

# Motivational Dynamics of Education in Indian Society

A Socio-Cultural Exploration

Heike Fischer

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1. Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Uwe Wilkesmann
2. Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Sigrid Metz-Göckl

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## Glossary

Adivasis	Indigenous inhabitants of India, also > Scheduled Tribes (ST)
Artha	Gaining wealth
Ashrama	Ideal Hindu life course
Bhagavat Gita	Hindu ancient scripture, said to be from the Hindu god Lord Krishna
Bharat	Official Hindi name of India
Brahmins	Priests (formally); highest group of the four > Varnas
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party („All Indian People’s Party“), political wing of > Hindutva
Crore	10 Million Rupees
Dalits	Untouchables, do not belong to the Indian fourfold Varna system, also > Scheduled Castes (SC)
Dharma	Duty, Hindu code of conduct
Guru	Teacher
Hindi	Hindustani language, primary official language of India
Hindu	Follower of Hinduism
Hindutva	Movements of Hindu nationalism
Jatis	Caste categories
Kama	Sensual pleasure
Karma	Work, deed; sum of karma determines the position of rebirth, also: Law of karma

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Kshyatrias	Rulers, soldiers; second group of the four > Varnas
Lhak	10.000 Rupees
Moksha	Release, freedom, ultimate salvation, and ending of > Samsara
Panchayat	Village council, local judicial body of village elders
Samsara	Cycle of rebirth
Scheduled Castes (SC)	Registered castes, formally the “depressed” castes, official name for > Dalits
Scheduled Tribes (ST)	Registered tribes; official name for > Adivasis
Shudras	Labourers, servants; fourth and lowest group of the four > Varnas
Vaishyas	Traders, third group of the four > Varnas
Varnas	Four main caste groups Brahmins, Kshyatrias, Vaishyas, and Shudras
Vedas	Hindu ancient scriptures
Upanishads	Hindu ancient scriptures

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Problem and Research Question

Research on motivation aims to enlighten the reason for people's behaviour, the questions as to *why* people act the way they do and why they begin or end a certain action (e.g. Heckhausen/Heckhausen 2008; Krapp 1993). Dealing with motivation is an inquiry into the *why* of behaviour. Deci and Ryan state that motivational theories address both the energization and the directedness of behaviour (1985). The present study is concerned with answering the why questions: Why do Indians pursue education? And why do some Indians pursue education enthusiastically and why apparently others much less or not at all? What role do aspects of the social-cultural environment play when it comes to educational decisions and its anticipated consequences? Or in other words: what reasons can be found in the socio-cultural background that they are embedded in for Indians' behaviour regarding education, which factors must be analysed and how do these factors influence motivational dynamics reflected as anticipated consequences of educational decisions?

From a psychological point of view motivation can be defined as the state of being motivated or as the "activating orientation of current life pursuits" (Rheinberg 2008: 323). For Heinz and his daughter Jutta Heckhausen, the activities stand in the centre of interest in motivational research. Activities reflect the pursuit of a certain goal and thus motivation becomes apparent through action (Heckhausen/Heckhausen, 2008: 1). Given this definition, I will examine the motivational reasons for Indians' observed actions in educational contexts. Educational activities shall generally include any activity related to seeking and obtaining education, either formal or informal. Here, motivation for education shall not stand for *imparting* knowledge or for any activity of educating others. The term refers only to *obtaining* education. This includes both school education and higher education which includes post school education and post school training.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The definitions of post school education and post school training refer to the Indian education system (explained in detail in chapter 3). This means higher education after higher secondary school following class 12 *or* vocational training after secondary school (class 10).

The term motivation to pursue education includes the psychological aspects of the motivation to learn but also much more. Motivation to learn does not seem to be a completely appropriate term that fully captures the object of research of this study. According to Krapp (1993: 188) motivation to learn describes those processes that explain the appearance and evolution of learning activities and its effects (see also Schiefele 1974). Here, learning refers to the psychological learning process itself (i.e. fields of application of learning psychology are mainly intended and systematically steered learning settings like school learning). However, learning certainly plays a role in the motivation to pursue education, because learning processes are naturally a part of educational activities. In contrast to the motivation to learn, I will bundle under the motivational dynamics for education any kind of effort that a person exhibits in his or her quest to pursue education. The reason for such behaviour can be variegated and will be explored extensively. Therefore I will apply a cognitive view on educational decisions. In the centre of interest stand the reasons why people decide cognitively for or against educational paths.

