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**Complexity, Complicity and Fluidity: Early
Years Provision in Tamil Nadu (India)**

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**Ph.D. Social Policy
The University of Edinburgh
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Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that this thesis was composed by myself for the award of PhD degree at Edinburgh University based upon my own empirical work and where other works have been used herein they were properly referenced. This work has not been published in any other journal/book and not submitted for any other degree or diploma.

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Vinnarasan Aruldoss

October 2013

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Abstract

Early years provision, which combines childcare and preschool education, has been considered vital for child development by theorists and practitioners. Within early years provision pedagogy is assumed to be both an enabling and constraining factor which can shape a particular experience of childhood and, possibly, prepare children for a particular adulthood. This thesis explores pedagogical processes and practices vis-à-vis children's experiences in three different pedagogical contexts: a corporation nursery, a private nursery and an ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) Anganwadi centre in Chennai in Tamil Nadu (India). It explores the findings of a one year ethnographic study that involved observation/informal conversation with children and semi-structured interviews with teachers, care worker(s) and parents. The ethnographic study used methodological approaches from childhood research, adopted ethical positions from childhood studies and valued children as competent individuals that should be treated with respect throughout the research processes.

The analysis of the empirical data uses the intersections of three concepts in the works of Foucault (subject), Butler (identity), Bourdieu (cultural capital) to illuminate and analyse the pedagogical processes and practices. The thesis characterises the different pedagogical contexts encountered in the study as: 'activity centred', 'task centred', and 'care centred'. It explains that this context emerged in an on-going active process of negotiation, deliberation, reflection through 'subjection' and 'resistance'. It demonstrates that children construct their embodied self-identity through everyday pedagogical/curriculum performativity and the teacher-children identities work within as well as outside pedagogical contexts. The empirical analysis identifies shame and distinction as key factors for pedagogical/curriculum performativity and argues that the embodied identities of children are fluid and contextual and that they are formed through the interaction of learning materials, academic ability/mastery, and bodily differences in the pedagogical contexts. It is argued that children employ cultural capital when (re)establishing home-nursery connections in different pedagogical contexts and that parents similarly use their cultural capital with a sense of 'practical logic' for decision making on matters related to early years provision, e.g. when recognising the transformative potential of children.

The thesis findings suggest that there is an element of fluidity in pedagogical contexts and that the local cultural practices of teachers/care worker are reflectively integrated with minority world ideas when normative pedagogies are constructed. The thesis contributes to the development of childhood theory, by demonstrating that childhood is a complex phenomenon. At the policy level, the thesis makes recommendations for practitioners and administrators on how they can value local cultural knowledge, acknowledge reflexive practices of teachers/care workers, and equity issues in early years provision.

List of abbreviations

DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practices
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECERS	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
EPL	Exercises of Practical Life
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
LKG	Lower Kindergarten
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
Pre-KG	Pre-Kindergarten
TECERS	Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
UKG	Upper Kindergarten
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund

1 Introduction

As the title of the thesis suggests, this study aims to explore the processes and practices in early years provision and in so doing, to look at the pedagogical experiences of children and to underscore the complexity and fluidity involved in early years provision. When I was a taught postgraduate student, I was exposed to child development theories for the first time. I was fascinated by Piaget's and others' theories and I naively believed that children develop across the globe in the same way in a universalistic fashion. Then, later on when I was a practitioner I was part of the children's rights movement that worked passionately for many children's-related issues in India, including child labour, without realising that there was a 'conceptual dissonance' that confounded us with many challenges on the ground. Finally, during my coursework for PhD, I was introduced to the sociology of childhood that revealed the variability in children's life experiences and an alternative theoretical perspective on childhood (James and Prout, 1990/1997; James *et al*, 1998; Qvortrup, 1994). My own construction and awareness of childhood had varied at different times. Is there any connection between these three matters? Certainly there is, in that they all are connected to children and they all have their foundations in the minority world¹. While the first one explains the travel of universalistic concepts from the minority world to the majority world, the second one reveals the impact of this universalistic concept on professional practice. The third one, the relativist standpoint, which offers scope to explore the culturalisation, appropriation and reproduction of childhood in a particular context, is also a product of the minority world.

Whenever I have spoken with my friends and people in Tamil Nadu about my research they have challenged me gently that the form of childhood presented here in this study was that of deprived children in Chennai, not of all children in Chennai. Some even argued that the characteristics portrayed here in my study were mainly

¹ Literatures in childhood studies now increasingly use the term minority and majority world in place of developed and developing world. Countries from the developing world where the majority of children live are called majority world and the countries of the developed world are called minority world. This terminology will be used throughout this thesis.

urban and that it does not have any rural characteristics. As an ethnographer, I was well aware of the particularity of my study, yet their conversation provoked me into thinking in a rather different way, about how the particularity and representation of childhood itself is understood differently in different contexts. For example, if I go further up north in India, say to Delhi, then people might agree that, at least partly if not fully, the characteristics presented in this study are the depiction of childhood of Tamil Nadu. Interestingly, when I presented my paper outwith India, people considered that these are to some extent the characteristics of Indian childhood. At times, my friends and colleagues in the university have tended to ask me about the quintessential nature of Indian childhood. Above all, in the literature, my study participants are subsumed into one big category, which is the childhood of the majority world. So, not only is childhood a social and cultural product but its representation differs from context to context.

Obviously, not all children in India will share the same features which my study participants share and there are numerous differences in characteristics even among my study participants such as age, gender, family background, material resources, opportunities, housing and so on. There are cultural specificities but, at the same time, there are some commonalities that intrinsically absorb every child into one category, that is, childhood (Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup, 2000). Therefore, in a way my study participants represent the quintessential Indian childhood and in another way it is a fact that the quintessential Indian childhood will certainly have at least some qualities of my study participants. This suggests that childhood is a complex phenomenon and that children's lives are embedded in different structures and socio-cultural determinants.

1.1 Contextualising this study

Moreover, this complex phenomenon is even more complicated particularly in a postcolonial context. In the intricate web of the social world there has always been a constant interaction between minority and majority worlds which influences the cultural construction of childhood in one way or the other. While analysing the

influence of colonial rule on India and Indian childhood, Nandy (1987) expounded on the interface between politics, psychology and ideology which forms childhood as a cultural category. He wrote that:

“There is nothing natural or inevitable about childhood. Childhood is culturally defined and created; it, too, is a matter of human choice. There are as many childhoods as there are families and cultures, and the consciousness of childhood is as much a cultural datum as patterns of child-rearing and social role of the child. However, there are political and psychological forces which allow the concept of childhood and the perception of the child to be shared and transmitted”
(Nandy, 1987:56)

This excerpt neatly sums up the complexities involved in postcolonial childhood. Though my study participants are specifically different in some ways from other children in India, they share, if not many, at least one common characteristic, which is that they are part of the project called ‘postcolonial childhood’.

Nevertheless, the literature on children from the majority world have been mostly typified into two broader categories which either assume that children from the urban middle-class have more of a modern childhood influenced by westernisation, modernisation and globalisation or that the childhoods of the poor are an uncontaminated form of traditional and indigenous childhood (see Balagopalan, 2002; Rampal, 2008). Seemingly, the literature in childhood studies has tended to focus mostly on poor children in the majority world in order to defend or display the cultural variability between the traditional and ideal bourgeoisie model (see for example, Penn, 2005; Punch, 2001). Looking at this trend, Balagopalan (2002:22) asserts that this mere phenomenological explanation of viewing childhood as the product of the cultures of the poor can be seen as an “ahistorical, essentialist processes and a ‘them’ and ‘us’ binary opposition persists, which offers only a depoliticised understanding of these lives”. Therefore, although we are in agreement that childhood is a social and cultural product, the childhood of the majority world needs to be explored beyond giving mere hermeneutic explanation and the wider structural and contextual implications need to be studied.

Nieuwenhuys (2009) problematised this issue further. In an attempt to flesh out the characteristics of Indian childhood, she observed that the complexity involved in it could partly be attributed to colonial legacy and the supremacy of minority world knowledge amongst Indian academics (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). As a result of colonial rule and the integration of minority world ideas through globalisation in the social, cultural and educational structures (Burman, 1996), India is now in search of its own childhood identity (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). Lack of description about Indian childhood poses great difficulty in providing a starting point for any academic analysis. My study does not attend to the political issues involved in the history of Indian childhood. The literature elsewhere has attended to this issue in an extensive manner (see for example, Balagopalan, 2002, 2008; Nandy, 1987; Viruru, 2001). What I set out to do in my study was to explore the processes and practices in the early years institutions vis-à-vis children's experiences.

Sharon Stephens (1995) work on the cultural politics of childhood is helpful here to explicate my concern for the process and practices of early years institutions in India. While narrating the interplay between childhood and the cultural complexities of the globalised world, she suggested that

“Rather than merely explicating the Western constructions of childhood, to be filled out in terms of gender, race, and class differences and to be compared with the childhoods of other cultures, we need also to explore the global process that are currently transforming gender, race, class, culture – and, by no means least of all, childhood itself”
(Stephens, 1995:7)

This argument was further taken up in earnest by James and James (2004) in their work on the cultural politics of childhood in which they identified three key elements constituting this discourse. Firstly, there are cultural determinants, which include both the social status ascribed to children in the social structures and institutions (such as kinship, religion, family, gender relations and school) and also children's own influence on their social status. Secondly, there is the process through which these cultural determinants are translated into practices – mainly the policies and

programmes. Thirdly there are the ways through which children themselves experience and influence these cultural determinants.

Towards this end, this study tries to investigate the everyday pedagogy of the early years institutions. The use of the term ‘pedagogy’ in this study, as I will explain in chapter three, is mainly education-oriented. For my study, the literature of Stephens (1995) and James and James (2004) is helpful for understanding how the normative idea of childhood translated through curriculum/pedagogy works in actual practice, how children are positioned and how they experience and influence the normative discourse in their everyday lives in early years institutions. Yet, they do not provide any theoretical apparatus to reality test the real world setting. Therefore, my study seeks to apply, as I shall explain in chapter 2 and 3, the ideas of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu in juxtaposition with childhood literatures so as to enable a better understanding about childhood. The research design which employed an ethnographic approach for theory testing is clearly elaborated in chapter four. The section below, however, will explain the context under which the ethnographic study was carried out in India.

1.2 Early years provision in India: the context

This section will provide an overview of early years provision in the Indian context and, by doing so, will establish the conceptual and policy relations between minority and majority worlds, but specifically in India.

The term Early Childhood Care and Education² (ECCE) refers to an overarching concept that combines two aspects: childcare and early years education. The term ECCE came into prominence in the year 1990 after the Jomtien Declaration³. Since then, the need for practising an integrated approach in early childhood, combining

² The term ECCE is used as early years provision throughout this study.

³ The world conference on Education for All (EFA) held at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and its subsequent declaration, which is now called the Jomtien Declaration, recognized that ‘learning begins at birth’. It provided an impetus to advocacy for ECCE programmes around the globe (UNESCO). Accessed at http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/en-leadup/findings_ECCD1.shtm on 13th August, 2010.

both care and education, has been emphasised at a global level. Advocates of this movement argued that early years are critical in human life and that investment in early years will reap benefits both at the individual level and the societal level (Arnold, 2004; Evans, 1996). In the literature, individual level benefits have been associated with school readiness, cognitive development, capability, human capital and freedom from sibling care responsibility (Arnold, 2004; Myers, 1995). At the societal level, eight different arguments have been proposed for investment for long term societal gains, namely Scientific, Human Rights, Economic, Social Equity, Social Mobilization, Programme Efficiency, and Moral and Social Values (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 1994). Through international conferences, summits and knowledge exchange, these ideas have been circulated across the world, including India, especially for policy formulation and programme planning⁴.

In India, childcare is primarily a family responsibility (Sultana, 2009). In the past, children would spend all the foundational years at home and learn things through socialisation mostly in a joint family system until they entered formal schooling. Most of the activities that impart knowledge to children at home are drawn from traditional wisdom (Swaminathan, 1992). In terms of early years education, research findings trace its roots back to the time of the Vedic age, approximately 1500 BC, in the form of *gurukulam* which is a kind of residential arrangement (Viruru, 2001). In the *gurukulam* system, children from the age of seven stay in the master's house and learn religious scripts or vocational knowledge/skills. Education was imparted only to priestly and warrior castes and the rest of the population was educated at home through family socialisation (Nawani and Jain, 2011).

Formal institutions providing early years education were first established in the 19th century during British rule (Kaul and Shankar, 2009). They were primarily modelled on the British infant schools and served the needs of British administrators and

⁴ For example, World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990), World Summit for Children (1990), the World Conference on Human Rights (1993), Dakar Framework for Action (2000), all emphasised early years provision and these ideas have been promoted through UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Bernard van Leer Foundation, The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, World Bank and several other International Non-Governmental Organisations around the world.

Indian elites (Verma, 1994). Otherwise, for an ordinary child, the provision of early education was mainly informal and provided within the family system or in extended kinships (Kaul and Shankar, 2009). Later, Maria Montessori's work in India inspired a few indigenous early childhood educators to spread preschool education, particularly in the urban areas (Swaminathan, 1992).

At the policy level, during the first half of the 20th century the report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (1944) headed by Sir John Sargent made a recommendation to the government that preschool education providing informal instruction to children should be considered as an important step towards the system of school education (see Sargent, 1968). In consideration of the poor housing facilities in urban areas and also in order to support working mothers, the report recommended two different models of preschool education: (1) a separate nursery that functions within the habitation (habitation model) in urban areas and (2) the nursery section attached to the primary school (institutional model) in other places. Despite these efforts, the spread of formal childcare provision and preschool education was very slow in India. This slowness was attributed to many causes, but largely to caste differences, the strong joint family system, the low status given to women as primary caretaker of the child in the society and the cultural beliefs that undermined formal arrangements for early years education (Kamerman, 2006; Minturn and Hitchcock, 1963).

After India gained independence from British rule, the rationale for providing early childhood interventions emerged out of a need to protect children from the risk of poverty, to encourage women into the work force and to provide quality education for all sections of the society (Pattnaik, 1996; Sharma *et al.*, 2008). In 1975, the Indian Government launched a central flagship programme called 'Integrated Child Development Services' (ICDS) to provide comprehensive services for children aged 0-6 years, primarily to those children coming from disadvantaged families. ICDS is the only major, integrated programme for the young child that covers health, nutrition, early childhood care and pre-school education. The country's budgetary commitments to ICDS has not been at the level expected and, with the advent of

private service providers, the scale and the quality of early years provision in the country have largely polarised over time, based on parental demands and affordability (Sareen, 2005).

The early years market in India now is largely unregulated and dispersed (Chopra, 2012; Singh and Sood, 2009). The last twenty to thirty years have witnessed a large-scale privatisation in early years service provision, whereby private service providers have emerged as the key players to meet the needs and aspirations of millions of middle class families (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006). The services being offered in the market vary significantly (Velayutham, 2005). Some offer only day-care, some provide formal teaching, some offer play-based education, while some others offer a combination of both a formal and a play-based curriculum (Hegde and Cassidy, 2006; Prochner, 2002). Most significantly, English medium education is widely utilised by parents as a tool for ensuring career success and it is very much valued across all sections of the society (M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, 2000). This suggests a deeply divided market system that provides services based on parental purchasing capacity and offers different platforms for children to experience different kinds of childhood and possibly prepares them for different adulthoods (Jeffery, 2005).

The political and ideological influence of British colonial rule strongly convinced the population, particularly the middle class, that science-based education is essential for human progress and prosperity (Nandy, 1988). Therefore there is little surprise that the indigenous educational philosophies found little mention in early years educational discourses. Moreover, the pedagogy of cultural relativism in education was not favoured at all due to fear that the cultural model of pedagogy might sit uncomfortably in a country where there are many languages and sub-cultures (see Raina, 2011). Thus, the system of education even after independence borrowed learning theories from the minority world that are deeply entrenched in behaviourism and constructivism (see Raina, 2011). In the early years normative discourse in India, one can often find terms such as ‘Developmentally Appropriate Practices’ (DAP), ‘Age Appropriate Practices’, ‘Culturally Appropriate Practices’, ‘Child-Centred

Education’ and so on, that are advocated and circulated widely around the world by the minority world (see chapter five).

Against this background, this study explores early years pedagogical processes and practices in three different institutions: a corporation nursery, a private nursery and the ICDS Anganwadi. The pedagogies followed in these three institutions are discussed in detail in chapter five. Significantly, the premise of the study was based on the following three assumptions: (1) that childhood is a complex phenomenon; (2) that childhood is embedded in an ensemble of factors; (3) that within the minority and majority world discourse, the processes that translate the normative discourse into practice are largely obscured.

1.3 The aim and scope of this study

As explained above, this study seeks to explore the everyday pedagogy of the early years institutions at an intersection of social theories and childhood studies. In particular, as I will explain in chapter three, the study seeks to apply Foucault’s idea of subject, Butler’s notion of performativity and Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural capital, and interpret these concepts at the backdrop of a local ethnographic study set in India. The theoretical underpinning of the study which is drawn from a range of scholarly ideas would offer a new understanding about childhood and unravel the nuances of everyday pedagogy. Therefore, the study can be considered unique to some extent because of its research design and the impact it would create on the existing body of knowledge. Moreover, this study would add knowledge to the early years field in India where these theoretical approaches are understudied.

The empirical focus of this study lies on the processes and practices that shape and are being shaped by, children’s lived experiences in three different early years institutions and their implications for children. To achieve this, the study has framed the following specific research aims:

1. To understand how active educable subjects are evolved in the process of everyday pedagogical practices
2. To explore how children construct their and others' identities through pedagogical performativity
3. To understand the ways in which children use their '*habitus*' and 'cultural capital' in learning environments
4. To examine the role of parental '*habitus*' and 'cultural capital' in early years provision with reference to decision making

In doing so this study intends to make a contribution to knowledge in the following three areas:

1. Firstly, this study will add knowledge to the debates on majority and minority world discourses of early childhood, particularly early years provision.
2. Secondly, this study will extend the theoretical base in childhood studies through its empirical evidence.
3. Finally, there is a dearth of literature available on early childhood from the relativist perspective in India and this study will add empirical analysis to that scholarship.

The intention of this thesis was not to critique the functioning of the institutions or castigate the approach of its staff members towards children; instead, the aim was to understand how children function within different pedagogical contexts and what this might mean for childhood and children's development. Like any PhD student I was baffled by many challenges throughout this research process. Based on my experiential knowledge, initially, I had designed my proposal to investigate the social construction of childhood by different duty bearers such as parents, policy makers and service providers in the ICDS programme and its implications on early years policy provision.

Later, during the PhD course work at the University of Edinburgh I came to notice that children need to be recognised as social actors and that it was unethical not to

include children while studying services which are actually meant for them (Christensen and James, 2000; Tisdall *et al.*, 2009). Upon realising my ethical responsibility I incorporated children as study participants and redesigned my research project. Then, my initial literature review convinced me that drawing a comparative perspective from different pedagogical contexts would offer rich theoretical and empirical insights rather than studying a single pedagogical context. Finally, after returning from my fieldwork, I found that the selection of theories threw up a considerable challenge to find a common theoretical framework for analysis. I would not say that my journey was smooth and focussed from beginning to end. My focus had been constantly shifting after every crucial stage and as a result, the study turned out to be somewhat complicated. I do not claim that this study is comprehensive. I am aware that the social theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu which I used for my empirical analysis could have been used exclusively for a whole study. Yet, I hope that this study will make at least a modest contribution to the existing scholarship in childhood studies and early years provision.

1.4 Motivation for this research

My interest for this study emerged from and builds upon the foundations which I had in working with children. Soon after my taught postgraduate study, as a trained social worker, I was given an opportunity to work with couple of children's based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in India and there I came into contact with various children's rights related issues that needed professional intervention. I worked on various issues specific to UNCRC and I was actively engaged in various NGO networks that vigorously promoted the 'right to education', especially for deprived children. It was later during an MPhil programme that I developed an academic interest in early childhood. For my MPhil dissertation, I explored the factors that influenced the non-enrolment of children in the ICDS Anganwadi centres in Chennai and I interviewed parents of children who had not enrolled in the ICDS Anganwadi centres but lived within the ICDS target coverage areas. The study findings suggested that quality was the main concern for parents and also that there was an inclination towards English medium preschool education. The culmination of

all these influences urged me to study early years provision with a much broader theoretical lens for my PhD research.

1.5 Chapter outline

Other than this introductory chapter, which gives an overview of my research and its aims, this study is divided into eight more chapters. Chapter two reviews the empirical literature in India. As much of this research was based on a positivist approach the chapter then turns to focus on minority world literature in the social sciences, especially childhood studies and in doing so locates my research in a wider theoretical context. The chapter seeks to move its theoretical lens from studying childhood as a social phenomenon to studying childhood as a complex phenomenon which might evolve with a combination of language, discourse, embodiment, material objects and so on in the early years provision. Chapter three offers the theoretical framework that explains the interplay between subject, identity and cultural capital as the backdrop of pedagogical practices and processes in early years provision. The works of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu are considered and some of the criticisms commonly found in their works which are relevant to my study are addressed in this chapter. Chapter four describes how the empirical research was actually carried out, including the methods used for data collection, the ethical and methodological challenges faced, data analysis, knowledge production and my critical reflections on the research process. Chapter five presents an analytical description of all three institutions selected for this research. This narrates the daily routines, curriculum, classroom composition and organisation, funding, children's family background and teachers' and staff's professional background in the institutions.

Chapter six, seven and eight analyse the empirical data. Chapter six describes the emergent nature of educable subjects in everyday pedagogical practices. Drawing on Foucault's concepts of subject and power, the chapter analyses the nature of pedagogy and its power distribution, negotiation of forces and the complexity and fluidity involved in everyday practices. The chapter suggests that active subjects

emerge during an on-going process of negotiation, deliberation and reflection through 'subjection' and 'resistance'. Chapter seven analyses identity formation in the institutions. By using Butler's concept of 'performativity' the chapter analyses how children identify with or differentiate from each other in the pedagogical process. The analysis identifies shame and distinction as key factors for pedagogical/curriculum performativity. The analysis further extends its focus on teacher-children identities and explores how pedagogical authority works within and outwith the institution. Chapter eight analyses the home-nursery relationship in early years provision. Bourdieu's concepts of '*habitus*' and 'cultural capital' are used in this chapter. The first part looks at the roles of *habitus* and cultural capital in the pedagogical process whilst the second part describes the implications of cultural capital for parental decision-making on matters related to early years provision.

The final chapter summarises the thesis, revisits some of the issues raised earlier in the literature review and discusses the study findings' implications for theory and practice. The study concludes that the institutions are complex/fluid and that future research could consider applying Deleuzian analysis to study 'fluidity', 'multiplicity' and 'becoming' aspects of children within the institution.

2 Childhood in Early Years Provision

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will review key literature in social sciences, especially childhood studies, which frame my research interests. For the purpose of my analysis I have divided this chapter into two sections: that the first section reviews the empirical literatures from India and the second carves out a broader theoretical space for this study from the minority world literature.

I start by reviewing the recent empirical literature on early years provision in India. Most of this literature, as I shall demonstrate, has been dominated by developmental psychology and has studied mainly children's developmental outcomes and the quality of early years provision using standardised tools and measurements. Taking a different approach to childhood, which is childhood studies, then, I will elucidate the foundations of childhood studies and also flesh out some of the built-in limitations to this approach. Theorisation in childhood studies, as I shall argue throughout this chapter, has been plagued by narrow dualisms in the past such as 'nature vs. culture', 'structure vs. agency', 'being vs. becoming'. Two constructions are of particular concern here, the concept of *children's bodies*, the analysis of which is embedded within the rigid dichotomy of nature versus culture and *children's agency* which to some extent theorised in an essentialist way in childhood studies (Prout, 2005).

Throughout my analysis I will underscore how these dualities are connected to my study objectives and I shall also propose that the social theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu could be useful to develop my work beyond these dualisms, or at least to approach childhood within a complementary theoretical framework. Doing a comprehensive review of minority world empirical literature on Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu in separate sections would be an uphill task. Therefore in this review I will focus only on these key writers and the contributions their theorisations can make to my dissertation.

2.2. Early years research in India

2.2.1 Universal perspective

The field of early years research in India is mainly dominated by a universalistic approach to childhood. The impact of early years provision, particularly the ICDS Anganwadi, on various developmental outcomes such as the physical, cognitive, motor, language, social and emotional have been studied by many researchers over the years (see for example, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, 2000; Vazir and Kashinath, 1999; and also a compendium of research abstracts published by NIPCCD, 2009). Through these studies researchers have argued that early years provision is crucial for young children and that the services provided at early years institutions do have a positive impact on their developmental outcomes.

Using a similar approach, some researchers have done a comparative analysis between attendees and non-attendees of the ICDS programme and found that children attending ICDS had better developmental outcomes compared to their counterparts who were not enrolled in any early years provision (see for example, Pattnaik, 1996; Rao, 2010; Verma, 1994). The impact of preschool education on children's development has also been studied between the beneficiaries of the ICDS programme and other early years institutions (see for example, NIPCCD, 2009; Shabnam, 2003). But the above studies measured children's development in a linear development model that always placed some sections of children in a disadvantaged position and, perhaps, labelled them as problem children if they failed to meet the established standards. Placing children in this kind of relational hierarchy, with the 'more developed' exhibiting those features which the 'less developed' lack, is criticised in postmodern literature for undermining the role of local knowledge and cultural significance in child development (Burman, 1995; Gupta, 2005).

The other aspect of early years provision that drew considerable attention from researchers is 'quality'. Quality in early years provision is associated mainly with children's developmental outcomes, process and structural factors such as physical

infrastructure, play materials, and so on. In one of the studies conducted in Delhi, Chopra (2012) examined the quality of the early years institutions, particularly preschool education, in five different types of institution: (1) ICDS (2) private nursery (3) nurseries attached to high/higher-secondary school (4) experimental preschools run by universities and (5) corporation nurseries. The quality of the preschool education was measured using the Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS), which is the culturally adapted version of the global Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and contains seven sub-scales: infrastructure, personal care and routine, physical learning aids, language and reasoning experiences, fine and gross motor activities, creative activities and social development (see Swaminathan *et al.*, 2000). This comparative study observed that the curricula designed in the experimental preschools were based on child development ideals and provided good quality services to children, while the private nurseries and nurseries attached to big schools were too formal and academically focussed. The ICDS and corporation nurseries provided child-oriented programmes but the quality was found to be poor.

Similar kinds of study conducted in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh looked at the quality aspects of early years institutions using TECERS. Sultana (2009) in her study of corporation nurseries in Chennai, Tamil Nadu investigated the correlation between the quality of early childhood care and education and children's developmental outcomes. Different corporation nurseries within Chennai were compared to find out the causal explanations between quality and developmental outcomes. A study conducted in Andhra Pradesh assessed the impact of the preschool quality of the ICDS programme on the development of 4-year-old children from poor and rural families (Rao, 2010). Children's developmental outcomes in this study were assessed using the modified version of the Mc-Carthy Scales of Children's Abilities and physician ratings and the preschool quality was assessed through TECERS. The study concluded that there was a strong positive relationship between quality and overall child development. The study further states that the ICDS programme was beneficial for child development in disadvantaged families although the quality

found in the ICDS centres could be very poor when compared with minority world normative standards.

These studies assessed the quality of the institutions based on the set criteria of a rating scale. There are some criticisms of this approach. While reviewing the revised global Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), Kennedy (2006) observes that the idea of 'quality' constructed in the rating scale is specifically linked to material resources and that the material differences that are prevalent in diverse contexts are not duly considered within the rating scale. Though the rating scale in India was culturally modified it is still founded on a particular version of childhood and assesses programme quality based on normative standards. As Dahlberg and others (2007) argue, 'quality' is not a value neutral concept; is subjective and it has value positions and assumptions. Thus, we need to deconstruct the word quality through meaning making or participatory processes of the participants (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2007).

2.2.2 Alternative perspective

Empirical research in India, that adopts the theoretical position of 'childhood studies', are very scant⁵, however a few studies do provide an alternative childhood studies type perspective about early years research in India. Among them, the ethnographic study conducted by Viruru (2001) in Hyderabad, India documented young children's experiences in an English medium private nursery. While describing the everyday experiences of the children and the adult educators in the nursery, Viruru disavowed some of the dominant minority world childhood discourses: mainly the childhood constructed in early years educational practices, which are chiefly informed by child development theories. She further questioned the impact of minority world childhood discourse in early years educational practice in India, which disapproves of local knowledge and culture and eventually categorise

⁵ The sociology of childhood is not an established force yet in the Indian Universities. Empirical studies conducted in India are either informed by child development theories or inspired by children's rights based approach. A few scholars like Viruru, Balagopalan and Chawla-Duggan have made an attempt to explore young children's life experiences from this theoretical perspective.

local children as ‘others’. Due to this extreme theoretical position, her study failed to acknowledge the cultural interpretation/assimilation of minority world concepts/theories in the early years provision. As Clarke (2001) posits, viewing the whole system as ‘foreign’ underestimates both the reflective practices of the teachers and fluidity within the early years provision. There is an intersection between minority world concepts/theories and local culture in everyday practices and that need to be properly investigated.

Similarly, an ethnographic study conducted about learning adopted a social constructionist approach to investigate the association between school knowledge and children’s identity as learners and its effects on life outside school (Sarangapani, 2003). The researcher observed a government primary school in Delhi, which had both nursery and primary sections and noted that in everyday classroom practices, good and bad behaviours, cleanliness, and moral character were often emphasised as part of education. She further noted that there was a difference with life outside school and children attending English medium schools were not allowed by their parents to play with others in the village for fear that it might have a negative socialising effect on their children’s language development. Sarangapani’s (2003) study was useful for understanding how children’s learner identities were socially constructed through everyday classroom practices and how English medium of education was viewed by adults as a sign of distinction in the village. Yet, this ethnographic account failed to engage with children’s performances and perspectives in the classroom. Instead, children were portrayed as accepting the adult-constructed version of knowledge and schooling that were transmitted mainly through textbooks and teaching.

Some researchers studied teacher’s perceptions about early years provision in a comparative perspective. For instance, a qualitative study conducted in Mumbai by Hegde and Cassidy (2009) analysed teachers’ beliefs about the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) and compared their analysis with teachers’ beliefs in the United States of America. The study focussed on six themes: academic study versus play, the importance of worksheets, the importance of group activity for

socialisation, constraints on play-based curriculum, need for change and struggle between belief and practices. Twelve teachers from middle and high income private English medium kindergartens were selected across Mumbai for this study. The findings suggested that there were similarities (desire to earn respect) and dissimilarities (classroom practice and dilemma) between American and Indian teachers; moreover, culture seemed to be the foundation for classroom practices. The study highlighted that though the teachers in India had strong opinions against formal teaching, in reality, they appeared less so in actual practice (Hegde and Cassidy, 2009).

Another study conducted in Delhi with private nurseries sketched out the perceptions of teachers about managing large classroom sizes and how they manage and set out their educational priorities in everyday classroom organisation (Gupta, 2004). The study further observed that large classroom sizes in the private nurseries was not unusual in India and in the classroom there was verbal and intellectual energy in comparison with the physical energy found in US preschool classrooms. Both these studies used social constructionist and postcolonial theories to deconstruct some of the universal assumptions, but they failed to seek children's opinions and lived experiences.

A cross-cultural study conducted by Cleghorn and Prochner (2010) sheds light on the functioning of ICDS (one centre from Gujarat) in a global context. While comparing the service provision of ECCE between India, South Africa and Canada, they explored the intersection of the effects of colonisation/globalisation and local knowledge/culture about working with children in the early years settings. Besides ethnographic observation, the study also evaluated policy documents and highlighted the effects of colonisation and globalisation in the early years settings. The study observed that the differences in practice at the local/cultural level still persist despite the fact that the policy documents in official discourse treat early childhood education as a unitary category.

Conclusion - In summary it is evident that the empirical research conducted in India are largely informed by child development theories and adopts a universalistic version of childhood, even though minority world techniques such as rating scales and evaluation standards were culturally modified. Studies conducted in the alternative tradition also had limitations due to adopting a disembodied approach to childhood that overlooked children's bodies and the objects/learning materials that shape children's everyday lived experiences in early years institutions. As my study was interested to explore the processes and practices in the early years institutions that configure the hybrid and emergent nature of childhood, this chapter now turns its focus on childhood studies and social sciences at large, to frame a theoretical framework for this dissertation.

2.3 Theoretical context

As I highlighted in my introduction, there is a connection theoretically, politically and ideologically between the minority and majority world. The concepts and ideas of (early)childhood still travel from the minority world to the majority world and create an impact on normative policy discourse (see Boyden, 1990; Burman, 1996; Penn, 2005). Against this backdrop, this section will review some of the literature in childhood studies and other social sciences so as to emphasise my theoretical concern for this study. In the last quarter of the twentieth century there was a shift in perspective about children and childhood. During this period, certain scholars in social sciences began to contest the veracity of erstwhile dominant child development theories, which theorised children as secondary adults and envisaged children's development in a linear, universal model (Jenks, 1982; Walkerdine, 1984/1998; Woodhead, 1990). Within sociology too, there was questioning by some scholars of the traditional sociological theory of socialisation which viewed children as passive recipients and less capable socio-cultural products of society (see Waksler, 1991). The culmination of all this, along with the post-positivist wave in the social sciences, propelled certain scholars to put forward a new proposition that childhood is a social phenomenon that varies across space and time.

2.3.1 Childhood as social phenomena

Most notably, the edited volumes of James and Prout (1990/1997) and Qvortrup and others (1994) and the work by James, Jenks and Prout (1998) made a massive impact on childhood scholars. At the beginning of the 1990s, James and Prout (1990/1997) identified six salient features of childhood studies. Their core arguments identify the conceptual dilemmas that will set up the foundation for my theoretical framework. According to James and Prout (1990:3-5):

1. Childhood is to be understood as a *social construction*. As such childhood is not to be viewed as a period of biological immaturity; instead, it is to be considered as a specific structural and cultural category in society.
2. Childhood needs to be treated as a *variable* in social analysis along with other variables such as class, gender or ethnicity. The aim of the argument is that children need to be liberated conceptually from the shadow of adults.
3. Children are *worthy of study* in their own right. It does not mean that children should be viewed away from adult life and relationships; rather, emphasis should be laid on theorising children as they are.
4. Children must be viewed as *active subjects* of their own social lives, who can participate and influence the environment in which they live. This implies that children are not just passive recipients of social processes and structures, but that they are competent to control their surroundings.
5. To achieve all these, we have to listen to children. Thus, *ethnography* can be considered as a useful methodology for capturing the nuances and intricacies of children's life experiences in a real world setting.
6. As childhood is a social phenomenon, the role of the researcher is to engage reflexively in the process of the reconstruction of childhood in society. This double hermeneutic model may pose political and ethical dilemmas for the researcher about position-taking in research; hence the researcher has to be aware that his/her position is implicitly significant when turning that constructed childhood into reality.

Taking these core ideas to their heart, subsequent childhood studies literature produced empirical evidence that claims children as active subjects of their own lives who can exercise certain control, authority and influence in the environments in which they live (see for example, Alanen and Mayall, 2001; Alderson, 2000; Mayall, 2002; Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Punch, 2001). This alternative discourse has received significant attention in other academic disciplines too and it has been strengthened further through multi/interdisciplinary research, though the focus has tended to differ slightly in different disciplines (see for example, Holloway and Valentine, 2000; Valentine, 1996 for children's geography and Buckingham, 2008; Cunningham, 1996; Hendrick, 1990 for childhood history). To be specific, in early years education, this relativist childhood approach has been well-conceived along with other postmodern/post-structural theories to challenge the hegemonic practices that tended to overlook local knowledge and cultural significance (see Cannella, 2004, 2005; Dahlberg *et al.*, 1999/2007; MacNaughton, 2000, 2005; Moss and Petrie, 2002; Viruru, 2001, 2005).

2.3.2 Some conceptual issues

As a result, a body of empirical research conducted in the last two to three decades in childhood studies provide descriptions about many forms of childhood and, most importantly, they document children as social actors of their own lives. As Mayall (1999:19) notes, all these empirical studies can be classified under two broad agenda: "to understand children's trajectories toward adulthood or to understand the social condition of childhood". There are concerns here. Too much focus in empirical research on socio-cultural aspects of childhood has "led to a degree of relativism" (Wyness, 2000:23) and thereby fails to bring any consensus whatsoever on describing the commonalities in childhood (James and James, 2004). Thus, there has been increased concern within childhood studies on how the conceptual category 'childhood' should be treated and how the issues of diversity and commonality can be addressed (James and James, 2004; Taguchi, 2010; Qvortrup, 2000, 2009).

For James and others (1998), childhood is not a unitary category: childhoods are diverse and many childhoods exist around the world. James and others (1998) further theorise childhood using four different approaches: the tribal child, the minority group child, the social-structural child and the socially constructed child. The first approach, tribal child, put emphasis on studying children as they are in their folklores, rituals, play cultures and social world and excluding adult fantasies and dispositions. The second approach, minority group child, is socio-political and attends to the practices and structures that discriminate children or put certain groups of them in a powerless, vulnerable, or deprived condition. The third approach, social-structural child, stresses the need to view children as competent human beings and theorise childhood as a structural category that is very much present in every society. Finally, the fourth approach, the socially constructed child, is basically hermeneutic in nature and suspends all the normative standards and judgements in theorisation. Most importantly, all four approaches encourage scholars to theorise childhood and children's experiences with an 'agency-centred' approach (see James *et al.*, 1998).

There is much to unpack here for my study. As the focus of my study was on the processes and practices in early years provision, I wish to consider how children are conceptualised in these four approaches and to what extent they can be relevant or applicable for my study objectives. The tribal child approach postulates children as competent individuals, who can internalise, interpret and reproduce their own culture in a given context; basically, this approach demands that scholars theorise children's own culture or children's childhood (James *et al.*, 1998). This approach sounds more anthropological and thus appears less relevant to my study objective. The minority child approach, more than the other three approaches, raises the issue of structure versus agency in theorisation. On the one hand, this approach recognises children as social actors and, on the other hand, it exposes children's vulnerability to the dominant power structures in society. This duality had implications for my study in theorising children's subject positions and identities.

It is assumed that children are positioned in complex, intricate, inter-dependent structures and relationships and that their life experiences are shaped by those very

forces and structures that govern them. Qvortrup (2000, 2009) was persistent on this issue and wrote that the structures in our society be they economic, social, or political, have an equal bearing on children's everyday lives and that they cannot be simply discounted at the expense of studying children's own life experiences and their agency. Echoing his sentiment, certain scholars in childhood studies began to question this 'agency-centred' approach. Some scholars argue that viewing children in this liberalist framework as autonomous individuals undermines the social dependence and power dynamics intrinsic to children's lives and agency (see Gallagher, 2004; Konstantoni, 2012). Thus, it is idealistic to say that children function as free agents without any constraints/control in all circumstances. People always function within power relationships and they are subjected to authority in one way or the other, especially when they are in an unequal power position (Foucault, 1977). This power negotiation need not necessarily be viewed as always existing only in adult/child dichotomy. It can happen amongst children. Thus, while studying children in their own right is to be rightly appreciated, as Mayall (1999:21) puts it, we need to have a complementary theoretical framework that captures "the structures that condition or intersect with children's agency".

Returning back to James and others (1998) their third approach, which is the social structural child, positions children in a broader theoretical framework and it implicitly seeks to reduce diversities in childhood, though it intrinsically sits uncomfortably with other approaches. Finally, the socially constructed child approach situates children in social interactions to explore the meaning which those social interactions attribute to childhood. This approach has taken inspiration from poststructural/postmodern scholars who challenged the intellectual hegemony and 'othering' people in the process of knowledge production (see Boyden, 1990; Mayall, 2000; Oakley, 1994; Thorne, 1993). From this perspective, as James (2009) argues, empirical literature has contributed immensely to a change in our ontological understanding and has theorised children as social actors. However, this approach has conceptual dissonance with children's bodies. James and Prout (1990) in their initial work admitted that not studying children's body is one of the limitations of social constructionist approach. Subsequent literature in childhood studies suggests

that children's life experiences in the social world are configured by an ensemble of parameters, not by language and discourse alone (Qvortrup, 2000, 2005). Children, especially in early years provision, use learning materials, toys and other objects in everyday practice and these all might give meaning to their childhood. In the following section, therefore, I will analyse at length these two aspects: children's bodies and structure versus agency and discuss their implications with specific reference to my study objectives.

2.3.3 Social phenomena to complex phenomena

The central issue which has been dealt with in a narrow dichotomy until recently in childhood studies is 'body'. Lack of theoretical attention to the 'body' in childhood studies has its base in a nature and culture dichotomy in social theories (Prout, 2000). Therefore, the nature and culture dichotomy in social theories needs to be tackled first in order to extend the theoretical base in childhood studies beyond social constructionism. In what follows I shall first examine the genealogy of the 'sociology of body' and then describe what effects this analysis has on my study with specific reference to studying children's subject, identity and cultural capital.

The body in sociology has remained an elusive concept and difficult territory for scholars for long time. Turner (1991) sees the lack of interest within classical sociology on the body as due to the following four reasons. Firstly, the sociologists of the classical tradition were concerned with studying the similarities between industrial capitalist societies rather than studying the differences of the historical evolution of human beings. Secondly, scholarly work in sociology has tended to concentrate on the conditions prerequisite for establishing social order, social control and the characteristics that create social change in society. Therefore, the ontological aspect of the body was generally overlooked as a 'natural' phenomenon that did not require serious theoretical examination. Thirdly, the abilities of human beings or human agency in sociology were studied within an economic framework and as a result human actions were directly connected to the human mind and its cognitive aspects such as rational choice and behaviour, rather than the experiences of the

‘lived body’. Finally, unlike anthropology which studied human bodies as one of the classificatory systems across cultures, sociology did not show much interest in body studies because of its anti-positivist ontological and epistemological foundations.

Turner (1984) further asserted that the primary dichotomy in the theories of classical sociology was not between nature and society, but self and society. Consequently, the body was treated as an ethereal entity in sociological analysis. While micro-sociology treated individuals as socially constituted actors in action, macro-sociology laid its theoretical focus on broader social structures and social systems. Thus, Turner (1996:63) argues that the superficial treatment of body in sociological theories can be considered as “submergence rather than absence”: that is, the body is present with the social actor but it received less theoretical attention in analysis.

While Turner has provided an account for the disembodied approach in classical sociological theories, Shilling (2005) identified the following reasons as propelling interest among scholars in body studies. Firstly, theories of culture and consumerism, which analysed body as a container, vehicle and repository in the late modern era, provided insights on how the body can be perceived as a form of physical and cultural capital in theoretical analysis (see for example, Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Featherstone, 1991, 2007). Bourdieu’s (1986) work on cultural capital, as I will explain in the following chapter, is instrumental here for understanding how the body - as a state of embodied capital - acquires position and status in a society. Secondly, the feminist discourse, which challenged the male hegemony, offered us an explanation for how the body was used as a means of justification for maintaining social hierarchy in society. The belief that female bodies were more suitable for domestic life due to their ‘biological’ nature whilst male bodies were more suitable for the public sphere because men were more rational was interrogated through an array of critical feminist theories (see for example, Butler, 1990a, 1993; Oakley, 1972). To be specific, Butler’s work illuminates how social norms are scripted on female bodies and thereby construct a particular kind of gender identity. Finally, studies on the changing nature of governmentality have raised awareness and interest among scholars about investigating the role of the human body in various discourses

and discursive practices (see for example, Foucault, 1977). Foucault's works illustrates the politics behind human body in society. These body literatures, especially the works of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu, to some extent, are criticised for placing too much emphasis on structures than agency and they will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

In general, the body in social theories, Turner (1996) notes, was approached from two contrasting perspectives: foundationalist and social constructionist. While the foundationalist approach treats the body as a biological entity/living organism, the social constructionist approach considers it as a cultural product. In the foundationalist perspective, the body as a corporeal material remains the same across cultures. This approach seeks to view bodily function and action through mechanistic principles that have their roots, as I will show in the next chapter, in Cartesian mind/body dualism. A social constructionist approach, on the other hand, reads the body within a cultural framework and considers that the body as a cultural datum acquires meaning through cultural interpretation. Turner (2008) was careful using the term social construction here. He was cautious of his explanation; he says that the term social constructionism is not a single and comprehensive theoretical doctrine but has different ways of situating agents in its approach. Concerns were raised in the literature that although the social constructionist approach of the body offered powerful theoretical explanations about how the social structures and the forces have "invaded, shaped, classified" and given meaning to the material body, it has failed to pay adequate theoretical attention to why the body acquired such importance in analysis (Shilling, 1993:10). The body in the social constructionist approach has been accorded a place in theories as object and mostly "it remained silent about the lived experiences" of the actors (Shilling, 2003:203).

While analysing the nature and social divide in social theories of body, Turner (1992) thus proposed methodological eclecticism - that is seeing both approaches as complementary - to overcome this problem. In contrast, Shilling (1993) suggests that the body/mind relationship should be studied within the broader framework of nature and social dualisms and more importantly that the body needs to be considered as a

resource and constraint which is shaped by the social process. Our presence in the world, as Burkitt (1999) posits, is located not only in discourse and construction but also with objects, materials and networks, we experience the world through different means and channels. Therefore we need to accept that bodies are not merely a construction; they are living organisms which actively interact, experience and (re)produce the social environment. Thus, it is not possible to dissipate bodies in theorisation. Seen from this viewpoint, the broader theoretical framework should encompass and investigate the interrelated processes of body and society by “bringing society into the body and the body into society” (Kirk 2004:52).

In line with the sociological theories of embodiment, James and others (1998) and later Prout (2000) in his edited collection, boldly asserted that children’s lives have both corporeal materiality (body) as well as representation (the discourses and narratives constructed on children’s bodies) and that they both should be studied within a common theoretical framework. There is no doubt that the social constructionist approach that was proclaimed as an alternative to the theories of biological determinism received huge interest among scholars, but, as a result, the body as a correlate of biology was under-explored in childhood studies. Ironically, most of the research conducted in childhood studies which recognises children as social actors or studies their agency overshadowed the fact that those views and actions are very much constituted in children’s bodies (James *et al.*, 1998). Prout (2000:5) thus suggests that considering “the body as socially and biologically unfinished reconnects what social constructionism separated” in childhood studies.

The concept of embodiment has many implications for identity formation. As Skattebol (2006) notes, there has been a tendency among scholars to undervalue the embodied aspects of children in identity formation. Recognising embodiment as an important component for identity construction, Skattebol (2006) demonstrates how the idea of gender works in fluid ways among preschool children. In a rather different manner, while studying gender and ethnic identities in the preschool, Brooker (2006) elucidates how bodies carry family practices into the nursery and how those practices are reinforced by children in the preschool institutions. I would

suggest, as I will explain in the next chapter, that Butler's idea of identity which considers both mind and body in identity formation could be an appropriate tool for studying children's embodied experiences in identity formation in early years provision.

The other issue that is closely connected to embodiment is agency. Turner (1992) asserts that the absence of the body in social theories is considered a major problem for how to theorise human agency. This implies that no theorisation of agency can be possible by overlooking the human body (Shilling, 1993). Agency in classical sociology was conceptualised based on actors' cognitive actions without considering the fact that the mind exists within the body and that bodily actions constrain or enable social relations in the society. There is no ontological consensus whatsoever about what the term agency means in social theory. While analysing the structure versus agency debate in sociology, Archer (2003) notes that the straightforward answer one can find in literature is, in some sense, that 'structure' is considered objective and 'agency' entails subjectivity. Other literature defines agency as a wilful act or desirable action of a person that is predicated upon the structure or other human beings to change the on-going course of action (Taguchi, 2010; Waller and Bitou, 2011).

Giddens's (1984) structuration theory is useful here to explicate this further. He wrote that human beings in the flow of life can do many things intentionally and unintentionally but that "agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place" (Giddens, 1984:8). This implicates power. To be an agent means to be able to deploy power. Our (re)actions in social life may vary depending on our capacity. This individual capacity to (re)act in a particular situation is facilitated or restrained by the circumstances in which the individual is situated. For instance, a child cannot use his/her agency in the school/nursery in the same way as he/she uses it with parents at home. In a formal set-up, children are positioned in an explicit power relationship. Most importantly, Giddens (1984:25) notes, "the constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a

duality”. Therefore, the structure is both medium and outcome of the practices and it is not completely external but in some sense it is internal – our own mental constructions.

While in childhood studies children are recognised as social actors and their agency has been recognised in research (James, 2009), the theoretical consideration of children’s bodies was ignored for sometime (Prout, 2000). The reasons are twofold: agency is treated as a taken-for-granted concept in empirical investigation and the biological aspects of children are considered as the opposite extreme of social constructionism (Prout 2000, 2005). In spite of this, agency is recognised as a prerequisite to theorising children as active agents and, thus, empirical accounts in childhood studies in the last decade provided description of agency as readily found acts and they hardly explained “what such agency really means for different groups of children and young people” (Tisdall and Punch, 2012:255). Thus over the years several authors described how children exercise their social, moral, religious and cultural agency and how they negotiate the power structures in school, family and in larger society (see Hemming and Madge, 2011). Prout (2000) however critiques the superficial treatment of agency in childhood studies and suggests that the notion of agency needs to be looked at with much more rigour and severity. Further he comments:

“Whilst the excitement of registering and mapping the hitherto unnoticed is understandable, it is open to the criticism that it treats children’s agency in an essentialist way. It is valorised, but treated as a given but previously overlooked attribute of children”
(Prout, 2000:16)

The implication is that we must deconstruct agency and explain how children’s agency creates effects in some conditions and fails to do so on others (Prout, 2000). For example, empirical accounts demonstrate that younger children may not use agency in the same way as older children (Chawla-Duggan *et al.*, 2012) and that age differences play a significant part the way children negotiate the power structure in different social institutions and encounters (Mayall, 1994). Moreover, our assumption that children exercise their agency on/against certain

structures/conditions indicates that the power struggle involved between two parties is a relational/dialogical process.

The other issue that is closely connected to embodiment and children's agency in childhood studies is children as being and becoming. The necessity for reformulating the being and becoming aspects of children has been strongly asserted in childhood literatures in recent time (Prout, 2005; Uprichard, 2008). Uprichard (2008), for instance, argued that to understand children's agency in a fullest sense it is essential to consider the 'being' and 'becoming' aspects of life as unifying characteristics of human being. By using Prigogine's analogy of time as 'being' and 'becoming', Uprichard (2008) argues that for any living organisms the dyadic nature of 'being' and 'becoming' are always inter-dependent and intrinsically related and unavoidable. While the recognition of children as competent 'beings' is one of the ethical, moral and philosophical foundations of childhood studies, we cannot completely deny the fact that the 'becoming' aspects are not as important as the 'being' aspects of children (Qvortrup, 2004). Our anticipation of the future will certainly influence the way in which we shape our present.

Indeed, children themselves anticipate their future in ways that contribute to shaping their childhood between present and future (Qvortrup, 2004). While studying the experiences of preschool children's transition to primary section, Lappalainen (2008) observes that children themselves imagine and make sense of their progression in space and time pathways. In another study conducted by Di Santo and Berman (2012) it was found that children begin to develop ideas about starting kindergarten even before their entry to the system. In a similar vein, Skattebol (2006) in her study with preschool children observed that children in their conversations often talk about their anticipation of 'becoming' older and the kind of people they want to become in the future. As Bauman (2008) notes, in a complex world individuals are responsible for their own lives at least in an ideological sense. Thus, as Uprichard (2008) suggests, neglecting the aspects of *becoming* adult in childhood studies is problematic from temporal and ethical perspectives. While recognising the competency of the *being* child as significant, the *becoming* aspects of the child are

also relevant, along with how those aspects interact with each other and influence the embodied experiences of the child in the social context. Bourdieu's (1986, 1990) work on cultural capital and *habitus* thus I consider useful to understand how the past-present-future triad works in children's lives.

2.4 Conclusion

I began this section with a review on early years empirical research in India. As much of this literature was informed by child development theories that constructed children as objects of normative evaluation standards, 'childhood studies' - largely developed in the minority world contexts – provided a productive critique. The sociological approaches in childhood studies, mainly social constructionism, offered scope to theorise children as social actors. Yet, they paid insufficient attention to other aspects of children, particularly children's bodies. They also limit our options in studying children by creating dualistic divides such as structure/agency, being/becoming and so on. Contemporary literature in childhood studies argued that childhood is a complex phenomenon that emerges through an ensemble of entities in the social world (see for example, Lee, 2001; Prout, 2005).

Further, while problematising dichotomies in childhood studies, specifically the nature and culture divide, I have argued that children's bodies are active and productive and that they cannot be simply ignored when they have many implications in their lives. In the analysis, then, I also pointed out how the social theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu are connected to the body and how these theories can be helpful for studying childhood within a broader theoretical framework that overcomes or compliments the dualistic divides. In the next chapter I shall explain their concepts of 'subject', 'identity' and 'cultural capital' in detail.

