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The role of families in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana, India

by

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has
not been submitted in any previous application for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis explores the family as a gendered site where young people's access to higher education (HE) is negotiated. The study is located in Haryana, a north-Indian state exhibiting high incidence of sexism and violence against women, along with a relatively developed economy. Haryana also reports a relatively high and gender equal HE enrolment rate within India. State-funded government colleges provide low-cost HE and are often the principal option available to students in rural and semi-urban areas. The study examines how local patrifocal gender regimes operate through and within families to influence access to these institutions.

The intersectional analysis of gendered access to higher education and the significance of the family in this thesis is based on a theoretical framework which understands family as a site where contextual and culturally specific gendered regimes are reproduced and changed over time. These gendered regimes influence how families and individuals are able to access and mobilise different kinds of social, economic and cultural capitals as they make decisions regarding HE. The thesis traces these gendered dynamics within the family through educational narratives about decisions and choices regarding HE.

The empirical study used individual and family group semi-structured in-depth interviews with full-time undergraduate students and their families from three colleges located in different districts of Haryana. The study shows that different family members simultaneously perform gendered roles of supporting, informing, inspiring and steering young people's educational choices. While making HE decisions, different family members exercise their individual agencies which are shaped by their gender identities and family norms. This is also influenced by intersectional factors such as social class and caste. Decisions about HE are not individual, but a group decision made by families within their particular intersectional contexts. This thesis unsettles individualised conceptualisations of educational choice, widening participation and access to HE.

Abbreviations

AISHE – All India Survey of Higher Education

ASER – Annual Status of Education Report

B.A. – Bachelor of Arts

B.Com. – Bachelor of Commerce

B.Sc. – Bachelor of Science

B.Ed. – Bachelor of Education

DMIC – Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor

DU – Delhi University

FCF – Fair Chance Foundation's Fair Chance to Education Project in Haryana

FIF – First in Family

GER – Gross Enrolment Ratio

HE – Higher Education

IAS – Indian Administrative Service

ITI – Industrial Training Institutes

JBT – Junior Basic Training

MDC – Sampled college in Mahendargarh District

NCRB – National Crime Records Bureau

NCR – National Capital Region

NFHS – National Family Health Survey

OBC – Other Backward Caste

PAN – Permanent Account Number

SC – Scheduled Caste

SDC – Sampled college in Sonipat District

SiDC – Sampled college in Sirsa District

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

U- DISE – Unified District Information System for Education

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The following two excerpts from interviews with Chandni, a young woman
enrolled in a co-educational government college in Mahendargarh district (MDC)
in Haryana, and her mother offer a glimpse into how the family is involved in the
educational decisions and trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana.

Interview with Chandni:

> I: So where all did you apply?
>
> Chandni: At the college, I did it [the application] here and then in DU
> [Delhi University]. But at time, no one at home had ever stayed outside
> and far from Mummy-Papa. Then I got admission [her application was
> accepted] in DU
>
> I: Ok in which college were you successful?
>
> Chandni: [Names a nationally ranked and prestigious state-funded
> women's college]
>
> I: That is a very good college
>
> Chandni: Yes, then, my maternal uncle's daughter was going there, but,
> then it was far away [from home], I would have had to stay far from
> family for three years. Now if you take admission [enrol] and you return
> home [i.e. drop out], you waste a year. Then Papa said that "you look and
> think, if you can stay away you can go, otherwise do not go. Otherwise,
> you can do a B.Sc. [Bachelor of Science] here."
>
> I: Why did you not go there?
>
> Chandni: I just did not feel like it then, to suddenly leave the family

Interview with Chandni and her mother:

> I: Which colleges did you consider for your daughter?
>
> Mother: We did not apply everywhere. Her father just did not want to send
> her to Delhi. We only applied here and here she got admission [application
> was successful, and daughter was enrolled]
>
> I: Why?

Mother: Just like that did not want to send

Chandni [interjecting]: have never lived far away

Mother: so did not send. Never left the children anywhere far away…there was no problem, we just went and submitted her papers [application for the national medical entrance examinations] Delhi was the centre [for the examination], but she did not get selected for a government [medical] college, we cannot afford private college because we do not have just one child at home. And we are a joint family, they [my brother-in-law and sister-in-law] also have children, have to look after everyone because of which…

Chandni has rationalised her choice to enrol in the nearest college. During my interview with Chandni, when the mother was not present, she had shared that she had even explored accommodations in Delhi with her cousin, but had eventually changed her mind. On the other hand, the mother indicates that the father never wanted Chandni to go to Delhi, even though it is a more prestigious college. Since the college in Delhi where her application was successful was a state-funded women's college, the difference in tuition fees between the college in Delhi and MDC is marginal. The concerns expressed by Chandni and her mother are clearly not financial. Indian extended family members, such as maternal uncles, often support accommodation needs of nieces and nephews. Chandni shared that she had a good relationship with her maternal uncle and her cousins in Delhi. Her exploration of higher education choices in Delhi was based on this relationship, and its ability to support her higher education aspirations and accommodation in the city.

In spite of this support, it is possible that Chandni has self-selected away from a more prestigious institution (Reay, David and Ball 2005, Shiner and Noden 2015). However, the rationalisations expressed by the mother and daughter indicate that the primary concern is Chandni's unwillingness to live separately in a different city. Chandni and her mother went on to also identify an emotional attachment which, according to them influenced this decision. Are these emotions related to

the gendered relationship between Chandni and her family members? Another key point of interest in how the mother has reflected on the educational decision regarding her daughter's higher education is the recognition that Chandni is not the only child in the family, and that decisions regarding education are made while keeping the needs of everyone in the family in mind. This clearly indicates that educational decisions are made within the family while considering the needs of other family members. Chandni is the eldest and the only daughter in the family; all of the mother's other children and nephews are young men or boys. How is thinking about all the children in the family influenced by the gender identity and birth order of the particular child whose education is being contemplated? How are such contemplations similar and different, especially if (and when) gender ceases to be a factor? These two excerpts demonstrate that making choices regarding enrolling in particular colleges involves complex and gendered negotiations at home between family members. These two excerpts also reveal similarities and differences in narratives regarding education within the family.

This thesis explores how gendered educational choices are not primarily individual autonomous decisions. It explores intersectional gendered regimes and agencies operating within families, and how they produce gendered perceptions and higher education preferences within the family. These gendered discourses on higher education, along with intersectional factors such as social class and caste, influence the educational trajectories of young people in Haryana. To examine the influence of intersectional factors and agencies on educational trajectories and choices, this thesis utilises a theoretical framework, which I have developed for this thesis, which synthesises feminist conceptualisations of gender, agency and intersectionality within families and gendered access and mobilisation of different kinds of capitals. This is used to explore how families are contemplating higher education as an important life decision. Such a framework can be used to understand how choices and decisions are made which have lasting impacts on individual and community life experiences and trajectories. The experiences of accessing higher education, especially experiences of overcoming barriers to

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accessing higher education, indicate that families are not only sites of gendered
control, but also sites with the potential to bring about personal and social change.

1.2 Accessing higher education

Higher education is a social institution serving multiple purposes such as
developing skills, research and building social justice and equality through
positive discrimination and affirmative action policies. Students accessing higher
education are expected to develop skills and acquire knowledge so as to improve
their employability and career pathways. However, research indicates that access
to higher education is unequal (Reay et al. 2005, John 2012, Boliver 2013, David
2015). Concerted efforts labelled as widening participation, positive
discrimination and affirmative action are often made within national educational
policies to address inequalities in access and participation in higher education.
Within these policy-driven efforts, choices regarding higher education are
identified as a key concern. Globally, educational choices in terms of choice of
discipline, course and institution reflect several intersectional social inequalities
such as gender, social class, race and ethnicities (Mullen 2009 and 2014,
Lehmann 2016, Reay 2016, Bathmaker et al. 2016, O'Shea 2020). Similarly,
inequalities in terms of access and choice of higher education are observed in
India in terms of gender, caste and social class (Chanana 2007, Verma 2014,
Gautam 2015, Wadhwa 2018, Sonalkar 2018).

Research on these inequalities in terms of widening participation or increasing
access to higher education has recognised the importance of family (Reay 1998,
David 1993, Brooks 2003, Bathmaker et al. 2016, Cooper 2017, Häuberer and
Brändle 2018, Shapiro 2018). In terms of social and cultural capital, studies have
reflected on lack of embedded knowledge available to first generation, first-in-
family (FIF) and non-traditional students who are accessing higher education
(O'Shea 2015, 2020). These families have no first-hand experiences and
expectations of higher education. Since they lack experiences and knowledge of
accessing higher education, the availability of accessible information and advice
is crucial. The literature explored in the next chapter recognises the differential
value and impact of "cold" and "hot" knowledge (Slack et al. 2014) which is

available to students from different kinds of sources as they contemplate accessing higher education in UK. In USA there has been a development of research into how LatinX students, especially young women, are accessing higher education, and how their entry into universities is significantly supported through a network of women within and around their families (Alvarez 2015). Such research indicates that gendered relationships and families play a key role in how young men and women access and participate in higher education. Importantly, research indicates that the family is not only a site where barriers to accessing higher education are manifested; it is also a significant site where access to higher education can be supported and encouraged.

1.3 Accessing higher education in India

Indian higher education has been massifying over the last couple of decades (Varghese 2015). The massifying of higher education in India is driven by increased demand for higher education, especially from historically non-traditional students such as young women, Dalits and students from rural locations. Students from high income and high social status groups can financially afford to travel longer distances and stay away from home to pursue higher education (Varghese et al. 2019). As far as historically non-traditional students are concerned, higher education institutions in rural and semi-urban locations provide a service which is in great demand. Among the rapidly expanding body of higher education institutions in India, publicly supported public colleges (categorised by the Indian state as government colleges) predominantly serve the needs of "full-time and local, or regional traditionally aged students" (Tierney and Sabharwal 2016: 24).

Massification leads to a growth in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education; however, social inequalities continue to accompany the growth in GER. Persisting inequalities are most prominently visible in national surveys (AISHE 2017-18) in terms of access to or enrolment in different courses and institutions, indicators of participation and successful completion of courses. How young people access education, especially higher education, is significantly influenced by intersectional factors such as gender, social class and caste. This is

intrinsically linked to the post-colonial context in which education and higher
education have developed in the country (Chanana 1988 and 1990, Chakravarti
2012, Chatterjee 1989). As observed in the previous section, research on families
and education in India indicates that families play a significant role in the key life
decisions made for young people, especially with regard to education, careers and
marriage. Additionally, personal observations and reflections from my earlier
professional experience working on research projects focussing on undergraduate
students, teenagers and their families resonate with this. Family members,
especially parents, wield substantial power and authority in directing the
educational, career and matrimonial decisions made in the lives of young people
(Gautam 2015, Sahu et al. 2017, Sudarshan 2018).

In terms of gender and education research in India, the primary focus has been on
schooling of girls and access to higher education. Although indicators for both
levels of education have been increasing, it has been argued that access to higher
education for young women is not primarily geared towards career development
and employment (Sudarshan 2018). Rather, access to higher education for young
women is primarily aimed towards improving matrimonial prospects and
decreasing marriage expenses of young women in the family (Kumar and Gupta
2008). In most Indian communities, especially in Northern India, marriage costs
are completely borne by the bride's family (Karve 1953, Dube 1988). Marriage
costs along with the persistent social practice of dowry are a significant financial
expense borne by family members of young women. In contrast, educational
choices for young men are significantly influenced by the gendered expectation
that they would be the primary source of family income. It follows that it is
important to understand what is happening within the family as different gendered
individuals contemplate and access higher education.

1.3.1 Caste and affirmative action policies in India

Caste is a very sensitive form of social hierarchy and prejudice in India which is
prescribed by accident of birth (Dumont 1969, Srinivas 1959 and 1962). Caste
identities are significantly attached to the historical occupation of the family and

community and their status within the larger society. Every person in India has a caste identity or *jaati*. This is determined by the caste identity of their parents and families. There are several castes in India, which are broadly categorised into five hierarchical groups or *Varnas* (See Table 1.1). The priestly or *brahmin* caste group has traditionally been placed at the top of the hierarchy, followed by the warrior *kshatriya* and the trading *vaishya* or *baniya* and the lower *shudra* caste groups, which include peasants and skilled arts such as pottery and carpentry. The fifth caste group is the most marginalised group called the *ati-shudra*, whose traditional occupations are associated with death and polluting vocations such as sanitation (Dumont 1969). Although the position of these caste groups and castes are often debated, the first four caste groups are also categorised together as twice-born or *Suvarna* castes and the fifth group of *ati-shudra* as *achhoot* (untouchable), *adi-dravidas, harijans*[1] (children of god), depressed classes and *Dalit*[2] (the crushed or oppressed). Caste is a form of social hierarchy which is maintained through social practices of endogamy, occupational specialization and hierarchy (Ghurye, 1969), hierarchy and repulsion (Dumont, 1969) and purity and pollution (Bougle, 1958).

There are many controversies as regards the origins of caste, its relation to the concepts of "Varna" and "Jaati", the relation of caste to the colonial experience and in particular to the colonial exercise of classification and enumeration of un-touchable, harijan or Dalit castes into Schedules (Dirks, 2001). Individuals belonging to the castes listed in these schedules have been able to access education and public sector jobs in colonial India through affirmative action. This practice was further supported in Post-Independence India. The Scheduled Castes

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[1] A term famously proposal by M.K. Gandhi to socially empower the *ati-shudra* or untouchable communities in colonial India.

[2] Dalit is a term probably first used by Jotiba Phule to refer to those diverse groups, communities or people who were from the untouchable castes. This term is often used synonymously with the terms Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and even other religious minorities. It is often associated with an empowered social and political consciousness (Omvedt, 2013). This term was historically used by Dr. Ambedkar and later by the Dalit Panthers in the 1970s.

and the Other Backward Classes have the right, on the basis of the First
Amendment to the Constitution of India (as also its Article 16 and 46) to
reservation of seats in Higher Educational Institutions as well as reservation of
jobs in the public sector.

Table 1.1.Caste Hierarchy

Varna / Caste group	Traditional Occupations	Constitutional terms	Terms used by social activists
Brahmin	Priest	General	Suvarna or twice born
Kshatriya	Warrior	General	Suvarna or twice born
Vaishya or Baniya	Trader	General	Suvarna or twice born
Shudra	Peasants, Artisans	Other Backward Classes	Dalit or Bahujan
Ati-Shudra	Death and Sanitation	Scheduled Caste	Dalit

The most severe form of caste-based hierarchy is evident in the persistent
historical marginalisation of "Bahujan" and especially "Dalit" caste groups from
mainstream Indian society. These hierarchies persistently determine one's life
trajectory, especially with regard to access to education, matrimonial possibilities
and relationships, professional and career opportunities and avenues (Gupta 2005,
Jodhka and Newman 2007, Madheswaran and Attewell 2007, Thorat and Attewell
2007, Shan 2007, Omvedt 2013, Paik 2014). Caste-based discrimination and
social exclusion continue to influence access to educational and employment
opportunities in modern India (Ghosh 2006, Hasan and Mehta 2006, Deshpande
2006, Deshpande and Yadav 2006, Wankhede 2013). The practice of
untouchability which is the most extreme form of such hierarchy has been
abolished under the Indian constitution. Policies of affirmative action are
practiced across state controlled educational institutions in India in an effort to
redress this historical injustice. Caste-based prejudices and caste identities are also
observed within the Islamic, Sikh and Christian communities in India but are most
commonly discussed in relation to the Hindu faith. In terms of higher education
and state-funded employment, seats in each state is reserved for persons from
Hindu Dalit communities which are listed in the schedule of the state concerned.
(The proportion of reservation roughly corresponds to the share of the Dalits in
the state population. At the national level the share of Dalits in centrally funded

educational institutions and central-sector jobs is 15%). Additionally, higher
education hostel accommodation and food in the hostels are subsidised. In spite of
these constitutional provisions and anti-discriminatory laws, students from Dalit
communities continue to experience caste-based discrimination at all levels of
Indian higher education institutions (Sukumar 2008 and 2013, Sonalkar 2018). It
has also been observed that caste-based inequalities are densely intertwined with
class-based inequalities to such an extent that they are inseparable and it is
difficult to demarcate the impact of caste and class (Ghosh 2006). Although I use
the caste terms as they are used by the participants when quoting their accounts, in
this thesis I otherwise employ the term Suvarna and Dalit to refer to students from
the General or Upper caste communities and Scheduled Caste and Other
Backward classes communities respectively.

Caste is an important consideration when we examine access to higher education
in India. Dalit students, who are more likely to be first-generation students
(Wadhwa 2018), lack access to embedded knowledge and cultural capital, which
when amalgamated with experience of caste-based discrimination can dissuade
them from accessing higher education. It also must be noted that these
constitutional affirmative action provisions require different application and
enrolment procedures which often demarcate experiences of access for Dalit
students from those of the mainstream. Different application and enrolment
process often require students to have access to documentation, which identifies
their caste and social class backgrounds.

This also means that they require additional information and advice which is
different from that required for students from Suvarna, Upper Caste or General
caste backgrounds. These often create experiences of stigma and humiliation
among peers and within classrooms as students fill application forms for different
educational purposes (Sonalkar 2018, Thomas 2015). The potential of one's caste
identity or marginalisation to create instances of stigma and humiliation
influences experiences of accessing and participation in higher education.

1.4 The Fair Chance to Education project in Haryana

The Fair Chance to Education (FCF) in Haryana, India is a five-year action-research project led by the University of Warwick and funded by the Fair Chance Foundation. In its initial stage, the FCF project sampled three colleges in Haryana and observed that families significantly encourage and influence the educational trajectories of undergraduate students enrolled in these institutions. The groundwork laid by the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) identified the family as a crucial site where educational choices is mediated.

This doctoral thesis is funded by the FCF project and is embedded within the second phase of the project. This thesis builds on the findings and observations of the FCF Phase I study (ibid.) to examine the experiences and educational choices of families and undergraduate students enrolled in these colleges. The FCF Phase I study included quantitative questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (conducted in February 2018) with students in the sampled college campuses. My study involves qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews and family group interviews (conducted between December 2018 and March 2019) with undergraduate students from the same sampled three colleges and their families at their respective residences. This is further explained in the next section on research design.

1.5 Context of the study

Haryana is a state which reports several contradictions in terms of economic development and persistent and growing instances of prejudice and violence against women and individuals from Dalit communities (Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014, Ahlawat 2012, Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2011 and 2009). Apart from indications of high economic development and regressive gender practices, Haryana also reports gross enrolment rates in schools and higher education which are above the national average (AISHE 2017-18).There is evidence of sexism and bias in favour of men in the communities and families (Gautam 2015, Verma 2015, Chaudhry 2011e and 2011d). Yet, educational reports from the state indicate that more girls and young women are enrolled in schools and higher education institutions than boys and young men.

(AISHE 2017-18). This is a cause for concern in terms of gender parity. Globally,
massification has shown similar indicators but an exploration of enrolment across
disciplines reveal that women are often under-represented in Science,
Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Enrolment
reports from Haryana (as reported by AISHE 2017-18) do not follow this global
trend of young women being under represented in STEM undergraduate courses.

However, enrolment figures as an indicator do not take into account the number of
young men and women enrolled in professional courses such as engineering,
education and nursing, which continue to demonstrate gendered preferences and
choices in terms of discipline and career (Krishna and Sarin 2013, Sudarshan
2018). Moreover, numerical equity in terms of access to higher education between
men and women has not been accompanied by the development of a more gender-
neutral or non-sexist society (Women against Sexual Violence and State
Repression 2015 and 2014, Ahlawat 2012, Chowdhry 2010). There are several
studies (ibid.) which identify persistent gendered practices and violence against
women in the state. As mentioned earlier, the proportional presence of young
men is declining in higher education institutions in Haryana. It could indicate that
young men with access to significant cultural and economic capital are able to
migrate to bigger cities such as Delhi to access higher education in more elite
institutions. It can be argued that this is a concern which has not been mapped or
studied as of yet in India.

Although Haryana has several kinds of higher education institutions
(https://www.highereduhry.com n.d.), the government (state-funded) colleges
affiliated to state universities cater to the educational needs of families located in
rural areas and small towns and especially the most marginalised students in the
state (Varghese et al. 2019). A majority of the students enrolled in these
institutions are also first-generation students to access higher education. Taking
these considerations into account, Phase I of the FCF project selected three co-
educational government colleges in three districts on the basis of district-level
data on low sex-ratio, low literacy and low female literacy, as well as distance

from the national capital and availability of key informants and gatekeepers.
Religion is also a significant social factor in India, and it has also been recognised
students from religious minorities such as Muslims in India are under-represented
(Hasan 2015). However, only one district out of 21 in Haryana reports a
significant population of religious minorities and the sampled districts do not
report a significant population of religious minorities. Therefore, religion will not
be a factor being considered in this thesis.

1.6 The Study

This section briefly introduces the research design which has been used for this
study. It is primarily influenced and guided by three research questions.

1.6.1 Research questions

The review of literature on gendered access to higher education and the social
context of gender and development in Haryana, along with the preliminary
findings and observations from the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021)
have led me to understand that educational trajectories are gendered and are
influenced by intersectional and contextual factors such as caste and social class,
and that there is a need to explore in depth how families are involved in these
educational decisions and trajectories. In order to address this, I arrived at the
following three research questions.

- What are the different roles played by different family members as
  students access higher education, and how are these gendered?

- How are different gendered educational decisions made within families?
  How do different family members justify these decisions?

- How are the families' gendered plans and experiences of enrolling in
  college influenced by a range of other intersecting factors?

These three questions explore different aspects of how families are involved in the
gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana. These
questions lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how educational
pathways to higher education and educational decisions are gendered in their
particular contexts, families and communities. These questions have also
influenced the theoretical framework and methodology used in this thesis. This

study primarily uses a qualitative and exploratory methodology to understand how families are involved in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana. Experiences of students and families provide insights which can help us to understand how gendered relationships, regimes and agency operate within families.

Experiences and perceptions of higher education, along with the processes involved within families as they make educational decisions and the rationalisation of these decisions, have been captured through in-depth semi-structured interviews with undergraduate participants and members of their families. Methodologically, interviews with family members have not commonly been practiced by researchers exploring access and widening participation. The interviews with family members explore multiple perspectives, gendered agencies, discourses and rationalisations within the family. The interviews helped to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how families are involved in the process through which young people access higher education, especially when they are the first individuals in the family to access higher education. This research design required me to meet the family at their home where I observed their socio-economic backgrounds (size and structure of household and amenities) and observed how family members were interacting with each other. Observations of the family home and family interactions added greater insight towards understanding gendered family dynamics and relationships in their specific contexts.

The findings on families and gendered educational decisions and pathways can lead towards developing a more nuanced understanding of gendered experiences, especially every-day experiences within higher education, after students access higher education. This study empirically questions the theoretical conceptualisation of students aspiring to access higher education as autonomous individuals, instead exploring them within the family grouping, and simultaneously explores how families are a site wherein students' educational

pathways and aspirations are encouraged and supported (and also obstructed), especially within first-generation families.

1.7 Theoretical framework
The theoretical framework guiding this thesis is a synthesis of feminist understandings of gender regimes, family, gendered agency and intersectionality with an understanding of different kinds of capitals inspired by the work of Bourdieu (1977, 1986). This framework is based on the understanding that the family is a critical social institution where individuals mobilise different kinds of cultural, social and economic capital as they access higher education. Accessibility and ability to mobilise these different kinds of capital are significantly shaped by the gender of individuals and the gendered regimes operating within their families and communities. The framework recognises a patrifocal gender regime within families in Haryana, where family dynamics and allocation of resources are primarily directed in favour of the male members of the family (Mukhopadhyay and Seymore 1994, Mukhopadhyay 2019).

Within this patrifocal gender framework, where more young women than men are enrolled in higher education, there are possible re-arrangements in the values and the objectives which are motivating families and students to enrol in full-time undergraduate courses. These complexities are explored within the educational experiences of different individuals within the family. The framework's synthesis of gender regimes and families is significantly indebted to Connell's (1991, 2015) theorisation of gender regimes and gender in families. The framework that I am using understands the family as a culturally specific, significant and enduring social institution which involves intense and prolonged relationships between individuals over time and space (Connell 1991). Individuals experience and forge relationships with each other through relationships of blood and matrimony. These are complex, differential and emotional relationships. Families socialise the members of the family into different gendered roles prescribed by the gender regime to maintain and develop particular classed and cultured identities (Donner 2011). These socialised gendered relationships between family members (Dube 1988) mediate and limit the independence or autonomy of individual family

members. Decisions regarding education within this framework are not individual, but are a product of complex and time-sensitive relationships within the family.

These gendered dynamics within the family can be traced by mapping experiences of gendered agencies (McNay 2004) within the family. This involves a combination of individual perceptions, actions and reflexive analysis of the outcome of these strategies. Perceptions of individual family members include examinations of past experiences and barriers, rationalisations of decisions made in the past, present and future. In terms of action towards accessing higher education, this framework focusses on how students and different family members are speaking strategically or remaining silent. This is a strategised process where individuals' actions or expressions of educational interests are reflexively expressed through socially censored and acceptable goals and expectations. In terms of gender, access to education is socially supported through gendered expectations from and of young men and women. These expectations are gendered in terms of the nature of acceptable employment, and obligations and responsibilities towards parents, spouses and progeny.

These gendered expectations, experiences and strategic actions within the family are simultaneously influenced by intersectional factors such as social class or economic capital accessible to the family, their caste identity and the social and cultural capital accessible to different family members. My theoretical framework has synthesised intersectionality (Collins and Bilge 2016, Cuádraz and Uttal 1999, Carastathis 2016) with a conceptualisation of family as a site where individuals have gendered relationships with each other which are complicated and extended over time and space. This conceptualisation of family and gendered agency resonates with the conceptualisation of intersectionality which emphasises the significance of experiences and narratives within specific historical and social contexts (Collins and Bilge 2016, Carastathis 2016, Cho et al. 2013). Additionally, an analysis of just one factor such as gender, social class or caste is not able to explain the contradictions in terms of development and gender reported within Haryana and the contradictions in terms of gender regimes and enrolment

practices in Haryana. An intersectional analysis which addresses multiple factors
simultaneously across time and space has the potential to explain the
contradictions. This framework is a synthesis of intersectionality with gender
regimes, gendered agency and mobilization of capitals within families.
Furthermore, this framework helps to develop a non-individualised understanding
of gendered access to higher education.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

The second chapter of this thesis explores the literature on gendered access to
higher education across the world and in India, and how families are identified as
a site where gendered and intersectional access to higher education is mediated.
This chapter is broadly divided into four sections. The first section explores how
literature on access to higher education is gendered. The next section explores
how access to higher education is influenced by intersectional inequalities such as
social class and caste. Here, it is emphasised that, in terms of access to higher
education, the influence of caste is inseparable from the significant role played by
social class. The third section explores how families have been identified in
literature around the world on access to higher education. This is followed by a
fourth section exploring how gender influences the role played by families in
India, especially how gendered regimes influence families in India within a post-
colonial context.

The third chapter explores the theoretical framework described in the previous
section. This chapter argues that the family is a gendered site where individuals
experience intense and time-sensitive relationships. These relationships and the
gender regimes operating within the family influence how different family
members reflexively perceive and strategically mobilise different kinds of capitals
to achieve their educational interests and goals. The way in which different family
members express their educational interests and young people within the family
access higher education is simultaneously influenced by intersectional factors
such as gender, social class and caste in the particular context of the family. This
conceptual framework shapes the methodology used in this study, which is
explored in the fifth chapter.

This is followed by the fourth chapter which explores the unique social and historical context of Haryana. This chapter examines literature on Haryana and particularly focusses on how the specific historical and socio-economic context of the state influences gendered norms and regimes which operate within families and communities in the state. The final section of the chapter also explores the educational context of the state, in terms of schooling and higher education and how participation in schooling and higher education institutions in Haryana reflects the gender and caste dynamics which operate in the state.

The fifth chapter on methodology explores how this feminist and qualitative study was conducted in the sampled colleges in Haryana, and the different methods: semi-structured in-depth interviews and family group interviews, that have been used to collect qualitative data from undergraduate participants and members of their respective families. This chapter also explores how the transcripts of the recorded interviews have been analysed in a manner which complements the theoretical framework synthesised in the third chapter to address the three research questions. The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters of this thesis explore the three key research questions that guided this research.

The sixth chapter addresses the first research question, regarding the role played by the family in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students. Analysis of the interview transcripts reveal that different family members, sometimes simultaneously, play different gendered roles to support, inspire, inform and steer the educational choices of children in the family. As the family supports, inspires, informs and influences the educational choices made within the family, it is also actively accessing, mobilising and generating social, cultural and economic capitals for the family. Most of the participants of this study are first-generation students accessing higher education, a significant number of students are also FIF trailblazers or the first individuals in their families to access higher education. The experiences of these trailblazing students and their families are rich with knowledge and experiences of overcoming barriers to higher education.

As families influence the educational choices of young people, they are also engaging with gendered ideas of academic achievement, emotional attachments and moral behaviours which are socially sanctioned by their particular gender regime.

The seventh chapter explores how the families have performed key roles identified in the previous chapter. It examines the multiple perspectives and experiences emerging from the same family, along with an understanding of how different family members are strategically maintaining silence or expressing their educational interests within the family. The experiences of students and family members and their recollection of past experiences of the student accessing higher education provide a brief glimpse into how the gendered dynamics at home influence the ways in which different family members develop gendered and discursive strategies to pursue their educational objectives.

The eighth chapter examines five participants and their families. This in-depth and intersectional analysis contributes towards developing an understanding of the different roles played by family members and the gendered agencies that the family members perform over time and space to make educational decisions. This analysis puts together how gendered roles and agencies are simultaneously influenced by intersectional factors such as social class and caste. Individual narratives of the undergraduate participants have been juxtaposed with those of their family members to further explore how educational choice as a family-group decision is multi-faceted and intersectional. The analysis demonstrates how intersectional factors simultaneously influence educational experiences and choices, and how their cumulative impact on educational choices is more complex than the sum of the factor's individual influences on educational choices.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to knowledge regarding families and educational decision in terms of Indian and international access to higher education. This thesis is providing insights into how families mobilise different kinds of capital as students access higher education; it reflects on how the family

as a unit, and different gendered family members within this unit play different roles in their attempts to pursue individual gendered objectives. This process involves individual perspectives and understandings of young people's situational context, their past and present educational experiences and the futures they imagine for themselves as they access higher education. As students access higher education, different family members play different and often multiple roles simultaneously. Gender norms, practices and expectations embedded within specific social contexts significantly influence how individuals perceive, negotiate and perform gendered roles as they contemplate accessing higher education. These micro-processes are intrinsically influenced by intersectional factors such as gender, social class and caste.

Chapter 2 – Gender and access to higher education: when families are involved

This thesis is focused on how families are involved in the gendered educational
trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana, India. As indicated in the
previous chapter a focus on families is supported by the findings reported by
Henderson et al. (2021) in Haryana which identifies the importance of families in
how students make educational decisions. This chapter is an exploration of
literature on access to higher education, gendered access to higher education and
how the family is a site which mediates access to higher education. It reviews
existing research studies which establish that access to higher education is
gendered (Chakravarti 2012, John 2012, Boliver 2013, Mullen 2014, David 2015).
Gendered access to higher education is further influenced by intersectional factors
such as social class and caste in India.

The first part of this chapter examines how access to higher education is gendered
across the world and in the particular context of India. This is followed by a
section on how factors such as social class and caste intersectionally influence
access to higher education. The third section explores the ways in which families
are identified as sites which mediate access to higher education. The fourth
section of this chapter explores literature studying how families are involved in
gendered educational trajectories of young people in India.

2.1 Gendered access to higher education

One of the primary goals of higher education is to provide to students, in an
equitable and democratic fashion, opportunities to develop skills, knowledge,
careers and citizenship (Castells 1994, Nussbaum 2012, Tierney and Sabharwal
2016). This is particularly important in terms of addressing historical social
injustices such as exclusion of women, marginalised communities and Dalit
people from accessing education (Ghosh 2006, Deshpande 2006, Deshpande and
Yadav 2006, Nussbaum 2012, Weisskopf 2012, Sabharwal and Malish 2016).
Gender is a widely recognised barrier to accessing higher education (Chakravarti
2012, John 2012, Boliver 2013, Mullen 2014, David 2015). The gendered barrier

to higher education is usually measured by the difference in male and female participation or enrolment. This gap has reduced significantly or changed directions in many parts of the world. Feminists have pointed out that such an account of male and female students does not adequately address gendered inequalities (Davies and Guppy 1997, Bradley 2000, Leathwood and Read 2009, David, 2015, Smith 2017). Bradley (2000) in fact points out that more "developed" countries like Sweden have lower female participation in traditional male disciplines in comparison to less developed countries with greater degrees of gender differentiations.

Gender as a barrier can also be examined in the transition between school and higher education, especially by focusing on young people's choice of institutions and courses (Bradley 2000). For example, Mullen (2014) conducted a study in a prestigious Liberal Arts University in USA on the gendered processes through which students are choosing disciplines. She finds an interesting interplay between intellectual interests and pursuits of a majority of students from middle class and wealthy families. At the same time, she finds that there is a very masculine rationalisation and understating of merit and significance of a discipline. She remarks, "Women, much more so than men, chose majors primarily on the basis of their academic interests, giving little thought to future career" (Mullen 2014: 301). A rare study in India which explores gender and disciplinary choices observed,

> family members considered science a subject that was 'appropriate for boys', while they regarded the social sciences as 'preferable for girls'. This perception of certain subjects as being 'preferable for girls' led to these disciplines being labelled 'girlish', and hence of a 'lower standard'. (Gautam 2015: 41)

These observations mirror the findings of Troiano and Elias (2013) in Spain regarding how social class influences prioritisations of career and intellectual interests while choosing university courses. Brinbaum and Guégnard (2013)

report that women and second-generation immigrant students, especially from the North-African countries seem to practice self-selection towards vocational and less-prestigious university courses in France. In India, there has been a growing amount of feminist research on the presence, in terms of numbers, of women in higher education institutions and the perceptions and choices that brought them into universities and colleges (Chanana 2000, 2007, John 2012, Verma 2014, Gautam 2015, Sahu et al. 2017, Sudarshan 2018).

Consecutive national surveys on higher education in India (AISHE 2016-17 and 2017-18) report that although women have managed to achieve equal representation in undergraduate education, they are marginally under-represented in the sciences. They are severely under-represented in professional courses like law, engineering and management. Similar findings have been reported by Chanana (1988, 2000, 2007) since the eighties. This under-representation is linked with matrimonial practices, social aspirations, hidden curricula within schooling and concerns over public safety and instances of violence against women. While the presence of women in higher education has improved considerably since Independence, it has primarily increased for Suvarna caste urban women. These trends are linked to aspirations of upward social mobility, across lines of class and caste. Caste and class intersect with gendering forces when it comes to representation of women in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) fields within universities and at workplaces. While women are under-represented in STEM disciplines and most professional courses (except nursing), this gap is wider when it comes to women from Dalit communities.

A majority of the women entering higher education institutions in India are from urban areas and are most likely to belong to middle-class, Suvarna caste and urban communities (John 2012). Increasing educational aspirations, enrolment and achievements are not accompanied with larger social development. A majority of the women who do enter universities, do not enter the workforce. Matrimonial prospects seem to remain the primary incentive. Sudarshan (2018) in fact points out that girls' decisions to enter higher education are mediated by concerns over

affordable and safe modes of everyday transport between home and the college. She also points out that many girls who are not able to afford respectable and safe modes of transport, opt for correspondence courses which include classes during the weekend and fewer attendance and participation requirements. Her findings indicate that gendered norms significantly influence access and participation of young women and men in higher education institutions in India. This is also reflected in the policy briefs drafted by Sabharwal and Malish (2017) on Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education in India. Literature on gendered access to higher education in India is further explored in the fourth section (see 2.4) with a particular focus on how families are involved in gendered access to higher education. In conclusion, this section identified that gendered access to higher education is visible within educational choices and that these educational choices are further influenced by intersectional factors such as social class, ethnicity and caste. The next section will explore how social class and caste intersectionally influence access to higher education.

2.2 Intersectional factors which influence family's educational perceptions and choices

Intersectionality is a theoretical practice originating in black feminist movements in the Unites States of America (Hancock 2016, Carastathis 2016, Collins and Bilge 2016). The next chapter explores this as a conceptual framework in the Global North and in India (see 3.5). An intersectional framework posits that multiple factors simultaneously influence institutional practices and experiences. This lens captures structural complexities and experiences in an inclusive and non-reductive manner (Hancock 2016, Carastathis 2016, Collins and Bilge 2016). Apart from gender, access to higher education is simultaneously influenced by factors such as social class, ethnic and cultural marginalisations and caste in India. In this section I focus on how social class and caste influence access to higher education.

2.2.1 Social class

One of the most significant and intensely studied barriers to accessing higher education across the world is social class background. Large international

comparative and quantitative research studies such as Chiao-Ling Chien et al.
(2017) associate unequal access to higher education to family income disparities
or financial burdens which limit students from poor or low-wealth families. In
India, Thorat and Khan (2018) deftly use NSSO data from the last three decades
to show that increasing numbers of students from families exhibiting low levels of
consumption and expenditure access government higher education institutions. It
is also interesting that inequalities across class groups overlap inequalities across
caste and religion. Thorat and Khan (2018) find that class and caste-based
inequalities in terms to access to higher education have increased with increasing
massification and privatization of Higher education. These concerns, however, are
not new. Over the years, several scholars studying a complex nexus of caste and
class have argued that the Indian education system reproduces, throughout
schooling and subsequent entry in higher education, systems of inequalities and
discrimination, in their processes and in their outcomes (Velaskar 2005 and 2018,
Majumdar and Mooij 2012, Krishna 2012).

Most quantitative studies use economic indicators such as household income,
nature of parental employment and financial wealth to identify social class of the
students and their families. Literature based on qualitative research on social class
and ethnic inequalities as a barrier to accessing higher education often use similar
household indicators to locate social class background of the student and their
families. For instance, studies show that students with parents having different
class positions and occupations develop different strategies involving families and
communities to engineer their own upward social mobility (Brooks 2003, Evans
2009, Mitchall and Jaeger 2018). These studies have utilised the cultural aspects
of a family's class position. They identify the significant relationship between
economic capital with social and cultural capital. This is influenced by the work
of Bourdieu which will be explored in the next chapter.

Bathmaker et al. (2016) suggest that a student's class identity has a significant
influence on how individual students have grown up and developed perceptions
and aspirations to enter universities. Reay, David and Ball (2005) found that

students from British working-class backgrounds often self-select themselves out
of more prestigious universities and courses. Similarly, in Spain, Troiano and
Elias (2013) found that working-class students chose degrees with greater
employability, scope for social mobility and minimal risk, while middle-class and
elite students were not similarly motivated. Middle-class and elite students were
more likely to choose degrees with a more expressive motive. A recent study on
young women accessing higher education in urban India similarly observes,

> Muslim and Hindu young women from lower socio-economic
> backgrounds stressed the importance of higher education for financial
> independence and a better paying job, whilst participants from wealthier
> socio-economic backgrounds added that higher education builds self-
> respect and self-worth. (Sahu et al. 2017: 181)

Apart from the class identity of the student's family and parents, the educational
backgrounds of family members, especially parents, are recognised as a
significant source of social and cultural capital. Studies show how a student can
benefit greatly from "emotional support and encouragement of her immediate and
extended family" (O'Shea 2015: 151). A recurrent theme in research projects
considering the role of parental education is the discourse that working-class
parents and parents from marginalised communities might not have had the
opportunity to pursue higher education and that they want "better" opportunities
for their children (Hutching and Archer 2000, Alvarez 2015, Cooper 2017). It is
embedded in the acknowledgment that parents of students who are first-generation
and the first in the family (FIF) do not have the cultural capital and knowledge to
assist students in a manner similar to parents of students from more advantaged
social backgrounds. This often stems from a position of deficit or a sense that they
lack something and want to become "better" via accessing higher education. This
perception of not owning or being able access certain kinds of knowledge and
experience often occurs alongside silence (O'Shea 2015) at home regarding
higher education choices and opportunities. Mitchall and Jaegar (2018) on the
other hand, have used a motivational lens to explore how different kinds of

"support" can influence students' access to higher education. These kinds of "support" include being a "sounding board", encouraging autonomy and giving positive feedback on educational achievements.

In terms of social class and the role of family, there are multiple studies (Reay 1998 and 2000, Donner 2006) which have emphasised the family's interest in upward social mobility or maintenance of middle-class identity through higher education. For example, Bergerson et al. (2013) find,

> each family culture and the ways it was expressed were as unique as the family itself. Some messages were communicated through discussion and conversation, while others were expressed as family activities involving higher education institutions. It was clear that participants' understanding of family culture began to develop at a young age and continued beyond the predisposition stage. (2013: 194).

The influence of the discourses on higher education within families is reflected in research where middle-class students report that going to university is a taken for granted and assumed practice after successful completion of senior secondary school (Bathmaker et al. 2016, Bergerson et al. 2013). In comparison to middle-class students, working class students tackle silence on higher education within the family (O'Shea 2015) and occasionally convince their parents about the benefits of a particular elite educational choice (Mullen 2009).

Several studies (Bathmaker et al. 2016, Bergerson et al. 2013) reiterate that while middle class students grew up with a family habitus where entering university is a natural assumption, working class families were not able to assist the students during the decision-making process with regard to choice of institution and course. It is also interesting to note that middle-class and working-class students in the UK were experiencing different kinds of concerted intervention (Bathmaker et al. 2016). Interventions by family members (primarily parents) in cases of working-class students were often motivated by exceptional academic

achievements in schools. While middle class students are negotiating expectations
and guidance towards higher education, working class students develop skills of
"self-reliance and resilience" (Bathmaker et al. 2016: 57). Brooks (2003)
reiterates that parents have a pivotal role in how students access higher education.
However, she also illuminates how social class position of the family can operate
in multiple ways to support access to higher education. She elaborates how the
parents' particular job or "the specific context in which their parents worked"
(Brooks 2003: 295), gave parents opportunities to interact with colleagues and co-
workers with different social and cultural capital and knowledge to inform their
children educational choices and decision. This dismantles the rather
straightforward connection made between social class background of families and
the nature of "hot"[3] knowledges (Slack et al. 2014) that students can access while
contemplating accessing higher education.

This section demonstrates that cultural capital and parental (not family)
involvement influences access to higher education across the world. Similar
literature on social class of parents or families and their role in access to higher
education is not found in India. Literature on parental involvement and social
class in terms of access to education in India is limited to schooling practices
across the country (Donner 2006, Dhingra et al. 2007, Kumar and Gupta 2008,
Gurney 2017). This focus is not extended to accessing higher education.

2.2.2 Marginalised communities and cultures
The intersectional nature of inequalities blurs the boundaries between
investigations focussed on one or other factor. This can be illustrated using studies

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[3] Literature on educational choices and families defines hot knowledge as
"a particular manifestation of social networks, and relates to first-hand or second-
hand recommendations or warnings about specific institutions, based upon some
form of direct experience" (Slack et al. 2014: 208). It is more trustable than cold
knowledge which includes literature such as prospectuses and research reports
(Ball and Vincent 1998).

which focus on racial or ethnic inequalities, where social class is evoked in intersection with race/ethnicity. Research on access to higher education in the USA strongly indicates that African American families are significantly poorer than white families, and that this in turn affects the opportunities available to African American students to access higher education. Cross and Slater (1997) find that scholarships and student finance schemes are more accessible to wealthier families who are predominantly white. This indicates that economic barriers are harder to overcome for marginalised races or communities. The cultural capital based on social class or the lack of "embedded" experiences is simultaneously affected by the cultural capital of different community backgrounds or identities.

However, this simultaneous deficit or cumulative deficit of experiences and knowledge in term of social class or race is not universal. Archer and Hutchings (2000) find that, for female students from minority ethnic groups,

> black female familial networks provided strong encouragement towards
> HE participation, although they were also a source of potential retribution
> for 'failure'. A number of Asian students also talked about receiving
> economic and personal encouragement from their families to stay on in
> education. (561).

They report that students from immigrant families in the UK pursue higher education to fulfil the dreams of their parents and to "better" themselves and their families. It is important to note that families are seeking to "better" themselves, both in terms of social class and ethnic marginalisation. Research among a marginalised ethnic community in Chile found that the sampled students' indigenous community networks often became valuable resources when students were pursuing higher education (Webb 2019). Indigenous parents were providing emotional support to their children and were actively engaged in encouraging their children to "better" their lives through higher education. This did not indicate if this form of familial support and encouragement from the parents was a

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culturally or ethnically rooted phenomenon. These studies indicate that, although communities have been historically marginalised from access to higher education, they manage to develop networks of support and encouragement. Although they appear to be un-embedded with experiences and knowledge of higher education, over time, they have recognised the value and significance of higher education and have developed their own networks of support.

Alavarez (2015) reports that staying away from home is a significant consideration for LatinX students in USA while contemplating higher education choices and that this consideration deeply colours the manner in which parents and children negotiate educational choices and decisions. This is a significant factor for this study, since students in India, are expected to contribute to household chores and contribute to family incomes in a manner similar to LatinX families in USA. This consideration is important since it stems from how families negotiate roles and responsibilities within the family.

Similarly, studies which examine participation of students from marginalised communities in India, find that inequalities such as caste and religion often coincide with economic constraints and that they are so intricately intertwined with each other that it is difficult to distinctly identify caste, religion and social class (Ghosh 2006, Deshpande 2006). Students from Dalit families experience caste-based discrimination, and their families do not have the capital (social and economic) for private tuition or coaching which is more accessible to Suvarna caste and middle-class families (Majumdar and Mooij 2012). Majumdar and Mooij (2012) have argued that home-based support is a key ingredient which determines how students access education and employment opportunities. However, these studies do not explore how these inequalities are manifest within families or households.

2.2.3 Conclusion

This section explored how social class and social marginalisation influence access to higher education. It is important to note that within this literature, deficit is the

dominant trope identified in educational decision-making processes reported by students and parents from both working-class families and socially marginalised communities. While the deficit in the narratives of working-class families is theorised as a lack of social and cultural capital, the deficit in other socially marginalised communities exhibit culturally specific nuances and practices. Although this section has examined the influence of social class and social marginalisation separately, socially marginalised communities often tend to simultaneously experience economic marginalisation. This intersectionality between social class and marginalised communities is manifested through multiple and complex barriers to access higher education. This would indicate that barriers based on social class and caste increasingly coagulates the deficit experienced by students who are the first generation in their families to access higher education. This is a prominent concern in the rapidly massifying higher education scenario observed in developing countries such as India.

These studies indicate that family members are involved in students' educational trajectories. Families have tremendous potential as both barriers and as sources of support. The two sections on social class and marginalised communities highlight the fact that both forms of inequality encourage parents to use a variety of ways to support and encourage their children. The section on socially marginalised communities also highlighted the fact that ethnic communities have potential networks which can assist students in accessing higher education.

2.3 Identifying family as a significant factor influencing gendered access to higher education

As seen in the previous section, research on access to higher education identifies social and cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) as critical factors shaping educational trajectories. Social and cultural capital are social and cultural resources owned by individual students and their families which act as facilitators and barriers to higher education pathways and choices (Mullen 2014, Engberg and Wolniak 2010). As mentioned in the previous section (see 2.2.1), Slack et al. (2014) find that a majority of students sought information from a small group of family, friends and current students in higher education institutions. It indicates

that a significant role is played by family and other social networks when students enrol in higher education institutions. It is also important to note that hot and cold knowledge sources are different for first generation students and "embedded" students who have parents or direct family members who have had prior higher education experiences (Häuberer and Brändle 2018).

In research on schooling (such as Gurney 2017, Donner 2006, Connell 1982), significant attention has been paid to the role of families, especially parents. However, this is not explored in similar depth or detail in relation to higher education. Educational researchers working within the Bourdieusian paradigm (such as David 1993, Reay 1998 and 2000) have explored the role and relationships between parents and schooling and higher educational choices. This has been particularly studied with regard to the involvement of mothers in the educational trajectories of their children in schools. This is rarely studied in terms of access to higher education. One rare British study reports,

> Predominantly, the mothers here are arguing that their involvement is intended to gain the 'best start in life' for their daughters, but in doing so they are maintaining and extending their economic privilege and using their cultural capital to its best advantage. (Cooper 2017: 336)

This examination of the role of parents is not followed when most researchers are examining how students access higher education. Parents or family are reduced to the methodological categorisation of the social and cultural capital of participants. The occupation and financial wealth accessible to parents, especially fathers, are recognised as markers of a student's social, economic and cultural capital. However, this identification of social class does not always recognise that dynamics within the family, such as a bias towards sons, might deny young women the opportunity to access these capitals thought to be available to the family. These markers are also likely to be inaccessible to young people in cases where there is conflict within the family. The depth of parents involvement in influencing their children' educational and career priorities are often not explored

adequately. We can especially see this in the following section on how families access higher education in India.

Arguably, there is an assumption made in much of the academic research emanating from the Global North about the nature of higher educational access and experiences that underpins research on this topic. Northern discourses on the university student often hinge on understanding students as autonomous adults who are actively engaging with the knowledge economy. It is assumed that, although individual students are parts of a family, their educational choices and decisions are autonomous. These assumptions of autonomous decision-making seem to be based on the understanding that, as students transition from school to higher education, they are simultaneously transitioning from minors to becoming autonomous adults. It does not recognise the significance of how parents and other family members might influence the educational choices and priorities of their children. Especially in instances where parents are funding the higher education of more than one child, they are more likely to advise or orient different children towards particular disciplines or professional courses.

Bathmaker et al. (2016) included participants who are from south-Asian, African and mixed ethnic heritage. The narratives of their student-participants reveal that, as students aspiring to higher education in UK, they were being supported by their families; however, this support was not similar to the support experienced by their white middle class peers. One participant who is from a Muslim family of Indian origin is of particular interest here. She reports that her desire and outlook towards student culture, societies and activities were quite different. She has to negotiate with the religious and cultural values and beliefs of her parents. While parents were greatly supportive in terms of working towards a career and upward social mobility, the student felt that this often had produced an uncomfortable relationship with their social and cultural expectations. Young people making autonomous educational decisions are certainly not congruent to social and institutional cultures observed in India, especially in Haryana (see chapter 4).

The family as a site and its relationship with households is explored further in the
next chapter (see 3.1). Most empirical studies do not go beyond passing
references to family and households to explore mechanisms through which
families operate as students transition from school to higher education. It is also
interesting to note that the most prominent family members being identified in
these studies are parents, followed by siblings or members of the "familial
networks" (Archer and Hutchings 2000: 561). While the family itself remains
undefined, these studies recognize parent-child and sibling-to-sibling relationships
which are a prominent feature of families. This literature does not define family
and references to parents and siblings are often vague. Most discourses across the
world on widening participation and affirmative action in education visualise a
nuclear family headed by two heterosexual cis-gendered parents with children
(David 1993).

In India, there is a rising concern for new entrants or first-generation students into
higher education (Wadhwa 2018). In most cases, the family is placed as an
undefined factor which is used to understand social class and community
background. There needs to be a greater understanding of how gender and other
allied intersectional inequalities influence educational choices within different
kinds of families. This will be explored in the next chapter. The following section
further explores how studies in India which recognise the pivotal role played by
families have understood intersectional factors influencing dynamics, decisions
and choices within the family.

2.4 Family and gendered access to higher education in India

As mentioned earlier, maintenance of a middle or upper-middle class social
identity and upward class mobility seem to be the primary objective in parental
discourses concerning education. Within families, mothers have an intimate and
gendered role to play in the cultivation and maintenance of middle-class habitus
(Reay 1998 and 2000, Donner 2006, Cooper 2017). This thrust for social mobility
cannot be uncoupled from gendered arrangements of family priorities, parental
decision making and educational aspirations and choices for girls and boys
(Marks and McLanahan 1993, Davis and Pearce 2007). One study found that the

higher education decisions of working-class girls perceived access to higher
education as an investment for the benefit of their present families; additionally,
"expectations of motherhood in ways that can limit the accrual of particular forms
of cultural capital" are also considered (Evans 2009: 352).

Not only are families actively involved in maintaining social and cultural capital,
families are also pursuing education with the consideration of how their daughters
will in future become mothers performing this important role of maintaining
social and cultural capital. Similar patterns can be drawn for young men within
this gendered regime operating in the family, wherein young men (especially in
Indian families) are steered towards disciplines and careers which lead towards
employment (Sudarshan 2018). Thus, educational decisions are both the cause
and effect of social reproduction within the family.

There are a few studies in India which examine how families influence gendered
education trajectories in India. The first part of this section will explore studies
from India which have identified ways in which families influence educational
choices of children. This will be followed by a second part which argues that the
history of formal education in India during the colonial period in India continues
to inform gendered social practices, perceptions and behaviours, especially with
regard to education.