Though other purposes of education are within the understanding of the study, education in general has the overall goal of increasing the livelihood of people and at least in the Indian case, of improving living conditions above the poverty line. An appropriate definition for this broader understanding of the motivation for education (and beyond the terms learning motivation and achievement motivation) has not yet been developed. In the psychology of motivation, socio-cultural influences have been widely neglected so far. A lack in literature is obvious here (see below).

Overall, it is clear that the value of education is reflected in both personal and societal growth. This higher purpose and potential of education is the main reason for exploring the topic further. Education is highly instrumental in the economic development of a society, the generation of skilled manpower, the upward mobility of its members, the rise in status and livelihood and the reduction of poverty. Indian social scientist P.N. Shrivastava said in 1988 that “Education is a basic pre-requisite for the removal of poverty and the development of any country” (found in Jain 2005: 31). Today the importance of education for the Indians still remains the same. Ashok Srivastava (2009) states that education, especially schooling, and its structuring and monitoring is of “special significance in a developing country like India” (2009: 358).

Two phenomena characterise the current socio-economic state of India: persistent poverty despite the very high economic growth rate, and a huge number of working poor. The growing trend of under- and unemployment is reinforced by the demographic dividend, the decline of fertility and mortality, which leads to a transition in the age structure, clearly reflected in an enormous increase in the working age population of the coming years. Due to this development, the country will have to face the prospect of millions of job seekers in the near future, the majority of whom have little to no education or skills. According to the Census of India 2001<sup>2</sup>, 57.09% or 587 million out of 1.029 billion Indians (2011: 1.210 billion) are in the 15-59 age group. The vast majority of the rest is younger than 15 years. Future population growth has been projected on the basis of the 2001 Census results: in the year 2026 the population will probably reach 1.4 billion. An anticipated 64.5% will be between 15 and 59, totalling 903 million people who will have to be employed (Chaurasia/Gulati 2008; Government of India 2006a). The Indian government is aware of the possibilities as well as the problems that can result from the demographic development. The Indian planning commission states in the context of the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan, valid from 2007 – 2012, that

“[...] all avenues for increasing employment [...] must be explored. If we fail to do so, the demographic dividend can turn into a demographic nightmare”. (Government of India, Approach to the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan: 6. Also see Government of India 2008, 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan: 91)

The Indian economy already suffers from a shortage of skilled employees (Team Lease 2007). In comparison with other economic factors, the lack of skill development and education is perceived as the main reason for underemployment and poverty. While India has the potential of a vast labour force, the majority of people are not sufficiently educated and qualified to meet the requirements of the growing economy. This is the core problem of the Indian labour market. The government of India is aware of the importance of skill development and training:

“Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. [...] Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of global development.” (Government of India 2008, 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan: 76)

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<sup>2</sup> The latest Census of India 2011 provides only provisional population trends so far and no figures on the respective age group, future prospects, castes and religion at the time when finalizing the study.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan itself the Indian government approaches the upgrading of education and skill training in the context of the demographic dividend. The government emphasises that the labour force growth in India will be larger than that of the industrialized countries and China. India has the youngest population in the world with a median age of 24 in the year 2000 - compared to China with 30, Europe with 38, and Japan with 41 (Government of India 2008: 91). The Indian government tries to present the development as an advantage that will make the country able to compete globally and to position itself as a global service provider with a young work force. The question is: what happens to the masses in the work force if they are undereducated and not properly trained to be an asset to the economy or even to the world market? To explore the reasons for the mismatch, a profound look at the influences that lead people to make educational decisions is needed. As will be shown, India has a very high illiteracy rate (44% according to UNDP Factsheets 2009). Many children do not attend school at all or drop out at early stages in the school system. In the last three decades a number of surveys have tried to answer the question of why so many Indian children are out of school or do not receive any kind of post-school education (e.g. Caldwell et al. 1985; Govinda/Varghese 1993; Sinha/Sinha 1995; Probe Team 1999; Leclercq 2001; Drèze/Kingdom 2001; Ota 2002). The present study partly ties in with these investigations but it also goes beyond them as the others mainly concentrate on basic education. This study focuses on the motivation and the decision to go to school, continue with school or to seek training possibilities or formal higher occupational qualifications.

Although broad theories come from the field of psychology, this study largely employs a cultural, psychological and sociological research perspective rather than a pure psychological one. The reason for this is that the study deals with the influences of the environment on the individual and the underlying patterns of social life. It deals less with purely internal processes as traditional psychological research tends to do. The study here follows E. Durkheim's epistemological approach to social life in his belief: "That the *substance* of social life cannot be explained by purely psychological factors, [...] seems to us to be perfectly evident" (Durkheim 1950, in Giddens 1972: 70). Saying that educational choices are purely the decisions of the individual is to ignore the social context the people are embedded in. In India socio-economic, socio-cultural and religious forces form the context within educational

decisions are made. Thus in this study, educational learning and the factors that influence educational decisions are understood as social processes themselves that are strongly influenced by the society .