3 Key Concepts: Subject, Identity and Cultural Capital

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the key concepts of ‘subject’, ‘identity’ and ‘cultural capital’ that are going to be used for analysis in this study. In the preceding chapter, I emphasised that there is a need to study the processes in early years provision that capture the hybrid and complex natures of childhoods, rather than presuming that childhood is constituted only in social interaction or that children always function as free individuals. There, I also argued that the social theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu could be helpful for understanding how children emerge as active subjects, construct identities and use their cultural capital in everyday practice in the early years institutions. To this end, the relevance and application of these three key concepts are discussed at length in this chapter. Their theoretical intersections are analysed as the backdrop to another concept called ‘pedagogy’ in the early years institutions.

3.2 Pedagogy in early years provision

The word pedagogy is derived from the Greek *paidagogos*, which means the leading of the child (Leech and Moon, 2008). While pedagogy is understood in the English-speaking world as meaning the science of teaching, Petrie and others (2006:20) note that it has wider meaning in other places, denoting “education in its broadest sense, or ‘bringing up’ children in a way that addresses the whole child”. Literature describes pedagogy as a collaborative and iterative process (Leech and Moon, 2008). It encompasses both teaching and learning and it covers talks, interactions and relationships, not only between teacher and children but also amongst children within the learning environment (Alexander, 2008).

Pedagogy is mainly guided by educational philosophies, theories and knowledge bases. In a wider connotation, pedagogy is conceived by how it “connects to culture,

social structure and human agency and thus acquires educational meaning” (Alexander, 2008:46; Davis, 2011). In simple terms, pedagogy refers to the ways in which teaching and learning happen in institutions and includes the practices in the institution beyond curriculum teaching (Moyles, 2010). Thus, pedagogy should be acknowledged as the process that emerges in institutions which involves practices such as dialogue, discussion and confrontation in both teaching and learning. Amongst academics and to some extent in our everyday practice, teaching has this formal connotation (Moyles, 2010) but in early years provision, teaching has to be understood as being more informal. In early years provision, for example, all teaching can take place through play or non-formal instruction (Moyles, 2010).

In the literature, pedagogy is used in varied ways according to educational aims, goals and philosophies such as ‘feminist pedagogy’, ‘critical pedagogy’, ‘social pedagogy’, ‘playful pedagogy’ and so on (see Alexander, 2008; Freire, 1972; Kornbeck, 2009; Leach and Moon, 2008; Moyles, 2010). This suggests that the normative framework for pedagogy is inspired by dispositions, ideas and ideologies and they could be social, political, educational or political (Alexander, 2008; Leach and Moon, 2008). For example, in the case of early years provision, for many years, ideas such as ‘child development’, ‘child-centred education’, ‘age-appropriate’, ‘development-appropriate’ and the philosophy of Montessori have been influential all over the world, including India. As a result, differing knowledge claims are noticeable in the early years literatures and they seem to be fundamental for the normative construction of early years pedagogy (see Burman, 1994/2008; Walkerdine, 1984/1998). Seemingly, the references for early years normative pedagogy are predominantly drawn from theories related to child development (Davis, 2011).

The postmodernist literature in early childhood however argues that children just do not fit into a pre-defined model as passive objects who conform to the adult constructed model of curriculum/pedagogy; instead children negotiate and co-construct pedagogy as active agents in everyday practices (Yelland and Kilderry, 2005). Moreover, the teachers/care workers in early years provision also have

choices in actual practice and the way in which they perceive children can also have implications in pedagogical practices, since children are either overtly or covertly situated in an unequal power relationship (see Dahlberg *et al.*, 1999). The teacher/care worker practises/integrates pedagogy with their dispositions and ideas rather than practise it as actual concept (Davis, 2011). The above points imply that pedagogy is a fluid concept and that children and teachers/workers together construct pedagogy in everyday practice, though the teacher/care worker draw references from normative discourse. This further indicates that everyday pedagogical practices are the key that enables and constrains children's lived experiences in the institutional context.

In childhood studies, the conceptual framework that values children as competent social actors of their present 'being' has produced a proliferation of studies that examine children's own narratives from different cultural, social and environmental contexts. Children's play-cultures, agency, creativity, identity, rights and home-school relationships have been approached from the viewpoint that children are the chief architects of their lives (see Cassidy, 2007; Christensen and James, 2000; Edwards, 2002; Faulkner and Coates, 2011; James, 1993; Mayall, 2002). In this viewpoint the central significance has been placed on treating children as capable individuals, not as inferior or immature creatures (MacNaughton *et al.*, 2007; Tisdall and Davis, 2004). However while recognising children as social actors in theory is important for children and for childhood studies, it is unreal to think that children are free from power constraints and that they have the ability to challenge the power order in all circumstances.

Liberalist thinking that considers children as autonomous individuals undermines the complexity involved in the social world. However, recent literature about childhood raised concerns that the agency-centred approach that downplays inter-dependency in relationships, power dynamics in pedagogical context and family survival strategies in the majority world (see Gallagher, 2004; Abebe, 2012; Konstantoni, 2012; Tisdall and Punch, 2012). To be specific, it is argued that in the early years institutional set-up, children are differently positioned in the official pedagogy from teachers/care

workers and they cannot be considered as free individuals who can ignore adults' authority and power. Within this context, the following section will explain how the concept of 'subject' can be understood and applied in this study by using Foucault's analysis.

3.3 Subject or Subjectivation

Although Foucault's ideas about knowledge and power have been widely used in academic literature, Foucault's main philosophical intention is not to theorise power or knowledge, rather it is "the philosophy of the subject" (Marshall, 1990:14). Foucault himself mentioned that his scholarly aim was chiefly to investigate how different discursive practices transformed human beings into subjects of a particular kind:

"I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyse the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects"
(Foucault, 1982:208)

Foucault in his long and illustrious career had done research on different fascinating themes but only at the later stage of his career did he establish the continuity in his theoretical trajectory that underpins all his scholarly works and that was concerning the 'subject'. Foucault (1982) was categorical about his philosophical goal, which seems to be questioning our ontology of our existence and 'being' in the society. In his assumption, human beings are not subjects by birth; rather we are made into subjects through different mode of practices. Foucault's initial work placed much emphasis on the power of language and discursive practices; however, as he mentioned in his interview, he later alter his focus onto ethics and self (Foucault, 1982).

For Foucault, subject has two different meanings. The first implies a form of subjection or subjectivation, by which he means how an individual is "subject to

someone else by control and dependence” (Foucault, 1982:212). In a series of scholarly investigations, Foucault (1967, 1973, 1977) demonstrated this by explaining how people are subjected to control and authority by the administrative apparatus of the state and eventually transformed into a mad, sick and delinquent subject. The second one implies a form of self-subject formation - how an individual “tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” becomes the subject in everyday practices (Foucault, 1982:212). The subject here is more of an experiential and active subject. Foucault (1979, 1990, 1992) illustrated this through his works on ‘*The History of Sexuality*’, where he offered insights on morality, ethics, sexuality and how the ethical practices of a person ultimately leads into a self-formation of the ‘ethical subject’. This ethical subject requires a human being “to act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself” (Foucault, 1992:28). The emphasis here is laid on showing how an individual tied up with rules and behaviours emerges as a subject through the normalisation process in a particular society.

In spite of these differences in meanings, Foucault (1982:212) states that both the forms of subject, be it subjectivation or self-formation, point towards “a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to”. If the process of subjectivation involves an explicit form of power and dominance over the subjects, the subject formation of the self involves a very subtle form of power and dominance through normalisation over the subjects. Thus, in Foucault’s view, to be a subject is apparently to be subjected. In his view, as McNay (1994) posits, even the free individual subject is always under the control of an insidious power structure which may act not through repression but through normalisation.

Even though Foucault was keen to explore the ontology of subject in his analysis, his double concepts - knowledge and power - impacted on the ways in which subjects were theorised in his writings. Particularly, his work on the penal system (see Foucault, 1977) elaborated lucidly how subjectivation happens in discursive practices. He observed that there has been a change in the penal system and, as a result, a new body of scientific knowledge on the human mind and behaviour provided different reasons for exercising power over delinquents. They constituted a

powerful administrative apparatus or 'regime of truth' for control them. Significantly the technique of power in the penal system was exercised through the process of 'individualisation'. The individuals in the punishment process were detached from society both physically (e.g. spatial separation) and conceptually (individualisation of the subject) and they were subjected, used, manipulated and transformed in the penal process.

Foucault (1977) used here the concept of 'docility' to explain the functioning of the penal system. He wrote that it is through 'docility' that the usefulness of the body is manipulated. The body is considered useful only if it is productive and the body becomes productive if it is ready to become docile. It is a subtle form of coercion that used 'techniques of power' mainly to control bodily actions such as movements, gestures, attitudes and its energy. This intelligible way of regulating, conditioning, or controlling the functions of the docile body, which surrenders its energy to the person who controls it, might be called 'discipline' (Foucault, 1977:137). Discipline is a form of domination that subordinates the human body. At the same time, discipline obtains the effects of its utility in that it produces both subjugated and productive bodies. Discipline has been used to increase the economic forces of the body (in terms of its utility) while it diminishes the same forces (resistance) within the body. In short, it dissociates power from the body, while it seeks to increase its capacity, aptitude, energy and utility.

It is not necessary that the bodily subjection should always take place through violence or force; it can be physical, but still without violence. The knowledge constituted under the new administrative apparatus, which Foucault (1977:26) called, "the political technology of the body" was diffuse and the discourse was not coherent, yet the "disciplinary society" uses different instruments and tools at different level to make the system functional. The "techniques of power" that are used in the prison can be different from the ones used in a school or in a factory (Danaher *et al.*, 2000). So, the success of power mainly lies in execution, which Foucault describes as "a micro-physics of power". This tells us that the power exercised on the body is not a property, but it is more of a strategy. In Foucault's

(1977:26) view, “power is exercised rather than possessed”. Foucault also asserts that power is not a “context-free, ahistorical, objective description” (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982:184). Contrary to Marxist analysis which suggests that power is the privilege of the elite or ruling class, Foucault asserts that power is the result of different social positions, an outcome of negotiations between forces in the social world which is mainly manifested and sometimes re-inscribed by the people who take dominant positions.

The central tenet of Foucault’s argument is that power is ubiquitous and that people always either explicitly or implicitly exercise/negotiate power in a given social space (Gandhi, 1998). In a rather interesting way, Foucault (1982:221) further notes that “power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free”. Thus, within the power analysis, terms such as domination and resistance cannot be considered as ontologically different but as opposing effects of the same power relations (McNay, 1994). Foucault (1982) lists three types of power struggles in his genealogy of power analysis: struggle against domination, struggle against exploitation and finally struggle against subjection. While the first two forms of struggle are apparent and might take place in explicit ways, the struggle against subjection is less visible and might have subtle forms. I would suggest that the classroom environment is one of the finest examples where the power struggle happens in subtle and even covert ways.

While power is a relation between forces, as Deleuze (2006) interprets Foucault, institutions are the apparatus that assign, integrate, order and stratify those forces. Institutions fix forces and disperse relationships into functional forms in order to (re)produce the system. In a penal system, for instance, the discursive form articulates delinquents, the non-discursive form gives a visual assemblage of prison and the prisoner, and the prisoner’s body is disciplined through surveillance and docility to increase its usefulness (Foucault, 1977). However, Foucault’s analysis of power in the prison can be viewed as an ideal type which is situated in a particular social, cultural, political, technological and institutional context (Gallagher, 2004). The power dynamics, however, work differently in different contexts.

Foucault's methodological approach in his scholarly investigations is divided into two broad categories: archaeology and genealogy (Marshall, 1990). While archaeology deals with the nature of systems of knowledge, genealogy examines how the system of knowledge and power produces subjects (Jardine, 2005). Genealogy is more concerned with the 'history of the present', but it does not make any categorical causal connections (Mills, 2003). Foucault (1982) himself has admitted that his analysis of genealogy is not concerned about an analysis of truth; instead his concern was with 'ontology of ourselves', that is, the conditions under which we exist as individuals.

Foucault's analysis has been the subject of criticism for seeing institutions as too repressive and reducing agential powers to structures (see McNay, 1994; Ransom, 1997). I would suggest that Foucault's ideas are still relevant and need to be put into perspective before any theoretical scrutiny. As some authors note, Foucault's analysis of 'disciplinary society' can be considered as a critique to erstwhile minority world discourses that portrayed human beings as rational, self-reflexive, and unified subjects (Ball, 1990; McNay, 1994; Turner, 1992). Social theories in the minority world postulated, explicitly or implicitly, "the subject as the foundation, as the central core of all knowledge, as that in which and on the basis on which freedom revealed itself and truth could blossom" (Faubion, 1994:3). Therefore, the primary intention of Foucault's philosophical endeavour is to criticise the notion that knowledge is progressive and liberal, and is directly associated with the improvement of human conditions (Ransom, 1997; Turner, 1992). With his range of scholarly works Foucault demystified the erstwhile notion that knowledge is *a priori*, pre-given, and a universal truth (Cregan, 2006; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). In doing so, Foucault also deconstructed the notion that institutions are power-neutral (Ball 1990).

Foucault's analysis is helpful for understanding how knowledge creates the claim to truth and thereby develops a particular kind of subject. Nevertheless, as Cregan (2006) suggests, Foucault's arguments are almost exclusively confined to minority world cultural history and thus to some extent they are criticised as hegemonic (see

Mills, 2003). On this count, the concept of 'subject' can be critically examined from two different angles. Firstly, as Foucault (1990) himself has acknowledged, the idea of perceiving human beings as subjects is almost a modern phenomenon which emerged mainly in the minority world through the Enlightenment movement. However, the notion of the ideal subject has been conceptualised differently in different periods and contexts. While examining the conception of human subjects within various minority world scholarly traditions, Morris (1991) points out how both the empiricist and rationalist traditions conceptualise the subject as an 'individuated' asocial being. Elsewhere in his work (1994:16) he argues that while the subject in the minority world is largely conceived as an "individuated, detached, separate and self-sufficient" entity, the subject in other cultures is socio-centric or holistic. I would suggest here that this generalisation of the ideal subject will not yield any analytical insights and therefore that the study warrants a contextualised understanding of 'subject' in early years provision.

Secondly, some authors argue that Foucault's analytical framework is necessary but not sufficient to capture the historical complexity entangled in a minority world (see Nandy 1983; Venn 2006). For instance, while the genealogy of the prison in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977) elucidates the rehabilitation process of the delinquents, the function of the prison system in the corresponding period in India reveals a completely different picture. During the colonial period, the prison system in India mainly served as an instrument for control and labour, rather than as a rehabilitation apparatus (Arnold, 1994). The native bodies in the prison were subjected to power through different administrative and scientific apparatuses. I would argue here that although the genealogy of the penal system in India provides a different description from the one which Foucault described, his concepts are still relevant to the study of how power operates and produces the subject. In fact, Foucault's claim about truth and knowledge gives post colonial scholars a sophisticated theoretical tool for understanding how dominant power structures construct the identity of the postcolonial subject as 'other' in various discourses (see Gandhi, 1998; Turner and Yangwen, 2009).

Although colonialism has dismantled its old fashioned political ties, the symbiotic relationship between coloniser and colonised still continues on many ways (Venn, 2006). The power relations and domination are established and instituted in a more complex form now – alliances, networks, academic collaborations, and global institutions have been created (Nambissan and Ball, 2010; Venn, 2000). As a result, the discourses and decision making in postcolonial countries are still influenced, directly or indirectly, by minority world discourses and academic theories. The influence of the World Bank, UNICEF and other agencies that advocate and circulate concepts and policies related to schooling, early childhood education, care, child rearing and parenting in India is a case in point (Penn, 2002; Nambissan and Ball, 2010).

So, how can Foucault's concept of 'subject' be applied to this study? As Prout (2005) wrote, we live our life in complex and inter-dependent relationships where the power hierarchy works differently in different contexts. In pedagogy, children are differently situated by teachers/care workers (Lofdahl and Hagglund, 2007). On the one hand, there is a possibility that children's bodies, time and space will be subjected through discipline and control in early years institutions (Simpson, 2000). On the other hand, studies on childhood studies argue that children do have agency and that they can deploy their power to challenge authority. If we look at Foucault's analysis of the subject, we find that in his later works (1990, 1992) he demonstrated the agential powers of an individual, 'the technology of the self', particularly in his works on sexuality.

There is no doubt that Foucault's analysis of the 'technologies of the self' gives some space for human agency, yet his analysis seems to be concerned primarily with how individuals form an ethical relationship with their own selves (Burkitt, 1999:54) and therefore it appears like a kind of 'self-disciplining' (Danaher *et al.*, 2000). The literature in childhood studies, however, argues that individuals are not only capable of reflexive thinking and self-disciplining, but that they can also exhibit their agential powers to reconstruct/reconcile the power structure (Robinson and Kellett, 2004). This suggests that there is always a struggle and negotiation between teachers and

children in the pedagogical process (see Cannella, 2004; Millei, 2005; Popkewitz and Bloch, 2001; Yelland and Kilderry, 2005). Thus, Foucault's ideas are important for my study for understanding how the educable subjects emerge in pedagogical practices.

3.4 Identity

While Foucault's concept of the subject is important for this study in exploring the emerging nature of active subjects in everyday pedagogical practices, Butler's notion of performativity is significant for the observation of identity construction in institutions. Before I proceed to explain performativity, however, I will try to unpack the genealogy of identity in social theories and how it works in contemporary identity discourse. The word identity is derived from the Latin *idem*, meaning 'the same' but Jenkins (1996/2004) asserts that 'identity' has two different meanings. The first is absolute sameness: the condition of being oneself or itself. In Heidegger's (1969:26) term this is a 'being of being', how every human being is: "namely: it itself is the same with itself" through mediation, connection and synthesis of thoughts in the social world. The second meaning is distinctiveness: the uniqueness of individuals from others. Both these meanings have some implications for the way in which identity is theorised. To understand this, first, we have to unravel Descartes' philosophy and its connection to identity theories in the social sciences.

The text on *Meditation* (original in 1641, English version in 1968), in which Descartes made the distinction between 'body and soul', has been instrumental to the mind-body dichotomy in identity formation for many years (see for example, Burkitt, 1999; Craib, 1998). For Descartes, 'mind' and 'body' are two different entities. The body is divisible, it extends into space and it is subject to physical laws. The mind is indivisible, does not extend into space and is beyond the purview of physical laws. In essence, Descartes viewed the mind as a thinking substance whereas the body is part of the external world and as such the knowledge which it accumulates are through senses, which are unreliable. Thus, the thinking substance 'mind' is more valuable and superior to the human body. The mind is reflective and connected to the external

world through thought and knowledge. In contrast the body is just a material, a human flesh and thus as Crossley puts it, “the real Descartes is the thinking substance: mind” (2001:10).

Following Descartes, theories of identity have been dominated by mental constructions and consciousness, particularly in the subject disciplines of philosophy and psychology (Madell, 1981). As a result, identity in rationalist, existentialist and idealist traditions was equated straightaway with cognitive constructions or sameness of personhood (Madell, 1981; Morris, 1991). On the other extreme, the social constructionist approach to identity began to view individuals in two categories: (1) a person as a social actor who constantly negotiates his/her own identity through every day interactions in the social environment and (2) the individual identity emerges in the process of discourse in which the individual is situated (Craib 1998). While the second category gives too much emphasis to language, the first category approaches identity at a superficial level without giving much attention to the body (see Burkitt, 1999; Craib, 1998). So, there have been calls in recent times to consider identity as embodied phenomena. Literature suggests that the body is not just simply an object; it is a ‘thinking body’, so, “a thinking body cannot be separated from the emotional body, which in turn cannot be separated from the communicative or productive body” (Burkitt, 1999:129; Ilyenkov, 1977).

Some literature further suggest that our physical and mental states are connected in a complex system and that they interact with each other (Claxton, 2012), or, at least, that they function in parallel but not in a hierarchical order (Popper, 1994). Moreover, mind and body are not two separate things but part of the same thing. Mind and body influence each other, they consist of different units, they coordinate and they both function within a complex system (Ryle, 1949). Along this line, Merleau-Ponty (1964) argues that perception or mental life is an embodied activity, that our bodies interact with the environment and the meanings they generate are very much shaped by the given contexts. He further argues that our bodies function “in a sort of circuit with the social world” and that we come into existence in the world through appropriation of social structures and, at the same time, our bodily

functions give life to those structures and schemas (Merleau-Ponty, 1964:123). Similar to Merleau-Ponty, Mead (1934) notes that the identity of a person mainly develops through socialisation and within a system of interpersonal relationships.

This suggests that identity can in fact only be understood as process, as ‘being’ or ‘becoming’, because our identities are our ‘emergent selves’ and they emerge in the process of ‘becoming’ or ‘belonging’ (Jenkins, 2004). To understand identity, we have to understand the relationship between social space and individuals, and how ‘identity’ or ‘belonging’ are defined and redefined in a given social environment (Ardener, 1987; James, 1993). Bell notes that the term ‘belonging’ is such a fluid one and in an ontological sense it “is an achievement at several levels of abstraction” (Bell, 1999:8). In a post modernist sense, the notion that a person ‘belongs’ to a particular category such as sex, gender, class, caste or ethnicity can still be deconstructed or problematised. While the modernist literature take identity as it is, the postmodernist literature seeks to go deeper and explore how an empty concept like ‘identity’ acquires such powerful meanings and effects in the social process (Fraser, 1999; Rustin, 2000). It is argued mainly in social anthropology that the concept of ‘identity’ emerges only by differentiating ‘otherness’ in context and in effect the difference is sustained and produced in complex ways on different levels, both within and beyond ‘the subject’ (Bell, 1999; Hetherington, 1998; James, 1993; Venn, 2000). It is further argued that individuals in a given spatial – temporal context produce the effects and affects of identity, and thereby try to assimilate at least some aspects of dominant culture in order to minimise the differences (Bell, 1999; Seidler, 2010).

Although identity is derived from a sense of self or through the actualisation process, the concept of self appears more liquid than fixed (Wetherell, 2010). While the modernist concept of identity is single and unitary, the concept of identity in a postmodernist view is multiple, fluid, flexible and derived from the complex meaning-making process (Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001). Further, the postmodernist notion of identity challenges the view that identity is a unitary concept and questions the essentialist idea that an individual can have “singular, integral,

altogether harmonious and unproblematic identities” (Calhoun, 1994:13). The concept itself is not a unitary aspect of selfhood, rather, we can deem it “as a negotiated, unstable assemblage of ideas and perceptions” (Hockey and James, 2003:4). Jenkins (2004) however suggests that we might have a number of embodied ‘selves’ and that they are like an assembly of different pieces / plurality of entities, but that we live our lives as a more or less unitary self and not in small bits. We do not experience ourselves as a different person when we play different roles attached to different positions. Craib (1998) disagree with Jenks and asks why it cannot be possible to have both a ‘unitary self’ and an ‘assembly of different bits’ together. He asserts that we can experience ourselves as a different person in different situations.

Every individual possesses multiple identities and, to a certain extent, individuals can play around with their identities according to inclination, purpose and motives in the social context (Konstantoni, 2010). Since human beings are creative and reflexive we adapt to the changes in the environment and effectively negotiate the social situations. There may be an overlap sometimes between these multiple identities, as the boundaries of each identity may not be clearly visible and defined, but it works on individuals both in covert and overt ways. Our identities, either individual or social, emerge through objectivising certain norms or regularity in our society and, in turn, the identity of individuals appears through our interactions, conversations and embodied actions (Layder, 2004). Individuals as socially animated human beings interact, contradict, negotiate and support fellow human beings and, in turn, produce and reproduce the system or norm/regularity that they engage (Berger and Lukmann, 1967).

So, how is the norm/regularity produced or reproduced in a society? Judith Butler’s concept of performativity offers a powerful explanation of how this circular motion of being-identity-being occurs in society and how performativity constructs identity in concurrence with the established norm/regularity. In feminist discourse, Butler (1990a, 1990b, 1993) uses the concept of performativity to analyse how the concept of gender is constructed through speech and actions. For Butler, gender is performative and defined through a bounded system of performances which draws its

references from the ideal construct 'sex'. In Butler's view the term "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate "act", but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourses produces the effects that it names" (Butler 1993:2).

The central argument of Butler's thesis is that the term gender accrues its meaning through the process of subjection or subjectivation to the ideal norms and regulative control which is established in a society by linguistic and cultural constructions. In simple terms, women are expected to perform in certain ways in society; if they fail, it can have serious consequences – isolation, violence, abuse and punishment (Burnard and White, 2008). The power exercised on the materiality, that is, women's bodies, constraints and shapes their identities. Several analyses of gender performativity note that shame is a focal point for understanding how gender works (Chinn, 2010). From this perspective, identity can be seen as the result of performativity and not the other way around (Butler, 1990b, 1993). Butler (1990a) however is cautious in her analysis and notes that the term 'women' cannot be treated as single category because it intersects with many other social identities such as class, age, education and occupation. Moreover, the agency of the subject has to be interpreted based on the ways in which the subject shows variations in the repetition of performances.

There are claims and counterclaims about how the concept of 'performativity' is operationalised in Butler's analysis. Nelson (1999) suggests that the notion of 'performativity' seems ontologically too narrow. He further argues that performativity produces an abstracted subject, which means that the individual subject in performativity emerges through the process of subjectivation and thus provides no space for reflexivity, negotiation or agency in the construction of identity. In consequence, it limits the ability of a situated subject – a thinking or speaking subject - who is located in space and time. Further, he asserts, discursive practices may produce performativity yet it should not be completely reduced to discourses alone. In contrast, Barad (2003) argues that the misconception that performativity gives too much power to language and treats language as the matter of

reality is not true and convincing. Actually, she says, the concept of performativity contests the “unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve” (Barad, 2003:802). Similarly, Davies (2006) suggests that performativity gives space for agency (though it is fundamentally constrained) in which individual subjects can assess their conditions of possibility and in which they can both sabotage and obscure the powers that act on them. Further, it gives adequate conceptual space that takes into account both subjection and resistance (Davies, 2006).

Butler’s concept of performativity is important in my study for understanding how the notion of identity is formed within a particular institutional context through/with a pedagogy or curriculum. Butler’s concept of performativity is unique in some way from other identity theories. Because her concept of performativity treats identity as an embodied activity, both subjection and emancipation in the process happen as an embodied activity (with body/mind) in a reiterative manner. As Davies and others (2001:170) put it, “bodies are subjected within available discourses and thus become the selves we take them to be” and thus our emerging selves in the context are embodied.

Following this, the idea of performativity in my study is used to understand the nuances of working or doing a pedagogy/curriculum. In other words, as Sellers (2010:564) note, pedagogical performativity “involves matters of interrelationships of curriculum and demonstrated understandings, such matters working not with conditions or states but with/in liminal spaces or thresholds between”. It demands both subjection and mastery from children (Davies, 2006). Thus, the role of early childhood institutions and their pedagogical practices are pivotal for identity formation (Farquhar, 2012). Institutions allow space for socialisation and they shape personality through the use of specific pedagogies and technologies of discipline that control or regulate children. Pedagogies and regulative mechanisms develop a particular kind of identity and subjectivity through the social spaces of conformity, regulation and surveillance (Farquhar, 2012).

In an ideal sense, as Butler (1990a, 1993) suggests, the normative notion of a pedagogy acts as a regulative control based on which the performativity of individuals, the learning environment and classroom organisation are judged in the educational set up. From this point of view, teachers and children are expected to 'perform' in certain ways repeatedly in the educational process and quite often they are judged by others using pedagogical/curriculum performativity as a yardstick (Grieshaber and Cannella, 2001). Although the meaning that we attribute to pedagogy and 'performativity' are socially constructed, the normative framework of pedagogy may have an effect on the performativity of individuals and the way that the relationships are shaped and identities are formed (Burnard and White 2008). Moreover, as Bloch and others (2006) argue, children in the learning environment are scrutinised according to the normative standards as in most cases pedagogy treats everyone equally ontologically. As my study covers three different pedagogical contexts, it is also significant to look at the factors that have decisive effects in the way children conceive others and are conceived by others in the pedagogical/curriculum performativity (Corsaro, 1997; James, 1993).

It is interesting to note that the idea of 'self-identity' is a relatively recent concept rooted in minority world individualism within which individuals reflexively construct their own personal narrative (Giddens, 1991). Therefore, it is important for this study to look at how the concept of ideal self and identity works in India. Morris (1994) argues that the conception of the self in Hindu philosophy is more religious or metaphysical. While the self in the minority world is linked towards autonomy, inner-self, reasoning, materialism and personality, the self in Hindu philosophy is necessarily a spiritual quest to salvation (De Vos *et al.*, 1985). The purpose here is to overcome the materialistic delusion and worldly temptation and to identify one's inner, true self – a deep interiority (Sheshagiri, 2011). In fact, the self in Hindu philosophy has been considered as the central focus in the pursuit of enlightenment and for human perfection (Bharati, 1985). In a way, there is a similarity between Cartesian dualism and the Hindu philosophy of the self in that they both value the mind as superior device/pure and body as lifeless corpse/impure.

Though the ideal Hindu *self* appears metaphysical or religious in its description, as the postmodern theories suggest human beings in reality construct and reconstruct their self-identity through their experiential knowledge. We do not just live our lives in seclusion, rather, as Merleau-Ponty (1964) suggests, our lives are very much entrenched in social circumstances. The embodied identities, as Mead (1934) explains, are constructed through socialisation or social encounters in which individuals define and redefine their position and status. The literature on caste, class and gender in India shows how these social identities are culturally transmitted from one generation to another through socialisation and the institutionalisation of certain cultural and ritual practices (Alter, 1992; Chakravarti, 2004; Gupta, 1992; Srinivas, 2005). To a great extent, social identities in India have been analysed as a structural category in social theories; thus, the idea of self-identity remained unexplored territory until recently. In a recent development, the literature in India, in particular, queer theory and feminist literature, has used individuals as their central focus of analysis to narrate the complexity and the effects of identities in individuals (see for example, Roy, 2012). Against this backdrop, this study intends to explore how pedagogical performativity constructs identities in early years provision.

3.5 Cultural Capital

Foucault's and Butler's theories are helpful for understanding the subject and identity formation at individual and interactional levels, but it is Bourdieu who provides us with a sophisticated tool to analyse the socio-cultural aspects of an individual in early years provision. As McNay (1999) suggests, Bourdieu merged socio-cultural aspects into the body and his cultural capital concept is significant for this study in understanding how the home-nursery relationship works in early years provision and its effects on children's everyday experiences in the classroom environment.

Bourdieu is one of the key influential figures in the sociology of education and his writings have made significant contributions to the way in which education has been conceptualised in social theories (Lingard *et al.*, 2005). Bourdieu's work on 'cultural capital' produced along with Passeron, originally published in French in 1970 and

later published in English as '*Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*' in 1977, created immense interest among education scholars. Bourdieu and Passeron analysed the effects of culture on the class system and more specifically the role of cultural capital on education in French society. They held a belief that the educational system favours elite and middle class students and then reproduces and strengthens the existing social stratification system in society (Gane, 2003; Reed-Danahay, 2005).

Bourdieu (1986) describes cultural capital as having three major forms: *embodied*, *objectified* and *institutionalised*. For Bourdieu, cultural capital is basically accrued and deposited in human bodies and it is displayed through embodied actions. This embodied capital presupposes embodiment and, like human capital, it dies with the person who holds it. Bourdieu demystified Cartesian philosophy in a novel way and boldly asserted that mind and body act together in action (Jenkins, 2002). Bourdieu also challenged the dominant notion that mind as a superior device, a creator of command and body as an inferior device, an executor of command (Taylor, 1993). Objectified capital can be found in material objects or in cultural goods such as writings, paintings, arts, monuments and instruments and it can be internalised and transmitted through embodied capital. Institutionalised capital is a form of capital that is made available through forms such as educational qualification, titles, honours and recognition (Bourdieu, 1986). In sum, cultural capital encompasses a range of attributes including linguistic competences, life styles, preferences, manners, choices, educational qualifications, status and attitudes.

Unlike economic capital, which is immediately exchangeable into money, cultural capital does not have a direct face value (Bourdieu, 1986). But the capital accumulated internally over a period of time as embodied assets can be converted later into other forms of capital. Bourdieu (1973, 1986) mainly considers education as a form of cultural capital that can be converted into profit or success at a later stage in life especially in the institutionalised form of educational qualifications. More importantly, cultural capital is a relational concept which cannot be understood separately from other forms of capital in understanding the advantage or

disadvantage of a particular individual or social group in the society (Reay *et al.*, 2005). Through this concept Bourdieu challenged the social system once regarded in the society as ‘taken for granted’. Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural capital offers us convincing, if not fully convincing, insights on how the unequal distribution of economic resources creates symbolic capital and power and how the dominant groups reproduce and maximise their resources and capital systematically through education.

From some quarters, Bourdieu is critiqued for the latent determinism in his theory that gives relatively little room for the autonomy of agents. Nash (1990), for example, comments that the focus of his theory primarily rests on a structure that explains class differences, rather than agents’ actions. Similarly, Alexander (1995:135) notes that “when the outer layer of his theorising is peeled away, one finds that a renewed interest in the creativity or voluntariness of action is not at all what he actually has in mind”. He goes on to argue that since Bourdieu is determined to show in his conceptualisation that cultural practices are structured and dictated by material forces, in the process he submerges culture into material (Alexander, 1995).

Another type of perspective suggests that there are problems at an operational level with Bourdieu’s definition of culture; since he failed to define clearly the characteristics of high culture (see Dumais, 2006). This has implications at two levels. Firstly, as Calhoun (1993) and Gartman (2002) write, defining the cultural markers for high culture especially in a pluralistic, multicultural, democratic society is always problematic. Secondly, Bourdieu’s definition brings a new set of problems for curriculum design in schools where cultural needs have to be addressed. Nash (1990) notes that all cultural practices are arbitrary and humanly possible and in this sense the content of any culture or the curriculum being practised in the school may be considered as arbitrary and that will weaken the potential and effectiveness of the school. In a rather different account, Sullivan (2001) argues that though Bourdieu is not precise enough in defining the markers of high culture and high culture’s cultural

capital, his work has got real substance and offers room for the researcher to effectively manipulate the core concept for further theoretical advancement.

Bourdieu analyses his philosophical project 'cultural capital' with the support of another concept, '*habitus*' (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990). He uses *habitus* as mediation to transcend the objective-subjective dualism in social theories. In his terms, *habitus* is the combination of bodily and mental dispositions, inherited from the past and working in the present (Bourdieu, 1990). Primarily, in the past, it was acquired through childhood socialisation - from home, school, or in any other social environment, or from any objectified materials. It tends to internalise all external rules, structures, codes and conditions and has the ability to reproduce the structure or social environment. So, in that sense, *habitus* is a 'structured structure' and also 'structuring structure' (Bourdieu, 1990, Postone *et al.*, 1993). There is no need to expect that this appropriation should take place only with a conscious mind; it can also happen unconsciously and a person can learn and acquire things from his surroundings as a passive learner without realising it.

Bourdieu (1990:54) notes that *habitus* inculcates the "possibilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions" which are embedded in the objective conditions and *habitus* generates dispositions that are compatible with the objective realities. The future of *habitus* depends on structures constituted in the environment and the power relationships involved within those structures. Bourdieu (1998) writes that *habitus* can also be categorised in a classificatory system such as age, gender, class etc. and it has the ability to change, improve or adapt to the social circumstances. So, as Reay and others (2005) note, Bourdieu operationalised this concept at two levels: individual *habitus* and shared *habitus*. At the individual level, he explained this concept as mediation between structure and individual. At the collective level, he used the concept as an explanatory variable to demonstrate how social reproduction occurs in society particularly through educational institutions. In his own analysis, however, Bourdieu viewed individuals as a holder of 'shared *habitus*' rather than 'individual *habitus*' (Reed-Danahay, 2005). In Bourdieu's (1990:53) view, the conditions associated with

the class system produce a particular kind of shared *habitus*, “systems of durable, transposable dispositions”. Individuals try to harmonise their own experiences with the experiences of other individuals or groups and then try to improvise them so as to look identical to the group (Bourdieu, 1977).

There are criticisms about how Bourdieu defined his concept of ‘*habitus*’ (see for example, Butler, 1999; DiMaggio, 1979; Nash, 1990; Postone *et al.*, 1993). Sayer (2004), for instance, says that Bourdieu overemphasises the importance of the unconscious mind and thereby underplays the everyday reflexes of the agent. Referring to Bourdieu’s (1977:18) position that “agents are possessed by their *habitus* more than they possess it”, Alexander (1995) criticises that this is the weakest position ever theorised of the agents in social theories. Similarly, Clegg (2011) suggests that in Bourdieu’s cultural capital approach there is no scope for recognising the resilience or creative skills of individuals who overcome their relatively weak position in the field. He further cautions that in educational research there is a danger that this cultural capital approach may end up labelling students: that means, that those who do not possess certain capital can be considered as lacking something even before they enter into the educational system. As a result, even though Bourdieu wanted to distance himself from structuralism and tried to find ways to mediate the objective - subjective dichotomy in social theory, ironically, he ended up being called by his critics as more of a structuralist (see Fowler, 1977). This is simply because Bourdieu has taken the very basic problem of sociology in his thesis to explain how the system of dominance and power prevails and is reproduced in the society without the conscious awareness of social agents. Fowler (1977:22) notes that he combines “a theory of class interest and misrecognition of such interest with a theory of stable structures and social relations which comes from Durkheimian inheritance” and thus, Bourdieu was labelled by his critics as a structuralist.

The pessimistic reading of Bourdieu’s work was repudiated by his followers. Lamont and Lareau (1988), for instance, argue that though the theory may look in hindsight as structural, if one probes further we can understand that the concept still offer room for reflective process of social actor. In a similar vein, Jenkins (2002) argues that

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of 'structured structures' and 'structuring structures' offer enough scope for *habitus* to act as active individual and not as a passive recipient. Therefore the transformative potentials of the *habitus* are recognised in theory and it is up to researchers to manipulate this concept effectively according to their research objectives and social conditions. Many authors echo this view and suggest that '*habitus*' should be employed in empirical study reflexively rather than applied as a rigid concept (Mills, 2008; Robbins, 2005; Sullivan, 2001).

Another critique of Bourdieu's theory concerns human action and specifically the function of '*habitus*'. Jenkins (2002) asserts that Bourdieu has failed to explain, in his original theoretical analysis, what are 'dispositions' in *habitus*. In his original work Bourdieu explained *habitus* as nothing but a combination of mental and bodily dispositions, which interact with the structure and other social systems and in effect appropriate those structures and reproduce them. The concept was however understood by some analysts as something equivalent to human habits, attitudes and values that are acquired through socialisation and for others it appears an elusive concept (Sullivan, 2002). To clarify this, in an *Outline of a Theory of Practice* Bourdieu (1977:214) explained that the word disposition has some distinct meanings: (a) the result of an action that means appropriation of structure by *habitus* (b) a way of being or a habitual state (of the body) and (c) a 'predisposition', 'tendency', 'propensity' or 'inclination'. However, Jenkins (2002) views the description of 'disposition' as the result of an action as simply tautological and as leaving unexplained the meaning, purpose or strategy involved with human action.

The question that is then raised here follows on from the previous one, that is, what prompts human action? Bourdieu (1977) disapproves of the notion that human actions are motivated by or due to economic rationality or mechanistic principles explained in the Cartesian philosophy. Rather, he explains human action using the idea of 'practical sense' or 'practical logic' (Bourdieu, 1990, 1998). Since he was very much against rational choice theory, in his early works he used practical sense or practical logic as his explanation for human action and he placed this argument within his own metaphor of a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu, 1990:66). He compares

a person's *habitus* with a player playing the game. Like a player playing the game, a person's *habitus* is aware of the rules, stakes, chances, outcomes and investment; thus, he/she plays the game with a practical sense.

In his later work, however, Bourdieu (1998) refines his argument and explains human action by using the notion of *libido*. He says that the biological *libido* of a person in a society has been through socialisation transformed into social *libido*, with a specific social interest that is constituted in the structures where the *habitus* performs (Bourdieu, 1998). Crossley (2001) however disagrees with Bourdieu's claim that biological impulses are undifferentiated. He asserts that this claim is disputable and beyond our capacity to investigate. On reflection, I would suggest here that Bourdieu's account of 'practical logic' or practical sense' seems more tangible than his explanation of social *libido* and that it offers some room to explore the motivating factors for human action in my study.

Concerns can be raised about how useful Bourdieu's concepts are in the context of India. In India, caste is predominantly used as an analytical tool for studying the social stratification system in the past. Nevertheless, the social structures of society in India, especially in the big cities, have altered in recent times as an effect of neo-liberal economic policies. With the advent of a strong and developing middle class in Indian cities, the social organisation and boundaries of the caste and class systems have undergone tremendous changes in urban India (Fernandes, 2006; Nambissan and Ball, 2010). As postmodern literature argues, there is fluidity in the social structure and organisation and the class system in India has gained a significant amount of attention from scholars in their analysis of many social issues (Jeffery *et al.*, 2005; Qayum and Ray, 2003). Nevertheless, the term class is very fluid and there is no consensus on how to define class - whether by occupation, economic capital, social capital, cultural practices and so on (Fernandes, 2006). However, for the purpose of my study, I roughly define the term 'class' based on economic position (income) as it is crucial for deciding one's position in the Indian society.

Arguably, the interests of the class system in the education sector in India are reconciled and restructured, in juxtaposition with the recent social and economic changes. The educational systems are much more democratised than they were a few decades ago. For example, access to education has significantly improved for all social groups, yet the class relation and class interest work in different ways in the neo-liberal market in India, particularly in big cities (Chopra, 2003). As Bourdieu's (2003) work *sketches* out, the neo-liberal economy has deregulated the market and as a result education has slowly been relegated from its position of public good to commercial commodity. The role of the state as a chief provider of welfare services has been changed to 'regulator' and 'facilitator' of the market and all these changes are justified under the new ideologies - 'consumer choice', 'quality' and 'efficiency' (Curtice and Heath, 2009; Nambissan and Ball, 2010). Therefore, Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and cultural capital are useful for explaining choice-making and cultural reproduction not only inside the classroom but also in society at large.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed in detail all the three key concepts: subject, identity and cultural capital, which are going to be used for the analysis of this study. Throughout the discussion I underscored the intersection of these concepts with pedagogy and how they could be applied in this study. I argued that Foucault's concept of subject is useful for understanding how power and knowledge form a formidable alliance, which is pedagogy and thereby produce emerging and active subjects. I have drawn attention to the differences which Foucault explained about self-formation of the subject and the process of subjectivation. In Foucault's view self-formation of the subject is to some extent linked with self-ethical practices, while subjectivation is linked with power and control. However, Foucault asserts that both the modes of subject involve power, in either covert or overt ways. Taking my cue from Foucault's argument that power acts on free subjects and that there is always a negotiation and resistance in the process of subjectivation, I will explore in my empirical data how this works in early years provision.

I also illustrated how the notion of identity is theorised in modernist and postmodernist literature, mainly with the use of Cartesian dualism. I explained that identity is now considered as a process of emerging and embodied activity. I argued that Butler's theory of performativity will be useful for understanding how children construct their own and others' identities in the classroom through pedagogical performativity. As Davies (2006) argues, curriculum or pedagogy demands subjection and mastery and the emerging embodied selves of children are determined by their performativity over time. Finally, I also demonstrated the need for studying Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital in order to understand the home-school relationship in the learning environment. I argued that Bourdieu's concepts are useful in the Indian context for seeing how cultural capital influences children's learning experiences, parent's choice-making and the overall educational aspirations. Bourdieu used the concept of *habitus* to analyse the influence of cultural capital in social reproduction. The motivation or action of *habitus* is explained earlier in Bourdieu's theoretical analysis with the notion of 'practical logic' or 'practical sense' and, later, with an idea of 'social libido'. After careful consideration, I argued that Bourdieu's explanation of 'practical logic' or 'practical sense' seems more viable than 'social libido' for exploring the actions of individuals in my study.

Overall, there can be some conceptual discomfort especially from the standpoint of childhood studies. With hindsight, all these three key concepts and their positions may appear to be undermining children's agential powers in theorisation. While Foucault's and Butler's concepts lay emphasis on subjection and power, Bourdieu's concept places significance on cultural materialism. Nonetheless, as I demonstrated throughout this chapter, they all give adequate attention and concern to the actions of social actors. Moreover, Foucault's idea of subject, Butler's notion of performativity and Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, each treat the human body as a potential significant instrument in their theorisations. Therefore, as I argued in the previous chapter, these concepts will also help us to understand the complex and hybrid nature of childhood that emerges in pedagogical practices and also to overcome the dualistic barriers in childhood studies.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology adopted for this study. It focuses on the rationale for why an ethnographic approach was preferred over other approaches, what methods were used for data collection and how the empirical data were collected from the field. Further, it describes the strategy that was employed for data analysis and illustrates how the ethical issues encountered in this research were dealt with. Reflexivity in ethnographic research is an iterative process. Therefore, the reflexive narratives are interspersed throughout the chapter rather than placed in a separate section.

The purpose of the chapter is two-fold. Firstly, like any methodology chapter, it explains to the reader as clearly as possible the process of conducting this research from inception to report writing. Secondly, it reflects upon the conditions under which this particular piece of scholarly work was undertaken and self-critiques some of its claims about truth and knowledge. As Foucault suggests, any claim about 'truth' does not carry 'universal values' and must be examined under three specificities: that of a person's or intellectual's class position; that of a truth bearer's conditions of life and work; and lastly, the specificity of the politics of truth that is created through political, economic, ideological and scientific discourses in our societies (reported in Rabinow, 1991:73). This indicates that it is impossible to maintain value neutrality in social research and therefore the 'positionality' of the researcher (i.e. the influence of subjective predispositions and ideological positions) needs to be analysed in relation to the research process (Davis, 1998).

Also, I have to accept that while I was carrying out the research I was bound by certain rules, procedures and ethics and these procedures and ethical practices through the mode of subjection and self-formation transformed me as a researcher into who I am now. When explaining the interconnection between ethics and subject

formation, Foucault (1992:27) notes that one performs ethical work on oneself, “not only in order to bring one’s conduct into compliance with a given rule, but to attempt to transform oneself into the ethical subject of one’s behaviour”. When I started this research I was unaware of many of the ethical issues involved in doing research with young children. The long research process, as Foucault (1992) mentioned, subjected me to a rigorous ethical scrutiny and made me put concerted effort into transforming myself into an ethically responsible researcher.

In the context of the above, it has to be understood that the piece of research work that has been produced here is embedded in certain theoretical, methodological and ethical positions. Thus, it cannot be considered as universal truth or knowledge but should be treated as one possibility amongst multiple truths.

4.2 Researching children

Researching children is not even a topic in much of the social science methodological literature (Lange and Mierendorff, 2009) but in childhood literature the methodological issues in researching children are extensively discussed. The issues are, in general, based on three questions: (1) Do children need similar methods as adults or do they need flexible, creative methods? (2) How do we ensure the correct balance between use of flexible, creative childhood research methods and the demands of meeting rigorous social science methodological standards? (3) What are the ethical issues that may arise while researching with children and how can they be addressed in compliance with established ethical standards? (see for example, Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Brannen and O’Brien, 1996; Christensen and James 2000; Christensen and Prout, 2002; Gallagher *et al.*, 2010; Punch, 2002; Tisdall *et al.*, 2009).

The foundation for these methodological debates has emerged mainly from the epistemological and ontological shift that took place in childhood studies in the last quarter of the last century. The emergence of the recognition of children as ‘subjects’ rather than ‘objects’ of a research study and of a practice of doing ‘research’ or

‘consultation’ with children rather than ‘research on children’ emphasised that children are active agents of their lives and that their views/opinions should be heard in a respectful way during research (see for example, Christensen and Prout, 2002; Davis *et al.*, 2000; James *et al.*, 1998; Punch, 2002; Qvortrup, 1994). Accepting this as a guiding principle, researchers in childhood studies have explored young children’s life experiences by involving them as co-constructors of knowledge (see for example, Clark and Moss, 2001; Konstantoni, 2010; Lofdahl and Hagglund, 2007; MacNaughton *et al.*, 2007; Mandell, 1991; Mayall, 2000). Drawing on this tradition, this study also values children as competent individuals and therefore adopts the position that children should be engaged with respect and dignity in the research process.

4.3 Qualitative research

As described earlier in chapter one, the overall aim of this study was to understand the processes and practices in pedagogical contexts and in so doing look at the pedagogical experiences of children in early years provisions. To achieve this, the study has framed the following research aims:

1. To understand how active educable subjects are evolved in the process of everyday pedagogical practices
2. To explore how children construct their and others’ identities through pedagogical performativity
3. To understand the ways in which children use their ‘*habitus*’ and ‘cultural capital’ in learning environments
4. To examine the role of parental ‘*habitus*’ and ‘cultural capital’ in early years provision with reference to decision making

These aims implied that this project was not primarily interested in the quantification of social phenomena. It was explorative and qualitative in nature, being particularly interested in capturing respondents’ everyday interactions and understanding how they construct meaning out of their life experiences. Qualitative research is not a new

phenomenon but it acquired distinct status in the twentieth century against the backdrop of a dominant positivist mindset (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In the mid twentieth century theorists such as Schutz advanced the proposition that the subjective opinions, perceptions and views of respondents in social science research cannot be studied in the same way as natural sciences by using the positivist framework and that there needs to be an alternative approach (Schutz 1952 in Seale, 2004). Subsequently, a new breed of scholars started to argue that the basic belief system of positivism is embedded in realistic enquiry, thus inviting a quantitative approach for investigation. Positivism, which has its root in realist ontology, supports the belief that the social world exists independently from the researcher and that the researcher has to seek universal 'truth' from the social world (Guba, 1990). On the other hand, the theoretical assumptions of post-positivism fall into the epistemological position of naturalistic enquiry such as interpretivism, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics (Blaikie, 1993; Bryman, 1988; Creswell, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Guba (1990) divides post-positivism into two major ontological strands: *critical realism* and *constructionism* (or idealism). *Critical realism* ontologically challenges the *realist* position that the researcher can discover ultimate 'truth'. According to this belief, the researcher can only apprehend partial truth, yet there can be a reality out there. *Constructionism*, on the other hand, completely disagrees with *realism* and holds an assumption that 'reality' exists only in our mental construction. Therefore, there can be many 'realities' or many 'truths' in the social world and, from this theoretical standpoint, the production of knowledge can be considered as an outcome of human construction. Later, scholars in social sciences developed this ontological stand into *social constructionism* (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967), arguing that people construct reality through interactions and language and that there can be many social constructions in the social world.

The quantitative approach, which is rooted in the so-called positivist framework, supports the belief that 'reality is out there' and the researcher has to go and study the reality through standardised scientific scales and measurements. In contrast the

qualitative approach tries to understand the socially constructed nature of reality and “seeks answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998:8). This suggests that qualitative research takes place in a natural setting and is firmly situated in the lived experiences of people, in which the researcher is recognized as an instrument of data collection (Creswell, 1998). In essence, qualitative research accepts that people construct meaning out of their life experiences and everyday realities and that the descriptions of people’s “behaviour, social relationships, social processes, social situations” can be studied in a systematic manner (Blaikie, 2000:232). After weighing up all these methodological possibilities, I decided to take up qualitative research which has a critical realist ontological stand – opposing the argument of objective truth and believes in incremental truth or partial truth – for this research.

4.4 Ethnographic approach

The term ‘qualitative research’ is very broad and covers a range of research approaches which “differ in their theoretical assumptions, their understanding of their object of investigation and their methodological focus” (Flick *et al.*, 2004:5) and to a certain extent also overlap with each other (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). While reviewing the research literature I found evidence for this argument in the different approaches being discussed by different authors as types of qualitative enquiry (see Creswell, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; De Vaus, 2001; Gilham, 2000; Gomm *et al.*, 2000; Hamel *et al.*, 1993; Seale *et al.*, 2004; Yin, 2003).

As my study was aimed at the pedagogical experiences of children, I deemed that an ethnographic approach that was explorative by its design and flexible in nature could be the most appropriate option for my research when compared with other qualitative approaches. Ethnography is mainly concerned with processes and practices which naturally occur in a particular social setting (Coffey, 1999; Davies, 1999). The context in ethnography is useful and it can be used as a background for analysis but the methodological focus of ethnography lies in the processes and practices that take place within that context. Given my research aims, I decided that the pedagogical

processes and practices in the institution would provide an apt backdrop for analysing the data. Therefore this chapter mainly discusses ethnographic literature.

Ethnography has a long history (Fielding, 1993). In academic research, however, ethnography was initially used by anthropologists to study ‘others’ in the colonial context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). It gained currency later on in other academic disciplines such as sociology, education, social work, social policy and childhood studies. While ethnography is now being used in many scholarly disciplines, their aim and focus can be different. For example, in childhood studies, ethnographic approaches have been predominantly used as a means to engage children actively in research processes studying their life experiences (see for example, Christensen and James, 2000; Mayall, 2002). In education, researchers use ethnography for hypothesis testing or to provide thick description on teacher-pupil interactions, class room organisation, deviance and associated problems in the class room environment (see for example, Hammersley, 1990; Pole and Morrison, 2003; Stubbs and Delamont, 1976).