2.4.1 Gendered educational choices within families

Family involvement, educational choices and trajectories in schools and colleges
are gendered. Significant feminist studies in India are critical of the unequal
representation of women in STEM disciplines (Chanana 2000, 2007). A deeper
inspection finds that science is the de jure choice for male offspring in accordance
with the family's perception of the son's gendered capabilities and ability to do
hard work (Gautam 2015). Verma (2014) reports that choices including medium
of instruction, discipline and institutions by female students and their families
along with their aspirations demonstrate a social reproduction of middle-class and
patriarchal values where young women's choices are made in view of how they
will be compatible within hetero-normative families after they are married. These

trends are linked to aspirations of upward social mobility, across lines of class and caste. Caste and class intersect with gendering forces when it comes to representation of women in STEM fields within universities and at workplaces. National reports (AISHE 2017-18) indicate that while women are under-represented in STEM disciplines and most professional courses (except nursing), this gap is wider when it comes to women from Dalit communities. As mentioned earlier, disciplinary choices for young men and women in India are greatly shaped by parental perception of the academic capability of their sons and daughters and their gendered career aspirations (Gautam 2015).

Studies on female undergraduate and post-graduate students report concerns over safety and reputation of girls in an institution, distance from residence, along with hostel facilities as factors influencing decisions regarding enrolment of girls in higher education (Sudarshan 2018, Sahu et al. 2017, Gautam 2015, Verma 2014). These studies also indicate that families are significantly influenced by social concerns such as safety and honour embodied in the body of women in the family. For instance one of these studies reports,

> In light of women's compromised security in public space, parents often impose gender-biased restrictions on their daughters rather than restrict their sons. In part, this is because parents prioritise the education of sons who are expected to ensure parental old-age security. Investing in girls' education is often regarded as an expensive liability that does not contribute to their parents' long-term well-being: for daughters, marriage is their final goal, they leave their natal homes on marriage and need to be provided with a dowry, and there is no point in delaying their marriages beyond the age of 20 or so. (Sahu et al. 2017: 185)

This study also reported that family members were persuaded by neighbours and relatives to limit the mobility of young college-going women in the family (ibid.). This kind of emphasis on intense familial monitoring and concerns such as safety are culturally specific to India. They find affinity with international research

studies which observe gendered and ethnic self-selection (see 2.2.1) away from more prestigious higher education institutions and courses. However, most research into access to higher education in India identifies families largely in terms of parents and siblings and does not explore how the family is a group of individuals related to each other in complex, intense, emotional and gendered relationships over time and space.

2.4.2 Persistent burdens of post-colonial marriage and honour in India

This section demonstrates that an understanding and examination of gender and education in India cannot be separated from colonial and post-colonial discourses. In the case of education, gender is deeply entrenched within the discourse of nationalism and national development (Chakravarti 2012, Chanana 1988 and 1990). The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) observed several participants identifying goals such as a national development as a motivation to enrol in higher education and to explain their career aspirations. Nationalism and development discourses are essentially hetero-normative, middle-class and Suvarna caste (non-subaltern) discourses. For instance, Chakravarti (2012) observes,

> women were to be educated to be fit partners for a new generation of men, as companionate wives of a new class in the making. They were carefully 'schooled' for their new roles as class socialisers, raising a new generation of men who were to become leading figures in the movement to forge a nation. This has remained the dominant model for women's education, as motherhood and the need to reproduce family, caste and class were the central basis of the new education. In a sense, this rationale of why women need to be educated has continued into post-independent India. (2012: 225)

An exploration of studies on gender and access to higher education finds that entry into higher education is a great leap for the family and community and is often associated with fears of female transgression and greater scrutiny of the girl's movements outside the home (Chatterjee 1989, Sahu et al. 2017). In

comparison to higher education, school education is socially considered more disciplined and safer, since the students' movement and activities are closely monitored within the school. Higher education, on the other hand, is a riskier enterprise as it involves students commuting for longer distances, often on public transport and having greater opportunity to interact with other individuals and students who are from different genders, social class, caste and religious backgrounds. These hetero-normative and patriarchal pressures are rooted in the post-colonial and nationalist history and discourses around education of women and a restricted vision of men and women in the grand project of nation-building and development (Chanana 1988 and 1990). This is deeply ensconced within hetero-normative companionate marriage and household dynamics (Chakravarti 2012, Donner 2011).

The history of education of girls in India (Naik and Narullah 2000) and their origins in Zenana (enclosed away from male presence) education made available to women within elite households suggest a negotiation by the colonised with dominant norms of 'respectability' and honour embodied in the body of the woman. Chatterjee (1989) suggests that the nationalist thrust for education in the mother-tongue, especially for the Suvarna caste women imply that access to English education for women was considered more radical to the elite middle class than education in regional languages. He argues that education with English as the primary medium of instruction, continues to be associated with opening of national and international avenues of educational and employment opportunities; in the case of women better marriage prospects were a significant motivator. Verma (2014) reflects that the cultural capital of families continues to play a significant role in how families encourage girls to pursue education in a particular medium of instruction, in single-sex institutions (historically rooted in colonial Zenana education for girls) and more feminine disciplinary choices.

Chanana (1990) and Chakravarti (2012) assert that the nationalist position on the education of women has not evolved beyond the ideas of companionate marriage and motherhood. Kumar and Gupta (2008) point out that educational aspirations

of parents are gendered and continue to revolve around popular discourses on marriage and honour. This persistent pattern can be seen in a recent study on female undergraduate students from Dalit and Muslim backgrounds in southern India which finds,

> Parents are the ultimate authority in deciding a young woman's future trajectory: either education or marriage. Young women whose parents do not support their education face huge (and possibly insuperable) hurdles in pursuing higher education. The participants in this study, however, have all been able to continue their education only due to their fathers' (and sometimes mothers') support, at times in the face of the opposition of relatives, neighbours and the larger community. (Sahu et al. 2017: 188).

This excerpt reiterates that parents in India have a tremendous amount of control over the gendered educational choices and mobilities of young people and that this is simultaneously a barrier and source of support.

2.5 Conclusion

The existing body of empirical work does not address adequately the way in which differently constituted families are involved in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students. There is some literature on families and gendered schooling choices, but similar depth of research cannot be observed in terms of families and gendered access to higher education. Existing empirical work does not adequately define family or explore how gender and other intersectional factors operate within the family as students transition from school to higher education.

This chapter has established that motivations for accessing higher education and educational choices are inherently gendered in India. Family members, especially parents play a pivotal role in the educational choices and decisions made by students accessing higher education. It is also evident that educational choices and decisions made within families are not only gendered but they are also influenced

by intersectional and post-colonial factors such as social class, caste and social
perceptions of safety and honour.

While the larger body of literature on access to higher education (often located in
or conducted from the Global North) treats the student as an individual with
individualised choices and aspirations, the literature examined in the chapter and
the preliminary findings of the FCF Phase 1 project (Henderson et al. 2021)
indicate that students are deeply embedded in a family. Family and community
are both a source of support and a barrier. However, the ways in which they
manifest as sources of support and barriers are complex. Gendered considerations
and intersectional forces such as social class and community can both enhance
and inhibit educational mobility and choices available to young people across
genders. In order to harness the potential of family as a source of support it is
important to understand discourses and dynamics within different kinds of
families within their specific contexts. The fourth chapter explores the social
economic and historical context of Haryana and how it influences the gender and
educational access to higher education in the state.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical framework: family - a gendered site mediating access to HE

The preceding chapter explored how access to higher education, educational choices and trajectories are intrinsically gendered. This is based on the observation that there is a persistent inequality in terms of how individuals with different gendered identities and social and economic backgrounds are accessing higher education. The literature also indicates that factors such as the family and community are sites where students face barriers and support to access higher education (such as Gautam 2015, Alvarez 2015 and Brooks 2003). The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) confirms that families are significantly involved in how students access higher education in Haryana. However, there is insufficient literature which explores *who* in the family is involved and *how* they are involved as families make educational decisions to access higher education. This chapter theoretically explores conceptualisations of (1) family in the Indian context, (2) gender regimes, (3) social reproduction, (4) agency and (5) intersectionality, and argues that a combination of these concepts are suitable theoretical tools through which the role of families in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students can be explored and analysed.

3.1 Family in the Indian context
Family is a key concept for this thesis. Mukhopadhyay (2019) says,

> Family really matters in understanding Indian educational decisions and outcomes, including historical gender disparities at all levels of the educational system (2019: 57).

Although there are different kinds of families across the world, cohabitation and relationship are the prominent pillars used to define family. The UN Women's 2019 report on women and families says,

> The world over, families are a fundamental unit of society, one with
> enormous significance for individuals and also for economies. It is often
> through family relations that people share resources such as housing and
> income, look after those who are sick and frail, and reproduce, nurture and
> care for the next generation. Equally importantly, though less tangibly,
> family life is a common site of love and affection and is pivotal for
> women's and men's sense of identity, belonging and purpose. This is not
> to say that families are automatically benign or egalitarian. Nor are they
> isolated entities, able to sustain their members without supportive
> communities, markets and states. (UN Women 2019: 22)

Families are often understood to be a basic unit of social organization and are
presumed to be formed through bonds which are based on kinship of different
kinds. The most enduring images of the family in literature on access to higher
education explored in the previous chapter are that of the nuclear family with a
heterogenous patriarchal parent pair with children; and that of the larger joint
patriarchal and patrilocal family including grandparents, grandchildren, uncles,
aunts and cousins. However, these seemingly enduring structures have evolved
over the years. This has been greatly influenced by industrialization and the
growth of feminist and queer movements across the world, especially within the
global north (Stacey 1987, Weston 1991).

Definitions of families often coalesce with technical definitions such as the
household. The United Nations Statistics Division defines the household as a
single person or a group of people making "provision for food or other essentials
for living" in a "housing unit", whereas a family "is defined as those members of
the household who are related, to a specified degree, through blood, adoption or
marriage" (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/sconcerns/family/#docs
n.d. n.p.). The relationship between a family and a household is tenuous. A
household might not include a family or include several families whereas
emerging forms of families need not be limited within the physical confines of a

household. Since households are easier to comprehend, most large-scale surveys
equate the household to the family (McCarthy and Edwards 2011).

However, the idea of family is itself very turbulent and transcendental at the same
time. It can transcend boundaries of households and physical distances and even
traditional limitations such as relationships forged through blood, marriage and
adoption. Connell describes the family as

> a scene of multi-layered relationships folded over on each other like
> geological strata. In no other institution are relationships so extended in
> time, so intensive in contact, so dense in their interweaving of economics,
> emotion, power and resistance (Connell 1991: 202).

Being multi-layered across time and space makes the family a significant site
where gendered division of labour (Engels 1884), values and regimes are
operational. It is the primary site where individuals develop and are trained or
socialised to perform their gendered identities such as daughter, son, husband,
wife, father and mother (Dube 1988).

India is a very diverse country with a multitude of cultural and linguistic practices
which shape different family structures across the country. The formation of
families are deeply infused with Brahmanical practices of caste and gotra
exogamy and endogamy[4] (Karve 1953, Dumont 1966, Dube 1988, Chakravarti
2012). Indian families are diverse in terms of practices of patrilineal (where
lineage is traced through male family members), matrilineal (where lineage is
traced through female family members), patrilocal (where children and spouses

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[4] Gotra are sub-groups within castes which are similar to clan systems (Karve 1953). In terms of
marriage, caste determines the suitability of two individuals. To maintain caste hierarchy, marriage
practices follow a combination of caste endogamy and gotra exogamy wherein individuals can
marry others within the same caste and cannot marry others from the same gotra as their parents
and grandparents. Marrying an individual within a prohibited set of gotras is considered
incestuous.

reside at the male spouse's natal residence), matrilocal (where children and spouse reside at the female spouse's natal residence), monogamous (only one partner) and polygamous (multiple partners) relationships. However, the focus of my thesis is Haryana, located in the northern part of India, where the predominant social organisations of families are patriarchal (characterised by masculine superiority and authority; see 3.2), patrilocal and patrilineal, wherein families trace lineage through male members of the family and that residence is largely at the home of the husband or the father of the husband (Karve 1953, Dube 1988, Agrawal 2013). The family and network of extended families and kinship are significant social capital which are often influential in the educational perceptions, pursuits and decisions in the family. In the context of Haryana, the patrilineal and patriarchal arrangements within the family are explored in the next chapter (see 4.3) in terms of ownership of land and inheritance practices, preference for sons, violence against women, matrimonial practices and gendered access to education.

While working on child-rearing and education behaviours among Indian families, Mukhopadhyay and Seymour (1994) observed that families followed a pattern or ideology which prioritised the needs and wishes of male family members over female family members. They called this the patrifocal family structure, wherein patrilocal families place the male family members such as fathers in law, husbands, brothers and sons at the centre, and female members such as mothers, wives, sisters and daughters at the periphery. The patrifocal family structure allocates gendered roles, responsibilities and obligations in the private sphere of the household and the outside public world with a focus on embodied honour and chastity of daughters, sisters and wives. Here the term patrifocal refers to a patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal regime, which creates a gendered regime within families, which in turn influences how educational choices are articulated and decisions are made.

This gendered patrifocal social model dictates that educational decisions are made by the family, that decisions often prioritise sons over daughters, that educational expectations and goals are gendered, and that educational decisions for daughters

are deeply influenced by the family's patriarchal and patrilocal priorities. Post schooling decisions are made within the family and not by the student as an independent individual. Mukhopadhyay (2019) posits that the patrifocal family structure and ideology subsume individual goals within family goals. The patrifocal model is characterised by,

> the expression of individual goals within a broader collective set of family goals centered on family welfare; structural features (patrilineality, patrilocal residence) which reinforce the centrality of sons and the peripheral status of daughters; gender-differentiated family responsibilities and activities; regulation of female sexuality (to maintain the purity of the patriline) through arranged marriages and restricted male-female interactions; and female standards of behaviour which emphasize "homely" traits such as obedience, self-sacrifice, adaptability, nurturance, restraint, and other behaviours considered conducive to family harmony. (Mukhopadhyay 2019: 63)

This means that educational decisions within the family are guided by collective family concerns and goals. The educational expectations and obligations within the family for sons and daughters are gendered and decisions made for daughters, girls or young women are concerned with female chastity, marriageability and family honour. The operation of this gendered regime is visible in how young women and men in India are accessing higher education (such as Sudarshan 2018, Wadhwa 2018, Sahu et al. 2017, Gautam 2015, Verma 2014).

Within this patrifocal model, chastity and marriage of daughters are of primary concern and obligation for families (Mukhpadhyay and Seymour 1994, Dube 1988). This is accompanied by gendered roles and tasks within the family and household but also a differential investment in education and career development of young people in the family (Dube 1988, Agrawal 2013). The sons are expected to provide care in the natal family through future engagement in economically productive or bread-winning activities whereas the daughters are married and

"leave" (Mukhopadhyay 2019: 63) the natal families and acquire obligations of care and responsibility in their future husband's families (Karve 1953, Dube 1988, Sahu et al. 2017).

Within this model, investment in the daughter's education does not profit the natal family or parents. It primarily benefits the daughter's marital family. The increasing presence of women in higher education institutions in India questions this argument, but Mukhopadhyay (2019) makes a refined argument that although there has been a general improvement in terms of investment in higher education of women, this investment is gendered in terms of the money and effort and choice of discipline made available to sons and daughters. In conclusion, a contextual understanding of the patrifocal family is needed to understand how families in India, and in Haryana in particular, are involved in the educational trajectories of young people.

3.2 Gender regimes

Gender is a difficult concept to define with precision since it is culturally specific and deeply coloured by its immediate context. The concept is slippery as it operates within "one-to-one relationships between people or on the society as a whole" (Connell 1991: 199). This definition indicates that gender is a social phenomenon which permeates micro or individual relationships, within and across institutions and across international borders. While gender is embedded in its immediate context, it is simultaneously global. This is further complicated by the fact that the development of gender as a contested concept is embedded in the development of feminist academia and movements across the world and in India (Aneja 2019).

Gender is a form of social inequality. The conceptualisation of gender differentiates gender from sex where gender is defined as a social construct which is often based on scientifically determined biological sex (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004, Dillabough 2006). Gender features socially constructed binaries or rigid categorisation of individuals into a hierarchy of social status, value and role such as masculine-feminine, son-daughter, husband-wife, mother-father. These

hierarchies are culturally specific. These are intertwined with expectations.
Individuals identified as a particular gender are expected to behave in certain
culturally specific and prescribed ways; this also influences their key life
decisions on education, careers, conditions of employment and marriage. In the
previous section, Mukhopadhyay's (2019) definition of the patrifocal gender
pattern in India highlighted how within families, educational decisions and goals
are enmeshed with gendered roles, expectations and behaviours for sons and
daughters.

Gender is also created and is recreated by individuals in their everyday lived lives
and experiences (Bradley 2007, Connell and Pearse 2013). In other words, actions
or performances of individuals are created by culturally specific patterns of
gender relations or arrangements. At the same time, individuals, who are
embedded in a specific cultural and material context, re-create or improvise the
very gendered space in which they find themselves, thereby gradually changing
the arrangement. Connell and Pearse (2013) call these culturally specific
arrangements gender regimes. The key element to understanding or identifying a
gender regime in a society involves recognizing patterns of behaviour and
experiences which are socially different for individuals identified as members of
different gendered identities such as men and women. This also involves an
examination of how different individuals are expected to behave in different ways
due to their gender identity in society, and how their gender identity influences
the socially approved choices and freedoms available to them in terms of every-
day and key life decisions such as education, marriage and employment.

Gender regimes within families are culturally and socially specific. Within
families, the consistent pattern is patriarchal where young people are often
subordinated to the old and women to men. This pattern complements ideologies
of masculine superiority and authority (Connell 1991). The socio-cultural and
historical context of Haryana presents a patriarchal gender regime which has been
historically post-colonial, feudal, agricultural and sexist. This will be explored
further in the next chapter which focusses on Haryana.

The literature on gender dynamics operating in Haryana indicate that gendered concerns within the state are primarily based on a binary man-woman gender divide. In order to understand and analyse how access to higher education and the involvement of families are gendered in Haryana, my theorisation and analysis will utilise a complementary patrifocal and heteronormative[5] conceptualisation of gender, family and educational practices observed in India (Mukhopadhyay 2019, Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994, Chanana 2000 and 2007, Chakravarti 2012). This complementary conceptualisation will examine differences between women and men and how the narratives of the participants and their experiences conform or contradict this socially constructed binary divide in the state.

3.3 Forms of capital and social reproduction

The conceptualisation of social and cultural capital proposed by Bourdieu has inspired a significant amount of work on access to education and the recognition of the role played by family (Cooper 2017, O'Shea 2015, Noble and Davies 2009, Reay David and Ball 2005, Brooks 2003). Bourdieu conceptualised different forms of capitals within a framework of social reproduction. This framework has significant roots in Marxist theorisation of capital which envisions dominant and powerful classes which are pitted against the exploited and marginalised classes (Fowler 2011). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) proposed that individuals' social position and family background provide them with social and cultural resources which need to be actively invested to yield social gains (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) based this argument on an empirical examination of how students from different social class backgrounds in French universities were reproducing social and cultural capital as they accessed education.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) explain that practices entrenched in education, and within educational institutions are ingrained with symbolic violence or disciplinary practices. Symbolic violence within an educational context involves

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[5] Where heterosexuality and heterosexual arrangements and behaviours are the norm.

pedagogic action (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) through which dominant culture and structures of inequality are reproduced. Through symbolic violence, value and merit are given and reaffirmed in arbitrary practices or artefacts (such as aesthetic tastes and behavioural norms). These practices or artefacts are beneficial to, and are usually owned by the dominant class in the given society. This argument is based on the understanding that capital is a form of resource (which has multiple forms) which individual and groups can own, accumulate and invest or mobilise towards achieving their interests. Those individuals with greater access or ownership of capital are able to invest more and yield more.

Literature on access to and experiences of higher education in the global north and in India demonstrate that ethnically marginalised and Dalit students experience great hardship as they try to cultivate their own capital through investment in education (Majumdar and Mooij 2012, Singh 2013, Sukumar 2008, Sonalkar 2018, Wadhwa 2018). While individuals are potentially able to cultivate or yield upward social class mobility, the larger unequal and arbitrary dominant structure is reproduced. Harker (1982) suggests that for successful social mobility, appropriate cultural capital has to be acquired, with inevitable consequences in terms of social class, and assimilation when referring to cultural or ethnic groups. The processes facilitating social mobility simultaneously perpetuate an arbitrary dominant system.

Bourdieu (1986) has proposed that there are three fundamental forms of capital – economic, cultural and social. He says,

> Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as *economic capital,* which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of educational qualifications; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ("connections") which is

convertible, in certain conditions into economic capital and may be institutionalised in the form of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu 1986: 243)

He has based these concepts within a framework in which the family and educational practices within society produce and reproduce inequalities such as class and gender. The economic form of capital is directly related to money and is institutionalised in the form of property rights (Bourdieu 1986). On the other hand, cultural capital is intangible and in certain conditions can be converted into economic capital. Bourdieu (1986) explains that this was a concept which presented itself to him when he tried to explain unequal scholastic achievements of students from different social classes.

Bourdieu has expanded cultural capital into three sub-types. The embodied state of cultural capital involves long-lasting disposition[6] of the mind and body. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) introduced this as habitus, which they defined as embodied 'dispositions' and taste, which generates practice on continuous and improvised encounters with the 'social field'. It is an individualised reflection of the person's cultural capital. The objectified state involves ownership or access to cultural goods such as "pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines" (Bourdieu 1986: 243). The institutionalised state of cultural capital is observed in the tangible forms of accreditation or educational qualifications.

The third form of capital conceptualised by Bourdieu is social capital, which is defined as

the aggregate of actual and potential resources which are linked to the possessions of a durable network of more or less institutionalised

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[6] This is a term used to imply patterns of thinking. Bourdieu has used this to describe habitus. Bourdieu argues that individual perceptions and ways of thinking or logic are rooted in social class identity.

relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu 1986:
248).

Within literature on democracy, citizenship and civic engagement, social capital
has been defined as, "social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust
that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 2000).
Both definitions refer to social relationships which are mutually beneficial to all
persons involved and the network or relationships which connect the individuals.

Within this framework of capitals, Bourdieu also notes,

> The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends
> on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and
> on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in
> his own right by each of those to whom he is connected (Bourdieu 1986:
> 249)

These different forms of capitals and relationships of mutual benefit operate
within the family. The following section explores how families access, own and
invest different kinds of capitals.

3.3.1 Capitals operating within the family

The framework of social reproduction is located within the family. Skeggs
observes that Bourdieu offers "explanatory power" (2004: 21) since his work is
able to link objective structures with subjective experiences, explain values and
mobility among humans and his methodological insight regarding reflexivity
explains knowledge and positions in terms of gender and feminism (Skeggs
2004). Educational practices within families and societies produce and reproduce
inequalities such as class and gender. The focus on the social and the cultural
recognises the significance of the cultural capital which families transmit and
inherit through domestic practices (Bourdieu 1986, Skeggs 2004, Reay 2004).

A significant feature of Bourdieu's framework is that each of these three distinct types of capitals are convertible to each other. This multidirectional ability to transform into another form of capital, however, is not uniform across the three capitals. According to Bourdieu. (1986), economic capital can be easily converted to cultural and social capital; however, the reverse is not similarly easy, and the process is not straightforward. The way in which different types of capital can be used or invested influences decisions regarding education within families.

The triad of capitals within this framework is a key concept for this thesis. It helps identify the social class location of the family and the ways in which families reproduce social, economic and cultural capitals; by mobilising different kinds of capitals when students pursue higher education. The literature on access to higher education, both globally (such as Mullen 2009, Noble and Davies 2009, Reay David and Ball 2005, Engberg and Wolniak 2010, Bathmaker et al. 2016) and in India (such as Malish and Ilvarasan 2016, Velaskar 3005 and 2018, Verma 2014), indicates that cultural and social capitals are significant aspects within the family which shape the educational trajectories of students. As discussed in the previous chapter, Indian educational practices and motivations reveal a family-centred decision to create, maintain and re-affirm social status of the family by accumulating social and cultural capital gained in educational institutions.

Within families, economic capital can be measured in terms of financial wealth and property. Economic capital is not only able to finance the access to higher education, it can also be converted into cultural and social capitals in order to aid the process by which students can access higher education. For instance, families can invest their economic capital to provide additional coaching and tutoring to children which enhances their ability to access higher education. Majumdar and Mooij (2012) observe that wealthier families are able to invest in tutoring and coaching services to help their children survive the dominant educational regime which places great merit on academic performance during schooling.

Cultural capital in the family has been measured by different educational researchers (such as Noble and Davies 2009 and Mikus et al. 2020) through indicators such as ownership and access to different cultural goods, practices within the family such as reading and aesthetic appreciations and educational qualifications of the family members. Lamont and Lareau (1988) note that the understanding of cultural capital is surrounded with confusion as it has over time gained multiple meanings which are often contradictory to each other. In terms of cultural capital within the family, my thesis considers the institutionalised state of cultural capital indicated though educational qualifications of the family members such as grandparents, parents, siblings and significant members of the extended family such as cousins, aunts and uncles. These family members might reside within the same household, be residing in the same neighbourhoods or in different villages.

As mentioned in the section on families in India, maternal uncles and the mother's natal family in North India play an important role in the education and marriage of young women (Karve 1953, Dube 1988). Within such social practices, the capitals available and embedded in the extended family in India is a considerable asset as students access higher education. This is supported by Häuberer and Brändle's (2018) finding that students who are in families "embedded" with experiences and knowledge of higher education have easier access to experiences of higher education. "Un-embedded" or first-generation students are likely to face a greater volume and variety of barriers to higher education.

The social capital of a family can be identified by mapping the size and quality of their social networks and connections and the volume of capital (economic, cultural and symbolic) that can be potentially mobilised (Bourdieu 1986) through these networks. In terms of access to education by the family, this involves the potential of social networks and relationships such as extended family members, kinship and clan memberships, neighbours and friends to mobilise different kinds of information and advice regarding access to higher education (Ball and Vincent 1998, Brooks 2003, Reay at al. 20015, Slack et al. 2014). In terms of this thesis,

social networks and relationships with persons who have been recognised by participants or family members as significant sources of inspiration and information are of particular interest. This is motivated by the assumption that these persons have influenced the educational choices made by the family in terms of discipline and institution.

Brooks (2003) extended the impact of social capital on educational choices by examining the workplace contexts of parents. In terms of this thesis, an analysis of social capital being mobilised by participants requires an examination of social networks of family members, and the ways in which these social networks might aid the student's access to higher education. Family members and their social networks are significant sources of "hot" knowledge (Slack et al. 2014). Social capital can enable access to information about application and enrolment processes and provide advice and recommendations for different courses and institutions.

The specific gender regime and social class position influence ownership, accessibility and utilisation of different kinds of capitals within the family and community. The next section will explore agency as a feminist concept which has the potential to unsettle the deterministic manner in which structural and material factors such as social class and gender regimes shape habitus and social reproduction.

3.4 Agency
Agency is a concept which helps subvert the determinism of structural and intersecting factors (Ahearn 2001, McNay 2004). McNay observes, "agency is a key mediating category through which the inter-connections between cultural and economic forces, identity formations and social structures can be examined*"* (McNay 2004: 177). Agency is a significant concept for this thesis as its utilization will help unveil how behaviour and educational choices within families influence educational trajectories. The next chapter on the social context of Haryana will demonstrate that the state has a rapidly developing economy accompanied by regressive social norms and practices. The previous chapter

revealed that individual educational trajectories are significantly determined by intersectional (Crenshaw 1989) factors such as gender, caste and social class. This leads to an understanding that overcoming these barriers is a gargantuan challenge for young people, especially young women. Reports indicate that there is a significant increase in access to higher education institutions across genders, caste and social class (AISHE 2017-18). This increase is bound to have generated significant changes in how individuals are able to think and act within families and communities. An account of agency within families has the potential to explain how families influence individual educational trajectories.

This thesis understands agency as an individual or group's ability to reflect, act and bring into effect an outcome of their preference, especially when facing opposition. This is time sensitive and based on individual experiences and how individuals rationalise and narrate their experiences and decisions. McNay (2004) articulates that agency refers to a person's ability for self-reflection, self-evaluation and can be traced though actions and experiences. Similarly, Klugman et al. (2014) describe agency as the ability to make decisions about one's own life and act on them to achieve a desired outcome wherein one is free from experiences of violence, retribution and fear. These conceptualisations of agency, although individualised, are cognizant of the structural constraints and contexts which influence it.

Experiences and reflections on structural constraints accompany action in the conceptualization of agency. However, exercise of agency is not a simple process. It requires,

> charting varying degrees of manoeuvrability, inventiveness, and reflective choice shown by social actors in relation to the constraining and enabling contexts of action. (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 964).

This indicates a certain degree of active and creative thinking on the part of the actors as they exercise their agency. The need to be creative and "manoeuvre"

towards a particular choice is particularly required within families with limited
access to different kinds of capitals. Families were discussed in the first section as
gendered spaces which involve multi-layered relationships which are extended
over time and involve intensive contact.

This understanding of the complexity which shapes families requires a
conceptualisation of agency as

> a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the
> past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a
> capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a
> capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the
> contingencies of the moment (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 963).

The key factor is that reflections and actions by actors are time-bound or
temporal. Apart from material and cultural factors, agency is also significantly
embedded within specific historical contexts (McNay 2004). This consideration is
significant regarding how individuals and families make critical life decisions. In
terms of access to higher education, several points in time can be identified as
critical nodal points where educational trajectories are shaped. In terms of
reflection Emirbayer and Mische (1998) broadly recommend an analysis of
reflections of the past and ongoing experiences as well as imaginations of futures.

Additionally, the process in which individuals are reflecting and acting involves a
"process of forward-looking reflection wherein meanings are remade or
reinforced, that agency takes on its reproductive or, alternatively, transformative
capacity" (Leach 2005). Reflection or reflexive thinking which is intrinsic to the
version of agency being conceptualised here, involves a process where meanings
or values are remade or reinforced over time and space and are linked with time-
sensitive and strategic action. In the present context, this involves students and
families perceiving, recreating and changing the accessibility, value and meaning

of different institutions and educational courses as they seek to access higher
education.

3.4.1 Gendered agency

As discussed in the second section (see 3.2), gender regimes shape the ability of
individuals to access and utilise capitals in the family and community. Gender
regimes give voice to some individuals and silence others. Masculine and
feminine roles are often selectively imbued with assertiveness and passivity. A
feminist conceptualisation of agency examines women's ability to "formulate
choices" (Hirschmann 1998: 361) and not simply to make choices that they are
disciplined to perceive and accept. To exercise agency an individual "requires the
ability to have meaningful power in the construction of contexts" (Hirschmann
1998: 361). Therefore, as individuals are *making* choices, they are deciding to
select one of two or more socially acceptable options available to them, whereas
formulating choices involves a deeper contemplation of possible options and
possibly even the creation of a new hitherto un-thought of option or choice.
Within this theorisation of agency,

> Choices are understood as more akin to "forced choices", since the
> subject's positioning within particular discourses makes the "chosen" line
> of action the only possible action, not because there are no other lines of
> action but because one has been subjectively constituted through one's
> placement within that discourse to want that line of action (Davies 1991:
> 46)

The key difference between a *forced* and a *formulated* choice is the exercise of
reflexive action or agency.

Development theorists working on gender often conceptualised agency as a means
to empower women to make strategic life choices (Kabeer 2001). The key word to
be noted here is that choices are *strategic*. Strategic choices allude to an individual
self-reflecting and self-evaluating their experiences and particular social context.

Additionally, agency within this development discourse is understood as "the heart of the process where choices are made" (Mishra and Tripathi 2011: 59).

In terms of agency, patriarchal and heteronormative gender regimes are globally reflected in inequality in the access and participation of women in higher education, especially in STEM disciplines. On the other hand, this gender discourse is also influencing how some young men exhibit preference for certain disciplines and courses (such as Mullen 2014, Gautam 2015). Gender regimes influence perceptions and rationalisations of educational choices. For instance, in India, gendered regimes operating within families and educational institutions influence the kinds of technical, professional and liberal higher education accessed by young women and men and the imagined ideal future employment which drive the access to higher education (Sudarshan 2018). A greater number of young women than men are enrolled in open educational institutions or in part-time courses while they await socially appropriate marriage proposals (ibid.). These gender regimes also shape how young men and their families imagine their future educational choices and career.

For instance, in UK, culturally different performances of masculinities seem to lead to under-performance and self-selection out of universities and courses. Burke's (2007, 2011) exploration of experiences of a variety of male students who are trying to access higher education illuminates how heteronormative masculine pressures impact the educational trajectories and negotiations. These narratives give evidence of gendered behaviour and self-selection by men from migrant and ethnic minority groups while planning their educational and career trajectories. The voices of these male participants present a complex negotiation between heteronormative masculinity, identity of male students with neo-liberal and Southern contestations of terms like talent and capabilities (Burke 2011).

Similar patterns could be predicted in India. Gautam (2015) has explored how discourses within families have directed the subject choices for women. She has focused on how women were denied the opportunity to pursue more expensive or

prestigious disciplines. This reflects a patrifocal engagement with women's education within families. It is inevitable that a patrifocal focus on male family members also direct young men towards educational choices and trajectories which are perceived to have better employability possibilities. Agency comprising of reflections and manoeuvring activities by young women and men are likely to recreate and resist these gendered obligations.

3.5 Intersectionality
The previous sections on the different kinds of capital and agency revolve around the need to address multiple and often simultaneously active forces or forms of inequalities. Inequalities manifest themselves in the everyday experiences of individuals. Intersectionality is a theoretical and methodological framework which is able to address these experiences of inequalities. Intersectionality's origins have been popularly credited to both Black feminism and the work of Crenshaw (1989) in USA to explain the lived realities of African American women in terms of gender, race and class (Cho et al. 2013, Nash 2016). Intersectionality is a prominent feminist framework used to unmask multiple forms of inequality which operate on individuals and are intimately linked with everyday experiences. It is used as a means to dismantle mainstream universalising discourses which are predominantly hetero-normative, white and middle class and usually originate in the Global North (Collins and Bilge 2016).

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework which attempts to address experiences of inequalities. Collins and Bilge (2016) have theorised that intersectionality as a framework features six core themes – different forms of social inequality (such as gender, social class and race), relationality (interconnections, mutual connections and relationships), power (systems of power co-producing each other), social context (particular or specific social and historical backgrounds), complexity (different factors such as gender, race and social class are intertwined and sometimes inseparable from each other) and social justice (to address intersectional inequalities). Intersectionality theorised in this manner acknowledges that intersecting forces are coincidental to such a degree that they are often inseparable. Historically, intersectionality has evolved to address the

inadequacy of focussing on only one social constraint or force of inequality. It
demands that multiple forces of inequality and the interaction and intermingling
of multiple forces of inequality are addressed simultaneously (Cho et al. 2013).

This framework demands that we look at each structural force both separately and
simultaneously (Cuádraz and Uttal 1999, Cho et al. 2013, Carastathis 2016).
Intersectionality can examine how cultural identities and material structures
intersect. Intersectionality can restore complexity to identity politics by insisting
on recognition of erstwhile segregated categories such as race and gender in an
anti-essentialist manner.

3.5.1 Intersectionality in the Indian context

Equating Black feminism in the Global North with Dalit feminism in India would
be simplistic. Since intersectionality has been largely developed in the US within
the context of Black feminism, Fernandes (2015) is cautious about how
intersectionality is imported and adopted in local and national contexts outside
USA. In India there are debates about the adaptability of intersectionality. For
instance, intersectionality is understood by Fernandes as

> an epistemological and ontological project that coexists with, interacts
> with, and builds on a much wider range of scholarly debates including (but
> not limited to) difference, race, postcoloniality, and multiculturalism.
> (Fernandes 2015: 646).

Frankenberg and Mani's (1993) exploration of postcoloniality uses tropes similar
to those found in theorisations of intersectionality. They argue that the recognition
of the post-colonial location involves an effort,

> to describe moments, social formations, subject positions and practices
> which arise out of an unfolding axis of colonization/decolonization,
> interwoven with the unfolding of other axes, in uneven, unequal relations
> with one another (Frankenberg and Mani 1993: 307).

While Frankenberg and Mani (1993) are talking about post-coloniality, they are also acknowledging the presence of multiple axes which are entangled with each other.

Intersectionality as a concept finds traction within Dalit feminism in India (John 2015). Pandey identifies the basis of the similarities and differences between caste in India and race in USA by categorising "vernacular" and "universal" prejudices (Pandey 2013: 2). Vernacular prejudices are localised, often visible, or sometimes acknowledged such as prejudices against people of colour, untouchables, gays, muslims and women. He associates this with often condemned behaviour like racism, casteism or patriarchy.

Menon has argued that "intersectionality framework freezes notions of pre-existing individual, woman and other identities" *(*2015: 44). I would argue that this is an argument made within a theoretical examination of feminist movements in India and engagement with law. Menon critically recognises the dominant pattern wherein knowledge and theory are imposed from the Global North onto the Global South. However, equating Black feminist theorisation with global northern theorisation undervalues the historical and political efforts which have developed Black feminist thought and theories. John (2015) and Menon (2015) both eventually agree that social identities or categories such as gender, caste, class and religion are porous in India. They are intertwined and inseparable. For instance, Ghosh (2005) argues that caste-based discrimination and inequalities have combined and coagulated with economic inequalities. These inequalities cannot be understood and addressed in isolation. An intersectional lens examining gender, social class and caste simultaneously is better equipped to address these inequalities.

The key argument of an intersectional framework is that social injustice is not a simple multiplicity or multiple burdens of different axes of inequalities. Intersectionality is simultaneous and the total is more than the sum of the parts

(John 2015). An intersectional analysis of experiences of inequalities reveals that instances of discrimination or domination are simultaneous and are more than just a cumulative injustice. An intersectional exploration can reveal a more complex manifestation of power and inequality. It provides an opportunity "to study how various oppressions work together to produce something unique and distinct from any one form of discrimination standing alone" (Dhamoon 2011: 231).

Haryana presents a unique combination of accelerated economic and industrial development and increasing participation in higher education (especially young women) accompanied with persistent gender and caste-based discrimination and violence. An examination of Haryana reveals that the parts, such as economic development and increasing access to higher education do not correspond to Haryana's persistent social inequalities and prejudices. An intersectional framework is able potentially to provide some explanations to this paradoxical state in northern India.

3.6 Family as a gendered site: A feminist framework
These discussions of family, gender regime, capitals, agency and intersectionality have led me towards the theoretical framework outlined in this section.

Inequality is a form of injustice where one individual or group has less access or ownership of a resource or a group of resources in comparison to other individuals or groups. Social class, race, ethnicity and caste are some of the most common and intersecting structures underpinning inequalities. These inequalities categorise families into hierarchies such as wealthy and poor, privileged and marginalised. Social norms and practices within the families' respective social contexts are imbued with gender inequalities and gendered division of labour, obligations and access to different forms of capitals. Gender is a fundamental form of inequality which permeates individual relationships, experiences and perceptions. At the same time, gender is a form of inequality which is global, and is present across social classes, race, communities, groups and families.

The family is a social site and institution which is often understood as a
fundamental unit of society. This is a site where individuals experience and
perform intense gendered relationships which are complex, multi-layered and
extended over time and space. Contextual gender regimes shape the multi-layered
relationships and divisions of labour and capitals within the family. The social and
historical contexts include multiple forms of structural inequalities such as social
class and caste which simultaneously shape gender regimes. The location of
individuals and families in particular social class and caste groups influences
access to different forms of capitals and the embodiment of different kinds of
gendered and class-based habitus. This also significantly influences social
perceptions of different higher education choices among students and family
members. This leads towards a significantly deterministic understanding where
social structures and individual or family locations within these structures
determine their perceptions, abilities to act reflectively and imagined future
selves. Here, gender regimes as a theoretical tool will help identify how individual
family members and students are grappling with their gendered identities and the
roles, responsibilities and expectations associated with their gendered identities
within their particular context and families – and how educational choices are
influenced by these gendered identities and processes. The following chapter
details the particular social context and the gendered regimes which operate
within families in Haryana (see 4.3.4).

However, as more students access higher education, they are changing the ways in
which families are perceiving and talking about higher education. In effect, larger
structural changes are creating small changes in discourses being used within the
family. Structural barriers continue to be significant factors impeding access to
higher education; however, changes in discourses and perceptions within the
community and the family make it easier for students to garner support and
information to access higher education.

Theoretically, different forms of capital are accessible to different gendered
family members and are mobilised and generated in different ways by different

gendered family members. Within this thesis, a conceptualisation of different forms of capitals has led towards identifying the significance of educational backgrounds of family members as the key cultural capital, and the different social networks mobilised by the families as the key social capital being utilised by families as members access higher education.

Conceptualisation of different kinds of capital by Bourdieu seem deterministic wherein symbolic violence and habitus are often determining educational perceptions and participation. However, my theoretical synthesis, developed in this chapter, also finds resonance with the arguments made by Reay (1998) and McNay (2004) that within this understanding of forms of capitals, the concept of habitus also has the potential to bring about social change and transformation. Habitus is a culturally embodied taste which is constantly replicating and changing over time and space. This pattern and possibility for change are mirrored in how Davies (1991) and Hirschmann (1998) identify the significance of *formulating* choices over simply making choices. Similar potential for change can be observed in how Leach (2005) and Emirbayer and Mische (1998) have conceptualised agency as time-sensitive reflexive actions. My analysis will examine how students and family members make educational decisions, how they rationalise their educational preferences and decisions, and how these choices were formulated.

Students and family members have individual and often contradictory perceptions in their immediate social contexts and social norms. Each individual perception takes into account the roles and obligations that social and gender regimes have prescribed for them. My conceptualisation of agency examines how individuals and family members, within their respective gendered regime, are engaging in *reflexive thinking* (about past, present and future educational decisions) and *reflexive actions* as they manoeuvre within their families to mobilise different forms of capitals to access higher education. Conceptualising agency with reflexive thinking and action as tools means that it is possible to gauge how agency is being exercised within families as students access higher education.

Each person individually perceives and rationalises their past experiences and educational choices, which have placed them in their present context in a particular educational institution and course. These perceptions and rationalisations involve individual comprehensions of immediate contexts and family dynamics, perceptions of barriers and higher education choices which are accompanied by strategic actions. The way in which gendered family members reflectively perceive and act to mobilise different kinds of capitals in order to access higher education is simultaneously influenced by and influences intersectional factors such as social class and caste in India.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored concepts such as the family in India, gendered regimes, forms of capitals, agency and intersectionality; and then synthesised them into a theoretical framework to examine gendered inequalities and involvement of families in educational trajectories of young people. Gendered manifestation of systematic and symbolic forms of discrimination and injustice intensively shapes individual and everyday lived experiences. The family is a significant site where the gendered regime of inequality is experienced, performed, recreated and resisted. Gender regimes regulate access to different forms of capitals to the family and to different gendered members of the family.

Family members engage in reflective and strategizing activities to mobilise different forms of capitals, as they strive to access higher education. This process of exercising gendered agency through reflective thinking and strategic manoeuvres to achieve educational goals is additionally influenced by intersectional forces such as social class and caste. This theoretical synthesis understands that agency and intersectionality are revealed through perceptions and experiences, especially everyday lived experiences.

Chapter 4 – Haryana

4.1 Introduction

Figure 4.1 Political Map of India

Haryana is a northern state of India (see figure 4.1), created from Punjab in 1966 through the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966 (Chowdhry 2011). Since the reorganisation of Punjab, Chandigarh is the state capital for both Punjab and Haryana. Apart from Chandigarh, the Panchkula district in Haryana also houses several Haryana state agencies covering revenue, health, education, women and child development, higher education and technical education. This administrative change was greatly influenced by the demands for separation by the Punjabi speaking Sikh community in current Punjab and largely Hindi speaking community in current Haryana. This also carried undercurrents of tension between the Sikh and Hindu communities. According to the most recent decadal national census in 2011, Haryana has a largely Hindu population (87.46%) with a small but significant population of Muslims (7.03%) and Sikhs (4.91%).

The 2011 Census records a population of 25,351,462 in Haryana. The overall density of this population is 573 persons per square kilometre (Indian average is 382) and 34.88 percent of this population resides in urban areas. The adjoining political map (see figure 4.1) of India illustrates the location and relative size of Haryana within India.

Haryana follows closely in the footsteps of Punjab in terms of exponential development in agriculture and agricultural industry. However, in the last couple of decades, urbanization is a significant growing phenomenon in the state. The Haryana state development report[7] (Planning Commission 2009) indicates that Haryana's index of industrial production is far above the all-India average. Haryana shares three borders with New Delhi (see figure 4.2) and has several districts which fall within the National Capital Region (NCR) and therefore it receives additional support for development of infrastructure and industrial growth (see 4.2). Nearly 40% of NCR is in Haryana. These demographic facts influence the educational and social development experienced in the state, especially in terms of gender and caste (see 4.4).

Haryana is one of the states in India which has reaped significant benefits from the green (agricultural) revolution in India, which has escalated the social attachment to land (explained in 4.3.1). The green revolution has increased the role of land as a source of income as well as social status. Apart from an economic boost from the green revolution, Haryana is also a state known for high presence in the military and sports, especially in sports such as *kabaddi*, boxing and wrestling (Chowdhry 2011a, Yadav 2010). Engagement with sports has a complex relationship with the gradual decline of profitability of agriculture and popular conceptualisation of masculinity, especially among the dominant land-owning caste groups in the state (Yadav 2010). The gendered historical and social context of land-ownership and employment in the state is further explored in the section on social context.

Haryana is also a state which is recognised for low female sex-ratio, and high incidence of female infanticide, rape, violence against women, honour killings

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[7] State development reports were prepared by the Central Government's Planning Commission, (replaced by NITI Aayog in 2015). The Planning Commission's 2009 report on Haryana is the last such report .

and *khap panchayats*[8] who scrutinise the movements of young people especially women, and sometimes organize boycotts and violence against those suspected of inter-caste and intra-gotra relationships (Chowdhry2010, 2012, Ahlawat 2012, Kumar 2012). This will be explored in greater depth in the section on gendered social concerns in Haryana. These factors are likely to influence the choices and experiences of young people pursuing higher education in the state are explored in greater depth in the section on gendered social concerns (see 4.3.4). The following sections will focus on the economic and social context of Haryana with primary focus on gender along with caste as an intersectional factor. This will be then used in the last section to study the very limited literature and empirical data on higher education in Haryana.

Figure 4.2 Political Map of Haryana

4.2 Economic and geographic background of the state

Haryana has 22 districts 14 of which are part of the National Capital Region (NCR) These 14 districts have relatively convenient access to infrastructural resources and have experienced a mushrooming of industries (Apex Cluster Development Services 2015). Many of the Haryana districts are located on the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), which covers about sixty percent of the area of the state. DMIC is a part of the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme which is an

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[8] These are local caste-based groups which claim to be protectors of culture and morality. They often react violently to transgressions made by youth, especially sexual relations and marriages within the same gotra or across lines of caste.

infrastructure programme aiming to develop "Smart Cities"
(http://www.dmicdc.com/about-DMICDC_n.d.).

Apart from its access to additional resources and infrastructure because of its
geographical location, Haryana has benefited from the State Government's policy
thrust towards industrialization and urbanization. The Central Government's
Planning Commission report on Haryana states,

> Haryana's index of industrial production is far above the all-India average
> . . . The progress of industry in the recent decade saw some new
> milestones emerging with the remarkable performance by industrial units
> engaged in the production of motorcycles, scooters, mopeds, cars, etc."
> (Planning Commission 2009: 24).

As noted above, Haryana is a state which was part of Punjab up to 1966.
Participation in the armed forces, landownership and animal husbandry were
encouraged by the colonial rulers (Chowdhry 2011a). Since independence, the
aforementioned green revolution from the late sixties utilised its history of
landownership to develop an agricultural economy which also significantly
influenced the society and politics of the state. A majority of the elected political
leadership in Haryana are from dominant-caste, agricultural land-owning families
and cater to rural landed interests (Bhalla 1995). A political discourse which is
dominated by rural landed interests does have significant influence on the social
and cultural practices in the state (see 4.3.1).

4.2.1 Local self-governance or Panchayati Raj Institutions
The local village panchayats and the khap panchayats have a significant influence
on the gender and caste dynamics and deeply colour everyday life in Haryana.
The dominant political discourse within the state is rural and geared towards an
agricultural economy (Ahlawat 2012, Yadav 2001). Village self-governance
through the Panchayats plays an important role in the rural community. These
Panchayats (different from the caste-based khap panchayats) have been

recognised by the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India in 1992 and they
operate at the local level in the villages and they are responsible for local
administration of public services such as drinking water, primary education,
primary health care and different social schemes (Sadanandan 2017). They are
also required to be democratic in terms of participation and one third of its
members are required to be from marginalised caste groups.

Village panchayats are quite different from the infamous *Khap Panchayats* of
Haryana which are exclusive caste-based local leadership groups who operate
across the state to promote the interests of particular dominant castes. They have
been actively engaged in monitoring inter-caste relations, especially between
young people and condone social exclusion and honour killing of those who
transgress caste norms (Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression
2015 and 2014, Chowdhry 2010, Kumar 2012).

Social discourses regarding participation of women in the domestic and social
spheres are contradictory. State policies focusing on gender empowerment of
women have tried to encourage participation of women in social spheres in
different ways such as reservation for women in the local village panchayat
(which was traditionally exclusively male and only had members from the
dominant caste families in the village). In contrast to the official village
panchayats which are democratic in terms of having members from different caste
communities and women, the Khap Panchayats represent dominant caste interests
and have been known to lobby to decrease the minimum age of marriage for
young men and women and to lobby against the inheritance laws which grant
women the right to inherit land from parents (Ahlawat 2012, Yadav 2001). They
also often perform the role of informal local judiciary whereby they settle local
disputes and conflicts. These institutions influence caste and gender-based
practices and concerns in the state as discussed in the following section.

4.3 Social context

This section will explore the social context of Haryana and its influence on
families, communities and gendered social practices in the state. The following

sections will explore how agrarian economy, caste, class and gendered practices
have an intersectional influence on families and educational practices in the state.

4.3.1 Impact of land ownership and agriculture

The colonial government repeatedly deferred investing in irrigation facilities in
the region in order to encourage animal husbandry. The aim was to allow animal
husbandry to become the dominant sector of the local economy, thus ensuring the
supply of draught cattle to the surrounding region (Chowdhry 2011a). At the same
time, to maintain colonial political control over the north-western province, the
colonial government encouraged recruitment of individuals in the Punjab and
Haryana regions into the armed forces (ibid.). As mentioned earlier, Haryana is
one of the leading states in terms of agricultural productivity. This, according to
Prem Chowdhry (2011c), has greatly influenced gendered social practices such as
marriage and remarriage of widows to younger brothers of their late husband.
Such practices help families avoid eventual break-up of the family-owned land
and property. Such practices continue to be followed by families where widows
are remarried in the state.

Feminist researchers have been interested in agricultural labour performed by
women especially by rural women in India. Thakur, Varma and Goldey (2001)
found that women in rural Haryana were spending more time than men on tasks
which are part of agriculture and animal husbandry. Although men were assigned
tasks which are considered to demand greater physical strength and skill, women
were given more monotonous and apparently less demanding tasks which are
underpaid and unacknowledged at times. Thakur et al. (2001) also highlight the
fact that, apart from spending more hours being involved in animal husbandry and
agriculture in the farms, women were also the primary and often only people
responsible for tasks within the households. Even though men are assigned more
skilled and physically demanding tasks, Thakur, Varma and Goldey (2001) argue
that household chores and their contributions in agriculture and animal husbandry,
in a gendered manner, make life for women filled with more drudgery (physical
strain and hardship) than men. Their study observed that there was higher labour

contribution in terms number of hours of work by women than men in cultivation of crops such as wheat and paddy, and in animal husbandry operations such as feeding and washing the cattle, preparing cow dung cakes for fuel, milking and preparing dairy products. Chowdhry (2011a) has argued that the green revolution (agriculture) and the White Revolution (animal husbandry focused on producing milk and milk-products) has inadvertently marginalised and increased the demand for unrecognised women's labour.

It is also important to note that this gendered division of labour would influence the scope and social perceptions around need for education of young women in Haryana. The study by Thakur et al. (2001) observed adult (and usually married) women, but my previous experience of being a researcher working with families in rural Haryana (during 2012-13) tells me that young unmarried women and teenage girls also contribute greatly to agriculture and animal husbandry within the household. This affects the time and resources that young women can dedicate towards their school and higher education. The division of labour within homes, require women to be engaged in several home-making activities and domestic labour. Young women are actively engaged in these activities, especially young brides in the family. Haryana has a very low sex ratio. This would correlate with fewer female individuals in families. Often brides are sought to contribute to the domestic and gendered labour within the household. Thus, the gendered division of labour within the household and within agriculture and animal husbandry affects the "marriage market" for young men and women in the state. This gendered regime also influences the educational trajectories and priorities within families for their children.

Additionally, the attachment to land has inspired several failed attempts by different political parties, khaps (caste panchayats) and lobbies in the state to revoke the inheritance laws in the country which gave women equal rights to inherit parental property (Ahlawat 2012, Yadav 2001). Ahlawat (2012) and Chowdhry (2010, 2012) both link this to practices of female foeticide, skewed sex

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ratios, shortage of brides, and rising incidence of violence against women and girls.