Nevertheless, the study combines several research perspectives. Psychological theories play a major role in explaining the dependent variable of the study, motivation. The findings are meant to contribute to the conception and design of educational initiatives for special target groups. Focusing on this wider goal, the study thus also includes a pedagogical aspect.

## **1.2. Existing Research and Research Gaps**

I consider two main areas of existing research as relevant and important for this study: the first area covers the state of research in India on psychology, social sciences such as sociology and social anthropology, and educational sciences including existing research on motivation. The second area to be looked at is international research on motivation (mainly from psychology and sociology of education) that reflects on cultural aspects. In the following I will present the two areas and explain identified research gaps that my study aims to close to some extent.

### **1.2.1. Indian Psychology, Social Sciences, and Educational Science**

I am aware that exploring phenomena in a different culture inevitably includes a subjective and culturally bound view. Many postcolonial scholars like Edward Said in his concept of Orientalism (1978), or British sociologist Stuart Hall, one of the originators of cultural studies (e.g. 1997; 1980), have been criticising Western-biased and ethnocentric perspectives of many Western scientific approaches. According to Said, the progress and values of non Western cultures (the so-called Orient) are judged in terms of, and in comparison to, the West; so they are always seen as the “Other”, the conquerable object, and therefore the lower. Social scientist Linda Tuhiway Smith criticises the mentality of Western researchers and their research methodologies and methods of interpretation towards other cultures as “They came, they saw, they named, they claimed” (Smith 1999: 80). Researchers have to be aware of the risk of lapsing into this ethnocentric tendency when analysing foreign cultures and societies.

French-Indian sociologist André Béteille states that Indian sociologists and social anthropologists have been influenced by concepts and methods that are largely of external provenance (2004). Early Western leading scholars like e.g. Hegel, Herder, Schlegel, Marx, Weber and many others, neglected the intellectual and scientific achievements of pre-colonial India and were almost completely unaware of the variety of Indian philosophical systems and thinkers. The fact that India must be seen as one of the cradles of human and urban civilisation was almost completely ignored in this era (Chakkarath 2010). The negative impact of colonialism on (social) sciences is apparent in its vision of a new Indian elite, which was to be “indigenous by blood and colour, but English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect” (ibid 2010: 106). In this regard, colonial influences have determined the development of the social sciences in India for a long time. Béteille argues that “[...] these concepts and methods have themselves been shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by values that are too freely assumed to be universal [...]” (Béteille 2004: 54). Most colonialists did not even perceive non-Western traditions as sciences and took this view as the psychological justification to “develop” the world according to their benefit (Jahoda 1999). As Said has remarked, early science was used to excuse the West’s power over the world (1978; Chakkarath 2010).

The field of psychology shows even more clearly how a scientific discipline in India developed in strong dependence on the West. Psychological researchers were trained by British or American psychologists coupled with colonial influences. According to social-psychologist and leading researcher in cultural and indigenous psychology in India, Girishwar Misra, this development led to the practice of a culturally blind psychology (1996). The psychological topics taught in Indian universities were 100% Western for a long time. Often the theories had been only tested under Western conditions and by Western researchers. D. Sinha describes the Indian psychology of a certain time period as “imitative” (1993). Like in other non-Western countries, most of the studies conducted in India followed Western trends and used the theories and concepts readily available in Western literature. This methodology created the impression that the Western concepts, theories, and methods were fully appropriate and universally valid also for all other non-Western settings. Research findings from non-Western research traditions were given hardly any access to established scientific journals (Straub/Thomas, 2003), and researchers