Nevertheless, the term ethnography still remains vague and its boundaries are blurred with other qualitative approaches (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Hammersley (2006:3) notes that the term ‘ethnography’ is now being interpreted differently by different people simply for the reason that it does not have “a clear and systematic taxonomy”. In the methodological literature, at times, the term ‘ethnography’ has been synonymously equated with qualitative research and, at other times, it was linked with anthropological field studies or life histories (see Hammersley, 2006; Walford, 2009). Above all, the boundary of ethnography was stretched over time from traditional field-based ethnography to contemporary visual ethnography, which relies chiefly on secondary sources for data collection (Hammersley, 2006; Walford, 2009). Thus, trying to find an agreeable definition for ethnography in the literature is unlikely and contestable (Bryman, 2001; Fielding, 1993). Yet, to claim the nomenclature ‘ethnography’ in a study, Walford (2009) insists, the study should have at least some degree of participant observation in the field for an extended period of time.

Despite definitional and boundary issues, ethnographic approaches are very much in use in social sciences for their capacity to generate rich data from the field. Ethnographic study like this has many merits in its research design: its flexibility in approach offers scope for the researcher to accommodate any salient features that arise during the research process and the researcher's prolonged immersion in the field can generate rich primary data for analysis (Bryman, 2001; Fielding, 1993). Although ethnography uses observation as its main tool for data collection it also has available a range of other tools such as the semi-structured interview, the in-depth interview and documentary analysis. The other salient feature of ethnography is its capacity to allow reflection upon the processes that shape and contribute knowledge for the research (Coffey, 1999; Davis *et al.*, 2000). Reflexive practice involves researchers analysing the influence which they have had upon the research process and vice versa. It also examines how the researcher's influence impacts not only in the research setting, but also ultimately on the production of knowledge (Coffey, 1999; Davies, 1999).

Reflexivity is a vague term and is used in the literature in various ways for different reasons. Pillow (2003:331) notes that in the old ethnographic literature reflexivity is used as "a response to critiques of classical, colonial ethnographic methods" and its use is insisted in "situating the researcher as non-exploitative and compassionate toward the research subjects". Later, when the objectivity and validity of ethnographic research was questioned reflexivity took centre stage to analyse the power dynamics between the researchers and the researched in the production of knowledge (Davies, 1999; Pillow, 2003). With a post-positivist turn in social sciences, post-structuralist and postmodernist through reflexive practices tend to question the representation of research subjects, legitimation of researchers' claims and the process of research in ethnographic literatures (Gallagher, 2004; Punch, 2002; Viruru, 2001). This implies a strong connection between reflexivity and ethics in research, especially in childhood research, where the issues of representation, participation and knowledge claims are questioned in the research process.

In this research, my reflexive accounts were duly maintained side-by-side in the field notes and through note keeping in the form of a research diary throughout the research process. Moreover, those reflective narratives are interspersed throughout this chapter to give as clear a picture as possible of what happened in the field and later in ethnographic writing. With that, the chapter now turns its focus on the criteria followed for selection of the field site and institutions and how access to those institutions was negotiated with ‘gate keepers’.

4.5 Selection of institutions and access

The selection of a field site and institutions occurred at different levels in this study. India is divided into 28 States and 7 Union Territories (UT’s) under its federal administrative system and I did not see any particular reason to reject methodologically any of these State’s or UT’s from my study, as all of them share some common elements relating to the study topic. However, my rationale for choosing Tamil Nadu was threefold. Firstly, as mentioned above, the present study topic was partly developed from my previous study experience and so I felt that it was feasible to study this topic in the same locality, that is, Tamil Nadu. Secondly, Tamil Nadu is one of the very few States where the publicly funded and delivered Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) has been successful (Rajivan, 2006); at the same time, commercialisation and privatisation of early years provision have also rapidly increased (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006; Velayutham, 2005). Finally, language would have been a barrier to my conducting research outside Tamil Nadu, since every state in India practises either its vernacular language or Hindi. Tamil is the vernacular language of Tamil Nadu and it is the researcher’s mother tongue.

Even though the institutionalisation of care and preschool services has percolated down to all levels, the types of service provisioning were particularly high in the cities compared to rural areas (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2006; Velayutham, 2005). After considering the rural – urban divide in Tamil Nadu and its latent effects on the outcome of the study, I decided to focus only

on the urban area in Tamil Nadu. Subsequently, Chennai⁶ - the capital city of Tamil Nadu, which has different types of service provisioning within, was chosen as a field of study.

There are different types of care and educational institutions available in Chennai, which vary to a great extent. Therefore, it was important to decide at the outset what type of institutions might provide interesting data on this topic. The selection of institutions was influenced by three different factors: (1) funding (2) organisation and (3) pedagogical practice. Using this as criteria, I decided to select ICDS Anganwadi, corporation nursery and private nursery for this study. While ICDS Anganwadi centres were counted as the main constituent under publicly funded and delivered services, the private nurseries/kindergartens run by individuals were categorised under privately funded and privately delivered services. The corporation nursery was included in this study under Public-Private Partnership (PPP)⁷. After consideration, an ICDS Anganwadi centre which follows a 'holistic child development' model, a corporation nursery which practises a combination of formal and 'Montessori' approaches and a private nursery which focuses on 'formal teaching', were considered potential pedagogical contexts for this study. The description of these institutions and their approaches/practices will be provided in the following chapter.

Armed with these broader selection criteria, I approached the 'gate keepers' of my research settings and, in this case, the department of ICDS and the Education Department in Chennai Corporation, for the selection of institutions and obtaining approval for my access (Fielding, 1993). Having worked before with the ministry in the central government, I knew that getting approval from a government department was time consuming and also a tedious process. However, the timing of my application for approval, especially to ICDS, was problematic. When I made my application, the bureaucracy in the ICDS department was under pressure from the

⁶ Chennai, formerly known as Madras is the capital city of Tamil Nadu. Chennai is the fourth most populous city in India next to Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi. According to 2001 census the city had a population of 6.42 million people.

⁷ The definition of public-private partnership varies to some extent depending on funding and organisation of service delivery. In this particular context, the organisation of service delivery was mainly provided by the trust through partnership and the physical infrastructure and administration were provided by the government.

state government as the data disseminated by another researcher in a public forum had highlighted the pitfalls about ICDS in the state. Thus, the ICDS top bureaucracy was somewhat hesitant about giving approval to researchers. As Lofland and Lofland (1995:41) suggest, this unfortunate incident increased the “bureaucratic barrier” for my access in a manner that was beyond my control.

When I had my first meeting with a junior officer in the ICDS there was some real concern about whether my project would “help or harm” the organization (Fielding 1993:159). In subsequent meetings, with great persuasion I explained my case for approval: I briefly explained the significance of my project, the ethical committee approval from the university and finally my ethical assurance to ICDS. On request, later, I supplied for approval a formal permission letter explaining my project on the university’s letter headed paper and a photocopy of my ethical checklist approval form by the university (see appendix one). After regular follow-up, finally, I got the approval after a month with a ‘set of conditions’ (see appendix two). One of the main conditions was that without prior permission the data or findings should not be published or disseminated in any form. This condition did not have any effect during my fieldwork though it will have significant effect at the publication stage.

With approval granted, I discussed selection with the project officer and selected one ICDS Anganwadi centre, which was one of the model centres in Chennai, for my research. As far as the approval for corporation nursery is concerned, it was relatively smooth. I met the officer concerned in person and briefed him about my project with a formal requisition letter for gaining access. The permission was immediately granted (see appendix three) with a verbal informal ‘condition’ that the study should include only the model (best) nurseries for examination. Subsequently, after discussion with the officials, one of the model nurseries of Chennai Corporation was selected for this study. The term ‘model centres’ or ‘model nurseries’ here has a locally constructed meaning. Based on evaluation the departments classify a set of nurseries/centres which performs better than others as model centres/nurseries. The methodological implications of the selection of model nursery and Anganwadi centre are discussed later in the chapter as one of the limitations in this study.

The selection of the private nursery, however, seemed to be more challenging than the selection of the other two institutions, for many reasons. The variation in size and quality of service provision in the private was vast⁸ and it seemed difficult to me to single out an institution from such a large category. My discussion with a local field expert, who was an academic-cum-practitioner in the field of early childhood, suggested that it would be best to prepare a list of potential institutions that cater, more or less, for children of a similar social background to those in ICDS and Corporation nursery. The socio-economic characteristics of children were taken into account to strike a right balance with other institutions.

Knowing that ICDS and Corporation nurseries mostly attract children from socio-economically disadvantaged families, a list of 5-10 private institutions from the same ICDS field location was prepared and contacted for approval. Unfortunately, my attempts to contact some of the heads of these institutions were strategically denied by the school/nursery management due to the fear that allowing journalists or researchers would unnecessarily risk the institution. When I was about to start my field work, two young school children from Coimbatore, a city in Tamil Nadu, were taken for ransom and murdered by their school van driver. The driver was a new recruit to the school and the school did not have any records about his personal background. This incident created a lot of public anger and as a result the government initiated some reactive measures particularly with the private schools. This unfortunate tragic event had an effect on my approval for access as well.

After some unsuccessful phone calls and visits, finally I visited the school which I had eventually included in this research. Initially the school was not receptive and used delaying tactics for nearly two weeks, giving reasons why I could not meet the school principal. In desperation, one morning when I rang up to the school to check whether the principal was available on that day, his son fortuitously picked up the call and I told him the reason why I had made contact. The meeting finally materialized. I went to the school, sat with the principal's son and explained my

⁸ My discussion with one of the officials in the education department revealed that there were around 300 private nurseries in Chennai.

project. Having completed his PhD in the USA he understood things quickly and with a smile he said

“All these days you approached the wrong person, that’s what I would say.....they didn’t know anything about research and they are extremely afraid of journalists and outsiders, especially in these days (referring to the incident).....if I had met you earlier I would have given you the permission immediately”

Extracted from research diary [with permission to quote]

However, expressing his concern over misuse of data by researchers in the media, he said that he had no worries about giving me approval provided that I gave him assurance in writing that the data would not be used for media publication (see appendix four). Following my action, the approval was granted based on what Lofland and Lofland (1995:43) has called the “assurance of confidentiality”.

Though I secured permission for the research, I was little bit concerned about the socio-economic characteristics of children in the nursery. However, my observation with children and later the data collected from the parents showed that there was no major significant difference in terms of socio-economic characteristics. The analytical descriptions of the institutions and the detailed socio-economic characteristics of study participants are discussed later in chapter five.

In conclusion, with the selection of three different institutions, this study adopted a multi-sited ethnographic approach for empirical investigation (Marcus, 1998). The uniqueness of doing ethnography in multiple sites is that it allows the researcher to understand the local practices in each site and to analyse how those local practices are connected to the larger structures in the society. On the downside, there is a danger that the researcher can carry his predispositions from one site to another without recognising the distinctiveness of each site. Being aware of these merits and demerits, I made conscious efforts to study each site as unique from the others.

4.6 Maintaining access: roles and relationships

Gaining social access to the respondent is as important as gaining physical access to the institutions for data collection (Bryman, 2001; Fielding, 1993). Interested in children's lived experiences, I was keen to establish relationships with children and with their teacher(s)/care worker, in order to understand the insider's perspective of life experiences and the meaning actors devote to their particular actions within these institutions. The following section gives details of how my social access to the study participants was gained and maintained and what roles and relationships I had in the research settings.

4.6.1 Roles

“Fieldwork involves the enactment of social roles and relationships, which places the self at the heart of the enterprise”
(Coffey, 1999: 23)

In addition to Coffey, other social scientists emphasise the significance of the researcher's self in the ethnographic approach (Agar, 1996; Crang and Cook, 2007; Fielding, 1993; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). Because researchers are the central instruments in ethnographic research, a great deal of data collection depends on how they present, negotiate, adopt and adjust their multiple identities so as to create meaningful roles and relationships with the study participants (Coffey, 1999). These roles and relationships are not static but fluid and they are essential for the researcher to gain access to the respondent's social world (Mason, 2002).

Literature suggests that in ethnographic observation, the researcher can fulfil any one of the four roles of “complete participant, participant as observer, observer as participant and complete observer”, based on the research needs and the situation in a field setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:104). Since the study took place in an institutional environment, I felt that it was appropriate to observe things as they happen rather than trying to directly “influence the situation” (Whyte, 2001:171). Moreover, at the time of receiving approval for access I was told by the gatekeepers

not to disturb or interfere with the daily routines of the institutions. Bearing that in mind, I took up the observer-as-participant role in all three institutions. However, the level of my interaction or active participation was rather different in each setting.

For instance, in the corporation nursery where the Montessori activities were highly structured and individualised, my interaction with children was limited mostly to their break time. In the beginning of my observation, I asked the Montessori teacher whether I could interact with children while they did activities and she was of the opinion that that would distract children's concentration so it was better not to. Since the centre received many visitors throughout the year I felt that the reason she gave was justifiable. In the private nursery, however, the structure was relatively flexible and so I had more opportunities to interact with children throughout the day. Similarly, in the ICDS, my role as a researcher was minimally restricted by the structure and organisation of daily routines and so I had enough space to mingle and interact with children whenever I wanted. Detailed analytical descriptions of the institutions and their functioning are provided in chapter five.

The methodological literature in childhood studies argues that the role of the researcher doing research with children is somewhat different from doing research with adults. Mandell (1991), for example, asserts that with children the researcher has to assume a 'least-adult role' in order to blend fully with children's social worlds. From her viewpoint, researchers who usually carry the position of authoritative adult in a research project should put aside all their adult-like qualities except physical size while researching children. Fine and Sandstorm (1988:13) on the other hand argue that it is difficult to disqualify all adult characteristics and the adult researcher 'who attempts to understand a children's culture cannot pass unnoticed as a member of that group'. Instead, they suggest, the researcher might adopt a non-authoritative, friendly role with children which will also provide some methodological value to the research. In a similar vein James and others (1998:183) argue that the differences between adult researchers and children are inevitable and the researchers "can only ever have a semi-participatory role in children's lives". After thoughtful

consideration, I decided to take up a non-authoritative, friendly role with children in my observation.

Although I made conscious efforts to maintain a non-authoritative adult role in this research and somehow succeeded in it for most of my observation, at times my role was challenged in the field. Children in all three institutions, invariably, had infighting with each other and sometimes they sought my arbitration to settle their issues. My concerted effort in presenting myself as a non-authoritative adult was not well received at times by children. This could be perhaps due to my physical size and children's preconceived notion about adults and their authority over children. Children did have expectations of me as an adult in a position to control others. Wherever possible I advised children to take these kinds of issues for solution to the teacher(s)/care worker concerned. However, in the absence of teacher(s) or care worker, it proved difficult to remain an unemotional, mute spectator knowing that 'bullying' or 'violent infighting' was going to harm children. So I did use my power as a responsible authoritative adult on those few occasions. These sorts of issues raised some ethical dilemmas in the fieldwork and they are discussed later in this chapter.

As this research was conducted 'overtly' in the field, my principal identity as a researcher was visible and communicated to all the participants in the research settings. However, my other identities: male, young (although adult for children), middle class, doctoral student overseas, were constructed, interpreted and negotiated differently at different times by the respondents in the field situations.

"One day, *Venki*⁹, a 2 ½ year old boy, when I was taking down notes came towards me and asked what I was doing. I said I was writing down what children were doing in the class room. After a small pause he asked, 'didn't you go to work', rather surprised with his question at that point of time I asked 'what work', he said simply again just with a stress 'work' (field notes, 14th visit to corporation nursery)"

⁹ I have used pseudonyms for all children in this study and they are in italics.

Venki was not able to explain ‘work’ in adult language. But his vague conception about ‘adult work’ and, perhaps, my ‘undefined role’ in the institution might have made him think reflectively that I was not part of the staff team and I was different from other adults present in the institution. It reminded me of what Woods (1983) describes about the presentation of the subjective ‘I’, that means, presentation of self to others and objective ‘me’ – how I was perceived by others, in the field situation.

Throughout my observation, I did not have any particular fixed role in the institutions and this flexibility proved, as Davis and others (2000) suggest, valuable to get along easily with the children. Yet, I also had donned diverse roles as and when they presented in the field. For instance, there were times when children treated me like their elder brother or uncle and shared with me their personal stories of what happened at home or with their friends. There are many examples: *Ganesh* told me about the theft which occurred at his home (field notes, 29th visit) and *Mathew* shared about his experience of morning walks with his uncle to the park (field notes, 32nd visit). There were instances of children seeking help to solve their doubts in subjects or activities, treating me like a tutor in the institutions.

On the other hand, I played a different set of roles with the adults in the institutions. At times I was considered as a ‘resource person’ by the ICDS Anganwadi worker to mobilise material resources such as flip charts, posters and pamphlets on ECCE from local NGOs to hang up in her centre and I arranged that with the contacts I had in the field. Similarly, I was regarded as a ‘competent’ professional who was capable of suggesting ideas for the improvement of the nursery section in the private school and I did it despite my little knowledge. Conversely, in the corporation nursery I projected myself as an ‘incompetent’ person, one who does not know much about Montessori activities and I asked the teacher with ‘humility’ to arrange for a briefing session about various Montessori activities (Fielding, 1993). All these roles were performed according to the situation in the field.

4.6.2 Field relationships

Field relationships are of central concern to ethnographic data collection, determining the depth and authenticity of data which the researcher collects from the field. As Lofland and Lofland (1995) note, getting along with people in some situations can be emotionally challenging or sometimes it may present the researcher with an ethical dilemma. Yet these challenges are useful for the researcher to gain proximity with the study respondents and to understand how the social world is constructed and interpreted in a particular situation. As a researcher in an institutional setting, I was expected to develop a range of relationships, especially with two extremely different study groups - children and teachers/care workers and also with the extended support groups such as corporation school headmistress, private school authorities and the helpers in all three institutions, not only for data collection but also for the smooth conduct of my fieldwork.

Over time, I developed purposeful and friendly relationships with the adults with whom I worked. My interaction with the teachers in the corporation nursery was less than in the other two settings, due to their structured work pattern. However, I made the effort to build a good working relationship with them in the best possible manner. Whenever we had time to interact, I focused my discussion mostly on children's experiences with the Montessori approach, the relevance of Montessori in the Indian context and the feedback which they received from parents. Of course, there was a conflict of interest between teachers over 'formal teaching vs. Montessori' being practised in the institution and that was disclosed in one of my casual conversations with the government teacher. Throughout my informal conversations I maintained my neutrality, not showing favour for any method; at the same time, on reflection, it put me in an ethical dilemma over 'deceit' of study participant's trust.

My relationship with the care worker in the ICDS, on the other hand, was friendly and open. In fact, in many of our casual conversations she candidly expressed her feelings about community participation, children, her workload and the lacuna in the programme implementation. The informal chats which I had with her were useful for

understanding the intricacies of ICDS programme implementation. Our field relationship was built on a combination of professional and personal respect. At times, she treated me like a professional by calling me 'sir' and, at other times, she treated me like a young person by calling me in 'singular term'. In one of our conversations she said that she did not feel anything wrong by calling me in singular term, as I must be of her daughter's age (field notes, 46th visit). More importantly, she seemed to be comfortable in my presence and she said that she was quite used to getting along with visitors and researchers.

In the private nursery, my shared identity as an overseas researcher with the school principal's son made us comfortable about developing our relationship on some mutual grounds. The relationship was strengthened through a series of discussions and informal conversations about academic life, doing a PhD in foreign universities, preschool education and his school-related problems. I had occasional meetings with him in the school after my day's field visits. On the other hand, my relationship with him initially made the class teacher nervous in my presence. Through continuous interactions I instilled confidence in her that everything that I recorded in the classroom would be confidential (again it is a matter of ethical dilemma because the final thesis will be shared with the school) and it will be used only for my academic purpose. Firstly, I ensured that she was comfortable in my presence. Then slowly I developed a friendly relationship and had informal chats about her views on formal teaching and children in the classroom.

With regard to children, I realised that it was not possible to develop the same level of relationship with everyone, as I had nearly 70 children in all three institutions under my observation. Nevertheless, what I felt more important was to ensure that my role in the institution was not the same as that of teacher or care worker, I was different and I was friendly and easily approachable for everyone. My former experience as a social worker working with children in community settings helped me in building rapport with children. I used different strategies to get along with the children. Knowing the differences in personalities, I spotted children in each institution who were 'sociable' and get along easily with strangers and I built up

rapport with them through simple conversations. This strategy created a snowball effect and other children gradually invited me voluntarily to participate in their interactions.

“During lunch time usually the teacher and the helper will assist children to open their lunch box. One day *Priya* asked me to open her lunch box and I did it. She very happily told others, as if she has achieved something, that I opened her lunch box. The next day some of her friends asked me to open their lunch boxes and over time it turned out to be a competition who gives it to me first to open (Reflection of my field notes, 6th visit to private nursery)”

Examples like this gave me confidence that social access could be obtained with children by applying experiential knowledge gained from my social work practice. All these roles and relationships were treated carefully to accomplish the practical purpose of completing my fieldwork. As this ethnography was carried out at home, throughout my fieldwork I was very careful with my professional conduct and cautious of not getting too immersed in the local culture or losing my analytical insight into the data collection process (Coffey, 1999).

4.7 Data collection

The word ‘researchability’ is intrinsic to social science research and occupies the central place in debates. White (2009) observes that questions that fail to generate data from the research setting are unresearchable in principle. Ideally, whatever the research questions the researcher wants to answer should be operationalised in such a way as to elicit desired information from the field. For that to happen, the researcher should pay sufficient attention in the whole research process, starting from the framing of research questions to the selection of data collection tools. Mindful of this critique and aware of the characteristics of research participants, this study employed ethnographic observation in the institutions and also conducted semi-structured interview with teachers and parents for data collection. With this note, the following sections will explain the process of data collection from the field from children, teachers/care worker and parents.

4.7.1 Ethnographic observation

This was the tool used to generate data mainly from children in the care and educational settings. My observation in each setting lasted for 3 to 4 months. The observation was first carried out in the corporation nursery (December 2010 - March 2011), then moved on to a private nursery (January 2011 - March 2011) and finally ended with the Anganwadi centre (March 2011 - June 11). Observation was carried out at least one or two days in a week in each setting and the times of my observation were confirmed on a weekly basis after consultation with the teachers/care workers concerned. All three institutions operated Monday to Friday, from 9.30 am to 3 pm and so the timing and day of my observation varied depending on what I wanted to observe on that particular day. Sometimes I chose to observe children in the morning to study how they arrived, sometimes I preferred to observe in the evening to see how they left and most of the times I would stay for the whole morning session until they went for a nap after lunch (although the corporation nursery does not have this practice). In general, I spent nearly 3-4 hours on each visit, and, in total, I made 49 visits (18 in corporation nursery, 15 in private nursery and 16 in Anganwadi centre) for observation. All these visits were helpful for understanding and establishing the relationships, patterns, sequence and the constructions in the institutions.

While children were the main focus of my data collection, my observation over time naturally expanded to cover adults such as teachers, care workers and sometimes parents or visitors within these institutions. The literature in childhood studies suggest that techniques that are used basically with adults can be used also with children provided that they are appropriate, context-specific and address the research question (Christensen and Prout, 2002; James *et al.*, 1998; Mayall, 2000). Reflecting on this, general observation techniques such as observation, listening, conversation and reflection were employed with children in the institutions for data generation. I avoided using other child-friendly techniques such as drawing or photographing in my research settings, as I found the corporation nursery was highly structured with their daily schedule and offered little time for interaction. Moreover, I felt that it was

my ethical responsibility not to interfere or take away children's learning time for my personal benefit.

One of the advantages of using observation as a technique in ethnographic approach is, as Robson (2002) observes, its 'directness',

“You do not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes;
you watch what they do and listen to what they say”
(Robson, 2002:310)

Unlike observations taking place under experimental conditions, the ethnographer “makes observations in a more natural open-ended way” and the interactions in the field are observed “as the stream of actions and events as they naturally unfold” (Punch, 1998:185). However, during my fieldwork one of the problems that I encountered in the beginning of my observation was the ‘selection of events’. When I was in the midst of so many activities, it was sometimes confusing to decide what to observe and record. As Mason (2002) notes, the issue of ‘selectivity’, that is, determining the inclusion/exclusion criteria for observation is one of the key aspects, especially in a setting like this where multiple interactions occur at any given point of time.

I started my observation with quite a broad and unstructured approach. In the beginning, I recorded almost all the events and interactions that seemed relevant to my broad research topic, in chronological order. I recorded events and interactions as much as possible even though its use might be miniscule for analysis. My grasp of events in my first couple of visits was slow. Over time, however, I developed my observation skills and made a concerted effort to sharpen my focus. As the fieldwork progressed, I realised that it was impossible to observe every child closely in the institution as the total numbers in each setting ranged from 18 to 28. Therefore, I randomly observed events and interactions which I felt more relevant to my study topic. As my overall research aim was to observe the pedagogical processes and practices, the selected events and conversations were closely followed so as to explore the meaning and interpretation which participants ascribed to their actions.

The list of children (pseudonyms) observed from each institution and later used for my empirical analysis in this thesis is given in appendix five.

Fielding (2001:162) suggests that writing field notes is productive, “not just of description but of first reflections on connections between processes, sequences and elements of interaction”. Keeping that in mind, all the observations and conversations that emerged from the institutions were jotted down and later at home converted into full field notes. My reflections on events and my general impression about a particular day’s visit were also recorded as analytical notes within field notes. I put my utmost effort into completing field notes on the day of the observation itself, or at least before I went for my next visit. In line with Fielding (2001), I found that field notes were quite helpful during my data collection to refresh my memory of events and to extract tips for future observation. Throughout my observation, I wrote field notes in the same format indicating the number of the visit, date, time, people present, events and interactions in chronological order, along with my reflection and general impression.

4.7.2 Semi-structured interview

This is one of the tools for an ethnographic approach and it was used in this research with 36 parents and 4 teachers/care workers¹⁰ for data collection. Mason (2002) suggests that the selection of semi-structured interviews in a research study can be due to the research’s ontological and epistemological position that is interested in studying the perception or discursive constructions of people. Interested in adults’ constructions on early childhood and how those constructions influence their choices, opportunities and practices related to children, this study used semi-structured interviews as the tool with teachers/care workers and parents for data collection.

One of the advantages of conducting semi-structured interviews in a research process is that it ensures that the data generated are deep, detailed, vivid and nuanced (Rubin

¹⁰ Out of six teachers in the corporation nursery two teachers were interviewed. Out of two teachers one teacher was interviewed in the private nursery. In the ICDS the only Anganwadi worker was interviewed.

and Rubin 1995:76-83). It gives scope for the researcher to explore the shared meanings that people develop and construct in their daily lives. In general, if the research requires more information on a particular topic, then it is ideal to use a semi-structured format as it offers flexibility and fluidity during the interview process. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer introduces the topic and then guides the discussion by asking specific questions with the use of an interview guide. The interview guides for this study, one for teachers/care workers and one for parents (see appendix six), contained a list of unstructured questions used for all interviews in order to make sure that basically the same topics were discussed with every respondent within each category (Patton, 1990).

At the same time, the interview guides were altered depending on the suitability for study respondents. For example, the interview guide for parents contained questions about their own childhood and early childhood experiences, their views about present early childhood practices, how the present early childhood practices differed from their own early childhood experiences, their perceptions about why their children need preschool services, what motivated them to send their children to a particular institutional type and what were their expectations from the service providers and so on. Though these questions were asked of all parents, some of the questions were very context specific and applicable only to a particular set of parents, such as the views/effects on Montessori practice which were specific to parents of Montessori nursery children, or the perspective on progress reports, tuition or homework which were more relevant to parents of the private nursery and so on. Similarly, the interview guide for teachers/care worker was modified to suit their work profile and method of practice.

The interviews with parents as well as teachers/care worker lasted for 20 minutes to 75 minutes. All the interviews with teachers/care worker were conducted at the end of my observation in each setting so as to incorporate any useful/interesting information that arose during my presence in the institution. The interviews with teachers/care worker were conducted in the school/Anganwadi centre itself during their free time. All four teachers/care worker interviewed in the study – two in

corporation nursery, one in private nursery and one in ICDS Anganwadi centre - were part of my every day observation.

Similarly, interviews were conducted with parents after observation in each setting. Before I commence my actual interview “pilot interviews” were conducted with several parents in the private nursery and discussed with my supervisors for their feedback (Fielding, 1993:137). Following my supervisors’ suggestions, the interview guide and the techniques of conducting interview were slightly modified to suit to the conditions and respondents. For instance, questions regarding parents’ own childhood experiences were curtailed in order to focus more on early years provision. Parents of children who were frequently engaged in my observation were given preference in my interviews to get a sense of how they talk about their children. Based on my preference list and parental availability, the contact details of parents were obtained from the teachers in the corporation and private nurseries. As the ICDS Anganwadi centre had enough space within its premises, parents of ICDS children were interviewed individually in the centre itself in a separate room. Parents of corporation and private nurseries were interviewed in their homes. However, my cautious attempt to include more fathers¹¹ in the interviews was futile as they were largely unavailable. All the interviews were conducted in Tamil and they were digitally recorded.

4.7.3 Integration

This section outlines how the empirical data for each and every research questions in this study were gathered from the field, by using what tools and from whom, in a tabular form.

¹¹ Out of 36 parents interviewed only two were fathers and the rest were mothers.

Table 4.1 - Selection of Study Respondents and Tools

Research Questions	Type of Service Provision	Study Respondents		
		Children	Teachers/Care Worker	Parents
(1) To understand how active educable subjects are evolved in the process of everyday pedagogical practices	Corporation Nursery Private Nursery ICDS Anganwadi	Participant observation	Participant observation and semi-structured interview	
(2) To explore how children construct their and others’ identities through pedagogical performativity				
(3) To understand the ways in which children use their ‘ <i>habitus</i> ’ and ‘cultural capital’ in learning environments				
(4) To examine the role of parental ‘ <i>habitus</i> ’ and ‘cultural capital’ in early years provision with reference to decision making				Semi-structured interview
Corporation Nursery – Parents (12) & Teachers (2) Private Nursery – Parents (12) & Teacher (1) ICDS Anganwadi – Parents (12) & Care Worker (1)				
Number of Study Respondents				

4.8 Ethical issues

Bulmer (2001:45) observes that “ethics is a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others”. The ethical issues related to social science research are discussed from different standpoints such as ‘individual rights’ (Bulmer, 2001), ‘social justice’¹² (Hood *et al.*, 1999; Konstantoni, 2010) and ‘utility’ (Alderson and Morrow, 2004) in the methodological literature. With the exception of interviews with the elite, most research in the social sciences is carried out with people having unequal power relations to the researchers, but that does not mean that the study participants are inferior to the researchers. Researchers do have ethical responsibility towards their subjects, and they have to ensure that they approached the subjects with certain sensitivity and dignity throughout the research process.

In India, where this research was conducted, and where I come from, it was not mandatory for researchers to undergo any ethical checklist approval process. However, the process of undergoing the Edinburgh University’s School of Social and Political Science Research Ethics Committee approval was, for me, a startling revelation. Along with methodological literature, it provided me with a broader framework for how I could engage my subjects with ethically sound practices. One of my important roles in the study was to continuously and reflectively examine ethical issues of (1) informed consent (2) privacy, confidentiality and anonymity and (3) vulnerability and preventing harm (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Bulmer, 2001; Gallagher, 2009; SSPS Ethical Guidelines, 2008).

4.8.1 Informed consent

¹² The term social justice has different meanings including recognition and redistribution (Fraser, 2000; Gewirtz, 2006), equity/discrimination (Konstantoni 2011) and legal entitlement and personal attributes (Dolan, 2008). The concept of social justice will not be expanded upon in this ethics section but it will have implications for how the findings of the thesis are utilized in policy making.

The empirical data for this study were collected from children in three institutions and from teachers/care worker and parents. In what follows, I explain firstly how informed consent was negotiated with children and then explain how it was obtained from adults.

With regard to children, it is widely acknowledged that, in order to engage children the researcher has to obtain consent from the ‘gatekeepers’, either the parents or institutions (James *et al.*, 1998; Masson, 2004). This practice is more important especially when the research is with young children. However, this practice of getting consent from gate keepers for children is sometimes criticised as *proxy* consent (see Gallagher, 2009). In addition to proxy consent, critics stress the need to respect young children’s rights, such as their informed consent for research (Alderson and Morrow, 2004; Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). While there may be a difference between the level of understanding of 3 year old and 15 year old children, some suggest that the researcher could still try to obtain age-appropriate consent from the young child (see Konstantoni, 2010). For example, Fine and Sandstorm (1988) argue that although the 3 years old preschool child would not fully understand the nature of the research, it is still advisable the child should be offered explanation in a simple and understandable language. They say that even the simplest explanation might be sufficient to give them a chance to provide informed consent.

Informed by this literature, at the outset I explained to children in a simple language who I was and what I was going to do for the next 3-4 months. I told them that I was going to observe what they do in the institution. To honour my ethical commitments, I also told them that they can talk to me if they wish; if they don’t wish they can simply ignore me i.e. ‘opt out’ and they will not be disturbed or observed (Dockett *et al.*, 2012; Fine and Sandstrom, 1988). In response, children have happily given their assent for my statement. However, my interactions with children later on made me to realise that children may have had some vague idea about who I was, but they did not know anything beyond that. It proved difficult for me to explain to them even in a simple language the nature and consequence of my research project. My attempts to

do this during my interactions with some of the children in the institutions were unsuccessful. Quite often, children in all three institutions asked me in the beginning ‘what I was doing there’ and that made me realise how poorly informed they were about the purpose of my visit. It was evident from the interactions that I had with children that they did realise my physical presence in the institutions but, over time, they completely forgot my researcher identity. They just associated me with other identities such as uncle, sir, elder brother or friend and that was evident in many of my interactions:

“I called *Thyagu* by name to pass on a story book to *Aki*. Surprised *Thyagu* asked me how did I know his name, I said I knew I observed while teachers calling him. Then he randomly selected children around him and asked me what were their names, I told all their names, he was surprised. Then I asked him does he know my name, with a smile he said ‘no’, I told my name, then I asked him again does he know what I was doing there, the answer was again ‘no’ and this time with a big smile (field notes, 9th visit to corporation nursery)”

I was not sure whether my question was an embarrassment to the child. I hoped it was not. I just directed those questions to the child out of my curiosity, not to test his memory or intelligence or make him feel inferior. To be honest, I have to accept that I took effort to remember their names, because it was necessary for my research project, but it was not the case for children; knowing my name or project was irrelevant for them. Nevertheless, what this example taught me was to understand some of the deep-rooted problems involved with the basic tenets of informed consent, especially with preschool age group children. I wondered whether I could consider their assent as ‘informed consent’ for my observation, as some authors claim. Gallagher and others (2010) are useful here to complicate this issue further

“For consent to be considered truly informed, participants must understand the nature, purpose and likely consequences of a research project; given this understanding, they agree to participate without coercion, knowing that they can withdraw at any time”
(Gallagher *et al.*, 2010:471)

When children are not aware of the nature and consequences of a research project, then, there is a danger in claiming that their assent as informed consent. Gallagher

and others (2010:471) suggest that even the so-called child-friendly, age-appropriate techniques have some “fundamental problems with informed consent” while doing research with young children. My fieldwork experiences, as shown in the above example, have substantiated their argument.

To comply with the ethical standards I also wanted to obtain proxy consent from the parents of all children under my observation in three institutions. However, my discussions with the teachers/care worker/management in the beginning pointed out to me that it was difficult to organise a meeting with all parents. Parents, they said, hardly turn up even for the parents-teacher association meeting or mothers’ meetings (in ICDS), though it happens occasionally. It was equally difficult to meet every parent individually at school for proxy consent. First of all, not all the parents accompany their children to the nurseries. In the private nursery, for example, some of the children coming from far off areas come and go by auto rickshaw with their peers. Similarly, in the corporation nursery, some parents dropped off their children at the main gate, while others accompanied them to the entrance of the building. Also, it was time consuming and practically impossible to meet every parent at home before I started my fieldwork. Moreover, I started my fieldwork immediately in the corporation nursery as soon as I had obtained permission from the gatekeepers and there was no time left to distribute written leaflets amongst parents. Therefore, I dropped the idea of gaining proxy consent from parents.

With regard to adults - both parents and staff members in the institutions - verbal informed consent was obtained on individual basis. Before I began my fieldwork I held discussions with few academics and development practitioners who worked in similar settings and I learnt from these discussions that people, especially those who are illiterate, will not sign documents from strangers. This is due to the fear that people may cheat or misuse their signature. For them, signing a document means giving ultimate authority to the opposite party. For this cultural reason it was deemed appropriate to obtain only verbal consent. It is important to note here that my decision for obtaining verbal consent was explained to and approved by the University’s ethics committee.

Before I began my semi-structured interview, I briefed every adult participant about my project and its potential consequences in giving their informed consent. Adult participants were also requested to give consent for audio taping of their semi-structured interviews. There is a possibility that the teacher in the private nursery may leave the school in the future or other teachers/care worker may get transferred to other places. In order to avoid all those problems their consent for using their quotes in my final thesis were obtained at the time of my data collection. Likewise, it would be difficult to access parents again on an individual basis after data collection, so the permission for using quotes was obtained at the time of interview.

4.8.2 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

While doing research I had to acknowledge genuinely that I had taken up this project for my academic advancement and, to that effect, I intruded on the privacy of others, either implicitly or explicitly in the research settings. Just my physical presence alone might have made the respondents alter their behaviour, especially the adults in the institutions. The following example will reveal how much this argument is true from the participant's point of view:

“At the end of my observation in the ICDS I presented a small gift to the worker and said it was my pleasure and a good learning experience being there all these days in the institution. She said she too enjoyed my presence. After a pause, she said ‘when our supervisor told me in the staff meeting about your visit my colleagues said better keep him in your centre, don’t let him to visit ours’. Because they felt it will affect their privacy (field notes, 16th visit to ICDS)”

I am not sure whether the Anganwadi worker felt the same way as her colleagues. Nevertheless, it was evident to some extent in all three institutions: how the teacher in the private nursery felt nervous in my presence on the first couple of my observations; how the care worker in the ICDS spent extra time with children for teaching in my first couple of visits; and how the teachers in the corporation nursery were over-cautious with their positive disciplining strategies. Similarly, my presence also had an impact to some extent on children's privacy at least in the beginning of

my observation and made them behave differently. It was obvious on a few occasions when children violated classroom regulations and they then looked at me with a sense of insecurity/fear/shame/shyness and altered their behaviour immediately. This issue of intrusion was reduced to a great extent over time through friendly interactions and personal acquaintance. After a point children became comfortable in my presence and they continued their social interaction and never minded violating classroom regulations.

As a researcher, it is my ethical responsibility to ensure that the basic rights of anonymity and confidentiality of the study respondents are not infringed. To this end, I informed all my gatekeepers in the beginning that the anonymity of institutions and their precise geographical location would be preserved in all my future reports and publications, including this thesis. Similarly, children's anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process. I have used pseudonyms for children in this final report. In the same way, the identity of all adults in this research was concealed to protect their anonymity. In order to avoid complications, the quotes of the parents were used in general terms as 'one of the parents from corporation/private/ICDS' in my thesis. However, I have to admit that although the identity of the teachers/care worker were anonymised with their designation, given the size of the staff team it is inevitable that their identity could be traceable by the gatekeepers. To avoid/reduce potential harm that may arise in the future to study participants, the data pertaining to teachers/care worker were carefully analysed in this report.

To inform the participants about the study outcome, it will be shared with children in simple and understandable language. I plan to prepare my key findings/feedback in a leaflet and send them to the teachers/care worker concerned to share with them. And, if possible, I shall visit the children in the institutions and narrate the feedback in a simple, clear and understandable language. I anticipate that there will be difficulty in accessing all the parents on an individual basis. Therefore, in consultation with the gate keepers an appropriate strategy will be drawn up to share the feedback with parents. Similarly, a copy of my final report will be shared with all the gatekeepers

involved in this study. To sustain confidentiality, all the raw data related to this study were saved in a password protected system.

4.8.3 Vulnerability and preventing harm

The literature in childhood studies recognises that children are competent enough and can construct knowledge of their own in the research process (Mayall, 2000; Punch, 2002). Even further, Mayall (2000:122) observes that within the *children's world*, children are more competent than the adult researcher, because they know more about “the status of being a child, and child-adult relations”. However, in a highly adult structured world and in an unequal power relation with adults, they are often thought to be vulnerable in the researcher-researched relationships. James and others (1988:187) note that children are vulnerable in two aspects: “first, a dependency on adults incurred through their physical weakness and limited social experience; and second, a structural vulnerability through which their position as social, political and economic actor is marginalized”.

On reflection, as Fine and Sandstrom (1988:75) suggest, I sought to follow three ‘R’s’, “responsibility, respect and reflection”, for my participant observation with children. Implications of the above say that I did not enforce my views and opinions on young children during my observation. However there were times when I encountered ethical dilemmas in a situation where the study participants were in a more difficult position and they were in want of my help (see Lofland and Lofland 1995). To be specific, in this research, I faced a dilemma when children invited my mediation when they were involved in fights with each other. As mentioned earlier wherever possible I referred the cases to the teachers/care worker concerned. However, in the absence of teachers/care worker as a last resort I used my authority as a responsible adult in order to prevent harm to other children.

The other ethical dilemma which I faced throughout my fieldwork was about corporal punishment. Though I was confident before I began my fieldwork that I could handle this issue with some kind of practical intervention, I felt helpless during

my actual fieldwork. In Tamil Nadu, cases of corporal punishment were reported in the past even in the early years institution and the government banned corporal punishment at all levels in the educational process. However, mild forms of corporal punishment such as physical exclusion from the class (making children stand in the corner of the classroom) or tweaking children's ears were prevalent in the institutions I observed, especially in the private nursery. Such practices were either justified or taken for granted on the grounds that there was no other option available for the effective management of the classroom.

Another research practice which might have caused emotional harm to the children is the researcher-researched relationship. I spent nearly 3-4 months in each setting and I became close to some children emotionally in the process of my fieldwork. In a similar way, there is a possibility that some of the children might also have developed emotional attachments due to my friendly interaction and extended stay and this might have done some emotional harm to them after my fieldwork. This was evident in one of the conversations I had with a child in the private nursery in the last day of my fieldwork and coincidentally that was the children's last working day of the academic year as well.

“After I distributed chocolates and said bye to the children, *Vahini* asked me ‘uncle we are going to the first standard next year, will you come with us’. I explained my position to her and said ‘no’. With a sad look she said ‘why uncle, come with us’ (field notes, 15th visit to private nursery)”

Though I told them in the beginning of my observation about the duration of my visit and my wind-up plan well in advance, with the example above it was evident that my departure from the field might have caused some emotional damage or harm to some children. With regard to adults, there is the possibility that my analysis of the research settings might have an effect on teachers/care worker directly or indirectly, as it was impossible to conceal their identity from the gatekeepers. As with any social science research, there is a risk that the findings of the research could be misinterpreted by gatekeepers and as a result they may have some negative effects on the teachers/care worker. Thus, to limit the potential damage it may cause to their reputation, detailed

attention was paid in my analysis to ensure that the representation of their data was done in a very thoughtful manner so that the findings should not be misrepresented by others.

4.9 Data analysis plan

This section explains the two-way process of the organisation and analysis of data and how I dealt with these issues in this study. Data analysis in ethnography is an iterative process (Fielding, 1993). As the literature suggest, my preliminary analysis of data started in the field in field notes and reflections, but it gathered speed and momentum vigorously upon my return from the research setting (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

As researchers in ethnography always carry a voluminous amount of data, organising and managing raw data is vital for easy retrieval and for effective analysis. As explained in the previous sections, the raw data for this study were collected from children, teachers/care worker and parents through participant observation and semi-structured interviews, and they were stored in the form of large volumes of field notes and 40 interview transcripts. Apart from my 100 pages of field notes, the 40 interviews conducted with adult participants in Tamil were later translated and transcribed as ‘verbatim transcription’ (Fielding, 1993:146). During the translation stage, utmost care was given not to distort any meaning or feeling that was expressed in the interviews by the study respondents. I did all the translations and transcriptions personally after listening to every interview several times.

There were some issues in translation, especially with some words and the use of formal and informal languages in the research settings and interviews. For instance, people quite often used the word school for ‘nursery’, particularly in the corporation and private nursery settings. In a broader sense, parents perceived ‘nursery’ as an integral part of the school system and so they interchangeably used school and nursery during my interviews. In my data I changed them all to ‘nursery’ as it does not have any significance technically for this study. Similarly, there was a difficulty

at times in translating the informal conversation as it is in English; however, I had given adequate attention not to distort or lose the essence of the meaning in my translation. The transcription process also helped me to recall the interview moments and to single out some key issues, which I felt important for future analysis.

Once translation and transcription were done, as a first step, the data were familiarised through reading and re-reading. Emerson and others (1995) note that the researcher reads through all field notes as a complete data set and scrutinises field notes from close angles for intensive and reflexive analysis. I read through my field notes several times with an academic eye, looking at what had been recorded and observed (Emerson *et al.*, 1995). I tried to establish a preliminary relationship between a few key issues or themes which I had noted as fascinating during my fieldwork. Then, at the next level, I intended to do coding, memo and mind mapping through computer assisted NVivo software. All the raw data were uploaded in NVivo and I did a mind mapping (making a diagram with key themes such as discipline, adult-child relationships, peer relationships and parental choice/aspiration, to see the link) with the issues identified earlier in the manual analysis process. My coding and analysis process in NVivo proved time consuming and that I decided eventually not to use NVivo for analysis.

I then carried out the whole analysis process manually. Firstly, I removed print outs of all my field notes and began a coding exercise. According to Charmaz (1995:37) “coding is the process of defining what the raw data being analysed are all about”. It involves identifying the passages of text under some theoretical or descriptive labels (Gibbs, 2007). There are different types of coding available for data analysis and it depends on the kind of research framework and nature of availability of data at hand (Lewis and Silver, 2007). Miles and Huberman (1994), for example, describe the deductive method of coding under three categories: descriptive, interpretive and pattern. Descriptive and interpretive coding, as the names suggest, describe and interpret data, whereas the pattern coding tries to look at the pattern that emerges in the data. By contrast, Glaser and Strauss (1967) categorise coding under the inductive method into three types: open, axial (or theoretical) and selective.

However, it is widely acknowledged in the literature that analysis always involves the combination of inductive and deductive coding, that means, top-down and bottom-up analysis (see Bryman, 2008).

As I was keen to do thematic analysis, I was interested in picking up key themes for analysis. Bryman (2008) observes that a theme in the thematic analysis is more or less the same as code for some writers, whereas for others it could be an assemblage of codes. In practice, the themes or codes for thematic analysis are identified from the theories and concepts (Ritchie *et al*, 2003). In this research, I used a combination of coding techniques for my analysis. At the preliminary stage, I did open coding - I read through the field notes in the printed out materials and highlighted different colours for different themes in the word document in the computer. Data for different chapters including the data for the methodology chapter was clearly segregated in this process. I used several labels here, mainly attributing a few key words for the whole text or event for future access. At the next level, I used theoretical coding, that is, the theme was identified from the data through going back and forth with the literature review. Contrasting themes were tested to check theoretical compatibility between themes. Once themes were identified, the interpretive coding was used to infer meaning from the data connecting them with the theme concerned. The field notes document in the computer was highlighted with different colours based on themes and prospective chapters for each transfer.

The interview transcripts were analysed at two levels. Initially, codes were described mainly based on the key topics covered in the interviews, which Lecompte and Schensul (1999) call pre-coded data. Then, at the first level, the relationships between different codes were analysed on a case-by-case basis. This process helped me to understand the pattern between each respondent's social and personal background and his/her response to choice, or aspiration or practice. Then, at the second level, the same code or theme was compared across different institutional groups such as private, corporation and ICDS, to find out the similarities and dissimilarities between groups. Similarly to field notes, the key themes identified

with a particular respondent were highlighted with different colours in the word document, for easy reference.

4.10 Ethnographic writing

“Texts do not simply and transparently report an independent order of reality. Rather, the text themselves are implicated in the work of reality construction”
(Atkinson, 1990:7)

As Atkinson suggests, any piece of scholarly writing is not just the reflection of social reality, but is also the construction of the researcher about his/his own research work. In this sense, in social research “what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions” (Geertz, 1973:9). Ethnographic research narrates a story based on the data collected from the field. The data are the “building blocks” for story narration and the narration is built around some key themes which attracted the ethnographers’ attention (Emerson *et al.*, 1995:171). Eventually, the collected data are presented as a form of knowledge with the support of theory over which the ethnographer has control and authority. Thus, the piece of work presented here is not mere reproduction of events from the field, rather it is the reconstruction of the data so as to explain a theory to an academic audience (Emerson *et al.*, 1995). Reconstruction here is discussed at two levels. At the first level, as Geertz (1973) says, the raw data itself may be a reconstruction of what the respondents in the field constructed, especially in ethnographic observation. While note taking I observed the reality and interpreted people’s actions and behaviours, but those actions and behaviours may have many meanings. At the second level, the reconstruction of data happens after return from the field, in the analysis and theory-building stage.

The literature suggests that one of the advantages of doing an indigenous ethnography is the familiarity of the context (Narayan, 2001; Smith, 2007). The researcher to some extent can go under the skin of the research topic and capture people’s meaning without much distortion. The damage could be lessened but we cannot be assured that we got the data with what the participants really meant.

Apparently, in a multicultural society, no one can claim that any culture and identity is unique. Also, as a researcher I possess multiple identities as did the respondents and it raises another question here: to what extent is a researcher an indigenous researcher? Of course, my identities are multiple and they can match at least partially some of those of the study respondents. However, my mental predispositions are largely influenced, as Davis (1998) suggests, by my academic as well as personal exposure. Though I can claim to some extent that I gathered the raw data from the field without spoiling their essence, I am not fully confident that I captured the data as a 'photo shot'. The other challenge, especially while doing research with children, is to what extent the childhood researcher can understand the meaning or implications of study participants in everyday narratives. The following example will explain the difficulty involved while doing research with young children.

“Looking at my notebook *Manoj* commented ‘your writing looks like a maize (what the child actually said)’. I didn’t understand what he meant or why he said so. I asked him again ‘what did you mean by that’?. *Vahini*, a girl sitting next to *Manoj* said ‘he meant your writing looks so small like maize’. ‘Did you’ I asked him again. He nodded his head (field notes, 12th visit to private nursery)”

The example above suggests the implication of understanding children’s language and culture in the research setting. Arguably, childhood literature provides ample evidence that children have their own cultures (see for example, Faulkner *et al.*, 2006) and, though I understood their language on most of the occasions, situations like the above exposed my inability and incompetency. It also made me to realise the level of accuracy of my own interpretation of children’s language. This corroborates with Emerson and others’ (1995) point. They suggest that members’ meanings in ethnographic research are not discoveries, rather they are the interpretations of the researcher.

The process of reconstruction occurred at the second level after my return from the field. As a researcher, I have the authority in the research process on two grounds. Firstly, I am the one who had first-hand experience in the field - I knew the context, the people and the circumstances under which the data were generated. Thus I can

confidently claim that I have an authority over the data and I can claim with confidence that I know what the data speaks about. Secondly, I also have the authority to decide what is to be included or excluded in the writing up process. As the literature suggests, ethnographic writing is not fiction, the ethnographic text displays its authority chiefly through linking data with theory (Atkinson, 1990). Though I was part of the story in the field as co-constructor, my position changed once I returned from the field from co-constructor to re-constructor in order to present my work to the academic community. I have selected and omitted some section of data from a large pool of data. Though this process is inevitable in ethnography, Clifford (1986:7) is critical of this approach and in reflection says “all constructed truths are made possible by powerful ‘lies’ of exclusion and rhetoric”, therefore, any claim about truths in ethnography are inherently partial and incomplete. This implies that all ethnographic research and knowledge are questionable on the claims they make (Sheehan, 2004).

Therefore, I have to admit honestly that what my scholarly piece of work describes here is not to be considered as ‘universal truth’ and it might be questionable on many fronts. Foucault’s work on ‘truth’ is relevant here to explain this phenomenon further. Foucault in one of his interviews suggests that “truth is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (reported in Rabinow, 1991:74). So in a Foucaultian view eventually whatever claim I make through this study would be reduced to a statement which may have been contestable from other perspectives. For example, a person, one who has different theoretical position, say a positivist or modernist theoretical stand, can investigate the same topic and ascribe a completely different interpretation to the same data gathered. This suggests, as Davis (1998) notes, that researchers always have two world views - the one constructed by the academic paradigm such as theory, ethics and methodology and the other constructed by one’s own life experiences and prejudice, and they both need to be tackled reflexively in the research process. This also leads us to raise another issue, that of power – the researcher’s position in research.

As Foucault says, a “regime of truth” is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it (reported in Rabinow, 1991:74). As a researcher I have the authority and power and this dominant power position to some extent also extends to the wider academic community which is involved in the production of knowledge by setting standards, guidelines and procedures. The process of knowledge production is my reconstruction rather than description in this research. The term ‘constructionism’ in knowledge production is however used with two distinct meanings: the first one gives phenomenological explanation of constructionism and the second one gives situated nature of knowledge production that empowers participants as social actors (Potter, 1996:37). There is a possibility that the researcher’s own stand in research can construct the study participants in different ways and childhood literature shows how, in the past, children’s knowledge was disregarded in research (see Christensen and Prout, 2002; Lewis, 2004; Robinson and Kellett, 2004). My ontological and epistemological position on children respects children’s own knowledge and I treated them with due respect in my writing as chief architects of my reconstruction. Nevertheless, I have to accept that what I demonstrate here is one side of the story that happened in the early years institutions, my own reconstruction of the social reality, which has certain specificity attached to my theoretical position, mental disposition and ethical commitment.