4.3.2 Class dynamics

Jodhka (2012) argues that over the last two decades the demography of the agrarian workforce in Haryana has changed. The erstwhile local agricultural labourers significantly populated by Dalit communities have been replaced by migrant labour from poorer states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. He argues that the affirmative action policies in education and employment, gradual mechanisation of agriculture over the years and fragmentation of land have changed the nature of agrarian relations within the state. He also argues that over the last two decades there has been a general disenchantment with agriculture, which is not however accompanied with a decline in attachment to land. Attachment to land is a persistent social phenomenon in the state. Those who had jobs outside their village preferred to stay in the village (Jodhka 2012). The gradual dissolution of traditional labour attachments within the agrarian economy in Haryana has had significant influence on the caste and class-based dynamics in the largely rural communities of Haryana (ibid.). This influences the division of labour within homes and how different family members are obliged to contribute to the family.

It has to be noted that the industrialisation and urbanisation thrust in Haryana has increased the migration of men from rural Haryana to industrial hubs in urban centres in search for employment and immigration of labour from neighbouring states. The women and other family members of workers often remain in their rural households and this has not eased the workload of the women in the family within their households. Indeed, this adds to the drudgery experienced by women in rural Haryana. Research on agriculture and industrial development in Haryana has rarely mentioned how this gendered division of labour has affected the quality of life of families and women in Haryana. Prem Chowdhry (2011a) has pointed out that a higher-class position does not often reduce the degree of drudgery

experiences by women. In fact, it often only increases the workload and
household responsibilities assigned to women, especially younger women.

4.3.3 Caste dynamics

Haryana does not exhibit the form of caste-based social hierarchy that classically
recognises and places the Brahmin or the priestly caste above the warrior and
trading caste communities (Dumont 1969, Srinivas 1962). Haryana exhibits a
more dynamic caste hierarchy based on local power dynamics similar to the
concept of the dominant caste (Srinivas 1969), where land-owning agricultural
caste groups, especially the Jaats, Gujjars and Yadavs hold sway over local
societies in the state (Chowdhry 2011b). The Jaats, Gujjars and the Yadavs are
primarily involved in agriculture, animal husbandry, law enforcement and in the
armed forces. These caste groups along with the warrior Rajput caste group
constitute the dominant caste groups in the state.

Inter-caste dynamics in Haryana are fraught with conflict and tensions. In the last
three decades there have been several incidences of violence against Dalit or
Scheduled Caste communities in different parts of Haryana (Chowdhry 2010,
Yadav 2011 and 2009). Most of these have been instigated within the context of
relatively small conflicts between Dalit and dominant caste individuals. Small
conflicts are often perceived by dominant caste communities as social insults or
an act of defiance by the lower caste communities (Women against Sexual
Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014, Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2011 and
2009). Incidences of violence range from physical altercations to burning houses
and entire Dalit neighbourhoods in the village (Yadav 2016). At the same time, in
2013 and in 2016 there was a state-wide agitation by members of the dominant
Jaat community seeking to be recognised as an OBC (Other Backward Class)
category community so that they could avail more educational and employment
opportunities through the national affirmative action policy. The agitation turned
violent in several locations across the state.

It is a matter of concern that acts of violence against Dalit communities received social sanction from dominant caste Khap Panchayats (Chowdhry 2010). These situations tend to become even more turbulent when there are suspicions or knowledge of inter-caste relationships between young men and women from dominant and Dalit communities. (Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2009). Additionally, as the reports by Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression (2015 and 2014) show, increasing violence against Dalit girls and women is motivated by dominant caste undercurrents of resentment and hostility. It has been argued that this violence and resentment against Dalit youth, especially girls, is triggered by visible improvement in their living condition bolstered through several government schemes targeting Scheduled Caste communities, and the Positive Discrimination policies in terms of higher education and employment (Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014). This adversely affects the social security and the gender and caste dynamics which determine the unequal accessibility of schools and higher education institutions for Dalit youth in Haryana.

4.3.4 Gendered social concerns

One of the most alarming effects of a low sex ratio is a shortage of brides and increasing numbers of 'involuntary' male bachelors in the state (Chowdhry 2005). According to Census 2011, among the 29 states of India, Haryana has the lowest overall sex-ratio and the lowest juvenile sex ratio. This is alarming as it demonstrates that Haryana continues to be a leading practitioner of female infanticide, pre-natal sex-determination and female foeticide.

The disproportionately large number of unmarried men in the state in comparison to women in Haryana (see Table 4.1) has created a market for brides involving middlemen (or *dalals*) and trafficking of brides across state lines (Kukreja and Kumar 2013, Mishra 2013, Larsen and Kaur 2013). This has repercussions on the mobility, social acceptance of bride and offspring, and vulnerability to domestic violence, abuse and trafficking. Although the low overall sex ratio and child sex ratio in Haryana has improved marginally, it still remains one of the lowest in the

country. The social implications of a low sex ratio intersect with factors such as caste, patriarchy and poverty. Kukreja and Kumar (2013) illustrate through cases how these rather tenuous marriages are brokered by middlemen and extended family members and motivated by labour, economic and social acceptance needs of the groom's family.

Table 4.1 Marital status of people of marriageable age in Haryana

Marital Status	Percentage of total male population	Percentage of total female population	Percentage of total overall population
Never married	51.69	40.95	46.67
Married	46.07	52.32	48.99
Widowed	2.04	6.52	4.13
Separated	0.11	0.13	0.12
Divorced	0.07	0.06	0.06
Total	100	100	100
Source: Census 2011			

While the *Khap panchayats* denounce inter-caste alliances, they are remarkably silent in cases where brides have been sourced through middle men. However, the subtle effects of social disapproval are experienced by the brides and their offspring. These alliances often do not enjoy social sanction and the caste and lineage of the brides and offspring are perceived with scepticism and hostility (Kukreja and Kumar 2013). A shortage of local brides, especially those who satisfy the demands of caste endogamy, leads to an increase in the social pressures and scrutiny over local girls and young women (Larsen and Kaur 2013, Kukreja and Kumar 2013).

Additionally, as mentioned above, the *Khap panchayats* have been campaigning to reduce the minimum age of marriage for girls and boys. At present, the Indian law states that young women cannot marry before the age of 18 and young men cannot marry before the age of 21 years. These lobbies want both young men and women to have the same minimum age requirements to be able to marry and they

also want to reduce it to 16 years of age for both young women and men. A khap
leader is reported to say,

> Boys and girls should be married by the time they turn 16, so that they do
> not stray... This will decrease the incidents of rape (Anon 2012: Paragraph
> 7)

Another news article reports,

> Khap panchayats, or the all-male caste councils that act like kangaroo
> courts and enforce extralegal norms on Jat villagers under them, have
> touched a national raw nerve by proposing a medieval solution: Young
> men and women should get married very young so that their 'sexual
> desires find safe outlets'. (Datta 2012: paragraph 3)

Additionally, inheritance by daughters is a very sensitive issue in the state.
Ahlawat (2012) and Chowdhry (2011d) have demonstrated how the powerful
khap panchayats and the political leaders in the state have tried different strategies
to counter the inheritance laws of the country which grant women the right to
inherit land and property. This dominant sanction against inheritance is deeply
intertwined with the practice of dowry. This has often been credited by social
discourses as a contributor to the practice of female infanticide. Prem Chowdhry
(2011 and 2011c) has argued that, although an increasing number of young
women are aware of their rights, they are coerced into signing away their claims
to paternal property to their male siblings. This is often used by some women to
maintain social security at natal homes and to bargain for greater support from
fathers and brothers in their marital homes after they get married.

Almost two decades ago, Bhupendra Yadav (2001) had elaborated how the
development in terms of economics and agriculture has not made any
corresponding improvement in the status of women in Haryana. He critically
examined the participation and enrolment of women in higher education

institutions in Haryana and how these have not effected any corresponding
improvement in women's employment after higher education. This is persistent
and visible in the perplexing combination of above average enrolment and
increasing levels of social insecurity and violence against women. For example,
Ahlawat (2012) uses data from different government surveys on family health
(NFHS) and crime (NCRB) in India to illustrate an increasing number of incidents
of rape and violence against women.

Prem Chowdhry (2005) has examined how increasing unemployment, ageing and
bachelordom have implications on the perceptions and practices associated with
masculinity in Haryana. She refers to factors such as low sex ratio and increasing
unemployment among male youth and how these have made them less desirable
grooms. In an effort to re-affirm their masculinity and social status, these
marginalised men align themselves with popular sentiment and opinion.
Chowdhry (2005) found that they are often more anxious and belligerent about
social transgressions, especially those by women. Due to the changing agricultural
and economic practices and context of Haryana, the elderly men and women are
facing the consequences of depletion of social role and devaluation of their
traditional experience and know-how. They subscribe to patriarchy and
masculinity to reassert their authority. Chowdhry (2005) observed very complex
'bonding of the marginalised' (unemployed youth and the elderly) men. This
results in increased scrutiny of youth, especially women, and strict imposition of
social sanctions and punishments on the transgressors.

A key sociological study by Agrawal et al. (2013) explores the childhood
experiences of women in rural Haryana. This study demonstrates that a majority
of women experience neglect as children, especially in comparison to their
brothers. The study concludes,

> the childhood experience of women of rural Haryana was relatively worse
> because they had more or less restricted mobility and less freedom than
> their siblings or other members in the family. A significant proportion of

women had faced food discrimination during their childhood. Substantial
proportions of women were abused/cursed or were told bad words by the
family and the society because of their gender. Almost none of the women
were asked about their opinion before arranging their marriage and, in
most cases, women's natal family members considered their marriage a
burden. (Agrawal et al. 2013: 457)

This study further elaborated how families in India, and Haryana in particular
prefer sons over daughters. This is based on the social practice of patriliny, the
involvement of sons in the final religious rites of parents and the patriarchal
gender regime wherein sons support and provide for the family and parents
whereas daughters require to be married with appropriate dowries and become
part of another family, thereby cutting ties from their natal families. Daughters
within this regime are visualised as "other people's wealth (*parayadhan*)" (ibid.:
457). This popular phrase leads families to perceive investment in women's
education as a low-return enterprise. A more educated daughter within this regime
requires a more educated and better employed groom, for whom the family could
be expected to pay higher dowry. However, occasionally, education and
employment of young women can lower the demands for dowry made by the
groom's family.

Within this gender regime, it would be highly beneficial if more young men could
access higher education and obtain gainful employment. However, Haryana also
presents a conundrum explored in the following section (see 4.4.2) where young
women outnumber young men in terms of undergraduate enrolment. In
conclusion, this section demonstrates that the social and historical context of the
state has produced a particular gendered regime in Haryana which operates within
communities and families. Families and communities closely monitor the
movements of young people, especially young women and their interactions and
relationships outside the home. This is associated with perceptions of safety and
honour of the family and community. This influences how students and families
enrol in schooling, higher education and other forms of education.

4.4 Education in Haryana

This section will briefly explore the educational situation in Haryana within the gendered context of the region. The first part examines education in Haryana in terms of schooling since schooling is a pre-requisite to access higher education and it affects the higher education opportunities and choices which are available to the student. This is followed by the second part which explores higher education in the state.

4.4.1 School education

In spite of the aforementioned awareness of insecurity experienced by girls and women in Haryana, different state and national surveys report increasing female enrolment and participation in both schools and higher education institutions. While the Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) 2016-17 report demonstrates that, although there are more boys (339,955) than girls (267,847) in class 12 (the graduating school level), more boys (3,497) than girls (1,474) have to repeat before they successfully graduate from school. On the other hand, the 2017 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) on Sonipat district in Haryana shows that there is a gendered gap between male and female students' general knowledge and their reading and arithmetic capabilities within schools. These numbers also indicate future gendered inequalities in terms of academic performance and achievements in class twelve public examinations. This is important as they are the sole measure of eligibility used by most higher education institutions in India.

The ASER report 2017 from Haryana reports that male students at all levels demonstrate considerably higher academic capabilities (across disciplines such as mathematics and reading) than female students. This report is alarming when we take into account the fact that girls are outnumbering boys in colleges. The gendered contradiction in academic performance and enrolment figures de-stabilises the veracity and reliability of enrolment numbers as an indicator of change in gender disparities in the state.

As mentioned in the second chapter, feminist academics around the world have
pointed out that a numeral account of male and female students does not
adequately address gendered inequalities (Davies and Guppy 1997, Bradley 2000,
Aikman and Unterhalter 2005, Leathwood and Read 2009, David 2015, Smith
2017). It is also important to note that the ASER data does not record differences
in capabilities between the Suvarna (General) and Dalit (OBC and SC) students.
This might have implications on the caste-based inequalities in Gross Enrolment
Ratio (GER) recorded by the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE).

Haryana's high female GER in schools and higher education institutions might be
explained by a low overall sex ratio and an even lower child sex ratio. Evidently
the youth sex ratio is much lower than the overall sex ratio (Census 2011 in Table
X). Since the overall population in numbers of females is lower, GER could be
proportionally higher. However, higher education enrolment rates for women are
higher in Haryana than for men. These numbers do not, however, explore gender
differentials across disciplines and in central universities and institutions of
national importance like the prestigious IITs (Indian Institutes of Technology).
Central Universities, IITs, and other prestigious institutions which prepare
students to be doctors and engineers are often identified as sites where sexism and
prejudice against women and Dalit students are prevalent (Sonalkar 2018,
Ovichegan 2014, Sukumar 2013). Students enrolled in these elite universities
often have migrated from different states and cities. This is not mapped when
gross enrolment ratios are calculated for a state. A lower number of male students
could also be explained by the patriarchal nature of land inheritance and
occupations in a largely agrarian state. This culture leads young men to enter the
workforce at a younger age rather than access higher education where future
gainful employment is not guaranteed. This pattern is mirrored in the growth of
aggressive masculine sports in the state (Yadav 2010).

4.4.2 Undergraduate higher education

The Haryana Government's department of higher education website
(https://www.highereduhry.com n.d.) in 2019 listed 29 universities in the state

including one central university, and other state and private universities, whereas the AISHE 2017-18 survey reports 40 universities including one central university, 2 institutes of national importance, 14 state public universities, 18 state private universities, 2 deemed government universities and 3 deemed private universities. Haryana is also one of the few states in India which has a Women's University. The reports shared by the Department of Higher Education, Haryana list 113 government colleges, whereas the 2017-18 AISHE report says that there are 193 government colleges in the state. The AISHE survey also reports 641 private un-aided colleges and 115 private aided colleges (a total of 756 private colleges) in Haryana. Most of these government, private-aided and private un-aided colleges are affiliated to different state universities. One of the possible reasons why these numbers do not match is that the Department of Higher Education, reallocates the regional affiliation of colleges to different state universities within Haryana; for instance, during one of the FCF project visits to a state-funded university, the administrative staff shared that a few new colleges, earlier affiliated to a different university in Haryana, have been added under their supervision and affiliation. Sometimes, the Department of Higher Education of Haryana also changes the nature of the college; for instance, the college which the project and my study have sampled in Sonipat (SDC) used to admit both young men and women. However, since 2017 it only enrols young women.

Private colleges outnumber government colleges in Haryana, the same AISHE survey reports that 354,869 (61.3 % of total students) students are enrolled in 756 private colleges in comparison to 224,755 (38.7 % of total students) students enrolled in 193 government colleges. The private colleges are more expensive options which are usually not affordable for students from marginalised and Dalit communities (Majumdar and Mooij 2012). The following table (4.2) further elaborates these inequalities across caste and gender in terms of Gross Enrolment ratios recorded in Haryana and India.

Table 4.2 GER for 18-23 age group

Country/ state	Overall GER	Overall male GER	Overall female GER	SC GER	SC male GER	SC female GER
India	25.8	26.3	25.4	21.8	22.2	21.4
Haryana	28.7	27	30.7	18.6	18	19.4
Source: AISHE 2017-18						

According to the AISHE 2017-18 report, while Haryana's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is higher than the national average, the state-wide GER for the SC population is lower than the national average. It seems that education within Haryana continues to be more accessible to the Suvarna Caste students than for the SC students. The possibility that Dalit students are being left out of this drive for higher education in Haryana is a cause for concern, not only in terms of caste but also in terms of gendered caste-based discrimination and inequalities. This is a concern not only in Haryana, but across the country.

The national survey also reports that, in Haryana, there is a greater out-turn (successful completion) among females (72,724) than males (44,293). The feminised pattern where the out-turn of undergraduate students is greater among female students at the undergraduate level is repeated at the (25,697 female and 13,576 male students who successfully completed)post-graduate[9], (269 female and 220 male students who successfully completed) M.Phil.[10] and (295 females and 283 males students who successfully completed) their doctoral education (AISHE 2017-18). This follows the trends regarding masculinity in Haryana where it has been argued that unemployed and unmarried men forge allegiance with patriarchy and caste to reassert masculinity. These men are likely to feel disenfranchised due to their unemployed and unmarried status in society, and potentially participate in regressive social practices and monitor other young

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[9] Masters Courses

[10] In India an M.Phil. is a distinct 2-year course which involves one year of course work and one year dedicated to a research dissertation. This is often followed by a separate 3-to-5-year PhD programme. Students having an M.Phil. degree are exempt from PhD coursework and can directly commence working on research for their thesis.

people, especially young women and Dalits, to rebuild their masculine status in society (Chowdhry 2005). This is a persistent pattern which can be observed in reports on violence against women and scrutiny of matrimonial choices across caste boundaries in the state (Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2009, Women against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014). This is definitely a cause for concern as caste and gender, along with class, can be counted as multiple barriers in an individual's educational trajectory. As more students, especially young women access higher education, they are simultaneously struggling and overcoming these intersectional barriers. The resurgence of regressive social practices and monitoring of young people's everyday actions adversely affect routes of access and participation in higher education.

Some of the gendered concerns and issues which families are likely to encounter while considering higher educational choices are spelled out in the narrative of one of Anoop Kumar Singh's (2013) participants from Haryana who shares,

> Despite having very encouraging parents, I had to handle lots of pressure. I had to constantly keep convincing my parents that I am not doing anything 'wrong' outside. This is an extra effort that many women in my situation have to make to keep parents' confidence in them. … I am also aware of my responsibilities as an elder sister and tried to set up an example for all my younger sisters. I knew that my life outside home will have a great impact on them and one wrong move on my part will hamper their studies and will create hindrances to their moving out for studies. (Singh 2013: 183)

Although Singh's focus is on the double (simultaneous) discrimination and burden experienced by Dalit female students in this excerpt, it is also interesting to note that the participant feels a need for the family's constant approval, and believes that family's evaluation of her performance outside the home will have a major impact on the opportunities the family will allow for other female children in the family.

Within literature on gendered access to higher education in India, explored in the second chapter, similar experiences of being monitored are not reported by young men. Male students do not seem to experience a need for approval of behaviour outside the home. Ideas and performances of community honour and masculinity have been linked to incidences of caste and gender-based violence in Haryana (Chowdhry 2005, 2010, 2012). These ideas of masculinity are highly compatible with careers that are popular in the state such as in the armed forces, law enforcement and sports. These careers do not always require higher education. Although women are also increasingly present in these careers, they are traditionally masculine professions. These careers often are associated with skills and abilities which are outside the confines of the traditional school classroom and college lecture rooms. The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) also observed that young men were significantly interested in the sports facilities available in colleges as they made educational choices. This interest was rarely observed among young women. In conclusion, although state surveys report higher participation and higher number of successful completion of higher education courses by young women, this is not an indicator of gender empowerment or equality. Choices to enrol in higher education in Haryana reflect the state's particular gendered context.

4.5 Conclusion
This chapter on Haryana has explored the economic and social context of the state, with gender and caste identified as significant intersectionalities which influence the educational practices of young people in the state. The apparent development of agriculture and industry experienced in Haryana, accompanied with a tremendous increase in the enrolment of girls in schools and higher education institutions (indicated by data from Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) and AISHE surveys), have not been associated with empowerment of women and a reduction in the incidence of crimes against women. Haryana demonstrates how economic development is not necessarily accompanied by gender development and gender equality (Madan and Gill 2011).

The fact that young women have higher GERs and that more young women are successfully graduating from schools and higher education institutions is far from a cause for celebration in terms of empowerment of women. This, I argue, reflects the manner in which measurable development has not translated into overall gender empowerment and equality. The decline in participation of young men in higher education is also a cause for concern as it reflects a gendered inequality in how families in Haryana are allowing freedom of choice and mobility to their sons and daughters.

The dominant caste communities in the state often propagate the discourse that incidences of sexual violence against women are caused by the fact that more young people are getting married later in life and that more young men are unmarried. This political discourse is also against women inheriting parental property, women's right to choose her spouse and seeks to lower the age of marriage. The movements of young women and members of marginalised communities are constantly monitored by families and communities to discourage relationships and romantic liaisons which subvert hierarchies of gender, caste and class.

Accessing higher education is not only linked to increasing opportunities for young men and women, it also increases possible exposure to ideas and experiences which might resist these popular social discourses. As already discussed, families are key sites influencing gendered access to higher education in Haryana. Within this context as more young people, especially young women are enrolling in higher education, it is likely to unsettle the gendered norms operating within families in Haryana. Therefore, it is important to understand what happens within the families as access to higher education is contemplated and planned for young family members.

Chapter 5 – Methodology

As argued in the third chapter, gendered regimes, agencies and intersectionalities
can be traced through experiences. This requires a feminist, exploratory and
qualitative methodology. This chapter will chart the development of this study
and how it was conducted. It describes how I entered the field in Haryana to
collect qualitative data, how I recruited my participants, the methods I used to
collect data from my participants, and how this data was collated and analysed.
While being qualitative and exploratory, this study is also aiming towards a
feminist ethics (Bloom and Sawin 2009) and agenda wherein

> The overarching goal is to create spaces and opportunities to reveal lived
> realities of power inequalities and difference, and provide evidence that
> can be deployed in working towards addressing these engrained
> inequalities. (Jenkins et al. 2019: 415)

This agenda has been identified by several feminist researchers whose research in
different discipline focus on "questioning and challenging of constructions of
gender and power imbalances in many forms" (Dankoski 2000: 7). The previous
chapters which have discussed my theoretical framework and the context of
Haryana and gendered access to higher education reflect a focus on gendered
inequalities, intersectionality and unveiling these everyday lived experiences in
order to address these inequalities. The different sections in this chapter are
reflecting feminist research and analysis practices.

The first section of this chapter discusses my personal position and previous
experiences in Haryana, familiarity with the field and the different personal
positions I performed while collecting my data in the field for this study. This is
followed by sections on how the colleges were sampled and how I entered the
field and recruited participants. The fourth section is an elucidation of the
methods and tools which facilitated data collection. This section discusses how
these methods and tools were piloted and refined. The fifth and sixth sections of

this chapter describes how the data was collated and analysed. The chapter
concludes with an examination of ethical considerations and practices.

5.1 Positionality, assumptions and realities of being a researcher in Haryana
This section represents a significant part of my feminist praxis, wherein I share
my reflections on my positionality or understanding of myself and how my life
and particular context has shaped how I see, understand and interact with the
world (Vanner 2015, Jenkins et al. 2019). There have been considerable debates
over validity and reliability in feminist and qualitative research (Acker et al. 1991,
Morse et al. 2002). Positionality is a significant practice in terms of building
validity within feminist research (Dillamore 2000), and as such I found my
principles of robust research within these feminist principles.

I was born a citizen of India, which is a global south country and a member of the
British Commonwealth. Most of the country experienced the violence and
injustice of colonial rule. Major aspects of formal education in India are
intertwined with this history. Thomas Babington Macaulay's minute on education
in 1835 continues to loom over contemporary educational policies and practices.
The minute famously advocated English education to cultivate a class of
interpreters who would be Indian in blood and colour but English in taste,
opinions, morals and intellect.[11] Multiple generations of my family have
benefitted from subsidized English language education in different elite schools
and higher education institutions in India. While this has put me in a relative
position of privilege and social capital within India, it has also disciplined me and
my ways of thinking.

Within India I occupy different positions of minority. I am a minority in terms of
my relatively privileged educational and social class background. I am also a
minority in terms of my religious, linguistic and ethnic background which is not
Hindu or Hindi-speaking. I have had to learn two languages in formal education

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[11] http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/victorian/topic_4/macaulay.htm

(Hindi and English) which are not my mother tongue (Malayalam). My preference
for English over Hindi often alienates me from many people, particularly in
Northern India, while it also makes me occupy a rather marginal affinity to the
English-speaking global north. My ethnic south Indian background and my
educational history do not place me within the Indian mainstream. Meanwhile, my
Indian social and educational background does not place me within the global
mainstream.

My education has been in elite Indian institutions in New Delhi and Mumbai.
These institutions are highly ranked and enjoy prestige within India, but are not
similarly recognized in the global north. My doctoral study in a global north
university changes the perceptions of the quality of my educational training and
research. While it adds to my formal educational merit in the global north, it also
de-stabilizes the knowledge that I produce. During my studies, I began to occupy
a constantly fluctuating insider and outsider (Kerstetter 2012, Razon and Ross
2012) status in both the north and the south. It rather places me at the fluid
margins between the global north and the global south. This has influenced my
interest in researching people who occupy margins in the world.

 In terms of my family, my greatest influences have been my parents, who are
politically affiliated to the leftist and feminist movements in India. My early
childhood belief in women being the better gender has over the years inspired me
to read and practice feminism. However, I do struggle to define the feminism I am
following, due to my liminal position in relation to the different mainstream and
marginalized settings discussed above. I believe in equality between all genders
and that gender has been a prominent root for inequality across the world. I
recognize that this is very close to a global north liberal feminist stance and that
this recognition is rooted in my own privilege.

As mentioned earlier, I have a minority background in India which is
simultaneously marginalized and privileged. My linguistic, ethnic and religious
background is very different from the communities in Haryana. Although I am

fluent in Hindi, I am not a native speaker and my educated accent in Hindi immediately marks me out as an outsider in Haryana. Although I can understand local dialects, I am not able to verbally reproduce the local dialect. My experiences of being a resident of one of the metropolitan centers in Haryana and working as a researcher in different districts of Haryana has helped me bridge this linguistic gap to some extent. However, the gap becomes very evident when I interact with parents and grandparents of undergraduate students who have had very little or no exposure to formal education.

Apart from language and culture, my social class background is very elite and easily marks me out in Haryana as an urban woman from a privileged family. I tried to undermine these embodied identities by wearing simple Indian attire which conformed to the local gender norms. This was often a troubling practice for me, where I had to negotiate practical and safety needs which contest my feminist beliefs. I am critical of social constructions which locate honour and women's virtues as embodied within their bodies (and therefore in need of protection). Yet I had to consider these constructions in making decisions about how I would move about and conduct myself in the fieldwork site. Similar concerns have rankled when I have found myself often passively accepting the regressive gendered narratives of participants and members of their families, through a wish to respect their accounts of the reality in which they live. These discrepancies in identification and access to opportunities and resources between myself and my participants were a source of constant consternation for me during the research process.

Prior to being enrolled in my doctoral programme, I had had experience of being a member of a team of young post-graduate researchers conducting qualitative research with young girls and their families in Haryana. This project was an impact evaluation of a conditional cash transfer programme in the state which aimed at improving how families and communities valued the girl child. I was part of a team of junior researchers who developed interview guidelines and conducted in-depth interviews with parents and daughters of beneficiary and non-

beneficiary families of the programme in Haryana. As a researcher in Haryana, the young women in my team of researchers usually interviewed girls, mothers and other older and younger women in the villages across Haryana. We were advised by the senior research staff in our organisation to build rapport gradually with the community members in the village to recruit families with young teenage girls.

We were advised to follow the social norms in rural Haryana in terms of wearing *Salwars with Kurtas* (loose pants and long tunics) and to cover our heads. Covering heads with scarves is a persistent practice in rural Haryana (Chowdhry 2011e). In spite of following these norms we were easily recognised as outsiders in the village and small details of our bearing such as the kinds of earrings the women in the team wore, that several of the women in my team wore spectacles, and the fact that on several days all the women were spotted wearing either black or very dark coloured[12] *salwars* piqued the interest of the women in the villages. We had to move within the village in a very subtle fashion and often perceived a lack of understanding among the villages of the qualitative methods being used. Some villagers expressed discomfort with methods such as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The people in the villages were more familiar and comfortable with quantitative surveys where the questions had easier and simpler answers. They occasionally expressed exasperation at being asked to explain a particular practice, behaviour or opinion. I also encountered many family members being very suspicious of our presence and our preference to talk with teenage daughters in private spaces. As researchers we often had to manage the presence of a mother, an aunt or a group of noisy younger siblings in the room when we interviewed young girls.

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[12] The roads in the village are often unpaved and dusty. My team and I preferred dark coloured salwars as they would not get dirty as quickly as other colours. One group of women told us that they had thought it was a uniform.

The research experiences in the villages of Haryana and the social persona that we were inhabiting in the field did affect my own sense of being. I found myself and my colleagues indulging in asserting our metropolitan urban identities in the small city markets and the hotels that we were residing in. We were actively engaged in activities such as being a group of young men and women who were friendly with each other in public and consuming non-vegetarian meals (in a predominantly vegetarian state) in public spaces such as restaurants. We tried to escape the rigid patriarchal norms which were being thrust upon us in the field. Most of the women and girls I encountered in Haryana were deeply engaged in domestic work, especially in the kitchen, whereas I and my colleagues have had relatively privileged lives where cooking is a leisure activity. I felt like I was living a dual reality. In the field, in the village and with the families that I met I tried to present a very deferring and polite personality who did not challenge or resist patriarchal norms and behaviours. This was very different from the assertive feminist person that I believe I am in the metropolitan spaces in India.

After about five years, I was expecting a similar experience on returning to the field for my doctoral research, especially in rural Haryana. I was also very apprehensive about the fact that this would be the first time I would be travelling solo in a state which according to popular media and narratives is not very safe for women (Chowdhry 2010, Yadav 2009, Women

Figure 5.1 Inside a state bus in Haryana

against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2015 and 2014). During my
previous experiences in the field in Haryana, my team members and I had
encountered several narratives of violence against women in the village and in
public spaces such as the local buses and streets. However, I also felt a little
reassured by the fact that, even if I wanted to, I cannot hide the fact that I am an
outsider in the village and small towns. My outsider status remains evident even
though I choose to wear culturally appropriate loose *Salwars* with *Kurtas* and
cover my head, especially when I visit families. I have felt that my own personal
privilege in terms of class, caste and elite education provide me with some degree
of protection in public spaces in Haryana. The narratives of violence against
women are often about women who occupy subaltern identities (Women against
Sexual violence and State Repression, 2014 and 2015).

To tackle my fear and apprehensions, I started my field work by taking small
steps such as going to the first sampled district by using state buses which are
severely overcrowded and are the cheapest form of travel in the district (see figure
5.1). This exercise gave me the confidence to continue using local private and
state buses and shared autorickshaws (tuk-tuks) during my field work in the three
sampled districts. These buses and shared autorickshaws were also the means of
transport used by most of my undergraduate participants and their family
members. This helped me to have a liminal experience of the everyday commute
to the college experienced by my participants. Some of my participants and other
students in the sampled college occasionally observed me using the same buses as
them, which I believe helped build rapport with them during the interviews. This
also helped partially bridge the socio-economic divide between my participants
and myself.

My experiences with families in Haryana in 2018-19 were very different from
those in 2012-13. Earlier, my route of entry and access to participants was through
the villagers and the parents of young women; this time, I primarily accessed and
recruited my participants through the colleges that were sampled in the first phase
of the FCF project. I followed up with undergraduate students from the sampled

colleges who volunteered to participate in my doctoral study. This meant that, when I visited the homes of the participants, it was easier to recruit family members to participate and receive informed voluntary consent. In several cases when the parents and grandparents in the family were illiterate or had only a brief exposure to primary education, the undergraduate participants helped translate my intentions and addressed their doubts and apprehensions. It was evident that the families valued their children's opinions and had a great degree and trust and respect for their opinion which they believe was developed as a result of their education. This often encouraged family members to participate in my study.

During the course of recruiting my undergraduate participants, I took great pains to build rapport and become familiar with their ways of talking and their concerns. I asked them about their daily lives and friendships within the college to make them comfortable with me. I engaged in small talk with their mothers and grandmothers about things such as clothes and fashion. Sometimes, the topic of such small talk naturally moved into a discussion of education. I had to re-tread and recollect their narratives during recorded interviews so that they were not lost from the transcripts.

While interacting with my participants and members of their family, I found that they were curious about my background, my ethnicity and my family. Several of the family members, especially the grandparents, were amused by the fact that I did not have a brother in my family, that I was unmarried at my age and that I was not scared about traveling across Haryana alone. Young women are likely to face difficult situations such as eve-teasing[13] and harassment in buses. This was observed among the narratives of students who participated in the FCF phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021). I knew that, even though I was using the same public amenities as my participants, my privileged background provided me with an extra layer of security and confidence that I could handle these difficult

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[13] Indian term for cat-calling, un-solicited propositioning and lewd comments

problems that my participants might face while occupying public spaces utilising public amenities.

During the course of my work in the field, all the members of faculty and staff in the college and my undergraduate participants repeatedly called me Ma'am. When one faculty member who is relatively senior also called me ma'am, he explained that it was a reflection of their culture and a way to avoid crossing certain social lines, especially with the opposite sex. He gave the analogy of greeting visitors with palms joined in a namaste rather than handshakes to explain this to me. I often wondered if my institutional access to my participants through the colleges, while giving me a certain degree of credibility and acceptability, simultaneously added to the distance between me and my participants. However, I found that different participants shared different degree of personal opinions and narratives, and that this was a reflection of their own diverse personalities and situations rather than the social inequalities and distances between me and my participants.

In fact, several of my participants, especially in Sirsa, felt like they had started a form of friendship with me. On reflection, these proclamations of friendship may have come from having rarely experienced occasions where they have shared intimate details of their educational lives. Many of my participants, especially girls, although they had a circle of other young women as friends, did not have many opportunities to spend time with each other outside the college campus. This is something similar to my experiences when researching my M.Phil. research with undergraduate students in New Delhi. During this research I had asked my participants about their higher education experiences and socialisation with peers. This often elucidated very private experiences and thoughts which might have not been shared with anyone else. I also recognise that the interviews, for my doctoral study, focus on very private rationalisations of educational choices and decisions which are often linked to financial capabilities and family dynamics, which my participants might be reticent to share with their friends and peers.

My interaction with the members of my participants' households required me to perform multiple identities (Lavis 2010). This performance was required to build rapport and to locate a comfortable space in the house where interviews could be conducted with a certain degree of privacy. I was much older than my undergraduate participants and much younger than most of the members of the families I encountered in the field. I had to simultaneously perform different identities. With the undergraduate participants, I often found myself referring to my own days as an undergraduate student and trying to establish the personality of an approachable slightly older peer. On the other hand, with the parents, I had to present a more mature personality who could empathise with their concerns and dilemma as parents. I used several strategic interactions to build and maintain rapport which is a very delicate relationship between the researcher and the participant (Hey 2000, Lapping 2008).

I often resorted to self-deprecating jokes based on my not understanding certain words in their local dialects or purposively misunderstanding certain common phrases. This made me appear less intimidating. Additionally, this appearance of being unfamiliar with local dialect and phrases provided an opportunity to explore the possible social meanings and norms rooted in their narratives. The performance of these multiple identities resulted in personally feeling perplexed and often disingenuous when I encountered narratives of pain (Lavin 2010) such as feeling neglected by certain family members. However, these strategies also helped me elicit different kinds of narratives from my participants.

I consider myself to be a qualitative researcher primarily using interviews and group interviews as research methods. As these interviews and focus group interviews were being conducted, I could identify two patterns described by Lundgren (2012). The first is the confessional style where participants share experiences which are rarely shared or talked about. In this pattern of interviews, the participants have significant agency as they are producing a truth (ibid.). The second pattern is the life history mode where participants' narratives reveal a similar way of telling or imagining lives. This is also a pattern where participants

can engage in maintenance work (Ahmed 2006) to either confirm or resist social
and cultural norms such as gender-appropriate educational and career choices.

I often encountered responses which were located between the confessional mode
and the life history mode. My very conscious and active self-positioning in the
field with my participants elicited narratives exhibiting different combinations of
confessions and life histories. I also found that I usually elicited responses which
could be identified as life histories because my questions often focused on the
educational histories of parents and children in the family. My research questions
tracked their educational choices from primary education to higher education.

In conclusion, this section has explored the assumptions and experiences I carried
with me as I entered the field and compared them with the experiences and
observations I have had as I conducted field research for this doctoral study. This
section on my own elastic position as an insider and an outsider, and the
exploration of differences in power and privilege between me and my participants
is the product of an exercise in feminist-self-reflection and feminist qualitative
research practice. The following sections explore how the colleges were sampled
and how I entered these educational spaces to recruit participants for this study.

5.2 Sampling the colleges

The review of literature and the FCF Phase I study led me to three districts across
Haryana which reflect diverse social culture and linguistic influences in the state.
The three sampled districts are Mahendargarh, Sirsa and Sonipat (see figure 5.2).
Mahendargarh shared state borders with Rajasthan, Sirsa with Punjab and
Rajasthan, and Sonipat with New Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. Each of these states
have distinct social and linguistic cultures which influence the social culture and
practices which can be observed across Haryana. Additionally, these districts were
selected on the basis of a history of low juvenile (0-6 years) and overall sex ratio,

lower female literacy (Census 2011) and higher number of co-educational state government colleges (Directory of Higher Education, Haryana).

These districts record low overall sex ratios (Mahendragarh 895, Sirsa 897 and Sonipat 856, Haryana 877, India 943) and juvenile sex ratios (Mahendragarh 775, Sirsa 862 and Sonipat 798, Haryana 834, India 918) and have low female literacy

Figure 5.2 Sampled Districts in Haryana

(Mahendragarh 64.6%, Sirsa 60.4% and Sonipat 69.8%, Haryana 65. 9%, India 64.6%) (Census of India 2011). All three districts are also home to a state or a central university campus. While Mahendragarh has an above average number of government colleges and a central university campus, Sonipat and Sirsa have four government colleges each. Nevertheless, Sirsa and Sonipat are home to state universities; Sonipat also has a new women's university.

Within the social ecology of post-secondary providers conceptualised by Tierney and Sabharwal (2016), the colleges sampled for this study are categorised as publicly supported public colleges[14]. One college was sampled in each district. The sampled co-educational colleges were selected on the basis of convenience and availability of cooperative key informants and gatekeepers. The gatekeepers

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[14] "The publicly supported public college receives funding from the State and charges little, or no, tuition and fees from its students … As public entities, they are non-profit and State-appointed and administered. Their employees are public employees, and decision-making tends to be centralised and external" (Tierney and Sabharwal 2016: 24).

and key informants in the sampled colleges were the principals, vice-principals and members of staff working in the college. I was introduced to these gatekeepers and key informants with the help of references from Indian academic consultants who are associated with the FCF Project in Haryana.

Figure 3.3 Entering a state funded college in Haryana

Each of the sampled colleges was affiliated to a state University in the same district or in a neighbouring district. While the sampled colleges in Mahendargarh (MDC) and Sonipat (SDC) offered courses in Arts, Commerce and Sciences, the sampled college in Sirsa (SiDC) only offered Arts and Commerce courses. The colleges in Mahendargarh and Sonipat were classified and located in urban areas (a principal town, but not the district centre); the college in Sirsa was rural and the newest among the three sampled colleges.

While all the sampled colleges were coeducational government colleges affiliated to state universities, they were also very diverse in their own historical trajectories. The college sampled in Mahendargarh was an old and popular college established in the fifties and has only recently started admitting young women in the arts courses. Previously young women were only enrolled in the science and commerce undergraduate courses in the college. A majority of the young women

in the college's catchment area enrol in the nearby government college for women
in the same urban area. On the other hand, the college in Sonipat is also affiliated
to the same state university (Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak) and is
gradually being converted into a women's only college. In comparison, the
college sampled in Sirsa is a rural college less than a decade old and was
established through the donation of privately owned land from the adjoining
village. While these three sampled colleges have a combination of differences and
similarities, I have chosen to identify each participant with the pseudonym of the
relevant sampled college to help the reader to understand their geographical
location. While the differences between the colleges are not a major axis of
analysis for the thesis, it is important to maintain the distinctions between them,
particularly in relation to the rural college (SiDC). This has contributed towards
identifying how varying degree of rurality and distance from the national capital,
which influenced perceptions of educational choices and institutions among
students and families (see 7.2.2), is a subsidiary factor in an analysis of gendered
educational choices.

The following section will discuss how I built rapport with the gatekeepers and
key informants in these sampled colleges; and how I gained access to the
undergraduate participants in the colleges.

5.3 Entering the colleges
During my first visit to the sampled colleges (see figure 5.3) I made sure that I
met my key informant who introduced me to key gatekeepers (O'Reilly 2009)
such as the college principals and members of staff and faculty. During my first
interaction with the gatekeepers, I built rapport by understanding their own
educational and social backgrounds and sharing the focus of my doctoral research
and the purpose of my visit to the college. I interacted with different
members of faculty during each of my visits to the sampled colleges. I made a
planned effort to spend time to interact with the teachers in an informal manner to
understand their views and perceptions of the college and the students enrolled in
the college and how higher education in the college is influenced by social and

economic factors in the region. These interactions contributed towards my own informal observations and reflections on my experiences in the field.

The members of faculty often introduced me to their colleagues, permitted me to interact with their students in the common rooms and classrooms and gave legitimacy to my presence in the college. However, my position as an outsider in Haryana demarcated me from the teachers working in these colleges, who were often alumni of similar state-funded colleges (Tierney and Sabharwal 2016) from Haryana. There is a very visible difference in the habitus and bearing performed by me and most of the teachers in these colleges. While I appear to have a more privileged educational, urban and social-class background, the students and participants did not accord me with the same degree of authority and power they recognised in the college faculty. While students often found themselves unable to refuse the request from a faculty member to interact with me when I was trying to recruit participants, my recruitment process and interaction with the students gave them the ability to refuse to participate in the study. Several times, participants would share their names and contact details when the faculty member was around but would later refuse when I called them a couple of days later.

5.3.1 Recruiting participants

Participants of the study were recruited through generous facilitation by gatekeepers and key informants in the sampled colleges. Members of faculty or the Principal in case of Sirsa introduced me to the students, I talked to the students about my doctoral research project and my objective to understand the motivations of the students and their families which have propelled them towards education in government colleges in Haryana. At the end of my interaction with the students, I requested those students who were interested in participating in my study to share their names and contact numbers so that I could call and fix a meeting with them at a time and place convenient to them. In the next couple of days, I called these volunteering participants and tried to meet them either in the college campus or at their homes.

During my initial interaction with the students in the common rooms and in classrooms, I said that I would like to meet their families and understand the thoughts and perceptions which motivated their parents to support their college education. I also said that I would be anonymising their names and would maintain their confidentiality to avoid any adverse complications from their participation in my study. I had initially felt that many students were self-conscious about the realities of their homes and family members, especially when they perform a very different identity in the college campus. I shared some details of my previous experience of being a researcher in Haryana about five years ago and how I had had some experience meeting people in their homes in villages across Haryana. Several times, when I had called volunteering undergraduate students over the phone, several students, especially the male students had shared with me their apprehension that I might not be able to interact much with their parents who were not very educated. Some students were also apprehensive that I might not be able to understand the heavy local dialects that were used in their homes. I found it very useful to share that I have worked in villages in Haryana before this and that I am fluent in Hindi and understand a little Punjabi.

During this process of recruiting participants, it was relatively easier to recruit male undergraduate students for interviews than female students. However, once successfully recruited over the phone, it was easier to convert interviews with female participants into interviews with their family members. Almost all the young women who volunteered to be participants, also consented to me visiting their home and interacting with their family members. Some of the male participants were from wealthier families than their female peers and had parents who were very busy businesspeople and who were simply not available. A couple of interested participants later backed out from family interviews. One young man in fact shared that he was afraid of his father and did not want me to interview his parents. The following section will describe the different methods which constitute the research design for my study. This will be then followed by a short section which briefly describes the participants who were successfully recruited for this study.

5.4 Methodology and methods

I have discussed in the earlier section on my own positionality that this project has worked with a feminist research ethic and a feminist methodology. Feminist methodology involves key features such as continuous efforts to be reflexive in terms of one's own positionality and raising consciousness regarding gendered and intersectional inequalities. This particularly

> challenge(s) the norm of objectivity that assumes that the subject and object of research can be separated from one another and that personal and/or grounded experiences are un- scientific (Cook and Fonow 1986: 5)

Cook and Fonow's (1986) emphasis on 'way of seeing' and their list of essential factors lead towards a focus on understanding the pervasive nature of gender in social inequalities, and an understanding that this can be unveiled through feminist research which focuses on subjective experiences across gendered individuals. The qualitative methods that I have used and discussed in this chapter reflect practices which explore gendered experiences and which form a feminist exploratory methodology that recognises the family as a key site for educational choices. Cook and Fonow (1986:4) argue in favour of "techniques and strategies to gather and explain data" which reflect "empirical research on gender asymmetry". In other words, collection of data focusses on gendered inequalities. The literature on access to higher education and my theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter are entrenched in feminist conceptualisations of gender, gender regimes, agency and intersectionality which has led towards the methodology used in this study.

Another key aspect of this feminist methodology involves reflexivity and positionality. The focus on positionality and reflexivity also has implications on the way a researcher behaves in and outside the field and has significant ethical implications as they collect and analyse data from different gendered individuals. They argue that feminist research involves "examining and interpreting their [the researchers'] methodological stances and practices in regard to feminist ideals"

(ibid.). Several sections of this chapter (5.1, 5.3, 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7) are actively
engaged in self-examination and reflections on how the data was collected and
analysed to address gendered inequalities in how families make educational
decision. This feminist methodology also has implications on concerns regarding
validity and reliability since the feminist research often rejects norms of
objectivity and scientific validity (Acker et al.1991, Dillamore 2000).

My feminist qualitative and exploratory methodology involves semi-structured in-
depth interviews with undergraduate students and their parents and family group
interviews with members of their family. The methodology used in this study
recognises the need to involve the family and the home in discussions of
educational participation, and also reflects my theoretical stance that individuals
do not operate autonomously, but rather are bound up in gender regimes.
Qualitative studies in India which have explored families and access to higher
education such as Sahu et al. (2017) have used in-depth interviews with young
women from seven different kinds of government and government aided colleges.
On the other hand, Verma's (2014) qualitative research methodology collected
data through an in-depth interview schedule and Focus Group Discussions
(FGDs) with female students in colleges. These methods have their respective
strengths and weaknesses when they are being utilised in the field. These are
briefly described in the following sub-sections.

5.4.1 Semi- structured In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with individuals and with groups in the
family constitute the qualitative core of my methodology. This study used
interview guides to assist me as I conducted individual and group interviews with
the sampled participants. Miller and Glassner (2004) have demonstrated how in-
depth and open-ended interviews can be effectively used to theorise social life. I
am using interviews to examine the participants' experiences (Brinkmann and
Kvale 2018) as accounts of social worlds and generate insights which help
theorise about social life and gendered access to higher education. The semi-
structured interviews were used to elicit individual narratives of transition from

school to higher education. Most of my interviews with undergraduate participants began by prompting them to talk about their childhood dreams and ambitions and how they have changed over time. The interviews gradually moved towards seeking narratives about their choice of college and course and how their family members might have influenced their choices and decisions. The interviews with parents often focused on their ambitions for their children, the dreams and aspirations they have for their children and how these were negotiated or talked about within the family.

5.4.2 Group interviews with families

Group interviews were conducted with the undergraduate participants' families. This included participation by the undergraduate participants and members of their respective families. Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub (1996) advocate that group interviews can be used to draw out and document deeper understandings of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences from different perspectives, especially with regard to power hierarchies and feminist research practices (Esim 1997). They are also useful where the objective is to study interaction among the group members (Överlien Aronsson and Hydén 2005, Lederman 1990). In my research design the group interview with the family was preceded by unstructured interviews with individuals; the group interview helped me observe and analyse agency and gendered dynamics within the family and its impact on narratives and educational trajectories. The interviews and group interviews were conducted with the participants after receiving informed voluntary consent from all participants in the family.

Before beginning the core of the interview, I also spent time with each participant to build rapport and also to record the educational and social background of the participants and their family members. Before formally beginning an interview, I spent time with the participant, talking about their family background and the educational background of their family members, especially their siblings. This aided the process of building rapport and also provided an opportunity to map the educational trajectories of the undergraduate participants and their siblings. This

enriched the quality and nature of questions that were being put forward to the
participants in the course of the interviews.

Because of realities in the field such as the limited availability of time from family
members, I often had to combine interviews with parents with family group
interviews. I was able to have a separate parent interview and a family group
interview only in the case of one female participant in Mahendargarh and one
female participant in Sirsa. In the case of the interview with the mother in Sirsa, it
was soon interrupted, and it did not seem like the mother would be able to speak
in detail. She was squatting on the ground silently while the grandparents and the
undergraduate participant were being vocal during the group interview. During
the group interview, the mother was completely silent and kept her face
completely covered. Most of the time, the interaction with the family was such
that the parental interview gradually became a family group interview. It was
often very difficult to differentiate between a group interview and the interview of
the parent. After exploring the patterns of participation in the interviews, I decided
to categorise those interviews in which the parent did not speak in great detail as
group interviews; and those in which one parent's voice dominated the narrative
as parent interviews, while accepting the indeterminacy of this classification.
These interviews with the families are also a reflection on one the focal points of
my research question regarding how individual family members influence the
educational trajectories and narratives of undergraduate students in Haryana.

5.4.3 Being a feminist researcher on and off the field

Within the understanding of what makes a research methodology feminist
discussed in the beginning of this section, this sub-section explores my practices
while conducting interviews and group interviews. Although not a formal method
used in the study, I informally observed how family members were interacting
with each other within the family and household spaces. I reflected on these
experiences of witnessing family behaviour in my fieldwork journal, and used
these reflections later when recalling the dynamics of the interview interactions.
These reflections from my interactions with students, their family members, the

gatekeepers and key informants in the field often complicated and added depth to
the experiences and contradictions in the experiences and perceptions shared by
different family members and participants.

While recruiting participants and building relationships with key-informants and
gatekeepers, I often met teachers and staff in the college and struck up
conversations with members of the family in the homes of my undergraduate
participants outside of the formal interviews. I also made it a point to note in my
fieldwork diary interactions between family members and the physical and
symbolic positions being occupied by different members of the family during the
interviews and group interviews. These notes recorded how different family
members reacted to each other's narratives and rationalisations during the
different interviews. I also noted down different material characteristics of the
homes, neighbourhoods and routes of travel available to my participants and their
families.

The reflections, recorded in my field notes, add depth to the findings and insights
gleaned from the transcribed interview narratives of the participants (Phillippi and
Lauderdale 2018). These field notes contribute towards a more comprehensive
understanding of agency of different family members and how they influence the
gendered educational perceptions, choices and decisions made within families.

5.4.5 Tools

I used a combination of tools to aid the collection of data in the field. The data
required for this study were experiences of education and educational decision-
making. In order to capture these experiences through semi-structured interviews,
I developed a participant information form and an interview guide. These are
shared in appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The participant information form recorded
the details of the participants' family background, which particularly focused on
the educational and occupational background of the family members and also
recorded the specific educational trajectories of the participant and all their
siblings. This was a tool with which I built familiarity with the participants'

families, and this enabled me to ask more relevant and informed questions to the
participants and their family members. The interview guides provided a list of
bilingual (Hindi and English) questions which covered the broad themes that
needed to be covered over the course of the recorded interactions. In addition to
this I also maintained a daily field diary to record my own activities, observations
and reflections in the field and to record daily findings and feedback from the
participants, key informants and gatekeepers.

5.4.6 Developing the interview guides

The interview guides were inspired by the undergraduate interview guides which I
co-developed for the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) in Haryana in
February 2018. The questions for the interviews with undergraduate participants
and their family members were adapted by me to the more specific focus for the
present research and to address the following research questions:

- What are the different roles played by different family members as
  students access higher education, and how are these gendered?

- How are different gendered educational decisions made within families?
  How do different family members justify these decisions?

- How are the families' gendered plans and experiences of enrolling in
  college influenced by a range of other intersecting factors?

As mentioned in the introduction, the FCF Phase I study focused on the social
background of students enrolled in the sampled colleges and explored the factors
which influence the enrolment of students in government colleges, whereas my
doctoral research focusses on gendered educational trajectories and the role that
families play in educational trajectories and choices. I have made efforts to ensure
that the questions in the guides adequately reflect the questions guiding my
doctoral research study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011). Therefore, the
interview guides that I developed had questions which focused on students'
personal aspirations, experiences and choices. The questions and probes were
especially designed to explore how family members figured in their experiences,
narratives and choices. The guide begins with simple questions regarding
students' childhood aspirations and how they have changed or evolved over the

years, and gradually included questions regarding their experiences of applying to higher education institutions; and how they navigated the educational choices available to them. The questions for the family group interview were then prepared with several similar questions. The objective behind this overlap was to explore distinctions between individual and group narratives, and to observe family group dynamics and agency.