did not have the opportunities to spread their alternative ideas and research results. This Western biased view has not only been typical in the field of psychology but also in many other areas of social sciences, and it is still an ongoing tendency (Chakkarath 2007). In the 1980s, persistently inconsistent and unexplained findings within the Indian context became an urgent wake-up call for Indian researchers, and a feeling of disappointment with Western approaches followed. The following process is referred to by D. Sinha as a phase of indigenisation of Indian psychology (1986). Indigenous psychology describes concepts that were developed in the context of the culture of investigation itself (Chakkarath 2005: 33). It considers aspects of how a culture “thinks”, takes into account the culture’s own worldviews, values and norms and concentrates intently on findings of native researchers. The approach carries the possibility of insights into the self-understanding of the culture. From an indigenous perspective all psychologies, also the Western psychology, are indigenous itself (Gergen, et al. 1996; Misra 2002; Berry et al. 1992: 380; Straub/Thomas 2003: 65).<sup>3</sup> Resistance to indigenous psychology grounds in apprehensions that the objects of interest are rather part of a general knowledge of the members of a culture, “irrelevant curiosities” (Misra 1993: 253), or that the approaches do not meet scientific demands (Chakkarath 2005). Misra (e.g. 2002; 2004; in Gergen et al. 1996) argues in favour of further development of indigenous psychology for the Indian context that does not ignore the cultural background that the individuals are embedded in. According to him, psychological processes are “rooted in historically variable and culturally mediated practical activities” (1996). The person and the context have to be seen as mutually defining, and as postcolonial studies have been claiming indigenous psychology underlines the role of the context

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<sup>3</sup> Indigenous psychology as a discipline has to be reflected in front of two other main psychological tendencies, cultural psychology and cross-cultural psychology, which have been developed relatively independent from each other. Ratner believes the three approaches to be the main concepts when the relationship between culture and the behaviour of individuals is analysed (Ratner 2008, Introduction). Cross-cultural psychology developed originally as a comparative methodological strategy of mainstreams psychology (Misra 2002: 5). It aims to pursue the universal validity of psychological theories across all cultures and tries to test as universally assumed psychological processes by means of cultural differences. Cross-cultural psychology is grounded in the idea of an objective reality which can be measured quantitatively. In contrast cultural psychology emphasises a relativistic view; it examines how local circumstances influence psychological processes (Shweder 1991: 72) from the perspective of the respective culture and is therefore much closer to indigenous psychology than cross-cultural psychology is. (For a more detailed description of the three approaches and their distinction see also Straub/Thomas 2003.)

of understanding. Misra states that many Western concepts lack experiential validity in other cultures (*ibid.*). Western models would often wrongly offer evidence for phenomena presumed as universally valid (Misra 2002). For example, the interpretation of psychological functioning in an Indian-Hindu context has to be entrenched in spiritual and natural dimensions to understand and explain Indian reality. D. Sinha has noticed some positive changes in recent times such as a move towards a culturally sensitive psychology and the re-exploration of cultures in order to correct the ethnocentricity predominant in many studies (cited in Misra 2002).

Regarding the state of research on motivation, Adesh Agarwal (2009) gives an updated overview on motivation research in India. Most often motives are studied, like the achievement motive. Other topics are aspirations, values, love and sex, interest, intrinsic motivation, future orientation, and background variables found (e.g. in child rearing). Further mentionable writings related to motivation and education are from Singhal and Misra, e.g. their study on the role of ecological (i.e. urban or rural surrounding), age, and gender on achievement cognition (1989) or a situation-context analysis of achievement goals (1994) which underlines differences of achievement behaviour and achievement goals across different cultures and social groups even within India. Misra and his associates state in their series on achievement motivation (Singhal/Misra, 1992, 1994; Misra et al. 1995) that while the notion of achievement in the West can be seen as individual achievement, in India significant others and familial considerations, or fulfilling one's duties towards others are parts of achievement goals. Furthermore, Misra (1994) has also observed causal attributions concerning success and failure. He draws attention to the fact that attribution in the West, often related to human agency or responsibility, differs from those in India that more strongly emphasizes a combination of both ability and luck. However, the field of the motivation to pursue education, applying a cognitive view, has not been fully investigated to date.

Returning to social sciences, in the last decades (and earlier than in psychology) Indian social sciences have independently developed sociological output of great volume and diversity. This content has been produced by Indians, Indian scholars

living outside India, and by international researchers.<sup>4</sup> They have been addressing broad trends in Indian society and culture for more than a century (Srinivas 1996; Das 2004). In addition, in the last 50 years area studies from the West and global institutions such as UNDP, World Bank, WHO, UNESCO, and UNICEF (Das 2004), and also from non governmental organisation and foundations have been important partners in the generation of knowledge on the Indian society. Meanwhile, a range of related disciplines like cultural history, cultural anthropology, cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology, and discursive psychology argue in favour of the significance of culture to the understanding of human action (see B eteille 2004; Misra 2002). One characteristic of Indian sociology, according to B eteille, is that there has been a closer relationship between sociology and social anthropology than in many other countries (2004). Although there is no universal agreement, B eteille himself presumes that this close relationship emphasizes the tradition to study society *and* culture of India by Indian and non-Indian scholars. This close link is of some value for the present study, which is also heavily anchored in social anthropology by combining research on society and culture. According to B eteille, social anthropology is defined as how living human beings behave in social groups. For example, in this field, as well as in my study, the roles of patterns, customs, kinship or religion are generally in focus. Nevertheless, the study is not of anthropological origin, mainly because the research method of semi-structured interviews used is not ethnography typical for anthropological approaches (more in chapter 4).