4.11 Methodological limitations

There were some limitations in my data collection, especially with children. As I mentioned earlier, my interactions with children were limited in the corporation nursery in comparison to other two institutions. More informal interaction or interviews with children out of nursery/institution hour would have made the data even richer, especially to elicit children’s own accounts and experiences of the institution, rather than observing the patterns and procedures in the structured environment. However the time constraints of doing research in three different settings prevented me from extending my observation beyond nursery/institution hours.

Arguably, the tools used for data collection might be considered by some scholars as one of the limitations in this study. In this research, I used conventional ethnographic tools such as observation, listening and informal conversation with children and I have not used any of the creative methods that are being discussed extensively in the minority world early years research literature. Use of creative methods might have increased the vitality of data and also increased the participation/ownership of children in the research process (Wyness, 2012), however, the variations in the structures of the research settings, time constraints and the practical issues involved in using these approaches in an unfamiliar cultural territory, all persuaded me not to use any creative methods in this research.

Similarly, the selection of a model nursery/centre in my research could have some implications in the findings. From my experiential knowledge, I was aware that the daily functioning of the nurseries/centres vary to a great extent in actual practice, particularly in the ICDS and that the selection of a non-functional or less-functional centre in reality would not have yielded better results to my research agenda. Keeping this in mind, one of the model centres was selected for this study. Thus, being mindful of this limitation, I do not wish to claim that the characteristics or findings described here are applicable to all nurseries/centres in the state/country. Like any ethnographic research, the findings of this research are contextual and deeply entrenched and derived from a particular context. At the same time, there could be some commonality in some elements and they can be rightly interpreted for their practical implications.

Above all, the study does not cover caste or gender in its empirical analysis which may be considered as one of the limitations in this study. Empirical researches conducted elsewhere in the minority world give accounts of how young children construct racial and gendered identities (or the role of intersectionality) in their everyday practices in the early years settings (see Brooker, 2006; Konstantoni, 2010; Skattebol, 2006). Since my focus in this study was on three different pedagogical environments, I made a methodological decision not to give any disaggregated analysis in this study in order to avoid complications for the reader.

If I was doing this research again I would focus my observation only on events that are relevant to the research questions rather than observing everything in the setting. Also, I would have avoided parents from the study group and conducted informal group discussions with children based on a few themes that emerged during the field work, in order to get a rich and nuanced understanding of children's meanings.

4.12 Conclusion

Overall, in this chapter, the research design adopted for this study was illustrated in a reflexive way. As I exemplified earlier, this study employed a 'multi-sited ethnographic approach' for its empirical investigation and the empirical data were collected from three different early years institutions in Chennai, the capital city of Tamil Nadu in India. The process of selection of the institutions, gaining physical and social access and the intricacies involved in establishing and maintaining relationships with research participants in three different research sites were explained in this chapter in a very detailed manner. The chapter further gave an account of how the raw data from the field were collected in the research process, particularly the data from children, through 3-4 months participant observation in each setting through observation, simple conversation and reflection.

I also observed teachers/care workers (with their consent) in the institutions and conducted semi-structured interviews at the end of observation. With parents, semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of my fieldwork in each setting. Reflexivity and ethics are major concerns when doing ethnography with young children and the ethical issues faced during the research process were reflexively analysed and addressed as and when required. The chapter then moved on to describe how the large amount of data generated from the field was organised and manually analysed based on three key themes and eventually produced in report form. The chapter further went on to question and self-critique its own claims about knowledge and truth and suggested that a form of knowledge produced in this report must be viewed as one form of multiple truths.

What were also highlighted in the chapter were the difficulties faced by the researcher in the research process. Doing research, ethnography especially, is a challenging endeavour for a novice researcher and I faced many obstacles and struggles from observation and note taking to analysing the large volume of raw data. As I pointed out, I had initial trouble with the selection of events for observation and observing several children at a time in the institutions and this problem was somehow aggravated by my broader research framework. Moreover, doing research in three different settings made me physically and emotionally exhausted in the field, with gaining access, maintaining relationships and winding up the process all in a relatively short period of time. Selection of three institutions, methodologically and theoretically also threw up several challenges in the research process, from selection to picking up the themes for analysis and report writing, though it is theoretically enriching at the end. Though I was very keen to explore different pedagogical environments, the dominance of a particular kind of data in each setting proved difficult for striking the right balance across institutions with my analytical focus.

Throughout the chapter I illustrated how the actual research was carried out from inception to report writing with specific focus on design, ethics and epistemological claims. In the next chapter I will describe the characteristics and functioning of the institutions.

5 Early Childhood Institutions - A Snapshot

5.1 Introduction

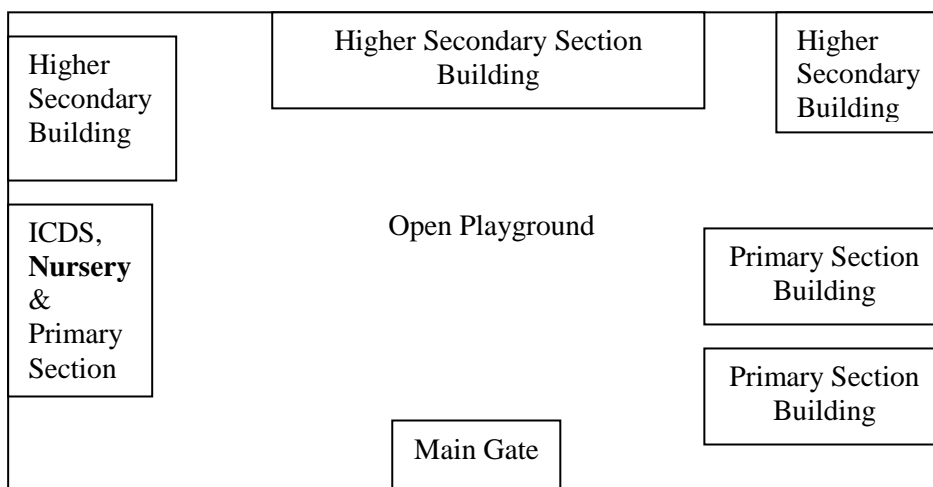
This chapter presents a snapshot of the three early childhood institutions selected for this study. Considering the arguments that children's lives are structured (Holloway, 2000) and governed (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005) by early childhood institutions and that children can interpret (Corsaro, 1997), negotiate (Mayall, 1994) and use their agency differently in different environments (Prout, 2000), this chapter unravels the contexts that underpin children's lived experiences in these institutions. As the data were gathered in specific social, cultural and educational contexts, outlining the context in which the data were generated is as important as the data itself for inferring any meaningful results. Without context the findings can be sometimes misinterpreted or may appear pointless to the reader. Bearing that in mind, this chapter provides the contextual descriptions of three early childhood institutions: a corporation nursery, a private nursery and an ICDS Anganwadi centre.

5.2 A portrait of the corporation nursery

The corporation nursery, which was attached to the corporation higher secondary school, was located in a busy, crowded market place in central Chennai. While walking down to the nursery one could see the corporation zonal office, corporation boys' higher secondary school, a few small commercial establishments, shops and some residential buildings, all in the same narrow, congested road. The road was extremely busy in the morning as it was the main route connecting commuters to the nearby suburban railway station and to local bus stops. Nevertheless the presence of the school was very noticeable in this noisy, bustling, chaotic place. In front of the school gate, there were a few people sitting and selling eatables on the roadside and they were mobbed by children in school uniforms. The school had a big campus and the noise that erupted from the playground was audible outside on the road. The campus entrance was guarded by an old iron gate. If one walked further down the

school gate, as shown in figure 5.2.1, the nursery section could be found housed along with primary and higher secondary sections within that single, big campus.

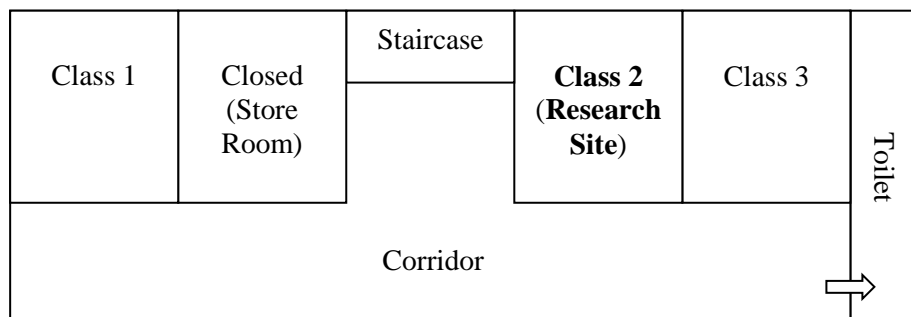
Figure 5.2.1 – Layout of the Corporation Nursery Campus



Note: Not to scale

The nursery section contained three classes (see figure 5.2.2) and they occupied the first floor of one building. In terms of administration, the primary section head teacher was responsible for the nursery section.

Figure 5.2.2 - Layout of the Corporation Nursery Building (First Floor)



Note: Not to scale

The nursery section in the corporation school was established in 1995 and has been collaborating with NGOs since 1998 for service delivery. The NGO present in this nursery at the time of my fieldwork had sponsored a Montessori trained teacher, Montessori materials and a helper for each class for the previous 6 years. Children have been admitted here generally from age 3 and admissions are twice in the

academic year, at the beginning in June and later during the *pooja* festival in September. In this nursery, the Lower Kindergarten (LKG) and Upper Kindergarten (UKG) were merged together and offered as a two year integrated programme. This means that children admitted here would stay two years in the same class and possibly with the same teacher. Those who were admitted at three years of age perhaps could stay little longer, up to 3 years, until they reached age 6 and then could be admitted to the primary section. In the class that I observed, there were 24 children of which 10 were girls. The children in the class were in different age groups, the youngest being 2 ½ years old and the oldest being 5 years old. For some children it was their first year and for others it was their second year in the same class.

The nursery attracts children mainly from the nearby neighbourhood. Children in the morning arrive at school in uniform with their parents, by foot, by bicycle and a few by motorbike. Parents, in general, stop beside the school building and let their children go in on their own, although a few parents accompany their children as far as their classroom on the first floor. Upon arrival, children put their lunch bags and slippers away in the designated racks in the corridor and join others for a conversation. In the meantime the staff team (the government teacher, the Montessori teacher and a helper) organise the classroom and get it ready for use.

A day at the corporation nursery

As shown in table 5.2.1, the day's proceedings in the Corporation nursery begin at 9.30 a.m. with Morning Prayer. Both children and teachers sit on the floor in a circle. The government teacher first says the prayer in Tamil, followed by the Montessori teacher saying the prayer in Sanskrit and children with their eyes closed and their hands pressed together repeat the prayers after the teachers. As the prayer ends, the teachers interact with children for a while, asking the children what they did the previous evening at home, did they take bath, did they brush their teeth, what did they eat in the morning and what would they like to become in the future and so on. Once the conversations were over, the Montessori teacher then demonstrated one or

two Montessori activities, either new or a repeat and/or taught a few topics as in the Montessori syllabus.

Table 5.2.1 - Timetable of the Corporation Nursery

Time	Activity
09.30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
09.30-10.00	Group Session (presentation of Montessori activities)
10.00-11.00	Individual Montessori Session
11.00-11.15	Snacks
11.15-12.00 pm	Group Session (formal teaching or group activities like singing, story telling etc.)
12.00-01.00	Lunch
01.00-02.30	Individual Montessori Session
02.00-03.00	Departure

For instance, on that day that I first visited, the Montessori teacher gave a demonstration on how to pour water from the water jar to the tumblers. The tumblers used for the demonstration were marked with a pointer at different levels. She said, ‘look here carefully, you have to pour water up to the level marked in this tumbler, not less, not more, did you understand’. Children shouted back in unison ‘understood’. She explained everything in an exaggeratedly slow manner - how to place the jar, how to place tumblers, in what order, how to pour water and how to wipe the water off with the sponge in case the water overflows or drops on the floor. She then did a presentation on how to shift grains from one bottle to another by using a funnel. These activities are called Exercises of Practical Life (EPL) in Montessori and they are intended to improve children’s concentration, determination, sensory perception and hand-eye coordination. Children sitting on the floor in the circle observed the demonstration. She then told children to go and stand in front of the map of India which was hanging on the wall in the classroom; children moved with hustle and bustle. She taught the names of the Indian states on the map. This group activity lasted 30 minutes.

Once the group activities were completed, children were instructed to do Montessori activities on their own. On hearing that announcement, children began to stand in a

queue to fetch the mats which were kept in the corner of the classroom. They spread out the 4x2 ½ foot sized mats on a painted line on the floor, leaving a space of 2-3 feet between each mat. As there was insufficient space inside the room a couple of children put their mats in the corridor. The children then grabbed materials from the materials rack kept alongside four walls of the classroom, sat with the materials and did activities individually as they wished. After completing one activity they moved onto another. Some of the activities like rolling *roti* (bread) dough, grating carrot and pounding roasted gram seemed to be very popular with children and they were allocated on a rotation basis by the teacher. During the activities the teachers sat with each and every child individually and guided them in their activities. Some children seemed to lose interest after only 20 minutes while others sustained it for the whole one hour session. After a point, children slowly started to move around to others' mats, got involved in talks with others, went outside, assembled in the toilet for a quick chat. The teachers sometimes did not mind children going outside, but at other times they restored children back in their places in order to make sure that they were not a disturbance to other children.

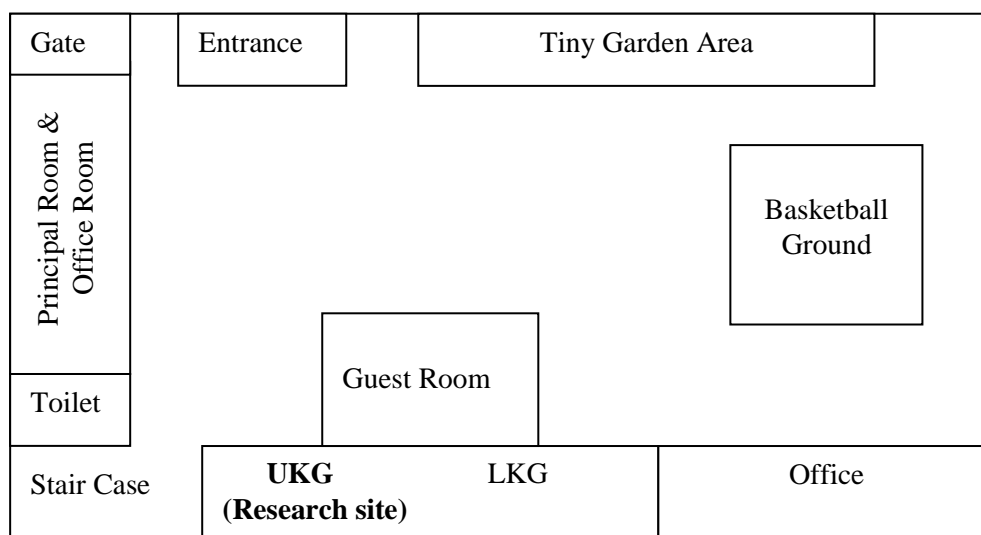
Children slowly gathered one by one in the corridor after they had finished their activities. By 11.00 children were sitting in a line in the corridor and ate snacks that they bought from home in the morning. In addition, the helper distributed a spoon of carrot grated by the children and a spoon of roasted gram which had been pounded by them during their activity session. After 5-10 minutes, there was a call from the teachers to get inside the classroom for the next session. Children slowly moved in and the next hour was devoted to formal teaching. The government teacher taught Tamil and English alphabets and numbers from 20 to 30. It was mainly group instruction. The teacher first wrote on the board and then read out what she had written and the children repeated after her. In between, the Montessori teacher engaged children with storytelling or singing rhymes. At about midday children sat in the corridor facing each other in two rows for lunch. Most of the children ate food on their own and those who were poor at eating were fed by the *Aaya* (helper). With much excitement and cheerfulness they exchanged food with their friends and ate. After lunch children had time to play, talk and fight with their friends in the corridor.

Then at one'o clock children were told to sit again individually with the Montessori materials. Children did activities until their parents came to pick them up. Children slowly dispersed one by one from 2 pm onwards once their parents had come for them.

5.3 A portrait of the private nursery

The nursery was situated in a middle class residential location just off the central city main road. Next to the nursery was a small office, a private hospital and, opposite, there were a couple of shops, a small bakery and a housing apartment and at the back the school was fenced in by individual residences. Like the corporation nursery, the nursery section in this school was attached to the primary and higher secondary sections. Anyone joining here in the nursery can continue schooling until standard grade 12 and finish their school education, if they wish to. All the classes, from LKG upwards as well as the school office, were housed in a single L-shaped three-story building. There was no play space for children other than a single basketball court and, during my observation, I rarely saw children playing on it. For the nursery children, there were some toys, tricycles and balls kept at the entrance of the classroom: only the LKG children used those materials during the school hours.

Figure 5.3.1 – Layout of the Private Nursery (Ground Floor)



Note: Not to scale

As shown in figure 5.3.1, the nursery section was accommodated in a long, single room on the ground floor, with a temporary wooden partition separating the LKG and UKG classes. Children from LKG quite frequently passed through the UKG classroom to go to the toilet and at times they also stopped beside their siblings and talked. The UKG class which I observed for my study was filled with 28 children, nearly half of them were girls and they were all age 5. Considering the school's geographical location one might get an impression that the school would probably cater to a middle class population. In contrast, my observation and interview data suggest that a vast majority of the school population, especially in the nursery section, comes from a working class background: e.g. fathers or mothers work as sales assistants in the local shops, as clerical assistants/drivers/watchmen in small private companies, as auto drivers and as skilled workers and so on.

A day at the private nursery (UKG class)

The school day started at 8.30 in the morning and the nursery section started at 9.00 (see the table 5.3.1 below). Children wearing school uniform, school shoes and school identity cards were dropped off at the school gate at around 8.45 by their parents. Children who lived farther away from the nursery arrived by auto rickshaw with other children.

Table 5.3.1 - Timetable of the Private Nursery

Time	Activity
09.00 am	Morning Prayer
09.00-09.45	Period 1 (English)
09.45-10.30	Period 2 (Tamil)
10.30-10.45	Snacks
10.45-11.30	Period 3 (Mathematics)
11.30-12.00 pm	Lunch
12.00-01.30	Rest (nap time)
01.30-02.30	Period 4 (Social Science)

After arrival, children left their lunch bags on the floor at the front corner of the classroom and arranged their 3 row x 2 column seating space on their own. They were, if need be, assisted by the teacher and helpers in pulling the study desk or

placing the chairs in a row. Children kept their school bags on their own backs in the child size chair they sit in, and catch up with their friends for a quick chat.

At 9.00, following the instruction from the teacher, they stood up for Morning Prayer. They sang the Tamil Anthem and then the teacher read out a couplet from *Thirukkural* (1330 rhyming Tamil couplet) and explained its meaning. At the end of this process they exchanged their morning greetings in English. Then, it was time for taking attendance: the teacher called children's names out one by one loudly from the attendance register, children formally replied back 'yes, miss' just as children do in the higher classes. The total number of children present and absent on that day was counted and written on the right top corner of the blackboard. The roll call was over. Children then quickly removed their homework notebooks from their bags and kept them on their desk; the teacher went around and corrected homework notebooks. Children who had failed to do homework were asked to stand in the corner of the classroom for 10-15 minutes.

Once this daily routine was completed, the focus moved to teaching. The morning schedule until 11.30 a.m. was roughly divided into 3 periods. However, the timetable observed in the classroom was flexible: one day the teacher taught English in the first hour whilst the next day she started with Mathematics. Similarly, some days children were allowed to eat their snacks before 10.00 in the morning whereas on other days they had their snacks at 10.15 or 10.30. It was up to the teacher to decide what subject to teach or when to allow children to eat their snacks. On the very first day of my observation, for instance, in the first period the teacher taught 'all' sound words in English – ball, tall, wall, call, fall, hall, stall, mall and small and so on. She wrote these words on the blackboard and read them out loudly; children in unison repeated after her. Then she told them to write these words in their notebooks. While children were writing she moved around to monitor how children were writing. After they completed writing they showed it to the teacher for correction. In the second period the teacher taught Tamil. At around 10.30 children were allowed to eat snacks that they had brought. After the snack break, a very similar exercise

continued, but on a different subject, with the teacher instructing about numbers and simple addition in mathematics.

Some children finished writing as early as possible and enjoyed the rest of the time, while others mixed writing and talking for the whole period. Throughout this writing session children talked, laughed and had playful fights with each other. When they went beyond a certain limit they received a warning from the teacher in her high pitched tone; children observed silence for few minutes, but after a few minutes the noise resumed. At 11.30, children ate their lunch where they were sitting. As soon as they finished their lunch they talked with their friends for a while and then they rested their heads on their study desks for a nap. The post-lunch session was between 1.30 to 2.30 pm and children undertook the same exercise, this time with social studies. After 2.30pm, children slowly disappeared home with their parent or auto driver.

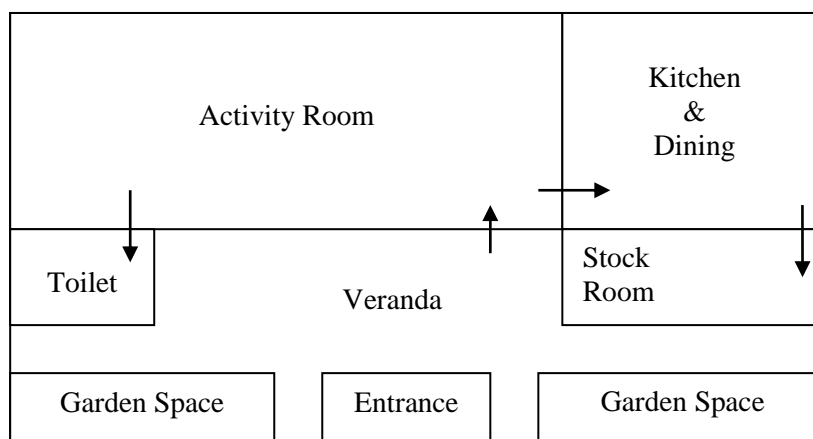
5.4 A portrait of the ICDS Anganwadi centre

The ICDS Anganwadi centre, which provides childcare and preschool education for children aged 2-5 years old, was located in one of the working class neighbourhoods of central Chennai. The neighbourhood was one of the biggest in the city and physically well connected to all basic amenities: the government college, the corporation school, the Anglo-Indian higher secondary school, shops and a market all in the near vicinity. Unlike several other Anganwadi centres that function on an *institutional* model, this Anganwadi centre functions on an *habitation* model. The difference here is that in the institutional model the Anganwadi centre is normally attached to the school, whereas in the habitation model the Anganwadi centre is run separately within the locality or community (see Sargent, 1968). As the Anganwadi centre was the focal point for all ICDS service delivery, it provided, besides childcare and preschool education, a range of services to its target population such as supplementary nutrition (for children aged between 0-6 and adolescent girls), immunization, health check-ups (prenatal and postnatal), health education (for adolescent girls and nursing mothers) and referral services. The Anganwadi worker

with the assistance from the *Aaya* (helper) runs the centre from 8 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

The centre operates in an detached concrete building. At the front it was fortified with a two meters high old compound wall and a small gate. Inside the gate there was barely five metres between the compound wall and the building. This small space (see Figure 5.4.1) nevertheless was converted into a beautiful garden where there were crotons, rose flowers, small plants and beetle leaves. They were the attraction in the centre for visitors. Inside the building, the floor was newly tiled and the walls were colourfully painted with Tamil and English alphabets, numbers, flowers, birds, animals, vehicles, shapes and colours. A decorative tree which carries every child's name and date of birth in separate cards, a fish tank, a 21 inch TV, toys, play materials and drawing books, were arranged in an orderly fashion in the activity room on a three foot cement slab. There were mini-chairs for the children, but they were stowed away in the storeroom for fear that children may fall down or fight with them and they were used only on important occasions.

Figure 5.4.1 – Layout of the ICDS Anganwadi Centre



Note: Not to scale

A day at the Anganwadi centre

The centre opened at 8.00 in the morning. Soon after opening, the helper arranged everything for the day and then went to buy vegetables from the nearby market for

lunch for children. The worker would arrive a few minutes later. At 9.00, children dressed in colourful outfits began to arrive on foot, escorted mostly by their mothers. The morning farewells at the Anganwadi centre were emotional. The mothers, in order to cajole their children inside, bought them chocolates or crisps in the morning. Some of the mothers sat and conversed with their children on the veranda for a while and then with a concerned look said goodbye to their children. As the timing was flexible at the Anganwadi centre, children arrived slowly one by one. Those who arrived earlier played on the veranda, ate a snack, or sat and talked with their friends in the activity room.

According to the official record, there were 25 children enrolled in the centre. However the daily attendance varied from day to day. On the first day of my visit, by 10.00, eighteen children had arrived and the worker assembled all the children in the activity room. Children along with the worker sang the Morning Prayer. When the prayer ended, the worker had a conversation with children for some time and then she started teaching rhymes to the children. At 11.00, *Vijayan* and his mother came. He was a new entrant to the centre admitted a few months previously. As the centre admits children throughout the year at any time there might be one or two newcomers in the centre. When he was brought to the centre *Vijayan* was crying. “*Vijayan* I will give you chocolate, don’t cry, you sit by me”, the worker tried to console him. Then the worker turned to her mother and said “You go, no need to worry, I will take care of him, try to bring him by 9.00 from tomorrow”. While she was talking to the mother, children become restless, so the worker directed children to do drawing and colouring. Children picked up the old drawing books, story books from the shelf and sat in small groups. In the group exercise, the younger children were guided by older children. Most of the learning materials in the centre, including the used drawing books, the fish tank and old toys, were obtained through local sponsorship. The worker was proud that many mothers and people in that locality were her old students and that they had been generous in sponsoring things for the centre. While children were doing drawing and colouring, the worker immersed herself with the administrative record work. After a point, children picked up the plastic balls from the shelf and played on the veranda.

On record, the Anganwadi centre's timetable for preschool education is as shown in Table 5.4.1. During my observation however I seldom saw them practising the timetable as prescribed. It was obvious in my observation that the centre was flexibly organised according to the availability of the staff team and its resources.

Table 5.4.1 - Timetable of the ICDS Anganwadi Centre

Time	Activity
10.00 am	Morning Prayer
10.00-10.10	Prayer and Imaginative Play
10.10-10.20	Open Conversation
10.20-10.40	Cognitive Development
10.40-11.00	Language Development (rhymes)
11.00-11.30	Creative work/Indoor Play (painting, drawing, instrument making)
11.30-11.50	Outdoor Play
11.50-12.00 pm	Story Telling, Acting, Puppetry
12.00-02.30	Lunch
12.30-02.30	Rest (nap time)
02.30 - 4.00	Departure

After the morning session, at around 12.00 children were served freshly cooked mixed rice containing rice, lentil and vegetables, with an egg provided two days in a week. After lunch children would take a nap on the mats on the floor. From 2.30 pm onwards children slowly left one by one with their parents. Some parents collected their children early in the afternoon around 2.00 or 2.30 whereas others picked up their children after their work, as late as 3.00 or 4.00 in the afternoon.

5.5. Pedagogy/curriculum, teacher's background and funding

Pedagogy/curriculum – The corporation nursery followed a combination of formal and Montessori approaches in practice. The curriculum for formal instruction in the corporation nursery covered mainly teaching of alphabets, numbers and rhymes. The Montessori curriculum, which was delivered for the maximum time in the day in the corporation nursery, was based on Maria Montessori's educational philosophy. The underlying assumption of Montessori's (1912) philosophy is the importance of

children's liberty in the learning process. She believed that education should be child-led and in the process the child should be encouraged "to explore his environment and develop his own inner resources" (Montessori, 1912:xxi). The basic aim of this approach is to educate a child in a positive and stimulating environment. It further believes that the child should be given choice and freedom in learning and properly guided to become an independent and self-disciplined learner (Smith, 1912). The individuality of the child should be respected throughout the learning process. Learning need not necessarily be centred on subjects or lessons; rather it should encourage the child to experience the environment and to explore his/her whole being (Isaacs, 2010).

In the Montessori approach, the role of the teacher is more of an observer, guide and interpreter than a teacher (Feez, 2010). The teacher has to prepare a classroom which gives every child the freedom to choose and work independently with the learning materials for exploration and self-discovery (Lillard, 2007). Without much interference, the teacher should guide children to develop their inner potential through purposeful Montessori activities (Lillard, 2007). In the classroom, the teacher is supposed to observe children's interaction with the learning materials and interpret those interactions in accordance with their individual developmental needs and stage. In essence, the teacher should act as a reflective practitioner who sensitively addresses the developmental needs of individual children in the learning environment. The developmental needs of children in the early years are divided into two groups: 0-3 years and 3-6 years (Feez, 2010). Accordingly, the activities that support the individual qualities in children are ordered and classified in compliance with the stage-wise developmental needs of children, from sensory perception to developing an interest in reading, writing and numbers (Isaacs, 2010). Ideally, the Montessori classroom should reflect some kind of aesthetic features – a nicely decorated and ordered environment which entices children (Feez, 2010; Isaacs, 2010).

Along this line, the Montessori curriculum in the corporation nursery was divided into four main categories: (1) Exercises of Practical Life (EPL) (2) Sensorial (3)

Language and (4) Mathematics. The EPL activities are supposed to be the initial activities in the Montessori curriculum that facilitate smooth transition of the child from home to nursery. The EPL activities focus on a range of topics that include: (1) preliminary activities – folding, opening, removing, carrying, rolling, turning; (2) care of the person – washing hands, combing hair, buttons, zippers, buckles, lacing; (3) care of the environment – washing, dusting, arranging, mopping, sweeping, setting; (4) grace and courtesy – introducing, greeting, presenting, expressing, yawning, coughing; (5) control of movement – walking in a line, sitting on the mat, silence. The purpose of EPL exercises is to make the child feel at home in a comfortable environment. Children will also feel familiar with a few of the activities and they eventually get attracted to other activities. The Sensorial activities used different blocks, rods, figures, cylinders, cube and a wooden geometric box to improve children's senses. Similarly, the language related activities focused on reading, writing and oral language (phonetics), while rods, cards, charts, bead frame and geometric box were used for learning Mathematics.

The private nursery followed a formal academic curriculum based on the Tamil Nadu Matriculation Board Syllabus. The philosophy that underpins this curriculum was about moving from the known to the unknown through an interactive approach that steers away from rote learning¹³. The curriculum was designed mainly to help children to develop reading and writing readiness, life skills, cognitive abilities, fine motor skills and language development. The syllabus¹⁴ outline prescribed by the Matriculation board for UKG was as follows:

1. General

A holistic learning experience of at least eight or more of the following topics: Family and Myself, Fruits, Vegetables, Clothing, Vehicles, Animals (Pet and Wild), Birds, Insects, Flowers. (More topics can be chosen according to the interest of the children).

2. Language I (English) Development (reading and writing)

3. Mathematics

4. Physical development

5. Creative Activities

¹³ This was extracted from the UKG text book.

¹⁴ The syllabus for UKG was accessed at the Government of Tamil Nadu, Directorate of Matriculation Schools website <http://dge.tn.gov.in/matricsyllabus/class00/class00UK.pdf> on 30th January 2013.

6. Action songs (Approximately 50 songs)
7. Stories
8. Science experiences
9. Moral and value education
10. Role play, dramatization and drama and movement
11. Field trips
12. Language II Development (mother tongue)

However, different schools follow different textbooks that are designed by different publishers following general guidelines. The guidelines for the Matriculation board syllabus state that the methodology used for teaching should be activity-based, participatory, age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate. It further states that:

“Compartmentalization is only for the convenience of planning; so teaching through subjects/periods such as mathematics, science, language etc. is unsuitable in these early years. This approach to learning, also called ‘thematic’ or ‘unit approach’ focuses on a total learning experience, which engages the whole child (extracts from a document on Pre-Primary Stage: Expected Outcome¹⁵)”

The document further suggests that the objective of education should be achieving all-round development of the child - social, personal, emotional, aesthetic, language, cognitive, sensory and physical and motor. Moreover, the learning in the classroom should incorporate and co-ordinate all areas of learning – readiness in reading, writing and numbers.

As far as the ICDS Anganwadi centre is concerned, the care and preschool aspects of children aged between three-to six years old was directed towards the provision of an informal, joyful and stimulating environment for learning, with an emphasis on nutritional support for growth and development. The ICDS project document further stated that:

“The early learning component of the ICDS is a significant input for providing a sound foundation for cumulative lifelong learning and development. It also contributes to the universalization of

¹⁵ The document ‘pre-primary stage: expected outcome’ was accessed at the Government of Tamil Nadu, Directorate of Matriculation Schools website <http://dge.tn.gov.in/matricsyllabus/preprimary.pdf> on 30th January 2013.

primary education, by providing to the child the necessary preparation for primary schooling and offering substitute care to younger siblings, thus freeing the older ones – especially girls – to attend school (extracts from ICDS project document¹⁶)”

The syllabus for preschool education was decided at the local level, that is, at the project level. For instance, there were twelve projects in Chennai and the monthly syllabus was decided in the staff meeting with the consensus of all Anganwadi workers and project officer at the beginning of the year. The syllabus followed in the ICDS Anganwadi at the time of my observation was as follows.

January – Religious Festivals
February – Parts of Body
March – Vehicles
April – Sea
May – Monsoon Season
June – Animals
July – Birds
August – National Festivals
September – Flowers
October – Vegetables
November – Fruits
December – Revision

Though the syllabus was decided at the project level the responsibility mainly lay with workers for preparing the learning materials. This was described by the Anganwadi worker as follows:

“They leave the responsibility with us, so, we have to create materials, um, it is tiring and time consuming. I think they should give proper learning materials. It will facilitate our work. I developed all these materials on my own, um, I mobilized some materials from NGOs, um, some from other sponsors. They (from the office) give only crayons, clay and a few drawing books, but, that is not enough for all children for a year. They just give topics for each month, um, we have to sit in a group in the meeting and develop syllabus and materials for each and every month (Interview with ICDS Anganwadi worker)”

¹⁶ The extract was removed from the Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development website <http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm> on 30th January 2013.

The worker was of the view that preparing learning materials for every month was a tedious process and the government should consider providing more materials to the centre to facilitate preschool education.

Teacher(s)/worker qualification – There were two teachers in the corporation nursery: (1) a government appointed teacher and (2) an NGO-sponsored Montessori teacher. The government teacher had nearly 28 years of experience in formal teaching including a few years of teaching experience in a private school. As far as qualification is concerned, she had completed two years of a Diploma in Elementary Teacher Education and was undergoing one day in a week in-service Montessori training. The Montessori teacher in the corporation nursery had an undergraduate degree and worked briefly in a private school. She had been practising Montessori for seven years now after her formal training on Montessori. In the private nursery the teacher in the UKG class held a bachelors degree in commerce. Prior to joining this school she had worked in another private school for several years. In the ICDS, the Anganwadi worker had been working in the same centre for 27 years since her appointment. She had completed SSLC (10th standard) and underwent three months training programme about ICDS prior to her appointment. Apart from that, the staff in the ICDS had to attend a one week refresher course at regular intervals and she had done her last refresher course two years previously. The educational qualification of the helpers in the institutions varied. While the helpers in the corporation nursery and ICDS did not have any formal education, the helper in the private nursery had completed primary education.

Funding - In terms of finances, the corporation nursery and ICDS Anganwadi were funded by the Government. While the corporation nursery¹⁷ was funded by the local body, which was Chennai Corporation, the ICDS was funded by both central and state governments. In the past, the ICDS programme in Tamil Nadu was partly funded by the World Bank from the early 1980s to 1997. At present, the central and state government contributes 50:50 for supplementary nutrition and 90:10

¹⁷ As mentioned in the last chapter, the corporation nursery runs on public-private partnership and the trust sponsors the Montessori teacher's and helper's salary in addition to providing Montessori materials. The government teacher's salary and other infrastructure were funded by the local body.

respectively for non nutritional components to the ICDS budget¹⁸. The private nursery was completely self-funded and it operated on the revenue generated from pupils through monthly tuition fees.

5.6 Characteristics of the parental group

The baseline data collected from parents at the time of my interview show that the vast majority of children in this study hail from a similar social background. Based on socio-demographic characteristics I can roughly categorise them as a low income social group, but there were differences mainly in the income and educational qualifications of parents across institutions. Parents of children studying in the private nursery were slightly better off in their education and income levels in comparison to parents of children studying in the other two institutions. For instance, while the monthly mean income of parents was 4900 rupees in the ICDS Anganwadi and 6500 rupees in the corporation nursery, it was 8200 rupees in the private nursery¹⁹. The slight income difference in the private nursery is explained by parents being able to afford to send their children to paid educational services.

With regard to mothers' education, nine out of twelve mothers interviewed in the private nursery said that they had completed either class 10 or 12, whereas in the corporation nursery and ICDS Anganwadi only three had completed class 10 or 12. In terms of employment, eight out of twelve mothers interviewed in the private nursery were un/non-employed, whereas in the ICDS Anganwadi, eight out of twelve mothers said that they worked as domestic assistants in the nearby middle class residential apartments. In the corporation nursery, half of the mothers interviewed, that is, six out of twelve, worked as tailor, office assistant and so on.

¹⁸ Ministry of Women and Child Development website <http://wcd.nic.in/icds.htm>, accessed at 28th February 2013).

¹⁹ The per capita monthly income of Tamil Nadu for the year 2010-11 is 6082.75 rupees at current price. (Government of Tamil Nadu website <http://www.tn.gov.in/deptst/Ecoindicator.htm> accessed at 01 March, 2013). This shows where the study participants stand in comparison to the average state per capita income. However, it is important to note that the per capita income in Chennai could be higher when compared to other districts in Tamil Nadu, because of Chennai's high socio-economic development. Also, there is no median income available at the state or national level.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the context such as the location, physical description of the classroom, daily schedule, curriculum, teachers' qualifications, funding and parental background of three different early years settings studied in this research. In the following chapters I will explore the connections between the empirical material and the context.

6 Educable Subjects

6.1 Introduction

In chapter two I mentioned that while most of the literature in India has taken a modernist approach using normative standards and rating scales to examine the various kinds of child development, little of it uses postmodernist/poststructuralist approaches to challenge the universal conception of childhood in the early years educational process. There I also underscored that there is a notable absence in the literature in India of Foucaultian analysis of early years institutions. Later, in chapter three, I argued that studying the interplay of subjects, identity and cultural capital in relation to pedagogy in the early years settings is equally as important as studying children's agency for understanding the complexity involved in the process.

To this end, this chapter will describe the 'subject' formation in the early years institutions (research question one). It uses Foucault's descriptions of 'subject' to explore how active subjects emerge through everyday practices. Foucault (1982) describes the concept of subject in two forms: the subject constructed in discursive practices through subjection, and the emergence of subject through self-ethical formation. As explained in chapter three, Foucault's notion of self-ethical formation or self-disciplining was critiqued for downplaying people's ability to negotiate power relationships (see Burkit, 1999; Danaher *et al.*, 2000). Taking this as a starting point, the chapter seeks to extend this argument by combining childhood literature with Foucault's ideas on subject and power. Empirical literature in childhood studies demonstrates how children show resistance in institutions in order to reconcile power differences (Lofdahl and Hagglund, 2007; Markstrom and Hallden, 2009; Robinson and Kellett, 2004). Therefore, with the use of empirical data, the following sections will analyse how the educable subjects in the institutions emerge in pedagogical practices through subjection, resistance, and appropriation.

6.2 Subjects in the institutions

One recurring theme that dominated my field notes across the three institutions was discipline and control. While discipline and control were enforced in all three institutions, the motive, the pedagogy, the role of the teacher(s)/care worker, the nature of negotiation of forces, and the outcomes - all seemed to be slightly different. Foucault elucidated the analysis of ‘disciplinary society’, especially the prison system, with an exemplar of ‘diagram’ (Foucault, 1977:205). If we consider, for example, an early years institution as a diagram, the assemblage of the institution integrates its contents (children), and finalises its functions (care/education). While analysing Foucault’s ‘disciplinary society’, Deleuze (2006) however suggests that the diagram is extremely fluid, it constantly produces functions, resists or challenges power relations, and confronts the system in a way that is likely to create change. Applying this exemplar of diagram, this chapter will analyse how a particular pedagogy serves as a device of regulation and control, how children and teacher(s)/worker are positioned in a particular pedagogical power structure, and how the negotiation between forces in practice produces active educable subjects in everyday pedagogy.

6.2.1 Activity centred subjects – corporation nursery

As shown in chapter five, the curriculum practised in the corporation nursery was a mix of Montessori and formal approaches of which the teachers felt very proud. The teachers held a strong conviction that education should be child friendly and it should not put academic pressure on children. Children, in their views, should not be forced to do anything against their own interests, and the pedagogy/curriculum should provide freedom and choice for learning. This was summed up by one of the teachers in my interview as follows:

“Education should be an assistance to life, should teach you how to live a life, it’s not like, um, you have to study this much at this age, that much at this age, no, that doesn’t matter...You know how xxx came (to the nursery), now he seems to be happy; I also feel happy about him, um, that is what important (in education) I

suppose. A child should be happy, he should grow up as a good child, should become a good citizen in the future. Overall, um, I think this method is the best to develop the personality. She does what she likes, she likes what she does. Once she likes, um, then only she will do an activity, she doesn't do anything against her own wish, if somebody forces someone then you cannot expect any creativity in what they do (Interview with Teacher 01) ”

The extract above sums up the teacher's perception about education, which to some extent resembles pragmatic and utilitarian principles. The notion of happy childhood here is linked to the characteristics of child-centred education such as happiness, personality development and so on. In the teacher's view, education must be a useful tool for leading a good life and laying the foundation for happy childhood. The learning process is moreover associated, as Burman (2008) suggests, with the ideals of individual readiness and choice of the child. The teacher here also drew an analogy between choice/freedom and individual creativity. Considering the institution's educational philosophy there is no surprise that creativity is linked to individual cognitive abilities. The literature however argues that creativity is not only individual, it is also collective, and it can happen through process, dialogue, brainstorming, consultation, group activity, facilitation and so on (Faulkner and Coates, 2011; Misztal, 2007; Sawyer, 2012; Sefton-Green, 2000).

Although the curriculum followed in the corporation nursery was child-centred, and it valued individuals as unique human beings, at times, as will be shown later in this chapter, it seemed to be incompatible with practice, especially when it came to disciplining bodies. The Montessori approach itself, as explained in chapter five, was bounded by some structure and therefore it intrinsically demanded that children function in isolation with some level of self-discipline. On a typical day, children did have different bodily expressions and movements in different activities. During lunch time, snack break, and to some extent in the group activity, children came together collectively and interacted with each other. Otherwise, children operated mostly in compartmentalised spaces under adult supervision. This reminded me of Walkerdine's (1998) view on child-centred pedagogy. Walkerdine (1998) notes that child-centred pedagogy not only constitutes observation and monitoring but also eventually produces a new form of childhood or subjects. So, is the approach too

individualistic and does it transform children into a new form in the process? The teacher's response was:

“Erm, activities are meant for, um, to develop children becoming independent. And, I don't see any harm in that. Yes, we allow the child to do everything independently, but, it doesn't mean that the child has to prepare tea or coffee on his own at home. We are not teaching for that, we teach them to develop their self-confidence, they should feel that they can do it everything alone, um, for that only we teach. If she likes, if she has the confidence, only then she will take up a particular activity, to that extent she will become independent. Our aim is not for tomorrow (future), I am teaching them to develop their self-confidence, that's how we have to look at it (Interview with Teacher 01)”

So, the purpose of doing educational activities in this nursery are envisioned as making an independent and self-confident child, and it is implied that self-confidence will enhance a child's ability to make a choice of his/her own in the learning process. The aim of the pedagogical approach was not futuristic, but to make the child 'self-confident', something that was thought of from the perspective of 'being' a child. As my field work progressed, however, I came to notice how individualistic some children were in the learning process. Sometimes they valued materials more than the human relationships. The following example will extend this analysis further:

“*Suja* was doing an activity - making different shapes with dough and wheat flour. The teacher called her by name and said she was not supposed to do that and it was *Prakash*'s turn for that activity today. She instructed *Prakash* to go and get the materials from *Suja*. *Prakash* went to her mat and without asking a word snatched the materials very rudely as if it was his possession that she has taken away (field notes, 14th visit)”

As children's interactions with others were curtailed to the minimum, and their contact was mostly with the Montessori materials, some children eventually became possessive towards the learning objects. As shown above in the extract, there was a bit of competition between children for possession of certain learning objects,

particularly the popular ones. This shows how much children value learning objects over peer relationships at times.

Foremost, in the corporation nursery ‘discipline’ appeared as an integral part of the pedagogy and a way of life. In one of the conversations I had with a teacher, she said “Discipline is not only essential for early life it is one of the qualities that is required throughout one’s life to be successful”, (field notes, 17th visit). Therefore, it was instilled in children that they should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner almost all the time in all activities. The body discipline of children: how to sit, how to walk, how to eat, and how to talk, were taught and reiterated every now and then during the activities. As the children in this nursery mainly come from underprivileged communities, one teacher said “it is our moral responsibility to teach children good behaviours” (field notes, 17th visit). On that ground, extra emphasis was given to teaching children how to present their bodies in a culturally appropriate manner. The example below will illustrate this:

“The teacher talked about the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene after Morning Prayer. She advised children to brush their teeth and take a bath every day in the morning before they come to school (field notes, 3rd visit)”

As I described in chapter five, although the Montessori curriculum does put an emphasis on ‘care of the person’ and ‘control of the movement’ within the classroom, advising children about cleanliness and personal hygiene was something beyond the scope of the curriculum. This was something unique that I found in this classroom that the teachers did according to their dispositions as a reflexive practitioner which they felt very relevant to the context. Significantly, the moral values and body conditioning that were imparted in the nursery were not only through group instruction; sometimes they were enforced at an individual level:

“The teacher noted that *Ajith* has got long hair and it repeatedly fell down on his face while he was doing the activity. *Ajith* just kept on adjusting his hair. Seeing this the teacher said, ‘*Ajith* go and tell your father to cut your hair. The hair is falling on your face’ (field notes, 10th visit)”

This indicates that the control and regulation of individual bodies in the classroom are imposed on matters beyond prescribed curriculum. To some extent, control is exercised beyond the child; and, it is extended here to the child's father in an insidious way. What I observed during my field work was that children in the institution were advised every now and then throughout the day in the classroom on how to behave. For example, one day in the lunch time:

“The teacher saw a girl squeezing her food with her hand. Considering that an uncultured way of eating, the teacher said to the girl, ‘this is not the way you are supposed to eat. Don’t squeeze the food too much. Take the food gently with your fingers and eat’ (field notes, 7th visit)”

In the example above one can see the resemblance of the monitorial school system where the purpose of schooling was to change the habits of children who were affected by crime or pauperism, by placing them under constant moral regulation through regular supervision and engaging them continuously in activity (Walkerline, 1998). This type of body civilisation happens in the institution perhaps based on the belief that these young poor children should learn to attune their behaviour in concurrence with the dominant values and culture (Vinovskis, 1996). Thus, the physical body of the child was put under pressure to function according to the expectations of the teacher – the teacher's imagination of an ideal social body.

The inculcation of values or good habits is not something that all the Montessori centres or Montessori teachers in India will do with the children to the same extent. I noticed from my observation that the level of insistence on imparting values and discipline varied between different classes practising Montessori in the same nursery. This shows how significant the individually and locally constructed meaning of terms such as education, discipline and values are in shaping the pedagogy, and also its effects on every day educational practice on children in the nursery, particularly on matters related to body civilisation and producing docile bodies.

In hindsight, is the structure in Montessori too rigid in basically calling for a certain amount of body control and spatial individuality in children during activities? I asked the teacher. The teacher asserted:

“That seems one of the major criticisms in this approach, but I think a certain amount of physical discipline is required for mental discipline (Interview with teacher 01)”

What I can infer from the teacher’s statement here is her explanation of physical discipline having some parallel with Hindu philosophy which says both mind and body are intrinsically connected to each other and “discipline is not simply manifest as an objectification of the body but equally as a subjectification of the self” (Alter, 1992:92-93). It is assumed that the restriction of bodily movements, bodily desires and senses of the body will automatically result in disciplining the functioning of the mental system. Discipline is embodied and mental discipline can be achieved through physical disciplining as well.

Negotiations and dilemmas in pedagogical practice – corporation nursery

There were a few areas where the negotiations or dilemmas in the pedagogical practices were palpable in regard to discipline and control. The clash between the ideals of Montessori philosophy and discipline in everyday classroom practice was both intrinsic and also explicit. At times, the conflict was overt, especially when children were forcibly asked to do certain activities in the classroom against their wishes. For instance,

“*Deena* had been sitting with a material for a long time in the morning session. The helper noticed that the child has been sitting with the same material for more than 30-40 minutes and said ‘hey, why are you doing the same activity since morning, go and do some other activity’ (field notes, 5th visit)”

Non-interference is one of the basic principles in Montessori. However, the helper here is under the impression that the child has to do different activities in each session and that the child is deliberately delaying the session by pretending as if

he/she is doing the activity. The helper's intention of making the child do more activities however clashes with child's own interest.

At other times, the clash was inherent. As Burman (2008) suggests, the teachers in the classroom found difficulties overseeing the individual development of a class of around 20 children during activity time or having an individual interaction with everyone. The example below will help us to understand the complexity the teachers faced in everyday pedagogical practice. One day:

“When the teacher was with a child, two, three children called her for help. In response to their demand she said ‘I can’t attend you all at the same time, wait, I will come one by one’ (field notes, 9th visit)”

The example above shows how at times the teachers seemed to be in a helpless position to deal with the pedagogical needs of many children at a given time. Although they worked with children on a rotation basis, on some occasions, when the demand was particularly high, they were forced to use their power to silence children. So here the authority of the teacher is used to nullify the demands of children and to make them docile.

In contrast, on a few occasions, I saw the teachers respond to the situation with practical solutions like the one below:

“The teacher observed that *Mano* was struggling and doing the activity completely in a wrong manner. She was with the other child at that time so she asked his neighbour to teach him how to do it (field notes, 5th visit)”

This suggests that though the normative curriculum is individualistic, as Deleuze (2004) notes, the teachers function with their own pedagogical reasoning and judgement, and they move around with lot of fluidity and flow within the system. They also effectively deploy their power in pedagogical practices that suits their need and demand. So how does the curriculum basically work? As Graue (2005) asks, does the teacher construct the curriculum based on the needs of an individual child or

does the teacher move the child to a curriculum that is deemed appropriate to the teacher's needs? The teacher's response was:

“Erm, look at xxx she is good at arithmetic and language, but if I tell her to do arithmetic I am sure she will not do it. She will do only what she likes, she prefers to do simple EPL activities, but she is extremely good at arithmetic and language...(we) assess the child only to develop methodology for teaching, for example, if a child is timid, if a child needs close observation, then, you can assess the child to find out what approach can be suitable, that too, um, the assessment should be internal (Interview with Teacher 01)”

What we can interpret from the above paragraph is how children are classified within the developmental paradigm and how the learning environments are constructed according to their developmentality. The basic assumption of child-centred pedagogy is that children possess inherent capacity and should be allowed to develop at their own speed and on their own path to become autonomous and rational adults (Aitken, 2001). In the above extract, the teacher's statement implicates two different curricula - a choice-based curriculum for a normal child and the adult-constructed curriculum for a timid child. The teacher's statement also highlights the potential conflict between a child's needs and a child's choice. Child-centred education functions with the belief that the choice should be based on a child's interest; at the same time, the educational opportunities should meet individual child's needs. Here, interest is subjective, but the developmental needs are assessed to some extent objectively by the teacher while organising the classroom or assessing individual progress in the Montessori curriculum. As Jones and others (2012) note, the teacher's position in the Montessori classroom is both active and passive. On the one hand, the teacher has to allow the child to do activities independently on his/her own and, on the other hand, the teacher should constantly assess/monitor the developmental needs of the child to provide new learning opportunities. The dilemma here is that the teacher cannot force the child to do activities that suit the child's developmental needs, if that is very much against the child's wish.

The other challenge that was quite often faced in the nursery was how to deal with children that are not ready (developmental readiness) to engage with activities.

“*Venki*, a new entrant and youngest of all in the classroom always prefers to sit with someone. The teachers knew that he is young and not ready to sit on his own but at the same time they struggled to contain him during the activity which is very much individualised. As a last resort the teachers let him to sit with others during the activities on few occasions (field notes, 15th visit)”

The extract above is another example of the dilemmas faced in pedagogical practices. Children in Montessori are supposed to do activities on their own; however, the teacher here offered a practical solution according to the demands of the situation. Knowing that the boy was not interested in doing individual activity, the teacher gently allowed the boy to join others provided the boy was not a disturbance to them.

Sometimes, as shown below, the teachers were in a helpless situation and they could not criticise or regulate children’s behaviour:

“After the lunch time children started to relax, play, chat with each other on the veranda. All of a sudden, a friendly conversation between *Megala* and *Rama* erupted into a fight and they began to swear at each other. Standing close to the door the teacher saw them using foul language and looked at them in dismay (field notes, 5th visit)”

The teacher here is almost in an ambiguous position. She was taken aback for a moment and she did not know how to react to this particular situation. Her strong belief in Montessori principles prevented her from being harsh or punishing children for their wrong behaviour, but at the same time, she seemed to be in a tricky position to handle the situation.