5.4.7 Piloting of tools

The interviews used interview guides to ensure that the interviews were comprehensive. The interview guides were piloted first in the UK with Indian-origin families in August 2018. This exercise contributed to more refined guides, especially with regard to the guide for interviews with parents and family groups. The feedback and reflections from the pilot interviews do not ask for large macro changes. However, the feedback from the pilot interviews helped me to identify some phrases which were found to be more useful to draw out experiences and educational preferences such as: careers or disciplines which are unpalatable to the parents or the family; the ideal higher education institution and the person who has been their inspiration to follow a particular educational trajectory.

The tools were piloted again in Haryana, India in November and December 2018. The purpose behind this was to check the suitability of these tools in the specific cultural and regional context of the field in Haryana. My personal observations and feedback from the participants inspired the adaptation of a couple of phrases and words which complemented the local context. This exercise also helped develop an estimate of the time required to recruit participants and the time required to conduct interviews with participants and their family members. During the course of the data collection, I also made it a point to follow up each interview with feedback on the nature of the questions being asked during the interview. The pilot exercises and the sampled interviews all received positive feedback from the participants and their family members. The piloting exercises in the UK and in Haryana, India demonstrated that the interview guides had the potential to elicit relevant qualitative data.

5.5 Data Collected in the Field

My research design involved recruiting four undergraduate students (two female and two male from diverse caste backgrounds) and members of their families in each sampled college in each of the three sampled districts. This study has sampled the districts and colleges sampled for the FCF Phase I study as the findings and observations of this study will contribute to the development of the third phase of the FCF action project in Haryana. However, this was not an easy target to achieve. I spent the first month of my engagement in the field (November 2018) contacting my key informants and gatekeepers in two of the three sampled colleges in Haryana and piloting my tools. I then had to bide my time and wait for undergraduate students in the three colleges to be available, as they were often busy with examinations at the end of their semesters in December-January and March-April and academic breaks in December and January. I also had to acknowledge the fact that many of students had parents, especially fathers, who were engaged in vocational professions such as house painters, masons and casual agricultural and industrial labour which kept them busy on all days of the week. This meant that, most of the time, the parent I interviewed was the mother. During most of the visits to participants' households, I used to encounter the older grandparents and school going younger siblings. Older siblings were either engaged in vocations similar to their parents or were older sisters living with their marital families in different locations. Most of the mothers I encountered during these visits were more comfortable interacting with me in the company of their children and other family members.

Due to constraints such as examinations and seasonal holidays for the students, unavailability of parents engaged in vocational professions and the limited amount of time and resources available to me, I ended up conducting more interviews with undergraduate students than families, especially in the case of male participants. The following table 5.1 provides a descriptive comparison of the targeted sample of participants and the number of participants I managed to recruit across the three districts. This is followed by table 5.2 which describes the caste background of undergraduate students whose family members were

interviewed. The third table (5.3) lists the family members of each participant who were interviewed individually and the participants of family group interviews.

Table 5.1 Sampled Undergraduate Participants

Participants	Target in each district	Achieved in Mahendargarh	Achieved in Sirsa	Achieved in Sonipat	Total Target	Total Achieved
Male Undergraduate Participants	1 Suvarna 1 Dalit	3 Suvarna 2 Dalit	4 Dalit	5 Suvarna 1 Dalit	3 Suvarna 3 Dalit	8 Suvarna 7 Dalit
Female Undergraduate Participants	1 Suvarna 1 Dalit	2 Suvarna 1 Dalit	1 Suvarna 3 Dalit	3 Suvarna 1 Dalit	3 Suvarna 3 Dalit	6 Suvarna 5 Dalit
Total Interviews	12	8	8	10	12	36
SC= Scheduled Caste, OBC= Other Backward Caste						

Table 5.2 Gender and Caste background of participants whose families were interviewed

Participants	Suvarna	SC	OBC	Total Dalit (SC and OBC) Family Interviews	Total Family Interviews
Male Participants	2	3	0	3	5
Female Participants	3	0	3	3	6
Total	5	3	3	6	11

Table 5.3 Group and Individual family members interviewed

Name and Caste Group of Undergraduate Participant	Individual Family Member Interviewed	Group Interview Participants
Amrita (Suvarna)	Father	Mother, Father and Amrita
Chandni (Suvarna)	Mother	-
Hritik (Suvarna)	Mother	-
Deepika (Dalit:OBC)	Mother	Mother, Grandmother, Grandfather and Deepika
Geeta (Suvarna)	-	Mother, Elder Sister, Paternal Uncle
Hema (Dalit: OBC)	Mother	-
Jaspal (Dalit: SC)	Elder Cousin Brother	Elder Cousin Brother, Cousin sisters, Mother and Aunt
Mohan (Dalit: SC)	-	Mother and Father
Jaya (Dalit: OBC)	-	Mother, 2 Elder Sisters and Younger Sister
Sachin (Suvarna)	Mother	-
Neil (Dalit: SC)	=	Participant and 2 Younger Paternal Cousins

A more detailed table describing the social and educational background of the
participants is provided in Appendices 7, 8 and 9. Although efforts were made to
recruit young women and men across different Suvarna or General and Dalit caste
categories, I was not able to recruit young women from SC communities.
Although there are no young SC women among the undergraduate participants,
the family members of SC participants include siblings and cousins whose
educational choices were also traced in the course of the family interviews. These
siblings and cousins are also gendered beings exercising agency within the family.
My research design to include family members as participants therefore addresses
this gap.

5.6 Analysis

All the interviews with the personal information of participants and audio-
recorded data have been transcribed into separate files. The transcriptions
accurately recorded the exact words and phrases used by the participants. The
transcription of the recorded oral interviews into the textual format was verbatim
and did not involve translation. The interviews were usually in Hindi which was
heavily inflected by the local dialect. These transcripts were not translated when
they were being analysed so as to retain the vernacular expressions and speech
being used by participants. Only the excerpts from the transcripts which have
been used in the thesis have been translated.

The reflections from each interview and group interview which have been
recorded in the field diary and the family background recorded in the participant
information sheets have been prefixed to respective transcript files. These collated
transcribed files have been then analysed to produce empirical findings and
insights which inform this thesis.

The theoretical framework used in this thesis understands the family as a gendered
site where individuals exercise gendered agency in a time-sensitive and reflexive
manner. The gendered roles performed within the family and gendered agencies
being exercised can be traced through experiences of making educational
decisions within the family. The interviews, although a dialogue between me and

the participants, are also narratives through which participants are sharing their experiences of making educational decisions; which are simultaneously temporal meaning-making exercises in the course of the interview (Goodson and Gill 2011).

During the interviews, the audience was both me and the participant; during family group interviews the audience also includes different family members. The narratives elicited during interviews with the participants and their family members articulate their personal recollections of past events where educational decisions were contemplated and determined within the family.

Such an understanding of the interviews process recognises that participants are performing gendered identities and roles. The interviews were temporal sites of exchange between me and the participant where undergraduate students and family members were recreating, resisting and occasionally creating innovative variations of the gender regimes operating within their specific contexts. During family interviews, family members observed and reacted to each other; where I as the researcher am observing these manoeuvres as complex meaning-making exercises. The analysis of interview transcripts and my observations and reflections of these interactions are an attempt to explore how their educational decisions and agencies are located in their specific social contexts. This involves an examination of how the participants and I positioned ourselves during the interview and after the interview. Morison and Macleod (2013) state,

> Narrative positioning potentially allows the analyst to acknowledge the narrator's reflexive awareness and creative action within narrative performances, while bearing in mind that it is not a performance enacted by a prediscursive, intentional actor since she or he can only utilize existing discursive resources that constrain any performance. (571)

They have argued in favour of a narrative-discursive approach which requires an examination of common elements within an interview and across interviews,

identification of contradictions or "trouble", and the "repair" rhetoric or rationalisations performed by students and family members as they "position" themselves within the interviews. They also identified that participants often use discursive resources such as 'children's needs' to rationalise or repair their narratives.

Due to this theoretical understanding of time-sensitive reflections and actions by participants and their family members, a participant document was made for each participant and their family. This participant document first analysed the interview transcripts to map the social and educational backgrounds and then analysed the narratives of their educational decision-making experiences to identify significant instance of "trouble" and "repair" and discursive attempts by participants and family members to position themselves within the interview.

The transcripts were read a second time to identify key chronological points where educational decisions are made. The theoretical framework described in the previous chapter understands the family as a social institution where individuals develop and experience inter-personal relationships over time and space. The experiences of the participants and their family members were examined at significant educational junctures such as choice of schooling, choice of discipline during schooling, contemplations regarding accessing higher education, applying to different higher education institutions, choice of higher education institution discipline and course and imagined futures. The following illustration (see figure 5.4) is a visualization of prominent moments where key educational decisions are made.
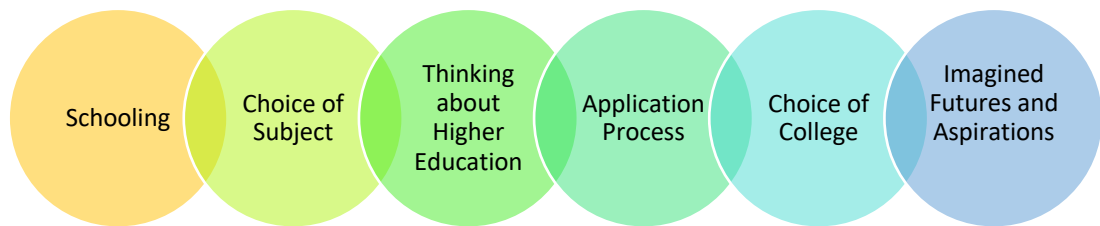
Figure 5.4 Moments of Educational Decisions

I have thematically coded (Reissman 2008) and analysed these chronologised transcripts. The thematic analysis through coding of the collated data is a combination of inductive and deductive analysis (Kawulich 2017). This analysis also focused on how participants' agencies within families are gendered and how they influence educational choices and decisions. This process identified the key roles being played by different family members, which were developed as thematic codes. During this stage the analysis considered how these roles, during the transition between schooling and higher education, helped students and family members to access and mobilise different kinds of capitals.

This first thematic analysis was examined in greater detail for a second time within family groups and how the undergraduate students and their family members shared similar and different experiences and rationalizations of their educational choices, preferences and decisions. At this stage, for the seventh chapter, these experiences were analysed in terms of gendered regimes operating within the family, multiple perceptions and reflections within the family and the way in which each family member exercised their gendered agency. The final research question guiding this thesis examines how intersectional factors such as social class and caste affect gendered agencies and educational choices being made within families. Another round of thematic analysis of the transcripts identified key intersectional factors such as location of home and college, social class and caste. These themes were used to select five families among my participants as cases through which it was possible to analyse in greater detail

how these factors simultaneously affect gendered agencies and educational
decisions being made within families. Along with positionality, the relationship
between my theoretical framework, the empirical realities explored in the second
and fourth chapter and the methodology to collect and analyse data is a means
through which validity and reliability are enriched for this study (Dillamore 2000
and Morse et al. 2002). The ethical concerns and dilemmas discussed in the next
section also contribute towards validity and reliability of this study.

5.7 Ethical considerations

The research study was granted ethical approval from the Department of
Education Studies at the University of Warwick. The study and my research
practice followed the codes of practice and guidelines listed in the British
Educational Research Association (BERA 2018) Ethical guidelines. All my
participants were at least 18 years of age and therefore not minors. I had also
prepared to elicit parental consent in cases where some of my participants'
siblings were minors and were part of the group family interview, however this
did not occur among the participants of this study. The University Grants
Commission (UGC) in India has been paying attention to ethical publishing of
academic work in academic journals. In terms of the ethics of doing research in
each academic discipline, the UGC has delegated this responsibility to individual
universities and research faculties. There is no Indian Educational research
association which has put together guidelines for research into education in India.
My post-graduate Masters in Social Work has trained me to be a professional
social worker in India. Therefore, apart from BERA (2018) guidelines I am also
following the research guidelines which are part of the code of ethics for
professional social workers in India enlisted in the National Association of
Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) 2016.

These guidelines are however not as intricate as the BERA guidelines, as the main
objective is to guide professional practice as social workers in the field. The
research guidelines are an off-shoot of the larger code of ethics guiding ethical
social work practice. These codes of ethical social work practice are the product
of a national consortium of Indian social workers and are a reflection of the Indian

context, particularly its cultures and norms. The NAPSWI (2016) codes also refer
to the right to participation, confidentiality and informed consent.

In order to follow these guidelines, the three sampled colleges have been
anonymised as MDC, SiDC and SDC. I have also not named the urban centres in
which these colleges are located in order to maintain their anonymity as most
urban centres in Haryana have only one or two government colleges each.
Additionally, the names of all participants have been anonymised in the
transcripts. The transcribed files of recorded interviews were collated and re-
named to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant. Special
care has been taken to check the transcripts for instances when either the
participants or I have mentioned personal names and details. These have been
then saved in a secure manner with passwords.

Although there is no contradiction in the guidelines put forward by BERA (2018)
and NAPSWI (2016), the more rigid guidelines in BERA (2018) are suited to a
British and European culture which is very conscious of data protection and
individual privacy. It is difficult to export these culturally-infused ethical
principles within an Indian community. In India, family members often have a
difficult time respecting the rights of young people's privacy. Similar concerns
were shared by Reissman (2005) while she was interviewing women in south
India. I had to be very careful when explaining consent, the purpose of my
research and how their data might be used by me as a researcher. I also had to
make careful efforts to ensure that young people could be interviewed at home
without being monitored by parents or other siblings.

Although NAPSWI also recommends written consent, and it is followed by most
researchers in India, it is a very new practice. Most of my participants were very
willing to talk to me and be interviewed but several participants also grew a little
conscious after giving informed written consent. This had to be handled delicately
and I then had to use my soft communication skills to build rapport and trust with
my participants. At the beginning of my interactions with undergraduate

participants, I shared the content of the information sheet that was developed to outline the purpose of the study and to inform the participants of their rights as participants of the study (Appendix 6). I used a bi-lingual (Hindi and English) consent form to record the informed consent of my participants. I also shared the consent form and its contents verbally with many of the family members who were participating in the study. This was due to the realisation that most of the parents and family members I encountered in the field were barely literate and were very unfamiliar with such practices. They often had difficulty reading through the consent forms. They usually referred to the advice of their educated children or my undergraduate participants.

While my initial introduction and interaction with undergraduate students is an illustration of the inequalities in power which can shape the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Etherington 2007, Mikkonen et al. 2017), my subsequent interactions with the students over phone calls and outside the supervision of their teachers ensured that they were able to exercise their rights to be informed and consent to be participants out of their own volition. The way I recruited my participants and my interactions in the field with participants, family members and institutional gatekeepers were reflectively (Wilkinson 1988, Subramani 2019) planned and practiced in order to address these inequalities (deLaine 2000, Kumar and Mahapatro 2017). My research practices in the field occasionally collided with ethical concerns regarding my health and safety. This had implications on how I shared personal details as I practiced self-reflection and positionality (Sikes 2006, Kumar and Mahapatro 2017). These concerns often entangled with practicalities which led me towards situational ethics:

> an extension of procedural ethics when the latter are no longer suited, in order to make the research empowering, reciprocal and transformative of existing disadvantaging power relations. (Weis 2019: 9)

Additionally, my personal safety was a concern, especially when I started using public transport which is notoriously unsafe for women commuting in the state. I

was interacting with men in an overwhelmingly patriarchal social context which
also reports scrutiny and gender-based violence against women. In the first
section, I have also mentioned navigating my insider and outsider status in the
field which also reflected a certain degree of conscious desexualising (Vogels
2019: 2) myself to ensure my own safety from possible violence and masculine
aggressions in the field (Allain 2014, Vogels 2019), especially as I interacted with
participants and gatekeepers who are men. I took precautions to ensure my safety
in the field (Pritchard 2019) such as keeping my friends, family members and
local key informants informed about my movements in the field. I also carried
petty cash and additional power banks to keep my mobile phone charged.
However, as discussed in the first section, I did not encounter any such situations
in the field. Nonetheless, this is also another facet of gendered behaviour in
Haryana which discourage interaction between men and women and which also
shaped my interactions with participants and families in the field.

5.8 Conclusion
In spite of these ethical concerns, this qualitative research design using semi-
structured in-depth interviews with students and family members in Haryana is
able to trace multiple experiences and gendered agencies within families. It is
based on the understanding that roles, agency and intersectionality can be traced
though experiences, perceptions and interpretations articulated by students and
members of their respective families. This chapter has explored how experiences
of students and families regarding educational decisions, especially as they
contemplated accessing higher education, were gathered across the three sampled
districts in Haryana. The experiences that were gathered through qualitative semi-
structured in-depth interviews and group interviews were then analysed to address
the three research questions guiding this study.

Chapter 6 – Roles played by families to mobilise capital

This chapter addresses the first research question to explore the different roles that the family plays in the educational trajectories of undergraduate students. Gender differences in the roles and narratives of students and individuals involved in the educational experiences of being students are the primary point of focus here. This chapter is based on the understanding that gender is a lived relational experience (McNay 2004) and often involves gendered performances which reproduce and recreate gendered identities and inequalities. These identities and inequalities are associated with socially created roles and responsibilities. As discussed in the third chapter, gender regimes within families provide individuals with socially accepted roles and responsibilities. Families mobilise different kinds of social, economic and cultural capitals to facilitate young people's access to higher education. The ownership and access to different kinds of capitals are determined by the gender regime operating in the family.

Within the family and gendered educational trajectories, the undergraduate student is the primary person of interest for this study in terms of gender and access to higher education. Different individuals are related to the undergraduate student through ties of family, kinship and friendship. The way the different individuals are related to the student constitutes the social network available to the undergraduate student. The social roles and the potential social, economic and cultural capitals available to each individual reflect specific gender regimes. Individual family members re-create, resist and change these gendered norms and roles as they mobilise different kinds of capitals as students access higher education. Within this gender regime, different kinds of capitals help the actors to perform their different roles and achieve their goals. As family members access education, they are also generating capital for themselves and the family.

I have categorised four key roles: (a) deductively through a review of literature on access to higher education discussed in the second chapter; (b) through thematic analysis of the transcripts of interviews with the participants of this study. These roles are associated with accessing and mobilising different kinds of capitals.

Although, I have sought to differentiate between the four most commonly observed roles, these are not distinct roles in the family sites where these educational decisions are being made. In most cases one action or performance by an individual smoothly transitions from one role to the other in different directions. To analyse the transcripts, I also categorised the educational trajectories of the undergraduate student into distinct stages such as schooling, considerations regarding accessing higher education, application process, choice of subject and college (institution). This is a reflection of the understanding that the nature of gendered relationships and gendered agencies operating within a family are time and space sensitive, as discussed in the fourth chapter.

The roles which are discussed in this chapter are broadly categorised as (1) *supporting* the educational access of the undergraduate student, (2*) inspiring* the undergraduate student and the members of their families to access higher education, (3) *providing information* to the undergraduate students and their family members about higher education institutions, subjects, colleges and application processes and (4) actions which *influence or steer* the educational choices being made by undergraduate students and their family members. This chapter addresses a gap that has been identified in the second chapter in terms of literature on families and access to higher education.

6.1 Supporting or providing social capital

As established in the second chapter, the literature on access to higher education in India indicate that the family plays a key role in the gendered educational choices and trajectories of undergraduate students in India (Sahu et al. 2017, Gautam 2015, Verma 2014). Support from family members and members of their community plays a significant role in the schooling and higher education choices and experiences of students in India (ibid.). Support identified in this section is gendered and involves both material (economic capital) and cultural practices (social and cultural capital) which enable and shape educational experiences and access. The feudal and agricultural background of Haryana is closely linked to a patriarchal and patrifocal arrangement of gendered roles and obligations within the family (Thakur at. Al 2001, Prem Chowdhry 2011a and Agrawal et al. 2013).

This in turn has a significant impact on the differential access to schools and higher education institutions being experienced by students in Haryana. Different family members are involved in experiences of access to schools and colleges. The participants of my study reported a variety of family members (parents, siblings, cousins, uncles and aunts), teachers and friends as individuals who have supported their educational pursuits.

This section will examine the gendered relationship that these supporting individuals have with the undergraduate student, and how the nature of support might be influenced by the gender of the particular individual and student. The narratives are fluid between these four roles (support, inspire, inform and steer). Older siblings or cousins are simultaneously significant sources of inspiration, information, advice and support within the family. For instance, while experiences of educational decision making might involve parents being inspired by the educational achievements and consequent employment of cousins, these cousins might also advise the students and parents about their educational experience and the value of different courses and institutions. These roles such as inspiring or advising younger siblings and cousins are also affected by the gender identity of the person being consulted. The nature of support being provided by different family members is significantly influenced by the gender regimes operating in the family. These gender regimes also inform the ways in which students are seeking and mobilizing support from different family members. The four parts of this section will primarily explore (a) how parents support access to higher education, (b) the gendered nature of support within families, (c) the financial factors influencing support and the significance of perceptions regarding (d) academic and gendered social performances of chastity as a condition which determine the support made available to young men and women.

6.1.1 Parental support to develop capitals

This part examines how parents have expressed support towards accessing higher education for their children. The FCF Phase I Study observes that parents are the most cited sources of support and encouragement by undergraduate students

(Henderson et al. 2021). Similar to the profile of undergraduate students who participated in the FCF Phase I study, most of my participants are part of the first generation in their families to have ever accessed higher education. One of the most common narratives of support observed in this study expresses the parents' hope that the next generation does better than themselves. For instance, Hema (SiDC)'s mother said,

> The dream for my children is that they study well, so that our burden decreases a bit. If they earn well they will have a good reputation. And we will also have serenity and do good work.

This is based on the premise that accessing higher education will provide the students with educational certifications which will contribute towards (a) developing the cultural capital owned by the family, (b) expanding the social capital accessible to the family through relationships of mutual trust and reciprocity built through educational experiences and participation and (c) potentially improving economic capital available to the family through development of skills, knowledge and graduate employment.

Supporting or encouraging children to access higher education is viewed as a means to gaining intergenerational upward social mobility. Similar aspirational narratives could be observed in the narratives of working-class students who are the first generation in their families to access higher education in the Global North (Hutching and Archer 2000, Alvarez 2015, Cooper 2017). It was observed, that among the participating families, support largely referred to approving a particular choice of course and college. This nature of support is explored in greater depth in the next chapter (see 7.1.1).

During her interview, Geeta's (SiDC) mother said, "my mother hit me when I said I wanted to go to school and dragged me home and told me to do my chores." While the mother herself never went to school, she sent all her children, especially

her daughters, to school. Both her daughters are accessing higher education, while
the son has not completed his schooling. During her interview, Geeta said,

> I don't know about that [brother's education], I was very small at that time
> but family members tell me that he himself did not go. Now I do not know
> why he did not like going to school. Family members even forced him,
> made him understand, even then he did not go, only went till class 8.

The mother and other members of the family said that Geeta's brother dropped
out due to lack of interest. Similar sentiments and experiences of thwarted
educational aspirations were shared by several mothers who participated in this
study. Maternal experiences of being denied access to education have been
observed as a significant phenomenon, especially among Dalit women, by
Shailaja Paik (2014) in Maharashtra (a western state in India) and Agrawal et al.
(2013) in Haryana; this has several implications for family life and education.

The government school in Geeta's village developed over the years and changed
from a primary school (up till grade 5) to a secondary (grade 10) and senior
secondary (grade 12) over the years. The mother said,

> at first I wanted to send all my children to school. As my eldest [Geeta's
> elder sister] finished school, my neighbours and other girls in the
> neighbourhood came to me and asked me if I could also send her [Geeta's
> elder sister] to college with the others. So I agreed and made her do
> graduation. After graduation she got into MA [course] and then B.Ed.

Her own educational aspiration for her children grew in tandem with the
development of the local government school in the village. While the wider
development of educational provisions in the village significantly impacts the
mother's own aspirations, she was also being motivated by a growth in the
number of visible children, especially girls, in the neighbourhood accessing
education and higher education. It could be argued that the gradual development

of cultural capital within the village in terms of development of the government
school in the village over time and increased enrolment among young people in
the village in higher education has influenced Geeta's family to support access to
higher education. This development has also led her mother to gradually increase
her educational aspirations for her children.

As shared in the above excerpt, Geeta's mother had not initially aspired for higher
education for her children. Eventually, after observing her neighbours sending
their daughters to higher education, she was motivated to support the entry of her
eldest daughter into a privately-funded women's college in the urban centre near
SiDC. The fact that the elder daughter would be accompanied by other young
women from the village significantly placated her concerns and anxieties
regarding safety during the commute to the college. Her second daughter, who is
the undergraduate participant in this study, is enthusiastic about pursuing sports
and exhibits incredible "self-reliance and resilience" (Bathmaker et al. 2016: 57).
Geeta, the second daughter has been making efforts to control and navigate her
higher education trajectory. On finding that the private women's college does not
encourage sports, Geeta negotiated a transfer to SiDC, which is a rural co-
educational government college further away from the village.

Häuberer and Brändle (2018) would identify such narratives from Haryana as
those of students who are not embedded with experience of higher education.
These narratives reveal a certain deficit in cultural capital in terms of experiences
of and discussion on higher education within the home. This relative silence
(O'Shea 2015) with regard to higher education in comparison to more privileged
middle-class homes has the potential to serve as a ground on which students can
develop a certain degree of independence and autonomy (Mitchall and Jaegar
2018). This is visible in the way in which Geeta, who is the second daughter in
the family, proactively negotiated her transfer from one higher education
institution to the other. Unlike most young women in her village and her elder
sister, she is travelling a greater distance every day.

Young women enrolled in the private women's college in the city have access to exclusive chartered buses on which they travel together between the village and college. This form of commute in which girls or young women travel together in a chartered bus is more sheltered and perceived to be safer and more secure. This pattern was observed among several of the young women enrolled in the sampled colleges. A similar preference was observed by Narwana (2019) in terms of parental schooling choices in Haryana. She observed,

> School transportation facilities and school locations are reported as important aspects for choosing private schools. Government schools are at the outskirts of the village, while the private school is located inside the village. For families living far from the private school, the school bus remains another attraction for sending small children to school. (194)

Several young women managed to garner support from families and communities due to the fact that there were other girls in the same village going to the same college. Whereas, Geeta's interest in sports had motivated her to travel on less "safe" public transport, for a longer distance, and required her to stay away from home for longer periods of time so that she can train.

Additionally, the support that parents of undergraduate students in Haryana have been observed to be providing to children is often quite intangible, emotional in nature and limited in scope (due to lack of embedded experience and knowledge of higher education). The narratives of both the students and the parents asserted that the parents are supporting their children's access to higher education; this is rarely followed with a discussion with specific actions or words which constitute support. Rather it is an absence of opposition and approval to the children accessing higher education. Support largely seems to involve verbal expressions by the parents and family to convey that they are in agreement that the student can enrol in college.

On the other hand, the narratives of two young women (Amrita and Chandni from MDC) and the narratives of their parents indicated that the parents provided emotional strength to their daughters who were not successful in the competitive entrance examinations to medical courses, or were anxious about successfully being accepted in a college of their choice. In one instance Amrita's parents were highly sensitive to the emotional needs of the student to stay at home while attending coaching classes, to help prepare for entrance exams for medical school (explored in greater detail in chapter 8). After she was not successful in the medical entrance exam, the parents helped her to recover her confidence and encouraged her to persevere in terms of accessing higher education. They actively encouraged their daughter to explore other avenues of accessing higher education and encouraged her to apply for undergraduate courses in the city. Such narratives of emotional support are altogether missing in the educational narratives of the young men who participated in this study.

6.1.2 Gendered support to develop capitals

This part examines how the gender regimes operating in Haryana have shaped the kinds of support that the families are able to provide to the student. This will involve a brief examination of gender regimes and resulting gendered obligations and roles within the family, such as parenting (not necessarily mothering) and providing financial support, ownership and control of assets such as land and domestic cattle, and presence of older siblings who have entered the workforce or who manage domestic chores thus enabling the younger siblings to access higher education. I also observed that in several instances, when I visited the homes of my participants, the parents shared that the daughters were actively involved in household chores such as cooking and cleaning (Thakur et al. 2001, Agrawal et al. 2013). While Mohan's (SiDC) parents encourage and insist that children should access higher education, the mother also expressed her opinion that,

> Girls belong to the next house [family to which they will get
> married[15]]…they should know how to cook and do chores at their marital
> home and boys should be able to take care of their [natal] families and
> parents.

Similarly, tropes and concerns can be observed in the following excerpt from my
interview with Hema's (SiDC) mother:

> There is no worry, the girls will study on her own, come and go, do a little
> bit of household chores in the morning, also knows how to milk the [cow]
> …my children do housework and then go to school… my daughter does
> all the work – cleaning the house, washing clothes, after doing all the
> work…

Evidently, while there is a focus on accessing and gathering new forms of social
and cultural capital to ensure upward social mobility, the parents are also hoping
to maintain existing gender regimes. This pattern of concern from parents about
household chores was usually not observed for sons. The sons who did help out at
home performed different kinds of chores such as procuring groceries from the
shops. For instance, Mohan (SiDC) and his younger brother often escorted their
sisters to their public examination venues.

The patrifocal gender regime in Haryana, as discussed in the earlier chapters,
gives great importance to the relationship between individuals within the family,
especially young women and their maternal uncle (Karve 1953, Dube 1988). Two
of the young women who participated in this study said that they resided at the
home of their maternal uncle during their schooling. Another two young women
said that their maternal uncle invested economic capital in their education and that
of their sisters. Jaya (SDC) has two elder sisters who did not access higher

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[15] A reference to the idea of *parayadhan* (Agrawal et al. 2013: 457) or girls being the marital
family's wealth or belonging see 4.3.4

education. She said that her maternal uncle not only financially supported the schooling of her elder sisters; but also financed their respective weddings (explored in greater depth in chapter 8). In this instance, economic capital is mobilised through the extended family network. On the other hand, Madhu (SDC) said that she felt that, although the maternal uncle financed her education and that of her elder sisters , he favoured her sisters over her since in comparison to them she was darker in complexion.[16] The gendered relationship between niece and maternal uncle is significant as the maternal home continues to be a significant contributor to the wedding of daughters in North India (Karve 1953, Dube 1988, Chowdhry 2011c and 2011d). However, Madhu's perceptions regarding support from her maternal uncle are further gendered. She felt neglected due to preferential treatment given by her maternal uncles to her sisters. In this case, sisters embodying a more socially approved feminine identity received greater support from traditional gendered avenues.

Support from fathers and brothers play a significant role in the lives of women in Haryana. Prem Chowdhry's (2011c and 2011d) research on inheritance practices by young women in the state indicates that women may relinquish their claim on natal property so that they can ensure support from fathers and brothers after they marry. For instance, Geeta (SiDC) shared,

> For class 11, I wanted to go to the government girls' school in [the nearest
> urban centre]. I was stubborn about this with my family that I wanted to
> study in that school. But they said that they will not send me to that
> school. I said I only wanted to go to that school, but then they said that
> 'you could stay at your *nanihaal*' [mother's natal house]. I said yes…later

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[16] Obsession with fair or light skin is a significant social phenomenon in India, especially regarding the complexion of women; this is evident in the large number of skin creams and advertisements aimed at women wishing to lighten their skin colour (Karan 2008, Parameswaran and Cardoza 2009). Fairer complexions are considered more beautiful and desirable, especially in the marriage market. Additionally, there is a social prejudice against darker complexion which is deeply gendered.

> when I came back and visited that school in [the urban centre] with a
> friend, I realised it was good that I did not go there.

The natal family is not only supporting the young woman after she marries, but also supporting her children, especially the education and marriage of her children in the future. We can see this in the narratives of several young women participating in this study where they have been supported in several ways by their mother's natal families and maternal uncles. These gendered relationships are significant social capital through which young women are able to mobilise the economic capital required to access higher education.

While parents and other family members are usually supportive in terms of schooling and access to higher education, in the narratives of undergraduate students, their lack of embeddedness is visible in the paucity of discussion regarding choice of subject, which was found in most narratives. Contrary to the observations made by Gautam (2015), wherein parents encouraged children towards a gendered choice of subject and course, a majority of my participants' parents did not put pressure on their children to choose a particular subject or course. There were a few exceptions to this pattern. Mohan (SiDC) shared that he followed the educational trajectories mapped out for him by his father, even though he personally had no interest in these. During the family interviews and interactions with Mohan's family I observed that the father often had the last word in family decisions, and that the children often used their mother as an intermediary through whom they communicated their needs and wants to their father. During his interview on the college campus, Mohan said that he never felt that he could directly express his interest in a different educational trajectory and career with his father, as his father is the older person and the head of the family (explored in 8.4). This is very much congruent with the patrifocal model of families accessing higher education in Haryana. Interestingly, the young women who participated in the study did not share similar experiences.

6.1.3 Financial support or mobilisation of economic capital to access higher education

This section explores how economic capital accessible to the family have been understood and expressed as a significant factor shaping the support parents are able to provide the children. The following is an excerpt from my interview with Kamal (SiDC) who is from a poor Dalit family.

> I: So whom did you ask about preparing for college?
>
> Kamal: My teacher
>
> I: Who?
>
> Kamal: When I had gone to take admission in [a special type of government school], there it was in English medium. So I felt a little doubt that I do not want to do English medium. Then I thought, why not do science in English medium. When I asked a little about science, my Uncle [although he had earlier mentioned a teacher, here he refers to an uncle], there are four in the family who have Masters. I asked them, they said 'you can do it, since you are also good at studying, but that requires more money'
>
> I: Ok so it requires more money…
>
> Kamal: Yes for science there is some coaching etc. Then I thought, my family is poor, and I chose the middle path…commerce is a practical subject, I will do that. I went to commerce, had classes for two days and felt like leaving it. I do not know what my teacher saw in me, he insisted and made sure that I do commerce.

It is evident that he was discouraged from science subjects as it was felt by the family that it would be a more expensive and unaffordable choice[17]. Whereas Neil (SDC), who is also from a Dalit family, did not identify financial concerns as a significant factor which influenced his choice of institution. It is important to note

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[17] Undergraduate science courses, across all higher education institutions are more expensive in terms of tuition fees and laboratory expenses.

here that social class is a significant intersectional factor. While Kamal's father is engaged as an agricultural labourer on farms, both of Neil's parents, and his uncle are employed in Haryana's state police (law enforcement). Although both students are from marginalised caste communities, there is considerable difference in their social class, access to financial resources and the cultural practices at home. While Kamal, is seeking advice from uncles, Neil said that his parents often discussed educational and career options with the children in the family. Cumulatively both young Dalit men have managed to access higher education, but their experiences of access are differently shaped by how social class intersects the barriers and limitations experienced by them. Within a context where economic capital is limited, Kamal (SiDC) and Neil (SDC) are mobilising different kinds of social capital to access information. They are mobilising their social capital to address limited access to economic capital.

Although the financial cost of higher education is a significant consideration for families, it is rarely evoked as a form of support in the narratives. Deepika and Esha (Deepika's cousin), both of whom participated in the study, and both of whom are some of the first women in their village to access the sampled rural college (SiDC) in the adjoining village, said that they preferred this government co-educational college to the private women's college in the city purely due to financial considerations (see 8.3.3). However, this was not a common trend. None of the other young women who participated in this study and chose government colleges closer to home explicitly cited financial consideration as the primary concern. Nevertheless, it is likely that this is a significant consideration since the colleges sampled in this study cater to the higher education needs of the most marginalised families, most of whom are accessing higher education with significantly limited budgets.

While the decisions in favour of a government college closer to home, or the preference to send girls in the village to the same college through a sheltered and safe chartered bus are motivated by socio-cultural concerns of the parents, there may have been financial considerations which were not being verbalised. Sending

daughters to a private women's college which has higher tuition fees and an equally expensive chartered and safe bus service is based on the cultural preferences of families in Haryana who wish to monitor and control the "chastity" and "honour" of their daughters (Chowdhry 2005 and 2010). This socially approved routes though which young women can access higher education is more expensive financially and is socially perceived to mitigate the risk to the "honour" and "prestige" of the family. In this context, young women and their families are investing a relatively higher degree of economic capital to address a gendered barrier to access higher education.

Since my participants rarely acknowledged financial considerations as a significant factor of their own accord, I often found myself directly asking whether their decisions were financially influenced. Financial constraints were usually not verbalised with ease. However, there were a couple of narratives where participants have expressed that their parents supported their access to higher education by paying their college fees and travel costs, or had agreed to fund their plans to further post-graduate education and coaching costs to prepare for competitive examinations. Some of the young men eventually said that their parents similarly supported their sisters' access to higher education, in order to express to me that their parents are not gendered in their educational aspirations for their children. For instance, Lal (SiDC) said, "my father even took loans to pay for elder sisters' education [in nursing]". This is a conscious effort on his part to illustrate his view that his parents were not sexist in their support towards their children's higher education.

The impact of financial considerations on a family's educational decisions can be observed in the following excerpts from my interview with Om (SDC);

> I: Why only [apply to] this college?
> Om: Travel was the reason. That time the situation was such that I could not go out much.
> I: What kind of a situation was that?

Om: Mostly a financial reason.

I: But your sisters were also studying.

Om: We could not manage all that together.

Prem (SDC) also said that he felt that a government college, which is not very expensive and closer to home, was preferred over private colleges and more prestigious colleges in bigger cities at the undergraduate level. He shared his opinion that it was wiser to invest more resources (economic capital) at the post-graduate level in better institutions in a bigger city. He obviously assumed that a post-graduate degree from a bigger city even though it would require greater investment of resources (time and money) would exponentially improve the potential for post-graduate employment.

The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) observed that more women than men prioritised colleges which were closest to home along with the availability of a safe commute. This indicates that the gendered difference in the choice of institution for young women due to socio-cultural concerns requires relatively sequestered higher education experiences for women which are more likely to be more expensive, requiring more economic capital. This social perception is rooted in the colonial history of introducing education for women in the sequestered or *Zenana* spaces in elite homes (see 2.4.2). This socio-cultural basis for financing higher education for young women is not necessarily geared towards employment in the same manner as it is for young men. It is primarily concerned with seeking to develop and maintaining gendered cultural capital such as appearances of honour and respectability in the community.

It is also interesting to note here that the birth order of the undergraduate participants made a significant impact on financing the participants' educational trajectory. Prem (SDC), a young man from a poor family said,

I am able to come to college because my *bhaiyya* [elder brother] did not go to college and earned money for the family

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Here the elder brother seems to have made a decision to discontinue his education and become the eldest son who was financially supporting the household and his younger brother's access to higher education. It was observed that young women who had older siblings (brother or sister) who had accessed higher education found greater support within the family to access higher education. The presence of older siblings in the educational narratives of undergraduate students is significant. While parents and siblings both support access to higher education, older siblings often also become sources of inspiration, information and advice. This will be explored in greater detail in the sections on inspiration and information.

6.1.4 Developing gendered cultural capital to access higher education

The middle-class narratives reported in global north contexts such as the UK reflect the assumption, within that context, that that accessing higher education was somehow 'natural' (Bathmaker et al. 2016). This assumption was not so "natural" in the narratives of my participants' families. Several participants, especially young women undergraduates, made reference to being a "good" student who is perceived as being single minded and being focused only on academics. A similar trope of exceptional academic performance in school, motivating children of working-class families to access higher education is reported in the UK (ibid.).

However, this pattern where the family acknowledges the academic achievements of their children, especially girls, is not gender neutral. Some of the parents of young women who participated in the study expressed great pride in the academic performance and single-minded focus on education they observed in their daughter. For instance, Deepika's (SiDC) grandmother shared,

> Yes, she studies very well. Very well she studies. The children are alright. Goes her own way and comes back her own way [indicating that she is not looking around or getting distracted]. She works hard.

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The focus on academic study is based on the social understanding that, since the adolescent girl or young woman is only intent on the pursuit of academics, she will not have time to develop friendships and relationships with any young men in her vicinity. This is intimately linked with a patriarchal preoccupation with feminine chastity (Chakravarti 1993, Kandiyoti 1988). A similar pride was not observed among parents of young men who participated in the study.

Additionally, several participants said that they had been greatly self-motivated and had worked hard to obtain "good marks" in school in order to access higher education. It is important to note that Deepika (SiDC) and Esha (SiDC) were among the first women in their respective villages to access higher education. Their parents and grandparents said that they had trust in the "character" of their daughters and were not "worried" about any possible negative social perception in the village regarding their daughter or the social environment of the co-educational college where young men and women were observed to inter-mingle. Although several of the participants' parents, without being solicited, said that they had great "trust" in their daughter, they continued to closely monitor the movements of their daughters when they were outside the home.

Thus, in order to garner and maintain support to access higher education, young women need to demonstrate good academic performance and actively manage social monitoring or chaste behaviour (Singh 2013). The social perceptions or reputation of an educational institution and how it might affect the behaviour and reputations of its student were a significant concern. This was also voiced by several participants of the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021). In my study, Jaya's (SDC) mother said that as a girl accessing higher education, she had to be very careful not to become associated with any untoward incident or rumour. Meanwhile, Kajal (SDC), said that her teachers in school had advised her parents to send her to a college. These continued performances of being a moral daughter and ideal student on the part of young women seem to elicit support from the family as they access higher education. These performances by young women

indicate that they have reflexively identified the family as a key source of support in access to higher education.

In conclusion, parents support their children's access to higher education in several ways. This is significantly influenced by the gender regime operating within the family. For instance, it was observed that when parents were supporting or approving the decision to access higher education, they were seeking to be "better" in terms of cultural and economic capital. In terms of gender, when parents were seeking better futures through accessing higher education, mothers were in particular, referring to their own personal experience of being denied access to education as children. This too is a reflection of how women in Haryana experience neglect during their childhood (Agrawal et al. 2013). The support and approval from parents were in most cases accompanied by parents investing economic capital in their higher education tuition fees and other allied expenses such as the commute. Importantly, several young women's schooling and higher education were being supported by their maternal uncles. This is a gendered pattern in northern India and Haryana, where maternal uncles are involved in the education and marriage of their nieces. This also reflects gendered inheritance practices and how young women are dependent on their natal families, after they marry (Chowdhry 2011d, Dube 1988, Karve 1953). This section also observed that young women were actively garnering gendered support to access higher education by performing the identity of an ideal and determined student with a morally upright character.

6.2 Inspirational figures of social and cultural capital

This section examines how different individuals motivated and influenced undergraduate students to pursue higher education, and their choice of subject and courses. This is different from individuals informing, advising, supporting or steering educational choices. The prime feature of the individuals considered in this section is that they are *points of reference* for the participant or the family members of the participant. These individuals might often simultaneously play other roles such as being a source of information and advice. Several of the individuals identified as sources of inspirations might not even be aware that they

are inspiring the undergraduate student's educational trajectory. Nevertheless, these inspiring individuals were of great importance to individual undergraduate students as they were inspiring the participant and their family's perceptions of the choices which were available to them.

Additionally, this section examines the gendered relationship between the undergraduate student or family member and the source of inspiration. It is observed that individuals are often inspired by another individual of the same gender identity and role within the gender regime. For instance, young men often identified older brothers or male cousins as figures of inspiration which shaped their choice of discipline and careers. They were often enticed by the employment of older brothers in state-funded jobs. On the other hand, young women often referred to the educational choices and experiences of older sisters and female cousins. This has mixed implications. When one young woman accesses higher education, she is creating a new manifestation of the existing gender regime. When other young women follow the same pathway or educational trajectory, they are then simply reproducing the gender regime established by the inspiring young woman as a socially acceptable gendered educational choice. This means that challenging the gender regime from within the regime runs the risk of simply extending the gender regime to new areas of social existence. These new formats or retraditionalised (Adkins 1999) gender regimes continue to perpetuate inequalities. Reproduction of an established educational trajectory involves making a choice rather than engaging in what Hirschmann (1998) calls formulating a choice. In light of this conundrum the section also goes on to examine cases in which inspiration is cited across genders.

6.2.1 The Trailblazing participants

Of a total of twenty-six undergraduate participants, eight were first in their families, having no older siblings or cousins who had accessed higher education before them. Of these eight, only three are men. Out of a total of 11 undergraduate women participating in the study, five young women were the first in their larger extended family group to access higher education. On the other hand, out of a

total of fifteen young men, only three were the first in their larger extended family group to access higher education.

The sampling of participants for this study only considered gender and caste group category to recruit a variety of participants. Sampling was not determined by the educational background of the family. However, the presence of a larger proportion of trailblazing young women is interesting within the context of gendered inequalities in higher education participation in the state. The educational reports from the state and central government data indicate that a greater number of young women are accessing higher education in the state than young men (see. 4.4.2). This gendered trend of the oldest child in the family, who is a young woman, accessing higher education, is reflective of a larger change in terms of access to higher education in Haryana.

Several of the young women among my undergraduate participants were the first in their family and village to access higher education and have inspired other young women. FIF students' experiences explored by O'Shea (2020) were mostly mature students, whereas the trailblazing students identified in this study have freshly graduated from schooling. While literature on FIF students (O'Shea 2020) accessing higher education explores experiences of barriers and struggles, the trailblazers being identified in this study are not only FIF they are also inspiring younger siblings and cousins in the family.

The narratives of these trailblazing participants are noteworthy as they were often the first to take the initiative towards accessing higher education and to establish new educational pathways and aspirations within the family. This is an important empirical finding of this study. Trailblazers such as Deepika and Esha (SiDC), shared how they have influenced the educational choices made by the family. They said that they are now aware of the different qualities of education being made available in government and private schools accessible to them, and have successfully advocated sending Esha's younger brother to a private school. They said that this might be a better choice. They have become a point of reference in

terms of both social and cultural capital within their family and community. While
they are developing their own personal social, economic and cultural capital, they
are also gradually becoming sources of social and cultural capital within their
gendered family and kinship networks.

The next section on older siblings and cousins who have inspired the
undergraduate students participating in this study will further explore the
significance of these trailblazing individuals. The trailblazing participants are
significant as their narratives potentially identify individuals within the family
who can facilitate ways of overcoming limitations such as not being embedded
with knowledge and experience of higher education. Individuals outside the
family too may be identified who can facilitate mobilisation of different kinds of
capitals to access higher education.

The location and nature of relationships that these facilitating individuals have
with the trailblazing participant can potentially reshape the traditional image of
the family as a site where barriers to education are active and can be overcome.
The patrifocal model of families portrayed in the work of Mukhopadhyay and
Seymour (1994) illustrate how extended family members, such as aunts and
uncles and daughters-in-law, make space to support the needs of children and the
older members of the family. The previous section, for instance, elaborated the
gendered relationship between maternal uncles and nieces. It must be noted that
these nieces were often the first daughters in the family to access higher
education. This observation is identifying a new gendered relationship within
extended family networks as a key social capital which is facilitating young
women's access to higher education.

The participating trailblazers were also actively performing the role of an inspirer
within their family for younger siblings and cousins. For instance, Jaya (SDC) has
overcome opposition and is the family trailblazer. During the home visit, it was
found that her younger sister was also working towards completing her schooling
and accessing higher education. However, this was not an easy or smooth process.

Her mother continues to be anxious that Jaya and the family's social reputation and honour should not be adversely affected by Jaya's accessing higher education. The role of older siblings and cousins is significant as students and families contemplate accessing higher education; trailblazers occupy a significant position during this process. The following section further explores how siblings and cousins can inspire access to higher education.

6.2.2 Older siblings and cousins

Several of my participants said that they had older siblings who had accessed higher education. These participants were benefitted by the fact that their older siblings had already made a significant foray into higher education and eased the decision-making process when it was their turn to contemplate higher education choices and decisions within the family. It was observed that a majority of these older siblings and cousins were aware of the fact that their own educational experiences were useful to the undergraduate students. They used their cultural capital and allied experiences and observations to inform and advice both the undergraduate students and the parents of the undergraduate students towards particular subjects, courses and institutions. For instance, Hema (SiDC) said,

> My brother was doing his B.Com [Bachelors in Commerce] so he suggested it to me, that I could also do the same.

Similarly, Jaspal (SiDC) said,

> *Bhaiyya* [elder cousin brother who is the family trailblazer] kept telling us that we should go to college. 'Get good marks now, in class and in plus two [class 12] to later go to college. The better your number [marks] are you can go to a better college'.

Since most of the participants were first generation students to access higher education in their families, older siblings and cousins were crucial nodes of inspiration, support and information. Their role as sources of information is

discussed in greater detail in the next section. This section will focus on how the trailblazing siblings and cousins have influenced the gendered aspirations and educational decisions being made by the undergraduate student and their families.

Bobby (MDC) said that he had been greatly inspired and advised by his older male cousin who was in the armed forces. Similarly, young women and their parents were motivated and inspired by the educational choices being made by female cousins and nieces. While it appears that inspiration is gendered in a parallel pattern, when women inspire women and men inspire men, there are some significant narratives which stray from this pattern. For instance, Hritik (MDC) said that he decided to choose commerce subjects and the same undergraduate course as his older sister, who was the first person in their family to access higher education (see 8.5). He said that his older sister was an exceptional student and that she had been tutoring him since his school days. This narrative acknowledges the support that families give to young women who demonstrate academic excellence to access higher education. This in turn also inspired this young man, who confessed that he was not greatly interested in accessing higher education.

This particular narrative is interesting on multiple levels. At one level, we observe a new gendered pattern in access to higher education, where young women are establishing educational choices and patterns within the family. At the same time, pioneering young women are performing gendered responsibilities which are often associated with mothering and educational practices within the family. The older sister in this family is in effect performing the role which is often played by educated wives within a companionate marriage in modern India (Chakravarti 2012, Donner 2006, Cooper 2017), where the educated mother is responsible for the educational support and experiences of the children, especially the sons in the family. At another level, the new educational patterns and choices established by the elder sister reflects a gendered pattern of access to higher education which is particular to the social context in Haryana, where more young women than young men are enrolled in undergraduate courses. This has significant implications for

post-graduate employment and matrimonial preferences of individuals and
families. For example, this has significant implications for how graduates seek
employment and for the matrimonial alliances which are socially acceptable for
young men and women who have accessed higher education (Sudarshan 2018).

The educational pathway which had been established by Hritik's (MDC) older
sister made entry into higher education the new norm within the family. His elder
sister's trailblazing entry into higher education has developed the cultural and
social capital available to the family. It created a new assumption that schooling is
to be followed by higher education. Hritik (MDC) said that he was also
encouraged by his stepfather to access higher education, as this would also
improve his future marriage prospects. It could also be argued that, in such cases,
the macro-level improvement in the participation of women in higher education is
having a micro-level impact on educational pathways of young men who might
not be academically inclined. This is an important observation in Haryana, as the
records from Haryana state government and the Indian central government bodies
indicate that women are now outnumbering men in undergraduate courses across
disciplines in the state. This observation indicates the development of gendered
cultural capital within the family and a retraditionalized (Adkins 1999) pattern of
gendered access to higher education in the state.

6.2.3 Inspiring the parents

While older siblings and cousins inspire the educational trajectories of
undergraduate participates, they were also important points of reference for the
parents. This can have both positive and negative outcomes. One particular
instance can be observed in the narrative of Mohan (SiDC). He said that his
father, who is the dominant decision-making figure in the family, often compared
his academic performance with that of his sisters. He said,

> So I did not pass one paper [module]. Then father said – 'your three sisters
> never failed, but how did you fail?'

While it is commendable that the father is supportive of the education of his daughters, Mohan said that this comparison often created tension in his relationship with his father. Comparison between siblings and cousins is a common pattern in Indian families which can be reflected in the rather popular expression "*Sharmaji ka beta*" (Mr Sharma's son), which refers to another person in the locality or family network who has performed exceptionally in terms of educational performance and gainful employment. This popular phrase aptly signifies a popular understanding of how Indian parents are motivated by the educational performance and employment of other people's children and often put pressure on their own children to follow the same pattern of education and employment. This was also observed earlier (see 6.1.1) when it was observed that Geeta's (SiDC) mother enrolled her daughters in higher education following the new cultural norm established in the village in terms of young women accessing higher education.

Several participants identified inspiring individuals who had actively been involved in shaping their educational choices and decisions. This interest to inspire younger siblings was observed in the narratives of some of the undergraduate participants in this study. Being inspired by older siblings and cousins, and inspiring younger siblings, is largely influenced by the patrifocal gender arrangements which have been observed and reported in Haryana. The siblings, cousins and participants themselves acknowledge that their decision to access higher education needed to be socially approved and supported by parents and elders in their families and communities. They understood that they could not act as completely autonomous individuals. In the previous section, I have argued that the limited nature of support which is available to a majority of my participants who are the first generation in their family to access higher education, had made them, in some ways, more independent and autonomous. However, this development of independence and autonomous confidence towards initiating access to higher education is relative. The relative development of confidence and initiative is bound by the understanding that support of the family is a vital ingredient in their educational trajectories. For instance, Hritik's (MDC) older

sister, who was a family trailblazer in accessing undergraduate and post-graduate education, said that while parents actively support and finance children's access to higher education, parents do not allow children to be enrolled in institutions which are deemed to be too far from home (see 8.5.3).