So, in any sense, is the Montessori practice in conflict with the local culture considering the fact that these children from neighbourhood background always live in coexistence at home? I asked the teacher. She said:

“No, I don’t think so, in general, um, children will not sit and do any activities for long time and this is the universal phenomenon (Interview with teacher 01)”

Her statement here reverberates with Aitken’s (2001) argument that, at times, the child-centred education puts the practitioners in a delicate position when they were not allowed to go beyond the notion of ‘the child’ prescribed in the curriculum. Although, on many occasions, the teacher acted as a reflective practitioner in the nursery by integrating local ideas with Montessori philosophy, in a situation like the above, she refused to alter or critique her own perception about ‘the child’ prescribed in the Montessori curriculum. The teacher’s firm belief that the Montessori approach is an apt method for children’s development and learning, thus at times put the teacher in a position of not going beyond or challenging the normative curriculum. So, children’s boredom here is described as a universal quality so as to downplay the significance of local conditions.

Children’s power/resistance – corporation nursery

Contrary to teachers’ beliefs that child-centred education matches children’s choices and interests, as shown in the examples above, children were sometimes overtly or covertly forced to do activities against their wishes. As a result, children used different forms of resistance to overcome the control exercised in the classroom. My observation revealed that the Montessori curriculum practised in the nursery was not always enticing for children; therefore, children used different tactics to negotiate the power implied in the structure, especially with teachers. The common tactic predominantly used by children was to just pretend that they were doing the activity:

“*Thyagu* was assembling the broken eagle pieces (puzzle). After 5 minutes, he looked disinterested and just looking around what other children were doing. When I asked why he didn’t do the activity, he replied it was boring. But whenever the teacher looked at his side he acted as if he was doing something (field notes, 7th visit)”

The data show that child-centred education, as the literature suggests, creates the illusion that children have choice in the learning process when actually the 'will' is imprisoned by the structure through the pre-text of freedom (Cannella, 1997). Children are obliged to do activities in the individual session though they have liberty to select activities from a range of learning properties. However, what I noted during my observation was that children did not always enjoy doing activities without talking to anyone in a 'laboratory' like condition. Thus, like *Thyagu*, children used different strategies to overcome this subjection in the classroom. On some occasions I have seen children simply keeping materials in front but not doing anything until they receive a warning from the teacher or else use the materials with a completely different purpose. The extract below will demonstrate this:

“*Janaki* was sitting with matching objects (pairing-up fruits). After a while she started playing with the objects with her own imagination. When I asked her what she was doing, she said with a smile ‘just like that’ (field notes, 7th visit)”

The other strategy that was used by quite a handful of children was to avoid the spatial surveillance of teachers. Due to the paucity of space in the classroom the teachers normally advised some students to sit outside on the veranda. Children who wanted to evade the attention of teachers mostly seemed to prefer sitting on the veranda. At times, children moved around inside the classroom pretending that they were picking up the materials from the material rack. They assembled in small groups - a group of two or three - and talk with each other until they got a call from the teacher asking them to go back to their places. On some occasions, I saw children sneak out of the classroom and stand in the veranda or toilet for a chat. For example, one day:

“The individual activity started at 10.00am. At around 10.25 children slowly started to go out one by one and they gathered in the toilet and veranda for a quick meeting (field notes, 10th visit)”

The example above illustrates how children negotiated the governmentality of spatial segregation and surveillance in the classroom. Children expressed their resistance through bodily movements. It seemed that the spatial individuality bothered children

at times. Hence, throughout an individual session they tried to find the means to interact with each other.

In extreme cases children sometimes negotiated their power showing their bodily resistance to the teachers or helper, as below:

“*Aki* and *Venki* sitting on the veranda were playing with the materials. The teacher noticed that they were not doing the activity and called *Venki* inside the classroom to sit. He just ignored teacher’s announcement and didn’t go inside. He sat again in his place. The teacher called his name again. He didn’t respond. A boy next to him said the teacher was calling him. He shrugged off his head and turned his focus on the material (field notes, 14th visit)”

This example shows the negotiation of power in relation to behavioural management in the classroom. As Foucault (1977, 1982) suggests, subjection and resistance are not ontologically two different things, but are an outcome of the same thing - negotiation of social positions. Seen from this viewpoint one can look at how the child *Venki* is situated here as a powerful and powerless boy in the power relationship with the teacher in the classroom. He used his bodily gesture to show his insubordination to classroom authority. This shows how children were positioned as both powerful and powerless actors in pedagogical relations (Jones and Brown, 2001).

Sometimes, repetition can also be recognised as a form of resistance in the classroom. Children tended to do the same thing or repeat the same behaviour/action in a way to show their negotiation or resistance in the power structure:

“Children are supposed to repeat the prayer after the teacher says. *Thyagu* said every line in the prayer before the teacher says and he was very loud too. After the prayer gets over looking at *Thyagu* the teacher said ‘Why did you say prayer loudly before I say? You have to repeat (the prayer) gently after me, you understand. I told you many times before but you are not following’ (field notes, 13th visit)”

Yet, the next day I observed *Thyagu* repeating the prayer in his same loud tone. The child here defied the teacher's instruction the previous day and continued his action/behaviour in the same manner. All the examples above show various ways in which children exercised their power. The following section will show how teachers used their power and authority in the pedagogical practices.

Teacher's power/strategies – corporation nursery

As the Montessori approach in the nursery was structured and individualised, children often found difficulty in doing activities alone for a long time and they employed many tactics to confront the power structure in the classroom. Therefore, to bring control to the classroom the teachers used a range of disciplinary techniques depending on the situation. In the group session sometimes the teachers used a positive approach (Qi, 2006), as below, for behaviour modification:

“Look at *Mala*, she is a good girl. She is calm and quiet. Why don't you all be like her?” (field notes, 5th visit)”

Public praising of a particular child in the classroom for his/her good behaviour was considered as a strategy to inspire other children. Setting up an example of a good child or ideal child in certain situations put pressure on others to comply with expected classroom behaviour. As Foucault (1992) says, this worked as a kind of self-disciplining or motivating/threatening factor for others to follow the same behaviour. Here, children are forced to appropriate the classroom behaviour. As the literature suggests, every child can have different body repertoires and habits (Ivinson, 2012) and praising certain behaviour in the classroom implicitly encourages other children to appropriate those behaviours and conform to classroom rules and procedures.

At other times, like the one below, the teachers used to threaten children with the warning of suspension of their favourite activities. The teachers in the institution identify the popular activities or children's interest and used them, as below, as a strategy to bring control to the classroom:

“In the group exercise children were continuously talking after several warnings. The teacher then said ‘if you don’t stop talking I am not going to tell you now ‘my teddy bear’ story (field notes, 10th visit)”

Another disciplinary technique used in the nursery was the teacher threatening children not to give them gram (to pound) or dough (to make design) for a week. These two activities were quite popular among children; thus the teachers used this as a strategy as below:

“During the morning group session, the teacher asked all children to stand in front of the microscope. While standing on a queue children started to fight with each other. The teacher first made a few announcements asked them to stand quiet but children didn’t listen. Then she said, ‘I told you guys many times not to fight. If I see anyone again making noise or fight I am not going to give gram and dough for one week’ (field notes, 15th visit)”

The example above shows a series of attempts from the teacher to bring silence and docility to children’s bodies. First, the announcement, then, she threatened children by not giving the activity for one week.

These kinds of approaches did not always help the teachers to achieve their intended purpose, which was bringing control to the classroom. Thus, to create a congenial atmosphere in the classroom, and to ensure that learning took place amicably to all its members, children’s bodies were at times, as shown below, forced to keep spatial individuality by ‘public naming’:

“When *Thyagu* was matching the objects incorrectly the child sitting next to him moved on to his mat and started helping him. The teacher watched them for a while then called their names loudly and told them not to talk and to do activities individually (field notes, 3rd visit)”

Targeting individuals through ‘public naming’ worked to some extent to create fear among other children. Foucault (1997) in his work illustrated how public display of torture was used in early days as a strategy to create fear among general public. It is also served as a kind of warning to the future rule-breakers. So, despite the rhetoric

that the child-centred education considers every individual as unique individuals and they should be treated in the learning process as such, in practice, as James (1993) suggests, a rule-bound uniformity is imposed with a justification that a good learning atmosphere should be provided to everyone in the institution. As a result, self-restraint was demanded, as above, from children in the nursery on every occasion, and it was used as a more effective tool than overt control (Cannella, 1997). At times the teacher allowed a child to help another like the one I showed in the last section. But this time the child was snubbed for helping his peer because he was not authorised to do so. This shows how power is used differently for different purposes.

As the teachers in the Montessori were soft in their approach to discipline, children sometimes, as shown in *Venki*'s example in the previous section, ignored teachers' instructions. On those circumstances the teachers sought the helpers' assistance to bring control to the classroom. During my observation I noticed that on several occasions the names of the helpers were used in the classroom as a disciplinary tactic by the teachers to control children. For instance:

“Children slowly started to whisper with each other in the group activity and after a point it swelled up as a big noise in the classroom. As the noise has reached its threshold level the teacher warned children: ‘why are you making noise? Shall I call *Aaya* (helper) now?’ (field notes, 3rd visit)”

Sound surveillance was another tactic employed by the teachers in the classroom. The noise level in the classroom was sometimes reduced through a one-to-one individual approach:

“Some children were continuously calling miss, miss to ask doubts. A visibly annoyed teacher said ‘don’t shout like this, if you want anything come and say to me gently, don’t shout from your place’ (field notes, 8th visit)”

At times, children were controlled with a stern look or a minute of teacher's silence to bring back their attention or to resume the activity. Quite a few times either the

whole group or an individual child were verbally threatened to follow the rules as described below:

“In the group activity *Mani* was inattentive and she was looking outside through the window. Observing her for a while the teacher said ‘if you don’t listen I will give you punishment, listen, if any one plays or don’t listen to my words then I will give you punishment’ (field notes, 5th visit)”

The term ‘punishment’ was not defined in this context. Though the teachers used the word ‘punishment’ on a few occasions with children I rarely saw in my observation that they gave a punishment to children.

Conclusion - In summary, this section captured the complexity and fluidity within the Montessori approach and the negotiation of power between children and teachers in everyday pedagogical practices. Both teacher and children used a range of techniques to use their power for negotiation. On the one hand, children used avoidance of spatial surveillance, pretence and bodily resistance as strategies to avoid subjection. On the other hand, the teacher’s used ‘public praising’ or ‘public shaming’ as a strategy for self-surveillance and a warning to would-be rule-breakers. For teachers, spatial surveillance and spatial individuality also worked as a strategy to bring about docility in children’s bodies. As Aitken (2001) notes, at times the teachers followed the notion of the ‘child’ prescribed in the Montessori education in their practice; at other times, the teachers dealt with the situation with reflexive practice. The reflexive practices of the teachers who localised the Montessori education in everyday practices through value education highlight the fluid nature of the classroom. The teachers taught e.g. moral values and body civilisation, things beyond stated curriculum which they felt really important for children. This suggests, as Deleuze (2004) wrote, that fluidity does not indicate something incomplete; on the contrary, fluidity denotes vitality, positivity, reflexivity, appropriation and integration.

6.2.2 Task centred subjects – private nursery

As shown in Chapter 5.3, the private nursery follows a formal academic curriculum that was based on the Tamil Nadu Matriculation Board Syllabus. As the focus in the nursery was on school preparedness, the concentration was mainly on academic learning and the transition of children's bodies was gradual in all aspects, including academics and discipline. Within the nursery section, children's bodies in the Pre-KG and LKG had more freedom to move around in the classroom compared to their UKG counterparts. Sometimes the helpers closed the door to confine Pre-KG and LKG children inside the building. Children in Pre-KG and LKG were relatively free to do whatever they wanted: they went to the toilet, they playfully fought in the classroom, they ran, they played and they never asked permission from the teacher to do all these activities. But in the UKG classroom, children's bodies were regulated with many spatial restrictions and they were gradually trained to fit into the formal school system in all aspects. Their bodies were conditioned with the daily routines by situating them in a spatial and temporal arrangement.

In general, the atmosphere of the UKG classroom and the daily schedule looked like a formal classroom. In each period, children were asked to repeat the words, rhymes, and numbers along with the teacher, and the children repeated loudly in unison. Anyone who is unfamiliar with the culture will be surprised by the rapturous noise that explodes from children in the classroom. The atmosphere was noisy, with its own uniqueness, pattern, rhythm, vibration and coordination. The teacher was categorical that engaging children over the whole day with formal teaching was a big challenge both for children and for her as well. She put it:

“It is really difficult to make them sit the whole day. If we have some outdoor activities or play materials then at least we can engage them in diverse ways (Interview with the Teacher)”

The difficulty involved in formal teaching with specific reference to classroom control was narrated in this example by the teacher. Her statement indicates that the structure in the formal schooling itself intrinsically demands disciplining of children

so as to fulfil the functional requirements of teaching and schooling. The complexity involved in maintaining the classroom as a controlled unit for effective teaching on the one hand and provoking children's interest in formal learning on the other hand is underscored here by the teacher. So, disciplining of children in this nursery mainly worked as a tool for regulative mechanism (Ivinson, 2012). The teacher had to do a double role: bringing about docility in children's bodies and using those bodies effectively for fulfilling her teaching obligation. Thus, as Foucault (1977) described, children in this nursery were governed in a structured way with timetable and daily routines, and the surveillance mechanism was in place to monitor children's functions (homework, writing exercise). For example, on a typical day, children had to submit or show their notebook to the teacher for correction after every writing exercise, as follows:

“In the Tamil period she taught about activities – studying, writing, running, sleeping and so on. She wrote the sentences first on the board and taught. After 5-10 minutes she asked children to write those sentences in their notebook. Children after writing went and showed their notebook to the teacher for correction. Then, in the next period she taught English and the same exercise continued now as well (field notes, 4th visit)”

The fact that children were monitored at regular intervals in the classroom made children deliver the work that they were supposed to do. Nevertheless, children's bodies in this nursery had lots of lively interactions with their peers throughout the day, as will be shown below. The rigid structure still offered a lot of space to children for fun and peer interactions. As mentioned in chapter 5.3, the teacher taught lessons for 5-10 minutes in each period and the rest of the time was devoted to writing exercises. My observations showed that, besides teaching time, children in this nursery throughout the day interacted with each other especially during their writing exercises. Once children were finished with their writing, they had their own space and time in each period, although it was interrupted with mild warnings at times from the teacher. Children had animated talks, playful fights, and some times a small group gathering in which a child told a story to a group of friends. Children had choice to use the time according to their convenience. Some children finished their writing first and then used the rest of the time according to their wish. Some

children did this vice versa. Others mixed up writing and talking throughout the session.

Negotiations and dilemmas in pedagogical practice – private nursery

In an ideal sense members of the group were expected mainly to fulfil their academic tasks and the task that they performed should comply with the established group standards. The inherent differences of individuals were not taken into consideration seriously in this education system. The curriculum was designed based on the belief that, as mentioned in chapter five, the educational practices should be age-appropriate and development-appropriate. So, pedagogy in this nursery constituted, on the one hand, normative discourses from developmental psychology that offers reference for ‘normality’ to cognition and capabilities, and, on the other hand, classroom organisation of teaching and learning that evolved in everyday practice (Venn, 2006). The educational practices here ideally sought to achieve ‘normality’ in every child as was prescribed in the curriculum and in the process of doing so, as I argue through this section, to control/regulate children’s bodies.

In the classroom, although the level of collective interactions was quite high, most of the time the group activities were teacher-led. For example, one day children were told to do public performance: they had to sing rhymes with action individually according to their seating order. Children stood up in the front and sang rhymes facing others in the classroom. In the lunch break I asked the teacher the reason behind doing this group exercise. She asserted:

“When children hear the rhymes many times it will automatically register in their mind (informal conversation with the teacher, field notes, 10th visit)”

The data above substantiates other literature that says that in the formal education system children were constructed as passive recipients of knowledge, though it might offer potential for individual empowerment and social transformation (Nawani and Jain, 2011). What I noticed during this exercise was that some children really

struggled to sing and those who did not recite correctly were told to repeat their singing the next day. “Was it not a humiliation for children who did not do well?” I asked the teacher again. The teacher’s response was:

“No, children those who are not good will also learn from others and moreover slowly they develop to open up their mouth (informal conversation with the teacher, field notes, 10th visit)”

The purpose of the exercise was not meant to develop rational thinking or reasoning; it was mainly for memorisation. The teacher’s intention here was that giving repetition would help those children who were poor in memorisation and communication. This shows how children are conditioned through educational curriculum to achieve what is described as normal development. The idea of ‘normal’ or ‘good’ here is interpreted from the comparisons made between children of the same age group. Literature notes that the formal education system in India is concerned too much with the end product rather than the process (Jeffery, 2005); it primarily demands memorisation from children and memorisation is considered as a form of learning (Sarangapani, 1999). Memorisation has a long history and connection with Hindu religious practices (Clarke, 2001; Viruru, 2001). Literature suggests that the cultural models of formal education in India focus on “memorisation, discipline, and hard work; rather than on motivation, curiosity, and enjoyment in learning” (Clarke, 2001:170). In the extract above children did not have a choice. Whether they liked it or not they had to deliver according to the teachers’ instruction. During the group exercise, however, children exhibited a great deal of group effort and togetherness:

“When a child struggled with the word or action others tacitly showed actions or gave a lead to the child with the starting word in the rhymes (field notes, 10th visit)”

The extract above corroborates with other early childhood literature that shows how children collaborate and rescue their peers in pedagogical practices (Markstrom and Hallden, 2009). Though the children and teacher were positioned differently in the power structure, children used their agency collectively to counteract classroom authority. I do not suggest here that children always had a great amount of group

solidarity and social relationships in the institution. I saw competitions amongst children during my observation especially on academic related matters. But what I intended to do here is to exhibit the dilemma that was sometimes faced in the pedagogical practice and how children negotiated the teacher's authority in the classroom.

After all, the teacher also expressed the difficulty in handling the classroom of around 30 children, as below:

“For instance, classroom means, um, they have to be calm. In between the periods, for instance, if one period ends and the next period going to start, um, what they have to do, they have to sit and do, concentrate on the homework of that particular period, but most of our children will never do that, only a very few do that. Because, mainly, um, in our days we were beaten in schools, now we can't do that, we have to tell them affectionately, if you tell them affectionately, um, sometimes they understand, but sometimes they don't. That's there, um, that's the challenge, you can't beat children, at the same time, um, you have to make them understand (interview with teacher)”

Here, the teacher was categorical about corporal punishment. The absence of corporation punishment in contemporary schooling, in her view, complicates things for the teacher trying to bring control to the classroom. The distance between her imagination of an ideal classroom and the actual classroom that exists in the nursery was highlighted here as a place for negotiation/contestation. The negotiation happens between differently positioned forces such as children and teacher in the classroom. As she was not provided with any alternative or additional training to work with young children she found it difficult to manage both teaching and producing docile bodies for teaching in everyday practice.

Further, the institutional arrangement which did not have any additional support or facility other than formal curriculum was considered as a barrier to engage children. She further says:

“We can't blame children as well. We have to understand from their point of view (interview with teacher)”

The teacher was empathetic about children's difficulty in engaging with academic activity for the entire day, and also their subjection to spatial surveillance. However, she was of the opinion that lack of resources in the institution gave her no option but to control children spatially only with academic activity. This substantiates the findings of the study by Hegde and Cassidy (2009) that though the early years teachers in India have strong views against formal teaching they end up practising more under the subtext that they have no other alternatives. In such a rigid pedagogical environment how children will react will be described in the following section.

Children's power/resistance – private nursery

As the classroom was filled full of interaction for a maximum time in a day there was always a negotiation between children and teacher. Children used a range of tactics to negotiate the power structure in pedagogical practices. Sometimes children did the same thing irrespective of teacher's warning to stop and they just ignored the teacher's reprimand. Thus, repetition of action, as shown below, can be considered as a way of children showing resistance to the power structure:

“In the maths period the teacher was teaching addition and children have been asked to stand and repeat what she teaches. *Arun*, a boy from the last row was sitting and chatting. When the teacher called his name in an authoritative voice, as a warning, *Arun* stood up for some time but after a while sat again (field notes, 1st visit)”

The boy here simply neglected the teacher's warning and sat again. The teacher's classroom authority was respected first and then soon ignored. It shows the on-going power negotiation in the classroom. Children had freedom to select their seating space in the classroom and children who sat in the last row sometimes did all sorts of playful activities hiding behind the children in the front rows. Children's spatial positioning was the key here to get away from the teacher's spatial surveillance.

The other strategy which children normally used in the classroom was pretence. Children just pretended in the classroom that they were performing their task, as below:

“Hari was not at all writing. Are you not writing, his neighbour asked him? He said he didn’t bring his rough note. He was simply sitting without writing and pretending to the teacher as if he was writing (field notes, 10th visit)”

The child here sensed that he was going to be punished or reprimanded for not bringing his rough note to the classroom. So, realising his powerless position in the power order he used pretence as a strategy to escape the attention of the teacher. This shows how children use their agential power to overcome their position as vulnerable actors in the pedagogical relationship.

Similarly, at times some children used the following tactic in the classroom just to show that they were attentive during the activity after they had indulged in playful activity or inattentive during teaching.

“Ganesh was hiding and talking with his friend while the teacher was teaching a lesson on the board. All of a sudden he said, ‘miss, it is not audible, can you speak loud please’, ‘If you guys keep on murmuring like this, how will you hear?’ she replied. ‘No miss, I didn’t talk’ he defied (field notes, 4th visit)”

The boy here is taking a pre-emptive step by blaming the teacher for his own classroom violation. He said that her tone was very low and he could not hear her properly. The boy tried to pose himself as if he was listening to the teacher after he had a conversation with his friend. When the teacher pointed out about the noise level in the classroom the boy immediately refuted her accusation and said he did nothing wrong and it was not his fault. The extract above shows how children and teacher in the classroom negotiate power order and how they both tried to position and reposition themselves to gain authority in this particular moment.

Quite a few times in the classroom I saw children showing their resistance through voice or sound, as below:

“While repeating the words in Tamil children were very low in their voice. Not impressed with their response the teacher said ‘say little louder’. Children then suddenly raised their voice to the extreme. Rather bewildered with their voice level then the teacher said, ‘don’t shout, repeat gently’ (field notes, 2nd visit)”

The paragraph above shows children’s reaction to teacher’s demand through sound. When the teacher asked them to raise their voice they raised to the maximum as a fun like activity. I saw children enjoying doing this on a few occasions. When the teacher challenged the rhythm and flow of children’s bodily response in the teaching exercise the children in turn upset the rhythm of the teacher with their abrupt increase of voice level. The teacher’s expectation of bringing about docility in children’s bodies to increase their utility was severely tested by children on such occasions. The following section will show the teacher’s response in the power struggle in the classroom.

Teacher’s power/strategies – private nursery

The teacher used different tactics to bring control and order to the classroom which supports suitable learning environment for all, and particularly to enable her authority for teaching. Whenever the noise level went beyond a certain limit, the teacher in her high pitched tone said ‘silence’ to the whole group. The threshold level of noise that demanded teacher’s action however varied depending on the context and her state of mind.

The strategy was not always aimed at the whole class. Most of the time, the strategy was targeted at individuals. If a particular child did not conform to the group norms or failed to perform his/her tasks then disciplinary tactic was individualised towards that particular child. Mostly, at the initial stage it was a stern look pointing at a particular child who failed to comply with the teacher’s demand. Children most of the time understood the implication of her non-verbal communication and restored

themselves with proper conduct, which was surrendering their docile bodies to the teacher for her use (Foucault, 1977).

Sometimes, the teacher used public naming of individuals as a strategy to control a particular child and also to warn future rule-breakers.

“*Ganesh* and *Magi* were playing during writing time. The teacher noticed for a while that they were playful and not writing anything. With a stern face she called out their names to calm down and focus on writing (field notes, 5th visit)”

The tone of the teacher itself conveyed clearly her expression to children. It seemed that the children had a very good understanding about the body language of the teacher. What I observed during my fieldwork was that when the teacher called children’s names softly children sometimes neglected her warning and continued doing the same activity. But, when the teacher called children’s name with a loud tone, as shown above, children immediately understood its implications and reacted to the situation as desired. By calling out children’s name publicly in the classroom the teacher also sent out an indication to other students about ‘acceptable and unacceptable behaviours’ in the classroom. Children were expected to appropriate the acceptable behaviours and be dissuaded from the unacceptable behaviours.

At times the teacher used a combination of strategies like close surveillance and punishment in the classroom especially when the child failed to deliver the task or was inattentive during teaching. The example below will demonstrate this:

“The teacher observed *Arun* for some time that he was not attentive in the class. She told *Arun* to bring his notebook to see what he has written. He didn’t write anything. The teacher asked him to sit and write in the first desk in the first row with close observation (field notes, 1st visit)”

The combination of strategy was used here to increase the usefulness of the child’s body. The body was made docile with punishment and close surveillance while seeking to increase its efficiency.

Sometime, separation was used as a strategy to segregate children spatially to avoid further disturbance or nuisance in the classroom. As Foucault (1977) mentioned, this spatial segregation puts individuals away from their comfort zones, cut off a particular child's association with his/her friendship group and, to some extent, decreases the influence of collective agency against teacher's authority in the classroom. Apparently, at times, children's bodies themselves were used as a tool to control unruly behaviours, or restrict unwanted bodily movements, or to reduce the noise level in the classroom. The following example will explain this:

“All of a sudden the noise level in the classroom has reached its peak and children were moving here and there when she was busy in correcting homework note and writing instruction for the next day's homework in individual notes. A visibly annoyed teacher told children fold their hands for some time until silence has comeback in the classroom (field notes, 7th visit)”

On some occasions, children's interests, needs or desires were exploited to bring control to the classroom. This shows the unequal power relationship in the pedagogical relationship between teacher and children and how the teacher uses children's interests as means to achieve his/her ends. The following paragraph will explain how it happened in the classroom:

“The teacher was teaching social science in the last hour before lunch and children were restless and uncontrollable. ‘If you don't listen I am not going to leave you for lunch, mind it’, the teacher gave a strong warning (field notes, 4th visit)”

The teacher here set the condition to children that they will only be allowed for lunch provided if they pay attention to teaching. The physical forces of children expressed here through bodily resentment and restlessness was destabilised through the teacher's authority by setting out conditions connecting with children's future favourable action. To some extent, the example above is reminiscent of the behaviourist model in which punishment and award are linked with a child's behaviour (see Millei, 2005). Children here will be rewarded if they comply with the conditions or else they will be punished for their violation.

In the extreme, children's bodies were excluded from the class. This strategy was used mostly when children failed to produce a homework note in the morning. On a rare occasion, this strategy was employed when children were involved in in-fighting. For example:

“All of a sudden some tussle has arisen between *Dany* and *Hari* and *Hari* has punched *Dany* on his stomach. He cried in pain, and went and complained to the teacher. The teacher called *Hari* and enquired about the incident. Finding fault with his action then she told *Hari* to stand in the corner of the classroom. *Hari* stood up there for nearly half an hour (field notes, 11th visit)”

As Foucault (1977) explained in his work, this public display of punishment was used as a strategy to create fear among other students. It was believed that this kind of public shaming through spatial exclusion would deter other children from engaging in such kind of activities.

Sometimes, my presence in the classroom was also used as one of the disciplinary tactics to control children, as shown below:

“In the morning the school correspondent came to my desk to inform me about some administrative matters regarding my research. Children said good morning to her very loudly. ‘Don’t shout, say politely, this uncle is observing you, then only he will say in his report you children are good’, she told children (field notes, 5th visit)”

The example above shows how my presence was used in the classroom to ask children to behave as ethically responsible students (Foucault, 1992). Children were insisted to act with proper conduct in the eyes of an outsider. Control and discipline here was associated with self-ethics and morality. Children were advised to realise their responsibility as a responsible students rather than somebody imposing outside power. This reverberates with Foucault's point on conformity behaviour – self-governing of individuals according to established norms in the classroom.

Interestingly, as Foucault (1979) argues, children themselves actualise the structure, pattern, rules and behaviour in the classroom and they also became an instrument to monitor their fellow children. The below example will tell how it happened in the classroom:

“*Ganesh* – Miss, you are conducting a test now. Aren’t you? *Balu* is copying me (field notes, 14th visit)”

Here, the boy *Ganesh* distinguish between a normal writing exercise with the mock test, and he complained to the teacher about *Balu* about copying him. A sense of competition amongst students to score good marks in tests, might have prompted *Ganesh* to inform the teacher, yet it shows that children themselves actualise the system and they become part of the project as object and subject.

Conclusion – In sum, this section demonstrated that there was an on-going mediation in everyday pedagogical practice between children and teacher, and they both exercised their agential powers within their limits and capacity. While children used collaboration, sound resistance, verbal negotiation and neglect as tactics to challenge the classroom authority, the teachers used spatial segregation, exclusion, self-ethics, public naming and shaming as tactics to reinstate control and authority in the classroom. The section also revealed that in this nursery throughout the writing exercise there was much interaction between children. There are criticisms in the literature about children’s bodies being subjected to academic writing at the tender age in the formal academic set up (Viruru, 2001). My stand here is not to justify whether these academic practices are correct. Instead what I tried to unfold here is to give an account of how the active educable subjects within the institution emerge through pedagogical processes and practices.

6.2.3 Care centred subjects – ICDS Anganwadi

As the ICDS Anganwadi centre was mainly concerned with the provision of care and nutrition components, the provision of preschool education here was seen as complementary in actual service delivery. In the Anganwadi, as described in chapter

five, the daily routines were loosely structured and the timing of children's arrival was flexible to some extent. During my observation, I saw some children arriving as late as 11 o'clock especially when their school-going siblings were on summer holidays. Sometimes, the worker instructed the parents to bring their children on time. As the structure and timing was somewhat flexible at Anganwadi, most of the morning was devoted to free play, with drawing/colouring and a rhymes session. There were some toys, learning materials, balls and other play materials arranged within the accessible reach of children but the instruction of alphabets or numbers was not explicit everyday. So, what was the philosophy that underpinned the functioning of the institution especially with children? I asked the worker.

“Our philosophy is child friendly’ the worker asserted, ‘that is the reason why we are not forcing anyone to do anything against their interest, we have to let the child freely to hang out and do activities as they wish’ (field notes, 14th visit)”

It was evident to some extent. Children's bodies were to a certain extent free from adult supervision as they were not obliged to perform certain adult-supervised tasks at the centre. Most of the times, the activities were children-led: two older children who were appointed as leaders by the worker led group activities such as singing rhymes, painting, drawing and indoor play and so on. These two leaders were often instructed by the worker on what to do or how to conduct a particular group activity with the children. Whenever the worker was free, she joined them in teaching rhymes and also engaged children with other activities.

As children were admitted to the Anganwadi throughout the year, anyone visiting the centre at any point of time in the year might have the possibility of seeing at least one or two new entrants. When I was observing the centre towards the end of the academic year I saw a boy who had started at the centre ten days previously.

“His mother dropped him in the centre at around 11'o clock. The child was continuously crying. ‘I will give you chocolate, don't cry, come and sit here,’ the worker consoled him. He didn't stop crying. He somehow sat in the corner of the centre and had been crying continuously. The AWW instructed other children to do

drawing and colouring and she was back in to her record work. She didn't bother about him crying and didn't make any effort to comfort him after that (field notes, 4th visit)"

The time which the worker spent with children in the centre was to a great extent constrained by her other administrative commitments. Thus, the worker here put some effort initially into pacify the crying child but after a while the child was left alone on his own without any additional support. When I asked the worker about this later, she said:

"Children will be like this in the beginning. They will acclimatize to the environment slowly and they will be alright after a point of time (field notes, 4th visit)"

A child crying in the beginning due to separation from parents or home was seen here as natural in the transition process by the worker, and it was justified with the belief that children have natural abilities and coping mechanisms for overcoming the situation. The worker was persuaded by her own perception that children slowly get a sense of their environment and develop resilience against separation anxiety. Literature notes that in the early years institution how a toy or object was used to make crying children docile (Jones *et al.*, 2012). Seen from this viewpoint, the neglect of a crying child by the worker can also be seen as a way of making the child docile. Although the child expressed his/her anxiety or displeasure through crying, his/her bodily expression was neglected and the child was spatially separated from others to make him/her docile.

There was also flexibility in the structure. Children in this centre could eat a snack at any time and they did not have any stipulated time slot for snack break as such. But it does not mean that children's bodies always functioned with complete freedom. There were times when children's bodily actions were put under scrutiny and their actions were questioned. For example, one day:

"*Isha* came late at 10'o clock. She didn't say good morning to the teacher while entering the centre. 'Did you say good morning to

me? Say good morning to sir (pointing her fingers towards me) as well', the worker told *Isha* (field notes, 8th visit)"

In the above extract, one can see how the child was forced to greet the teacher and outsiders like me present in the institution. Greeting the teacher itself can be considered as a mild form of subjection which re-inscribes the child's subordinate position as inferior to the teacher. This shows the explicit and visible nature of the power position in everyday practice. Similarly, there were other instances where the Anganwadi worker or helper demanded modification in children's behaviour and action. For example,

"While eating snack *Naveen* spread the chips on the floor. The helper in a frustrated tone shouted "look at him, what he did, oh, just now I cleaned the floor" (field notes, 10th visit)"

The helper was concerned here about the cleanliness of the floor and she chided the child's action of spreading chips on floor. However, what I noticed in my observation was that the level of surveillance put on children in the centre was context specific, mostly depending on the worker/helper's needs and convenience. At times the worker/helper did not mind children doing certain things but at other times as will be described later the same actions were challenged.

Negotiations and dilemmas in pedagogical practice – ICDS Anganwadi

There were a few areas where the dilemmas and negotiations were apparent in the pedagogical practices, carrying implications for the way in which the disciplinary apparatus operated in the centre. First of all, there were fewer restrictions on parents from entering the centre or accessing their children after they dropped them off in the morning. There was a certain amount of liberty, and parents visited their children with permission whenever they wished to do so, as below:

"*Sinduja's* mother came up to the centre at around 11'o clock with jasmine. She asked permission from AWW and kept the flower on *Sinduja's* head (field notes, 5th visit)"

Similarly, during the business hours of the centre the access of local community members was not restricted; the local community members, mainly the stakeholders of ICDS programme, could just straight away walk in at any time and talk to the worker or helper regarding matters related to ICDS schemes. The following text will exemplify that:

“The AWW was teaching rhymes to children. A lady just walked in and produced a birth certificate of her grandchild and the medical report of her daughter and discussed for a while about the medical report (field notes, 1st visit)”

The fact that they will be entertained during business hours encouraged parents and local community members to visit as they wished. The frequent interruption from parents and community members thus obstructed the learning process and the flow/rhythm of children in the social environment. Children’s social space was interrupted and also intruded by outsiders at regular intervals. When I asked about these frequent interruptions from community members, the worker said:

“As per our office rule we are not supposed to entertain people from the community in the morning. But it is really difficult to say no to people. If we say no to them then they will not cooperate when we go for house visit’ (informal conversation, field notes, 1st visit)”

The worker was of the view that saying no to people would have an adverse effect in maintaining a relationship with the community. She felt that it was necessary to establish and sustain a good rapport with the local community for programme success. As literature confirms, the sustenance of multiple relationships in the integrated programme was considered as a big challenge in actual practice (Davis, 2011).

Thus, the dilemma was palpable in everyday organisation of the centre. In addition, as described earlier in chapter five, the worker was entrusted with multiple administrative responsibilities besides early years teaching. Thus, she found it difficult to juggle her official tasks, especially spending time with children everyday

for preschool activity. Significantly, as I will show in the following sections, this has many implications for the way in which the worker organised the centre and the disciplinary apparatus used to control children.

Children's power/resistance – ICDS Anganwadi

In a highly undefined environment it is important to note how a particular situation demands a particular kind of bodily actions from children and how children effectively deal with the demands of the worker or cope with the situation. Children showed their power or resistance against the power structure in different ways. The basic form of showing resistance in the centre was just ignoring the rules or instructions:

“A few children were on the veranda. All others were inside. *Jo* bought a balloon and he was very much in demand from others. They encouraged him to blow the balloon big. The teacher instructed *Isha* and *Geetha* to teach rhymes. Few children went inside and joined them for singing rhymes. *Jo* and others just simply neglected the instruction and continued playing with the balloon on the veranda (field notes, 3rd visit)”

In the above example one could see children's physical mobility in the centre. Children were physically in motion most of the time and they used this spatial movement to avoid surveillance. At times as shown above children just simply ignored the worker's announcement and went out to the veranda continuing their social interactions and friendly chats. Spatial mobility was effectively used here by children at times to negotiate the power order in the institution. On other occasion:

“The helper distributed old drawing/colouring books collected from the local community and told children to colour/draw pictures. In some of the books almost all the pictures were already coloured; yet, children picked up those books and started drawing/colouring the picture. But, not all the children were involved in the activity. *Suresh* and *Mishkin* didn't do anything. They were just engaged in conversation (field notes, 3rd visit)”

Both *Suresh* and *Mishkin* were chatting throughout the session while sitting in the group in the drawing session. They just pretended that they were doing drawing while busily engaged in talking. Throughout the drawing session which lasted for nearly thirty minutes both the children were busy talking and did not draw anything. But whenever the worker turned her sight towards children they kept the page which was already coloured in front as if they have done that.

Sometimes children showed verbal resilience to the power order in the centre, as follows:

“Aaya (helper) give me the raw egg, I don’t like boiled ones, and my mom will fry it at home’ *Ragu* said to the helper (field notes, 12th visit) “

The extract above shows how children express their needs and choice at times without showing any fear. Children were mostly served boiled eggs for lunch and they were supposed to eat in the centre itself. However, the child here tried to challenge the established norms by conveying his preference and he did not show any inhibition while involved with this negotiation.

On a few occasions I saw children completely boycotting the activity or refusing to obey the orders of worker or helper during activity time. The paragraph below will explain how a child did this in a group activity:

“Children were instructed to do indoor play. Children stood on two lines facing each other and threw the ball one by one to their partners standing opposite to them. *Naveen* who was always quiet in the classroom did not join the group and he was sitting in the corner of the room. The helper asked him to join the group. He just shook his head with a disinterested face. The helper asked him one more time and this time his response was even stronger, shaking his head with a ‘no’. The helper then gave up (field notes, 7th visit)”

In the extract above, though the helper asked *Naveen* to join others in the activity he said no to her call first with his bodily gesture. The helper’s intention of making him join others in the group activity was dissuaded by the boy with his stubborn

resistance. He showed a lack of interest in joining others and wanted to be alone on his own. It shows how children exercise their agency in ways that are possible within their limits.

Worker's power/strategies – ICDS Anganwadi

On the other hand, the worker used a range of disciplinary tactics in the centre to bring about docility in children's bodies. One of the strategies employed by the worker to regulate children in the centre was the appointment of class leaders. In the centre *Isha* and *Geetha* were appointed as leaders to guide other children. Whenever the worker was busy with administrative tasks or interrupted by others the leaders spontaneously took up their leadership role and led the group. Interestingly, in a child-structured environment these children leaders use their delegated power to control others. The following excerpts will explain the role of leaders in controlling children's bodies in the absence of the worker:

“The worker was late in the morning. *Geetha* pulled out the worker's chair and sat with the scale as if she was the teacher. “Hey, I am going to sing prayer song now, you both repeat after me” she said to *Princy* and *Bindu*. She sang the prayer song. After she finished singing she said ‘good morning children’ like the worker says. *Princy* and *Bindu* didn't say anything. *Nagul* and *Suresh* sitting on the other corner of the room were laughing. “Come on, say Good Morning Miss”, she insisted again. *Princy* and *Bindu* laughingly said ‘Good Morning Miss’. Then she told children to sit straight on a line. “Look at *Sinduja*, she sits on line, um, she is a good girl” she used this complimentary strategy to prompt others to follow the rules (field notes, 3rd visit)”

The example above explains a different power dynamics between children in everyday pedagogical practices. It shows how the power delegated to the leaders works in everyday practice and how this particular leader used her position to exert control over other children in the centre. The leader here almost tried to emulate the working style of the worker. However, her position was conceived in various ways by different students. While *Suresh* and *Nagul* seemed to disapprove of her authority and laughed at her imitation of the worker, *Princy* and *Bindu* accepted her authority,

at least partially, by responding to her announcement. Though *Princy* and *Bindu* laughed at the beginning they eventually obeyed her command. Finally, the leader used here a complimentary strategy to entice other children to follow her instructions. She praised *Sinduja* for her positive response and expected others to follow so. This shows how the surveillance strategy worked in the centre at two different levels through power distribution.

As a positive strategy, on some occasions meditation was used by the worker as a tool for controlling children in the centre.

“Children were running and shouting in the morning. The worker assembled all children in one place and gave instruction to do meditation for 10 minutes - close your eyes, pray to god to study well, to sing well, for your parents, for your siblings, for your friends, for yourself, for your teacher - she was giving instruction one by one. ‘Now open your eyes. Why were you shouting like this,’ she asked (field notes, 15th visit)”

The strategy used here was unique. She used this strategy to bring control over children’s bodies and minds, but without harming or hurting the children. It worked with a double purpose: bringing about docility in children’s bodies and channelising their energies for educational purpose.

Sometimes the worker used a ‘public warning’ as a tactic to involve children in activity. For example,

“*Isha* has been singing rhymes in the group. Very few children have repeated the rhymes and others have been simply sitting without any response. ‘Look there, poor *Isha*, she has been singing all alone. It will be encouraging for her if only all others follow’, the AWW said to helper. Then, she turned to children and said, ‘you all sing with *Isha*, otherwise I will ask you to sing individually one by one’ (field notes, 5th visit)”

Here, just a warning to the group that they will be targeted individually if they fail to sign along with *Isha* was used as a strategy to provoke more participation from

children. The statement implies that the worker used children's fear of performing in public as a way of handling this particular situation.

Sometimes, the worker used a mild form of physical threat, as follows, to organise children for teaching or assembling them in the centre for group activity:

“The AWW instructed children to sit on the other side of the classroom for teaching. Some children went outside. Some children were with the play materials. The AWW got annoyed and said ‘nobody is following my instruction, get the stick’ (field notes, 2nd visit)”

The word stick here was used as a tool to create fear among children. Though she never beat children during my observation she quite often used this strategy to sustain fear among children. The fear psychology of children was exploited to bring order to children.

The tactic of public warning did not always work with children. Thus, at times, the worker targeted individuals in the group to bring order in the centre. At the initial stage, a particular child who committed an offence was targeted with a rebuke or reprimand in order to change his/her behaviour or action. Although children were targeted individually, the strategies employed by the worker/helper varied from individual to individual. For example:

“*Naveen* and *Vijayan* were crying in the morning. The helper offered a mat to *Naveen*, who seemed to be an introvert child, and told him softly to sleep. At the same time she was a bit aggressive with *Vijayan*, who seemed to be an adamant child. She snubbed him couple of times and told him to stop crying in a stern voice (field notes, 10th visit)”

The above example is reminiscent of Foucault's (1977) point on the micro-physics of power. According to Foucault the success of a control regime depends on how power is exercised in a given situation or condition. So, although both children were crying in the centre, the helper used different tactics matching with their personality traits.

The images of children built over time in the classroom were used as a yardstick in this particular disciplinary approach.

At times, the rationale that arose for disciplining the body was situation-based. On a day when the Anganwadi worker was on leave, children's bodily movements and actions were to a great extent restricted. Children were not allowed to do drawing or touch the play materials. The helper was concerned about keeping things tidy and in place. She literally found it difficult to manage everything, including cooking, all alone without any support. Similarly, when the helper went for a week-long on-the-job training, the worker became cautious and nervous, and gave extra instruction to children on body management especially on toilet training and cleanliness. Such situations put extra pressure on children, insisting that they be self-governed individuals with respect to their own bodies and self (Foucault, 1992).

Conclusion – In summary, the section captured the complexity involved in the pedagogical process in the ICDS Anganwadi centre. The everyday pedagogical practices here were mainly concerned with care aspects of the children, although preschool education was imparted to children occasionally. There were on-going power negotiations between children and worker(s) throughout the day. As the structure in the centre was a loose one, the negotiation of power between the worker(s) and children was mostly context specific. The active subjects here emerged in a less adult-controlled pedagogical environment.

6.3 Conclusion

In summary, as shown below in the table, this chapter captured the complexity and fluidity involved in the pedagogical process of three different early years institutions. In this chapter, I mainly used Foucault's analysis of 'subject'. As I mentioned in the introduction of this chapter Foucault explains the concept of subject in two ways: the subject evolves in discursive practices through subjection, and the emancipation of subject through self-ethical formation. Foucault's notion of self-ethical formation was criticised for undermining power negotiation. My empirical data revealed that

the active subjects in the nursery emerge through a combination of forms: subjection, resistance, and appropriation. In the everyday pedagogical process children were subjected through various practices; yet, they used their agential powers within their limits.

Table 6.3 Empirical Findings and Theoretical Advancement

Type of Institution	Empirical Findings	Theoretical Advancement
Corporation Nursery	<p>Power in everyday pedagogy worked in subtle ways and the pedagogy intrinsically demanded self-discipline.</p> <p>Children's way of power negotiation: avoidance of spatial surveillance, pretence and bodily resistance.</p> <p>Teacher's way of power negotiation: public praising, public shaming and spatial individuality</p>	<p>Foucault explicates the concept of subject in two ways: the subject constructed in discourses through subjectivation, and the subject emerges through self-ethical formation. Foucault's analysis of self-ethical formation was criticised for undermining power negotiation.</p> <p>The empirical data in this chapter showed that the active subjects in the nursery emerge through a combination of ways: subjection, resistance, and appropriation.</p> <p>In everyday pedagogy, there was an on-going mediation between teacher and children. Children were subjected through various practices; yet, they used their agential powers within their limits.</p>
Private Nursery	<p>Power in everyday pedagogy worked in overt ways.</p> <p>Children's way of power negotiation: peer collaboration, sound resistance, pretence, verbal negotiation and neglect.</p> <p>Teacher's way of power negotiation: spatial segregation, exclusion, self-ethics, public naming and shaming.</p>	
ICDS Anganwadi Centre	<p>Power in everyday pedagogy worked in mild ways and it was contextual.</p> <p>Children's way of power negotiation: ignoring the rules or instructions, spatial mobility, pretence, verbal resilience and boycotting the activity.</p> <p>Teacher's way of power negotiation: peer-surveillance, positive discipline (meditation), public rebuke, targeting individual and mild threat.</p>	

Certainly, Foucault's analysis of subject cannot be understood without understanding the power structure and dynamics involved in the process. Whether it is subjection or self-formation, Foucault (1982) says power works either in apparent ways or in subtle ways through normalisation. In his view, power is everywhere, and the success of power in any institution lies in its adaptation, and how the 'micro-physics of power' works in that particular institution. Foucault explains this power analysis with an exemplar of a diagram. Seen from this perspective, I analysed the data in this chapter to capture the nuances of power structure, and how differently positioned forces in the pedagogy such as teacher and children negotiated the power structure in everyday practices. My data suggest that (1) the active educable subjects in the institutions emerge in the context through constant negotiation and mediation (2) both teacher and children act according to the situation and (3) the nature of pedagogy and the teacher's understanding of childhood are pivotal in the pedagogical process.

As I have shown in my analysis throughout this chapter, the subjects in the institutions emerge through a complex process. There were complexities in the institutions but at the same time there were fluidity as well. The analysis in this chapter also shows that the rationality underpinning the use of disciplinary power in the institutions varies (Pike, 2008). In the corporation nursery the subjects that emerge in the process were activity-centred. Children here were spatially segregated most of the time throughout the day. Here, the pedagogical power worked in subtle ways, the power and control was exercised over children mainly through covert normalisation, and the structure intrinsically demanded self-discipline from children. There was a structure in the approach that children needed to follow, but within that they had some freedom to function in the learning process. In the private nursery the active subjects that emerged through the process were task-centred. The pedagogical structure was formal and academic in nature, and children were expected to fulfil the academic demands to the normative standard. Differently positioned power structures such as children and teacher however negotiated the power positions. The disciplining strategy here was overt, yet children used their agency within their limits. Though the structure was formal, throughout the day children had lively

interactions with their peers. In the ICDS the subjects that emerge in the process was care-centred. The pedagogy practised here was complex, fluid and contextual. The opposing powers here worked in mild ways. In everyday practice where children's spatial position was very fluid, it was difficult for the worker to use isolation or separation techniques. Children's bodies here were constantly moving around and they changed their social position quite often. For instance, whenever older children assumed a leadership role, the power dynamics within the group seemed to change, and the child leaders demanded a certain amount of control and docility in their friends' bodies. In those contexts the leaders behaved as empowered individuals within the group. At the same time whenever the worker took control of the classroom they immediately exchanged their leader role with a normal child's role in the institution.

In conclusion, this chapter suggests that Foucault's concepts will be helpful to understand how the administrative apparatus works in early years provision for regulation and control. Indeed, the institutions serve as an instrument of regulation in the process of fulfilling their manifest and latent functions to the society (Pike, 2008). The pedagogy among other things provides a structure for everyday practices and interactions. In this process, the socially constituted child that enters the early years institution is expected to be converted into a useful product through/with the use of docility/utility arguments. For this to happen, basically, different disciplinary techniques such as normalising, controlling, stratifying have been used by the teacher(s)/care worker. However, an increasing amount of literature in childhood studies suggests that children have the capacity to redefine relationship/power in the social context and my data substantiate that (Corsaro, 2004; Gallagher, 2004). Thus, the argument that I would like to put forward here with my empirical data is that though the early childhood education curriculum has been dominated by normative discourse as postmodernist literatures argue, nevertheless the educational practices in everyday reality are constructed by both teacher and children through practices and interactions in the pedagogical process (Cannella, 2004; Dahlberg *et al.*, 1999; Popkewitz and Bloch, 2001; Yelland and Kilderry, 2005).

7 Institutionalising Identity

7.1 Introduction

In chapter three, I elaborated the theoretical connections between ‘subject’ and ‘identity’ and I argued that identity is neither physical nor mental, but is an embodied process. In this chapter I analyse the processes that unfold identity formation in everyday pedagogical practices. While the modernist concept of identity is single, unitary and fixed, the postmodernist/poststructuralist notion of identity is multiple, fluid and stems from a complex meaning-making process. In simple terms, for postmodernists/poststructuralists, identity needs to be understood as a process that emerges in the course of ‘becoming’ or ‘belonging’ in the social context (James, 1993; Jenkins, 2004).

To this end, this chapter describes how children construct their own and others’ identity through pedagogical performativity (research question two). As mentioned in chapter three, Butler (1990a, 1990b) used the term ‘performativity’ in feminist sociology to analyse how identity is constructed through a system of act and speech. According to Butler (1990b:271), identity is not precedent to an actor’s act rather it is the result of “stylized repetition of acts through time”. While critiquing the phenomenological explanation of ‘acts’ that envisages the actor’s existence in the social world prior to language and performance, she suggests that the actor’s act constitutes both “meaning and that through which meaning is performed or enacted” (Butler, 1990b:272). Thus, for Butler, identity is accomplished through performative repetition and the ‘becoming’ of a subject is ontologically incomplete (David *et al.*, 2006).

By applying Butler’s notion of *performativity*, this chapter will illustrate how learning properties in the corporation nursery, academic writing in the private nursery and bodily characteristics in the ICDS Anganwadi were used as means for identity formation. The analysis will specifically focus on everyday performativity -

how children perform through/with pedagogy and, in doing so, how they construct identity. Before I proceed to analyse children's pedagogical performativity, however, I describe the teacher/worker-children identities within/outwith early years institutions. The narrations of teacher/worker-children identities have some implications for children drawing references for their performativity in everyday practices. Therefore, in the following sections first I elucidate the construction of teacher(s)/worker(s)-children identities and then I explain the 'doing' of children's identity through pedagogical performativity.

7.2. Teacher(s)/worker – children identities

Seemingly, the teacher-children identities are constructed based on how they both perform in the institution and their performativity is to some extent enmeshed in control regimes and inter-personal relationships. Quite a few authors suggest that a teacher's role/authority in everyday practice is instrumental to the way the teacher is constructed by children and for children's being/belonging in the institution (Chen, 2009; Sarangapani, 2003). These constructions either directly or indirectly provide further references/indicators for children's everyday pedagogical performativity. Against this background, the following section will illustrate the distribution of power and teacher-children relationship *vis-à-vis* identity construction in everyday pedagogy.

7.2.1 Corporation nursery

As Butler (1990a, 1990b, 1993) argues, identity emerges in the ambivalent process of subjection and emancipation. Thus, the distribution of power in pedagogy plays a central part in understanding how identities are practised and constructed. To some extent, the classroom organisation itself shows power structures in pedagogical practices. In the conventional classroom in India, either the teacher alone will sit on the chair or the teacher will sit on the chair in the designated space separately from children. Seen from this viewpoint, the chair in the classroom can be regarded as a symbol that reflects the power difference between teacher and children. In this

nursery, as they follow the Montessori approach, children and teachers sat on the floor throughout the day and the movement of the teachers was fluid across physical spaces in the classroom. The one-to-one interaction in the learning process between teachers and children was high. This made this nursery quite distinct from others. Another characteristic that overtly exhibits the distribution of power *vis-à-vis* identity formation in the classroom is how children called the adults in the classroom. In this nursery, for example, children called the adult ‘aunty’ and not ‘miss’ or ‘teacher’. The use of this term revealed the less formal relationship that existed in the power structure. Moreover, children in this setting were not restrained from touching teachers’ bodies:

“During the presentation children were sitting on the circle. *Prakash* who was next to the teacher kept his hand on teacher’s lap and followed the presentation (field notes, 17th visit)”

The extract above indicates how informal the teacher-children relationship was in this nursery. Children did not have any fear or inhibition about touching teachers’ bodies in the classroom. This type of inter-embodiment might possibly have given children a unique learning experience and also a positive feel to their state of being in the institution. On another instance:

“The teacher was teaching rhymes with action. The girl *Megala* one who was sitting next to the teacher jokingly asked ‘aunty, I want to sit on your lap, shall I sit’ (field notes, 7th visit)”

The extracts above show the warmth and less formal relationship that subsists in the institution. The body contact of the teacher and children here can also be interpreted from the viewpoint of power order in the pedagogy. As Butler (1990a) suggests the ‘doing’ of teacher’s identity is instrumental in the ways in which children make sense of their role as learners in the institution. This kind of everyday repetitive act might possibly construct a particular image over time about the teacher’s authority and shape a particular experience of the nursery for the children. There could be some variations in individual experiences, but, at the same time, there could be some common characteristics that all children in the nursery might experience.

Further, the teacher-children identities in the classroom were constructed beyond the curriculum which was inscribed in the Montessori approach. The performativity of the teacher was not simply confined within the curriculum; as some of the literature on India suggests, it went beyond that (Gupta, 2004; Sarangapani, 2003). At times, the teacher-children relationship was embroiled like the *guru-shishya* (master-apprentice) relationship in which the teacher has ultimate responsibility to teach many things to children which are related to life (Sarangapani, 2003). Just like the *guru-shishya* relationship where the *guru* transforms all his embodied knowledge to his *shishya*, the teachers in the nursery intermittently imparted their knowledge, mainly in the form of moral values. The example below extends this analysis:

“The teacher was explaining about different types of plants with the picture cards. While doing presentation she said, ‘plants and animals do have life, do you understand. So, you should not pluck the leaf or beat animals. It is a sin, understand’ (field notes, 5th visit)”

Gupta (2004) argues that in the Indian context some teachers view teaching of values and moral behaviours as a curriculum separate from academic curriculum in schools. In the example above although teaching about plants was part of a Montessori curriculum the teacher’s advice about beating animals or plucking a leaf can be considered as something the teacher taught children as an add-on moral curriculum in this particular situation. This corresponds to Gupta’s argument on a teacher’s perception of educating individuals as conscientious and responsible members of the society.

Sometimes, the teacher’s role in the institution was like a mentor/assistant where the teacher offered additional help or material assistance to the needy children. One of the parents in the interview explained:

“Actually, when I admit her at 3-3 ½ years in the nursery, she was like a dumb, she couldn’t speak even a word, she was like that before, then she slowly developed talking at 4, she slowly started to socialise and talk with other children. In the nursery they looked after her as a (special) child, the miss was very caring, she’ll give

clothes to her, she does so many things to her and she gave utmost care to my child (Interview with parent 10)”

In the extract above, we can assume that offering a child material assistance was not part of the Montessori curriculum, but stemmed from the teacher’s goodwill. The above example resonates with empirical literature in India that has suggested that the teacher-children relationships in institutions is multi-dimensional (Sarangapani, 2003).

In addition there were two levels of markers for children’s performativity: body control and curriculum performativity. Body control, was connected with notions of the good child and quite often references were also made to bodily presentation (Goffman, 1973) or bodily civilisation (Elias, 1998). As explained in the last chapter, children were put under a control regime and were advised to present their bodies in an appropriate manner. Children’s bodies were subjected and conditioned in the classroom to impart culturally appropriate behaviours. Thus, the example for a good child here was often referred to as a child who presents his/her body according to the standards/expectations of the teacher. The paragraph below will illustrate this:

“Look at *Ruth*, she looks very neat, she is a good girl’, the teacher said, when she is explaining about the importance of cleanliness in the group session. While she is explaining, *Megala* is repeatedly saying ‘miss, miss, miss, I brush my teeth everyday, yes miss, I also take bath everyday, my grandmother bathe me every day’ (field notes, 2nd visit)”

In this example the teacher connected *Ruth’s appearance*, the presenting of the body neatly in the public space, as an attribute of a good child, and this prompted *Megala* to claim that she too was clean and in some way infer that she should also be appreciated or endorsed as a good child. The teachers’ intended by appreciating a particular child in public to induce others also to come clean to the classroom. On the other side, a reference for a bad child was offered, as below:

“*Sundar* was sitting in a class with raised collar. ‘Look, how are you sitting? You look like a rowdy. Only rowdy’s will sit like this. Fold up your collar,’ she said (field notes, 7th visit)”

In this episode, the teacher's interpretation that only a rowdy will sit with a raised collar or people who raise their collar are considered rowdy sends a strong moral message to children. This type of repetitive message in the classroom communicates to children what actions are accepted in the classroom and what actions are not accepted.

With regard to curriculum performativity, children were indirectly influenced and motivated to gain mastery of Montessori curriculum, particularly at the time of group activities. For instance:

“During the group exercise the Montessori teacher was teaching the names of peninsulas, islands and Indian states on assemble board. The teacher called children individually to show the answer. The teacher said ‘*Nidhi*, you come and pick Tamil Nadu from the map’. *Nidhi* went and picked up the right one. Then she asked *Moni* to pick up Kerala. She struggled. She was moving her finger one by one, this, this, this. The teacher said ‘no’ (field notes, 8th visit)”

Though the Montessori curriculum was mainly individualised, the mastery of an individual child was indirectly tested in the group as above in the learning processes. During this exercise, while *Nidhi* was able to pick the state correctly from the map, *Moni* struggled to identify the right one in the beginning. Here, the teacher's intention was not to publicly shame the non-performing child; rather the intention of the teacher was to make the demonstration more participatory. This was the routinised activity in the nursery, yet, it indirectly conveyed the message to children that they have to gain mastery of the curriculum otherwise their non-performance will be exposed in public. On some occasions children's previous performativity failure was publicly pointed out by the teachers to demand further action from children:

“Before individual activity the teacher was doing presentation on sequence of actions with picture cards: cutting the watermelon, eating maize and drinking water from the bottle. She shuffled the cards and asked children to order with sequence. When the

teacher asked a boy to arrange the sequence *Thyagu* was tipping the answer. Looking at *Thyagu* the teacher said ‘you tell everything now, but you don’t follow while doing (the activity), do you?’ (field notes, 14th visit)”

Though the child seemed to have knowledge about this particular activity his previous non-performativity was utilised at this particular moment to make judgements about his action. The boy was not supposed to tip others the answers in the group activity. So his unwanted response was criticised and connected with his earlier mistakes. This indicated that possession of knowledge alone is not enough in pedagogical practice; instead, what seemed to be important was that the child should perform the way he was supposed to perform to the standards and expectations of the teacher. In sum, the significance of children’s performativity in the classroom was intentionally or unintentionally communicated to children in everyday pedagogical practices.

7.2.2 Private nursery

The teacher-student relationship in the private nursery was mainly defined by academic performativity. The classroom organisation in this nursery appeared like a typical classroom where the teacher sat in the front separately from the children. Besides actual teaching, the one-to-one interaction in teaching/learning was to a great extent constrained by institutional structures, spatial arrangements and the teacher’s range of classroom commitments. The teacher explained:

“What I am doing at present seems to be tedious, in the sense, I spend a lot of time for correction of homework notebooks and giving homework for the next day, I spend considerably less time with children. If that work is reduced, um, I think I will get more time for children, yeah, I can spend more time for teaching, I can clear their doubts, can spend extra time with weak students (Interview with the teacher)”

In the paragraph above the teacher was self-critical about her own performativity and institutional structures. She was under the impression that spending too much time on children’s homework reduced the time for actual teaching. She further admitted that

since she was busy spending time with correction and assigning tasks for home work she could not pay any special attention to academically weak children. What the extract above also implies is that the children should be treated as equal in the learning process. Everyone in the classroom was expected to deliver normative level performance. So it was the child's responsibility to gain mastery of subject knowledge to meet the demands of normative standards.

The relationship between the teacher and children in the nursery was mostly academic-focussed and the classroom atmosphere resembled a typical formal classroom. In the classroom the teacher was the main custodian of the control regime. In order to regulate the children's performances, character and behaviour rules were imposed/followed and children were penalised for violation of the rules:

“One day I saw *Magi*, a boy, crying at the school gate in the morning. He was late to the class. His father tried to leave him at the nursery gate. *Magi* was adamant and seemed persuading his father to his teacher and explain the reason for his late arrival. Finally, his father came inside and dropped him in the classroom after he tenders his apology to the teacher (field notes, 8th visit)”

Magi's fear that late comers would be punished and the teacher would not excuse his late arrival forced him strongly to persuade his father to negotiate the power order in the classroom. So what made *Magi* afraid and made him cry for being late? Later on that day I asked him. ‘My father comes late every day. After bathing only he comes. *Lucas* also suggested, ‘he just give plain excuse, he comes late everyday’. The reason for his late arrival could be due to many reasons. But what is significant here is to understand the rule-binding nature of the institution and how children view the teacher as a strict implementer of administrative control. The teacher's identity here appeared to be that of an enforcer of rules and regulations. However, in this example *Magi* utilised his father's parental authority to counteract the teacher's authority. The episode further demonstrates how the fluid nature of identity gains a ‘fixed’ image over time. While the boy *Magi* was perceived as a regular latecomer by *Lucas* based on his repetitive acts, the teacher was perceived as a strict implementer of rules by *Magi* on this particular occasion.

At times, children viewed the teacher as a strict person, but at other times they saw her as a less-authoritative person:

“*Ganesh* was entertaining his friends with his action stunt – he was repeatedly falling backwards with his chair. Seeing him doing this one of the boy said ‘hey Miss is watching you’. The teacher was casually interacting with a few other children at that time in her desk. By noticing her casual mood, *Ganesh* said ‘hey she will not say anything now’ (field notes, 6th visit)”

The extract above sums up the nature of classroom formed teacher-children relationships. In the flow of daily routines the teacher swapped her role as a strict or less-authoritative person according to the needs of classroom management. Children as competent individuals read the situation, negotiate the boundaries of power order and co-construct identities with the teacher. So the construction of teacher-children identities in everyday pedagogy was reciprocal and circumstantial. There was a constant arbitration from both teacher and children throughout the day concerning their performativity.

Other than this control regime, the academic performativity of the children appeared to be crucial in determining teacher-children identities in the classroom. As children’s academic performativity was evaluated almost every hour in the classroom, this repetitive act persuaded children to learn and show mastery in the learning process. In general, children who were good academically seemed to have confidence in the classroom in comparison to others and they had a very good interpersonal relationship with the teacher. They were comfortable talking to the teacher in all aspects. For instance:

“After most of the children finished writing the classroom looked very relaxed in the last period before lunch and some children were involved in pep talks with the teacher. *Priya* happily showed ‘miss, miss, this is my new bangles, how do they look’. The teacher said ‘nice’ (field notes, 15th visit)”

On the flipside, academically weak students appeared to, over time, lose confidence in classroom activities. The continuous warnings, rebukes and reprimands from the teacher of academically weak children for their performativity failure had an inadvertent but detrimental impact on children's self-image and self-esteem. In this process academically less performing child seemed to be less effective in using their agential power and negotiation capacity in teacher-children relationships. During my observations I saw an academically less performing student mostly trying to evade the attention of the teacher in the classroom:

“Balu came early this morning. The chairs in the first row were empty. While arranging the chairs I asked him whether he wanted to sit in the front. He said ‘no’. He showed some discomfort. I asked him further why he didn’t want to sit in the front. He said ‘I will sit in my usual place, I am fine with my usual place’ (field notes, 15th visit)”

The above data showed the boy's preference and comfort for sitting in the back row. There was no restriction in seating arrangements and children could sit anywhere they wished in the classroom. Based on priority and availability of spaces children mostly changed their place every day. At the superficial level at first it appeared well in my observation. However, as my field work progressed I found some children always had preferred to sit in the front and some seemed to be comfortable sitting in the back row. In most cases the children sitting in the front were those who had a comfortable relationship with the teacher whereas some children sitting at the back seemed to avoid the attention of teacher. This observation showed how far academic performativity influenced the embodied experiences of children and impacted on their ability to realise their belonging and becoming in the classroom and thereby construct a variety of teacher-children identities. In sum, this section shows how academic performativity in relation to teacher-children relationship plays a part in identity construction in the classroom environment.

7.2.3 ICDS Anganwadi centre

In the ICDS, the worker-children relationship was fluid and contextual. The worker had strong ties with local community members and these were reflected on many occasions in day-to-day interactions. My observation revealed that the social bonds and interactions between parents and the worker in this centre were significantly high. While dropping off and picking up their children parents quite often had a conversation with the worker and at times the conversations were personal, discussing family matters. This revealed the depth of the bond between them. As a result, the conduct of the children in the centre was monitored beyond working hours. Sometimes, parents shared things, as shown below, about what their children did at home:

“The other day *Banu*’s mother complained to the worker. ‘Miss control *Banu* here. She is not obedient at home. Every day she demands 10 rupees from her father in the morning. As soon as she wakes up, she go to the shop, buy snacks and eat them without brushing her teeth’ (field notes, 7th visit)”

On another occasion, *Suresh*’s mother said:

“Miss, tell him not to watch TV late night. He watches cartoon channel till late in the night (field notes, 4th visit)”

The examples above show how strong the home – institution mediation was in everyday practice. They also illustrated the convergence of parental and worker authority in bringing about discipline and control in children. These examples also demonstrate the triangular nature of the relationship between parent-children-worker in the institution. Parents felt less effective at home controlling children, thus, they sought additional formal support from the institution. Such approval from parents also gave authority to the worker directly or indirectly to wield her power beyond the institution. In one instance the worker said:

“Yesterday *Vijay* was playing on the street with bare body. When he saw me walking on the street in a long distance he went and

wear his shirt immediately from home and said hello as if he was playing with his shirt before (informal conversation with AWW)”

It shows that the relationship between the worker and children was not confined within the institution; it stretched even further. The worker was, as shown previously in this section, treated by mothers with respect as a professional and also as a local community member. Thus, the worker “wore a different hat” at different times according to the demand. The incident described above is an exemplar that reveals the power dynamics of worker-children relationships beyond the institution. However, it should be noted that these relationships were not fixed and within the institution the worker performed different identities at different times. Let us look at the below example:

“Isha, who is a semi-orphan child and lives with her step mother, came late. The AWW asked why she was late. She said she burnt her left hand yesterday and she still feels the pain. ‘Did you apply any ointment,’ the AWW asked, she said ‘no’. She called her to her table and applied her own ointment (field notes, 4th visit)”

In this interaction the worker acted like a parent/adult. Though it was not her duty, as a responsible adult/person she applied her own ointment with a real concern for the child. This suggests that the transitions of worker’s identities were flexible in everyday practice, changing from one role to another and also that they were very much contextual. Significantly, the transition of her identity, for instance, a soft worker, or a kind person, or a strict worker, depended on her workload and other job related commitments, for instance, in the week when the helper was away from the centre for on-the-job training:

“Vijay’s mother came inside the centre at around 10.30 am and gave him the snacks packet. ‘Didn’t he eat in the morning, the AWW asked. ‘He ate’, she replied. ‘Then why did you give snacks now. He will keep eating this for one hour. Other children will also sit around him and ask’, the AWW said in annoying tone (field notes, 11th visit)”

She had never raised this issue before and I was wondering, why only today? Perhaps the absence of the helper might have prompted her to behave so. She was a bit over-

cautious about keeping the place tidy as the helper was away. The examples above tell us the context-specific pedagogical relationship and identity of the worker in the institution. Similarly, what the worker referred to as an ideal performing body also depended on the context in which a child's body was situated. The example below will extend this argument:

“Suddenly the noise in the centre went beyond the worker's threshold level. She asked children to be quiet for few times. Then she said, ‘Look at *Naveen*, how quiet he is, he is a good boy, why don't you all be like *Naveen*’ (field notes, 14th visit)”

The worker complemented *Naveen*'s silence in this particular moment, but on several previous occasions, *Naveen*'s silence had been considered unusual. *Naveen* who had always been silent in the centre was viewed by the worker as a non-performing child in some aspects. The boy had some difficulty with his language acquisition. When the worker talked about this to his aunt, she told the worker that he was like that even at home (field notes, 10th visit). His lack of language proficiency was considered earlier by the same worker as a problem and it was viewed as a deficit for the child. But now his same silence was appreciated with a compliment. This example enabled the conclusion that the notion of competency and performativity involves socially situated meaning that can be exploited by adults for their own convenience.

Also, in everyday pedagogy, the notion of self-care was associated in the centre with bodily features such as physical size and maturity. The bodies of older children were considered ideal for self-management and independence and this message was repeatedly conveyed either implicitly or explicitly to children in actual practice. For example:

“Normally the helper assists children for going to toilet. Sometimes if she is busy she will ask older children to guide younger children. The older children in the group help younger children to remove/wear their trouser or skirt before and after they go for toilet (field notes, 2nd visit)”

Such type of practices communicated an adult-constructed image that physical size was important for care and management. Likewise, children's everyday performativity in the centre was adjudged by children's physical attributes and conduct. For example:

“The helper said to the worker ‘yesterday she (*Geetha*) dumped all leftover food in the bathroom. She has been troubling a lot these days. Ask her why she did that’. After hearing this from the helper the worker said to *Geetha* in annoying tone ‘you have been coming (to the centre) for three years, didn’t you learn anything (good things)? You are not a small child. You have grown up. Do you understand?’ (field notes, 8th visit)”

In the extract above the worker publicly stated that a physically grown up child who had been attending the centre for three years should have known by this time how to conduct herself in a given situation. The assumption here is that a child must acquire knowledge and mastery about self-conduct and bodily practices over time in the centre and that he or she is supposed to perform in an ideal way without making any trouble. Similarly, the idea of cognitive maturity and competency was portrayed in concomitant to physical maturity of the child. The paragraph below illustrates how ideas of maturity influenced everyday performativity in the centre:

“Before teaching rhymes the worker asked children one by one what they ate in the morning.

Worker – *Nagul*, what did you eat?

Nagul – Sosa (dosai)

Worker – *Vijay* you

Vijay – Boova (a meal)

Worker – Boova with what?

Vijay – Boova (he repeatedly said)

Worker – *Sinduja* you tell me what did you eat?

Sinduja – Boova

Worker – Boova with what?

Sinduja – Sambar (curry)

Worker – *Bindu* you

Bindu – Boova

Worker – Boova with what?

Bindu - Rasam (pepper water)

Worker – Don’t lie. I will ask your mom. You are 4 years old now
but you don’t know what you ate.

Worker – *Jo* what did you eat in the morning?

Jo – Idly
Worker – How many idly?
Jo – 3 idly
Worker – All of you clap. He only said correctly (field notes, 11th visit)

In the paragraph above, while *Jo* was appreciated for his correct response *Bindu* was snubbed by the worker as an incompetent child who did not know what she had in the morning for her breakfast. The teacher's own perception that eating pepper water in the morning was an unusual practice prompted her to draw a conclusion that *Bindu* was just simply lying. Further *Bindu* was chastised for her failure to deliver the expected answer considering that she was physically mature and older than other children in the centre. Examples like the above created an impression that everyday performativity in the centre was associated with bodily characteristics and, in an ideal sense, older children were expected to perform better than their counterpoints in all aspects, otherwise they were subjected to shame and humiliation.

Conclusion – In summary, this section described the teacher-children relationships inside/outwith the institutions and how they constructed teacher-children identities in everyday practice. The data show the key role of power/authority distribution in offering indicators for teacher-children relationship and children's performativity. In the corporation nursery the environment was less formal and the identity of the teachers in the classroom was more like a person who values moral behaviour. Here, a reference point for a good or bad child was quite often drawn from a student's bodily presentation in the classroom. Also, the importance of curriculum performativity was insisted overtly and covertly in the classroom. In the private nursery the teacher's authority was visible and the teacher's identity was more like a person who values tasks and rules. There was constant negotiation between teacher and children in their performativity and they co-constructed identities in everyday pedagogy. The academic performativity of the child was a crucial aspect of teacher-children identities. In the ICDS Anganwadi the identity of the worker was multiple and contextual where power dynamics also influenced behaviour outwith the institution. A reference point for an ideal performing body was provided by the teacher/worker depending on the context in which a child was situated. Children's

everyday pedagogical performativity was flagged up with markers such as physical attributes (e.g. size, age and maturity). Overall, this section captured the teacher-children identities in pedagogical practices and how the teacher-children relationship set out the indicators for children's performativity in everyday pedagogy.

7.3 Pedagogical performativity

This section will analyse how children constructed identity through/with pedagogical performativity. It will mainly consider how pedagogical performativity was connected to learning properties in the corporation nursery, academic writing in private nursery and children's bodies in the ICDS Anganwadi.

In the corporation nursery, where they mainly followed the Montessori curriculum, learning materials played a crucial role in pedagogical performativity. The human relational connection to the external world and the knowledge it generated through bodily interactions, were altered by artefacts, "whether this is a symbol or sign or a material object such as a tool or utensil" (Burkitt, 1999, p 38). Literature explains how the development of artefacts transforms human experiences differently in different eras (Mellor and Shilling, 1997). Artifacts are developed with specific purposes and they modify human experiences about the world (Burkitt, 1999). Based on new developments, the embodied individual also develops new capacities to utilise, adapt and orient to new artefacts (Mellor and Shilling, 1997). In the above context, it is important to understand how children in the corporation nursery engaged their bodies with inanimate objects and how those objects could be encountered, experienced and interpreted by children in a given social context for identity formation (Hindmarsh and Heath, 2003).

In the private nursery, as mentioned earlier in chapter five, the main educational aim was to teach reading, writing and arithmetic and the curriculum was formal and academic in nature. As the literature points out, the formal approach to the curriculum is based on the understanding that rote learning such as reading, writing and arithmetic takes place in a sequencing, categorising and linear order in the

cognitive zones according to developmental milestones (Piaget, 1968; Sellers, 2010). From the embodied cognitive perspective, however, one can argue that academic activities such as reading and writing are not only cognitive, but also need bodily coordination and presentation in order to attain the desired results and outcomes (Ivinson, 2012). Like any other manual work, academic activities require certain bodily obligations. Therefore, academic activities, specifically writing, was picked up in the private nursery to understand the nuances of children's embodied selves in everyday pedagogical performativity.

In the ICDS Anganwadi, bodily differences were quite visible as they had a multi-age group in the centre. Bodily differences such as size, appearance, gesture, act and talk served as an analytical device to judge one's position in relation to others (Hindmarsh and Heath, 2003; James, 2000, Simpson, 2000). Further, the literature has suggested that the body image and self-image that people develop are based on the sense of being embodied and the way in which this experience is shaped in the social world (Burkitt, 1999). Seen from this viewpoint, children's bodies were chosen in the ICDS to find out how identity works in everyday pedagogical performativity.

The literature on performativity notes that shame, embarrassment, distinction and mastery are the markers that encourage people to perform in certain ways in social life (Butler, 1990; Chinn, 2010; Davies, 2006). The process of performativity entails both subjection and liberation in the early years provision. Towards this end, the sections below will illustrate pedagogical performativity in the early years institutions.

7.3.1 Learning material in the corporation nursery

The Montessori classroom utilised a myriad of learning materials to create a learning environment where children were expected to explore different subject matters from Exercises of Practical Life (EPL) and basic literacy to simple arithmetic (Jones *et al.*, 2012). It was assumed that children learn things in a bounded system through/with

learning materials. As learning materials were pivotal in the nursery, it became important to analyse how children personalised the learning materials over time and how they were used to produce embodied identities through everyday performativity.

As explained in chapter five, the nursery had a range of learning materials and children were normally expected to progress from simple to complex activities. The simplest form of learning began with EPL activities and the complex ones were literacy and numerical activities. The kind of learning materials that a child used was the sign of where the child stood in comparison to others in the group, though the comparison was not obvious in everyday practice. The following example will explain how it worked:

“In the morning group session, the teacher taught sequence of human action - cutting watermelon, eating maize and drinking water - with picture cards. Then, she explained how to pair up fruits such as mango, orange, grape and pomegranate that seem identical. After the group activity she said ‘ok now all UKG guys you go and do tracing. You put the study desk and trace letters. You should not do it on your own, we will come and assist you one by one, understand’ (field notes, 14th visit)”

There was no clear distinction physically between LKG and UKG children in the nursery, but as the extract above shows, the activities that children engaged with would enable them to subtly realise their position in the classroom. Roughly in this context, children doing complex activities were assumed to be UKG students and the rest as LKG students. The position of children in the group was based on what materials they used and how they used them in the classroom. Children were individually monitored and guided on their progression. The nursery emphasised individual interest in the learning process, hence, the teachers normally did not force anyone to do complex activities (this was particularly the case for the first 6 months to 1 year of their time in the nursery). This implied that the progression of children on the activity ladder was to a great extent based on children’s internal motivation and desire; however, the teachers implicitly guided and persuaded the child over time to stretch their ability further to encompass complex activities. Pedagogical performativity enabled children to realise their position in relation to others:

“*Hari* was doing simple maths (addition) using materials and workbook. When *Hari* was writing on his notebook he was surrounded by 2-3 other children. I asked them what they were looking at. Filled with curiosity, one boy said ‘he is writing, he is doing mathematics,’ while the other boy *Akil* smiled and winked (field notes, 10th visit)”

The above data show how children came to realise their position from the activities that they did in the classroom. As children were positioned individually within the activity zone, the type of activity children performed carried significant implications with reference to their position in the group. The pre-requisite for doing any activity was a technical ‘know-how’ knowledge about the material, as each activity was specifically designed for a certain learning purpose. Otherwise the use of materials was meaningless in connection to learning outcomes. This was sometimes categorically confirmed by the teacher(s):

“*Rohit*, a long absentee to the class, asked ‘miss what activity I shall do now? Can I take this material (he was pointing his fingers towards numerical activity materials)?’ The teacher said ‘no, you do this first (pointing her fingers towards EPL activities materials)’ (field notes, 12th visit)”

In the above paragraph the teacher thought the child needed to have familiarity or prior knowledge about the learning material which he/she intended to use. Children had to demonstrate over time to the teacher that they had the capacity to handle the property that they picked up (Burkitt, 1999); otherwise they were subjected to humiliation/shame from peers or teachers/helpers in relation to their inability to handle the material. The literature in performativity suggests that shame and embarrassment are an important factor which makes people perform or not perform in the group (Butler, 1990, 1992; Chinn, 2010). The extract below will help us to extend the analysis further on this matter:

“*Deena* was sitting with the puzzle (camel, tortoise, monkey, squirrel, rabbit and camel) material. Looking at him the helper said ‘do you know how to do it? I told you not to bring materials that you do not know how to handle it’ (field notes, 17th visit)”

Here, the helper wanted the child to do activities with which he was familiar and/or wanted the child to utilise his time properly for learning; yet, this expectation contradicted with the child's own choice. Moreover her remarks had the potential to impose a self-fulfilling prophesy where child came to think that he was incapable of handling that particular material. In this example the child was subjected to power and expected to gain mastery of using learning materials and, at the same time, he was shamed for his performativity failure which was defined by normative standards.

Sometimes children's inability to perform certain tasks with properties was mentioned explicitly by the teacher(s) in the group. The example below will explain how shaming a person in group happens in the institution:

“With *Ruth* the teacher was doing demonstration on how to wash hands. *Rama* and *Megala* did not pay attention to the teacher and they were whispering with each other. The teacher called their names and said ‘*Rama* and *Megala*, look here, how she is doing, you always do incorrectly and you are not listening now’ (field notes, 12th visit)”

In the episode above *Rama* and *Megala* were publicly shamed about their past mistakes and their incapacity of doing the activity correctly. This activity set out a marker for what constituted an ideal learner. An ideal learner should pay attention during presentations and similarly an ideal performer should perform the activity the way the teacher demonstrated. I also noted during my observations that children reacted differently with their bodily gestures when they were shamed publicly. For instance, while *Rama* bowed her head down with humiliation, *Megala* showed her resistance in mild ways like neglecting eye-to-eye contact with the teacher.

The inability of children was not only flagged up by the teachers or helper; it was also implied by their peers in casual interactions during individual Montessori sessions. However, when children were pointed out by their peers about their wrongdoing, unlike with adults, they were on the defensive mode or used denial/avoidance strategies:

“*Janaki* was making English alphabets with the use of different colours sticks. When she did some letters incorrectly, for instance, she placed the colour sticks in the opposite direction for the alphabet ‘C’, *Mano* the boy sitting next to her told her that it was wrong. He said, C is not like this, you have to do it like this (he demonstrated). *Janaki*, with a frustrated look said, ‘yeah, I know, I know, I know how to do it, you just leave me, I will do it on my own’ (field notes, 12th visit)”

When *Janaki*’s incompetence in using the material was pointed out by *Mano*, she got irritated and defended herself saying that she knew how to handle the sticks and she did not need any external support to enhance her performativity. She seemed to be almost in confrontation with *Mano*. She might have felt humiliated by *Mano*’s action but she was on the defensive by saying that she knew how to do it and she was capable of doing that activity.

The following example illustrates a child’s experience and interpretation of performativity in the classroom in regards to shame. *Venki*, a 2 ½ years old boy, never did an individual activity at the beginning of my observation. He was the smallest in the group and relatively new to the classroom. The teachers never forced him directly to do activities on his own. Sometime he sat on the veranda not doing any activity and most of the time he joined others who were beginners like him in the group. One day:

“*Venki* noticed *Aki* had been sitting with the pictorial workbook without doing anything. He called me and said ‘uncle, teach him, poor chap, he is just simply sitting’

Researcher – Where is your mat?

Venki – I don’t do anything. He will do (he was pointing his fingers towards *Sundar* who was sitting by me)

Researcher – Why didn’t you do any activity?

Venki – Miss is scolding me (field notes, 13th visit)”

He was in denial mode about his non-performance and pointed his fingers towards another boy who was doing the activity, in order to defend his position. Also, he showed sympathy towards the other child who was not performing with the materials. A couple of days later I asked him again the same question:

Researcher - Why didn't you do any activity?

Venki - Miss is scolding me

Researcher - Why she is scolding you?

Venki - I don't know, she is scolding me (field notes, 15th visit)

The teacher's continuous insistence not to touch others' materials formed a misconception in his mind that he was not allowed to touch the materials. The shame and humiliation that he faced at several occasions before in the classroom made him shy of working independently with materials. Also, he seemed to be happy joining others rather than doing an activity of his own.

On a few occasions, I noted that children were hesitant to approach the teacher to clarify doubts or to invite her to teach them how to handle the materials. Thus children performed independently even if it was wrong. For instance:

"Megala was supposed to touch and identify different sizes of wooden materials in ascending order blindfolded. But she opened her eyes every time she picked up a new wooden piece (field notes, 12th visit)"

Instead of doing the activity in a prescribed manner the child here did the activity with her own interpretation. So what can be understood from the above excerpt is children's preference for achieving results over process. In this exercise the child had to touch, feel and identify the differences of various sizes of learning materials. However, instead, the child identified the materials with open eyes and brought her own interpretation to the activity. When I asked her whether she had finished the activity she said with a sense of accomplishment that she had. It shows how at times children reinterpret the learning process in the given circumstances in order to achieve the curriculum output and distinction. Children's own interpretation of performativity through/with the materials encouraged them to think that they succeeded or achieved mastery of doing the activity even if it was done wrongly (in terms of the teachers view).

Moreover, the way children used a particular material itself could be viewed as a sign of self-expression. The materials became a device for expressing children's feelings

or emotions in performativity. Children sometimes expressed their restlessness, disinterest, bodily discomfort and isolated feelings through learning materials:

“*Thyagu* looked restless during the activity. After every 5 minutes he went and picked up another material and he showed some discomfort in sitting and doing alone (field notes, 3rd visit)”

The data above showed the affective process involved with learning materials in the pedagogical practices. Learning materials were used here as a form of expression by the child. The boy, *Thyagu*, expressed his restlessness and discomfort through re-choosing learning materials. This suggests that the ways children use a particular learning material conveys to others their interest, motivation and the desire for doing a particular activity at a specified time. It also sends out the possibilities to others to make judgement about how committed or disinterested a particular child is in a specific learning process.

In sum, this section indicates the significance of learning objects in relation to the child’s expressions, feelings, emotions, conformity and positioning in the group. Jenks (2004) notes that the construction of identity not only works in human minds but it also constitutes in assemblage of materials, practices, procedures and embodiment. This section corresponds to Jenks’ (2004) argument that identity is constructed through an assemblage of learning materials and embodied experiences such as shame or accomplishing distinction in pedagogical practice.

7.3.2 Writing in the private nursery

In the private nursery, as will be shown below, children were expected to perform mainly academic tasks. Thus, the aspect of academic performativity, mainly writing performativity, occupied a central place for identity formation in both formal and informal conversations in the classroom. Literature suggests academic performativity involves not only cognitive aspects but is also embodied (Sellers, 2010; Ivinson, 2012). Moreover, if there is any performativity failure in the classroom, the consequences are first visibly displayed on the body itself. The body has to suffer

and bear the brunt of any punishment awarded in the classroom such as separation, exclusion, standing or kneeling, as below:

“After morning roll call the teacher was checking the homework notebook. And children who failed to do homework were asked to stand for nearly 15-20 minutes in the corner of the classroom (field notes, 5th visit)”

This everyday ritualistic practice of public exhibition of punishment on the non-performing bodies reminded everyone in the classroom that they had to perform according to the conditions set out in the institution. If they failed to do so they would be humiliated in public. It was presumed that this kind of bodily subjection and public punishment would bolster children to change their behaviour and make them perform to teacher expectations.

So, in the classroom atmosphere, as Butler (1990, 1997) suggests, children were subjected to power by the teacher. At the same time they were expected to acquire mastery of knowledge/academic activities. Children were obliged to perform certain tasks irrespective of their wish in every period throughout the day in order to fit correctly with their student role (Butler, 1990, 1992).

“When the teacher goes around in the classroom to supervise how the children are writing, *Mathew*, a boy from the front row has been following her asking some doubts. The teacher stopped for a moment, cleared his doubt and then continued walking for surveillance’ (field notes, 1st visit)”

The boy’s enthusiasm here to clarify his doubts was considered as a sign of a motivated learner. His behaviour did not invite any disapproval from the teacher. Instead, his action was endorsed by the teacher at this particular moment and the teacher positively responded to his demand. So, the underlying assumption here is that a good learner is always proactive, diligent and passionate about learning, if he/she has any doubts in the subject he/she will immediately clarify them with the teacher. The good learner utilises a checking approach as a way of showing interest and commitment towards their studies. The child does not have to perform well in

terms of outcomes if, his/her enthusiasm is appreciated and he is viewed as a motivated learner by the teacher.

The embodied experience of the child in the classroom could not simply be altered or transformed to meet their own aspirations. There were consequences for non-compliance. There were boundaries of embodiment, structures in the classroom, which marked out what was to be considered as normal; thus it was difficult for the child to resist or avoid the forces in the setting which sought to regulate and discipline (Budgeon, 2003). Normative discourses constructed a belief that children should develop cognitive maturity, perform expected academic tasks and keep in line with notions of pedagogical performativity. So, a child had to conform to the established standards and practices even if it was against his/her own wishes. Otherwise his/her actions were punished or reprimanded and he/she was treated as a non-performing child:

“During writing exercise, instead of writing English words on the notebook *Punitha* was scribbling some drawings. While moving around in the classroom the teacher noticed that she was not writing English and drawing pictures on the rough note. She chided her to write English words on her class work note (field notes, 9th visit)”

The girl *Punitha* was passionate about drawing and she told me in one of the conversations I had with her that she had won a few prizes in drawing competitions that were conducted in her local community. Nevertheless, the skill that she effectively used to win accolades in other contexts was regarded here by the teacher as unwarranted during the class hour. Such ‘non-academic’ skills were almost considered irrelevant in everyday practice in this particular academic-oriented setting. *Punitha’s rejection sent a message to others that children’s embodied action in the classroom should concur with the scheduled timetable and the teacher’s assigned task.* Such types of warnings conveyed and reinstated the teacher’s position concerning normative performativity. The top-down pedagogy did not give any space for children’s possibility-thinking or creativity in the pedagogical process (Craft, 2005, 2011) and it discouraged diversity in the learning process (Konstantoni, 2011).

The literature suggests however that in the learning process children's strength should be valued and such recognition can be the key for their identity formation (Davis, 2011; Houston and Dolan, 2008).

Children at times attuned to or enhanced their mastery to match-up with teacher's normative standard and/or expectations:

“The teacher taught a topic on ‘our feathered friends’. She has written 10 birds’ names on the black board and told them to write in their notebook. While looking at *Keerthi*’s note *Priya* said ‘it doesn’t look nice, look at the board, how nicely miss has written’ (field notes, 3rd visit)”

The girl's action in the above paragraph resonates with argument about concepts of learning that connect learning to memorising and reproducing (Beaty *et al.*, 1990 quoted in Willis, 1993:388-390). Children like *Keerthi* and *Priya*, are made to repeat and reproduce the predetermined educational outcomes of the formal learning environment without any interpretation or understanding. My argument here does not mean that children lack capability for interpretation or understanding or reworking of normative ideas. Instead, I am suggesting that children conceptualise the teacher's handwriting on the board as an ideal type, and they try to improve their performance or repeat the same thing in order to match up to the standard.

Indeed, children through actualisation deeply internalise, not passively but reflectively, the structures in their daily activities (Corsaro, 2004). At times, children's performances were scrutinised by their peers in the informal conversations. For children, teacher's feedback, comments, marks and other symbols are used as signifiers, to place their ‘self’ with ‘others’. These signifiers were utilised when children aspired to achieve the ideal performance of ‘self’ in the group:

“After finishing her math's writing *Lakshmi* went for correction. She was happily showing her note to others that she has got 7 out of 8 correct answers presuming that she is the topper, but when other children showed their note that they have got 8 out of 8, the smile slowly faded away from her face and she seemed a little upset for a moment (field notes, 5th visit)”

As the paragraph above shows, children's recognition, joy, acceptance and satisfaction were derived from how they were placed in comparison to others. Children while performing the curriculum learnt what they were and what others were. They reflectively situate themselves in all their social encounters and interactions and, as illustrated in the following account, they sought to establish and confirm their identity only after they related their 'self' to 'others' in the social world in which they lived.

“‘Uncle, I have completed my homework and I don't know whether I will get a 'star' or 'good' from miss', *Ganesh* told me before he went for correction with his homework note. After correction he came with a disappointed look that he didn't get either. Then he asked *Anand* whether he got a 'star'. *Anand* said no. He gleefully said 'you also didn't get it, then it is okay' (field notes, 11th visit)”

In this example, the child *Ganesh* was happy only after knowing that the other child *Anand* also did not get any distinction for his work from the teacher and they both were equal in position. So, after reflexive thoughts he drew a conclusion about his own 'self' in the situation. Like *Ganesh*, children constantly situate themselves in their everyday narratives and construct meaning out of it for their and other's childhoods.

Further, I saw during my observation a large variation in the way children wrote and utilised their free time in every hour during the writing exercise. As Rowe and Neitzel (2010) argue, children did use their agency in various ways in writing performativity. Some children concentrated only on their own performativity whereas others involved themselves in social interaction throughout the writing exercise. At one instance, I asked children:

Researcher – Have you finished writing? I asked Arun

Magi – He always writes slowly

Researcher – What about you?

Magi – I am always fast, I already finished my writing. We all four in our desk are always fast. Those three (showing the back row) are always slow in writing (field notes, 2nd visit)

The child *Magi* revealed that the four children at his desk were fast in writing and they achieved distinction with their writing performativity. On the other hand his statement also implied that the children sitting in the back row were slow and they were a level lower in their performativity. When I asked him the reason why the children at the back row were slow and he and his friends were fast, he commented:

“We start writing immediately as soon as the teacher told us to write. But they don’t, they talk; they look here and there and slowly write (field notes, 2nd visit)”

His interpretation reveals that the attributes that separate fast writing and slow writing were chiefly motivation and determination. He felt proud that he was a fast writer and that he completed his assignment well before others. By comparing his action with others he felt that he had achieved distinction and had performed to the expected level. But individual interest alone did not contribute to the factors associated with writing performativity. For instance:

“When I was talking to *Komu*, a child who had some learning difficulties, other children told me with disapproval that she did not know anything.

Lakshmi – Uncle, she doesn’t know anything.

Keerthi – She never writes. She just scribbles on the note. Miss also never mind her (field notes, 5th visit)”

Such insulting comments from *Komu*’s peers would have reinforced her feelings that she was constructed as a non-performer in the group. During my observation I saw how a few children who were very slow and literally struggled to write even a single word were taunted by their peers in social interactions. The reasons for their slow writing could be diverse. There were possibilities that children who were slow at this stage could raise their standards at a later stage. But within the present environment there were treated as non-performers. This kind of taunting happened mostly within the children’s zone without the knowledge of the teacher. Contrary to some literature which notes that children can resist adult discourses about disability (Davis and Watson, 2000) this extract substantiates how much children imbibe adult discourses in identity formation in the classroom.

During the writing exercise, I observed that the teacher wrote in the notebook about those children who were slow in writing and asked them to repeat writing the same thing 5-10 times:

“During the writing exercise the teacher was moving around the classroom to monitor whether children are writing correctly in their notebooks. She found *Arun* struggling with his writing; his handwriting did not appear legible to read. The teacher pulled his note, wrote once and asked him to repeat the same 5 times. He appeared struggling more now. All his peers finished. He continued his writing till the end of the session much to the taunting of his peers (field notes, 11th visit)”

The teacher believed that a less performing child needed to practice more, so that he/she would develop his/her writing skills to the expected level. However, the teacher’s action put more pressure on the child who was already struggling to write. It also created an image among his peers that he was a poor performer in the class and that poor performance gave the teacher a reason to pay extra attention to him. On another occasion:

“*Balu* was pretending as if writing. The teacher noticed him for a while and asked him to bring his notebook to her table. Before he went, he removed all scribbled pages from the notebook. She checked the note book. It was empty and nothing written. She tweaked his ears and made him to stand and write on her table in front of others’ (field notes, 3rd visit)”

This kind of public display underscored the message that performativity failure warranted punishment from the authority. It also re-emphasised children’s inadequacy and inability in performing certain embodied actions. During the academic exercise, children like *Arun* and *Balu* who were not constructed as academically good for most of the time sat doing nothing or pretended as if they were writing. Other children used to bully them and play pranks on them. I witnessed in my observations that their continuous humiliation by their peers and the teacher had a detrimental effect on their self-esteem. These children appeared to have low self-confidence and were vulnerable within the group. My conversation with *Balu* revealed how isolated he was in the group:

Researcher – Who is your close friend in this class?

Puru – He don't have any friends

Researcher – Don't you have any friends?

Balu – Yes, I don't

Puru – He talks to everyone. But still he will say he don't have any friends (field notes, 4th visit)

On other occasion he was just ignored by others:

“Before the writing exercise *Balu* found that his pencil was not sharp enough to write so he asked pencil sharpener for almost 15 minutes to his neighbours. Some children had a pencil sharpener but they just ignore his request and few said no. A visibly frustrated *Balu* then finally started to bite his pencil to sharpen it (field notes, 6th visit)”

This child's performativity in academics had an effect on his relationship with others in the institution. His self-confidence was continuously dented by others. As shown in section 7.2.2, he quite often sat in the last row and seemed in a situation of avoidance/isolation. However, the interview with his mother revealed that he was a completely different person at his home. This reverberated with Mayall's (2000) finding that children are treated differently by adults in home and school environments and children negotiate the power order differently at home from school. Mayall further noted that while children's competencies to some extent were recognised by parents at home, the school/educational process treated children as less competent. In *Balu*'s case, according to his mother, he was a confident child at home and his continuous performativity failure provided him with a position as a weak student amongst the group who experienced reduced his agential power e.g. a reduction in his ability to negotiate access to a pencil sharpener. Mayall (2000) further observed that in such situations, older children were much more effective in dealing with the power order in school in comparison to younger children who exhibited less resistance and opposition to school authority. The normative standards and evaluations placed some children in an advantageous position and others in a disadvantaged position. This suggests that social space and social role defines a person's identity based on his/her capacity to execute his/her role effectively in any situation.

Overall, this section illustrated the influence of academic performativity in self-identity formation in the institution. It illustrated the normative pedagogical standard followed in the institution and described how children at times used teacher's feedbacks/comments as the markers and at other times challenged those notions for their performativity and identity construction in the group. The normative standard was mainly linked with achieving distinction in the group and those who failed in writing performativity were subjected to shame and humiliation by teacher and peers. The assessment of children's performativity in this nursery was very obvious in everyday pedagogical practice.

7.3.3 Bodily differences in the ICDS Anganwadi

In the ICDS Anganwadi centre, where there was diversity in children's ages, the body itself became an object and source for children to mark each other as different. Thus, I begin my analysis in this section with reference to two older children in the group: *Isha* and *Geetha*, who were chosen as leaders by the Anganwadi worker to look after others. The appointment of older children in the group as leaders offered indication to other children that these two children were different and that they had the ability to perform pedagogical tasks in the centre. Though the selection of student leaders in the group was justified by the worker on the grounds that it would give opportunity to these children to develop their leadership qualities, it often reduced the amount of contact between worker and children. The worker was busy with many administrative tasks that were part of her job responsibilities and, as a result, her contact hour with children and the time she spent on preschool education was considerably reduced. She put it:

“We have to do so many record works...um because of this record work um we cannot spend quality time with children for more than one hour in a day. You have to write record, then, um, have to monitor and write down the ration, then, you also have to supervise food preparation by the helper, so many things. If they (government) stop giving us record work, I think, um, we can spend more time with children, for preschool, for their education” (Interview with Anganwadi worker)”

Thus, as I discussed earlier in chapter six, the selection of child leaders in the centre can be seen as a strategy to engage and regulate other children in the centre. The selection process underscored the fact that these two older children were capable enough to teach and guide others. The two children offered the leadership roles were different in personalities and this had an effect on the way they handled their role in daily activities. *Isha*, who seemed to be helpful and affable, used her leadership role in a more positive way - she taught rhymes, engaged children in group activities and got along with others, showing gentle power and authority:

“*Isha* started singing rhymes. Very few children repeated the rhymes. Others have been playing on the veranda. She went outside and asked everyone in a friendly way to come and join her in singing (field notes, 7th visit)”

In a child-led environment she normally organised activities and tried to involve everyone in a friendly and sociable way. In contrast, *Geetha* used her leadership role to control others and exercised a great amount of influence. It was discernible on a few occasions where she was quite dominant with younger children and exerted leadership power over others.

“Children were sitting in small groups and they were busy chatting. The Anganwadi worker told *Geetha* to teach them rhymes. She told children to assemble in a particular place. Some children responded immediately to her announcement and some didn't. Then she forcibly pulled and dragged children to come and assemble (field notes, 11th visit)”

The extract above shows the physical force used by *Geetha* for bringing control over young children. Younger children, however, as described below, did not recognize her as leader in all situations. :

“Whilst doing drawing *Geetha* stretched her legs in front of *Suresh*. He just pressed her legs playfully like doing massage. She felt comfortable and asked him to do it again. He did it again but not with full interest. ‘Hey, do it properly’, she told him as if he is obliged to do that. A visibly irritated *Suresh* said, ‘No’ (field notes, 3rd visit)”

On another occasion:

“*Keerthana*, *Princy* and *Madhu* were running and chasing each other on the veranda. *Geetha* wanted to join them in play and she asked *Keerthana*, *Bindu* and *Princy* to include her in the game. But they didn’t seem to be comfortable with *Geetha* and they just neglected her. *Bindu* said ‘We already started playing you better go and play with others’ (field notes, 4th visit)”

As the above examples show children always placed their relationships with *Geetha* in a wider context and analysed what her role was and what their roles were in that particular encounter. At times they accepted her role as leader by obeying her instructions, whereas at other times they treated her like any other children in the group. That is, sometimes the younger children’s bodies, were subordinate to older children (in ways largely inherited from adults) at other times children did not accept everything passively. Literature suggests that there are two core categories of body awareness that emerge through social encounters (1) living in the body - how a person becomes aware of his/her body, bodily experiences and needs and (2) living in relation to others in society (Gyllensten *et al.*, 2010). The literature suggests that children like *Sinduja* in the paragraph below always have to deal with their body in a given social situation, and derive meaning through their embodied experiences.

“During the play time *Geetha* slapped *Sinduja* at the back. *Sinduja*, a thin and fragile girl, tried to slap her back, but she couldn’t. They were physically involved in a fight until *Sinduja* realised that she could not beat her anymore. *Sinduja* then used a different strategy - she said, ‘If you touch me anymore I will complain to the teacher’ (field notes, 5th visit)”

This data illustrated how the child *Sinduja* realised her physical weakness in relation to *Geetha*’s body. After this realisation, she then applied a different strategy: she threatened to make a complaint to the teacher - a higher authority - in order to overcome that situation. As the literature suggests, children’s bodily experiences are always present, situational and they are connected to self image and wellbeing (Gyllensten *et al.*, 2010). Thus, the meaning *Sinduja* derived from her bodily experiences was contextualised to that particular situation.

Sinduja's body was a site of contestation for three different interpretations. In the Anganwadi worker's view, *Sinduja* was the underweight child, as she failed to attain the expected level of physical development described in the medical standard, growth chart and anthropometric test. But, for her mother, the reason for her underweight was mainly due to heredity, as she says children in her family are like her in the early stages and then they will slowly gain normal weight. From her mother's view point *Sinduja's* thin body was not a problem at all. For the child the realisation of her own body was through experiential knowledge. The child did not accept here the objectified views of her body as it was, but sought to find her own interpretation through embodied experience. She first tried to fight with *Geetha* then realised that she could not because she was weaker than her. Finally, she decided to approach the teacher. The examples above tell us how two child leaders used different leadership styles in a child-led environment in everyday pedagogy to bring control and develop mastery over younger children's bodies.

Like *Sinduja*, children did not always threaten to approach the teacher to sort out their conflicts with their peers. In most cases, young children at the first level sought older children's assistance to settle their problems. The following extract will explain this:

“Unknowingly *Suresh* elbowed *Nagul* in his eye when he was playing with others. *Nagul* complained to *Jo* and *Banu*, the older children present at that time, that *Suresh* punched him on his eyes (field notes, 10th visit)”

Nagul's action demonstrates the power dynamics between older and younger children and prompts us to ask how children came to know that older children have power and authority in dealing with younger children. It is probably because of the fact that they have seen older children in the nursery controlling younger children on different occasions. Or else it could be the influence of what they have learnt from home that they have to approach older people for problem solving. Children therefore, by analytically reflecting on their physical size and power position, used different techniques for handling their issues.

The other instance where children connected their bodily characteristics with their action, was crying. Although most of the children had gone through this anxiety at one time or another in their transition from home to school, their views on crying were quite different.

““*Vijayan* came late today and he was crying unstoppably. Jo, one who was busily engaged in chatting with others, gave a sympathetic look to *Vijayan*. When I looked at Jo he just flashed a smile. I asked him what the matter was. ‘He is crying like a small boy,’ he said again with a smile (field note, 11th visit)”

Vijayan, a 3 ½ years old child, was physically tall and had been attending the institution for more than six months. Yet he was not acclimatised to the conditions and often cried when he was dropped off by his mother in the morning. As children in the ICDS are mostly admitted as young as 2 years old, by the time they turn 3 years old they usually have become familiar with the conditions and feel comfortable with them. However, each child might have different experiences of dealing with this anxiety problem and they would have applied different strategies to cope with that situation. Therefore, in *Jo*’s view, a physically mature boy crying due to separation from his mother in the institution was something unusual; thus he passed on his judgment that crying was the quality that small children possess. The interpretation he has drawn on that occasion was relative to the context; he might have compared *Vijayan*’s experience with his own experience or with other children’s experience. Moreover, children knew that crying was due to separation from their mother and at times it was manipulated to their favour, as shown below, by older children.

“Whilst playing in the group *Bindu* playfully pinched *Suresh* on his back and he cried in pain. I asked *Bindu* what she did with *Suresh*. ‘I did nothing, he wants his mother,’ she replied (field notes, 9th visit)”

In the absence of *Isha* and *Geetha*, *Banu*, a 5 year old girl, led the group activities. Some children were involved in imaginative play whilst others were working on building blocks.

“She gave instruction to children on how to assemble building block. Children sitting around her were holding different pieces on their hands. When she asked for a particular piece from *Sinduja*, she was hesitant to give. *Bindu*, sitting next to her tried to snatch the piece from her hand. *Banu* immediately said ‘she is a child, you know, let her be’ to *Bindu*’ (field notes, 8th visit)”

This example tells us how *Banu* conceptualise another child as ‘child’. 5 year old *Banu* used bodily criteria to come to the conclusion that 2 ½ years old *Sinduja* was a child?