In conclusion, this section of the chapter has found that students and parents are inspired by young trailblazing students who are the first in their families to access higher education. Additionally, undergraduate students have recognised that they have been inspired to access higher education, and in several instances follow the same educational trajectory as their older siblings. This is also greatly influenced by the gender identity of the trailblazer and sibling and their relationship with the parents and student. Trailblazers and older siblings who have accessed higher education contribute to the cultural and social capital accessible to the family and they have contextual knowledge and experience of mobilising different kinds of capitals to access higher education. Trailblazers and older siblings in the family who have accessed higher education are also significant sources of information, knowledge and experience of higher education which will be discussed in the next section.

6.3 Information: repositories of social and cultural capital required to access higher education

Since a majority of the undergraduate students were part of the first generation in their respective families and extended families to enter higher education, limited cultural capital and a lack of first-hand information about higher education from parents in the educational trajectories is expected (Slack et al. 2014, Häuberer and Brändle 2018). Most students participating in this study sought information about the different kinds of courses and the different institutions which they can access, and how they could apply to become students. This pattern is reflected in the literature which refers to the role played by families of students accessing higher education for the first time (ibid.). The lack of cultural capital and knowledge often places the students in a position of deficit which occurs around a silence (O'Shea 2015) within the family regarding higher education experiences and expectations. However, there is evidence in the narratives of students that they

have been able to gather information and knowledge about higher education and
career goals through the larger social network available to the different members
of their family. In several cases, individuals identified as sources of inspiration are
simultaneously sources of information and advice to both participants and their
family members.

In this section, the individuals who had been recognised by participants as sources
of information and advice regarding choice of schooling and higher education are
considered. I focus on (1) the gender of the individuals providing information and
advice and (2) the nature of their gendered relationship with the undergraduate
student. Among a majority of the participants who are first generation students in
their respective families to enter higher education, it is observed that parents have
expressed support for or advised in favour of a college closer to home. In this
section I will also examine how the nature of information and advice made
available to students and their siblings is both reproducing and restructuring
gendered educational regimes in the state.

6.3.1 Parents

While the literature predicts that the "un-embedded" (Häuberer and Brändle 2018)
parents are unlikely to have personal experience of higher education, several of
my participants said that they received information and advice regarding higher
education from individuals who are their parents' friends, colleagues or clients.
For instance, Chandni (MDC) said that her parents were acquainted with one of
the professors working at MDC, and he had informed them about the application
process and academic performance of the college. Jaya (SDC) said that her
paternal aunt and her aunt's husband had given her the information regarding
SDC and the application and admission processes. While a majority of the
participants said that their parents were supportive of their pursuit of higher
education, parents offered little or no information or experiences of accessing
higher education. The parents were usually only able to advise their children to
choose a college closer to home or those which were considered (by word of
mouth) to be located in a safer location.

On the other hand, Neil (SDC) explained that both his parents are in the local police force and that they had shared their experiences and observations at work with him and his siblings. He said,

> They told me about how many papers are there. Their department is only such that all the time…you know people talk about the department where they work. So they kept telling me about the responsibilities and the work to be done. So this created an interest in me to do something like this in the future.

Later in the interview he explained,

> My father tells me about the challenges in that profession [as a law enforcement officer]. Sometimes there is a murder, sometimes something else. There is only a narrow scope of change in the police profession. You can only change something within that department. But if you go into IAS [Indian Administrative Service] then you have access to different kind of fields to work in. For example, the role of an election commissioner, or a collector, water or electricity related problems. If these basic facilities reach our villages, then there are a lot of children who have intelligence, then they will also get opportunities in the future.

This had inspired him to access higher education and pursue a more prestigious and competitive career as a public administrator in the government. Even though both his parents had not experienced higher education, the particular context of the parents' employment gave his parents opportunities to interact with colleagues and co-workers with different social and cultural capitals and the knowledge to inform their children educational choices and decisions. Similar observations have been made by Brooks (2003) who observed that parents' workplace was an alternate source of "hot" knowledge about higher education. For Neil, the occupational social capital of the parents had not given any additional

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information, it has, nevertheless, enabled parents themselves to become a source
of inspiration and support. The discussions within the family regarding the
parents' work experiences and observations motivated the educational and career
aspirations of the student. A couple of parents said that they sought information
from their colleagues or business clients about appropriate higher education
choices available to their children. This, however, is quite limited, since a
significant number of my participants' parents were involved in blue collar jobs
with limited social capital. In such a situation, siblings and cousins who have
accessed higher education become a significant source of information.

6.3.2 Trailblazing siblings and cousins

Although parents facilitate the student's access to individuals who can provide
them with information and advice regarding higher education, siblings and
cousins also play a significant role as source of "hot" knowledge regarding higher
education courses and institutions (Slack et al. 2014). Several of my participants
had siblings and cousins who had been enrolled as undergraduate students in the
same college. In fact, Jaspal's (SiDC) wife and some of his younger brothers and
sisters were also enrolled in the same college. While Jaspal and his wife were both
keen to access higher education, their entry into higher education and their choice
of college was greatly influenced by Jaspal's eldest male cousin, who was the first
in their joint family to access higher education. This trailblazing eldest cousin had
a significant role in inspiring and informing all the younger children in the family
to access higher education. He has become a point of reference in terms of both
cultural and social capital within the family.

Similarly, the significance of the important role played by older siblings can be
seen in the narratives of undergraduate participants. For instance, Hritik's (MDC)
mother said that when Hritiks's elder sister, who was the first in the family to
enter higher education, enrolled in college, they had faced multiple barriers
(Castleman and Page 2013). She explained,

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> I did not have any ID … there was nothing, no ration card, no *aadhaar*
> card, not even a PAN card [different cards issued by the government for
> subsidised food rations, identification and taxation issued by the
> government]…I had a lot of difficulties.

One of the most difficult barriers they faced was the need to produce
documentation regarding their residence, identity and a local bank account. This
process was considerably easier when her son, the undergraduate participant of
this study, was applying for higher education in the sampled college. This first
attempt and the struggle involved during the application and enrolment process
into higher education helped the family to be better prepared for the second
sibling with information and know-how regarding expectations and the access
process to enter higher education institutions. It was also revealed that Hritik's
application and enrolment experience was additionally facilitated by his sister's
social network. However, this is not a straightforward and gender-neutral
transmission of information and knowledge between siblings and cousins. The
following section on steering educational choices explores how the educational
choices of several of the young women who participated in the study were
dominated by their brothers and male cousins.

The trailblazing sisters and cousins, while in themselves figures of reference and
inspiration, were often also sources of information. For instance, Geeta (SiDC)
said that she was initially enrolled in the same private women's college where her
elder sister was an alumna. A majority of the participants' educational trajectories
mirrored the trailblazing educational trajectories established by their elder sisters.
For instance, Sachin (SDC) also was enrolled in the same college as his elder
sister. However, this pioneering entry by the family into higher education is not
gender neutral. The daughters were often encouraged to enter private women's
colleges, which are socially perceived to be safer for chaste young women, since
the participants and their family members believe that in women's colleges their
daughters are less likely to encounter or interact with men outside their own
families. Nevertheless, the pioneering step taken by the elder sister helped Geeta's

(SiDC) educational trajectory. Geeta was eventually able to gain confidence and autonomy to formulate her choice (Hirschmann 1998) and to negotiate a transfer to a government co-educational college to pursue her interest in sports. She was able to invest the cultural and social capital developed by her elder sister's access and experience of higher education to formulate her own unique choice to pursue higher education and sports.

This pattern of deviations from established educational pathways is gendered. In Geeta's case, the educational trajectories of both the older and younger sister reproduce and recreate gendered educational pathways. The initial pioneering movement involves a compromise with the gender regime operating in their family and village. However, over time, the daughters are seen to be slowly changing the regime and educational pathways available to young people in the family and the village. On the other hand, participants such as Ajay (MDC) and Bobby (MDC) said that they got information regarding higher education from an older male cousin who was employed in the armed forces. The participant said that he was hoping to replicate the career and success pathway established by his cousin. This is congruent with the gender regime within families in Haryana regarding access to higher education and graduate employment for young men.

6.3.3 Friends and seniors

The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) found that a significant number of young men and women sought information and advice from their friends and seniors from school to understand the higher educational choices available to them. The FCF Phase I study (ibid.) found that more young women consulted parents than young men, who tended to consult peers and friends. Raj (SDC) is one such example. He said,

> So I chose to do it here because even my friends and seniors from schools are in this college. They had also advised me for this college.

In my study, I observed that the influence of peers such as classmates, friends and
seniors from school is more observable in narratives regarding the choice of
subject both at school and higher education. For instance, Geeta (SiDC) who was
a young woman keen to pursue sports as a vocation said,

> I had first enrolled in B.A. since it is considered to be easier and can be
> done as I pursue my interest in sports. Then my friends said that I had
> Commerce in class 11 and 12 because of which B.Com will not be
> difficult for me. So I tried for 2-3 days and I felt that it was not so tough. I
> can do B.Com with sports. So I enrolled in B.Com

A couple of my participants who were young men pursuing science and
commerce courses, said that they decided to select science or commerce subjects
on the basis of similar choices being made by their classmates and friend circles.
For instance, Bobby (MDC) said, "I took science. All the children in school were
taking so I too took science." A similar pattern was not observed in the subject
choices being made by most of the young women who participated in the study.
Some women like Deepika and Esha (SiDC) did not have a choice in terms of
discipline in high school (class 11 and 12) as the government school in their
village only offered humanities. One the other hand, Kajal (SDC) says,

> I took commerce in 12th because I felt I am not capable enough to take
> science and for arts stream Hindi language is compulsory which I couldn't
> do so only commerce was left as an option.

Most of the young women who participated in the study shared that they chose
subjects which were of interest to them and then explored how these choices
could lead to employment. These choices were often not shaped with a particular
career in mind. On the other hand, young men's choice of subject was aften made
after considering future employment opportunities. This is congruent with
literature on gender, education and employment patterns in India. The literature,
explored in the second chapter, on young women accessing higher education in

India states that a majority of young women accessing undergraduate courses in
India do not enter the workforce (e.g. Sudarshan 2017).

6.3.4 The local cyber-café: a gendered public space where educational decisions are made

Nearly all of my participants'
narratives of accessing higher
education, especially regarding
the application process and forms,
involved the person who runs the
local cyber-café in their village or
neighbourhoods. It is interesting
to note that this person and shop
had a significant role to play in
the local circulation of
information regarding higher
education and state-funded

Figure 6.1 A Cyber-cafe

employment opportunities in India. The cyber-café is a common sight (see figure
6.1) across rural and urban Haryana and India more generally. These shops
usually provide a variety of goods and services. Apart from providing access to
the internet and computers, they often provide printouts and xerox (or
photocopying) services. Most undergraduate participants' narratives of access to
higher education feature the cyber-café. The cyber-café is a popular site where
students and family members fill in their higher education application forms for a
small fee. For instance, Kajal (SDC) said,

> When we went to fill the form at the [cyber-café] shop, they told us about
> the cut off lists [eligibility to apply] of different colleges.

The Haryana state government which funds and governs the sampled universities
and colleges has an online application form. Students interested in enrolling in the

colleges are obliged to fill an online form which is then printed and submitted at
the college of interest. The narratives of my participants indicate that the owner of
the cyber-café has knowledge about the paperwork or certificates required for
applications to higher education institutions and state (government) employment
opportunities. For instance, Sachin (SDC) said, "My friend's [cyber-café] shop is
there and there is always a discussion." They often assisted the students and
families to fill in the application forms and gave them information about different
institutions. Since several people in the cyber-café's catchment area would go to
this shop to fill forms for employment and educational purposes, there is a lot of
discussion and information circulating at this site, making it a significant site
where families are accessing information and advice regarding different higher
education choices. The people who run the cyber-café were believed by
participants and family members to have significant information about the
application process to different educational and employment opportunities. They
occasionally advised students about the different educational courses which make
applicants eligible to apply for state government jobs of different kinds in the
future.

The owners or individuals providing services in these cyber-cafes, who were
identified as sources of information by the participants, were all men. This fact is
significant, since most of the narratives of young women mention that their
application process in the cyber-café and in the college was not a solo endeavour.
Nearly all of them were accompanied by either their fathers, brothers or male
cousins. However, this pattern was not observed in the narratives of
undergraduate men. This reflects the patrifocal gender regime operating in
Haryana, wherein young men experience less restriction and more freedom in
social spaces than young women (Chowdhry 2005). A few of the young men who
participated in the study, such as Sachin (SDC), gave great credit to this person in
their successful enrolment in the sampled college. A couple of the young men said
that they felt that this person is a close friend or a brother who is not related to
them by blood. This is significant social capital based on a relationship of mutual

trust and reciprocity. The service provider at the cyber-café even featured in the narratives of participants whose siblings have been students of the same college.

Although the cyber-café and the service provider at the cyber-café are not always members of the family, their role and their gendered interaction with students and members of their families reflect the gendered pattern of social interactions in Haryana. A relationship with the person providing services at a cyber-café can be considered a significant form of social capital aiding access to higher education and future employment opportunities. The fact that young women are accompanied by their fathers and/or brothers had a significant impact on the nature of choices and decisions which are made by the students. Young women such as Amrita (MDC), Hema (SiDC) and Madhu (SDC) said that their brothers who accompanied them or filled their forms dictated their educational decisions for them.

In conclusion this section of the chapter identified different sources of information which help students and families access higher education. Most students participating in this study are first-generation students, and their families are often low on cultural capital in terms of first-hand experience and knowledge of higher education, However, families are able to use a variety of social capital through networks accessed by trailblazers, siblings, friends and other extended family members such as uncles and aunts. It also noted rare instances, where parents were seeking information at their workplace. This section also identified the cyber-café as a gendered public space which is an important site where information regarding various higher education institutions and courses is available. The next section on steering focusses on how different family members engage in different kinds of actions to steer or influence the educational decision made regarding the undergraduate students' higher education.

6.4 Steering choices: gendered mobilisations of capitals within the family
The previous sections of this chapter have described how families and the different individuals who are part of their social network provided support, inspiration and information to the undergraduate student. This section focuses on

how the different individuals involved in the educational trajectory of the
participants acted in different ways to influence or manoeuvre the educational
decisions made by the family and the student. This section examines individuals
who have successfully or unsuccessfully steered the educational trajectories of
undergraduate students. It explores how the efforts to steer are motivated by
gendered roles and obligations within the family, such as the gendered sense of
obligation felt by daughters and sons towards their parents, and the gendered
emotional ties which steer young women and men to institutions closer to home.

This includes examination of instances in which either a father or brother (or a
male relative) have made the decisions, such as filling forms and enrolling the
student with or without considering the choices or interest expressed by the
student, instances where family members have expressed opposition to the student
accessing higher education, instances where the family members were either
convinced or over time developed interest in steering students towards higher
education and, most importantly, where family members or individuals actively
advocated access to higher education. The gendered position of the individuals
concerned and their gendered relationship with the students are of interest here, as
they are involved in creating and re-creating the patrifocal gender regime in
Haryana.

6.4.1 Mobilising cultural capital to garner support
As discussed in the section on support, a majority of parents' support for their
daughters accessing higher education was significantly bolstered by their
academic performance in school. This in turn can potentially influence how much
parents might be willing to invest in the higher education of daughters. Mullen
(2009) found that occasionally working-class students in the UK had to convince
their parents about the benefit of a particular elite institution. However, such a
narrative was not observed among the educational trajectories of my participants.
The young men often said that their parents gave them freedom to choose an
appropriate college for themselves. However, when directly asked, these young
men said that they did not apply for colleges in bigger metropolitan cities as they

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are more expensive, and they preferred to invest more in their post-graduate education. This awareness of financial capabilities limited the variety of higher education choices they perceived as affordable and available to them. Awareness about the barriers and opportunities available to an individual is a significant aspect of agency, which will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.

In terms of awareness, young women were equally aware of the financial considerations behind choosing a nearby, convenient college versus a more elite college in a metropolitan city. However, they did not immediately identify the cost as the primary factor steering their educational choice. They might not have wanted to directly acknowledge this limitation. It is possibly easier for women to articulate choice in terms of emotional attachment as seen in the narratives of Chandni (MDC) and her mother where they rationalised their choice to stay with the family. However, a narrative-discursive (Morison and Macleod 2013) analysis of Deepika's (SiDC) narrative is indicative of how a usually sensitive conversation on financing access to higher education was simultaneously utilised to convince her family to permit her access to higher education (See 8.3). She worked hard to gather support within the family. She worked hard to demonstrate single minded focus on academics during schooling and received merit-based scholarships both in school and in the college. These scholarships, apart from being an institutionalised form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), subsidised the cost of higher education tuition fees. Interestingly, she said that, when contemplating access to higher education, she chose to apply to the cheaper co-educational rural government college, rather than the more expensive private women's universities. This position bolsters her educational aspirations with the moral high ground of not being a drain on the family finances. Along with the academic merit, the scholarships and the moral higher ground of being an ideal daughter to the family were very effective means by which she was able to garner and maintain support within the family to access higher education. This degree of effort to maintain an ideal, chaste and academic identity within the family was not observed in the narratives of any of the participants who are men. There is a

subtly gendered and significant difference in the educational perceptions and
means by which young women and men are accessing higher education.

6.4.2 Manoeuvring within the family to forge novel educational pathways

As noted earlier, Jaya (SDC) said that she received support from her paternal aunt
and uncle who had a social relationship with the college principal. The paternal
aunt and uncle were able to support her application and admission process into the
college, in spite of opposition from her stepfather and maternal uncle. This
process was quite complicated within the family. Her stepfather was opposed to
the idea of her going to college. She also faced discouragement from her maternal
uncle, who had supported the schooling and funded the marriage of her elder
sisters. During her interview she said,

> My *bua* [paternal aunt] is married here in this city, so she told us about
> the government college. She said that the fees here are minimal. I agreed
> to this and with her help got admission into this college... My *phuphaji*
> [paternal aunt's husband] has studied in this college so he came along with
> me and spoke to Principal Ma'am… My *bua* suggested this college closer
> to her home where she can help me in case there is a problem and papa
> agreed.

Jaya's paternal aunt's discourse regarding availability of family members near the
college adds to the strategy being used by young women who are mobilising
familial social networks to enhance perceptions of safety and honour to garner
support to access higher education.

While Jaya had made significant efforts to manoeuvre family members in order to
enrol in college, Amrita (MDC) and Madhu (SDC) shared narratives where they
chose to stay with the family and enrol in the nearest college which was more
acceptable to their parents. Amrita said that this was a decision imposed on her by
her male cousin against her own wishes. Her parents, along with her male cousin,
were keen that she stay at home. Amrita was keen to go to another city like her

female cousin. Her mother dismissed this option by saying that the female cousin
had to go to another city as her application was not accepted at a higher education
institution nearer to home. As shown in Chapter 1, according to Chandni (MDC),
she had been accepted in a prestigious college in New Delhi and had even figured
out accommodation with relatives in the city, but had eventually decided to stay at
home as she did not want to live away from her parents and siblings. Chandni's
mother, on the other hand, revealed that her father never wanted the daughter to
go to another city. The narratives of Amrita and Chandni show that they have
compromised in terms of choice and location of institute in order to maintain
support from their fathers and brothers.

In contrast to the situations in which young women actively compromised and
manoeuvred to garner and maintain support within the family, four of the young
men who participated in the study said that their fathers had actively pushed them
to access higher education. It is interesting to note that all these four young men
had older sisters, who had accessed higher education. Three of these four young
men at different points in the interview revealed that they were personally not
highly academically motivated to access higher education. Two of the young men
had fathers who implicitly dominated their education choices and decisions.

Lal (SiDC) had a father who had actively supported access of higher education of
his children, wherein he had taken a loan to support the higher education of one of
the elder sisters. Lal's father was incarcerated at the time that the young man was
completing his schooling. Due to this circumstance, Lal had decided to work to
support the family. During his visits with his father at the jail, the father was
insistent about Lal enrolling in college. He finally enrolled in college after his
father was released on bail.

The fact that all the four young men had older sisters who have accessed higher
education, seemed to have created a new educational norm within the family
which is pushing sometimes uninterested young men into higher education
courses and institutions (which are of greater interest to their parents). This also

indicates that, while more young women are accessing higher education, families are increasingly interested in ensuring that the young men in the family have equal or higher institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) or educational qualifications which would help them maintain the patrifocal gender regimes and hierarchies operating in the family.

6.4.3 Choosing the higher education institution

As we have seen, a majority of the participants said that the parents were supportive but not informative about accessing higher education. Parents were rarely able to provide information regarding different courses and institutions, the career prospects of each and the application and enrolment processes. The students however consult parents and other family members about the selection of an appropriate college where they should enrol as undergraduate students. Narratives of these discussions reveal that a majority of the parents, while ambitious, were largely in favour of their children being enrolled in the nearest college. For instance, Om (SDC) explained,

> Boys go to outside colleges like [city] and [city] because it is easy for them to travel. For girls, travelling is a problem. Even the families of girls feel that if they go too far it will take them time to return home so they prefer getting them enrolled in nearby colleges.

Another key narrative observed among parents of both young men and women and is based on parents subscribing to the belief (also shown in the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) that the content and quality of education provided at different colleges are the same and that academic performance is based on the hard work and determination of the individual. The discussion on academic performance in the section on support, however, suggests that a focus on academic performance is gendered. In terms of choice of college, academic performance at times resulted in contradictory educational decisions being made by the family. This can be observed in the following excerpt from my interview with Om (SDC):

I: Your two sisters are also in the same college?

Om: The elder sister is in this college [SC\DC] while the other one is in X [a more prestigious institution in an urban centre farther away from home].

I: But she did her B.Com from here [SDC]?

Om: No she did from there [X].

I: Why did they not send the elder sister there [X]?

Om: Because they wanted her to study closer home. The younger sister has more intelligence that's why she was sent to [X].

I: How does one know that she is intelligent while the older one is not?

Om: Through marks.

While one of his elder sisters went to the same coeducational college as he had, his parents had supported another sister's enrolment in a higher status women's university farther away from home since this sister was academically very good.

Additionally, several participants, mostly young women, said that their brothers and fathers had convinced them to select the sampled college. Here, it is important to note that for four out of eleven young women, who participated in this study, an older brother or older male cousin had filled the application form for them. Three of these women said that their brothers had successfully convinced them to choose the nearest and the more convenient college. Amrita (MDC) and Madhu (SDC) said that they had wanted to be enrolled in a college in a different city, but their male cousin or elder brother did not respect their wishes and imposed their choice in favour of nearest and most convenient college.

These narratives reveal that several women's educational choices were overshadowed by their fathers and brother's manoeuvring while filling the application forms and completing enrolment procedures in the sampled colleges. At the same time, not all educational decisions made by young women were so explicitly overshadowed by their fathers and brothers. Four of the young women

who participated in the study said that they chose colleges which were nearest to home as they did not want to live away from their parents and families.

On the other hand, three of the young men who participated in the study said that they chose the nearest and most convenient college as they felt obliged to live with their parents or widowed mothers. This can be observed in the following arguments made by Dilip (MDC):

> Anywhere else would have been too far away. Also I am alone. At home there is only me. All my siblings, sisters are married, one brother is in Delhi and my *taauji's* [older paternal uncle] son has died. Now only I stay at home and study at home.

These narratives reflect a gendered and emotional pull for young men. While in essence both young women and men were making a decision to continue living with their parents and families, there is a gendered difference in the discourses utilised by the women and men. Young women alluded to a sense of emotional attachment and feelings of sadness when they contemplated living away from family; the young men did not make any emotional allusions. The educational trajectories of the young men were being limited in terms of geographical mobility by a patrifocal sense of obligation and responsibility towards parents, and the need to take care of them as they age. Young women, on the other hand, seemed to be schooled with emotional ties to the family, which in effect limits their geographical mobility outside the household. This pattern is reflective of a gender regime which places the responsibility of care for aging parent only on the sons and daughters in law and a cultural norm wherein young women stay with the family till the day they get married.

6.5 Conclusion

The four sections in this chapter demonstrate that roles regarding access to higher education are not discrete and they are subtly gendered. Patriarchy and patrifocal socialization within the families lead family members, especially parents and elder brothers to control and monitor the movement of young women and men. It

is also evident that several young women and men are resisting and re-shaping these gendered regimes within a social context and culture which is often quite limiting in nature. The experiences of participants reflect the patriarchal and patrifocal gender regime popularly practiced in Haryana. As discussed in the second chapter, caste is a significant reality and factor in the everyday lived experience of participants, in terms of application procedures and in terms of social discrimination in the educational spaces and neighbourhoods (see 1.3.1). Caste also influenced how students and family members perceive the possibility of successfully enrolling in a particular course or college. However, caste did not seem to influence the relationship between family members and the different roles each individual played within the families in my study.

This chapter has explored the different roles that the family plays in the educational trajectories of students as they tried to mobilise different kinds of capital. The chapter broadly explored four different roles that were revealed within the narratives of the participants of the study. The first section of this chapter explored how family members support the students as they access higher education. The cultural capital, in terms of educational background of the family has a significant role in limiting the kind of support that the parents are able to provide. This section explored important factors such as academic performance, gender and financial considerations which influence how the family is able to support the student's access to higher education.

The second section looked at how different groups of individuals, such as the trailblazing participants themselves, and the cousins and siblings who are educational trailblazers in the family, are inspiring the family and the student to access higher education. Trailblazers are key persons who can support (and advocate), inspire, inform and steer educational choices of other young people in the family and community. The experiences of trailblazers are also rich with knowledge regarding how to overcome barriers to accessing higher education. The third section examined four groups of individuals who were providing information to the participants as they were applying and enrolling in the sampled

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colleges. This section found that participants were receiving significant
information from the social networks accessible to their parents, trailblazing
siblings and cousins, friends and seniors from school and people owning or
providing services at the local cyber-café.

Finally, the fourth section explored the different ways in which members of the
family were supporting and opposing the undergraduate students' access to higher
education. Additionally, this section also explored how the participants
themselves have actively manoeuvred individuals within the family to garner
support. Through these four sections this chapter has explored what happens
within and around families as young women and men access higher education and
it has been found that the ways in which different family members support,
inspire, inform and steer educational choices are gendered.

In conclusion, this chapter has addressed the first research question and identified
the key roles played by families as students access higher education. It maps out
how different gendered family members are playing different roles and how
different gendered family members perform the same role in different ways. In
the process, it has identified the key role played by trailblazers within the families.
This is an important observation as most of the participants and students enrolled
in the sampled colleges are first generation students to access higher education.
The next chapter will further analyse how these roles and how the different
individuals involved in performing these roles are exercising agency.

Chapter 7 – Gendered agency and educational decisions within families

This chapter addresses the second research question regarding how different family members are performing different roles in the educational trajectories of young people, especially as families make educational decisions. This focuses on how different family members perceive the process by which their family makes educational decisions and how different gendered family members explain and rationalise the educational decisions that were made.

Agency is a concept of great significance to feminist projects trying to uncover different and contextual forces of patriarchy across the world (McNay 2004). Agency can help to unravel the structural determinism of gender regimes and social identities through exercise of self-reflection and different combinations of strategic actions and reflections. Through self-reflection and strategic action, individual actors, performing the different roles identified in the previous chapter, can improvise or veer from the prescribed script of the structure, therefore effecting change. Within the context of Haryana, a predominantly patriarchal and agricultural heritage colours the norms operating within families (Chaudhry 2005, 2010). This significantly shapes how different members of a family in Haryana are able to exercise varying degrees of agency through different sequences and combinations of actions and reflections.

Along with the experiences of participating students, this chapter focuses on the experiences of the family members and interactions observed between the students and members of their families and explores the different aspects of agency being performed within the family. The first section explores how the students and family members perceived the decision-making dynamics within the household, in terms of everyday decisions and important life decisions such as schooling and higher education. The purpose of this section is to examine how the contextual family dynamics observed within the families of the participants reflect gender regimes operating within Haryana. This therefore foregrounds the arguments made in the following two sections on reflexivity and strategic actions

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observed among the participants and family members as students access higher education. The second section on reflexivity explores how participants and family members perceive the social barriers to accessing higher education, and how they rationalise their educational choices and trajectories. The final section explores how their perceptions of family dynamics and reflections led them to mobilise different kinds of capitals. This section also examines in greater detail how the participants and their family members chose to act strategically to express their opinions and interests or chose to remain silent as their families made decisions regarding higher education. These three sections together explore how students and families, within their particular social contexts and gendered regimes, think and act strategically to access higher education. This follows the conceptualisation of a contextual, gendered and time-sensitive agency explored in the third chapter.

7.1 Family dynamics: gender regimes within which agency is being exercised
In the previous chapter I explored how different kinds of support, information and advice from family members and trailblazing individuals influenced the innovations and autonomy observed in the educational choices and trajectories of the participants. This section analyses the different gendered and generational hierarchies observed in the , as family members perform different roles such as support, information and advice. Here, I also consider my own informal non-participant observations (during home visits) of their behaviour and interactions with each other at home. These observations cumulatively trace power and authority exercised by different family members. This is based on the understanding that family dynamics within the household were represented to me by the participants and their family members, through their narratives and interactions with each other.

7.1.1 The final decision maker
In India, young people are considered adult citizens at 18 years of age; however, this legal transition into adulthood is not accompanied by self-determinism or autonomy for most young people in Indian families. This is evident in how families determine educational choices for their children, especially daughters (Sudarshan 2018, Wadhwa, Sahu et al. 2017, Gautam 2015, Verma 2014).

Patriarchal and patrifocal gender norms in Haryana and in most parts of India are based on the observation that parents wield a significant amount of power and authority over the actions and decisions made in the lives of their children, even when the children have grown into adults. This is reflected in empirical work on educational decisions and need for parental approval and support across India (Gautam 2015, Sahu et al. 2017).

This kind of patriarchal hierarchy, in terms of the power to approve and support decisions, is visible in the previous chapter, where participants were reported as saying that their parents supported or expressed approval of their decision to enter higher education. The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) also found that students felt that some of their peers, especially young women in their cohort, did not enter higher education due to lack of support from their parents. Many young men participating in my study said that their parents gave them the freedom to make their own decisions in terms of education and choice of higher education institution. For instance, Om (SDC) shares, "In terms of studies, we take our own decisions. There is no interference in that and we are allowed to do whatever we want." This was not observed among the narratives of the young women who participated in this study. Apart from these few exceptions among young men, a majority of the students who participated in this study expressed the belief that they needed the approval and support of their parents when they considered higher education and selected a college in which they wanted to enrol.

One of the young women, Chandni (MDC), whose experience of access higher education is described in chapter 1 and the previous chapter (see 6.4.2), also said that when her family had to take decisions, the parents discussed between themselves and that she follows their decisions. She explained that they offered her different options from which she could choose. At the same time, she also said that if they did not permit her to go somewhere, she did not go against their wishes. She inadvertently indicated that her parents gave her the freedom to make choices, but not to formulate her own choices (Hirschmann 1998).

However, this is not a straightforward process. We have seen that Chandni perceived that she had made the decision not to enrol in a college in Delhi, and that if she had decided to enrol in Delhi University her parents would have approved. However, her mother, in her interview, said that her father did not want her to go to Delhi. On hearing this, Chandni immediately intervened in her mother's interview with me, and said that her father has always been concerned about her even visiting friends in the same city as them, and just did not like the idea of her living separately. Her interjection during my interview with her mother was an attempt to rationalise her parents not being in favour of her enrolling in Delhi University. She seemed to be intent on communicating to me that her parents, especially her father, was not limiting her educational decisions. She wanted to reiterate that *she* had made the decision to enrol in the local government college in the same city rather than go to Delhi. She did not want me to entertain the possibility that her father might have made the decision for her. She seemed to be uncomfortable with the idea that I might perceive any lack of agency on her part.

However, this excessive parental concern regarding her whereabouts was not actively expressed for her younger brother who was going to another college. The father continued to wield considerable power within the household to persuade or sway the direction in which the family members, especially the children, are making educational decisions. Within such a context of taking educational decisions, while some families engage in discussing and sharing different opinions and interests, there are some members, usually the men, who convince, approve or enforce the final decision for the student.

A majority of the narratives clearly indicate that the mothers take and supervise everyday decisions made by family members, especially within the household. For instance, Raj (SDC) said that his mother was involved in decisions regarding concerns within the household. When asked about this, he explained, "No, the house is taken care of by mother so she has more say. Papa used to often stay outside." Raj's father was a driver and there was a clear gendered division

between the private and the public spheres. Similar patterns were observed in
other families such as Mohan's (SiDC). This indicates a normative division in
this family wherein the private, everyday household decisions were undertaken
and supervised by the maternal or feminine head of the family, whereas the public
domain decisions which involve significant financial and social considerations,
such as education and marriage, need the approval and supervision of the
masculine head of the family. This division of labour and decision-making
reflects a traditional gender regime.

These public and private domains of decision making are not only gendered; they
are hierarchised. For instance, when I visited Sachin's (SDC) home, Sachin made
tea for me and his mother. This was a rare sight for me. When I visited the home
of all my other participants, it was always women who made tea. Men only
instructed or suggested that tea should be made, which was often received as a cue
for women in the family to prepare tea for me. When I remarked on this, the
mother shared that her son is very "nice", but this was not the norm at their home.
Near the end of my interview with the mother, the father walked into the house.
He barely looked in and went on with his business. On reflection, it seems that he
assumed we were talking about feminine concerns. Both mother and son said that,
although the father and the uncle were not college educated, the father and uncle
had a significant influence in the educational pathways of the children. A similar
pattern of male members, such as fathers and uncles can be observed in the
following excerpt of my interview with Neil (SDC)

> I: You get a lot of time to spend with your father and mother?
> Neil: Yes
> I: Who gives you more important time?
> Neil: Everyone is important.
> I: Who takes more decisions at home?
> Neil: Most often decisions are taken by *chaachaa* [father's younger
> brother].
> I: Why so?

> Neil: Because there is a very special place we have for him and he has for
> us. However everyone is heard out at home and no one is denied to speak.
> Even our father is not someone who thinks that whatever he has said will
> be final. He wants us to think about our ideas and accordingly take
> decisions.
>
> I: Is your uncle more educated, that's why he is listened to more?
>
> Neil: No, but the way he talks we feel convinced.

However, this pattern of intense fatherly involvement in the educational trajectory
was not replicated in any interest in my discussions with Sachin and his mother
regarding higher education. It is also possible that the traditional cultural practices
and norms in Haryana made him uncomfortable about conversing with me,
especially in front of his mother. One of the senior teaching faculty at MDC
earlier explained that such behaviour, where there is very limited interaction
between un-related men and women, are the norm in Haryana and act as a means
to ensure that appropriate distance is maintained between men and women who
are not related to each other.

The experiences of my participants and their family members indicated that
decisions were often made with the approval and support of the male heads of the
family. Education is a major life decision, which has significant outcomes in the
public and private domains. Educational decisions are immediately related to
investment of economic capital, in particular on the educational course itself and
also on the mode of transport. While educational decisions made for sons, which
are also gendered, are primarily classed in terms of financial capabilities to invest
in education and the economic condition of the family, the educational decisions
made for daughters were more complicated due to gendered social concerns.
Educational decisions for daughters, as explored in the previous chapter (see
6.1.1) seem to require families to evaluate the safety of the available and
affordable public transport services to the institution or college being considered
and the social perceptions allied to the institution. These factors seemed to require
the supervision and sanction of the male heads of the family, especially the older

members of the family. Hritik's (MDC) elder sister, who is exploring post-graduate research choices available to her, said that, here (in Haryana), people do not let children, especially girls, travel far away for education. She was able to explore these options through the friends she had made during her schooling and college days. However, her desire to pursue these options was strongly resisted by both parents.

The ways in which families make decisions were obscured by most students and family members during the interviews, as they might have been interested in presenting (to me) their families in the best light possible. Analysis of their experiences and rationalizations of educational choices clarifies that parents, especially fathers, had significant power to direct the decisions being made within the family. For instance, Mohan's (SiDC) father seemed to dominate most decisions being made for the family. The mother and the son shared a similar narrative wherein the children use the mother as a go-between. During the family group interview, the mother said that the father unilaterally made sartorial choices for the family members. He apparently went and chose the clothes for the weddings of the daughters. This is quite different from the social norm. It is usually observed that the budget for the wedding is set by the male members of the family but within this budget, choices in terms of "feminine" concerns such as clothes and jewellery are the domain of the women in the family. The father had not been very participative during the group interview; however, here he interjected that sometimes his daughters accompanied him when they went to buy their clothes.

While the mother and the sons are very clearly communicating that the father was dominating the decisions made by the family in terms of marriage and education, his occasional participation in the conversation seemed to be geared towards managing and reducing my perceptions regarding the extent to which he was dominant within the family. The observations from my interaction with Mohan's family indicate that the father had significant power to veto and direct the decisions made within the family. The member of the family who has the power

to veto has a significant role in the educational decisions and choices made by students in Haryana. This process of enforcing parental choice or preference is further explored in the section on action and expression of educational interests (see 7.3.2).

When we compare how mothers, fathers and brothers are involved in the educational pathway of young women, the male decision makers are involved in more visible or public processes where application and enrolment decisions and choices were made. Brothers and fathers were involved in filling and submitting application forms for young women at the local cyber-café and the college (see 6.3.4). At the time of enrolment, Amrita (MDC) shared that her older male cousin advised her to be careful when she started going to college and to consciously limit her interactions with "boys". She said,

> *Bhaiyya* [the older cousin brother] told me to talk [to boys] only if there is some work [related to course work]. Usually there is no need to be in contact with boys. *Bhaiyya* told me this when I used to go to school and also when I went to college. *Bhaiyya* keeps guiding me from time to time. Usually girls [in the class] can explain to me if required. If there is some work, I will talk but it is only then and does not extend beyond work. I was told that there is no need to be extra friendly.

While the men had influenced or made the larger decisions, the women were involved in relatively private and everyday sphere. However, mothers of several young women (such as Amrita in MDC, Hema in SiDC and Jaya in SDC) said that they monitor their daughter's movements outside the home. There was a gendered hierarchy in the spheres of control and monitoring. The men in the family were involved in the larger decisions, such as which college is most appropriate, while the women in the family are supervising and monitoring the everyday educational activities of the daughter. These narratives from different participants across the three sampled districts demonstrate that family dynamics

significantly influence educational trajectories, important institutional choices and everyday educational experiences of young people in the state.

7.1.2 The family members consulted and involved in negotiations

The previous section demonstrated that in a majority of households, the male head of the families wielded power in terms of the ability to veto or approve the decisions being made within the family. However, the processes through which students and families arrive at educational decisions was also influenced by the voices of different members of the family. This section explores how opinions of different family members were elicited when decisions were being made. This is an exploration of how different family members were involved or not involved in discussions regarding educational choices. While all family members were not final decision makers, the fact that their opinion was considered or acknowledged was a significant shift from the traditional gender regime of an autocratic male head of the family who made and imposed his decisions.

As mentioned in the previous section several young men said that their parents gave them considerable freedom to decide and choose their higher education course and college. However, this is still limited. For instance, Om (SDC) said that in terms of education, the children are able to make their own decisions. When I asked about how decisions regarding things other than education such as marriage and employment are made, he immediately identified the father as the decision maker. However, when I asked if his mother made any decisions, he considered this question and added that her opinion is also considered and that the father and the mother have the same influence in terms of decision making. I observed that among a majority of young women and men participating in my study, the approval and support of their parents was crucial when they were making decisions regarding higher education.

Occasionally these decisions were discussed within the family at home. For instance, Kajal (SDC), shares,

> If it is a matter concerning me, then they consult me or they decide. All
> three [both parents and Kajal] have the same influence. Regarding studies
> my decision is considered important.

She said that she had made the final decision to enrol in the sampled college.
However, it must also be noted that Kajal is an only child. It is quite rare in India,
particularly in Haryana, with high incidence of female foeticide and son
preference, to find parents having only one child who is a girl. During the
interview, she said that although in her family her opinion is important, for most
children in her village, they were "pressurised" simply to follow the wishes of
their parents. However, being an only child does not always guarantee similar
autonomy. Similar experience of family directing educational choices of Amrita
(MDC) was explored in the previous chapter (see 6.4.2).

It is interesting to note that, unlike all the other young men I have interviewed,
Mohan (SiDC) seemed to be close to his sisters and mother and knew their
aspirations. Most of the young men who participated in this study had minimal, if
any, involvement in the lives, and aspirations of their sisters. Young men and
women are brought up within families and schools to live segregated lives and
perform different gendered chores. Most young men found it difficult to answer
questions regarding the educational plans and aspirations of their sisters. This
observation contradicts the observations made by the FCF Phase I study
(Henderson et al. 2021). In the narratives of the participants of this study,
brothers have imposed their preference on the educational choice of their sisters.
This indicates that these brotherly impositions on educational choices of young
women may not be based on an understanding of the thoughts, interests and
aspirations of young women in the family, but rather based on gendered concerns
within the family regarding upward social mobility, safety and honour.

In comparison to men, most young women were aware of and involved in the
educational choices and trajectories of their brothers and sisters. For instance,
Bobby's (MDC) older male cousin, Hritik's (MDC) older sister, Deepika and

Esha (SiDC), Jaspal's (SiDC) male cousin, Neil (SDC) were actively involved in
the educational decisions being made for their younger siblings. Participants such
as Hema and Jaspal (both from SiDC) also shared narratives of the eldest son of
the family who was the first in the family to access higher education. Hema's
(SiDC) elder brother is the family trailblazer, he has been greatly involved in her
higher education choices and enrolment. In terms of making decisions within the
family, I had the following conversation with Hema

> I: And if there is a decision to be taken at home collectively then, who has
> the final say?
> Hema: My elder brother.
> I: What if your father has different opinions than him, then?
> Hema: So he will make our father understand.

These eldest sons actively pushed and occasionally directed the educational
pathways of their younger brothers and sisters. Jaspal said that his older male
cousin, who lived in the same household, had a significant role in developing his
academic interests over time. These narratives indicate that a few of the young
men and most of the young women who are family trailblazers in terms of
accessing higher education, are actively motivated to influence and steer the
educational choices and decisions being made within their family for their
younger siblings. This indicates that trailblazing students were engaging in
reflecting on the barriers and benefits of accessing education and had strategised
the educational choices made for themselves and their siblings.

7.1.3 Conclusion

This section has demonstrated that most students and mothers perceived the father
to be the primary decision maker in the family, and the father often held the power
to veto and approve decisions to access higher education and also the choice of
college. This is a crucial step which contributes towards understanding how
family members are thinking and acting to access higher education.

Additionally, this section of the chapter demonstrated that some family members had a significant voice during decision-making. It was noted that elder siblings and cousins, especially those in the family who were the trailblazing individuals to access higher education were popular sources of information and advice. Children being consulted by parents, especially as fathers made or approved educational decisions, can be credited to a larger chronological change in the educational enrolment and participation, where more young people are accessing higher education institutions in Haryana. These findings indicate that, although there has been a considerable involvement of young women and men and older brothers and sisters in family decision making processes, the larger structure remains patrifocal (Mukhopadhyay and Seymour 1994). The following section on reflexivity explores how participants and family members understand the family dynamics explored in this section to explain and evaluate their past, present and future educational experiences, choices, decisions and possibilities.

7.2 Reflexivity: perceptions influencing actions and educational decisions

An understanding of the past and the present condition plays a significant role in how players can replicate or improvise the script handed to them by the gender regime in their family. In terms of educational decision making, students' and family members' perceptions of the barriers and facilitators they have been facing as they access higher education in the past and at present play a crucial role in how they understand the educational and career choices available to them. The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) reported that family support, financial considerations and distance from college are significant factors affecting how young people in Haryana access or do not access higher education in Haryana.

The theoretical framework I have developed in the fourth chapter argues that gendered agency is a concept which can explain how different individuals within a family are involved in decisions to access higher education. Gendered agency can be traced by exploring how individuals perceive different social and economic barriers to higher education and how they perceive the support they might have as they consider and access different higher education options. These perceptions also influence the futures that the students and family members are able to

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imagine for themselves (Appadurai 2004). These aspirations which seem possible
have greater potential to encourage increased investment of time and money in
higher education within families for both daughters and sons. In this section, I
analyse how the participants and their family members have identified different
barriers to accessing higher education, their rationalisations of their education
choices, their educational preferences and the possible futures that they have
imagined for themselves.

This section is divided into three sub-sections. The first sub-section explores how
participants and family members perceive their present context, and how different
factors such as financial limitations, gendered social norms and caste impact
access to higher education. The second sub-section explores how students and
family members perceive, explain and rationalise their educational experiences,
choices and decisions, including their understanding or acknowledgment of their
personal and structural limitations and opportunities, and their perception of value
and recognition of different educational choices and outcomes. The final sub-
section explores how participants and family members imagine educational,
occupational and social possibilities and objectives in the future such as plans and
aspirations for further studies, marriage and career development. These motivate
their reflective actions and educational decisions. These points of reflexivity by
the participants will be compared to the patrifocal gender regime which has been
gleaned from the literature on gender and access to higher education in Haryana.
This will be used in the final section (see 7.3) to examine how these observed
perceptions influence the ways in which family members act strategically as
decisions regarding accessing higher education are made within the family.

7.2.1 Perceptions of barriers

In the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021), several respondents had
mentioned in the open-ended question that it is usually young women or girls who
face barriers to education as members of the community and their family members
do not support them. They explained that the community and families were not in
favour of young women stepping outside the households, and wanted their

daughters married as soon as possible. This section explores how participants in
my study perceived the barriers faced by students as they accessed higher
education. A majority of the participants, especially young men, identified
financial constraints as a factor limiting and influencing their choice of higher
education institution and course. The financial consideration involves anxiety
over being able to afford the more expensive tuition fees and cost of living in
bigger cities.

It has been seen that many participating students and family members also
identified distance and availability of affordable public transport which is regular,
safe and efficient as an important consideration. For instance, Sachin's (SDC)
mother stated,

> Children will have to be sent to where the family [parents] say, according
> to the money they have. If you send them far away to hostel or you send
> them nearby according to your condition. If the college is in S [the same
> town as home] then what is the need to send them far away? It takes a lot
> of money and wastes a lot of time.

The mother's explanation indicates that she has identified that her family has to
make educational choices which are compatible with their financial capabilities,
and that it is suitable to access an institution in the same city as it is more
economical in terms of time and commuting expenses.

A significant social barrier perceived by the participants revolved around
community discourses and perceptions on young people, especially girls
accessing higher education. A significant concern for students and family
members was the social reputation or respectability of a particular college in terms
of location and social perception of interaction between young women and men
within the college campus (Sudarshan 2018). This social scrutiny of interaction
between young women and men expands into social scrutiny of the social
interactions young men and women have in public spaces such as the local

market. For instance, Guru (MDC) said that he would not even acknowledge his classmates who are young women in the market, as he fears that this would give cause for the people in the community to talk negatively about him and his character. Similarly, Raj (SDC) explained,

> That if a boy and a girl are together then that's not good. That is their mentality, I don't feel anything like that. This creates a problem. For example if I am seen with a girl, then the boys comment and they are prone to judging her as well as me. This is something I don't like.

I perceived similar concerns affecting how willing young men were to introduce me to their family. The very fact that I was a young woman visiting their home is unusual within their context and is contrary to the gender regimes operating in Haryana.

The social perception of higher education as a site where it is significantly easier for young men and women to interact without family supervision threatens the gender regime, which attaches great value to arranged marriages and parental choice on selection of appropriate spouse from an appropriate caste and gotra category (a sub-category of caste very similar to clans) (Chowdhry 2010). For instance, Deepika (SiDC) and Esha (SiDC) said that people in their village did not have a very positive attitude towards SiDC. They said that the people in the village disapproved of the fact that the young women and men enrolled in the college were interacting with each other. According to Deepika and Esha, this was a significant reason why many families did not want to enrol their children in SiDC which was located within walking distance. Those who could afford it, enrolled their children in colleges which were more expensive, farther away and were socially perceived to be more appropriate spaces for education. It is important to note here that social disapproval of young people not following gendered social norms is of a greater consideration than distance for many families in the village. These perceptions of social scrutiny and approval would

influence how students and family members exercise agency by strategically accessing and participating in higher education.

Caste-based affirmative action was a significant factor perceived by participants as a barrier by some participants and family members from the non-OBC, non-Dalit groups in Haryana (in India the terms, "General" or "Suvarna" are also used for these groups). There was a perception among these groups that the system of reservations or affirmative action on the basis of caste made it harder for students from the "General" category to enrol in the college and the course of their choice. This perception of barrier or hardship based on a meritocratic discourse is based purely on marked academic performance (Majumdar and Mooij 2012). This also reveals the nature of caste-based prejudice and discrimination informing the discourses of students from the Suvarna (General) caste communities (Sonalkar 2018, Thomas 2015). The availability of a limited number of colleges with acceptable commute and distance further accentuates the perception of these groups that belonging to a privileged caste community is a disadvantage.

Such perceptions are a significant factor affecting access to higher education to students across caste communities. These perceptions might lead students to apply to colleges where they are sure to be accepted and forego application to more prestigious colleges. Additionally, awareness among Dalit (SC and OBC) families that members of Suvarna (General) caste groups do not recognise and respect their educational merit can discourage Dalit students from accessing higher education as they fear the prospect of having to face social discrimination and exclusion within colleges (Rao 2013, Sabharwal and Malish 2016, Thorat et al. 2014). For instance, one parent (who was visiting the SiDC campus when I was there) whose child (not a participant) was enrolled in SiDC said that SiDC is socially perceived to be a "SC[18]" college. He explained that many people believe that the teaching faculty in the college are not of good quality as many have been recruited through the affirmative action policy of India. The student data shared by the college

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[18] Scheduled Caste or Dalit

administration and the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) reported that
SiDC has a significantly larger number of Dalit students than MDC and SDC
(19.8% MDC, 14.3% SDC and 39% SiDC survey respondents were from SC
communities). Additionally, the parental education of students enrolled in SiDC is
lower than that of students in MDC and SDC. This difference is mirrored in the
educational backgrounds and caste identities of the participants enrolled in SiDC
in comparison to MDC and SDC.

In conclusion, students and family members were perceiving different kinds of
factors which discouraged access to higher education. Participants identified
intersectional factors such as financial limitations, location and social reputation
of the institution, caste-based reservations and the caste-based demographics of a
particular college. These perceptions shape the manoeuvring activities or strategic
actions performed by family members (see 7.3) as decisions regarding higher
education are made within the family.

7.2.2 Perceptions of choice

Almost all the young women who participated in the study said that they had
experienced tensions with and within their families regarding choice of college.
Many students said that as they finished their schooling they developed a natural
aspiration to access higher education. For instance, Ajay (MDC) said,

> Our thinking become like that that after class 12 (final year of schooling)
> one has to go to college. Normally family members want that we do what
> other are doing. What the elders do you also have to do.

Most of the young women who participated in the study were actively engaged in
seeking information and exploring choices which were occasionally different
from the options made available to them by their parents or the decision-making
members of the family. In the case of Deepika (SiDC), Esha (SiDC) and Jaya
(SDC), the question was whether the student can enrol and attend college at all.

The following illustration (figure 7.1) is a visual representation of the spectrum of support for accessing higher education being perceived by young women and men. Different participants and families can be located at different positions of this spectrum at different moments of time. As families consider educational options within their particular social context and limitation, they also actively seek information and advice from their social networks. As families access different kinds of information and advice through their social network, they move from one location in this spectrum to the other. This is indicative of the conceptualisation of agency in the third chapter wherein agency is a combination of time-sensitive reflective thinking accompanied by strategised action.

| Lack of support (no approval) | Tentative Support (open to be convinced) | Support (to selective colleges or institutions) | Supportive of children's choice |
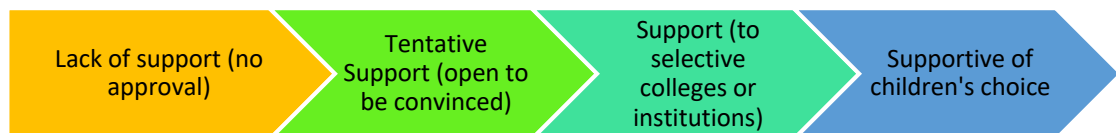
Figure 7.1 Spectrum of Support

Jaya's (SDC) narrative initially places her in the first part of this spectrum. She was, eventually, after significant effort on her part, able to convince her parents to move to the second location where they started to tentatively support her access to higher education. In comparison to Jaya, Deepika (SiDC) and Esha (SiDC) were able to move from the first to the second location with greater ease. They had reflexively understood that their performance as ideal students would help them garner support from their families. They mobilised their institutionalised cultural capital (scholarships) to facilitate this transition.

A majority of young women who participated in this study were in the third location where parents manifested a position in which they want their children to access higher education. Simultaneously, parents have strong college preferences for their daughters. Kajal (SDC) was the only young woman whose narrative expressed that she was given complete freedom to choose her college. She said,

> My parents told me that you can take admission where you are
> comfortable so it was an option to take admission outside but I wanted to
> stay at home. I have been living in the hostel for many years so now I
> wanted to stay home. This college was closer to where I live. If I would
> have gone to the district centre then my maternal uncle's house was there
> and similarly in the adjoining district centre I have relatives. The main
> factor was that I wanted to stay at home, not in a hostel or a paying guest.

She was however a rare student who was the only child of her parents and had
been previously living in a boarding school, which according to her influenced her
wish to live with her family. The narratives of young men and women in this third
location are gendered. The experiences and perceptions which put them in the
third location were greatly influenced by their gender identity and their gendered
relationships with different family members. As discussed in the previous chapter,
while young women and their families primarily referred to emotional
attachments and social barriers, young men and their families were giving other
kinds of reasons to explain their choices.

The young men who participated in this study usually occupied the fourth
location. However, most young men seemed to have self-selected or limited their
choice of college due to financial and time constraints. These gendered
differences are further complicated by geographical location of the families in
question. A substantive number of young women and men participating in the
study from Sonipat and Mahendargarh stated that they had discussed the choice of
college within the family. The colleges sampled for this study in Sonipat and
Mahendargarh are classified by the government as urban colleges and are located
in urban centres (though not district centres). A significant proportion of students
enrolled in the two urban colleges were residents of the same urban centre, the
rest of the students lived in villages which are in the catchment area of the college
and their commute rarely exceeds an hour of travel. This observation is also made
in the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021). Additionally, as discussed in the
second chapter, Sonipat and Mahendargarh are quite close to the national capital

and accessing higher education in colleges in Delhi University can be contemplated as an option. Both Sonipat and Mahendargarh are part of the National Capital Region and they are well connected to New Delhi through frequent state and private bus services. In fact, a couple of participants in Sonipat and Mahendargarh said that their application to a prestigious college in Delhi university had been accepted, but they eventually chose to enrol in a college closer to home.

The narratives regarding the choice of college were quite different in Sirsa in comparison to Sonipat and Mahendargarh. It is observed that students and family members were not encountering similar degrees of conflict in terms of choice of college in Sirsa. SiDC is categorised as a rural college by the government. A majority of the students enrolled in this college were from nearby villages. This was the only co-educational college in the Administrative Block (each district has several blocks). There is a private women's college in the nearby urban centre, which is relatively more expensive due to travel and tuition fees. The students and parents rationalised selection of SiDC primarily on the basis of factors such as distance, cost and duration of commute between home and college. There is a strong, almost universal awareness that SiDC is the most affordable and accessible venue of higher education. On the other hand, the explanations expressed by participants, for college choice in Sonipat and Mahendargarh were more complex. This is evident in the difference in the tone of the narratives of college choice between young women in Sirsa and young women in Sonipat and Mahendargarh.

These perceptions lead young men and women to different strategic positions or manoeuvres within the family. A majority of the young women said that they strategically seek and maintain family support to access higher education after schooling. The previous chapters observed how young women were mobilising their institutionalised cultural capital (see 6.4.1) and performing gendered roles of ideal and moral daughters (see 6.1.4) to garner support to access higher education. The young women who participated from Sirsa seemed to be acting strategically

with the understanding that they need to convince their parents to obtain permission to access higher education. Their struggle had not evolved into a stage where the families assume that accessing higher education is the norm, where the families support access to particular colleges.

An overwhelming majority of the participants in Sirsa were the first generation in their families to access higher education. As mentioned earlier, the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) also indicated that parents of students enrolled in SiDC were less educated, a larger proportion of the students enrolled in this college were from Dalit communities, and most of the parents of students in SiDC were engaged in agriculture or blue-collar vocations such as house painting and using hand-carts to vend vegetables and fruits. Parents of students enrolled in SDC and MDC were engaged in the armed forces, law enforcement and small local businesses. The discussion within the family revolved around whether to access higher education or not; the question of choice of institution was not the primary concern. A reflective recognition of the fact that the rural college was not very far and accessible by public transport actually encouraged the families to move in favour of accessing higher education. The location of the college changes how the parents perceive the accessibility of higher education, which in turn influences how parents strategically steer educational choices and mobilise different capitals to access higher education.

In comparison to Sirsa, a majority of young women and men in Sonipat and Mahendargarh, who were also first-generation students to access higher education, perceived a larger number of accessible choices in terms of colleges. Their narratives established that they were aware that their families are in favour of them accessing higher education. For them, the primary consideration was a selection from a relatively wider variety of choices. Two out of three young women from Mahendargarh in this study had explored colleges outside the city in the district of Rohtak as well as Delhi but were eventually enrolled in MDC. This decision was bound to have been a significant point of discussion during the transition from school to higher education. While Amrita's (MDC) choice was

made for her by her family when the male cousin enrolled her, in spite of her opposition, Chandni (MDC) was persuaded by her family that this was a better and safer option. Both young women, during the interview, rationalised that they had not wanted to stay away from home. Their family members, especially both mothers during their interviews, similarly asserted that their daughter had a very strong "*emotional attachment*" to them and that they did not want to live in separate cities.

As mentioned earlier, young men are perceiving, rationalizing and expressing financial concerns whereas most young women are perceiving, rationalizing, resisting and expressing gendered socio-cultural concerns and differences in opinions from their family members. These rationalisations are active reflections by participants about past decision-making experiences within the family. These perceptions expressed by young women are also significantly shaped by emotional considerations and attachments with the family. Similar emotional considerations are rarely expressed by the young men participating in this study. These perceptions shape how young women and men, are, at present,, strategically convincing their parents to approve of their attempts to access higher education, and how, in future, similar strategising can be exercised.

7.2.3 Aspirations

This section explores how the participants and members of their families are imagining possible futures for themselves. Aspirations are a significant consideration in terms of agency, as they can potentially trace out how individuals are manoeuvring and strategizing to achieve their goals. As individuals reflexively comprehend their immediate social contexts, family dynamics, barriers and aspirations, they simultaneously negotiate, confirm and resist these roles and obligations. Reflective thinking and strategised actions by individuals are connected with discourses of gender and education circulating in society. As discussed in the third and fourth chapters, reflections on the past and present and imaginations of possible futures are based on intersectional factors such as social

class and caste in Haryana. These often determine the routes through which individuals can mobilise different kinds of capitals and access higher education.

Among my participants, aspirations involved three varieties of concerns: such as further education, career and marriage. Imaginations about marriage are relevant in this study as marriage or matrimonial concerns significantly influence the educational decisions of the students and their families (Kumar and Gupta 2008, Sudarshan 2018). Several participants in the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) also expressed the view that that some of their female classmates did not access higher education as their families arranged their marriage as soon as they turned 18 and finished their schooling (class 12). In this study, Babeeta (MDC) is a family trailblazer who has an older sister who did not enrol in higher education after she completed her schooling. Babeeta explains her choice of course in the following way,

> I have an older sister who is not married and education can be a disturbance. The plan is for both of us sisters to get married together [on the same day to different men] to manage wedding expenses. So, I cannot plan to study for a long time.

In contrast to Babeeta who was concerned about the time required for completing higher education and the expenses of her wedding, young men such as Ajay (MDC) were concerned with being employed before getting married. When I had asked him about his future plans after higher education, he said,

> My family wants me to get married but I have told them to wait for some time. I will have to get married eventually. If I do no earn anything then family members will taunt me after getting married, there will be everyday conflicts at home and life would be miserable. Because of this I has asked them not to look [for a bride] at the moment. Wait for 2-4 years.

The gendered differences in aspirations, education and matrimony are visible in the following excerpt from my interview with Jaspal (SiDC):

> I: So what do you want to do in future?
>
> Jaspal: In future a government job…looking at the condition of the family it feels as though if we get a job we will improve our family condition…my father is, you know, now 53 years old and can work less now. Once I get a job, two brothers have studied, there will be an effect from this.
>
> I: Do you feel that boys have more pressure to start earning fast? And do girls not have that much pressure?
>
> Jaspal: Yes this is definitely there in our society that only the son works and only the son has to work.
>
> I: What is the difficulty if a daughter works?
>
> Jaspal: It is for the son. 'You will get married in the future and you only will have to work'. For the daughter it is that 'we will get you married whether you study or not you will get married'. The daughter has to take care of the family, because of which she is quickly married off.

The literature on access to higher education in India indicates that marriage and wedding costs are dominant concerns as educational decisions are made for daughters, but none of the literature explored in the second chapter express similar concerns regarding educational decisions for sons. Hritik (MDC) stated that he was asked to enrol in college by his stepfather as this would improve his marriage prospects. He said that his father believed that, in their merchant caste group, young women were very educated and would prefer their husbands to have a degree.

These gendered differences in how families discuss and plan children's educational pathways are further illuminated in the following excerpt from my interview with Sachin's (SDC) mother:

I: Why didn't you send the younger son to college?

Mother: We also have to judge the mind of a child. How is he [performing] in studying matters. My elder son's three years were wasted in college; we should have made him study in college via distance.

I: You think that the three years have gone to waste?

Mother: Yes

I: Why?

Mother: If he could have done college through distance education, he could have done some work along with that. Probably could have taken a coaching in his spare time.

I: You think the three years your elder son has gone to college has been a waste of time…a complete loss?

Mother: [Laughs] According to his father it has not been a waste of time…

I: According to his father, what has been the benefit of college?

Mother: That they can fill forms for all posts, particularly higher posts.

I: So higher posts have been the benefit of going to college?

Mother: Yes. Forms can be filled on the basis of +2 (12th class) and 10th standard [class].

I: So at the time of the younger son, his father didn't insist on sending him to college?

Mother: He said 'I got the elder one into college, you plan the younger son's education'. I told him to do ITI [Industrial Training Institute[19]].

I: What did the younger son want?

Mother: He was more content with ITI.

The parents preferred Sachin to be enrolled in SDC and his younger brother in ITI as Sachin was more academically inclined than his younger brother. It is also interesting to note that, while his mother agrees that going to college helps children apply to a wider spectrum of jobs, she also felt that Sachin's time in

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[19] ITIs are industrial training institutions which provide (6 months to 2 years) courses which train students in different trades.

college was a waste and has not had any significant benefit. She says that this perception has motivated her to be in favour of enrolling the younger son in an ITI course instead of college.

Sachin's mother also expressed that the family thinks that the daughter could get a job as a teacher through college education. There is a gendered difference in the scope of careers imagined by the family for the sons and the daughter (Sudarshan 2018). This is also evident in the daughter's current engagements. The daughter, who has also graduated from SDC is currently doing a stenography course which is likely to lead towards a traditionally feminine clerical job. The mother, who has great pride in the daughter's stitching skills, also said that the family does not want the daughter to make money with her stitching work. She explained that the daughter is earning a little providing tuition services for children which is more acceptable to the family. She rationalised that tailoring would have distracted the daughter from academics while providing tuition to children will help her retain knowledge. The discussion in the family regarding the education of the sons is primarily directed towards optimizing the employment of the sons in the future. However, this desire is somewhat diluted for the daughter as the primary goal is to educate her and get her married. This demonstrates how a family which is not embedded with knowledge and experiences of accessing and participating in higher education, is clearly functioning as a gendered space.

Although marriage was not currently being discussed or planned, especially by the students and siblings, there were several parents and students who said that the parents were planning to look for a spouse for their children. Some parents also said that they were open to waiting for a couple of years after the student graduates so that the student, especially in case of young men, could be satisfactorily settled into an acceptable job.

Parents and students prioritised distance and commute as factors while selecting a college. They said that these considerations would cease to be as important when their son or daughters obtained a "good" job, especially a "government" job in

public sector banks, government offices, schools, colleges, the national railways, police or the armed forces. These ideal jobs that the students and families aspire to are usually state government jobs which the participants families considered to be prestigious. Family members observed that these jobs have fixed working hours and are accompanied by a certain degree of job security which is not available in the private sector.

When asked how distance and commute could diminish as a consideration in the future, they revealed that by the time the children have a job, they would be older and wiser. For instance, Chandni's (MDC) mother felt that her daughter was now more independent and had grown wiser and was therefore better equipped to study and work farther away if required. On the other hand, Kajal (SDC), said that, while she chose to stay with her family as college student, she had aspirations to do an MBA. She had shared this ambition with her parents and was assured that her parents would support and financially fund her aspirations. These considerations indicate that they have actively imagined a future, that they foresaw barriers to their academic and career goals and that they were contemplating reflexive actions to express these interests within the family to overcome these barriers.

A majority of the young men who participated in this study said that they were interested in gaining graduate employment after graduating from college. Many of the participants were strategically attending coaching classes in the evening or during the weekends which would help them prepare for the public examinations through which different state departments and the armed forces recruit employees. These aspirations have led young men and their families to strategically invest economic capital in coaching institutions. In fact, some of the young men and women said that they were also working on improving their physical fitness so that they can successfully be employed in the police and the armed forces. During my field work, I observed many of my participants filling forms for these public examinations and waiting with great hope to be successfully employed by the

state. These aspirations are influencing the exercise of agency though strategic
planning and actions in the present by both students and their families.

7.2.4 Conclusion

The first part of this section demonstrated that the gender of the student, gender
norms, especially social scrutiny of interaction between young women and men,
and caste are perceived by participants to be significant barriers to accessing
higher education. The second part of this section explored how barriers such as
gender of the student, geographical location of the home and college and
availability of timely and safe commute significantly influence how young people
and their family members *perceive* different higher educational choices available
to them. Finally, the third part of this section demonstrated that marriage and
career considerations not only motivated students to access higher education, they
also operated as motivations for their future plans. These aspirations are not
always gendered; both young women and men are aspiring for jobs after
graduating. In terms of plans for marriage, families are in a greater hurry to get
their daughters married. Since young women are usually married at a younger age
than young men, young women are likely to be under greater pressure to
strategically fulfil their educational aspirations. These perceptions of the past,
present and future aspirations are key reflections by students and family members
as they contemplate accessing higher education. These reflections influence
exercise of gendered agency which can also be traced through strategic actions
within the family.

These perceptions have the potential to impact the ways in which different
students and family members express their educational and career interests and
aspirations within the family. These perceptions also influence how family
members exercise their agency to strategically support or approve of students
accessing higher education, and how different educational choices are made
within the family. The following section explores how students and family
members mobilise capitals to support, inform and advise each other as they make

educational choices, and how different family members choose to speak or remain silent as they try to achieve their educational goals.

7.3 Actions: accounts of agency being exercised

Actions are the most tangible measure of how individuals are exercising their agency. This section explores how different family members have managed to achieve an intended object or goal through strategic actions. Action by actors within their particular contextual constraints and opportunities reflects differential exercise of autonomy by actors within the family. The way in which actions were performed and were successful alludes to the efficiency with which a particular goal has been achieved or the ease with which other persons have been convinced by the actor to lend support or recognise the objectives of the actor.

As demonstrated in the previous sections, individual members recognise the need to be strategic in order to garner support from their families. The previous chapter described four distinct roles (support, inspire, inform and steer educational decisions) that family members perform as students transition from school to higher education in Haryana. These roles involve action on the part of the family members. This section explores *how* family members have actively supported, informed and influenced the educational decisions made within the family. It is broadly divided into two parts, the first part explores how different family members and students were strategically mobilising different kinds of capitals available to the family and extended families, whereas the second part of this section will explore how families are expressing or remaining silent as they mobilise different capitals to access higher education.

7.3.1 Mobilizing capital

All the participants of the study have accessed different combinations of economic and social capital available to their families. How different individuals have used or mobilised different kinds of capital is important here, as it can potentially reveal how gender regimes operate within educational trajectories. Parents and families were almost always investing economic capital by funding the tuition and college fees at the college and they also helped the student with

daily expenses such as commute. Part-time work by students to support their educational expenses is very rare. This pattern is also observed in the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021).

Almost half of the young women who participated in the study directly or indirectly accessed social and economic capital through their maternal uncles (see 6.1.2). Jaya (SDC) and Madhu (SDC) said that they and their sisters' schooling and higher education was funded by their maternal uncle. Geeta (SiDC) expressed her wish to her family that she wanted to go the government girls' school in the urban centre close to the sampled rural college. Both the urban centre and the school were quite far away. Her family provided her with an alternative choice to stay at her mother's natal home and go to a private coeducational school there. Geeta's active expressions of her educational interests and aspirations led the family to explore the schooling options available to them outside the village. She felt that she had in the end managed to enrol in a high school which was even better than the government girls' school that she was initially interest in. She followed this successful choice of school by actively negotiating with her family and the administrators of the private girls' college to pursue her interest in sports in SiDC. She was actively mobilising the cultural capital which had developed within her family as her elder sister accessed higher education. She was also mobilising her own personal social capital which she gained as she accessed school and higher education, to make choices which are of interest to her.

As discussed in previous chapter (see 6.1.1), Geeta's access to education and higher education is shaped by the fact that Geeta and her elder sister are the first in the family to access schooling and higher education. Since her family's educational background lacks embedded (Häuberer and Brändle 2018) knowledge and experience of education, her access to higher education was significantly linked to a comparatively greater degree of innovation and agency on the part of Geeta and her elder sister. This instance is an example of social capital which is based on normative gender regimes operating in Haryana. The normative obligations between the mother's natal family and the students is a significant

social node or avenue which facilitates access to higher education. Unlike the other young women participating in this study who have been supported by maternal uncles, Geeta managed to activate the social capital available through her mother's natal family in a way that was more valuable to her. Her proactive expressions of educational interests and aspirations had a significant role in how she was able to successfully access a higher education institution of her choice. The importance of expressing educational interests is explored in greater detail in the second part of this section.

Across an overwhelming majority of participants' narratives, I was able to observe that families and students were being inspired by the social capital of cousins and extended family members who were trailblazing first-generation students to enter higher education. This is very evident in how young men such as Bobby (MDC) follow an educational and career trajectory established by older cousins. The previous chapter established that cousins have been figures of inspiration, information and advice for both families and students as they access higher education. On the other hand, when Lal (SiDC) was finishing his schooling (class 12) his father was imprisoned due to a criminal case filed against the father. His paternal uncle introduced the family to a retired army man in the same urban centre from the same ancestral village, who helped them through this difficult time. The children in the family managed to gain part-time employment which helped them financially support the family during this tough period. Lal said that he was helped to get his part-time job with the help of a recommendation from this retired army man.

A similar activation of social networks is also observed in how students and family members seek information and advice as they consider accessing higher education. Over the one-year period when his father was incarcerated, Lal and his siblings were making educational decisions which reflected the financial needs of the family. As the situation improved over the year, Lal sought out information from his network of friends and eventually enrolled in SiDC. This demonstrates how educational decisions wherein all the siblings were enrolled in different

educational institutions changed with time. With time, family members were mobilising their social capitals to seek employment and later seek information to access higher education, thereby developing their cultural capital. The way in which the family was using different actions and decisions at different points of time indicate reflective thinking and strategic action, in other words exercising agency to mobilise and develop different kinds of capitals.

Apart from seeking information and advice, the young people participating in the study were obliged to actively generate and maintain support. Here, I will give special attention to the narratives of Jaya (SDC) and her family members. The previous chapter (see 6.4.2) explored her experiences of convincing family members to support and permit her to access higher education. Jaya (SDC) is the only participant who faced opposition within the family to accessing higher education. Her narrative of accessing higher education is a trailblazing pathway that she has managed to put together. This required her to step outside of the intimate circle of her maternal uncle's and her stepfather's involvement and support in her schooling. She exercised gendered agency to actively seek information and support from her paternal aunt and her paternal aunt's husband to apply and enrol in a college.

Jaya said that this was a very stressful period for her as she had to actively convince her parents to access higher education. It is also interesting to note that the paternal aunt and her husband mobilised their own social networks to interact with the faculty in SDC. These crucial actions made it possible for her to access higher education. Jaya's actions which enabled her to access higher education are significant as she was located within an immediate circle of family members such as her stepfather and maternal uncle, who did not support her ambition to access higher education. In spite of my repeated questions to explore these experiences with Jaya during the interview, she was very brief in her narrative about this period. She did say that it was very tense and difficult for her, and gave credit to her paternal aunt and her uncle's active involvement in the application and enrolment process.

The paternal aunt and husband, on their part, played an active role in advocating on behalf of Jaya both with Jaya's parents and with the faculty of SDC to seek information and advice. The implications of this verbal opposition are significant. Jaya said that she felt that her father and uncle would not express similar opposition for her brothers. The way in which she expressed this belief was quite poignant and revealed pain regarding the gendered biases she experiences at home. This potential for words to actively impact emotions and actions of people is further explored in the second part of this section.

7.3.2 Verbalised preferences for accessing higher education

This part of the section on action explores how students and family members have voiced their opinions and how their voices are recognised within the family as decisions are being made. Agency is traced in expressions of choices or preferences by individuals is a strategic act(ion) of personal proclamation which are aimed at achieving an overt or covert objective (Kabeer 2001). These expressions are also a means through which students and family members can explore different social capitals and networks and also the means through which they are able to access information and advice. Individual's perceptions and the dynamics of power operating in a family influences the student's ability to express their educational preferences. It also influences how the family acknowledges these utterances. Family dynamics and personal perceptions influence how individuals exercise agency to strategically voice their opinion or remain silent.

This sub-section analyses the participants and their respective family members narratives to observe gendered differences in the nature and content of arguments made with regard to educational aspirations, choices and decisions. This section also explores how, in the course of the interviews with the participant and family members, different actors are participating, making efforts to manage or position the researcher's perceptions of the family. Additionally, this section explores how

different speakers differentially recognise the actors who have played significant
roles such as advice, inform, support and inspire.

7.3.2.1 Expressions of opposition

Different family members have voiced opposition to higher education access or
choices within the family. As we have seen, across the 26 students who
participated in this study only Jaya (SDC) and her family have talked of
experiences of family members who opposed access to higher education. Apart
from Jaya, the only other instance when an older member of the family opposed
access to higher education was in the instance of the elder sister of Hritik (MDC)
(see 7.2.3). In both families, parents and elders explicitly expressed a wish to soon
marry off their daughters to a suitable groom whom they would select and
approve. This is a popular gendered pattern operating across Haryana. Daughters
are often seen as financial and social burdens, which were intimately linked to the
cost to be incurred on their marriages (Agrawal et al. 2013). These social norms
lead towards an analysis of cost and benefit within the family, wherein investment
in education of daughters does not benefit the parents, rather, it is more beneficial
to the groom and his family.

The following excerpt from my interview with Jaya is a rare glimpse into how
families oppose access to higher education for young women.

> I: You mentioned initially that your parents did not want you to study after
> 12th. So was there any difficulty when you spoke to them about college?
> Jaya: Yes there was some difficulty. My parents didn't have as much
> problem but it was my *mama* [maternal uncle] who had a lot of problems.
> He said going to college is not okay. These days girls get spoilt after going
> to college. They study less and indulge in more time pass [just a non-
> serious activity to occupy time]. He was strongly against that and he tried
> his best to not allow me to study further. If he could have had his way, I
> would not have been able to enrol in college.
> I: Does your maternal uncle live with you?

> Jaya: He does not live with us but he has a lot of say in our family matters.
> I: How?
> Jaya: That's because my mom is close to her brother, so she takes his advice seriously. And our maternal uncle is also very good, he helps us a lot and thinks the best for us. He got my elder sisters married. Now he does not say anything to me regarding the college. Since the admission has already happened he can't do anything.

In contrast, I observed that one of my participants, Kamal (SiDC), who was from a poor and Dalit background, was advised by his family members to not pursue the science disciplines which were of interest to him. He explained that his uncles, who had post-graduate degrees, had advised him that science disciplines require more investment in terms of coaching for entrance examinations, which his family could not afford. Here there was a very clear perception within the family regarding financial barriers to particular educational and career choices for their son. Literature on caste-based discrimination does indicate that social discrimination and exclusion is more severe in the sciences in India. This is evident in literature on caste-based discrimination and cases of suicides by Dalit students in engineering and medical training institutions (Sonalkar 2018, Malish and Ilavarasan 2016, Ovichegan 2014, Singh 2013).

Kamal's uncles, who have embedded experiences of higher education, are likely to be aware of this. The advice given to him in a very subtle way expresses the family's perception of caste-based barriers to higher education in the more prestigious engineering and medical institutions in India. This complements the previous section on reflexivity which identified perceptions of caste-based discrimination and social exclusions as a significant barrier to accessing higher education. These perceptions influence how students and family members make reflexive educational preferences and choices. Perception of an insurmountable barrier is likely to lead families to oppose access to higher education. On the other hand, when family members perceive that a barrier can be overcome, they are identifying and strategizing ways in which they can access higher education.

7.3.2.2 Dominant silence

This section explores how the family members who have the final say in the decisions being made by the family and hold the power to approve or veto a decision or choice, operate through silence. Dominant silence is behaviour where an individual is able to establish and maintain their dominance without actually expressing their opinions. Male family members are usually the dominant decision makers and influencers in the family. These include other family members like fathers, elder brothers and cousins (see 7.1.1). It is interesting to note that the father often does not need to express his opinions, directions or wishes in direct words to the children. In the case of Mohan (SiDC), he is able to maintain his dominance through silence. During the family group interview, he was not very vocal; however, I felt that his presence permeated the conversation during the family group interview. Since I had interviewed Mohan on SiDC campus a couple of days before meeting the family, I was curious about the father's opinions and experiences. In contrast, the mother was actively participating in the interview, this did not appear to translate into her having ownership or ability to mobilise power or autonomy within the household. The content of the conversation and the responses of the family members reinforce the perception that the father held the power to finally approve or disapprove an educational choice. The interviews revealed that the father rarely talked to Mohan and his siblings directly.

The activation of power within the family through silence is evident in the fact that Mohan had said that he had followed the wishes of his father and enrolled in a course he was never interested in. He said that he just was not able to talk to his father directly. He felt that if he did, it might not be well received (see 8.4). The father seemed to be operating silently by expressing his wishes to the mother, without actually conversing with the children. This arrangement of silence ensures that the mother had to perform the emotional labour (Hochschild 2012) in the household. The mother was expected to translate the father's wishes and directions to the children. During his interview, Mohan said that he talked with his

mother if he wished to convey his interest or wishes to his father. This was further confirmed during the family group interview by the mother. The mother was placed at the centre of the emotional relationships within the family. The father was at the top of this pyramid of power while the mother was at the centre, absorbing and translating emotions and aspirations between the parents and children. The position of the mother at the centre only allowed her limited power within the household. This arrangement of relationships imbued with power and emotions are primarily patrifocal and this arrangement was in favour of the father. The father seemingly never had to directly deny or oppose the children's interests or aspirations.

7.3.2.3 Subjugated silence

This section explores how particular members of the family seemingly chose to remain silent for various reasons, especially with regard to choice of subject, career and college. One of the most prominent reasons why a family member, especially when the member concerned is a child or young person, is that they lack authority within the family. For instance, Amrita's (MDC) mother said that Amrita is afraid of speaking out against the opinions and decisions made by the father and her male cousin. It is not always a direct lack of power or authority which persuades family members to remain silent. Silence is often developed through a complicated deference to either the age or knowledge available to a more vocal and often dominant family member.

The previous sections explored silence being used by Mohan's (SiDC) father and the children indirectly communicating their wishes and aspirations though their mother. Mohan felt that he could not directly oppose father's directions as he felt that it would have been disrespectful. Similarly, Neelam (SDC), who wanted to pursue a career in the police, did not share this with her parents. She explained that she did not share her interest with her parents because of the following reason,

one, because what our parents say is right. If I would have opted for the
police line, I might have to take coaching classes. Without coaching the
police test can't happen. That time I didn't have too much knowledge of
how to navigate the outside world, which was also one of the problems.

Although she says that she did not share or advocate for her desire to pursue a
career in the police due to lack of information and awareness on her part, she is
also stating that she believes that her parents' opinions are correct. During the
interview she said that her father is the most influential person in the family when
decisions are made. In the instances in which the family decisions concern her,
her family does elicit her opinion before they make a decision. What is interesting
in this situation is that although the participant did not communicate her
aspirations to her parents, she is confident that her parents will not enforce any
particular choice on her without her consent.

The narrative patterns here resemble the patterns observed in the interviews with
Chandni (MDC) and her mother. Both Chandni and Neelam are making efforts to
position themselves to me as someone who had actively made a choice. They
seem to greatly value that fact that although they have not *formulated* their choice,
they have *made* a choice of their own (Hirschmann 1998). Although not entirely
silent when higher education choices are considered in the family, nevertheless,
they eventually are persuaded by the final decision made by the father and male
cousin.

7.3.2.4 Expression of own interests

This section explores how students and parents have used different means
successfully and unsuccessfully to influence the final educational decision being
made. A broad analysis of the narratives of the young women participating in this
study indicates that young women tended to plan what and how they express their
interests. They were cautious when they were sharing their choice of college or
subject with members of the family, especially when there is a difference of
opinion with men in the family who were the primary decision makers. Nearly all

the young women who had a different choice of college than their parents or brothers eventually followed the wishes of the parents and brothers. This outcome is a combination of subdued expression of own interests, and the fact that they are often accompanied by either fathers or brothers when they fill application and enrolment forms at a cyber-café or in the sampled college campus. Several of my participants such as Amrita (MDC), Chandni (MDC) and Madhu (SDC) have said that they did not continue to object to the educational decisions made for them and imposed on them by their fathers and brothers.

The manner in which young women are expressing a different opinion or choice are deeply rooted in the gender regimes operating in Haryana. For instance, their strategic performance within the family, as an ideal student and moral daughter (see 6.4.1) complements the gender regime operating in Haryana. In contrast, several young men, who have stated that their parents have given them freedom to decide their educational and career pathways and have never had the need to voice any opinion or choice at all. I have also argued in the previous section that this gendered silence is often based on the perception that elders and parents have the wisdom and wherewithal to give appropriate educational advice. Additionally, when we consider how Mohan (SiDC) also chose to remain silent in front of his father as a form of respect to his elders, it is evident that patriarchal arrangements or norms of behaviour within the family make it difficult for both young women and men to voice their own interests. However, the specific gendered regimes in Haryana make it harder for young women to express their interests.

I would argue that although a majority of the parents are themselves not embedded with experiences and knowledge of higher education, they are often expressing opinions which are popularly believed to be practical and which recognise their economic and social contexts. For instance, Sachin's (SDC) father and uncle have actively discussed appropriate higher education choices within the family and have debated the merits of an undergraduate course in SDC or a vocational course in the regional technical institute. Sachin had said in the beginning of the interview that as a child he wanted to be a farmer and was quite

fascinated by farming as an occupation as he lived in an urban area. However, this
changed as he grew up and he credited his father and paternal uncle for the way he
developed his career aspirations.

As mentioned earlier, parents often associate enrolment of children, both sons and
daughters with future matrimonial plans. Educating young women to become
companionate wives and educated mothers is a popularly recognised motivation
for families. However, it was also interesting to observe parents of young men
such as Hritik (MDC) and Mohan (SiDC) also associating their sons' access to
higher education with a context where more young women in the community are
graduates and will not be interested in marrying someone without a graduate
degree. While this discourse is a reaction to changing social contexts where
increasing number of young women are accessing higher education, the discourse
and the advice directs Hritik towards maintaining a gender regime where the
husband needs to have equal or higher educational degrees as the wife. The advice
being given by the parents, although not based in embedded knowledge and
experience of higher education, are cognizant of their social contexts and
changing patterns of education.

It was also observed that a number of the parents actively expressed their support
for their children opting to enrol in a college close to home rather than in colleges
in bigger cities such as Delhi. Many parents and other members of the families
said that if there is a government college in the vicinity, it is the best option. They
felt that a college in a bigger city would have provided their children with the
same coursework and quality of education.

When the perception of choice is whether the child can access higher education at
all, a government college close to home is a significant factor which makes higher
education accessible. While this is a concern shared by young men who have
participated in this study, the degree of concern is substantially higher for parents
of young women. This is because the concern over distance and duration of
journey is not a straightforward concern. I have demonstrated in the previous
chapter how this is a gendered concern and cost incurred by families as daughters

access higher education in Haryana. The preoccupation with distance and safety
revealed a persistence of social discrimination and threat of violence against
women and the family's honour embodied by them (Ahlawat 2012, Women
against Sexual Violence and State Repression 2014 and 2015). This continues to
shape perceptions and impacts the accessibility of higher education in Haryana.

7.3.3 Conclusion

This section of the chapter has explored how different family members are
strategically mobilizing capital to access schooling and higher education. Students
and family members especially explore their social networks to seek information
and advice as they consider different educational choices. The second part of this
section traced gendered agency in terms of strategised and reflexive actions within
the family, especially in terms of how different family members chose to speak or
not speak as educational decisions were made. This section found that while
parents and children do voice their interests and aspirations, a majority of the
young women who participated in the study seem to either have subdued voices or
are very careful when they express their interests. In a majority of cases, the
primary decision maker or the individual who holds the power to veto a decision
chose to remain silent. In most cases, the decision maker was the father or the
elder brother. It was observed that even through silence fathers were able to wield
a considerable amount of power and control over the educational decisions made
within the family. This placed the mother in the centre performing the difficult
task of managing the emotions of all the family members. Some of the young
people participating in the study also said that they found it very difficult to share
their personal aspirations with their families. This was more common among
young women than men. Silence is being mobilised by men and women in
different ways. While masculine decision makers continued to influence decisions
by remaining silent, young women and men who chose to remain silent often
accepted educational choices which were not of interest to them. This is not only a
concern in terms of gender but also in terms of communication between parents
and children and how it adversely limits young people's rights to exercise their
own choice while making significant life decisions.

7.4 Conclusion

The perceptions and strategic actions explored in this chapter trace how students
and family members are exercising agency over time in their particular gendered
contexts. Different family members differentially perceive and present the
gendered dynamics operating within their family. Gendered norms such as
respecting elders in the family and the gendered nature of emotional relationships
between parents and children over time and space influence how individuals in the
family think and act towards pursuing different educational interests. These
factors and the perceptions cumulatively influence how students and their family
members perceive barriers and limitations which impeded their access to higher
education,

Gender regimes play a significant role in how individuals within families actively
think and act to influence family decisions regarding higher education. This in
turn influences how families are actually making educational decisions. The final
section of this chapter demonstrated that family dynamics and personal reflections
of each family member influence how different family members speak and remain
silent at different points in time to influence the final educational decision being
made. The way in which the students and family members were voicing their
opinion is reflective of the agency they were able to exercise at that point of time.

The experiences also indicate that young people are being consulted and involved
as families make educational decisions. Young people are able to voice their
opinions and be heard as the family makes educational decisions. A major reason
for this is that enrolment of young people, especially young women, in the schools
and colleges in Haryana is growing. During my interviews with family members,
they often expressed trust in the "educated" opinions and advice shared by their
children who have accessed schooling and higher education. The educational
enrolment in schools and colleges in Haryana (see 4.4) is above the national
average in India. As more young people are accessing higher education, they are
encouraging more young siblings and cousins in the families to access higher
education. At the same time, these changes continue to be unequal in terms of

gender. The larger increase in young people accessing higher education is creating trailblazing individuals within families and kinship networks. These changes are accompanied by young men and women actively exploring new discourses and strategies to access higher education.

This chapter has addressed the second research question which sought to explore how different gendered family members differently perceive their immediate social contexts and families to strategically support, inform, inspire and steer the educational choices being made within the family.

Young women and men, and their parents perceive the different educational barriers and experiences in their particular social contexts. These perceptions are time-sensitive and influence how family members access and mobilise different kinds of capitals. The process by which capitals are accessed and mobilised also involve agency at different moments of time where parents and students chose to remain silent or express their educational interests. These strategies and strategic expressions of interests are located within the family which is a gendered site where educational trajectories are shaped. The following chapter further explores how different intersectional factors influence gendered agencies and family involvement as young people access higher education in Haryana.

Chapter 8 – Family roles and agencies: an intersectional analysis of gendered trajectories to HE

The last two chapters have established different roles (to support, inspire, inform and steer educational choices), and how different individuals within the family are (i) performing different roles and (ii) exercising their agencies in different ways to access higher education. This chapter addresses the third research question by examining how intersectional factors are influencing the way in which families are (i) performing different roles and (ii) exercising agencies as educational decisions are being made. As discussed in the third chapter, the intersectional framework is based on the understanding that different inequalities and forms of oppression such as gender, caste and social class are inseparable from each other and that each of them simultaneously shape everyday experiences (Collins and Bilge 2016, Cho et al. 2013). This framework also argues that intersecting factors need to be examined separately and simultaneously (Cuádraz and Uttal 1999, Cho et al. 2013, Carastathis 2016).

This chapter focusses on the particular social contexts and intersecting factors which influence how families perform different roles to mobilise capitals in order to access higher education. This chapter uses a select group of participants to understand how particular social contexts and factors intersectionally influence the educational trajectories of young people. This highlights how factors associated with their particular gendered social contexts, such as social class and caste, are intersecting with gender as students access higher education in Haryana.

In order to select the cases for this chapter, significant intersectional factors were identified through a thematic analysis of the transcribed interviews with undergraduate students and their family members. Using these intersectional factors, I identified five participants with different combinations of intersecting factors. I use these to illustrate how these intersecting factors interact with each other to influence gendered dynamics, roles and agencies. Each of these influence how different educational decisions are being made within the family. Across the five participants, their different intersectional and particular contexts are

examined, along with the ways in which the families have made gendered
educational decisions.

The selected participants are introduced briefly here in order to explain the order
of their presentation and their distinguishing features. The contrast between the
first three cases, Jaya, Deepika and Amrita, demonstrates differences in how
social class and caste identities influence gendered educational pathways and
decision making. The first case examines Jaya (SDC), who is a young Dalit (OBC
– Saini) trailblazing woman, from a working-class farming family residing in a
village in Haryana. She has successfully manoeuvred against opposition from
within her immediate family and mobilised the social and cultural capital
available through her extended family network to garner and maintain support to
access higher education.

In contrast, Amrita (MDC) is a young woman who is the only child of a relatively
more privileged caste community (Suvarna – Jaat), a landowning family which is
relatively wealthy, with a significantly more educated network of extended family
who are educated and engaged in white collar occupations such as medicine, the
armed forces and higher education. Amrita's case is an illustration of how
families with a significantly greater degree of economic and social capital are
investing and monitoring the educational pathways of young women accessing
higher education.

Deepika's (SiDC) case illustrates how young women from Dalit (OBC – Bhaat)
and rural backgrounds are accessing higher education in rural colleges, and how
other young trailblazing women in the family and kinship network bolster their
educational pathways to access higher education.

In comparison to Jaya, Deepika's case illustrates in greater depth the ways in
which intersections of caste and gender are influenced by rurality and rural
communities as young women access higher education. The fourth and fifth cases
of Mohan (SiDC) from a rural, Dalit (SC – Meghwal) and upwardly mobile

working-class family, and Hritik (MDC) who is from an urban and relatively privileged caste (Suvarna – Baniya) and non-working class family, examine how their gender identity as men in rural and urban contexts is influencing their educational pathways. A comparison between Mohan and Hritik also illustrates how patterns of roles and agencies within families are influenced by their different caste and social class identities.

Each case is presented in four sections based upon the theoretical framework established in chapter 3. The first section introduces the social background of each participant including the different intersecting factors and the educational decisions made by each family. It identifies the potential social, cultural and economic capitals that the participant and their families can access. The second section considers the different roles performed by different members of the sampled family such as supporting, informing, inspiring and steering the educational decisions made within the family. It reveals how the participant and family members are mobilizing the capitals accessible to them and how this is influenced by the gender regimes operating within their family. The third section turns to the way in which different family members are exercising their gendered agencies as educational decisions are being made in the family and involves a brief description of actions and reflections shared by different family members. The observations made in the first three sections will be combined and re-examined in the fourth section to understand how roles and agencies are influenced by intersectional factors. This re-examination is a reflection on my theorisation of intersectionality wherein the sum is more than the parts. The analysis in the fourth section will demonstrate how the influence of intersectional factors are inseparable from each other. When the first three sections are combined and re-examined together in the fourth section, the analysis is more comprehensive.

8.1 Case 1: Jaya
Jaya has been mentioned several times in the last two chapters as she is the only participant who personally experienced and overcame direct opposition within the family to access higher education. She is from a Dalit (OBC) and working-class

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farming family wherein she is the family trailblazer to access higher education.
The way in which she had managed to mobilise the capitals accessible to her and
the way on which she was able to enrol in spite of parental opposition is of
interest in understanding the roles played by the family and how different family
members can support or oppose access to higher education. Her case is also used
in this chapter to locate her experiences within her particular social context. The
following table (8.1) lists the key contextual factors shaping Jaya's educational
pathway.

Table 8.1 Jaya Family Background

Contextual factors	Case 1 (SDC) Jaya Details
Caste	Dalit (OBC): Saini
Source of parental income	Farming
Family members living in the same household	Mother, step-father, younger sister and 2 half-brothers
Siblings	2 older sisters, 1 younger sister and 2 younger half-brothers
Education of Siblings	Elder sisters have finished schooling. She is the family trailblazer. Younger siblings are in school.
Decision Maker	Self
Significant Family network members	Maternal Uncle (opposition). Paternal aunt and uncle (support)
Location of home	Village in Sonipat district
Participant's class 12 schooling	Private
Mother's education	Class 5 (completed primary)
Father's education	Class 8 (mid-secondary)

Jaya volunteered to participate in my study in SDC. The interview with Jaya was
conducted within the privacy of a classroom in the college. The interview with the
family in the village was conducted two weeks after the interview with Jaya in the
college. The home is located in a village which is about half an hour away from
the urban centre by car. The house is located near the village government school
and is smaller in comparison to the traditional rural homes in Haryana. The home
has two bedrooms, a kitchen, a small cattle shed, a toilet and a washroom which
are arranged around a concrete courtyard. When I visited the home, Jaya's elder
sisters were visiting the family and one of them had brought their baby daughter
with her. When I entered the home, one of the elder sisters was cleaning the
courtyard. After an initial introduction with the family, I sat in one of the

bedrooms on a cot and interviewed the mother and her elder sisters. Jaya and her younger sister sat on the same bed as me while the mother and one of the older sisters sat on a second cot facing me during the interview. The home seemed to have been built recently. The walls were plastered but not painted.

8.1.1 Social background and education

This case is important as it is the only participant who has accessed higher education in spite of opposition at home. As mentioned earlier (see 6.1.2 and 6.4.2), Jaya's mother was widowed when the children were very young. Jaya has two older sisters, a younger sister and two younger half-brothers. When the mother was widowed, the mother's family helped her get remarried and the three eldest daughters, including Jaya stayed with their maternal uncle; however, since she was very young, she soon joined her mother, stepfather and younger sister in their current home. The maternal uncle has funded the schooling and marriage of the older two sisters. Jaya resides in the village house with her mother, stepfather, younger sister and two younger half-brothers. The two elder sisters were quickly married once they finished their schooling (class 12). The elder sisters said that they had felt that it was appropriate to get married soon after completing their schooling as they were very grateful for the support and generosity of the maternal uncle, and did not wish to burden him further. The elder daughters had felt that, if they took a couple of years after schooling to go to college, their uncle would have had to spend more money on them. Jaya's younger sister is in high school (class 12) whereas the half-brothers are in middle school (class 5 and 8). While her elder sisters have both been schooled in government Hindi medium schools, Jaya and her younger siblings have been schooled in a private English medium school.

Jaya said that she is a singer of religious songs and wants to be a singer in future. Since being a singer is a very precarious vocation, she is continuing with formal education to have a more stable career option. She said that occasionally she is invited to sing at events where she is paid. If the venue is very far away her stepfather accompanies her. Through her singing she is able to earn a small

amount of money which she spends on her own education fees and other small daily expenses. Although she is from a rural, lower-middle class, Other Backward Class (OBC) background, she wears western outfits and is quite confident in the college. While some young women in the college do wear western outfits, this is not common. One of the participants of the qualitative in-depth interviews in SDC during the FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) had said that when she first wore western outfits such as jeans and a t-shirt in college, she was perceived to be very "bold". This is a very meaningful term used in India for women to indicate a woman who is more sexualised and of an immoral character.

8.1.2 Roles

Jaya was the first among the sisters in her family to go to college. She had to seek support from a paternal aunt and her husband who live near the college to convince her parents. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, Jaya's paternal aunt and uncle, who reside near SDC, had sought out information about the college and even accessed their own personal social networks to talk to the principal of SDC to facilitate her enrolment. During her interview Jaya said,

> My family condition is not good enough for them to be able to afford my singing training costs. They are getting me educated, that is enough. And that too in such a good school and college, that is more than enough for me. Because my [older] sisters studied only till 10th/12th. Initially they also used to tell me that 'maximum we will educate you till 12th standard but won't send you to college'. But I passed 12th standard with good marks and there was never any complaint against me, so automatically they allowed me to study in college.

Since she obtained good marks in class 12, she was able to convince her parents to allow her to go to college. She rationalised that she was able to do this since she obtained good marks, unlike her sisters. She also said that there were no complaints against her when she was in school which convinced her family that she was sincere in her educational pursuits. She further explained,

My parents realized that the daughter was studying so well and there was
no complaint. Particularly every time they went for the parent-teacher
meetings, my teachers encouraged my parents to educate me further. For
those girls who do not study, the teachers ask the parents to get them
married. But my teachers really supported me. When my father said that
'we will enrol her in a government school', my teachers refused to give
him my 10th standard certificate and told him that they will pay the tuition
fees for my private school education. For two years my teachers paid the
school fees because they wanted me to stay in a private school. Later the
school itself gave me a fees waiver. I had to pay less than half, nothing
more than Rs 200-300 per month). That really made my parents think that
'let the girl study if she wants to'.

She feels that this support from her teachers in the private school was very
significant in her educational trajectory. The family had wanted her to change her
to a government school, but the teachers resisted the family's wishes and
supported her. They personally contributed towards her fees and gave her
scholarships which allowed her to continue studying in the private school. This
support from her teachers has played a significant role in encouraging her parents
to support her access to higher education, especially since the narrative reveals
that even during her schooling her family had been hesitant about investing time
and money on her education. The rationalisations, linkages with trust from parents
and good academic performance are very similar to Deepika's and several other
young women who have participated in this study. The educational and marital
trajectories of her elder sisters are evidence of the parents' desire to get their
daughters married as soon as possible.

8.1.3 Agencies

Different family members have opposed or supported Jaya's access to higher
education. Jaya herself has played a significantly proactive role in seeking out
information about higher education from her friends and paternal aunt and uncle.

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Jaya is a family trailblazer in terms of accessing higher education. Unlike her two older sisters, she was able to garner support within the family by mobilising the social capital accessible to her paternal aunt, in spite of opposition from her stepfather and maternal uncle. This in turn has inspired her young sister, who said that she was planning to seek admission to higher education in the future. During her individual interview, Jaya said

> Even if they wouldn't have taught me, they would definitely send the brothers to college because boys are valued more. Like my sisters were only taught till 10th standard but that was not the fault of my family. One of my sisters (the second elder sister) had to re-write an exam so they filled a form but my sisters didn't have too much interest in studying, unlike me who wanted to study. So it was their fault that their education had to be stopped. My family had said that they will at least educate them till 12th standard but won't send them to college. But their 12th standard didn't happen because of their own fault as they did not study.

This trailblazing participant had not only resisted the gender regime experienced by her two elder sisters; she also established a possible educational pathway or choice which is now accessible to her younger sister. However, this discourse does put considerable responsibility and pressure on the individual young women to just focus on their education, and dismisses the significance of gendered biases and prejudices within the family.

Jaya has mixed feelings about her maternal uncle. Although she says that he has been very helpful and of great influence with her mother, he did not want her to go to college as he believed that when girls went to college, they become spoilt. She constantly shared details of her daily life with her mother to ensure that her parents trust her. Maintaining an image of good character is important. It is important to note that although Jaya has successfully steered her own educational trajectory, she did need to strategically generate support and approval from her

parents. Her reflexive efforts to garner support and her gendered relationship with her family is reflected in the following excerpt:

> In the beginning I had to tell my mother that, please get me admission in college, I will study well and never give you a reason to complain. Our parents' thinking is also not wrong because around us there are girls who…you know you can understand. I am also a girl so I am not saying that all the girls are the same but there are girls who instead of going to college only do 'time pass' [activities which are not related to education]. That is the reason for parents' fear. After seeing the character of girls in our neighbourhood my parents got scared that what if I also become like this when I go to outside/college. But I had to say only a little; I didn't have to force them. My mummy papa are very 'simple' [i.e. straightforward individuals who are not very educated or complicated], if they were stricter then I had to convince them more. They are very good and they listen to what I have to say.

Jaya said that after she concluded her schooling, most of her classmates went to a private college in another city which was closer but more expensive. She enquired through her aunt and uncle and chose to enrol in SDC as this was cheaper. Her explanations and the position she takes within her family with her educational choice is similar to the one expressed by Deepika (SiDC). This seems to have been a very well thought out and pragmatic decision made by Jaya in order to strategically address the opposition she faced from her maternal uncle and stepfather.

As mentioned in the seventh chapter, Jaya is very aware of the social barriers which she has had to address as she struggles to access higher education. She is also aware that these barriers are significantly influenced by her gendered identity in the family. She said that she does not foresee her younger brothers facing similar opposition if they wish to access higher education. The mother, on the other hand, during my home visit said that the opposition voiced by the maternal

uncle and stepfather was not very serious and was just noise and bluster which evaporated quite quickly as soon as Jaya was enrolled and commenced her higher education in SDC. The mother also expressed anxiety about violence against women and the fact even a single misstep or straying in terms of interaction with the opposite sex might be disastrous for Jaya and other young women who might wish to follow in her steps.

8.1.4 Intersectional access to higher education

Jaya is a rare participant who has successfully overcome opposition to higher education in the family. Jaya is from a Dalit (OBC) community whose primary source of income is farming. Jaya is a trailblazer who has strategically garnered support from different family members within her particular caste and social class context. Additionally, she is a rare undergraduate student who is earning through part-time work outside the college. The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) had revealed that none of the students enrolled in the three sampled colleges was engaged in any kind of part-time work. Jaya is actively designing her own educational pathway and making educational decisions of her own. This case illustrated an intersectional and contextual opposition to access higher education along with an agentic overcoming of opposition within the same gender regime which was restricting her access.

As shown in this study, and through this case, gender regimes and gendered considerations affect the everyday experiences and educational trajectories of young people in India. People's gender identities infuse their educational trajectories with gendered roles, expectations, aspirations and opportunities. For instance, Jaya faced opposition from her immediate family when she initially expressed interest in accessing higher education. This opposition was explicitly gender-related, since it was based on the family members' negative perceptions regarding the character and behaviour of young women who access higher education. As students overcome gendered barriers to access higher education, they mobilise different kinds of social, cultural and economic capitals which are available within their particular caste and social class context. For instance, Jaya's

narratives reflect young women's intersectional concerns regarding their (a) gendered identities as daughters and, in Jaya's case, niece, and (b) social class identities reflected in their financial limitations and career aspirations and (c) matrimonial aspirations for grooms within their particular caste communities.

Within her particular Dalit (OBC) and working-class context, the trailblazing Jaya mobilised her social capital to access information about SDC and further mobilised her gendered cultural capital to garner familial support as she accessed higher education. However, as Jaya continued to conform to the requirements of an ideal daughter and student, she was aware of the fact that her brothers did not have to face similar expectations and limitations from their family's gender regime. Students such as Jaya are able to perceive and reflect upon social anxieties and inequalities which are influenced by their gendered social class and caste contexts. As trailblazers such as Jaya access higher education, they resist existing gender regimes and establish new gendered patterns (through entering higher education for the first time) within their particular class and caste communities. The patrifocal gender regime persists, although subtly reconfigured with new gendered educational trajectories wherein women accessing HE is the new norm, and from Jaya's case we can see that gendered inequalities intersect with inequalities based on students' social class and caste identities. Young women's educational decisions and everyday experiences of being monitored reflect intersectional class-based financial limitations, gender and caste-based anxieties about social reputations due to possible relationships with young men from different social class and caste communities, and social anxieties regarding safety.

8.2 Case 2: Amrita
Amrita is an only child from a Suvarna family. Her father is a retired Army man who owns land and Amrita's family has a relatively wider network of family members who have accessed higher education. I met Amrita in December 2018 in the women's common room in MDC. She volunteered along with some of her friends to participate in the study. I called her after a couple of days and confirmed that I will meet her and her family at her home. When I visited the

family home the next day, they were in the process of completing the construction
of the home. The home is located in Rajasthan, and is just over the border from
Haryana, and is about half an hour's travel by a motor vehicle from MDC. The
newly constructed home, at the end of their village, is two storied and includes a
large living space and kitchen along with bedrooms. The following table (8.2)
lists significant contextual factors which shape Amrita's access to higher
education.