“Is she a child’, I asked her. ‘Yes, she is a small girl’ she replied. ‘You’, I asked her again. ‘I am a big girl’, she replied (field notes, 8th visit)”

This example showed how much children’s bodily characteristics, mainly their physical size, played a role in their embodied experience and in constituting their ‘self’ in relation to ‘others’ in the group. This resonates with Prendergast’s (1966) argument about how physical bigness in children gives different embodied experiences so that they assume themselves to be, virtually, a big person.

Sometimes in this nursery, older children were bestowed with a caring responsibility by their mothers, as below:

“*Bindu* came to the centre with another child her neighbour who is a new entrant to the centre. *Bindu*’s mother told her to look after her neighbour’s child. *Bindu* seemed a little nervous at the beginning and then slowly tried to engage her in activities (field notes, 13th visit)”

The above example shows how a sense of responsibility changes the child’s identity according to the social situation. She behaved like a caretaker of a younger child more than a normal child in the centre. She looked rather nervous for some time because it was her responsibility to make sure that the young child was comfortable in her custody. As a result her bodily movements were restricted to some extent for a while. She refused to join their friends when they invited her for a play or chat. Her focus was on the young child and she tried her level best to avoid the child crying by

engaging the child in activities. She stopped the child for a few hours from crying but when the child started to cry saying she wants her mother *Bindu* sought the help of the Anganwadi worker. So such types of practices reaffirmed the status of older children in different positions in the group in relation to younger children. Contrarily, at times, small children made fun of older children when they failed to perform some activities which younger children performed:

“Children were advised to jump over car tyres which were placed on the floor. The activity was meant for physical and motor development. *Nagul* and *Suresh*, who were relatedly small in the group, jumped one by one successfully. *Nasrin*, an older child struggled to jump. When she failed in her attempt *Nagul* and *Suresh* laughingly asked ‘Can’t you jump’ (field notes, 8th visit)”

Nagul and *Suresh* were happy and they looked like they had achieved something which an older child could not do.

In summary this section outlined the connection between bodily characteristics and identity formation in the ICDS Anganwadi. As ICDS Anganwadi admits children from different age groups the physical body occupied a special place in identity formation in everyday pedagogical practices. Older children were given the responsibility to lead others on the basis that their bodies were ready to fulfil pedagogical needs. Differences among children were made through bodily characteristics, but, identity was also constructed through children’s own embodied experiences and pedagogical performativity.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I used Judith Butler’s concept of ‘performativity’ to analyse how the notion of ‘identity’ worked in the early years institutions. I began this chapter with an overview that explained how the idea of ‘identity’ could be understood with the use of ‘performativity’. The analysis sets its focus on children’s performativity through/with the doing of everyday pedagogy. The empirical data in this chapter was analysed in two sections and the overall analysis was summarised as below.

Table 7.4 Empirical Findings and Theoretical Advancement

Type of Institution	Empirical Findings	Theoretical Advancement
Corporation Nursery	<p>Teacher-children relationship was less formal. The reference for good or bad child was often drawn from bodily presentation.</p> <p>Learning material played a pivotal role in identity construction. Identity was constructed through an assemblage of learning materials and embodied experiences.</p>	<p>Moving away from Cartesian philosophy the recent literature suggest that identity is neither physical nor mental, it is embodied.</p> <p>This chapter used Butler's notion of performativity to understand the nuances of identity formation.</p>
Private Nursery	<p>Teacher-children relationship was formal. The reference for good or bad child was often drawn from academic performativity.</p> <p>Academic performativity played a crucial role in identity formation. Children's academic performativity were judged by using normative standards.</p>	<p>The data showed that embodied identity emerges in the ambivalent process of subjection and emancipation through performativity.</p> <p>Children's performativity worked through shame, distinction and mastery.</p>
ICDS Anganwadi Centre	<p>Teacher-children relationship was multi-layered and it worked outwith the institution. The reference for good or bad child was contextual in juxtaposition with physical attributes.</p> <p>Physical size played a crucial role in identity formation. Pedagogical performativity were judged based on age and physical size.</p>	<p>The data suggested that the fluid nature of identity gains a 'fixed' status over time.</p> <p>Children at times accepted and at other times challenged adult's notion of performativity.</p>

In the first part of the chapter I described the teacher(s)/worker-children relationship in the institutions and how it constructed the identities of teachers and children within/outwith early years institutions. For example, there were differences in the ways in which teacher(s)/worker-children identities were shaped in these three institutions. While the teachers and children in the corporation nursery had an informal and multi-dimensional relationship, the teacher - children relationship in the

private nursery seemed formal and one-dimensional. In the Anganwadi centre, the worker - children relationship was multi-layered and context specific. Also, there was variation between the individual and collective identities of children based on their performativity in the pedagogy. These teacher-children interactions further provided markers implicitly or explicitly for children's performativity in the institution.

The second part of the chapter analysed the 'doing' of identity with specific reference to learning objects in the corporation nursery, academic writing in the private nursery and children's bodies in the ICDS Anganwadi centre. Through these examples I illustrated how children's working knowledge, ability and performativity with learning objects in the corporation nursery played a pivotal role for children in realising their embodied selves in the classroom. My findings suggested that the process of subjection and the demand for gaining mastery in the corporation nursery worked in mild and implicit ways on children's identity formation. In relation to the private nursery I argued that children's embodied actions such as writing was one of the key features that determined their position within the group. As Crossley (2001) suggests, these bodily performances are neither completely cognitive nor fully physical; they are embodied in children's action. In the formal academic set-up, where there was no other extra-curricular activity involved, the academic performativity of the children was significant not only to establish their identity but also for relationship formation in the group.

Throughout this part of the analysis, I explained that a child was regarded as an 'ideal' performer if they academically outperformed others, showed diligence for learning (see Mathew's example) and/or delivered to the teacher's expected normative standard,. The normative standards used in this institution may differ from other institutions. Nonetheless, this spatialised normative standard, that is, the embodied performances of some children within the class were used as an identity marker to establish a standard in the group. Children's each and every action in the classroom was linked and measured to a great extent based on their academic performativity. In the Anganwadi centre, bodily characteristics were important

markers for children's embodied identity and they enabled children to assert their position in their group (James, 2000; Simpson, 2000). The Anganwadi consisted of a multi-age group, and children and teachers used bodily differences to confirm each others position and the process of identity formation was very explicit in the environment. Children however did not seem to agree with the adult-constructed notion of physical maturity and identity and instead they realised their position through their embodied experiences and sense of belonging in the group (see *Sinduja's* example). In summary, as shown in table 6.4, I explored in detail how identity worked within and to some extent outwith three different pedagogical environments. In the next chapter I will examine the connection between home-nursery relationships in the educational process.

8 Embodied Capital

8.1 Introduction

In chapter three, I argued that there was a connection at the theoretical level between subject, identity, and cultural capital, and that they needed to be studied in relation to pedagogical practices in early years provision. Then, in the last two analysis chapters, I demonstrated that active subjects emerged in pedagogical practices and illustrated how identity was constructed in the early years institutions through pedagogical performativity. Chapter seven touched on the influence teachers could have on the home setting, however this chapter will demonstrate in detail the nexus between home-nursery relationships in early years provision.

This chapter uses Bourdieu's (1986, 1990) concepts of cultural capital and *habitus*. Bourdieu used *habitus* as a theoretical tool along with cultural capital to show how individuals appropriated objective structures in society and reproduced those structures in actual practice (DiMaggio, 1979; Sullivan, 2002). As mentioned earlier in chapter three, Bourdieu operationalised the concept of *habitus* at two levels. On the one hand, he applied this concept to transcend the structure-agency boundary in theories, and to show the mediation between structure and agency in social theory. On the other hand, he utilised this concept as an explanatory variable to demonstrate the connection between social structures and social reproduction in society, especially in the field of education.

The empirical analysis in this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will focus on how children used their cultural capital and *habitus* in the institutions, and how cultural capital shapes children's everyday experiences in pedagogical processes (research question three). The second part will analyse the use and application of various forms of parental cultural capital with specific reference to choice making, service provisioning and how parents related to the 'being' and 'becoming' aspects of their children (research question four).

8.2 *Habitus* and cultural capital in early childhood institutions

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital has huge relevance for childhood studies. Although Bourdieu did not directly work with young children, his ideas strongly suggest that differences in cultural capital begin at conception and consolidate their position through socialisation especially in the early phase of human life (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). For Bourdieu, *habitus* is primarily shaped by familial practices and strengthened by the social, material, and cultural conditions in which a person lives (Postone *et al.*, 1993).

There is scepticism in childhood studies about the way in which Bourdieu conceptualised children in his work. Particularly, Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital has been criticised by several childhood scholars for theorising children as passive object of culture (see Morrow, 1999; James, 2000). Prout (2000, p 9) for example argues that in Bourdieu's work "there is little recognition of the possibility that children actively appropriate and transform as well as absorb" culture. In fact, in one of his writings, Bourdieu (1997, p 87) himself wrote that children "imitate...other people's actions". Hence, although Bourdieu's work is useful for overcoming structural and functional determinism in social theory, Corsaro, (1997/2004) notes, it eventually undermined children's contribution to social change and participation in society. Taking these arguments into consideration, the empirical analysis of this chapter examines how Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and *habitus* work with children in early years institutions.

Indeed, Bourdieu's and Passeron's work illustrates the significance of cultural capital in the education system (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In the educational processes, they posit that style, elegance, vocabulary, expression, and articulation all play a significant role in determining a student's progress and success. They further argue that students coming from better-off family backgrounds to some extent already possess the practical mastery in vocabulary and achieve an early advantage in pedagogical communication, whereas students coming from deprived family backgrounds have to put considerable effort into overcoming these deficiencies.

Also, the difference between evaluative standards being used in educational institutions and the embodied capital already imbibed through past socialisation in individuals is far less for students coming from elite/middle class backgrounds than for those students coming from a working class background (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In line with Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) the effects of cultural capital on children's education have been mainly analysed in the literatures in relation to educational outcomes. This chapter, however, tries to examine the processes - whether children coming from similar social backgrounds have any effect of cultural capital in their everyday pedagogical practices - rather than outcomes.

Though differences in cultural capital are visible in the later stages of education, which is linked with educational outcomes such as exam results and grades (Yamamoto and Brinton, 2010); the effects of cultural capital in the early years may be considered less tangible. Yet the literature argues that cultural capital works in the early stages of a child's education (see Dumais, 2006). For instance, the language acquisition in early childhood, the support system the child has at home, and early socialisation in the family environment are all claimed to have implications in pedagogical practices in early years institutions. On this note, the following section will analyse how children use their *habitus* and cultural capital in their everyday pedagogy. Also, the chapter will look at children's experiences of 'becoming' and its effects on embodied experiences and everyday practices in early years institutions.

8.2.1 Corporation nursery

Foremost, the efforts and concern which parents show at home about children's education was apparent in everyday conversations in the classroom. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) suggest, the opportunities and resources which children had in the home environment certainly made children's educational process smoother and more enjoyable in the classroom. The example below will help us to look at this issue further:

“*Aki* was simply playing with the cards that carry vegetable names with pictures. When I asked the names of the vegetables he said half correct answers and half wrong answers. But, *Kala*, the girl

sitting next to him told all vegetables names correctly. ‘How did you know all the names?’ I asked her. ‘Erm, miss taught us in the class, and I also saw these vegetables in the market when I went with my mum, my mum also taught me all these names’, she replied (field notes, 6th visit 6)”

Though the vegetable names were taught in the classroom for all, one child outperformed the others using extra knowledge that was accrued outside the formal system. As described in the preceding chapters, this nursery teaches a specialised curriculum for learning, yet, as shown above, real world exposure with a parent had created learning opportunities for the child. The child as a capable individual appropriated the informal educational environment and developed practical mastery and embodied knowledge. This shows that the education a child gets at home or outwith the nursery is as significant for learning and development as the exposure a child gets inside the nursery.

Home environments not only facilitated academic learning but they also, as Bourdieu (1986) postulated, nurtured embodied cultural capital of the child. The following paragraph will explain the impact of cultural capital on nurturing non-academic knowledge at home and will illustrate the effects it carries in fixing a child’s social position in the classroom:

“One day during the lunch break when I was removing my mobile phone from the bag

Venki – Uncle, do you have songs in this? Play a song.

Researcher – No, I don’t have any songs

Venki – What about games

Researcher – Games. Do you know how to play games?

Venki – Yeah, my mom taught. I play in her mobile phone.

Aki – Hey, you know how to play games?

Venki – Yeah, I know. Don’t you?

Aki – No, I don’t know” (field notes, 10th visit)

The conversation between these two children shows how much access and exposure to different forms of cultural capital put some children in a better position and others in a disadvantaged situation in everyday social encounters. As Buckingham (2008) argues, in a digitalised world, technology is increasingly utilised as a tool for

empowering children. Technology is used both for learning and entertainment in today's world amongst children (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis, 2001). The extent to which a child gains advantage and distinction from others at the early stage is itself based on his/her access and utilisation of electronic gadgets. There is no doubt that technology as a form of objectified capital gives confidence and knowledge, and also gives an extra edge to individuals to outshine others in education and employment. Also, technology becomes an integral part of lifestyle in contemporary society. Children who have access to technology find themselves in an advantageous position in certain ways in comparison to their counterparts who lack the facility. Seen from this viewpoint, the example above shows how in everyday conversations in the classroom this type of lifestyle difference surfaces and establishes advantage and disadvantage in one's social position.

In the classroom, as Bourdieu (1977, 1990) explained, children's *habitus* placed in an interrelated relationship observes the environment and acts upon the situation based on the actions and dispositions of others. What I noticed during my observation was that at times, the teachers talked about the becoming aspects of children - what they want to become in the future. The teachers spent their energy in the classroom to fine-tune children's aspirations with the aim of motivating children onto a appropriate transition path. So, the 'becoming' aspects of the children were overtly or covertly imposed by the structure or by the adults, as below:

“In the morning group session the teacher asked the children what they want to become. The children replied ‘doctor’ ‘teacher’ ‘police’ and so on. After every reply the teacher said ‘Good’ (field notes, 2nd visit)”

The futuristic aspirations of the children here are developed in a dialectical process. Sometimes it is imposed by the structure in subtle ways as above where the teachers indulged in conversation with children that might possibly instigate their aspirations about the type of adult they want to become. These kind of motivational drives in everyday conversation were very much focused on career and education. As the literature says, however, children reflexively internalise the structural conditions or pick up their interests and motivations from the environment that they live in

(Qvortrup, 2004). Children might also develop their vocational interest through their socialisation process. In a normative sense, as the cultural reproduction theory explains, parental cultural capital plays a significant role for the educational/career success of a person (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). Nevertheless, as the data above show, irrespective of children's social conditions or parental cultural capital, almost all the children in the classroom aspired to become a 'doctor' or 'engineer' or 'teacher' – the popular vocational models or the symbolic capital which was revered in the local society. It was suggested that there was a possibility that, as time passed, children's *habitus* may alter their position as they realise their status in society and that this may enable them to negotiate the conditions between ideal aspiration and practical possibilities.

In the classroom, in a cyclic motion, children appropriated and (re)produced the structures (Bourdieu, 1990, 1998). Children made sense of their learner role, internalised the education system, developed future-oriented thinking, and negotiated, as reflexive social actors, the present-future educational trajectory. Children internalised their responsibility in the process as a learner, to incorporate the structure, and to produce embodied actions that were expected of them such as playing, reading, writing, drawing, and story-telling. The following example tells us how far children placed themselves in the present-future dichotomy:

“In the formal teaching session children have been told to write the English alphabets on their slate. *Sundar* did not write anything, and he was simply scribbling on the slate. The teacher called his name and said ‘you are not writing anything. I do not know what you are going to do in the 1st standard’. *Varsha*, a boy in the class said ‘Miss, he is going to get beaten’ (field notes, 6th visit)”

The conversation revealed that social circumstances could make children think within the present-future temporal pathway and children had the capacity to think in multiple ways as the situation demanded. Although children were still in the kindergarten, they foresaw the situation and wanted to be prepared for the near future. Children learned and gathered information from different sources, internalised it, and then made judgements on what was required of them in a situation. The above

extract also indicated the child's imagination of the formal school system and higher class. The child's own imagination of the school was discipline-oriented (Lappalainen, 2008). The child might have got this impression from his parents/siblings or from the institution itself. But what his imagination says is how the idea of disciplinary power in the educational system was linked to progression in the educational trajectory. The child is under the impression that the transition from nursery to primary section means moving from a less authoritative place to a more authoritative one.

The literature suggests that the educational system that demands academic performance requires at least some kind of familiarity with the dominant culture and in return forces the culturally deprived student to get some training for acculturation (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The need to demonstrate linguistic and cultural competence, which is naturally fostered in the home environment for elite and middle class students, and which is expected from everyone in the educational system, put working class children under pressure. The following example illustrates such pressure:

“In the group session, the teacher was holding the ‘tent’ picture card on her hand and asked ‘what is this’.....thatched house, *Thyagu* replied....No, this is called tent,’ she said (field notes, 15th visit)”

As the children in this nursery came from relatively low socio-economic backgrounds the child related the picture of a ‘tent’ with a thatched house. In a similar situation, a person from a different social background might have answered in the way fitting with the teacher's expectation. So, what transpires from this example is how an object culturally unfamiliar to the child at times situates him in a position to think that he has a knowledge deficit.

Another important aspect of cultural capital that was recognisable in pedagogical practices was classroom manners. In his seminal work on *Distinction* Bourdieu (1984) discussed the ways in which certain cultural practices acquire distinction in society as ‘aesthetic culture’ or ‘highbrow culture’, and how people identify and

organise themselves into a class-based society through these cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1984). On this particular point, Bourdieu also endorses Marx's idea that highly valued cultural practices in a society are always those of dominant classes. The following example will illustrate how it happens in everyday practice in the classroom environment:

“While the teacher was interacting with children after prayer *Deena* sneezed and wiped off his nose with hand. Seeing this the teacher said in the class ‘I told you all several times before to bring kerchief to the classroom to clean your nose, don't use your hand, also try to wear slippers, don't come with bare foot’ (field notes, 16th visit)”

This example underscores the differences that remain in cultural practices between the teacher and children and also their underlying effects on the material deprivation of children. The literature suggests that a person's lifestyle is largely decided by a person's conditions of existence and material possessions, and these in turn produce a particular form of *habitus*, or an interest in certain type of cultural practices (Oliver and O'Reilly, 2010). In my research context, wiping the nose with hands is still common amongst some sections of people, yet, in the classroom, this practice was taught as inappropriate. It raises questions about the interface between the teacher's values and children's primary *habitus*, and illustrates how children are often asked to completely abort/modify their cultural practices or to develop a secondary *habitus* that fits into classroom culture (Brooker, 2006).

8.2.2 Private nursery

In the formal academic curriculum in India, Kumar (2007) notes, the home-school connection is very weak. The formal curriculum which is based on scientific knowledge, he notes, is very much indifferent; it neither criticises nor utilises children's home culture for learning (Kumar, 2007). The normative curriculum in this nursery did not recognise the cultural aspects of children in classroom learning. In actual practice however the effects of parental cultural capital played a huge part in children's educational process. In reality, there is always an implicit connection

between home and nursery in children's educational processes. Children bodies as vehicles carry knowledge, dispositions, and body civilisation from home to nursery and vice versa (see Brooker, 2006; Edwards, 2002; Shilling, 1993; Turner, 1984). The example below will help to illustrate how the home-nursery curriculum teaching worked:

“In the Maths period *Anand* was chatting with *Arun* for a while, then after some time *Anand* started doing the calculation in Maths which he was supposed to do in that period. While he was writing down the answers in his book I just looked at him, he said, ‘my mom taught me how to do this (calculation)’ (field notes, 9th visit)”

The data above showed that there is continuity in practising academic curriculum from home to nursery and nursery to home, and parents equally put in considerable effort at home for the performance enhancement of their children. The extract also corresponds with existing literature on early years cultural capital. Literature elsewhere suggests that the socio-economic characteristics of the family, particularly the mother's educational qualification, has positive effects on children's language development and literacy skills, and that parents contribute to the academic performance of children in the early years at home (Hartas, 2011). The example above also disagrees with other claims that working class parents completely depend on the nursery for their children's educational success and assume that it is the teacher's responsibility to instruct children in the curriculum to take early advantage in the education system (Lareau, 1987). Although parents have limited educational capital, it seemed that, within their capacity they tried to pass on their embodied knowledge to their children to meet the demands of the normative curriculum. The extract also suggested that children with a greater amount of formal and informal educational relationships stood a better chance of coping with the demands of the academic curriculum (Wikeley *et al.*, 2009).

Another aspect of cultural capital that was voluntarily exhibited by children in the classroom was ‘etiquette’. For example:

“During lunch time a few children spread a small towel on the desk and kept their lunch box on it. After they finished eating they used that towel to clean the desk and to wipe their hands. In contrast, majority of the children kept the lunch box on a plain desk and after eating cleaned their desk with hands (field notes, 5th visit)”

The difference in eating practices here was not apparently compared by anyone on this occasion, but the varied effect of cultural capital in children was subtly displayed through eating habits. The table manners and etiquette of some children which were possibly acquired through their family socialisation were demonstrated during lunch time. The eating style of these children covertly showed the distinction of their cultural practices in comparison to their classmates. The parental belief that children should learn good habits and conduct themselves in a proper manner in the presence of others, perhaps compelled children to learn and practise a certain type of lifestyle that the parents felt appropriate in order to show/sustain the cultural distinction in society.

Furthermore, in the classroom, the material and other cultural exposure children get at home was explicit in everyday conversations. Children’s home culture, lifestyle, choice and preference were often mentioned in children’s communication within their friendship zone. The extract below demonstrates how this occurred in the classroom amongst children:

Ganesh – Hey, my sister’s birthday

Dany – When

Ganesh – Um I don’t know. But we try to give address in the TV (he happily winked his eyes); I don’t know when it will come (in the TV) (field notes, 8th visit)

The example above described a child’s family’s intention about a birthday celebration. What is to be understood in this context is that not everyone in my research setting celebrated birthdays by sending an advertisement about it to the TV channels even though it was free. So the child here was happy about the way his family was planning to celebrate his sister’s birthday. The extract also illustrated the ‘advertisement culture’ prevalent in local society and how the child here was in a

position to accept the ‘advertisement culture’ as a way to score distinction in lifestyle. On another occasion:

“Ganesh was playfully demonstrating to others that he was going to launch the rocket. He showed pencil and rubber as rocket and fire and the geometry box as launching pad.

Hari – What are you doing?

Ganesh – Wait, I am going to launch the rocket now.

Hari – This is not the way to launch rocket

Ganesh – Hey I know this is how (they) launch rocket, I have seen it in discovery channel

Puru – Oh, you watch discovery, I also watch

Hari – Hey, we have home theatre and I watch movies in that (field notes, 4th visit)

There are two things to be noted here. Firstly, how children in everyday social interactions conveyed their choices, preferences and material conditions in their family. Children’s conversation here about home theatre and TV channels informs others about their status and lifestyle choices. Secondly, the children’s discussion about launching a rocket illustrated the various modes of learning that happened in the institution. Children learned knowledge from peers through play and interactions. Thus, as Dahlberg and others (2007, p 55) have asserted there was no need to see “knowledge as something absolute and unchangeable, as facts to be transmitted to the child, and thus as separate from the child, independent of experience and existing in a cultural, institutional and historical vacuum”. Children in the example above use their embodied experiences and collaborative play for knowledge production. This showed the significance of valuing children’s knowledge in the pedagogy and treating them as the co-constructors of knowledge in pedagogical process.

Also, the objectified form of cultural capital such as books, notebooks, pencil and so on became an important factor in children’s social interactions in scoring pride over others and to show the extent of their material conditions. These learning objects were, as Bourdieu (1996) argues, not only used to multiply their embodied capital but also used to assert their position in children’s everyday classroom culture. During my observation I frequently noticed children comparing pencil size, showing a new notebook, pencil sharpener or eraser to their friends with so much joy and passion:

“Before the prayer *Mathew* called *Lucas* and said ‘hey look here, I have got a big one (he has brought a long size note)’. He seems to be very happy and showed his note to almost everyone in the classroom, including the helper (field notes, 14th visit)”

The boy’s action here may appear trivial but as Bourdieu (1998) argues, the boy’s *habitus* positioned in social relationships assesses the given social situation and acts accordingly to achieve distinction. Bourdieu explains how every social context has its own characteristics and shapes the dispositions of individuals in certain possible ways from other contexts. So the practices followed here amongst children may sound insignificant to outsiders but for the *habitus* constituted in the classroom it means much for self-admiration and boasting.

At times, capital can be used by children for fun-making in the learning environment. The following excerpts will show how a child makes fun of another child in a friendly manner with the extra knowledge that he has:

Ganesh – Do you have cello tape or glue?

Researcher – No, I don’t

Ganesh – Check in your bag. You may be having.

Researcher – I don’t have. I know. Why do you need that?

Ganesh – A page has come off from my note. My mom will beat me if I go with this.

(*Ganesh* is in a worried look now)

Researcher – Who did that?

Ganesh – It has come off on its own.

He was so desperate to stick that page. He then turned up to *Lucas*

Ganesh – Hey do you have cello tape.

Lucas – Cello tape, the one used for fighting.

Ganesh started laughing. ‘Uncle, he didn’t know what cello tape is; when I asked him he said the one used for fighting’ he said to me.

Lucas – First of all I do not know what cello tape is (field notes, 11th visit)

In the example above the child *Lucas* was embarrassed when *Ganesh* mocked him, but he soon acknowledged his ignorance to avoid further humiliation. In this episode, the objectified capital becomes the central part of the conversation that determines one’s knowledge and position.

8.2.3 ICDS Anganwadi centre

In a flexible curriculum such as in the ICDS, the link between parental cultural capital and curriculum teaching was not very visible. But on a few occasions such as the one below it was covertly displayed in the teaching process:

“When the prayer ends, the worker had an interaction with children for some time. Then, she asked, ‘how many of you travelled in the bus’, majority of the children raised their hands, ‘how did you feel, you just tell others what was you feeling’, she told children. Children one by one shared their experiences. Then, she asked again, ‘who went to beach’, this time a few hands went up, ‘tell us, what did you find in the beach’, she asked. The conversation continued for few moments. Then she taught rhymes with action in Tamil about vehicle and beach (field notes, 4th visit)”

Here, in this example, the worker was about to teach Tamil rhymes on beach and vehicles. Therefore the worker asked children about their own experiences, if any, of travelling in a bus or being in the beach. Her curriculum intention however subtly revealed the differences in the out-of-home exposure which a child had had in life. When she asked about it not all children raised their hands. It transpired that some children had never been to the beach or travelled in a bus though the city has a beach and they live in the central part of the city. This example exposed the advantage and disadvantage which children experience in the learning process due to their lack of experiences beyond their homes. Their limited exposure to the beach and buses could occur for many reasons, such as a particular choice, priority and/or preference in family lifestyle. This example shows how different exposure gives different embodied feelings to children in the learning process.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) illustrated how students from a well-off family had advantages in the education system, based on their ability to learn through family socialisation some of the skills and knowledge which was being taught in the formal educational institution. Bourdieu fiercely advanced this proposition based on what he witnessed in the French society at the time of his writings. To strengthen this argument, Bourdieu (1973) further analysed the investment pattern of different class

systems on cultural activities such as attendance at museums, cinemas, music concerts, and plays which were at that time considered as a high cultural activity in France. Through this analysis he established the causal relationship between parents' cultural capital and their participation in high culture, and how this parental cultural capital creates social reproduction through children's education. Nonetheless, as literature argues, the markers of cultural capital works with some variation in different cultures (Holt, 1998). In this particular research context, travelling in a bus or going to the beach is not a marker for high culture, yet it explains the differences in taste, preference and choice in lifestyle and their associated effects for learning in the centre.

Another important aspect of cultural capital that was deeply entrenched in everyday practices in the centre was the 'snack' culture. As soon as children entered the centre the first thing that they would do or that they have been persuaded by their parents to do was to eat a snack. The examples below will help us to extend our analysis on this point:

“*Sinduja*'s mother after dropping her in the centre went to the nearby shop and brought her some chocolates and crisps. I asked her the reason behind doing this practice. She said 'it is just like that, to stop them (children) crying' (field notes, 7th visit)”

Though I asked quite a few parents about the reason for giving snacks to children in the morning, I asked once again *Mithra*'s mother for her opinion on this cultural practice. She said:

“She (*Mithra*) usually says no to snacks, but I only compel her. How she will simply sit when others are eating (snack)', she replied (field notes, 10th visit)”

The examples above show two different views on why parents encouraged children to eat a snack in the morning. While for *Sinduja*'s mother the practice was used as a strategy to appease her daughter *Mithra*'s mother pointed out this routinised practice became an established norm in the centre and parents were forced to buy snacks for children. The practice of buying crisps and chocolate also had another important

element in it - the influence of mass culture on local practices. Literature has connected consumption practices, cultural capital and mass culture (Holt, 1998). It has argued that 'trickle-down' lifestyle effects permeate into every strata of society and, as a result in our case parents ended up buying crisps every day from the shops rather than giving children a home-prepared snack. The snack as cultural object was used here as means for parents to achieve their ends. However, not all children accept this practice as a passive recipient, as in the case of *Mithra* some children showed resilience from 'inside' as active player in their lifestyle choice (Dolan, 2008).

In everyday conversations children at times talked about their becoming aspects of life, especially the becoming aspects of education life. The extract below explains how this happened in social conversations:

“When I was talking to *Bindu* and *Suresh* about how they go about doing the building block activity *Ragu* joined in our conversation. After some time *Ragu* said, ‘I am going to school (nursery), yeah, my mother said’. ‘From when’, I asked him. ‘Will go, will go later’, he said. The helper who was sitting within an earshot of our conversations said ‘he is going next year; his mother said she has done everything for admission’. ‘Erm, I am going’ *Rahul* said with an excitement (field notes, 14th visit)”

The *habitus* of the child in the paragraph above foresaw the futuristic aspects of educational life and synthesised the being and becoming aspects of life with a sense of reflection and responsibility. Literature suggests that children themselves develop the notion of future school children and feel excited about going to school even before they enter the kindergarten (Lappalainen, 2008). Children have the capacity to make sense of their surroundings and construct meanings out of their embodied experiences. Their dispositions, sense-making, and inclination towards a particular event or action are constructed based on their reflections on representations of objects/interactions presented in situations. This shows, as Uprichard (2008) argues, that 'being' and 'becoming' aspects are an integral part of life and children just like adults exhibit their capacity to control and regulate their life in time-space pathways.

8.2.4 Conclusion

In summary, I have explained how children's cultural capital and *habitus* shaped children's 'being' in the institution and how these two concepts worked in formal and informal relationships in pedagogical practices. There were similarities and differences across the three early years institutions. Despite differences in pedagogical practices, children in all three institutions appropriate the institutional environment and use their cultural capital in almost similar ways in peer relations, learning, and for sense-making in everyday pedagogy. The analysis also showed how varied forms of cultural capital facilitated/empowered children to gain distinction, joy, self-admiration and knowledge in their everyday pedagogical practices.

However, there was some dissimilarity across institutions. In the corporation nursery, for example, the distance between normative evaluation standards and the cultural capital of children emerged mainly in classroom manners and behaviours (see the example of *Deena*). The becoming aspects of children here was at times overtly rehearsed in formal relationships by the teachers (see the example of *Sundar*) and children as active players developed *habitus* that accrued both these temporal aspects in their dispositions. In the private nursery, the distance between normative standards and the cultural capital of children was visible to some extent in academic activities. Since children had more informal interactions in this nursery, the differences in children's cultural capital often surfaced in friendly conversations (see the examples of *Ganesh*, *Mathew*, *Dany*, and *Lucas*). In the ICDS Anganwadi, the objectified form of cultural capital, that is the 'snack' culture, appeared quite distinct in everyday practice. Some children however demonstrate resilience to such kinds of forced lifestyle (see the example of *Mithra*).

Across institutions, there is also a variation in home-nursery connection in children's education. While the parental cultural capital in the corporation nursery was used to provide additional knowledge to children (see the example of *Kala*), in the private nursery parents used their cultural capital to reduce the distance between the normative curriculum and the actual position of their children in education (see the

example of *Anand*). In the ICDS Anganwadi, parental cultural capital in the form of access to public places assisted children for their learning and development. Thus far, I have explained how children's cultural capital and *habitus* worked in everyday pedagogical practices within the early years institution. In the following section, I will explain in detail how parental cultural capital and their *habitus* really works in matters related to early years provision.

8.3 Parental *habitus* and cultural capital in early years provision

Across the globe, the education sector has undergone drastic changes in the past two or three decades. Bourdieu himself in his works, *Firing Back: Tyranny of the Market* 2 (2003) and *Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics* (edited by Wacquant, 2005) analysed the neo-liberal market's effects on various *habitus* positioned in a competitive market systems. As far as the situation in India is concerned, with the advent of the strong and emerging middle class in Indian cities (Fernandes, 2006), the neo-liberal educational agenda of privatisation and school choice has been advocated with a renewed interest in the market (Nambissan and Ball, 2010). Literature has suggested that school choice itself is a big key factor to sustain/preserve people's social and cultural position in the society (Vincent *et al.*, 2010). The choice the parents make for their children about nursery/school to some extent told us about the kind of childhood that parents aimed to provide and the kind of adulthood that they possibly aspired to for their children. Moreover, the idea that parents were responsible for children's career success, and the individualisation of the job market, put pressure on parents to maximise their children's academic performance and, at the same time, put pressure on children by default to accept this responsibility (by wish or force) keeping in view that it was good for their future (Bauman, 2008; Mayall, 2002).

So far in this thesis, choice-making in education has been discussed either by economic 'rational choice theory' or with the use of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Gorard *et al.*, 2003; Reay *et al.*, 2005). Even within Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, the empirical studies mainly investigated how different social classes (re)produce different educational aspirations or outcomes. In

all these analyses, social class has been taken as a unitary concept. However, the need to consider the diverse nature of cultural capitals within a social class for theoretical explanation is highlighted in recent literature. For example, van de Werfhorst (2010) argued that it was grossly over-simplistic to correlate the multi-dimensional nature of cultural capital with one uni-dimensional educational outcome. In a similar vein, Bennett and Silva (2011) argued that individuals reflexively weigh their different forms of capital and act in a situation depending on their own strengths and weaknesses. Taking a cue from this argument, this section uses data on parents of similar socio-economic backgrounds and tries to explore the factors that prompted them to make different pedagogy/institution choices for their children. Further, it also analyses the influence of parental *habitus* and cultural capital in early years provision, mainly seeking to analyse respondent's perceptions of after-nursery coaching, overall service provision in the institution, and how they are connected with the *habitus*, cultural capital and becoming aspects of their children.

8.3.1 Corporation nursery

Literature has showed that parents make choices from the range of resources and information that is available to them (Reay *et al.*, 2005). As Bennett and Silva (2011) have argued, a combination of factors influence parent's decision-making and that happens at different levels. My empirical material suggests that parents normally make realistic assessments of their chances and possibilities and then make a decision with a sense of logic or practical reasoning (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). The extract below from a mother will help us to understand this argument:

“One day I visited the nursery (unannounced visit), yeah, I just visited, the teachers spoke with me nicely, the place looked well maintained, and even the *Aaya*'s (helpers) um and they behaved well with children. Since the nursery was clean and hygienic, I liked it immediately, and I admitted my child.... My first daughter studied LKG and UKG in a nearby Matriculation school. What I desired was although I haven't studied much, at least my daughter should study in an English medium school. I admitted my daughter in that school without my husband's knowledge. The fee was quite heavy, more than twelve thousand rupees per annum, every now and then I sold out some of my jewels and somehow I

had managed. In the same school later I admitted my son too. But this time I found it very difficult to manage (the fees) for both, had to pay 3000 rupees once in every 2-3 months. I thought it might create misunderstanding (in the family). A good student will perform wherever he studies, so I admitted my child in the government school (Interview with Parent 03 in Corporation Nursery)”

The mother above, like any other parent, wanted to give her son the best of opportunities for education in a better nursery, but her family conditions persuaded her to send her son to the corporation nursery. Being aware of her own social position and limitation, she then started to search for a public nursery which had the best qualities in it. The major factors that contributed to her decision-making in favour of this corporation nursery were cleanliness and then the attitude of the staff towards children. The data also underscore the fact that choice-making was her personal decision, not a collective decision. This substantiates some of the existing literature that has argued that women take a lead role when it comes to choice-making for childcare and preschool education (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Vincent *et al.*, 2010).

While the attitude of the staff and cleanliness in the institution had attracted this mother to admitting her son to this particular nursery, another mother said that it was the learning materials and the method of teaching that pulled her to this nursery. She commented:

“One day I went for a visit, um, without the teacher’s knowledge I visited the nursery just like an onlooker. There, they were practicing activity-based education, um, they have been instructing (children) with the use of learning materials, um, there were lot of materials in the classroom, um, and it was obvious that they have got more materials than some of the Crèches I visited, so I decided to admit her (Interview with Parent 08 in Corporation Nursery)”

She was happy that this nursery had more learning materials than some of the private Crèches that she had visited. So, she applied her own reasoning skills and made judgement based on what she actually observed in a range of institutions, and then

finally she chose this nursery for her daughter. Her perspective about education and her understanding about learning objects encouraged her to select this particular nursery. Moreover, her own educational capital was instrumental and motivated her to provide the best learning opportunities for her child:

“I dreamt of becoming a teacher, um, I was the topper in the 12th standard in my school, but my family didn’t educate me further...now I want to give good education to my child...actually I expected a lot from the nursery, first, the physical environment of the classroom...then teacher – student ratio and then the teaching method... in this nursery they don’t practise rote learning so yeah their method is different (Interview with Parent 08 in Corporation Nursery)”

In the above paragraph, her own educational capital and career aspiration of becoming a teacher is highlighted. The mother put into perspective her own educational deprivation with her daughter’s educational needs. In her view, the physical environment, classroom organisation such as teacher-student ratio, learning materials and teaching methods were counted as the main criteria for admission. What was also evident from the extract above was how significant her educational capital was in making a choice for her daughter.

For some parents, the local knowledge available in their neighbourhood and the reputation of the nursery prompted them to make a choice. The term local knowledge is used here to describe the public opinion that is generated about the nursery within a particular locality. There was no rating system available for the nursery in Chennai which could circulate information about quality or any other parameters involved with good or bad nurseries/schools. Therefore, the term reputation used here in this context is completely a social construction, and it was mainly built up through public opinions among other things based on the school/nursery’s past achievements, or the teaching standards of the nursery or the exam results of the school (if the nursery was attached to a school). The example below explains this issue:

“I am an illiterate, um my mom died in my young age and I was in a child care home after that, so I didn’t go to school, I didn’t study. Therefore in general I will take the opinion of my

neighbours for my daughter's education..... People in my locality said there (in the nursery) the teaching is good, um, they teach well, um, they said it is like a convent (school), um, at the same time, um, they don't make any complaint about children, um, they also give good care to children (Interview with Parent 06 in Corporation Nursery)"

The extract above highlights a number of issues regarding choice making. Firstly, the mother's choice here was based on her neighbours' opinion about school reputation. Her statement strongly indicated that since she was illiterate she was dependent on her neighbours' opinion for decision making. Secondly, the role of institutional capital and the general notion that the Christian convent schools were good is reflected in this paragraph when she refers to the teaching of the corporation nursery as equivalent to the convent schools. Though she was not personally aware of the nursery or its teaching method, she was convinced by the fact that the nursery should be a good one because her neighbours endorsed it. The third key point she made was about the parental responsibility that many private schools these days try to bring into school/nursery. It resonated with a recent trend in educational practices in most countries whereby schools try to capitalise on parental cultural capital for the enforcement of discipline, educational outcomes and better home-school relationships (Reay, 2004). However, as Lareau (1987) points out not all the parents have enough of the cultural capital that the school demands from them, or have the confidence to deal with the school system, and they react to the situation differently according to their own capacity. Although the mother wanted good education for her child she did not like the practice of some nurseries/schools of the school authorities making complaints about children to their parents, thus, she admitted her child in this nursery.

Out of twelve parents that I interviewed for my study in this category, only three said that they were aware of the nursery using some kind of materials for teaching. The rest said that they did not know anything about learning materials at the time they admitted their children in the nursery. This reminds me of Bauman's (2008, p 145) claim that "choice is yours, but making choice is obligatory, and the limits on what you are allowed to choose are non-negotiable". As Bauman (2008) argues not all the

consumers in the market are equally positioned to make a choice of their own. Choice= making is obligatory; yet, parents are constrained by limited possibilities and opportunities. Moreover, not all parents receive information from the service providers, but they have to make a choice because, as Bauman (2008) says, it is a 'functional requisite' to survive in society and to a great extent the social positioning and capital the parents possess restricts the choice in choice-making (Ball, 2006).

With regard to private coaching there were divided opinions amongst the parents. On the one hand, some parents in the corporation nursery were of the view that sending children to tuition/additional coaching was unnecessary at this stage. One parent puts it:

"I don't think tuition is necessary. To me, personally, I feel tuition is a waste. We have to develop the capacity of the child for learning, that's what we have to do. If the teachers are good and if the relationship between the teacher and children (in the nursery) are good, learning will take place automatically (Interview with Parent 01 in Corporation Nursery)"

For this parent, teaching in the nursery itself is more than enough and what is important for learning is the relationship between the learner and the teacher. Thus, if the nursery provides a good learning environment for the children then there is no need to send them for additional coaching.

On the other hand, some of the parents in the corporation nursery felt that sending their children for additional coaching was mandatory for many reasons. Of particular concern here was lack of educational capital of the parents. A few parents said that lack of education made them feel incompetent to provide parental support for the pedagogical needs of the child at home. The example below will explain this:

"At home, um, the main reason is, I do not know anything about studies, so, um, how I know whether she is studying or not, moreover, um, I can't teach anything. If she goes for tuition um at least I can stay confident that she is studying something, um, she learns something from her tuition teacher (Interview with Parent 06 in Corporation Nursery)"

It is evident how anxious this parent was about her child's education, and her lack of educational capital gave her an uncertain feeling about her child's education performance at home. Interestingly, though the corporation nursery followed the Montessori approach and did not emphasise rote learning, the parents on their own had arranged supplementary coaching for children to teach alphabets, letters and numbers. It illustrates the extent to which a level of conflict was present between the educational philosophy followed in this nursery and the parental interest and expectations. Its implications are discussed in the conclusion of this chapter.

Opinions were divided amongst parents about the aspects of service delivery they thought were needing to be improved. Seemingly, the differences of opinion were mainly based on their educational capital. Parents who had a considerable level of education had showed a great amount of satisfaction with the quality of services delivered in the corporation nursery. One parent, who completed 10th standard, puts it as follows:

“I don't find any deficiency in what they are doing. They are already in an advanced stage. I don't know what more a child needs at this age...To some extent, I feel like um they didn't do any other activities apart from studies. They can organise some events like annual day or something like that to develop their extracurricular activities. If they do, that will give an additional element of joy to children (Interview with Parent 01 in Corporation Nursery)”

The above text shows the parent is quite happy with the way the nursery works and he didn't find any lacuna with regard to academics. However he was of the opinion that organising some events or extracurricular activities would cheer up children or nurture children's interest in such activities.

Parents who had no education or relatively less education, seemed to be in a confused state about the way the nursery works, although they were happy with the service provision. A mother, who had no formal education, said:

“Um, in the private school they give a notebook and a diary. They write on the diary what was taught in the classroom on a particular day and what they have to do at home. Children will do that at home. Here in the government school it’s not like that. They teach till it goes to their head and then they will stop. They don’t give diary or tell them to write answers in the notebook. If you pay for education it (quality) will be different altogether...In government they teach slowly, isn’t.....but I’m satisfied (Interview with Parent 02 in Corporation Nursery)”

The above data imply that although the parent was happy with the institution and the progress of the child, she had a perception that the teaching in the corporation nursery was slow compared to a private nursery. Moreover, she had a sense of understanding that the nursery should function in the way the private nursery works. This perspective has two implications. Firstly, having a school diary or notebook in this context can be regarded as a symbol that represents the nursery’s status and prestige and also showcase that its children are serious learners. Secondly, the learning that takes place in the institution should be exhibited in tangible terms. Some parents were confused about how the learning takes place inside the classroom. The gradual academic learning that takes place in Montessori approach in this nursery made the parents worry when they compared their children with others studying in other schools.

In sum this section shows the combinations of factors and parental cultural capital that play a vital role in choice-making. The majority of the parents were not aware about the pedagogy when they admitted their children to the nursery. This suggests that not all parents were informed about the market, and the possibilities and capacity of choice-making were constrained by resources, including a family’s economic capital. Parents were also divided on the basis of their educational capital in understanding and accepting the significance of learning materials in the educational process. The analysis reveals that parents with few or no qualifications in this parental group seemed to be in a confused state about Montessori learning, although they were content with the service.

8.3.2 Private nursery

The reason for parents sending their children to the private nursery was chiefly academically driven. The parents believed strongly that sending children quite early to formal education would have an advantage in their children's future schooling process. The majority of the parents in my interviews said that market pressures and competition were forcing them to send their children to formal schooling. They shared a view that early years education was almost a mandatory feature in the schooling process so they had no choice but to send their children to formal education. The example below will help us to understand their concerns:

“Now, everyone, um, there is LKG and UKG before 1st standard. In those days we admitted straight away in 1st standard. It's changed now. People say that even a new born child should pick up the language as quickly as possible. Erm, stuffs are available on CD, um, they are showing it on TV. In fact children are admitted in LKG in some schools based on the entrance test. In pre-KG children get used to the system, in LKG they learn a few things and in UKG they will become familiar with (the system). So, no alternative (Interview with Parent 02 in Private Nursery)”

The paragraph above highlights a parent's concern about language acquisition and the admission test being conducted in some of the private schools. What it also points out is the sense of competition that existed in the market and the influence of the media, particularly TV, advocating the significance of early child development and education in India. It shows the effects which the circulation of information about early years development in the media had on parents and which eventually influence their life choices concerning their children. A combination of a competitive market and propaganda about early child development, as Foucault (1977) says, constructs a truth regime and puts pressure on parents. It leaves parents under the impression that they have to prepare the children academically even before they enter the academic system. As a result, parental *habitus* incorporate those structures and respond to the situation with a practical reasoning (Bourdieu, 1990).

For most of the parents the decision that they made was due to interest in their children learning English. The demand for learning English in India, especially in the

schooling process, was highlighted by many authors in the literatures (Cleghorn and Prochner, 2010; Dash, 2009; Kochhar, 1992; Swaminathan, 1992; Venn, 2006; Viruru, 2001). The example below from a mother will explain this issue:

“Some people near my house told me that the school was good; their English coaching was good, so I admitted her. Otherwise, um, there was no other reason (Interview with Parent 01 in Private Nursery)”

For this mother the motive was the desire to educate her child in English and the choice was made through having local knowledge. Her statement that people said ‘English coaching was good’ has locally constructed meaning. Yet, it was the local opinion about English teaching that pushed her to select this particular nursery. Literature highlights the desire for English education due to many factors such as colonisation, globalisation, modernisation, gaining advantage in higher education, demand in labour market, social position and status (Dash, 2009; Jeffery, 2005; Kochhar, 1992; Venn, 2006; Viruru, 2001; Viswanathan, 1989). Dash (2009:14) notes that “the role of English in India easily exceeds its function as a language.” English becomes a part of everyday life and it has far reaching implications in life that goes beyond education. This was also one of the reasons for parents selecting private nurseries, since the majority of the private nurseries in India impart education in English (Streuli *et al.*, 2011).

In a divided education system, every private nursery has its own standards and evaluation criteria, and ideally expects pupils to meet those standards. As Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argued, there is always a possibility that some children may find the normative academic standards easy to conform to whereas others may find them difficult to cope with. Moreover, the expectations from nurseries are both academic and non-academic. The nurseries, as Foucault (1977) notes, expected pupils to be obedient and non-troublesome but, at the same time, they expected the students to be good academically. In recent time, the nurseries in big cities have started interviewing children to assess their language and cultural capital (home training) before admission. The following example exemplifies the admission process in the private nursery:

“He wasn’t good in speech at the time when we went for admission. Um, we have applied in few private schools, um, including this one. My first choice wasn’t this school, um, but, um, in other schools, um, as he was not able to speak in the interview they turned down admission, um, finally, I spoke with this school, um, with the LKG miss and then they admitted him (Interview with Parent 03 in Private Nursery)”

The above example tells us the importance which some of the private schools/nurseries give to children’s capital even before they enter the school system. The child’s lack of language skills here was viewed by other nurseries as a deficit for education, and instead of helping the child to overcome this problem they denied the admission. It illustrates how academically oriented some of the private institutions are and how much they are concerned about issues of performance (Ball, 2003; Jeffery, 2002; Lyotard, 1984) over nurturing children’s well-being. As a result of being denied admission to other nurseries the parent admitted her child in this nursery. For this parent it was not her first choice but as Bourdieu (1990) says, as a player involved in the game she had studied the circumstances and took a decision with a practical reasoning or logic.

For some parents the continuity of the schooling process in the same institution was another reason for their choice. They admitted that getting admission to a good private nursery itself is a tedious process, and therefore it was better to avoid the situation where they have to move their child from one school to another after every stage. This sentiment was summed up by one mother. She said:

“I thought if I get the admission here, there is no need to change the school now and then ...(we) can’t admit our child again and again. We have applied only in the schools where they have got up to 12th standard. I don’t want to shift my child to another school after 5th standard, um, in this school they have got till 12th standard, so I admitted my son. The child will also be happy studying in the same school, um, with same children (Interview with Parent 09 in Private Nursery)”

The mother here explained the difficulty involved in getting admission to good schools. She felt that it would also have an effect on the child’s schooling process,

peer relations, and familiarity with the school environment if these were disturbed more than once. At the same time she did anticipate the difficulties involved in the admission process especially in the private nurseries.

In regards to additional coaching, the level of acceptance was quite high among parents in the private nursery. Some parents were categorical that it was the competition for marks and grades that pushed them to send their children for additional coaching, irrespective of the child's performance in the school. Thus, sending children to after school coaching, as explained below, can be considered as a means to maximise their chances in the competitive employment market:

“Um, yeah, they gain knowledge in tuition, other thing is competition, there is a heavy competition, um, they have to score good mark, rank, um, and it is full of competition, um, you know (Interview with Parent 10 in Private Nursery)”

There may or may not be a progress in child's learning or performance, but parents had a belief that sending children to additional coaching would maximise the chances of success. The extract above substantiates Bourdieu's (1990) argument that the actor constituted in the social world and his *habitus* are placed in an interrelated relationship with other actors. The actor in the social world competes with other actors and, in the process of doing so, he imbibes and learns the rules of the game, and applies strategies; it may look irrelevant to outsiders, but for the actors involved it means much to achieve distinction. He argued that the parental *habitus* here applied its own reasoning and strategies to maximise the child's chances of acquiring distinction in the educational process. As Bourdieu wrote the decision of the parent may look farcical to others but for the parental *habitus* it was like a strategy.

Other than competition and distinction, parents attributed a few other reasons for sending their children to additional coaching. Notable among them was their perception about academic performance and academically weak children:

“Um, he is weak in studies, so I sent him for tuition. It doesn't mean that I don't teach at home, um, I also teach, um, but that is

only for half an hour or one hour. After tuition they will play for some time and then they will be free. So I teach him. I too regularly check at home, um, what he has learned at tuition, if he does any mistakes I will correct. I assist him in writing, um, in reading, I will teach him whatever I know, um, sometimes he will forget immediately, um, I will teach him again (Interview with Parent 09 in Private Nursery)”

The data above showed the level of importance given for academic learning. The normative standards and curriculum followed in the nursery judged the academic performances of the children and based on which they are classified as weak or good. The parent here seemed to be accepting those evaluation standards and agreed that her son was weak in studies. So she arranged additional coaching for him. The data also indicated that the provision of education was no longer solely the responsibility of the schools/nurseries; it was now a joint responsibility between parents and the institution. In practical terms, the responsibility lies more with children and parents than the institution. The school set-up which caters to the needs of normative learners forces others to find their own means to cope up with the system.

In a competitive system, parents who do not have enough educational capital, especially English language proficiency, felt that they were left with no option but to send their children for additional coaching to fulfil their educational needs. One mother said:

“I am not that much educated, um, so I don’t know much in English, I am not good at (English), so I sent him (for tuition). He goes for one hour in the evening. I can’t read in English, so, um, I specifically told her to teach him how to read (Interview with Parent 08 in Private Nursery)”

In the extract above, the main concern for the mother was teaching her child English reading. It is worth mention here that in India, English language learning is mainly associated with the formal education system. Since she was less educated this mother felt that she was not capable of teaching English to her child. The lack of parental educational capital was cited here as the reason for sending her child to tuition.