Table 8.2 Amrita Family Background

Contextual factors	Case 2 (MDC) Amrita
Caste	Suvarna (General): Jaat
Source of parental income	Own Land and Army pension
Family members living in the same household	Only child, with parents, grandmother and paternal uncle
Siblings	None
Education of Siblings	She has no siblings but has older cousins who have accessed higher education, especially a young woman training to be a medical doctor
Decision Maker	Father and cousin brother
Significant Family network	Paternal uncle and older cousin sister
Location of home	Village in Rajasthan
Participant's class 12 schooling	Private
Mother's education	Class 10 (end of secondary)
Father's education	BA (graduate)

After I introduced myself and my study, as per the preference of Amrita and her
parents, I first had an interview with the father while Amrita and her mother were
engaged with household chores. This was followed by an interview with Amrita,
where the mother observed our conversation. The home visit was concluded with
a family group interview. During my interview with Amrita, it was very difficult
to have privacy from the mother's presence. However, in spite of the mother's
presence, Amrita did manage to voice some of her opinions and aspirations which
were different from the narratives provided by her parents. The differences in
opinions and the gendered dynamics can be observed in how during the interview

the mother interjected and explained Amrita's educational trajectory and her eventual decision to stay with her family.

8.2.1 Social background and education

Amrita is an only child from a land-owning and dominant caste community. This is a very rare occurrence in the region, especially to have an only child who is a daughter. Such family arrangements in terms of number and gender of progeny is contrary to the social norms which value sons more than daughters (Yadav 2001, Larsen and Kaur 2013). At the time of my visit, Amrita lived with her parents, paternal grandmother and her paternal uncle. They also own buffaloes which are located in the backyard and which are cared for by the mother. The mother exhibited great pride in this activity. This is important to note that women's engagement with animal husbandry, especially buffalos is a significant and historically persistent social norm in Haryana and the region (Chowdhry 2011a, Thakur et al. 2001). This activity is not only a source of income for many women but also a source of dairy products for the household.

The house is located at the periphery of the village. The mother explained that they decided to relocate their home from within the village to the periphery as the house and rooms of their house in the village were smaller and this location was more convenient to overlook their land. This indicates that this family has significantly higher access to financial wealth than most of my participants who lived in significantly smaller homes in both rural and urban areas.

While her mother has not graduated from school, her father is a graduate. Amrita's father has recently retired from the armed forces, is waiting for his pension and looking for private employment. When the father was working in the armed forces, he used to live in army cantonments away from Amrita and her mother. During Amrita's schooling, Amrita and her mother used to live with her maternal uncle's family. The maternal uncle's family plays a significant role in the educational aspirations and choices that the family has made for Amrita. Amrita attended a private school in the same urban centre as MDC. On finishing

schooling, she took a year off to prepare for the highly competitive national medical school entrance examinations. She was unsuccessful at her attempt and realigned her educational pathway to enrol in a BSc in medical science at MDC.

8.2.2 Roles

The interviews with Amrita and her parents indicate that they are intimately involved in her education. When the father was away on his army postings, the mother was involved in her schooling and regularly interacted with her schoolteachers. When Amrita enrolled in MDC, her father visited the college to interact with her teachers to follow up on her academic performance and progress. This degree of involvement was not observed with any of the other participants of the study. The father said that they were very keen that Amrita accesses higher education and become a doctor or a teacher. The father also said that he made efforts to support and enrol Amrita in a coaching institute in Rajasthan in Kota, which is a city where young students from across India stay in paying guest accommodations and receive coaching to prepare for medical and engineering entrance examinations. He said that they accepted Amrita's wish to remain at home and receive coaching nearby. The father also said that the daughter was troubled at not being successful and that they reassured her at the time and encouraged her to access an undergraduate course at MDC. He also said that he had also invested in enrolling Amrita in an English language course to improve her English language proficiency.

Amrita and her family were advised by a diverse group of Amrita's cousins and uncles. The following excerpt from my interview with Amrita's father illustrates how Amrita's paternal uncle and her female cousin were a source of information, advice and inspiration for her father.

> I: You had earlier mentioned that you wished for your daughter to become a doctor?
>
> Father: Yes for medical. (I: yes) to be a doctor. (I: Yes) It is difficult, I mean it did not happen so after that I got her enrolled in college

I: So you had from the beginning been talking about [Amrita] becoming a doctor?

Father: Yes I was from the very beginning [interested] in medical, that we will make her a doctor. So from the beginning we made her do science [in school].

I: Ok, at what age did this begin with Amrita? That daughter should do this?

Father: No this was our interest just like one of my nieces is doing. She is preparing for MD [post graduate course in medicine]. She will give her test tomorrow. So she had done it first from here, meaning she was doing, this medical course to become a doctor. After her [the niece] then her [Amrita]. 'Daughter, you should become a doctor'.

The family is able to mobilise cultural capital and information from a wide kinship network. The cousin's educational trajectory inspired the father who wanted Amrita to pursue medicine. Amrita's paternal female cousin was also advising her to enrol in a college which was farther away from home than MDC. However, her parents and maternal male cousin managed to steer her towards enrolling in MDC. MDC is not the closest college to home. There is another college near her home in Rajasthan which is funded by the Rajasthan state government. Both parents felt that the distance to MDC was not too great and they were informed by Amrita's maternal uncle that MDC is a good college. They are also familiar with the college and assured by the fact that they have family staying in the vicinity in case of an emergency.

As discussed in the previous chapters, Amrita's enrolment was forced to a great degree by her maternal uncle's son who is a few years older than Amrita. This confluence of involvement, support, inspiration and information within Amrita's family indicated that different family members are performing multiple roles and exercising varying degrees of agency as educational choices are made for Amrita.

8.2.3 Agencies

On examining Amrita's experiences, it is evident that male family members are the predominant decision makers. The parents explained that they preferred MDC over the college in another city in Haryana as Amrita would be able to stay at home and have access to healthy home cooked food and home environment. The mother and the male cousin clearly were very keen about MDC being the ideal choice of college for Amrita. The narratives indicate that several cousins and uncles were sought out for advice and were often recognised as inspiration for Amrita and her father. The father also said that mobile internet is a very good source of inspiration and information and that he is consulted at the final stage of decision making for approval and the financial funding required for different educational courses. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the earlier two chapters, the final decision was approved by the parents and enforced in a manner by the male cousin who simply enrolled her in MDC in spite of her lack of interest.

Amrita is the only participant of this study whose family was able to invest in private coaching services. Other participants such as Hritik (MDC) received pro-bono services. Although her father had steered her towards pursuing medicine, she was also interested in becoming a teacher. When considering colleges, she said that she was not interested in enrolling in MDC but eventually over time, after being a student for a couple of months at MDC came to acknowledge that MDC was a good choice. When asked about how she had enrolled in a college she was not interested in, the mother intervened and said,

> She is scared of him [the male cousin]. She will only speak once directly. If it is a yes then it is yes, a no is a no. Will not speak again as it will be refused.

Along with this the father expressed,

> No it is fine here, a child who studies, can study anywhere, even if he studies at home he can do it.

This is a popular phrase and rationale which was echoed in almost all families when the interviews discussed choice of institution. This rationale, was, however not being consistently applied: while Amrita's parents are making this statement, they had also made an attempt to send Amrita to a coaching institute in another city where Amrita would have had to live in a hostel or paying guest accommodation. This indicates that they had a certain "hot" knowledge or information about the quality of training provided in the preferred coaching institute. Concerns regarding distance to college and discourses regarding healthy food and living at home were not considered when they wanted to send Amrita to this coaching institute.

The mother also explained that Amrita was very emotionally attached to her family and her interest to enrol in a college which was farther away was impractical. She cited Amrita's earlier choice to enrol in a less popular coaching institute near home during her year off as an instance where Amrita and the family found Amrita being very unhappy at contemplating staying away from her family. Amrita seems to be exercising different agencies within her family as educational decisions are made. While she has been able to convince her parents that she does not want private coaching far from home she is not able to convince her parents to support her enrolment in a college farther away from home. Amrita's herself stated that in comparison to her friends and their families, her parents are very "*open minded*" and explained that they usually let her do what she wanted to do. This statement is contradicted by the fact that the mother monitors Amrita's movements. The mother shares,

> If she is late for thirty minutes or an hour I will call her on the phone and ask her where she is and will ask her to explain why she is so late. And she would usually explain that it took more time in college that day.

The mother ensures that Amrita goes only to the college and directly comes home as soon as the lectures and laboratory sessions are concluded for the day. Her

perception that her parents are more open minded than others might have led her to be less vocal about her educational choices within the family. This also reflects how the processes through which educational decisions are made within the family are complex.

8.2.4 Intersectional access to higher education

This case demonstrates an intersection between class and gender. Unlike several other participants, Amrita's parents were able to fund her enrolment in coaching institutions after her schooling. While Amrita is clearly more advantaged in terms of her class position and mobility, the parents recalled being anxious about whether her application to MDC would be accepted because of their Suvarna caste identity and the location of their permanent residence across the border in Rajasthan.

The intersectional influence of class and gender reveals that the family is using emotional ties and discourse of home-based healthy lifestyle to limit and control Amrita's educational choices and participation. Her middle-class location as the only daughter of a relatively wealthy family in the village shapes her access and everyday mobility. Her parents have provided her with a scooter. Travelling on a personal scooter sets her apart. Most of the young women attending the sampled colleges travel by public transport services such as buses. The parents cite this as a way in which they are supporting her access to higher education. This classed form of support (in the form of a scooter) does make it easier for Amrita to commute from college, but this is only a relative loosening of control and monitoring. As mentioned earlier, the mother is constantly in touch with Amrita through her mobile phone and the family does not allow Amrita to visit her friends' homes.

Since Amrita is from a comparatively wealthy family, she and her family are able to invest in private coaching for her. She is able to access cultural capitals through her uncle and cousin, she and her family are able to convert their economic capital into cultural capital when they invest in private coaching for Amrita. However, in

spite of being able to access and mobilise cultural and economic capital, Amrita
was eventually enrolled in a higher education institution in which she was not
interested.

As shown here, gender also influences educational trajectories in wealthier
Suvarna families. In Amrita's case, gendered concerns are subtly inflected by her
wealthier social class and more privileged caste background. For instance, Amrita
was not worried about the cost of education and safety issues regarding commute
to colleges, which preoccupied participants from less privileged backgrounds.
Although relative privilege is able to subdue social anxieties rooted in social class
(return to investment in education and affordability) and caste (social
discrimination, prejudice and violence), gender persists to affect access to higher
education. Male family members continue to wield authority to approve and
support educational decisions while mothers are involved in monitoring the
everyday movements of young women as they accessed higher education.
Amrita's case demonstrates how, within a relatively privileged family, she was
socialised to have emotional attachments with the family, was obedient to the
wishes of men in the family (cousin brother and father) and her everyday
movements were monitored by the family. This demonstrates that some gendered
concerns differ across social class and caste contexts, but that there are also
commonalities that reflect the patrifocal gender regime.

8.3 Case 3: Deepika
Deepika is a young first-generation student from a rural Dalit (OBC) and
working-class which primarily supports itself through farming. Deepika is a very
sociable young woman whom I met along with her older cousin and neighbour
Esha who was also a participant. Deepika and Esha are cousins who live in
separate households but live next door to each other. The two cousins, their
parents and grandparents interact with each other every day. The two families and
the cousins have a very strong relationship and involvement with each other. It is
hard to distinguish between the two families. The interactions between the two
cousins and families together are an opportunity to explore the interactions within
extended families in India. This is an illustration of how definitions of family

within communities in north India are elastic. Both families consider Esha and Deepika as their daughters. The following table (8.3) illustrates the contextual factors shaping Deepika's educational experiences.

Table 8.3 Deepika Family Background

Contextual factors	Case 3 (SiDC) Deepika
Caste	Dalit (OBC): Bhaat
Source of parental income	Farming
Family members living in the same household	Grandparents, parents and siblings
Siblings	1 younger brother and 1 younger sister
Education of Siblings	Younger sister in class 10 and younger brother in class 8 in the same government school in the village
Decision Maker	Father
Significant Family network	Older cousin sister living in the neighbourhood
Location of home	Village in Sirsa district
Participant's class 12 schooling	Government
Mother's education	Class 5 (end of primary)
Father's education	Class 8 (mid-secondary)

I met Deepika and Esha on my second day in SiDC. They expressed an interest in participating in my study. I walked with them to their home in the village. I first visited Deepika's home in the village and interviewed her grandparents and her mother in the courtyard. Esha, in the meantime, had gone to her home in the neighbourhood. As I was interviewing Deepika's mother, Esha returned and insisted that we all move to her home and meet her family. At Esha's home I met Deepika and Esha's grandmothers sitting with other elderly women in their community in the courtyard. They were sitting on woven cots and socializing with each other. I briefly interacted with the grandmothers about their family history and proceeded to interview Deepika in the privacy of a bedroom.

8.3.1 Social background and education

Deepika is enrolled in the rural college which is located on ground donated from the same village. Deepika and Esha's grandmothers are sisters who are married to two brothers. This adds to the depth of kinship between the two families and

cousins. Deepika and Esha's fathers are cousins. Esha and Deepika's parents have not completed their schooling. Deepika's father is educated till class 8 and her mother has only finished elementary education till class 5. The family survive on farming on their own land which is primarily done by the father. Deepika's mother said that she herself had a difficult life and she wants her children to study, get a good job and have a better life.

Deepika's home is a traditional rural household which houses a joint family with grandparents, parents and children. This household adheres to the traditional format of a couple of bedrooms, an open-air kitchen, a washroom, and a buffalo. The family is from a Dalit and OBC (referred to within Haryana as Backward Class A) community which indicates that although they have not historically experienced the stigma of untouchability, they have however, been historically marginalised from several social and economic opportunities such as education. This is evident in the educational background of the family and the traditional occupation of the family in agriculture. Deepika is the first in her joint families to access higher education. Deepika's cousin Esha is the trailblazing first student and first young woman from the village to enrol in SiDC. Deepika's younger sister has also followed the same educational path established by her. Esha is a trailblazer who, in her first year of undergraduate studies used to walk alone from the village to the college. Now she is accompanied by Deepika and few more girls from the village.

8.3.2 Roles

The family has had a significant role in how Deepika has been able to access higher education. All the girls in the family have accessed schooling from the local village government school. Transition into higher education was significantly facilitated by family support. Deepika said that her mother has been especially supportive and protective of her during the transition. When asked about this, she explained that the people in the village did not have positive perceptions about the college. The villagers were sceptical about the fact that young men and women are interacting with each other and studying together. This

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social scrutiny and disapproval questions the morals and social character of
students enrolled in the college, especially that of the young women. Although the
villagers did not directly communicate this opinion with the family, family
members and both participants were very conscious of this popular perception.
The parents and grandparents have expressed a great degree of trust in the
character and motivations of their daughters. They expressed great pride in the
educational performance and scholarships being awarded to Deepika. The family
seems to be choosing to disregard the social scrutiny of the students enrolled in
the rural college. To the family the academic achievements and scholarships are
tangible evidence that Deepika is only focused on academics and that they are
determined students with good moral character.

Deepika expressed that she was inspired to focus on her studies and access higher
education because she initially wanted to become a police officer. She recalled
that she had been inspired by the authority and prestige enjoyed by a police officer
who had once visited their school and village. The family is also motivated to
access higher education so that the next generation is able to access better
employment and earning opportunities. This motivation along with Deepika's
academic performance and scholarship enable the family members to support their
educational aspirations. The scholarships also ensure that the family can afford the
cost of accessing higher education. While academic excellence and scholarships
have helped Deepika to garner family support, it also limits her choices (see
chapter 6). The families believe that only individual hard work and determination
creates good academic results and that this applies regardless of the quality of the
college. They feel that the nearest and cheapest college is as effective in terms of
outcomes as more prestigious colleges farther away from home.

8.3.3 Agencies

The family members, especially the men in the family, continue to wield the
power to approve educational choices. Deepika, like her cousin Esha a year before
her, was accompanied by her father when she applied and enrolled in SiDC.
Deepika and her sisters are accessing higher education and have developed certain

discourses which have helped them to garner and maintain family support as they pursue their educational and career objectives. In the previous two chapters I have discussed how they have actively demonstrated academic focus and achievements to the family. Deepika said

> So I first looked there [the private women's college in the urban centre] and the fees that it requires. I made some calculations that it was more there. So I took admission here

These choices demonstrate an acknowledgment of social and economic barriers as well as an interest to not add to the economic pressures on the family. This is however is a conscious performance on Deepika's part within the family. During the group interview with her mother and grandparents she explained,

> First my sister [Esha] told me to get enrolled in college. Then another person told me to get enrolled in the private women's college and that there the education is very good. But then because of money problem I said 'I won't enrol there'. Then my father said it does not matter, and that college is farther away too. Although fewer girls go here [to SiDC] and boys also come and there is gossip about it, I just want to study.

When actively choosing the least expensive and closest college, Deepika is also demonstrating to the family that she is being considerate about the financial capabilities of the family. This is a very strategic way to garner support. Deepika, her sister and cousins are aware of how they are being trusted by the family. In the previous excerpt it is important to note that Deepika said "I just want to study". This is a strategic position being expressed in order to build trust and support. Her cousin and the family trailblazer, Esha said,

> some villagers had even said this that this college is like this (not good), boys and girls study together. Villagers think like this. So you should not put them [the daughters] here. The honour of your girls is like this [intact]

now will become like that [dishonourable] later. Then the people in my
family protected. They had trust that their child is not like this. She will
maintain our honour. Our family members did not worry about the people
[villagers]. So with their trust I am now in the third year of college

The young women enrolled in the higher education in the family are also hoping
to pursue master's courses after they graduate and are aware that this might
require them to access universities which are farther away. They shared that they
are aware of their financial limitations and will need to figure out funding for this.

The educational trajectories and aspirations of Deepika and her cousin Esha
indicate that they are constantly reflecting on their social context and barriers and
the educational choices available to them. They said that the village government
school has teachers with different capabilities but the quality of teachers in the
school has improved over time. Esha who is the older cousin had to have tuition
in English and Mathematics in class 10, while Deepika did not need this as there
were new teachers when Deepika was in class 10. Esha also said that their village
school did not offer science in high school and limited their subject choices to
humanities. Deepika and Esha were actively engaged in the educational choices
being made for their younger siblings.

8.3.4 Intersectional access to higher education

This case is of great interest as it demonstrates the importance of location and how
it intersects with inequalities based on social class and caste. The location of the
family in this particular village is significant. If SiDC did not exist, the closest
higher education options accessible to Deepika and Esha's families would be the
more expensive and possibly unaffordable private women's college in the nearest
city or the government college in the district centre which is farther away. The
narratives of the two families reflect a clear intersectionality between gender,
class and caste. The families are not members of the local dominant caste group
yet have greatly benefitted by their residence in the village. The location of the
village and the college has made higher education more accessible to the young

people in the nearby villages. SiDC, as a rural college, has made higher education more accessible to lower income farming families in rural areas.

As mentioned in the previous section, the two cousins were critical of the quality of schooling available to them. In comparison to Amrita, who was residing in an urban centre during her schooling, Deepika and Esha did not have easy access to coaching institutions. They had to avail tuition services to address the poor quality of education available in the village school. The tuition was provided by another resident of the village and is very different from the coaching which was available to Amrita in the urban centre. Coaching services are more expensive and prepare students for highly competitive entrance examinations whereas tuition is geared towards improving the academic performance of students in the public school examinations.

This case demonstrates that location is a significant factor which influences how larger macro social forces such as class and gender mediate the educational choices and decisions made within the family. The complex nexus of gender, class and location is evident in how Deepika and Esha chose SiDC and the barriers they foresee in their aspirations for post graduate education. Location influenced their everyday commute from home to college. It also has significantly encouraged the entry of trailblazing young women into higher education for the first time in the educational histories of their families.

As shown in this case, intersectional gendered concerns also influence how students from Dalit and working-class backgrounds access rural colleges. Deepika's case illustrates how gendered concerns within Dalit (in this case, OBC) and small farming families are further inflected with heightened concerns regarding honour in rural Haryana. As young women in rural Haryana access higher education, they are conscious that traditional rural communities often disapprove of interactions between young men and women in rural colleges. In the previous case, it was observed that Amrita's older cousin brother had advised her on how to interact with the young men in her urban college campus. In rural

areas, there are heightened concerns about social reputation and scrutiny of young people accessing higher education due to the heightened focus on traditional gender codes in these areas. Deepika and her cousin were acutely aware of how the people in their village negatively perceived the honour and moral character of young people enrolled in SiDC. This social scrutiny may have greater impact on people from marginalised castes and disadvantaged social class backgrounds.

Deepika and her peers were aware of the gendered monitoring to which they are subject and talked about how their families "trust" them. Additionally, gendered consciousness is evident in Deepika's pathway into higher education. Young women, although they did not directly identify and discuss class-based barriers in my study, are nonetheless cognizant of social and economic limitations. Deepika reflexively chose the cheapest and nearest college and mobilised the economic and cultural capital located within her academic performance and scholarship. From my study it can be seen that young women reflexively perform the identities of *ideal daughter and student* to address concerns regarding safety and honour within the family and rural community. Deepika's case and her involvement in her siblings' educational choices also demonstrate how, as members of first-generation families accessing higher education, they are also generating new gendered social and cultural capital within rural communities.

8.4 Case 4: Mohan

Mohan is a young man from an upwardly mobile Dalit (SC) family in rural Haryana. Mohan had volunteered to participate in my study in college. The interview with Mohan was conducted in SiDC's campus grounds a day before the interview with the family. Mohan was not present during my interaction with the family. I had planned to have Mohan present during my interaction with his family, but his classes were rescheduled on the day and he assured me that he had talked to his younger brother who escorted me to the home from the village centre and introduced me to his family. The interview with family members was conducted in the courtyard where I shared a rope braided cot with the mother while the father chose to sit on a chair on the other side of the courtyard which was also within his earshot.

The following table (8.4) lists the significant contextual factors which influence his educational experiences and access to higher education.

Table 8.4 Mohan Family Background

Contextual factors	Case 4 (SiDC) Mohan
Caste	Dalit (SC): Meghwal
Source of parental income	Postal officer's salary and farming
Family members living in the same household	Parents, 2 older sisters and 1 younger brother
Siblings	3 older sisters and 1 younger brother
Education of Siblings	Elder sisters- BA and MA from private women's colleges, younger brother is doing an undergraduate course in SiDC.
Decision Maker	Father
Significant Family network	Father and older sisters
Location of home	Village in Sirsa
Participant's class 12 schooling	Government
Mother's education	None
Father's education	Class 12 (completed schooling)

8.4.1 Social background and education

Mohan comes from a Dalit family. One member of Mohan's extended family was a member of the village panchayat. As mentioned in the fourth chapter (see 4.2.2), under the law governing Panchayati Raj or local village government in India, leadership positions are reserved for women and the Dalit communities inhabiting the village. Mohan had said that this law had helped his father in eventually obtaining a local government job in the village. Additionally, the father and his brothers collectively farm on rented land in the village which contributes to the family income. These factors have helped them overcome caste barriers to a great degree. The family home in the village is quite traditional and includes a couple of bedrooms, a kitchen, a storage room for grains and a cattle shed (with buffaloes) which are placed around a courtyard within the household compound. Several extended families reside in the neighbourhood.

In terms of education, the mother could not recall any kind of formal education
while the father has completed his schooling till class 12. The parents are
involved in the educational decisions being made for the family. Mohan has three
elder sisters and one younger brother. All of them completed their schooling in
the village government school which had Hindi as the medium of instruction.
Mohan was first enrolled in an education course called Junior Basic Training
(JBT)[20] after he completed his schooling. He said that this was his father's choice
for him. After he graduated from the education course, he is now enrolled in
SiDC. His younger brother is also a student in SiDC. Mohan also has two older
sisters both of whom had graduated from the private women's college in the
nearby urban centre. One of the older sisters has a master's degree, while the other
sister is married and is preparing for public service examinations.

8.4.2 Roles

Mohan's family is intimately involved in the educational decisions made for the
children. Mohan said that most of the educational decisions made by the family
are determined by his father. This is very evident in their family dynamics. The
father is actively directing and supporting the educational choices in the family;
the mother, while also being supportive, is also significantly playing the role of
the family mediator and emotional manager. Although the parents themselves
have no experience of higher education, Mohan said that his father, like many
parents in the community, compares the educational performance of his children
and with that of other children in the neighbourhood. The family, especially the
father, is not only supporting the children's access to higher education, he is also
closely monitoring their educational progress and performance. As mentioned in
the previous chapter, Mohan said that his father often compared him with his
elder sisters and wanted him to perform better academically and pursue a career in
teaching.

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[20] This is usually a two-year diploma course which trains school graduates to become elementary
school teachers.

The family also seems to have developed a practice of successfully mobilising their social and kinship networks to engineer upward social mobility and make educational, professional and larger life plans. When asked about his younger brother's educational and career objectives, he said that his younger brother has no particular ambition. He said,

> He does not have any aim as of now. Our [paternal] uncle in Jaipur has a hospital. He [the uncle] only has one daughter. He [the uncle] considers my brother like his own son. So my brother says that he will just do something with my uncle. He has no tension.

The younger brother seems to be planning to join the paternal uncle in future. This narrative reveals a social preference for male heirs and sons. This social preference and norms can also be deduced from the birth order of daughters and sons in Mohan's families. He has three older sisters whose birth was followed by Mohan and his younger brother.

8.4.3 Agencies

The family dynamics in Mohan's home are traditionally patriarchal with the father dominating the decisions made within the family. We can see this in the following expert from my interview with Mohan,

> I: So your father told you about you having to go to college?
>
> Mohan: Father himself said that 'you can do you BA here and then do a B.Ed. [education course]'
>
> I: So a BA with a JBT [a teaching course he completed before enrolling in BA] will give you a lot of opportunities as a teacher.
>
> Mohan: [shakes his head to express disagreement]
>
> I: No?
>
> Mohan: I was never interested in a job as a teacher. Even now I am not interested.
>
> I: So your father forced you to do the JBT course?

Mohan: We cannot say forced. I also did it on his saying so. My uncle
[also a teacher] had also done it.

I: You were not interested, yet you did it? Never said that you weren't
interested?

Mohan: Cannot say that.

I: Why?

Mohan: If we say…here in this region [rural Haryana]…if we speak up,
there could be a problem at home later on… 'I had told you to do this' …if
in future I do not get a proper job in my area of interest.

I: So because of this you did it?

Mohan: Yes.

When probed about this later in the interview he said,

it is just a bit of shame [on my part], that it is ok [to not object to father]. If
everyone follows what he says his respect [and honour] increases.

He simultaneously says,

Nowadays in villages there are cases like that [of elopement] a lot.
Sometimes someone's daughter went away [elopes] with some boy. So our
family is a sincere family and everyone knows that very well.

His insistence that his family is an honourable and "sincere" family with no
scandals such as girls eloping with boys. This discursive position indicates a
patriarchal concern with honour, respect for elders or senior family members and
honour being embodied in the body of women in the family and obedience of
children.

During the interviews it was revealed that the father is overseeing and approving
all kinds of decisions such as choice of higher education institution and course
and even the clothes being worn by family members during family weddings. The

mother, on the other hand, supports the children's educational and professional
endeavours. For instance, Mohan said that during a family emergency, his father
required him to stay in a hospital in the district centre to help and support an uncle
who was suffering from a serious ailment. He realised that he needed to be in a
different city closer to home so that he could prepare and sit for a public
examination for a government job. He had to talk to his mother who then
convinced the father to make different arrangements at the hospital for his uncle.

The following excerpt indicates that Mohan could not share his own interest and
lack of interest in teaching because it would be disrespectful towards his father.

> I: So mother tells everything to your father?
>
> Mohan: I don't say anything to him. It does not feel good to say something
> directly to father. I tell mother, she then tells him.
>
> I: You don't like talking directly to your father?
>
> Mohan: We can discuss things but for important things, we have to do as
> father says. That is just how things are done.

In the previous chapter I had referred to interviews with Mohan and his parents to
explore how the father is using silence to maintain his authority within the family
while the mother manages the emotions within the family by performing the role
of the intermediary between her husband and her children. In terms of agency,
Mohan and his siblings who are perceptive of this dynamic at home actively
choose to communicate their interests with their mother. While they are actively
communicating with the mother, they do not directly converse with the father. It
seems that the children choose to remain strategically silent in front of the father.

8.4.4 Intersectional access to higher education

While the parents are supporting the education of all their sons and daughters,
their decisions are gendered. The sons have motorcycles and are enrolled in
coeducational government colleges while the daughters were enrolled in the more
expensive private women's college in the city. In objective terms it might seem

that the family is allocating more resources towards the education of young women in comparison to men. However, I also observed that unlike a lot of the young men who participated in the study, Mohan was familiar with the educational choices and aspirations of his sisters. He explained that he was familiar with these details as his parents had made him responsible for picking and dropping his sisters for different examinations. The parents said that they chose the private college for the daughters as the college provided private bus service for its students (for a fee). Greater investment in education of young women and more intimate involvement in the education of young women is an improvement from the past where women were denied educational opportunities. However, the opening up of educational opportunities has created new gendered mechanisms through which families and society is monitoring and controlling the movement and mobility of young women, as we saw in the case of Amrita, whose mother was constantly in touch with Amrita through the mobile phone and monitored her movements between the college and home.

While Mohan's family is from a Dalit community, they have over the years managed to achieve a certain degree of social class mobility. This can be linked to the family's close relation with the village Panchayat. Mohan said that his father had benefitted from this relationship and had managed to obtain employment as a local white-collar government servant. Their family was now able to afford motorcycles for sons and was also able to send daughters to the more expensive private women's college in the city. Upward class mobility has allowed the family to reproduce the gender regimes and practices of the wealthier communities in the village.

Mohan's elder sisters seem to belong to the first generation to access higher education in their family. Mohan and his younger brother seemed to have been gently nudged into higher education. Mohan and his younger brother do not demonstrate any active academic interest. Mohan is motivated to seek employment in traditionally masculine fields such as the police or the armed forces. During the interview with the parents, both parents said that higher

education improves the children's value in the marriage market. Mohan and his
brother evidently have accessed higher education for several gendered purposes.
They are primarily perceiving education as a route to employment while the
parents are also ensuring that the sons are as educated as their daughters.
Although this is not overtly stated, this conclusion is bolstered by the perception
that educational degrees help men obtain better spouses in the marriage market.

Mohan is a person who is very conscious of his appearance. Unlike most of his
peers, he carefully grooms his hair in a coif. He said that this makes him appear
taller than he actually is. He had wanted to appear taller for a physical fitness
examination which would have made him eligible for the armed forces. However,
his examiner saw through his coif and deemed him marginally shorter than
required. Although he laughed while he narrated this incident, it seems to have
bothered him. It is also interesting to observe that Mohan believes that his father
had initially directed him towards teaching as a career. Mohan also reflected that
his father never actively discouraged him from pursuing his own interest, but the
father has never clearly acknowledged that Mohan is interested in more masculine
professions such as law enforcement and the armed forces.

Mohan's case is important as it not only demonstrates social mobility in terms of
caste, social-class and access to higher education, it also demonstrates how
patriarchy can direct or shape the lives of young men. This aspect of how gender
regimes operate on young men in Haryana is a key concern with a gradual
decrease in the number of young men accessing higher education.

Mohan's case illustrates how gender also affects how young men in different
social class and caste communities access higher education. For instance, as
shown in Mohan's case (as a Dalit student from a socially mobile background
living in a rural area), his younger brother's educational and career aspirations
were shaped by this particular gender regime wherein he was planning to go to
work with an uncle who did not have a son. The gender regime in most rural
households remains patrifocal and it also affects how decisions are made for

young men in the family. For instance, Mohan's family was demonstrably
patrifocal, with the father being dominant and silently directing the educational
choices being made within the family. Mohan and his siblings reflexively
maintained respectful silence in front of the father and conversed with the mother,
who then had to perform the emotional labour of being the family communication
liaison.

The way gender affects young men accessing higher education is also
simultaneously affected by social class and caste. For instance, Mohan was from a
socially mobile working-class/farming Dalit family in rural Haryana which had
managed to mobilise their caste identity through affirmative action policies and
improve their financial capabilities. Even though Mohan's family members
preferred the nearest and most affordable higher education choices for their sons,
the family's ability to afford and access higher education institutions was aided by
his family's caste and upwardly mobile social class identity. Gendered
inequalities persisted in the educational choices and practices of upwardly mobile
Dalit families. For instance, Mohan's family were anxious about their daughters'
safety and honour. These gendered anxieties inspired a gendered arrangement or
regime wherein the sons often escorted their elder sisters to higher education
institutions and examination halls. This illustrates how young men, while
themselves being influenced by the patrifocal gender regime within their
particular caste and class context, are also part of the gender regime within their
family which monitors female sexuality and benefits from gendered inequalities.

8.5 Case 5: Hritik

Hritik resides in the same urban centre as MDC and is a first-generation student
from a relatively wealthier and privileged Suvarna (General) caste family. I met
Hritik in January 2019 in one of the classrooms in MDC. He volunteered to
participate along with some of his classmates. I called him after a couple of days
and fixed a meeting with him and his family. I met him at a street corner near his
house in the city. He then escorted me to his house. His home was located near
the centre of the city and is only a couple of kilometres from MDC. I was made to
understand that they used to live in a different rented house in the vicinity and

have only recently relocated to this newly built house that they own. The single
storied house has two bedrooms and a kitchen. Unlike rural homes, this house in
the urban centre does not have any animals or open spaces. I conducted the
interview in one of the bedrooms. The bedroom has a large bed and built in
concrete shelves covered with curtains on one side of the room which acted as a
wardrobe. The participants and I sat on the bed as I conducted the interview. This
is a common practice in Northern India. Guests are often invited to sit in
bedrooms and on beds as they socialise in a casual manner.

I first had an interview with the mother as Hritik had to go outside to fill forms for
a job application. During the interview with the mother, the elder sister hovered in
the background as she folded her clothes and made preparations to go out to meet
a friend. This was followed by an interview with Hritik. The elder sister
occasionally interjected the conversation with her mother when the mother
became very emotional. Although she did not actively participate in the
interviews, she did actively listen to the conversation, especially when the mother
was talking about the educational barriers the family had faced in the past. The
elder sister also strongly expressed her views about how according to her, families
and society in Haryana have very old fashioned and conservative views on young
people and educational opportunities. The following table (8.5) lists the
significant contextual factors which show how the family background is
influencing Hritik's educational pathway.

Table 8.5 Hritik Family Background

Contextual factors	Case5 (MDC) Hritik
Caste	Suvarna (General): Baniya
Source of parental income	Business
Family members living in the same household	Mother, step-father and elder sister
Siblings	2 older sisters
Education of Siblings	Oldest sister till class 10 (completed secondary), Elder sister-M.Com from MDC
Decision Maker	Stepfather and mother
Significant Family network	Stepfather and older sister
Location of home	Urban centre in Mahendargarh

Participant's class 12 schooling	Government
Mother's education	Class 12 (completed schooling)
Father's education	Class 10 (completed secondary)

8.5.1 Social background and education

Hritik is the youngest child and only son of the family. He has two older sisters. His biological father passed away due to cancer when he was very young. The late father used to run a shop in another state (Chhattisgarh – a central eastern state south of Haryana). After the father passed away, the mother came back with the children to her native state, Haryana. She felt that her family members and her late husband's family members were not actively helping her in her time of need. The mother's family however facilitated her second marriage. Her second husband. runs a small business and is actively involved in the educational choices made within the family.

The mother said that she had to struggle a great deal when her late husband underwent cancer treatment. She said,

> Now think, when a person goes with [personal] difficulties, nobody talks well with them. So I did not go to anyone.

She expressed that she felt very isolated and abandoned by the larger extended family and that she had to take up embroidery to support herself and her children. She can no longer continue with embroidery work as she has developed cataracts in her eye and does not want to undergo the surgery which can fix this problem. She feels that she has suffered and struggled a lot in life and that she no longer has the capacity to struggle. Her voice often broke and she had tears in her eyes as she expressed these feelings. This made her second daughter and me very uncomfortable. I offered her a break at this time which she refused, and she expressed that she wished to continue the interview. While I tried to express empathy, the daughter exclaimed that her mother is just too emotional and that

she tears up at the drop of a hat. This managed to calm the mother down for some
time, however, she repeatedly expressed that she has suffered a lot in life and no
longer has the strength to keep fighting against difficult situations.

In a manner similar to Geeta's (SiDC) mother (see 6.1.1), Hritik's mother
explained that as a child she had wanted to access higher education but could not
due to her family's financial condition and that she got married after finishing
class 12. The following excerpt from my interview with her explores her
educational interests:

> I: So when did you first start thinking about college?
>
> Mother: For the children from the very beginning I wanted to educate
> them, at least make them study till graduation. I would definitely make
> them do graduation. But the situation was such that I had to get my
> [oldest] daughter married as soon as she finished class 10. Now you can
> imagine what kind of situation it was. So for me, I liked the boy
> [prospective groom], so I did it [married off my eldest daughter].
>
> I: So did she not want to study further?
>
> Mother: She wanted to study, I too wanted to educate her. But my
> condition was not good to educate her. So I, they [the groom's family] had
> not asked for dowry… the boy earned [i.e. was employed], so I did it [got
> her married].

She was not able to fulfil this dream for her eldest daughter. While she expressed
pride in her second daughter's academic achievement she also said,

> Among our Baniya [*Savarna* trading caste community] people, we do not
> do that [get married, this community often gets daughters married at a
> relatively young age (not child marriage)]. So I think that if we get a good
> boy [prospective groom], if from a well to do family and is earning [i.e.
> employed], I will get her married. Then at least my responsibilities will be
> finished… I'm telling you, for my son, if he studies, I will educate him. If

he does not study, he still would have done his graduation. I think, he does
something, gets job. At least his future is made [secure].

Although interested in education she continues to conform to caste-specific
gender regimes. Additionally, the narratives of the mother as mentioned in the
previous chapter reveal that the children had trouble enrolling in higher education
as the mother had remarried and had consequently changed the last names of the
children. As mentioned in the sixth chapter (see 6.3.2) the complicated family
history created additional hurdles during the application and enrolment process.
The mother narrated a history of struggle and isolation and of unfulfilled
educational aspirations for herself and her eldest daughter.

Hritik on the other hand admits that he has very little academic inclinations and
that he is only pursuing a graduation to fulfil his family and society's expectations
from him. He said, "it depends on the mind. Hers [the older sister's mind] is
sharp, mine is not." He compares himself to his elder sister who he feels is a very
intelligent and gifted scholar who is keen about education.   He also illustrates his
lack of interest in academic study with the following observation:

> I have observed, I used to sleep and older sister would wake up at 5 am
> and study while I am sleeping. At 11 at night, she is still studying. I said to
> myself, 'I do not want to do this'.

His sister has now finished a master's in commerce and had successfully been
granted the prestigious national eligibility test and Junior Research Fellowship
which makes her eligible to teach at undergraduate level and also provides her
with a stipend if she chooses to enrol in a post-graduate research course. While his
sister is actively exploring this, the mother said that she wants to get this sister
married as soon as she gets a good marriage proposal.

8.5.2 Roles

The parents, especially the mother has played a significant role in supporting the education of the children. She was involved and seems to have made considerable effort for her children. She said,

> I mean you can understand that in the beginning at every step we struggled a lot…[When her first husband got ill] with their father too I went around on my own, there was no one with me. I had three small children with me.

When the family returned to Haryana after the father passed away the mother was involved in the children's educational choices. The children used to be enrolled in a private English medium school; since relocating to Haryana and due to reduced financial capabilities the children were then enrolled in a Hindi medium government school. This was especially difficult for the daughters as they had finished middle school in a private English medium school and the change in environment and medium of instruction affected their academic adjustment. The mother managed to identify and recruit a pro bono tuition teacher for the children who helped with this educational transition.

The mother was also intimately involved in the educational transition from schooling to higher education for both her second daughter and Hritik. For Hritik, the caste background of the family, the elder sister and both parents were figures of support. He says,

> My older sister has commerce. First of all I am businessman's child so calculations and everything, marketing things [also part of the curriculum] in commerce, have always been set in my mind. So there is not a lot of difficulty. Rest, my sister has commerce, she said that she will help. I said, 'what more do I need! Let's take commerce'.

The elder sister is also playing multiple roles as the inspiration, source of information and advice. Although the late father was a graduate, he passed away

before any of the children finished their schooling. His educational trajectory has not placed this family with any kind of embedded knowledge in terms of access and participation in Higher Education. Hritik and his elder sister found information and advice from senior students, friends and teachers at the school and college. Their lack of embeddedness is also evident in the previously mentioned struggles at the time of application and enrolment. The mother discovered that her remarriage and consequent change in the children's surname added complications to their access to education.

8.5.3 Agencies

The narratives from the family demonstrate that the mother plays a significant and emotional role as decisions are being made. However, the stepfather does retain his patriarchal dominance as he continues to hold the power to approve and support the educational choices being made. His power within the family is evident in his ability to push Hritik to enrol in college and fill forms for government jobs. During the home visit, although the stepfather was not present in person, his presence was observed as he made several calls to the family members to ensure that Hritik was filling up the employment application forms. He also ensured, through his calls, that the family prepared his lunch at a time that was convenient for him.

Hritik said that his stepfather had advised him to enrol in the college and continues to advise him to apply for government jobs. His elder sister shared the perception that their parents have geographically limited their educational choices whereas Hritik said that he preferred staying at home, engaging with the family business and chores. The important thing to be noted in this was that he expressed a familial obligation or responsibility as a son to contribute and help his parents. Emotional ties within the family have a significant role in shaping the educational opportunities that the family perceive to be acceptable and suitable for the children.

The children, especially the youngest, who is the only son has a significant emotional relationship with his parents as he chooses to enrol in the nearby college and assist his father with his business activities. It is interesting to observe how these emotional dynamics are gendered. When asked about his access to higher education Hritik said,

> Nowadays it happens among our people, among Baniyas [trading caste] that if the boy is educated then a good girl will come [with a proposal for marriage]. This is the thing. . . This is how papa thinks that no matter what the boy should be educated.

He further rationalises his choice of college by saying,

> No outside I am alone. As a son if I am here, I take care of things at home and the business too and study at the same time. So, looking at everything I have done this. If I went outside then these two, mummy-papa, who would look after them? So, this is the thing.

Here Hritik, as the son, is actively performing an emotional and patriarchal role of the son of the family, who is literally learning the family business by assisting his father, is also accessing higher education in order to be an eligible groom for a bride from the community. His choice of college exhibits a gendered emotional attachment with his parents, especially his mother as he chooses to enrol in the nearest college. He is actively making choices which demonstrate a traditional relationship between parents and son where the son is responsible for the well-being of the parents. Similar sentiments are not expressed by his sister. In contrast, Hritik's elder sister is not expressing similar sentiments. She seems to feel resentment for her parents who are restricting her educational aspirations and choices.

The mother on the other hand uses discourses which have been used by the parents of several of my participants. She says,

I always thought that there is nothing better than going to a local [nearby] college. And look, a child who studies will study irrespective of which college he goes to. And those who don't study, will not study even in the best college. This is what I believe. I took them out of English medium and put them in Hindi medium [school]. My children had to face so many difficulties. I bought them two sets of books, in Hindi and in English too. She [the second daughter] did not even know how to write in Hindi.

Parents are using a discourse of hard work and determination to rationalise their preference for the nearest higher education institutions. This discourse has significant and unequal implications for students residing in urban and rural spaces.

8.5.4 Intersectional access to higher education

Although the father is approving the educational decisions, the older sister is a prominent figure in the family. The late biological father was a graduate who passed away when the children were very young. Technically, the older sister is not the first in the family to access higher education, however, the unfortunate and untimely demise of the father has made the older sister the impromptu trailblazer to access higher education in the family. The educational barriers perceived by the mother regarding lack of knowledge, support and documentation to access higher education reveal hurdles often cited by first generation students. When the family returned to Haryana, the children were enrolled in the local government schools which provided Hindi medium instruction in the classrooms. Not only did the mother find a tutor to help the children adjust to the change in medium of instruction, she also bought two sets of textbooks in Hindi and English to help them with this change. The mother's narrative reveals how sudden family tragedies and ensuing economic changes can have intricate and deep impact on the educational trajectory of young people.

Additionally, the educational trajectories observed in the family reveal a classic intersection between class and gender. While the elder sister is demonstrating high academic performance and receiving awards and scholarships, the son, who is vocally disinterested is pushed to achieve a graduate degree to maintain educational equality in the marriage market in the community. This discourse of increasing levels of educational degrees being required by young men and women in a community to be eligible brides and grooms reflects increasing participation of young people, especially women from the community in education. However, this trend is not universal and is also influenced by birth order. As mentioned earlier, the eldest daughter only finished secondary schooling and was married at 18 years of age whereas the second daughter has completed a Masters course and is exploring a post graduate research course. While there is a wide and distinct difference in the educational trajectories of the two daughters, it is also important to note that the eldest daughter got married as soon as they got a "good" marriage proposal which did not seek dowry and expensive wedding day demands. The mother is very vocal about this and shared that she is waiting for a "good" proposal for the second daughter from their own caste community.

The educational barriers faced by this family reveal how widow-remarriage could complicate access to schooling and higher education in Haryana. Unlike most of my participants, this family does not seem to have been able to mobilise the capitals available to their extended family members and kinship networks. Nevertheless, the mother's family did arrange for her second marriage, which the mother admits has helped her to a certain degree to support her children and their educational trajectories.

Apart from this, Hritik's case is significant as it is similar and different from Jaya. In both families, the mother has children and remarries after her first husband passes away. Jaya's elder sisters got married as soon as they finished schooling. This is quite similar to how Hritik's eldest sister was married after class 10. However, unlike Hritik's elder sister, Jaya had to struggle to break the pattern in her family. There are two major differences between Jaya and Hritik's family.

Hritik's mother did not have children after her second marriage whereas in Jaya's family, Jaya's mother had 3 daughters in her first marriage and after getting married she had two sons with her second husband.

This difference in the gender of children and the birth order of children could be a significant factor influencing how families are supporting or opposing access to higher education. Additionally, Hritik's mother expressed feelings of being abandoned by her family at her time of need, whereas Jaya, her mother and her elder sisters have expressed great gratitude for the maternal uncle who arranged the second marriage and funded education and weddings of the two older sisters. In fact it seemed as if the older sisters were defensive of their maternal uncle and said that they were grateful to their uncle as he did his best to support them and remarked that it is wonderful that he helped them so much since he also had to look after his own family's needs.

It is also interesting to note that both Hritik and his elder sister are students of commerce. Their subject choices significantly reflect their community's historical vocation in commercial pursuits. Whereas Jaya's caste community have historically been farmers. This is an important observation since Hritik had identified this as a significant factor influencing his disciplinary choice. Both Jaya and Hritik's families continue to be engaged in their respective communities' vocation. Jaya, however, is a pioneer who is moving outside this traditional trajectory.

This case shows that gender also influences how young men from relatively wealthy and urban backgrounds access higher education. These gendered concerns are shaped by families' interest and motivation to maintain social status and gender regimes within the family. For instance, Hritik, who was from an urban and trading Suvarna caste community, had a very different pathway into higher education. Hritik himself had no academic interest and was pushed by his family to enrol in an undergraduate course. The family perceived his education to

be an important marker which would affect his future matrimonial prospects within their caste community.

Within their particular gender regime, while his elder sister's educational choices were being geographically limited, Hritik actively chose MDC so as to stay near the family and help his mother with household responsibilities, and to help his stepfather with the family business. In comparison to Jaya, whose mother also remarried after being widowed, Hritik's family had a more positive perception regarding higher education, however their approval and support continued to be bound by gendered and patriarchal concerns. Even in urban non-working class families, gendered expectations and norms persistently influence educational choices and decisions. Urban living and relatively higher economic capital in terms of financial wealth of the family, inflect gender regimes, which are persistently patrifocal.

Young women across different caste and class communities are believed to belong to their future marital family and young men are expected to support the family and be the future primary breadwinner. The discourses surrounding Hritik, his sister and Jaya's educational trajectory, within their respective families, demonstrate that the different and unequal gendered educational decisions made by the family for young men and women are explicitly geared towards upward social mobility and the maintenance of economic and patriarchal status within their particular caste community.

8.6 Conclusion
The five cases discussed have demonstrated how different factors linked with social class and caste intersect with gender as students access higher education. These intersections have an impact on how families perform different gendered roles and agencies and on how families make educational decisions. Additionally, geographical location is a significant factor which has influenced educational decisions and preferences of families and their reflections of education in different ways. Amrita's location in Rajasthan and the family's economic capital and ability to support and provide her with a personal scooter to commute to college

has influenced how the family perceives distance. Being a resident of a different state added to the anxiety experienced by Amrita and her family as Amrita was considering different colleges. On the other hand, students such as Hritik only applied to MDC as they were located in the same city and they were confident that their applications would be successfully accepted. Similarly, the location of Deepika in the same village as SiDC has made higher education significantly more accessible. Location of residence of participants in the same village or city significantly influences awareness and accessibility of higher education. This is very visible in the cases of Deepika and Hritik. Jaya on the other hand had close family relatives residing in the same city as SDC who had social relationships with college administrators and faculty. Their social capital helped her access information about the college and facilitated her enrolment in the college in spite of opposition from her immediate family.

Educational background or cultural capital of siblings and extended family members are a significant factor influencing how family members are able to perform roles as informers and figures of inspiration which positively improves access to information about higher education. Access to higher education by an older sibling or cousin often inspires participants to forge their own higher education pathways. This is evident in the narratives of Amrita, Hritik and Deepika. However, in the case of Hritik, the untimely death of his father, who was a graduate, nullified the possibility of the father's greater educational experience providing the family with embedded knowledge of higher education. The educational trajectory of Jaya's elder sisters illustrates the opposition to higher education she faced within her family. She had to overcome this opposition by maintaining an untainted reputation and performing exceptionally well during her school years. She also needed to actively seek information and advice from extended family members.

The cases also demonstrated that unfortunate tragedies in life can influence young people's educational trajectories in different ways. This is evident when we compare how Hritik and Jaya's families have fared after the father passed away

when the children were young. The mothers' second marriage has had different impacts on the life of the children. While all the children continued to reside with the mother in Hritik's family, Jaya's family was divided with the two older sisters residing separately with their maternal uncle. This has significant influence on how Jaya and Hritik and their sisters accessed education and higher education. Hritik's elder sister is vocal about her disagreement with social norms regarding educational mobility and interaction between young women and men, Jaya is more strategic and actively seeking information and support from extended family members to influence her family's educational decisions. It is also important to note how gendered education access within the family is persistent.

It is evident in all five cases that, across different castes and social classes, gender regimes persistently and intersectionally inflect educational decisions and choices. For instance across caste groups, Jaya's older sister from OBC caste, farming and working class background and Hritik's oldest sister from a Suvarna (General) and (trading) non-working class background were married off very quickly. In India the minimum age of marriage for young women is 18 (for young men it is 21) and most young people are just completing their schooling (class 12) at this age. It is illegal for girls to be married before 18 and in a state such as Haryana, this does happen, but it is a very sensitive issue (Ahlawat 2012, Panchal et al. 2020). As far as I could understand from the interviews, the older sisters, in both families, barely turned 18 years of age and finished their schooling when they were married.

The similarities and differences in the gendered educational trajectories are also influenced by their caste identities, parental occupation and associated class positions. However, within the family, the differences in caste and caste are subsumed by gender which is the overwhelming factor which is placing hurdles in the educational paths of Jaya, her sisters and Hritik's sisters. The cases demonstrate that gender and intersecting social forces influence the family's educational decisions and its access to higher education in different ways. Since access to higher education is mediated though the family, which is a gendered

site, gender is the predominant social inequality as families overcome different
intersectional hurdles to access higher education. Gendered regimes and
expectations influence how families perceive educational choices and goals for
their sons and daughters. Gender regimes intimately influence the relationship
sons and daughters have with fathers and mothers. The gendered relationship with
parents and gendered perceptions influence their educational decisions and
choices. The discursive positioning and strategic vocalisations by different family
members are simultaneously influenced by intersectional factors which are
associated with inequalities such as gender, social class and caste.

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

This thesis primarily aims to develop an understanding of how families and individual family members are involved in the process of making educational decisions as students access higher education. Involvement of family members has been identified as a key factor shaping access to higher education. To understand the involvement of the family and family members, it is important to understand the family as a gendered site where educational trajectories are mediated and forged. Globally, access to higher education is understood as a key route through which individuals and societies can both learn and develop. On an individual level, higher education is associated with personal growth in terms of knowledge, skills, opportunities, status and wealth. As discussed in the second chapter, literature from around the world on access to higher education identifies key structural barriers such as gender, social class, race, ethnicity and caste across the world (Reay et al. 2005, Archer and Hutchings 2000, David 2015, Davis and Guppy 1997, Lehman 2016, Bhopal 2017, Burke 2011 and 2007,) and in India (Varghese et al. 2019, Sonalkar 2018, Sudarshan 2018, John 2012, Chakravarti 2012, Deshpande 2006, Chanana 2000 and 2007).

As observed in the second chapter, the literature on higher education indicates that families and communities are significant sites where students are able to mobilise different kinds of social, economic and cultural capital as they aspire to and access different higher education choices. Families and communities are also sites where students can access networks of support, information and encouragement to access higher education. However, families are also often critical sites where barriers to higher education are activated, especially as they transmit unequal and patriarchal gender regimes to influence educational trajectories. The literature explored in the second and the fourth chapter on access to higher education in India and the social context of Haryana, identify multiple contradictions in terms of economic development and persistent gendered inequalities, violence against women and marginalised communities. The FCF Phase I study (Henderson et al. 2021) indicates that families play a significant role in supporting, encouraging, informing and often determining the educational trajectories of young people in

Haryana. The literature, however, does not elaborate on what happens *within* the
family and how gender regimes manifest themselves within families as
educational decisions are made.