As the parents of private nursery were very much focused on the academic performance of their children, they endorsed tuition to a great extent and observed that sending children for tuition would sustain the educational interest of the children at home. The example below explains this further:

“At home, um, he doesn’t pay heed to my words, he will sit and study for some time, then, um, he will close the book and say he finished studying, um, he will go and play or watch TV after that. In tuition he will sit and study at least for 2 hours, at least he will get some inspiration from seeing other children studying, um, that’s why I sent him for tuition (Interview with Parent 11 in Private Nursery)”

Here, the parent explained that the child was not listening to her words at home, he was playful, and also watched TV. The tuition here was seen as a control regime for the child to put him in a place to study. The mother was also of the opinion that sending her son for tuition would help him to seek some motivation from others to study. The whole idea here was that a child should continue and maintain his/her interest in studies at home whatever he/she carried over from the nursery. It also indicated the mother’s expectation of an educationally responsible child at home. Moreover, the extract revealed the control regimes in place for children at home and the continuity of power between nursery-home. Children are expected to perform always under the watchful eyes of adult supervision.

For some parents in the private nursery, the language component was the weakest in the school and they would have to do something to rectify it:

“The teachers in the school talk in Tamil. Since it is an English medium school they should speak in English with the children. Otherwise how children will learn English? (Interview with Parent 03 in Private Nursery)”

The parent expressed his/her anguish that although the nursery was an English medium one, in reality, the pedagogical communication and language socialisation took place mostly in Tamil and therefore children did not pick up English. The

indication here was that an ideal English medium nursery should encourage its teachers and children to speak in English. A few parents said that children should be provided more opportunity in school to learn languages other than Tamil and English, for example, Hindi. One parent said:

“They can appoint a Hindi teacher and teach Hindi to children. Many parents wanted that, um, even my child wanted to learn Hindi, cause, when she watches children from other schools studying Hindi she wanted to learn it (Interview with Parent 01 in Private Nursery)”

The example above shows how both parents and children compare themselves with others and/or the resources available in other schools and develop aspirations. What transpires from the above paragraph is parents’ obsession to develop a child to an optimum level. The parent also justified her demand by citing that it was the child’s wish as well.

In summary, parents in this nursery were driven by academic interests, mainly the interest for English education. Parental *habitus* positioned in the early years market led parents to chose this nursery in order to outperform others and to gain early advantage in the educational system. Choice-making was influenced by many factors such as the reputation of the school, local knowledge and continuation of education in the same school. Parents made decisions based on practical reasoning and strategic calculation after they analysed their position and possibilities (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990). They inclined towards formal learning and their expectations and aspirations were very much aimed towards preparing an academically-oriented child, and they provided additional support and created opportunities for maximum development. In terms of after school coaching, lack of educational and language capital were given as the main reasons for sending children to coaching. Other reasons included the sustaining of educational interest and putting children under some kind of surveillance.

8.3.3 ICDS Anganwadi centre

As noted earlier in chapter five, childcare was the main aspect of the ICDS service provision and the services mainly catered for the target population in the neighbourhood. The ICDS Anganwadi was treated as pre-nursery institution by few parents. Some children were admitted with the motive to get them trained (e.g. toilet training or to develop resilience against separation anxiety) before they joined nursery in the private or corporation school. The following passage from the worker explains this:

“A mother has admitted her child ‘in the (name supplied) nursery’. The teacher made the child sit outside the classroom because he cried, um, cause, by looking at him other children might also started crying.....The mother has now brought her child to my centre and asked me to give training (school preparedness) for one week. Look at her attitude. He is now three years old, she admitted her child straightaway in LKG, and now she wants one week training in the ICDS, cause, her child was crying in the private nursery. I asked her why she didn’t admit her child in the ICDS when he was 2 years old. I told her no (Interview with Anganwadi Worker)”

The extract above explains the Anganwadi worker’s concern. The mother wanted to admit her child in the ICDS Anganwadi just for a week because the child was crying in the private nursery and was forbidden to enter the classroom. The passage above also shows the narrow academically-oriented approach of the private nurseries and the high level of responsibility that was sought from parents in the schooling process. Though the worker in the ICDS declined to admit the child for a week, in one of the conversations I had with her, she revealed that some children attend the centre for only a year or so before they went to private or corporation nursery. This showed the flexibility in the admission process and, at the same time, the parental attitude and perception towards ICDS Anganwadi centre.

But, as I mentioned in chapter five, some children attended the Anganwadi as late as 5 or 6 years old until they went to 1st standard. The Anganwadi functions within the neighbourhood and therefore the transportation of children was very easy for parents.

Foremost among other reasons for parents to admit their children in this particular Anganwadi were childcare and security. A mother says:

“I go to work, um, if you leave your child here you can go without any fear, children stay here until 3-4 pm, so it is very safe, um, we cannot leave our child in neighbour’s house, can we? Children also understand (learn) things here, so balwadi (kindergarten) is necessary for the child before they go to nursery (Interview with Parent 06 in ICDS)”

The data above show that the concern for the mother here was mainly childcare. She was of the opinion that leaving the child in the Anganwadi was very safe and there was no need to worry about security when she was away at work. Literature suggests that care involves responsibility, relationships, and trust building, especially if it is offered in the formal set up (Brannen *et al.*, 2000; Moss and Brannen, 2003). The mother’s statement here resonates with care literatures. At the same time, the mother felt that the child was developing language, social, and cognitive skills from the environment.

In the admission process, parents always looked for some basic facilities such as the physical space, windows for ventilation, a ceiling fan, some toys to play, cleanliness, and some learning materials, to make the child happy and feel comfortable in the centre. The mother’s statement here will explain this:

“I admitted my first child in LKG in a private nursery, there, you know, um, I found it very difficult. Here, in this balwadi, children have space and time to play um they learn at least something simultaneously. There, you know, they don’t have time to play. If a child does anything wrong in the classroom, um, urine or toilet, the teacher will get upset, they don’t have (?), normally the helpers will clean, if they are not available they will send a messenger to home asking me to come and clean up, um, it was really embarrassing (Interview with Parent 01 in ICDS)”

It was her past bitter experience with the private institution that prompted her to prefer ICDS Anganwadi; she used her experiential knowledge to evaluate the choices she had for early years provision. Her statement also underscores the power which the

private institutions wield over parents, and the extent to which some of the private nurseries were ill equipped due to inadequate, unqualified staff. It was also evident in this case that there was a mismatch between what the nursery expected from parents or children and what the parents expected from the institution. As Reay and others (2005) suggest, the decision making here involves emotional aspects and feelings to some extent. Moreover, the mother found some attraction in the ICDS Anganwadi centre: the physical atmosphere, the loose structure which gave plenty of options for free play, and child care. The parent- friendly approach of the ICDS Anganwadi, she says, was one of the main pull factors for admission.

For some parents the everyday management of the institution and the attitude of the staff team were the primary reasons for admitting children to this centre. A mother described this as follows:

“I knew about this balwadi before. Um, I sent my son to the same balwadi, I knew that the staff team was good, they were very responsible, and the balwadi has got nice facilities, so I really liked it. Now I sent my daughter to the same balwadi (Interview with Parent 10 in ICDS)”

As the above paragraph narrates, the past experience of the parent with this institution was the main reason for choosing it again. The other important factor that really worked well in this Anganwadi was the familiarity and reputation of the staff team within the local community. Both the worker and the helper were from the same locality and what transpired from my fieldwork was that almost all the parents had personal acquaintance with the staff team. Parents had a greater amount of trust in the staff team and their personal acquaintance helped to build up better mother-worker, home-nursery relationships with ease and comfort. This corroborates with Bourdieu's (1990) ideas about shared *habitus*, how the individuals identify and associate with others who share the same value and cultural capital. In this case, it was easy for the parents to associate themselves or find a common ground to build a relationship with the workers as they both come from same neighbourhood.

Parents in the ICDS seemed to be very much against the idea of sending children to additional coaching. Out of twelve parents I interviewed no one was sending their children for additional coaching, although couple of parents said they teach them the basics in Tamil and English at home.

With regard to service delivery some parents were of the opinion that the ICDS Anganwadi centre should focus more on preschool aspects in their everyday practice. The excerpts below from mothers will explain this further. One mother said:

“To me, um, according to me, like in schools um they should give reading in the morning, soon after they come they should give training in reading and writing, um, ABCD, numbers, Tamil alphabets as children are fresh and brisk in the morning. In the afternoon um after lunch, children can take a nap, then, they can teach rhymes, cause, children may feel sleepy in the afternoon, if they do so it will be nice (Interview with Parent 10 in ICDS)”

The mother here highlighted the lack of attention in the centre on the preschool component. In her view, the centre should function like a full-fledged private nursery which gave emphasis on educational aspects, at least in the morning. On a similar line, another parent put it:

“Um, they should teach some good things, um, children should learn good behaviours, should learn at least few things related to their education. They can't keep children sit the whole day without any activity, it's not good, and they have to be engaged with one or the other things. (Interview with Parent 01 in ICDS)”

The mother's wish here tells us that the institution should both teach discipline and educate children. In her opinion, both teaching good behaviours and education were considered as a role of the early years institution. What the above extract also tells us is the parent's perception about good behaviour. Bourdieu (1973, 1984) explains how symbolic power and cultural practices works in every society to define the 'aesthetic culture' or 'highbrow culture', and thereby the high cultural practices puts people coming from less fortunate background in a situation to develop the aspiration (by choice or force) for acculturation. This is reflected here in the mother's narration. What transpires from her statement is her understanding about

good behaviour and, by default, her assumption that children hailing from her neighbourhood have some cultural deficiency and that the institution should teach children to change their behaviour.

Some parents felt that the timing of the institution's day should be regularised in the ICDS Anganwadi centre, though they were happy with the current provision of services. One parent said:

“I think, in my opinion, um, the staff and children should be present sharply at 9'o clock in the morning um they should be stricter with the timing, um, like in the schools....If they can do it I think it would be much better (Interview with Parent 05 in ICDS)”

The timing was considered one of the major issues in the ICDS Anganwadi centre; thus, the parent here wanted the functioning of the centre within a structured time frame, especially in the morning. As mentioned in the analysis in previous chapters, the Anganwadi has flexibility in its timing and this was considered here as one of the major barriers in the functioning of the institutions.

In conclusion this section shows that childcare and security were the main reasons for parents selecting this institution for their children. In addition parents looked for basic infrastructure such as ventilation, air-cooling fan, and a decent play space. The shared *habitus* of the workers and parents was another advantage in developing trust and a bond between them. Parents' opinions that the centre should devote more time for preschool education and should structure the time schedule indicates that, as Bourdieu (1990) argues, the *habitus* can think reflexively and act according to the situation. Moreover, the worker's narration about parental perception that some parents consider the ICDS as a second option to private nursery suggests that economic capital of the families make them stretch themselves and go beyond ICDS in choice-making.

8.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I analysed the role of cultural capital and *habitus* in the early years provision within/outwith pedagogical practices. The first part of this chapter analysed the home-nursery connection, particularly children's *habitus* and cultural capital in everyday pedagogy, and the second part focussed on parental cultural capital and *habitus* in choice making and overall service provision. The empirical material in this chapter were analysed based on the premises that: (1) children use their *habitus* and cultural capital in reflexive ways in their inter-personal interactions and it is present and future-oriented in the educational trajectory and (2) parents value the transformative potential of children's *habitus* and they mediate the 'being' and 'becoming' aspects of children, not only in choice making but throughout the process of early years provision.

With regard to children, the analysis suggests that children use their capital to be active players in the field. Children's cultural capital has some positive effects in learning. The differences in children's cultural capital are covertly or overtly displayed in pedagogical practices. In the informal relationships, particularly in the private nursery, children quite often use their varied forms of cultural capital for joy, fun, and to gain lifestyle distinction among peers. Children also show resilience and demonstrate their choice in choosing a particular cultural practice e.g. eating. Further, children's *habitus* synthesises the being and becoming aspects of educational life, and they negotiate temporal reality and imagination in the transition process. My analysis in this chapter extends the argument in childhood studies that it is necessary to understand the *being* and *becoming* aspects of the child in a common theoretical framework (Prout, 2005, Uprichard, 2008). In the temporal zone, there is a constant interaction and mediation and "how we conceptualise something in future may influence how we conceptualise it in the present" (Uprichard, 2008, p 304). Whilst recognising the competency of *being* child, it is also important to consider the *becoming* aspects of the child and how those aspects influence the embodied experiences of the child in the social context. Therefore, neglecting children as *becoming* adult in childhood studies is also problematic from temporal and ethical

perspectives. Moreover, as empirical data in this chapter shows children themselves eagerly look forward to the transition process in education. The summative table below explains the analysis of the chapter.

Table 8.4 Empirical Findings and Theoretical Advancement

Type of Institution	Empirical Findings	Theoretical Advancement
Corporation Nursery	<p>The significance of children's cultural capital was apparent mainly in classroom behaviours. Children used parental cultural capital to gain knowledge outwith the curriculum.</p> <p>Cleanliness, learning materials, staff attitude and reputation were considered the pull factors for parent's choice making.</p>	<p>Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital has been criticised for theorising children as passive object of culture.</p> <p>My analysis however proved that children appropriate the structure and use cultural capital in peer relations, to score academic / cultural distinction and for sense-making in everyday pedagogy.</p>
Private Nursery	<p>The cultural capital deficit of children was visible to some extent in everyday academic activities. Children used parental cultural capital to gain academic distinction from others in the classroom. The differences in cultural capital often appeared in children's peer-group conversations.</p> <p>English education and the continuity of schooling (from nursery to higher secondary in the same school) were considered the key factors for parent's choice making.</p>	<p>The data also show how cultural capital shaped children's 'being' in the institution.</p> <p>Parental cultural capital, particularly the education capital played significant role in choice making.</p>
ICDS Anganwadi Centre	<p>The objectified form of cultural capital, which is the 'snack' culture, seemed to be quite distinct in the centre. Few children showed resistance to such kinds of forced lifestyle. The differences in cultural capital at times surfaced in children's informal conversations.</p> <p>Childcare, safety, physical infrastructure, familiarity with the staff were the factors influenced parent's choice making</p>	<p>Parents recognised the transformative potential of children within the time-zone pathway.</p> <p>Parents assessed their strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and constraints before they make a decision.</p>

In terms of parental cultural capital, the data show that choices were made at a multi-level with a combination of factors. There were certain push factors, primarily associated with parental cultural capital, and there were certain pull factors within the early years institution that attracted parents towards the institution. In the corporation nursery, the reputation of the school/nursery, learning materials, and classroom organisation were the main pull factors for parents to make a decision in its favour. In the private nursery, parents were mainly motivated by their interest in academic learning, mainly English instruction. In the ICDS Anganwadi, the basic infrastructure seemed to be the main reason for parents to admit their children, in addition to childcare and security. Among many other reasons, the cultural compatibility and the shared *habitus* of parents and Anganwadi workers in the ICDS Anganwadi centre seemed to be the key factors there.

Parents' educational capital played a vital role in the early years provision across the three institutions. We have to bear in mind that the term 'educational capital' is a relative concept, it is very contextual, and what is considered as educational capital here can be different in other contexts. Returning to the analysis, the data showed that parents with relatively less or no educational capital appeared to be in a confused state about the use of learning materials and their tangible effects in the corporation nursery when they compare their children with others. Similarly, parents with less educational or language capital (English) in the private nursery felt that there was a greater need to send their children for supplementary education after nursery hours. Parental perceptions and aspirations about service provisioning, as Bourdieu (1990, 1998) argues, suggest that parental *habitus* can think about possibilities and opportunities based on the social field in which they play, and within their constrained resources and limitations. The data in all categories show that making choice for early childhood institution rests solely with parents. It was mostly a mother's choice (Gewirtz *et al.*, 1995; Vincent *et al.*, 2010), sometimes a father's choice, and in some cases it was a mutual decision. Rarely did I get a glimpse in my interviews that parents had sought children's opinions or wishes before they made their decision.

As noted in chapter three, Bourdieu disagrees with the notion that human actions are motivated by economic rationale. Along this line, Reay and others (2005) with their empirical data argue that choice-making is not purely based on economic rationality by the informed consumers in a market; rather, it is very much social and familial, dependent on networks and connections, and the ability to make ‘distinctions’ between the range of educational services on offer. My data partly substantiate their argument. Parents in this study acknowledged that they sought opinions from neighbours and their decisions were influenced by social networks and connections. However, my analysis reveals that economic capital still seems to be an important factor in choice-making. As the mother in the corporation nursery narrates, the choice-making of parents was multi-layered and economic capital played a crucial role.

In a globalized free-market economy, education becomes a symbolic good, and choice-making is completely linked with family economy and the purchasing power of the parents in the market. Parents in general viewed education as an investment for the family economy as well as for the future of the child. Seen from this perspective, most of the parents in this study viewed their economic constraints as limiting their chance of securing admission to a better nursery. Most of the parents said that if they had better economic resources they would have selected a better institution for their children. This suggests that although in the market discourse parents are portrayed as empowered customers who have the authority to select services according to their wish, in fact their decisions are constrained by their capital deficits (Exley, 2009). So, in reality, as Bennett and Silva (2011) argue, parents assess their own capital, weigh their strengths and weakness, analyse the possibilities and constraints, and finally make a decision.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on the key findings which emerged in my analysis chapters. The overall aim of this study was to understand how the normative ideas and discourses were translated into practice, what children's experiences were in the early years institutions, and how children influenced everyday pedagogy. To achieve this, I had framed the following specific research aims:

1. To understand how active educable subjects are evolved in the process of everyday pedagogical practices
2. To explore how children construct their and others' identities through pedagogical performativity
3. To understand the ways in which children use their '*habitus*' and 'cultural capital' in learning environments
4. To examine the role of parental '*habitus*' and 'cultural capital' in early years provision with reference to decision making

While reviewing the literature in chapters two and three, I described how dualistic divides in childhood studies namely structure/agency, nature/social, being/becoming, obstructed our capacity to think 'in-between' (Taguchi 2010), can be counteracted through the works of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu in order to understand the complex nature of children's lives. Then, in chapters five, six and seven I analysed the empirical material in accordance with my stated research aims. The results of the study are discussed here keeping in view the overall study objectives to understand the complexity and fluidity of pedagogical practices and how the study findings contribute to theory and practice.

9.2 Summary of key findings

In this section, firstly, I briefly summarise the key findings from each of my empirical analysis chapters and then at the end explain what they mean for the overall aim of the study.

In chapter six, I used Foucault's (1982) analysis on 'subject'. With the use of empirical data, I looked at how educable subjects emerged in the early years institutions (research question one). Foucault in his analysis constructed the subject in two modes: the subject constructed through subjection and the subject which emerges through self-formation. Taking a different stand from Foucault who viewed the individual as an ethically self-disciplined subject, in my empirical analysis I illustrated how children as emancipatory subjects showed their ability to negotiate or influence the situation in institutions. Children were subjected at times but at the same time they also challenged the power order either individually or collectively in their institution. Throughout the analysis I emphasised how the teacher/worker and the children used their power even if differently positioned in the pedagogy, and how children emerged as active subjects through subjection, negotiation, mediation and integration (conformity) in everyday pedagogical processes. Also, my findings suggested that in everyday pedagogy, children's position as 'power holder' or 'powerless victim' depended on the context in which they were situated.

In chapter seven, then, I explored the idea of embodied identity and how it worked in early years institutions (research question two). In that chapter, I used the concept of 'performativity' proposed by Butler (1990a, 1993). I began by analysing the teacher/worker-children identities in the pedagogical relationships and how they provided markers for pedagogical/curriculum performativity for children. The data suggested that the teacher/worker-children identities were not confined within the institution but also worked outwith the institution (especially in the ICDS Anganwadi). Then I analysed how children performed through/with the curriculum/pedagogy and by doing so constructed their and others' identities. I specifically looked at how learning materials in the corporation nursery, academic

writing in the private nursery and children's bodies in the ICDS Anganwadi were used as signifiers for identity formation. In my analysis I identified shame, distinction and mastery as main reasons for children's performativity. Children were expected to learn/acquire mastery according to the standards or expectation of the teacher while they were subjected to performing constantly in everyday pedagogy. Based on performativity children were appreciated, recognised, shamed or humiliated in everyday practices. Children however did not always follow the teacher/worker-supplied identity markers for their identity construction. Children developed their own sense of 'being' and 'belonging' after realising their position in relation to others in the social context.

Finally, in chapter eight, I examined Bourdieu's (1986, 1990) concepts of *habitus* and cultural capital within/outwith early years pedagogical practices. I divided this chapter into two sections: analysing how children's *habitus* and cultural capital were used in pedagogical practices (research question three) and examining the role of parental *habitus* and cultural capital in early years provision, particularly in choice-making (research question four). The findings suggested that children used their cultural capital in pedagogical practices for learning and peer-group relations, that their *habitus* was positioned in a time-space pathway and that they were present and future human beings. Similarly, parents valued the transformative potential of children's *habitus* and they tended to mediate the 'being' and 'becoming' aspects of children in choice-making. In terms of parental cultural capital, the data showed that choice-making was made at multi-levels with a combination of factors. There were certain *push factors*, within the families' cultural capital, and there were certain *pull factors* in the early years institution (cleanliness, attitude of the staff, medium of instruction, care and security and so on) that attracted parents to a certain institution. My data also suggested that the educational capital of the parents played a major role in matters related to early years provision. Choice-making seemed to be a privilege of parents, especially mothers, and children were not consulted at all in this process.

So, how do these empirical findings attend to my overall study objective? The empirical evidence suggested that the emergence of the active *subject* in everyday

pedagogy was to a certain degree intrinsically interconnected with a child's performativity and also the child's embodied cultural capital. Similarly, the performativity of a child in everyday pedagogy, both academic and behavioural, was intermingled with embodied cultural capital. Also, disciplinary power was used with children either to increase performativity or to modify children's classroom etiquette in line with teacher's legitimate culture. There was a certain degree of conceptual overlap in the empirical analysis and this overlap helped us to understand the interface between these concepts vis-à-vis children's experiences. The findings revealed that children's everyday experiences in the institutions were emergent and dynamic in nature and were built on a complex assemblage of relationships between peers and adults, power hierarchy, everyday performativity, and cultural capital. There could be variations at the individual level (e.g. individual child resisted the teacher) yet there were some commonalities in that children attending the same institution went through more or less similar experiences in everyday pedagogical practices. This meant that children were co-constructors of everyday pedagogy and gave meaning to the practices in the institutions.

Also, though the empirical study was conducted in three different early years institutions my intention was, as I noted in chapter one, neither to evaluate the institutions nor to explicitly criticise the functioning of the staff members. It would be trivial on my part to do so, as every institution has its own strengths and weaknesses. Instead, my focus in this study was to explore pedagogical practices and how those practices shaped children's everyday experiences in these institutions. In doing so, the empirical analysis implicitly drew attention to some of the practices, whether they were intended or unintended, that were in conflict with other aspects of children's lives in everyday pedagogy. Let's take a look, for example, at how the teacher's intention to discipline children's bodily presentations and behaviours was at times incompatible with children's own interests and cultural background (especially in the corporation nursery). Similarly, the teacher's assumption that 'public performance' would motivate children to gain mastery resulted in 'public shaming', and the legitimate performativity discourse had deterring effects on a few children's 'belonging' in the classroom (especially in the private nursery). Also, the

multiple responsibilities of the worker in the ICDS Anganwadi centre situated children in an ambiguous space-time environment. These everyday conflicts opened up the possibility of understanding the complexity involved in the pedagogical processes. The following section discusses these issues in concurrence with the stated official normative objectives of curriculum/pedagogy and asks what these findings mean for professional practice and early years provision at large.

9.3 Implications for professional practice

Earlier, in chapter five, I elucidated the philosophy and curriculum that underpins the official pedagogy of each institution and then with my empirical data I demonstrated how everyday pedagogy works in reality. As I acknowledged in my methodology chapter, I do not intend to claim that the findings presented here in this thesis are ‘universal truth’ rather they may be viewed as ‘partial truth’ – there could be many ‘truths’ or ‘realities’ found in the institutions depending on the position that one takes in research. Also, my expertise on education is very limited, and therefore, whatever suggestions I make here are not authoritative or prescriptive but may be considered as one of the perspectives or possibilities to inform professional practice which are mainly derived from my own theoretical knowledge and understanding.

In the corporation nursery, as explained in chapter six, the rationale for using disciplinary power in everyday pedagogy was often associated with children’s classroom behaviours and manners. This has two implications. First, the assumption that the spatial separation in the classroom would facilitate children’s concentration more on Montessori activities seemed to dissuade the group interaction in the classroom. Though the classroom provided a favourable learning environment for learning it also offered less space for social interaction among peers. Montessori literatures claims that in an ideal Montessori ‘work cycle’ children naturally tend to guide others and their collaborative learning with peers eventually increases the child’s sense of ‘belonging’ in the group (Isaacs, 2010; Lillard, 2007). Also, in an ideal Montessori classroom children are expected to move around and engage with activities as they wish (Isaacs, 2010). In contrast, the spatial separation observed in

this Montessori classroom seemed to limit the possibility for children to learn from peers. This spatial separation was due either to the paucity of the workspace (there was only one classroom) in the nursery or to the need to maintain order in the classroom. Nevertheless, it gave an individualised space for children and thereby offered limited potential for children's collective agency. Also, this spatial separation gave a structured space for children's sense of being (identity) in the classroom. Second, the teachers' assumption that children had cultural deficits and that they had to appropriate legitimate culture placed children under additional everyday surveillance. This conflict over what constituted legitimate practices enables to conclude that there is a great potential for reflective everyday practice for teachers to engage in discussions with children and parents about how they wished to define legitimate action and this provides teachers with the opportunity to recognise children's own socio-economic background and culture as a strength for learning rather than a deficit. Outwith the nursery, parental perception about classroom learning offered interesting insights. Though the nursery had a good reputation among parents, some of them seemed to lack understanding about the Montessori learning outcomes. Parents appeared confused because children's learning outcomes were not tangible (e.g. there was no homework taken home) and this meant that parents could not easily compare their children with neighbour's children studying in other schools. This suggests that there is a need for a strong nursery-family relationship that informs parents about the pedagogical contexts of their children's learning.

In the private nursery the power order was obvious and the disciplining strategy used was overt in everyday practice. As I illustrated with examples in chapter five and six, the normative discourse of the curriculum that provided signifiers for performativity did not provide additional support for academically weak children. Further, the teacher-centred curriculum had its focus on collective subjects and as a result it had negative effects on some children. The repetitive act of academic performativity and evaluation, which was based on classroom standards, created an impression that some children were better than others. This discrimination had varying effects on the children's sense of being and belonging in the institution. A straightforward

conclusion is that there should be more reflective pedagogical practices in this nursery that should value children's strength and ability beyond the rigid, judgemental criteria identified within the academic curriculum. This suggests that children should be recognised as active players who can learn things in many ways and acquire knowledge through their embodied experiences. It also requires teachers and parents to perceive them as more than passive absorbers of prescribed curriculum. Further, this opens up an avenue for considering what a child-influenced curriculum might look like that positively utilises children's strengths and capacities in everyday classroom practices.

In the ICDS Anganwadi the pedagogical power was used in mild ways but it was mainly situational. As I highlighted throughout the empirical analysis chapters, there was much fluidity in the institution in the control regime and everyday performativity. It appeared that both the worker and children constantly negotiated their boundaries depending on the situation in the centre. Most notably, the multiple responsibilities of the worker created an ambivalent environment for children and it also offered limited space for guided learning. Children seemed to switch their position and role quite often according to the pedagogical demands of the worker. This implies the need to improve professional practice at two levels: the reduction of multiple workloads for the worker so as to enhance her capacity to spend more time for preschool activities, and to equip the staff team to become reflective practitioners. The findings also pointed out that though some of the parents were happy with the care component of the centre, they also raised genuine concerns about the learning that took place in this institution. It is possible to conclude that as part of everyday regularised practice staff should spend more time explaining to parents the philosophy, foundations and nature of the activities that are carried out in the centre.

Overall, the study findings suggested that the teacher/worker in the early years provision as embodied practitioners integrate their dispositions, opinions and perspectives about children into their work. During this process they utilised established, normative, formal, official and philosophical criteria to judge the child's being in everyday pedagogical processes. The role of the teacher/worker in the early

years provision was crucial in shaping pedagogy and children's everyday experiences in the institution. I concluded it is essential for the institutions to ensure that the early years professionals have an understanding about what children are, how they develop, and why their individual strengths and cultural diversity needs must be respected in everyday professional practice. To be reflective practitioners, they have to develop and update their understanding about pedagogy and educational philosophy. Finally, to foster a strength-based approach, their central concern should be laid on professional values, reflective practice and family participation in the early years provision because otherwise we will not be able to recognise children's being, belonging and *habitus* in the pedagogical process and we will not be able to enable children as legitimate subjects (Davis, 2011; Houston and Dolan, 2008).

9.4 Theoretical contributions to childhood studies

This section focuses on the thesis's contribution to childhood studies, especially the conceptual issues highlighted in the literature review. The contributions of this thesis are mainly analysed in connection with children's embodiment, agency, *habitus* and cultural capital. These aspects are not analysed separately, rather they are intermingled throughout the arguments. In chapter two while reviewing the literature I underscored that the foundations of childhood studies proposed by James and Prout (1990/1997), Qvortrup and others (1994), James and others (1998), (e.g. that childhood is structural category, that children should be conceptually liberated and that children should be studied in their own right). I pointed out that nevertheless, too much of a focus on social constructionism undermined other perspectives in childhood studies, particularly children's bodies. The proponents of this approach themselves were aware of this limitation and admitted to it elsewhere in their works. James and Prout (1997:5) while reiterating the foundations of childhood studies have cautiously made a claim that,

“Although it is possible to identity these features as belonging to a new paradigm for the study of childhood it is clear that the paradigm exists more as a potential or possibility than as an already completed set of theoretical postulates”

They raised a concern that this paradigm had to be stretched further with new theories and approaches when recognising children as social actors. However, there seemed to be some conceptual constraints that were inherently built into the foundations. Firstly, the assumption that children need to be viewed as social actors at times stands in contradiction to studying the institutional, structural and material aspects of childhood. My empirical analysis in chapters six and seven showed that children were assigned a different status from that of the teacher/care worker in the pedagogy and at times they were subjected to being under control and performativity in everyday practice. Children's bodies were isolated, conditioned, individualised, spatially segregated, transformed and punished. But, at the same time, there were instances where children effectively used their agential powers in their body movements, gestures, communication and actions. This suggests that seeing children as individual free subjects, a view derived from the modernist notion of free and liberal individuals, is different from looking at how children are actually situated as active and emerging subject in a complex environment. My analysis offers insights on how the subject and identity of children emerges in a complex process that involves body, power, competency, ability, interaction and objects.

This raises another fundamental question in childhood studies about the researcher's predisposition in theorisation. James and others (1998) while discussing the social constructionist approach asserted that the researcher has to suspend his/her preconceived mental disposition and study children's life worlds as they are. But, as Foucault argues (see chapter four), it seems impossible to abort all our predispositions, since our own research itself is motivated by some theoretical or methodological inclinations. In the case of childhood studies, it was obvious that our dual assumptions that children need to be theorised as social actors, and that their experiences have to be theorised through an agency-centred approach, overlooked the structural determinants of childhood. My empirical data substantively contribute to the argument that children's life experiences are shaped by different parameters, they are complex, and that they need to be studied beyond the structure/agency dualism of childhood studies.

Secondly, the domination of the social constructionist approach in childhood studies neglected children's bodies in its theoretical investigation. James (1993) in her work on identity analysed the embodied aspects of children's disability in identity formation. Nevertheless, the body in childhood studies remained as an untouched theoretical territory due to fear of biological immaturity. However, sensing a danger in childhood scholars being carried away by the constructionist paradigm, James and others (1998:146) asserted that,

“It might be said that social constructionism stands in danger of replacing one reductionism with another: in brief, the body and the child appear as effects of social relation, leaving little room for the body/child as a physical or corporeal entity”

Furthermore, as I mentioned in chapter two, Prout (2000) and others in an edited volume analysed children's bodies and embodiment in order to carve out a common theoretical framework for studying children's embodied experiences. Prout (2000, 2005) extended this analysis further in his work linking children's agency. As I analysed in chapter three, the foundation of this divide was mainly rooted in Cartesian philosophy and it had effects particularly on identity theories. There I argued that the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy was instrumental for the divide in identity theories in the past and that identity is now considered as an embodied activity. Following this, I also demonstrated how children used their bodies in various ways for identity formation in early years institutions. Children's appropriation of learning materials, bodily experiences, actions and expressions were discussed in order to substantiate this argument. Most significantly, my analysis also demonstrated how children's agency was expressed through bodily actions, gestures, and resistance on different occasions in everyday practice. Therefore, I would say that it is impossible to overlook children's bodies when studying subject, identity and agency.

The other important factors which are closely related to children's body are *habitus* and cultural capital. Through Bourdieu's concepts I elucidated how children use their body as a repository in order to identify/distinguish themselves with/from others in everyday reality. As I described in chapter eight, there were criticisms

about Bourdieu in childhood studies for undermining children's ability in his theorisation of cultural and social reproduction (see for example, James, 2000; Corsaro, 2004; Morrow, 1999). Bourdieu's analysis of cultural reproduction primarily concentrates on the residue of the past, that is, the accumulated effects of the past on the present. Therefore, young children in his theory were treated as passive absorbers of the cultural capital. The empirical analysis in my study, however, showed that children use their *habitus* and cultural capital in reflexive ways in their inter-personal interactions and that it is present and future-oriented in their care/education trajectory.

There are a few examples in childhood studies where authors have used Bourdieu's work on social capital to understand how children develop their learning identities while living in poverty and how social exclusion influences health practices (see Morrow, 1999; Muschamp *et al.*, 2009). As I noted in chapter three, Bourdieu's (1986) idea of cultural capital works in a three tier-system – cultural capital underpins economic position and gets converted into social capital. The literature mentioned above used social capital – networks, memberships and connections – in their analysis. My study however used cultural capital for analysis and makes a modest contribution to the field to understanding how children use their cultural capital in the early years provision for learning and peer relations. Also, the study findings suggest that parents value the transformative potential of their children, and that the parental cultural capital that influences their choice-making in the early years provision has a huge impact on the kind of childhood and adulthood that the parents foresee for their children. Overall, the theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu helped me to overcome the dualistic divides in childhood studies in order to understand the emergent and complex nature of childhood in early years provisions. The section below will explain the possibility of looking at my work from other perspectives/theories and of extending this thesis further for future research.

9.5 A way forward

While writing about the trend in early childhood Moss (2007:232) elsewhere notes that besides Foucault “today, it is possible to find references in early childhood literature to the likes of Derrida, Deleuze and Levinas”. In the literature, as Moss (2007) wrote, Foucault’s work on power, knowledge, truth and subject have been increasingly used to understand how power dynamics, dominant discourses, disciplinary power, and governmentality works in the early childhood field (see Bloch *et al.*, 2003; Cannella, 1997; Cohen, 2008; Dahlberg *et al.*, 2007; Hultqvist and Dahlberg, 2001; MacNaughton, 2005; Millei, 2005). Recently, the works of Deleuze, particularly his concepts of rhizome, multiplicity and fluidity has been quoted in early years literature and to some extent childhood literature at large (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; Deleuze, 1992, 2006).

Deleuzian analysis is considered as an extension to the Foucaultian analysis of power – moving away from discipline to control (see Fendler, 2001). While Foucault’s analysis is mainly concerned with bodily discipline through spatial arrangements, Deleuzian analysis emphasises the ‘virtual’ or ‘immanent cause’ which means control through cognitive internalisation (Boundas, 2006; Deleuze, 2001). For example, chapter eight demonstrated that children internalised ideas of ‘informal-formal’ when considering their future attendance in primary school. While analysing Foucault’s disciplinary society, Deleuze (2006) argues that it is not only through repression, but also through integration that people realise their position and ‘invest’ willingly their resources, energy, and so on in the institution. For Deleuze (2006), while power relations define possibilities or probabilities of interaction, it is the institutions that provide space for actualisations of these singularities and then finally integrate them. What does integration mean? Deleuze (2006:32) says that “realisation is equally an integration, a collection of progressive integrations that are initially local and then become or tend to become global, aligning, homogenising and summarising relations between forces”. Thus, eventually this realisation and integration becomes a differentiation. Deleuze (2006) argues that the techniques of power in Foucault’s disciplinary society are primarily about, and always act on, a

‘multiplicity’, and it is through disciplinary techniques that this multiplicity is transformed into social order. What is multiplicity? Deleuze (2004:230) notes that ‘ideas are multiplicities: every idea is a multiplicity or a variety’. Multiplicity in disciplinary societies is distributed and organised across space and time (e.g. the timetable, seating arrangements, class room organisation and so on in school) in order to increase its utility and effectiveness. Thus, it can be seen that every individual in the institution is nothing but “the capture, integration and differentiation” of multiplicity (Lazzarato, 2006:171).

Deleuze framed his theoretical framework ‘societies of control’ mainly to understand the nuances of capitalism and capitalist institutions (Deleuze, 1992). He believed that the constitutive processes of both capitalist institutions and multiplicity can be understood only by understanding the notion of the ‘virtual’ and its modalities of actualisation and effectuation. Moreover, as Lazzarato (2006) suggests, in capitalist society, power ‘acts at a distance’ for the flow of ideas or the imposition of values (e.g. the influence of global media and technology that impose their agenda and influence on people). The Deleuzian framework owes a great deal to Foucault and his analysis of ‘disciplinary societies’. There are some similarities between the two, but Fendler (2001) sees the distinction between ‘control societies’ and ‘disciplinary societies’ in three ways. Firstly, both control society and disciplinary society are constituted in the self-monitoring gaze; however, the monitoring in a control society is more frequent and regular than in the disciplinary society. Secondly, standards in a control society are heterogeneous and rapidly changing whereas in a disciplinary society they tend to be centralised and durable. Finally, a disciplinary society offers the promise of closure of a project; however, a control society provides no possibility of completion. Children in a control society, for instance, are forced to move from one confinement to another - private coaching (tuition after regular school hours), additional language classes, and extra-curricular activities and so on. Deleuzian analysis focuses on control in open space, and it describes control as the superstructure to discipline, but what I see as a weakness in his concept is that there is no clear-cut definition provided on ‘what is control’. In my study control was not simply a superstructure, it was embodied, internalised and worked upon (e.g. in

chapter seven children worked with regimes of control in order to achieve reward and distinction).

Another set of literature used Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept to problematise the concept of 'becoming' in childhood studies. They argued that the term 'becoming' can be viewed as a fluid concept that happens constantly in a given social space in multiple ways with individuals (see for example, Dahlberg, 2003; MacNaughton, 2005; Taguchi, 2010). In Deleuzian perspective, becoming is a subjective term and it completely differs from the sociological idea of 'being' and 'becoming' as opposite entities (Dahlberg, 2003). Becoming in Deleuzian analysis is characterised by continuous change and alteration, it offers possibilities for multiple ways of thinking, and eventually considers children as emergent subjects (Bloch *et al.*, 2006; Dahlberg, 2003). Becoming in this sense is always a process of becoming something, it challenges the pre-defined assumptions and truths, and provides choice for a multiplicity of pathways (Bloch *et al.*, 2006; Sellers, 2010).

In this framework, children can be no longer perceived as (in)complete bodies, but are perceivable "as alternative epistemologies, in which dynamic processes are ongoing, being both subject and object of perpetual change through de-territorialisation" (Sellers, 2010:562). The Deleuzian notion of becoming offers potential for developing a concept of children as embodied be(com)ings, and both as a be(com)ing children and becoming adult in a particular context (Sellers, 2010). Finally, Deleuze and Guattari (1988:238) say that "becoming produces nothing other than itself"; it passes through space and time, not with fixed boundaries but with undefined lines of thought and movement. Becoming in this sense is becoming by itself over time. This offers scope to conceptualise the being-becoming aspects of childhood as a fluid concept that has much more relevance to children's own lives. Further, Deleuzian analysis is also useful for studying how children emerge as active subjects, how their identities are constructed and how their cultural capital might be used for designing pedagogy (see Sellers, 2010; Taguchi, 2010).

9.6 Concluding remarks

The overall aim of this study, as I described in chapter one, was to explore the process and practices in early years provisions. Building on the works of Stephens (1995), and James and James (2004), I proposed to explore the status of children and children's experiences/influences on everyday pedagogical practices. For this purpose, as mentioned in chapters four and five, I chose three early years institutions which each practised different pedagogies. Along the journey I teased out some of the issues that sat uncomfortably with my research in childhood literature. Notable here were the issues of children's bodies, agency and becoming aspects of childhood. I proposed that these dualistic divides could be overturned in my analysis through the theories of Foucault, Butler and Bourdieu. Then in the empirical analysis, Foucault's concept of subject was used to problematise the structure-agency debate in childhood studies. The empirical analysis of educable subjects suggested that it is unrealistic to believe that children always function as power-free individuals. In everyday practice, there was constant negotiation of power, children were subjected at times, and they also used their agency at other times.

Similarly, Butler's concept of performativity was used to problematise the nature versus culture dichotomy in childhood studies. Throughout my arguments in chapters two and three, I underscored that these two aspects needed to be studied within a common framework, and I also traced their foundation in Cartesian philosophy. I argued that identity is embodied, and that in the early years institutions pedagogical performativity was instrumental for children in confirming their position/identity in relation to others. Significantly, the individual identity which emerged in the institutions in the interactions was fluid and contextual, but over time it acquired a fixed position (see the example in the private nursery and Konstantoni, 2010). Then in the final analysis chapter, Bourdieu's theory was applied to problematise the being and becoming aspects of children. With the use of empirical material I underscored how children's bodies acted as vehicles and repositories that carried their cultural capital and how children's *habitus* reflexively acted in the pedagogical environment. In that chapter I showed that both children and parents

viewed children in a time-space pathway as both being and becoming human beings, and that parents valued children's transformative potential. Therefore, while recognising children as equal human beings it is also important to recognise that children function in a complex world and that the childhood emerges from the early years institution is hybrid and heterogeneous and not always a social construction. This I demonstrated particularly with my analysis on children's bodies and learning objects in the institutions.

More significantly, as I mentioned in the introduction chapter and described in chapter five, the pedagogies followed in all three institutions were one or other way influenced by minority world educational philosophies and theories. Nevertheless, these pedagogies were converted into reality through an on-going interaction and mediated between all the people involved in the process. Now, with confidence, I would argue that there was complexity in the process, and that at the same time, there was considerable fluidity in the early years institutions, integrating local cultural practices into everyday pedagogy. This also means that this thesis is able to argue, as other studies discussed in chapter one have argued, that we should avoid assuming that practices in Indian early years settings are deterministically based upon and/or influenced by western notions of childhood.

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Appendix 1



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES

Social Policy

The University of Edinburgh

Christie Macmillan Building

50 George Square

Edinburgh EH8 9JQ

Telephone 0131 650 6111

Fax 0131 650 6111

27th October 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct PhD research study

I am writing to you as Postgraduate Adviser of Social Policy, at the University of Edinburgh, and supervisor to Mr. Vinnarasan Aruldoss. We are seeking permission for him to conduct his PhD research using private early years provision as one of his case studies.

Mr Aruldoss is undertaking a PhD with us, on the 'social construction of early childhood' in the context of early childhood service provision in Tamil Nadu. The overall objective of his study is to understand how the idea of 'early childhood' is socially constructed in different early childhood institutional models and what are their policy implications? To achieve this objective, the study frames the following research questions:

1. How is the concept of early childhood understood by different 'duty bearers' such as policy makers, service providers, and parents?
2. To what extent do 'duty bearers' own constructions of early childhood influence their decision making as provider or receiver of services?
3. What are children's lived experiences in the early childhood institutions and how do these experiences create meaning to the institutional models?
4. What do these findings suggest for policy provision?

At the empirical level, the study intends to involve three different models of early childhood institutions such as ICDS, Corporation Nursery and Private Nursery for data collection. For the gathering of empirical data, the study will undertake semi-structured interviews with adults, and ethnographic observation with children in nursery settings. It is anticipated that in each institution the researcher may observe children 2-3 days in a week for 3-4 months. Mr Aruldoss, as the researcher, will play an observer-as-participant role with children; therefore, the research process will not have any influence on the daily routines of the institution.

Cont./

Page 2/

The University of Edinburgh prioritises research ethics and Mr Aruldoss' proposed research has already been intensely scrutinized from our institutional perspective. To honour ethical commitments, all researchers must gain informed consent from participants, and maintain anonymity and confidentiality of all study participants/institutions during and after the research process. Mr Aruldoss has successfully undergone our committee's scrutiny and will be bound by all the ethical procedures of the University.

We are confident that the research study is a productive project and will yield fruitful results for future policy formulation. It would be appreciated if you could give him the permission to access your institution and extend all your support for the successful completion of his field work. Should there be any questions about his particular fieldwork, he can be contacted at V.Aruldoss@sms.ed.ac.uk or (0)8754157745. If you have further concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,


Professor Kay Tisdall
K.Tisdall@ed.ac.uk

Appendix 2

Office of the Special Commissioner of ICDS,
Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai-113.

Re.No 17136/Trg/2010

Dated : 16.12.2010.

Sub : Training – Commissionerate of ICDS, Thiruvananthapuram, Chennai-113
School of Public Health – Mr. Vinnarasan Arudoss is undertaking
PhD. – Permission to conduct PhD research study on ICDS – Reg.

Ref : Letter from the Professor Kay Tisdall, School of Social and Political
studies

With reference to the letter cited, Mr. Vinnarasan Arudoss, undertaking a
PhD on "Social construction of early childhood" is hereby permitted to carryout study
in Chennai District with following conditions.

1. Under no circumstances, the Anganwadi Centre should be utilized other than
study purpose.
2. To ensure that the regular and routine work of Anganwadi Worker
/Anganwadi Helper should not be disturbed by your documentation.
3. The activities conducted for documentation should be within the working
timings of Anganwadi Centre.
4. A copy of the documentation report should be submitted to this office for
further reference.
5. Out come of study should be used only for documentation purpose.
6. The Out come of study should not be published without prior
permission of the Principal Secretary/Special Commissioner. If
published, legal action will be taken against the individual.

Mr. Vinnarasan Arudoss is instructed to approach the Programme Officer,
Chennai District with regard to carry out study early childhood activities in a
Anganwadi Centre.

To
Mr. Vinnarasan Arudoss,
21/51, Mary Ann Illam
Singavaram Road,
Chingee 604 202.

Principal Secretary/Special Commissioner

21.12.10.

(3/3)

Copy to
District Programme Officer
Chennai – with an instruction for necessary action at your end.

Appendix 3

From

To

Educational Officer,
Educational Department
Corporation of Chennai
Chennai-3.

Mr. Vinnarasan Arul Doss,
21/51, Mary Amil Illam,
Singavaram Road,
Gingee - 604 202, Villupuram Dt.,

E.D.C.No.A3/ /10.

Date, 2010.

Sub: E.D - Permission granted to Mr. Vinnarasan Arul Doss, *of Edinburgh University*
to conduct Ph.D., Research study in ~~social study at~~
~~Kindergarten~~ (Kinder Garden)

Ref: 1. Your letter Dated. 27.10.2010.
2. Orders of the Deputy Commissioner (Edn.) Dt.

As per the reference cited, permission is granted to Mr. Vinnarasan Arul Doss
Ph.D., Student ~~to~~ to conduct research programme at ~~Kindergarten~~ (Kinder Garden) without
affecting the regular classes of the school.

Georgina
Educational Officer.

29/4 *W*
29/11

Copy to H.M. ~~Kindergarten~~
(Kinder garden)

Appendix 4

Declaration

This is to state that, I (Vignarasan Aruldas), a PhD student from the University of Edinburgh have been doing research on 'the social construction of early childhood' and intend to use ~~the nursery section~~ (nursery section) as one of the samples for empirical study. This is purely an academic exercise and the study findings will be used solely for academic purpose. I can give assurance that, information pertaining to the institution or the findings of the study will not be disclosed to media or in any public domain without any prior permission from the school authorities concerned. In the case of academic writing, the anonymity of the institution and confidentiality will be strictly maintained in order to respect the privacy and sentiment of the institution.

Vignarasan Aruldas
(Vignarasan Aruldas)
PhD student

The University of Edinburgh

Received on
19/1/2011

Appendix 5

Children Observed in the Institutions (pseudonyms)

Corporation Nursery (2 ½ - 5 years)	Private Nursery (5 years)	ICDS Anganwadi Centre (2-5 years)
Ajith (boy)	Anand (boy)	Isha (girl)
Aki (boy)	Arun (boy)	Mishkin (boy)
Akil (boy)	Balu (boy)	Banu (girl)
Chandru (boy)	Dany (boy)	Sinduja (girl)
Deena (boy)	Ganesh (boy)	Nagul (boy)
Hari (boy)	Hari (boy)	Jo (boy)
Janaki (girl)	Keerthi (girl)	Bindu (girl)
Mano (boy)	Komu (girl)	Suresh (boy)
Nidhi (girl)	Lakshmi (girl)	Mithra (girl)
Megala (girl)	Lucas (boy)	Naveen (boy)
Moni (girl)	Magi (boy)	Princy (girl)
Rama (girl)	Mathew (boy)	Vijayan (boy)
Rohit (boy)	Priya (girl)	Ragu (boy)
Ruth (girl)	Punitha (girl)	Geetha (girl)
Suja (girl)	Puru (boy)	Vijay (boy)
Sundar (boy)	Vahini (girl)	Nasrin (girl)
Thyagu (boy)		
Varsha (girl)		
Venki (boy)		

Appendix 6

Semi-structured Interview Guide with Parents

Greeting

A brief introduction about myself – Who am I? What am I doing? About my project and the purpose of doing this interview with parents.

Assurance about confidentiality and anonymity.

Seeking verbal consent for interview, audio-taping and use of direct quotes.

Personal background:-

Name
Age
Educational qualification (of both parents)
Occupation
Individual and family income

Own Childhood Experiences:-

Can you please describe about your early childhood – your family composition, where you were brought up, early education and your experiences as a child at home and school?
What was the best part, or what did you enjoy the most in your childhood?
What was the worst part, or what did you like the least in your childhood?
Did you attend early years institution?

About Childhood:-

What is the best part of being child?
What is the worst part of being a child?
Do you see any changes in childhood between your time and now – parenting, children's behaviour, and society's attitude towards children?
What is your view on an ideal child?
What is your view on an ideal childhood?

About Early Years Provision:-

What is your view on early years education / sending children to an early years institution before age 6?
Do you think that sending children to early years institution is important? If so, why?
What was the main reason for choosing this institution – why this particular one, not others?

Are you happy with the institution / service provision? If not, why?
What are your suggestions for better service delivery? In what ways can the service provision in the nursery be improved?
What is your view on tuition and homework? Are you sending your child for tuition, if yes, for what reasons?
What is your view on corporal punishment? Should corporal punishment be handed out at home or in the nursery?
Do you know about Montessori / learning materials being used in the nursery? If yes, what is your view on that? (only with parents of corporation nursery)
What would an ideal institution look like?

Semi-structured Interview Guide with Teacher(s) / Care Worker

Greeting

A brief introduction about myself and my project (just to reiterate) and the purpose of doing this interview.

Assurance about confidentiality and anonymity.

Seeking verbal consent for interview, audio-taping and use of direct quotes.

Personal and professional background:-

Name

Age

Educational qualification

Work experience - how long you have been working in this institution and profession?

Professional training – on-the-job training, if any?

Has obtained any special degree/diploma/training related to the job?

What did you enjoy/like the most in your job?

What did you like the least in your job?

Everyday practice:-

(With all teachers/care worker)

What was your experience as a child?

What is your view on childhood in general?

Do you see any difference in children / childhood from your time as a child and now?

Do you see any difference in terms of childcare / early education between your time as a child and now?

What is your opinion / general impression about children in your class/centre?

What do you see as a challenge in your work / working with children?
What is your view on corporal punishment?
Would you like to share any other thoughts, anything you want to say or add?

(Only with teachers in the corporation nursery)

What is your thought on the Montessori approach?
In your view what is the difference between formal teaching and Montessori?
Do you consider anything as a challenge in Montessori Practice?
Do you get feedback/comments from parents about Montessori practice when they come to pick-up or drop off their children?
To what extent do you think Montessori is culturally applicable? Do you think everything works well culturally with your children, or do you have any cultural dilemmas/criticisms?
Have you been to other Montessori settings in Chennai? How similar or dissimilar were they from yours in terms of everyday practice?
Did you find any difficulty in your transition from formal teaching to Montessori (only with Government teacher in the corporation nursery)?

(Only with teacher in the private nursery)

What is your view on formal teaching, that is, what have you been practicing in the nursery?
What is your view on discipline/control in the classroom? Why do you think it is required?
Do you get any feedbacks/comments from parents?
Why do you think homework is mandatory?
Do you have any criticisms of formal teaching?
Do you find any conflicts in formal teaching as you are practising it now?
Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

(Only with care worker in the ICDS Anganwadi centre)

You are responsible for many tasks besides childcare and early education. What is your take on that? Do you relish having multiple responsibilities, or do you have any reservations?
What do you feel is the most important thing in your job profile? Everything is important but in your opinion which one you would rank high?
In your opinion, what do you think the children enjoy the most in the centre in everyday activities?
What is your view on early childhood education in the centre?
What is the reason behind the appointment of two children leaders?
What type of feedback/comments do you get from parents?
Do you find anything as a challenge to your time-management / multi-tasking?
Do you have anything to say about ICDS in general?