This lacuna has inspired this me to explore how families play a role in the
gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students in Haryana. Within
this primary research concern, the thesis focuses on understanding the different
roles the family has played in the educational lives of undergraduate students as
they made consecutive decisions through schooling and accessing higher
education to enrol in co-educational government colleges in Haryana.
Government colleges are the primary form of higher undergraduate education of
interest as it is the most affordable and accessible form of full-time undergraduate
education available in Haryana, especially for those students who have been
historically excluded or denied educational opportunities such as women, working
class and Dalit students.

This concluding chapter summarises the contribution that the empirical findings
make to the conceptualization of gendered educational choices. The first section
explores how I have addressed the three principal research questions guiding this
exploratory study. The second section on theoretical contributions explore how
the key findings reconceptualise gendered educational choices as family-group
decisions. The third section explores how these empirical findings are generated
by including family members as key participants in the study. The fourth section
explores the practical implications of the theoretical contributions and empirical
findings. The final section explores the limitations of this thesis and how they can
be addressed through further research.

9.1 Key empirical findings

The empirical findings of the thesis revolve around three primary research
questions. The first research question explores the different roles that the family
plays as young people make educational decisions. Analysis of interviews with
students and family members revealed that the family performs four key roles in
students' educational trajectories. Firstly, different family members are

differentially performing the role of source of support wherein they encourage and approve students' access to higher education, their choice of higher education institution, disciplinary choices and career aspirations. These roles are embedded within the gender regime of the particular social context of Haryana. These roles help families to access, mobilise and generate different forms of capitals as students access higher education. Here parental involvement and support from the family has been observed among all participants as a key source of economic and social capital. This parental support is an essential component which encourages young people to access higher education. For a majority of participants in this study, parental support comes from an un-embedded family context where parents have limited cultural capital or limited or no personal experience of accessing higher education. The research found that as parents support and approve the educational decisions made by their children, they are also influenced by a larger ongoing process of social change where more and more young people, especially young women, are accessing higher education from both cities and villages in Haryana.

The students participating in the study, often lacked the traditional social and cultural capital which help students successfully access and utilise higher education opportunities. Students who are accessing higher education in such situations often exhibit considerable "self-reliance and resilience" (Bathmaker et al. 2016: 57). Students who are accessing educational institutions for the first time, especially those who have faced opposition or lack of support are observed to be more proactive in seeking information and advice from their social networks. They also reflexively perceive the potential barriers embedded in their particular social context and within their families to strategically advocate for themselves and their siblings at home. Additionally, several young women are supported during their schooling, higher education and marriage by the maternal uncles and the mother's natal families. The literature on gendered practices in Haryana (Karve 1953, Dube 1988, Chowdhry 2011e) reveals that maternal uncles and brothers are traditionally responsible for the upbringing and marital lives of young women in the family. The economic capital owned by maternal uncles was

mobilised by families to financially support young women's access to schooling and higher education. It was observed that students and families, especially young women, were generating and mobilising different kinds of gendered social capitals to garner support towards accessing higher education. As more young women and men accessed higher education, they were strategically manoeuvring within their particular gender regime to generating new patterns or gendered regimes with gendered capitals which were then being accessed and mobilised by younger siblings and cousins.

A key finding is that family members, especially older siblings and cousins are inspiring young students to join higher education programs and encouraging their parents to support their children's access to higher education . Often family members who are conscious of being figures of inspiration within the family engage in informing, advocating and advising students, parents and other significant decision-making members of the family. The research revealed that trailblazers or family members who are the first to access higher education, are often engaging in reflexive thinking and strategic action to access higher education. They are also figures of inspiration and information.

As students try to access higher education the family plays a key role in mobilizing social capital to access information and advice. The trailblazers are often the most effective sources of advocacy, information and advice within the family. Since trailblazers are located within families which lack embedded knowledge and information about higher education institutions and courses, they often perform a vital role. Identification of trailblazing students will have significant practical implication (see 9.4) in terms of social and institutional interventions and policies to improve access to higher education.

The fourth primary role played by the family is to strategically steer educational choices. This is a very complex role intertwined with the second research question which focusses on gendered performances of roles (to support, inspire, inform and steer educational choices) within the family. Young people and family members

have said that they often decided in favour of the nearest institutions of higher education as they wished to continue living with their families. Analysis of interviews with students and family members found that, apart from structural limitations such as cost of higher education and availability of safe and convenient commute to higher education institutions, young people's educational decisions are not individualised decisions.

While both young women and men were making a decision to continue living with their parents and families, there is a subtle gendered difference in the positioning discourses utilised by the women and men participating in this study. Young women alluded to a sense of emotional attachment and sadness when they contemplated living away from family, the young men did not make any such emotional allusions. The educational trajectories of the young men were being limited in terms of geographical mobility by a patrifocal sense of obligations and responsibilities towards parents and the need to take care of them as they age. Young women, on the other hand, are socialised with emotional ties to the family, which in effect limits their geographical mobility outside the household. This is reflective of a gender regime which places the responsibility of care for elders solely on the sons and daughters in law and a cultural norm wherein young people stay with the family till the day they marry. Thus socialization into gendered roles within the family limits the educational choices and perceptions of accessible educational choices for both young women and men. This study has explored roles and discursive positionings to provide a glimpse into how families are involved in educational choices and trajectories of young women and men adding a new dimension to academic research on higher education, especially in India.

The second research question explores *how* different family members are performing different roles as students access higher education. This chapter uses agency as a concept to understand how family members mobilise different kinds of capitals to support the students' access to higher education. The interviews with the students and family members reveal that families are gendered sites which include intense and enduring relationships between gendered individuals over

time and space. The complexity of relationships and dynamics within the family cannot be individualised to particular family members. Even though families have individuals that make and approve decisions, they are not individual or autonomous decisions.

It was observed that across participants from different caste backgrounds and contexts, fathers, step-fathers and elder brothers approved and supported educational decisions. Fathers are usually the approvers and final decision makers in the family with regard to selecting appropriate higher education institutions. Nevertheless, other family members such as the mother and siblings are often consulted. The research revealed that a number of participants were reluctant to directly communicate their educational interests with their fathers. It was observed across participants that the mothers were often persuaded to become mediators between fathers and children.

The research has revealed the key role of the young men and young women who are family trailblazers in terms of accessing higher education. These trailblazers actively motivate, influence and steer the educational choices and decisions being made within their family for their younger siblings. The research found that trailblazing students were quite adept at strategising the educational choices made for themselves and their siblings. This process is nevertheless gendered. Young trailblazing men can appear as elder brothers and cousins in the family who dictate the educational choices made by the family for their sisters. This gendered dynamics between elder brothers and cousins with younger sisters has been particularly observed in the educational trajectories of several young women participating in the study.

While educational decisions made for sons were primarily discussed by participants in terms of the economic condition of the family and its ability to invest in education, the educational decisions made for daughters and sisters were more complicated. Educational decisions for young women require families to evaluate the safety of the available public transport services to the institution or

college being considered and the social perceptions allied to the college. These factors need the supervision and sanction of the male heads of the family and other older members of the family. There is a gendered hierarchy in the spheres of control and monitoring. The men in the family, usually the father and older brothers, are involved in the larger decision as to which college is most appropriate, while the mothers in the family are supervising and monitoring the everyday activities of the daughter. The discourses used to rationalise educational choices are primarily economic for young men whereas for women rationalisations hinge on factors such as emotional attachments, social perceptions of safety and security.

Several of the participants' parents used a discourse of "trusting" their daughters. This was often reported along with close monitoring of the movements of their daughters when they are outside the homestead. In order to garner and maintain family support, young women needed to actively maintain or manage social monitoring and demonstrate good academic performance and chaste behaviour (Singh 2013). Some participants, especially young women undergraduates, made reference to being a "good" student: one who is perceived as being single minded and focused only on "studies". As previously recognised in the UK, exceptional academic performance in schools by children from working class families has been identified as a factor which motivates access to higher education (Bathmaker et al. 2016). This is a significant and socially approved pattern of strategic self-presentation or positioning being utilised by most students, especially young women within families. Here the performance of a culturally specific role of an ideal, chaste and dedicated student representing the honour of the family is a strategic choice made by students to persuade family members to approve their higher education aspirations.

Apart from two exceptions, most young women's narratives locate their families as selectively supportive. It was observed that families of several young women have overtly and covertly directed their choice of college, whereas the young men have parents who are supportive of most of their choices. Most young men's

parents were only supportive of certain choices; they self-selected or limited their choice of college due to financial and time constraints. When students experience support for selective choices or where parents and families are only supporting access to selective institutions, the discourses and perceptions are gendered. While young men and their families tend to rationalise their educational choices in terms of material factors such as financial affordability and time constraints, young women and their family members often rationalised educational choices on the basis of emotional attachments and social concerns with safety of young women in public spaces.

The rationalisations of choice used by individual students and their family members are often contextually influenced by the geographical location of the home and higher educational institutions. Students and families in more remote and rural locations are often primarily concerned with seeking approval and support to access higher education (see 7.2.2). Their concerns have not progressed into the stage where families recognise that accessing higher education is the norm. Discussions within the family where students are trailblazers or first-generation learners predominantly revolve around whether the students can or cannot access higher education. Most participants from Sirsa who are enrolled in a rural government college were in this precarious and uncertain position. Proximity to home and availability of convenient public transport significantly aided access to students who were primarily concerned with whether or not they could get their family and community's support to access higher education.

Although the district comparison was not a major axis of analysis in the thesis, it was clear that location (of students' residence and of the college) was a factor that influenced gendered access to higher education. Geographically, in comparison to students enrolled in the rural government college, students enrolled in the urban colleges in Mahendargarh and Sonipat were closer to the national capital region. This factor led to students and family members becoming aware of a relatively wider range of higher educational choices and different degrees of reflexive support from parents. Most students enrolled in urban colleges were located

within families where they received selective support in favour of particular institutions. Parents were usually in favour of the nearest college with the most convenient and accessible commute from home. Usually, these participants were located in neighbourhoods where accessing higher education has become an established social norm. As families recognise the emerging need to educate children, especially to make them suitable candidates for employment and matrimony, the nature of discussions at home changes. Families slowly begin to re-evaluate their priorities and the merits of different educational institutions and courses.

Occasionally families expressed opposition to young girls wishing to access higher education. In most cases, the family's decision makers were fathers. Among the participants of this study one father expressed opposition and several fathers directed the final choice of higher education institution through silence. Fathers were often able to maintain their dominant position within the family while remaining silent. In families where the participants and children do express differences of opinion, the children often sought out their mother as a mediator and are very careful as they broach a contentious choice of college.

Family members, especially participants and children at times remain silent or do not communicate their difference of opinion due to cultural norms within the family which identify such expressions as disrespect towards the elders in the family. It is not always a direct lack of power or authority which persuades family members to remain silent. Silence is often developed though deference to either the age or knowledge available to a more vocal and often dominant family member. Several young women's narratives reveal that they have not been able to successfully convince their fathers in favour of a different college. Here, it is important to note that culturally specific gender regimes have shaped how young women and men express particular aspirations and choices.

Apart from choice of institution, the literature on gendered access to higher education shows that choice of subject or discipline is gendered (Mullen 2009 and

2014, Gautam 2015). However, this gendered difference in choices and educational decisions was not observed within undergraduate enrolment in Haryana (AISHE 2017-18). The empirical evidence from this study indicates that young men and women are equally enrolled across disciplines. However, it must also be noted that most parents express support towards accessing higher education but are themselves un-embedded in experiences and knowledge of higher education. This creates a lack of conversation within the family regarding choice of discipline. This is empirically observed in the narratives of most participants of this study. This finding is different from what has been reported in the literature: parents encouraging their children towards gendered subject choices (Gautam 2015). This different pattern of observation is possibly due to the fact that most of the participants of this study are located in rural neighbourhoods, from agricultural and working-class backgrounds and are first generation entrants to higher education.

The third question guiding this research related to how the roles performed by families in the gendered educational trajectories of undergraduate students were simultaneously influenced by intersectional factors such as social class and caste. This study identified some key important factors which accentuate gendered access to higher education such as the location of home and the distance and commute to college. Across most caste and social class communities, families tend to prefer the closest college, especially for daughters. This was further inflected by the impact of the rural and urban locations of families and the higher education institution that they were contemplating. It was observed through Deepika's (SiDC) case that closeness to a rural government college made it more accessible than a private women's college for the young women in the village in Sirsa. Social class background also plays an important role in making colleges accessible and inaccessible. This was established by comparing the intersectionally inflected gender, caste and class-based educational trajectories observed between Jaya (SDC), Amrita (MDC), Deepika (SiDC), Mohan (SiDC) and Hritik (MDC).

An intersectional analysis of these five families among my participants indicated that factors such as location of home, social class and caste background influence how families are able to support and encourage young men and women to access higher education. An intersectional analysis observed that the gender and birth order of the student often influences how families and students are making educational decisions in order to successfully access higher education, especially in the face of unexpected tragedies, stressful situations and contexts. The study observed that, across families from different caste communities, caste identity is a significant concern and that this did, at times, affect higher education decision making. Not only did families perceive the opportunities available to their children on the basis of their caste identity, they were also motivated to make educational decisions to maintain their social caste identity and class status, especially as these are linked to the educational behaviours and expectations within their respective communities regarding marriage. This is a particularly gendered concern. Gender regimes within families are intensely intertwined with patriarchal and feudal concerns to maintain caste- and class-based social norms as students access higher education.

9.2 Theoretical contribution of this research

My theoretical framework combined a structural understanding of social reproduction with a feminist understanding of gender, agency and intersectionality. Gendered discourses and the agencies operating within gender regimes have the potential to subvert the determinism of an overarching structural understanding of capitals. It therefore combines a structured framework wherein families are mobilizing capitals with more subjective and pliable conceptualization of gender regimes and agencies which makes it possible to study gradual social change in terms of gender and access to higher education.

The thesis is based on the understanding that the family is a social institution which is a complex and intense site of gendered relationships (Connell 1991). These relationships endure across time and space. Similarly, agency, which is gendered, is differentially exercised across time and space (Emirbayer and Mische 1998). Educational decisions and relationships within the family are gendered and

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involve reflexive thinking and strategic action. Reflexive thinking and strategic
action which are significant components of gendered agency also involve
individual perceptions of structural factors and barriers and individual discourses
which are differential discursive combinations of silences and expressions of
academic interests. The key empirical findings discussed in the previous section
weaken the popular conceptualization of educational choices as individual and
autonomous decisions made by students. These empirical findings support a need
to reconceptualise non-autonomous or group agency.

The locations and narratives of these participants reveal that families are not
always sites where gendered barriers to education manifest themselves. Families
while being significantly gendered sites are also sites where young first-
generation women and men are able to mobilise social and economic capital and
resources to access higher education. New educational practices reflected in
increasing participation of trailblazing young women and men in higher education
create new regimes of gendered roles and expectations. Gradual improvements in
access to higher education through massification is creating new arrangements of
gender or a 'retraditionalization' (Adkins 1999: 129) of gender regimes. Parental
roles are shifting to siblings along gendered axes. Older siblings and cousins,
especially if they are women are performing gendered responsibilities which are
often associated with mothering and educational practices within the family.
Older brothers are often observed reiterating fatherly authority over the
educational choices made by young sisters. The older sisters in some families are
in effect performing the role which is often played by educated wives within a
companionate marriage in modern India.

These empirical findings which reflect a gradual change within families require
the theoretical synthesis I have discussed in the fourth chapter. In terms of
conceptualisation of access to higher education and widening participant, the
family needs to be recognised as a key site mediating educational trajectories.

9.3 Methodological contribution

While research on access to higher education has recognised the family as a significant factor, it has not tended to engage with how the family and family members are involved. Studies across the world have primarily used different kinds of data gathered from students or aspiring students to demonstrate that the family is a prominent site where access to higher education or gendered educational trajectories are mediated (Webb 2019, Shapiro 2018, O'Shea 2015, Brooks 2003). A similar pattern can be observed in research on how families influence access to higher education in India. Significant studies such as Sahu et al. (2017), Gautam (2015) and Verma (2014) have used different qualitative and mixed methodologies. However, none have directly drawn out data from families or family members. While they do indicate that students are embedded within families and family backgrounds, their methodology, does not include family members. Therefore, their studies do not place the experiences and perspectives of the students within the multiple perspectives, experiences and motivations which surround them within the family. Although they argue that students are embedded within families, their methodology reflects an individualised and autonomous decision-making student. This undermines the very argument that these studies are trying to put forward.

In the context of higher education research in India, my qualitative and feminist study is pioneering methodologically in terms of its engagement with family members to study access to higher education. Unlike preceding studies on access to higher education in India (Sahu et al. 2017, Gautam 2015, Verma 2014), this thesis is studying the student as an individual embedded within their family and gives equal consideration to the narratives and discourses used by different family members. This helped in developing a deeper understanding of how families within their particular social context and gender regimes are making educational decisions. In terms of gender, both young men and women have participated in this study. Previous studies have only interviewed young women to explore gendered access to higher education, whereas I have recruited participants for this study across gender, class and caste. Similar to Sahu et al. (2017), Gautam (2015) and Verma (2014), I initiated contact with participants within the institutional

space of a government college, however, participants were given the opportunity to select a space which was comfortable to them. My research design also included home visits where participants and family members were interviewed. I have used a combination of institutional and home spaces of the participants. The inclusion of homes as a site where interviews aids in developing a more comprehensive understanding of how family members interact with each other and how families are engaged in making decisions to access higher education.

9.4 Practical implications of this research

The findings of this research will contribute to the longer-term FCF project in Haryana. Specifically, it will help in the development of a collaborative Policy Brief aimed at creating a more equitable access to higher education in Haryana. Additionally, the empirical findings and theoretical outcomes regarding education decision making reconceptualises educational choices as neither autonomous nor individual but rather as a gendered family group decision. This should lead towards a reconsideration of how access to higher education can be improved.

One significant consideration is the identification of trailblazers who are also first-generation students to access higher education. Trailblazers play a significant role within the family as active catalysts who encourage more young family members to access different kinds of higher education. This means that special attention needs to be directed towards students who might be the first students from a particular neighbourhood or community to access higher education.

Trailblazers are important sources of experiential knowledge as they have intense and personal experiences of navigating family opposition or lack of support to access higher education. Through their personal experiences in higher education and interactions in higher education they are able to potentially expand the width of social and cultural capitals accessible to them and their families. While the empirical findings do identify parents, especially fathers as significant figures of support and approval and mothers as mediators, the key role of advocacy to access higher education is often played by the trailblazers.

This thesis has also identified the local cyber-cafe as a significant site where families and students access the internet and information regarding higher education institutions, courses and career opportunities becomes accessible to them. The empirical findings of the thesis in the fifth chapter (on roles) indicate that access and social relationships to this public space is unequal and reflects the patrifocal gender regime of Haryana. Gendered access to this space in turn influences how families make educational decisions. Apart from the family and institutional spaces such as the school and the college, this is a significant site identified by most participants and their family members in their educational trajectories. It is observed that increasingly access, enrolment and participation in higher education is dependent on availability of internet and computer services. This indicates that there is a need for engagement with these public spaces which can significantly enhance how families and young people access important information and advice in order to make decisions regarding higher education.

9.5 Limitations and recommendations for future work

This section reflects on the limitations of this study and how the limitation can be addressed through further research in the future. This study is a detailed examination of undergraduate students who have successfully accessed higher education. Only one among 26 participants shared an experience of facing opposition to accessing higher education. While the narratives do explore the factors within the family which have managed to help students successfully access higher education, a similar exploration with students who have different educational choices and trajectories will add depth to the study of how gender regimes and other intersectional social factors limit accessibility to higher education.

A second significant limitation of the study is that in spite of my efforts, I was not able to recruit young women from Dalit communities. My own positionality as a woman from a privileged background is likely to have been intimidating in spite of my efforts to build rapport. This was complicated by the fact that it is difficult to immediately identify the caste background of students who volunteer to become participants. Also, women from the Dalit communities are the least

represented group in colleges in Haryana (AISHE 2017-18 and Henderson et al. 2021). However, this remains a significant limitation and needs to be explored further. I have tried to address this gap by focusing on the narratives from families of young Dalit men who have participated in the study. However, it was not possible to deduce or infer significant intersectionality between gender and caste though an analysis of the educational choices within participating Dalit families. It is possible that successful recruitment of young women from Dalit communities as the primary student participant from a family would have added greater depth towards understanding the intersectionality between gender and caste as students access higher education. Although there are studies on how Dalit women experience multiple discriminations as they access higher education (Sukumar 2013, Sonalkar 2018), these have not theoretically or methodologically included narratives of different gendered family members. As explained in the fifth chapter (see 5.6) the research design is able to address this gap as family members such as sisters' and cousins' educational trajectories have been traced during the family interviews.

Lundgren (2012) argues that when interviews are a complex event where not only are participants sharing experiences, they are also actively involved in a narrative event where they are performing and producing their own identity. As participants share their educational experiences and rationalise their educational priorities and choices, they are active agents within this research activity where, traditionally, I as the researcher am likely to enjoy certain amount of power and authority. However, the way in which I positioned myself in the field with the students and their family members, especially with their parents and grandparents, consciously tried to undermine my authority as the researcher. However, I do continue to retain a significant amount of power as I later analysed the interview transcripts and thematically selected relevant pieces of the interview conversations (ibid.). I also eventually selected some participants and represented their voices and experiences in this thesis while choosing not to bring forward the experiences of other participants. This shift in power as I write this thesis is unsettling and I found myself trying to resist my privileged ownership of knowledge and power. I

also often found myself deeply unsettled by the academic pressure to move from
the empirical findings regarding the struggles of my participants towards a
theoretical contribution to knowledge.

The empirical observations and theoretical reconceptualization of educational
choice as non-autonomous or a family-group decision is based on data from three
sampled districts and colleges of Haryana. Most of the students are residing in
villages or semi-urban neighbourhoods in small urban centres in Haryana. The
patrifocal regimes observed within the families of participants are located within
the specific post-colonial and socio-economic context of rural Haryana which
retains significant patriarchal characteristics in spite of rapid urbanization,
industrialization and economic development. These empirical findings need to be
compared with similar exploratory studies in other parts of India and the world.
Literature across the world on gendered access to higher education and the
significance of family as a factor which can limit and encourage access to higher
education indicate the likelihood of similar observations. Further studies in
different social and cultural gender regimes will potentially enhance our
understanding of how families are a crucial gendered site where educational
choices and discourses are mediated.

In conclusion, this thesis is a micro-sociological exploration of family as a
gendered site which mediates access to higher education. The thesis explores how
gendered roles and agencies influence family decision-making processes. It
particularly focusses on what happens within the family as access to higher
education is contemplated and pursued. It has produced knowledge about the
different significant roles played by different family members and by the family
as a unit as students access higher education. The thesis has explored how family
members play different gendered roles as it actively accesses and mobilises
different social, economic and cultural capitals to facilitate access to higher
education. Access to these different kinds of capitals and the performance of these
roles are based on time-sensitive social perceptions and strategic action. The
development of this knowledge is based on a unique theoretical synthesis of

Bourdieu's conceptualisation of different kinds of capitals with feminist conceptualisation of gender regimes, family, agency and intersectionality. This theoretical synthesis by including both family members and students as participants has demonstrated how the family is a complex and significant site where access to higher education is mediated, especially in a rapidly developing yet regressively gendered society such as Haryana.

As more countries across the world, especially in the global south are experiencing economic development, massification of schooling and higher education and a simultaneous resurgence of regressive and gendered discourses, an understanding of how the family is both a barrier and a facilitator to accessing higher education is important. While several research studies have examined how families are a site where barriers to accessing higher education are manifested in terms of gender and social class, this study also indicates that families of first-generation and trailblazing students can also perform key roles such as support and advocacy to mobilise different kinds of social, economic and cultural capitals. This is a significant consideration when higher education is massifying and the primary target population of massifying higher education systems are students who are trailblazers and members of the first generation in their family to access higher education.

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Appendix 1: Consent Form

Title of Project: Role of families in the Gendered Educational Trajectories of young people accessing Higher Education in Haryana, India

Name of researcher: Anjali Thomas (PhD student).

कृपया आपकी सहमति वाले प्रत्येक ब्यान को अपना हस्ताक्षर दे
Please initial each statement that you agree with.

1. हम पुष्टि करते हैं कि हमने उपरोक्त अध्ययन के लिए प्रदान की गई सूचना पत्र को पढ़ और समझ लिया है। हमे जानकारी पर विचार करने, सवाल पूछ्ने और इन्हें संतोषजनक रूप से उत्तर देने का अवसर मिला है।

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. हम समझते हैं कि हमारी भागीदारी स्वैच्छिक है और हम किसी भी समय, कारण के बिना इस अध्ययन से पीछे हट सकते हैं।

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason

3. हम इंटरव्यू को ऑडियो-रिकॉर्ड करने की सहमति देते है।

3. I consent to the interview being audio-recorded.

4. हम सहमत हैं कि इस इंटरव्यू के अनाम शब्दशः कोटेशन इस शोध के परिणामों की प्रस्तुतियों में इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है।

4. I agree that anonymised verbatim quotations from this interview may be used in presentations of the results of this research.

5. हम उपरोक्त अध्ययन में भाग लेने के लिए सहमत हैं।

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

प्रतिभागी का नाम	दिनांक	हस्ताक्षर
Name of Participant	Date	Signature

सहमति लेने वाले शोधकर्ता का नाम	दिनांक	हस्ताक्षर
Name of Researcher taking consent	Date	Signature

Appendix 2: Interview guide for interview with undergraduate participants

1. जब आप छोटे थे, आप बड़े होके क्या बनना चाहते थे? क्या यह पिछले कुछ सालों में बदला है?
   When you were little what did you want to become once you grew up? Has this changed over the years?

2. आपके स्कूल के दिन और उनके अनुभव कैसे थे? इन अनुभवों ने आपको कॉलेज के तरफ कैसे प्रेरित किया / तैयार किया?
   How was your experience of going to school? How did this experience motivate you to pursue higher education?

3. कॉलेज के बारे में आपके क्या ख्याल है?
   What made you think about going to college?

4. आप कॉलेज क्यों जाना चाहते हो? आपको कॉलेज के बारे में क्या विचार थे? आपके अनुभव के हिसाब से कॉलेज कैसा है?
   Why did you want to go to college? What did you think it will be like? How is it different from your own experience

5. आपको कॉलेज जाने को किसने प्रेरित किया? कॉलेज जाने की प्रेरणा आपको कहा से मिली?
   Who inspired you to go to college? Where did you get the inspiration to go to college?

6. किन लोगो ने ख़ास रूप से आपको कॉलेज में दाखिला लेने में मदद की / प्रोत्साहित किया? उन्होंने कैसे आपकी मदद किया/ प्रोत्साहन दिया?
   Who are the key people who encouraged you to apply and enrol in college? How were they encouraging?

7. स्कूल के बाद आपने कॉलेज में अप्लाई कैसे किया? इस दौरान आपकी मदद किसने किया?
   How did you apply to colleges after school? Who all were very helpful to you during this?

8. कॉलेज में अप्लाई करने के वक्त आपको किस तरह के मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ा? आपने इन मुश्किलों का सामना कैसे किया? उस समय आपके परिवार के लोगों ने आपका मदद कैसे किया?
   What were the challenges you faced while applying to colleges? How did you address these challenges? How was your family involved in this process?

9. आपने कॉलेज में दाखिला लेने का फैसला कैसे लिया? इसमें आपका मदद किसने किया? आपके परिवार ने आपका मदद कैसे किया?
   How did you decide to enrol in the college you are currently attending? Who helped you in making this decision? How was your family involved in this?

10. क्या आपके लड़के या लड़की होने के कारण कॉलेज दाखिला लेने के वक्त कोई कठिनाई या परेशनी हुई?
    How do you think your gender has influenced your ability to enroll in college?

11. क्या आपके भाई-बहन भी कॉलेज जाना चाहते है? उनमें और आप में क्या फरक है?
    Do your siblings go or plan to go to college? How is it different for you?

12. ऐसा क्या चीज़ है जिस से आपको लगता है की कॉलेज में दाखिला लेने में ज़्यादा आसानी होगी?
    What could have made it easier for you to enroll in a college?

13. आपको अपनी ज़िन्दगी को लेकर क्या सपने है? आप आगे जाकर क्या करना चाहते हो? आप क्या बनना चाहते हो?
    What are your dreams and aspirations for your life now? What do you want to do in future? What do you want to become?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for interview with parent/guardian

1. बच्चों के लिए कॉलेज में पढाई के बारे में आपने कब सोचना शुरू किया था? इस बात को लेकर परिवार में कैसे चर्चा की गयी?

   When did you first start thinking about college education for your children? How was this discussed in the family?

2. जब आपके बच्चे कॉलेज में अप्लाई करने वाले थे आपको किस तरह के समस्याओं का अंदाजा था? इनका सामना आपने कैसे किया?

   What were the challenges you foresaw for you child when they were going to apply for college? How were they addressed?

3. अपने बच्चों के पढाई के बारे में आपने क्या क्या सोचा है? आप अपने बच्चों को कॉलेज क्यों भेजना चाहते हो?

   What are you plans for education of your children? Why did you want the children to go to college?

4. किन लोगों ने आपके बच्चे को कॉलेज जाने के लिए प्रोत्साहन/ प्रेरणा और मदद किया? कैसे?

   Who are the key people who encouraged your children to apply and enrol in college? How were they encouraging?

5. स्कूल के बाद आपके बच्चे ने कॉलेज में कैसे अप्लाई किया? किन लोगों ने उस समय आपका मदद किया?

   How did your children apply to colleges after school? Who all were very helpful to you during this?

6. जब आपके बच्चे कॉलेज में अप्लाई कर रहे थे, आपको किन मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ा? आपने इन मुश्किलों का सामना कैसे किया?

   What were the challenges the you faced while your child was applying to colleges? How did you address these challenges?

7. आपके बच्चे ने इस कॉलेज को कैसे चुना? कॉलेज चुनने में बच्चे को किसने मदद की? आपने उस समय क्या किया?

   How did your children decide to enrol in the college they are currently attending? Who helped them in making this decision? How were you involved in this?

8. क्या आपके बच्चे का लड़का या लड़की होने के कारन कॉलेज में अप्लाई करने के वक्त कोई कठिनाई हुई थी?

   How do you think gender has influenced your child's ability to enrol in college?

9. क्या ऐसा कोई चीज़ है जिस से बच्चों को कॉलेज में दाखिला लेने में मदद हो सकती हैं?

   What could have made it easier for children to enrol in a college?

10. आपको अपने बच्चों को लेकर क्या सपने हैं? पिछले कुछ सालों में क्या ये सपने बदले हैं?

    What are your dreams and aspirations for your Children? How have they changed over the years?

Appendix 4: Interview guide for group interview with family

1. बच्चों के लिए कॉलेज में पढाई के बारे में आपने कब सोचना शुरू किया था? इस बात को लेकर परिवार में कैसे चर्चा की गयी?

   When did you first start thinking about college education for the children? How was this discussed in the family?

2. अपने बच्चों के पढाई के बारे में आपने क्या क्या सोचा है? आप अपने बच्चों को कॉलेज क्यों भेजना चाहते हो?

   What are you plans for education of your children? Why did you want the children to go to college?

3. किन लोगों ने आपके बच्चे को कॉलेज जाने के लिए प्रोत्साहन/ प्रेरणा और मदद किया? कैसे?

   Who are the key people who encouraged your children to apply and enrol in college? How were they encouraging?

4. स्कूल के बाद आपके बच्चे ने कॉलेज में कैसे अप्लाई किया? किन लोगों ने उस समय आपका मदद किया?

   How did your children apply to colleges after school? Who all were very helpful to you during this?

5. जब आपके बच्चे कॉलेज में अप्लाई कर रहे थे, आपको किन मुश्किलों का सामना करना पड़ा? आपने इन मुश्किलों का सामना कैसे किया?

   What were the challenges the family faced while applying to colleges? How did you address these challenges?

6. आपके बच्चे ने इस कॉलेज को कैसे चुना? कॉलेज चुनने में बच्चे को किसने मदद की? आपने उस समय क्या किया?

   How did your children decide to enrol in the college they are currently attending? Who helped them in making this decision? How were you involved in this?

7. क्या आपके बच्चे का लड़का या लड़की होने के कारन कॉलेज में अप्लाई करने के वक्त कोई कठिनाई हुई थी?

   How do you think gender has influenced your child's ability to enroll in college?

8. क्या ऐसा कोई चीज़ है जिस से बच्चों को कॉलेज में दाखिला लेने में मदद हो सकती हैं?

   What could have made it easier for children to enrol in a college?

9. आपको अपने बच्चों को लेकर क्या सपने हैं? पिछले कुछ सालों में क्या ये सपने बदले हैं?

   What are your dreams and aspirations for your Children? How have they changed over the years?

Appendix 5: Family face sheet

Residence:

Religion: Caste:

University Course:

High School:

Languages:

Educational and Occupations:

Family Member	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Income

Children's school education profile (Fill appropriate codes)

Children	Class 1-5	Class 6-8	Class 9-10	Class 11-12
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				
Child 4				
Child 5				

Code:
Kind of School: Government=G, Private=P, Convent=C Others=O
Language of Instruction: Hindi=H, English=E

Appendix 6: Information Sheet

Study Title:

The role of Family in the Gendered Educational Trajectories of young people accessing higher education in Haryana, India

Investigator:

Anjali Thomas (PhD student supervised by Emily Henderson and Ian Abbott).

Introduction

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

(Part 1 tells you the purpose of the study and what will happen to you if you take part. Part 2 gives you more detailed information about the conduct of the study)

Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

PART 1

What is the study about?

I am interested in the educational paths of young people in Haryana. I am particularly interested in understanding, how they come to be enrolled in higher education colleges, and the ways that gender differences affect the education of young women and men.

Do I have to take part?

It is entirely up to you to decide. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet when I meet you. I will give you this sheet to keep. If you choose to participate, I will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm that you have agreed to take part. You will be free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and this will not affect you or your circumstances in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The research activities (interviews and focus groups) will take place in your home. I will ask you to answer some questions about education and how education is affected by gender and may take written notes of your answers.

However, it would be easier for me if I could audio record your answers. I will ask you whether this is ok. If it is a problem; I will not record the interview.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part in this study?

I do not anticipate that there will be any disadvantages but if you would like to raise any at the start of this interview please feel free to do so.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

I hope that the information you (and other participants) provide will contribute to a greater understanding of the issues relating to the role that families and gender plays in young people's lives and educational progress.

What will happen when the study ends?

I will ensure that all the information you provide will be kept safely and securely. It will be used to inform my research in India. It will be used to improve the quality and efficiency of my research questions. It will also be used to contribute to an academic assignment on developing research tools.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. I will follow strict ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence. Further details are included in Part 2.

What if there is a problem?

Any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study or any possible harm that you might suffer will be addressed. Detailed information is given in Part 2.

This concludes Part 1.

If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.

PART 2

What will happen if I don't want to carry on being part of the study?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect you in any way. If you decide to take part in the study, you will need to sign a consent form, which states that you have given your consent to participate.

If you agree to participate, you may nevertheless withdraw from the study at any time without affecting you in any way.

You have the right to withdraw from the study completely and decline any further contact by study staff after you withdraw.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

The interviews and focus group data will be anonymised, using pseudonyms. If you agree to your interview being recorded we will use the same pseudonym. Digitalised information will be held in files that are password protected and transferred to a secure University of Warwick server as soon as practicable after the interview/focus group. Access to this secure information will be restricted to the core research team. No identifiable data will be transferred at any point from Warwick to other project partners/affiliates. Paper information will be kept in a locked cabinet, access to which will be restricted to the core research team.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results be used to inform my research generally. It will be used in publications in academic journals and in chapters in books where appropriate. It will be used to present papers at seminars and conferences. It may be used to inform recommendations relating to national and/or international policy. I would like to use where appropriate anonymised verbatim quotations from your interview. However, if you prefer that I do not I will not use such quotations.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick.

What if I want more information about the study?

If you have any questions about any aspect of the study, or your participation in it, not answered by this participant information leaflet, please contact:

Dr Emily Henderson, Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick

Email: E.Henderson@warwick.ac.uk

Tel: 02476522285

Thank you for taking the time to read this participant information leaflet.

अध्ययन शीर्षक: हरियाणा में उच्च शिक्षा तक पहुंचने वाले युवा के लिंगग्रस्त शैक्षणिक प्रक्षेपणों में परिवार की भूमिका

जांचकिष: Anjali Thomas (PhD student supervised by Emily Henderson and Ian Abbott).

उपक्षेप:

आपका एक सामाजिक अन्वेषण में स्वागत है। इस अन्वेषण में भाग लेने के निर्णय से पहले यह जानना ज़रूरी है की यह अन्वेषण क्यों किया जा रहा है और इसमें भाग लेने में आपकी क्या भूमिका रहेगी। नीचे दी गयी जानकारी को आप ध्यान से पढ़ें। आप इसके बारें में दुसरे लोगों से समपर्क या सलाह ले सकते हैं।

अगर आपको कुछ संदेह या प्रश्न हैं, आप हमसे और जानकारी और स्पष्टीकरण प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। आप आवश्यक्तानुसार समय लें यह तय करने के लिए कि आप भाग लेना चाहते हैं या नहीं।

भाग 1

यह श्रोध / अन्वेषण किस चीज़ के बारे में हैं?

हम हरियाणा के युवा लोगों के शैक्षिक रास्तो के बारे में जानना चाहते हैं। हम विशेष रूप से यह समझना चाहते हैं कि युवा-युवती किस तरह से उच्च शिक्षा महाविद्यालयों में कैसे प्रवेश करते हैं, और किन-किन तरीको से लिंगभेद युवाओं और युवतियों की शिक्षा को प्रभावित करते हैं।

क्या मुझे भाग लेना चाहिए?

इसमें भाग लेने का निर्णय आपके ऊपर है। हम आपको इस श्रोध/ अन्वेषण के बारे में बताएँगे। आप यह सूचना पत्र अपने पास रख सकते हैं। अगर आप भाग लेने का निर्णय लेते है तो हम आपको एक और फॉर्म देंगे जहा पर आप अपने हस्ताक्षर द्वारा अपना सहमति देंगे। आप किसी भी समय इसमे से पीछे हट सकते हैं। पीछे हटने के लिए आपको कोई भी कारन देने की आवश्यकता नहीं हैं। इसमें भाग लेने से या भाग न लेने से आपके निजी जीवन और परिस्तिथियों में कोई असर नहीं होगा।

मेरे भाग लेने पर मेरे साथ क्या होगा?

आपका इंटरव्यू घर में लिया जायेगा। हम आपसे शिक्षा और लिंगभेद के बारे में कुछ सवाल करेंगे। हम आपके जवाब और चर्चा के लिखित में नोट ले सकते हैं। अगर आपकी अनुमति हो तो हम इसका ऑडियो रेकार्ड लेंगे जो हमारे लिए ज़्यादा सुविधाजनक होगा। हम रिकॉर्डिंग आपके अनुमति के साथ ही लेंगे। अगर आप रिकॉर्डिंग का अनुमति नहीं देंगे, हम रिकॉर्डिंग नहीं करेंगे।

इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने के संभावित नुकसान क्या हैं?

आपको इस श्रोध/ अन्वेषण में भाग लेने से कोई नुक्सान नहीं होगा। अगर आपको कोई समस्य या शक हो,आप हमें शुरुआत में ही बता सकते हैं।

इस अध्ययन में भाग लेने के संभावित लाभ क्या हैं?

हमारी यह आशा है की आप (और अन्य भागीदारों) द्वारा प्राप्त जानकारी हमें युवा-युवतिओं के जीवन में शिक्षा और लिंग के भूमिका को बारीकी से समझने में मदद करेगा।

अध्ययन समाप्त होने पर क्या होगा?

हम यह सुनिश्चित करेंगे कि आपके द्वारा प्रदान की जाने वाली सभी जानकारी को सुरक्षित और सुरक्षित रूप से रखा जाएगा। इसका इस्तेमाल हमारे शोध को सूचित करने के लिए किया जाएगा। इसका उपयोग इस परियोजना से संबंधित प्रकाशन को सूचित करने के लिए किया जाएगा और अनुसंधान के परिणामस्वरूप उत्पन्न होने वाली नीति के लिए किया जाएगा। यह परियोजना के अगले चरण को भी सूचित करेगा।

क्या मेरा भागीदारी और मेरा जानकारी गोपनीय रखा जायेगा?

हाँ। हम सख्त नैतिक और कानूनी अभ्यास का पालन करेंगे और आपके बारे में सभी जानकारी गुप्त राखी जाएगी। अधिक जानकारी भाग 2 में हैं।

अगर कोई समस्या है तो क्या होगा?

अध्ययन के दौरान यदि आपको कोई भी समस्या हो या अध्ययन में भाग लेने के कारन आपको बाद में कोई भी समस्या या शिकायत हो, उसे संबोधित किया जायेगा।अधिक जानकारी भाग 2 में हैं।

यहाँ भाग 1 समाप्त होता है। यदि भाग 1 में दी गई जानकारी में आपकी रुचि है और आप भागीदारी पर विचार कर रहे हैं, तो कृपया किसी भी निर्णय लेने से पहले भाग 2 में अतिरिक्त जानकारी पढ़ें।

भाग 2

यदि हम इस अध्ययन का हिस्सा बनना नहीं चाहते तो क्या होगा?

इस अध्ययन में भागीदारी पूरी तरह से स्वैच्छिक है। भाग लेने से इनकार करने से आपको या आपके जीवन में किसी भी तरह से प्रभाव नहीं होगा। यदि आप अध्ययन में भाग लेने का निर्णय लेते हैं, तो आपको सहमति फॉर्म पर हस्ताक्षर करने की आवश्यकता होगा, जिसमें कहा गया है कि आपने भाग लेने की सहमति दी है।

यदि आप भाग लेने के लिए सहमत हैं, तो आप किसी भी समय इस अध्ययन से पीछे हट सकते हैं। पीछे हटने से आपको या आपके जीवन में कोई भी प्रभाव नहीं होगा।

आपके पास अध्ययन से पूरी तरह से पीछे हटने का अधिकार है। पीछे हटने के बाद अध्ययन स्टाफ द्वारा किसी भी संपर्क को आप अस्वीकार कर सकते हैं। ये आपके अधिकार हैं।

क्या मेरा इस अध्ययन में भाग लेना गोपनीय रखा जायेगा?

छद्म नामों का प्रयोग करके इंटरव्यू और फोकस ग्रुप डेटा का अनावरण किया जाएगा यदि आप अपने साक्षात्कार को रिकॉर्ड किए जाने से सहमत हैं तो हम एक ही छद्म नाम का प्रयोग करेंगे। डिजीटलिज की गई जानकारी उन फाइलों में आयोजित की जाएगी जो कि पासवर्ड की रक्षा की जाती हैं और इंटररेक्ट / फोकस ग्रुप के बाद एक विश्वसनीय यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ वॉरिक सर्वर पर हस्तांतरित की जा सकती हैं। इस सुरक्षित जानकारी तक पहुंच कोर अनुसंधान टीम तक सीमित होगी। कोई पहचान योग्य डेटा किसी अन्य बिंदु पर वारिक से दूसरे प्रोजेक्ट भागीदारों / सहयोगियों को स्थानांतरित नहीं किया जाएगा। पेपर की जानकारी को लॉक कैबिनेट में रखा जाएगा, जहां तक पहुंच कोर अनुसंधान टीम तक ही सीमित होगी।

अध्ययन के परिणामों का क्या होगा?

परिणाम आम तौर पर हमारे अनुसंधान को सूचित करने के लिए इस्तेमाल किया जाएगा। इसका इस्तेमाल उपयुक्त अकादमिक पत्रिकाओं और पुस्तकों में किया जाएगा। यह सेमिनारों और सम्मेलनों में कागजात प्रस्तुत करने के लिए उपयोग किया जाएगा। यह राष्ट्रीय और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय नीति से संबंधित सिफारिशों को सूचित करने के लिए भी इस्तेमाल किया जा सकता है। हम आपके साक्षात्कार से उचित अनाम शब्दशः कोटेशन का उपयोग करना चाहते हैं। अगर आप चाहें तो हम ऐसा कोटेशन का उपयोग नहीं करेंगे।

Who has reviewed the study?

इस अध्ययन की समीक्षा की गई है और शिक्षा अध्ययन केंद्र (CES), यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ़ वॉरिक ने इसको अनुकूल राय दी है।

यदि मुझे इस अध्ययन के बारे में अधिक जानकारी चाहिए?

यदि अध्ययन के किसी भी पहलू या इसमें आपकी भागीदारी के बारे में आपके कोई प्रश्न हैं जिनके जवाब इस प्रतिभागी सूचना पत्र में नहीं हैं, कृपया संपर्क करें:

Dr Emily Henderson, Centre for Education Studies, University of Warwick

Email: E.Henderson@warwick.ac.uk

Tel: 02476522285

इस प्रतिभागी सूचना पत्र को पढ़ने के लिए समय निकालने के लिए धन्िया

Appendix 7: MDC participants' social and educational background

Name	Gender	Caste	Religion	Course	Siblings	Schooling	Sibling schooling	Sibling HE	Mother Education	Father Education	Mother Occupation	Father Occupation
Amrita	W	Jaat - Suvarna	Hindu	B.Sc Medical	0	PH 0-12	NA	NA	10	BA	Homemaker	Retired Army Subedar
Babeeta	W	Saini – Dalit (OCB)	Hindu	BA	2	GH 0-12	ES GH 0-12, EB0-12	EB ITI	Don't Know	8	Dead	Mason
Chandni	W	Baniya - Suvarna	Hindu	B.Sc Medical	2	PE 0-12	YB1 PE 0-12, YB2 PE 0-9, YCB1 PE 0-4, YCB2 PE0-2	YB1 B.Sc Pharmacology (Pvt college)	10	10	Homemaker	Chemist shop
Ajay	M	Ahir – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	B.Sc Non-Medical	2	PH 0-12	YB-GH 0-12, ES-GH 0-12	ES-JBT,YB-BA 1st year	5	12	Homemaker	Farmer
Bobby	M	Prajapati Kumhar – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	B.Sc Non-Medical	2	PH 0-12	YB-PH 0-10, ES-PH 0-12	ES-BSc 2nd year	NA	10	Homemaker	School Canteen
Dilip	M	Brahmin - Suvarna	Hindu	BA	1	PH 0-12	ES-GH 0-12	ES-BA girls school	5	10	Homemaker	Labour
Guru	M	Saini – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	B.Com	1	PH 0-12	YS- GH 0-7	None	12	BA	Homemaker	Shopkeeper
Hritik	M	Baniya – Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	3	PE 0-01, GAH 2-12	ES1 PE 0-9 GAH 10, ES2 PE 0-8 GAH 9-12	ES-M.Com seeking PhD Admission	12	Late Father-BCom, Stepfather - 10	Homemaker	Late Father-shopkeeper, Stepfather- Business

Caste: BC=Backward Caste, SC=Scheduled Caste,
Course: BA=Bachelor of Arts, BCom=Bachelor of Commerce, BSc=Bachelor of Science, BTech= Bachelor of Technology, Bed= Bachelor of Education, JBT=Junior Basic Training, M.Com=Masters in Commerce, ITI= Industrial Training Institutes, MA=Master of Arts, MBBS=Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery
Kind of School: Government=G, Private=P, Convent=C Others=O
Language of Instruction: Hindi=H, English=E
Siblings: E=Elder, Y=Younger, S=Sister,B=Brother,C=Cousin

Appendix 8: SiDC participants' social and educational background

Name	Gender	Caste	Religion	Course	Siblings	Schooling	Sibling schooling	Sibling HE	Mother Education	Father Education	Mother Occupation	Father Occupation
Deepika	W	Bhaat – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	BA	2	GH 0-12	YS GH 0-10, YB GH 0-8	NA	5	8	Homemaker	Farmer
Esha	W	Bhaat – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	BA	3	GH 0-12	YS1 GH 0-12, YS2 GH 0-10, YB PE 0-6	YS1 BA 1st year (SiDC)	NA	8	Homemaker	Farmer
Geeta	W	Jaat - Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	2	GH 0-10, PH 11-12	EB GH 0-8, ES GH 0-12	ES BA and MA (Private Girls college)	0	0	Homemaker	Farmer
Hema	W	Kumhar – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	BA	2	PH 0-12	EB PH 0-12	EB PhD student (Punjab University), ES MA	5	5	Homemaker	Farmer
Jaspal	M	Bazigar – Dalit (SC)	Sikh	BA	2	GH 0-10, Aarohi 11-12	YB1 GH 0-8, YB2 GH 0-8, CEB PH 0-8 GH 9-12, CES1 GH0-12, CES2 GH 0-12	CEB PhD student, CES1 BA final (Private. Girls college), CES2 MA	0	0	Homemaker	Labour/ vegetable seller/ Construction builder
Kamal	M	Meghvansh – Dalit (SC)	Hindu	B.Com	1	GH 0-12	YS GH 0-11, 12th open	NA	NA	NA	Homemaker	Farmer/ Labour
Lal	M	Raegar – Dalit (SC)	Hindu	B.Com	4	PH 0-5, GH 6-12	YB GH 0-12, ES1 GH0-8, ES2 GH 0-12, ES3 GH 0-12	ES2 Nursing	NA	NA	Homemaker	Painter
Mohan	M	Meghwal – Dalit (SC)	Hindu	BA	4	GH 0-12	YB GH 0-10 GE 11-12, ES1 GH 0-12, ES2 GH 0-12, ES3 GH 0-12	YB BA 2nd year (SiDC), ES1 BA BEd MA, ES2 JBT, ES3 BA	NA	12	Homemaker	Postal Officer

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Course: BA=Bachelor of Arts, BCom=Bachelor of Commerce, BSc=Bachelor of Science, BTech= Bachelor of Technology, Bed= Bachelor of Education, JBT=Junior Basic Training, M.Com=Masters in Commerce, ITI= Industrial Training Institutes, MA=Master of Arts, MBBS=Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery
Kind of School: Government=G, Private=P, Convent=C Others=O
Language of Instruction: Hindi=H, English=E
Siblings: E=Elder, Y=Younger, S=Sister,B=Brother,C=Cousin

Appendix 9: SDC participants' social and educational background

Name	Gender	Caste	Religion	Course	Siblings	Schooling	Sibling schooling	Sibling HE	Mother Education	Father Education	Mother Occupation	Father Occupation
Jaya	W	Saini – Dalit (OBC)	Hindu	B.Com	4	PE 0-12	ES1 GH 0-10, ES2 GH 0-10, YS GH-11 YB1 PE 0-8, YB2 0-5	NA	5	Stepfather 8	Homemaker	Farmer
Kajal	W	Jaat – Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	0	GAE 0-12	NA	NA	8	10	Homemaker	Farmer (own land)
Madhu	W	Jaat – Suvarna	Hindu	BA	3	GH 0-10, PH 11-12	ES1 GH 0-10 PE 11-12, ES2 PH 0-12, EB GH 0-10 PE 11-12	EB BTech (private), ES1 BEd 2nd year, ES2 BA 1st year	10	Late Father 12	Homemaker	NA
Neelam	W	Jaat – Suvarna	Hindu	BA	2	GH 0-7 PH 8-12	YS GH0-5 PH 6-12, YB GH 0-6 PE 7-10	YS BA 3rd year (Private Distance mode)	10	BA Final	Homemaker	Driver
Neil	M	Dhanak – Dalit(SC)	Hindu	B.Com	1	GH 0-6 PE 7-12	YB GH 01-4 PE 5-12	NA	10	10	Police Constable	Police Constable
Om	M	Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	2	GH 0-5 PE 6-12	ES1 PE 0-12, ES2 PE 0-12	ES1 B.Com (SDC), ES2 M.Com	10	10	Homemaker	Shopkeeper
Prem	M	Punjabi – Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	2	GH 0-12	EB 1 GH 0-12, EB2 don't know	Open Degree (vague)	5	5	Homemaker	Tea Stall
Raj	M	Brahmin – Suvarna	Hindu	B.Com	1	PE 0-12	YB PE 0-12, ECB1 PE 0-12, ECB2 PE 0-12	YB BA (open), ECB1 MBBS, ECB2 B.Com	10	Late Father 10	Homemaker	Driver
Sachin	M	Jaat – Suvarna	Hindu	BA	2	PH 0-12	ES GH 0-12, YB GH 0-8 PH 9-10	ES BA and Stenography, YB ITI	10	10	Homemaker	Farmer (own land)
Tarun	M	Brahmin – Suvarna	Hindu	BA	2	PE 0-1, PH 2-10, GH 11-12	ES GH 0-12, EB PH 0-12	EB B.Com (Delhi), ES Medicine	10	BA, JBT	Homemaker	Shopkeeper

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