In the field of sociology of education the works of Patricia and Roger Jeffery are worth mentioning. They have been exploring e.g. the connection between education and fertility in India from a sociological perspective (e.g. 1994, also Jeffery/Basu 1996). Rhadika Chopra and Patricia Jeffery have more recently explored the ambiguity of social effects of education (2005) and Roger Jeffery et al. (2005) lectures on social inequality and the privatisation of schooling. Furthermore mentionable are the writings of Hemlata Talesra (2007) on sociological foundations of education in India and Sures C. Jain (2005) on education and socio-economic development and the rural urban divide. Kumar, Heath and Heath have been engaged

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<sup>4</sup> To name a few: Andr e B eteille, Jan Breman, Veena Das, Jean Dr eze, Leela Dube, Dipankar Gupta, Anthony Heath, Patricia and Roger Jeffery, Dieter Rothmund, Amartya Sen, M.N. Srinivas, etc.

in the examination of social mobility patterns and educational differences in India (e.g. 2002).

Educational circumstances in India and their social impact have also been described and analysed broadly by social, educational, and psychological scientists (to name a few: PROBE Public Report on Basic Education in India 1999, Sahu 2007 on trends and problems in Indian education, Indian Labour Reports 2007 and 2009 (Team Lease/IIJT) on vocational training, V. Raina 2006 on social disparities in access to education, Drèze 2004 and World Bank 1997 on basic education, Srivastava 1998 on child development, or Diehl 1999 on informal training). Education for selected groups of the society like scheduled castes, tribes, or women has also been in the centre of interest (e.g. Bhatt 1998; Jeffery/Basu 1996; Bhatt 2005). Ashok Srivastava presents a review of psychological research conducted during 1993-2003 on dynamics that influence Indian schooling (2009). Main research attention during this period was on systemic variables, the pedagogic processes, and the students' and teachers' performance in scholastic and non-scholastic domains.

But the motivation for education has not yet been investigated. One exception that nears the topic of the study is the 2006 WORCC study by G. Arulmani and S. Nag-Arulmani (Work Orientations and Responses to Career Choices - Indian Regional Survey) presented at the National Consultation on Career Psychology. The study was conducted in 86 regional Indian schools and analysed motivational aspects that lead to career decisions of pupils across different social classes. Another study by Ragini Bilolikar (1998) combines the topics of education, occupational choices and motivation in which she examines motivation factors of Indian women to opt for teacher training programmes. Nevertheless, in sociology, social anthropology, psychology and in educational science the topic of motivation to pursue education in combination with socio-cultural influences has yet to be broadly investigated.

Indian social scientists agree that their aim is not to abandon Western traditions and expertise, but to integrate the alternatives and to adapt Western and international concepts to suit the Indian culture (Gergen et al. 1996). My thesis, along with the former, tries to combine international research on motivation and the socio-cultural Indian context.

### 1.2.2. International Research on Motivation

Motivation is at first understood as a psychological concept; motivation for education applies psychological as well as sociological approaches here.

Briefly mentioned<sup>5</sup> international psychological research on motivation can be viewed from various angles; two main research perspectives represent 1. theories compiled under trait theories and 2. the cognitive perspective. The view of trait theories and other related approaches concentrates on personal dispositions of the individuals, shaped by the environment in early childhood. Individual traits (motives, needs, character) are believed to be developed in the first ten years of life. Certain incentives activate the innate and early, which cause the person to act. An important scholar is Henry A. Murray (1938) who developed a list with 20 motives, among them the need for achievement or achievement motive. Other important researcher of needs and motive research are Abraham Maslow (1954, 1968), John W. Atkinson (1957) and also Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan (e.g. 2000). Personal dispositions always play a certain role in the actions of human beings. But the approach hardly takes into account *current* influences of the environment.

In contrast, the cognitive perspective describes motivation through rationally reasoned action. The individual anticipates and calculates certain outcomes and consequences of his or her activity. Here, this cognitive procedure determines the individual's behaviour. Simply expressed, it takes the future into account instead of being orientated on past experiences and socialized attitudes as in the personal approach. A main scholar in this field is H. Heckhausen (e.g. 1994; 2008). The cognitive perspective seems to be appropriate to explain the influence of socio-cultural factors on behaviour, because to some extent the environment has already been integrated. The perspective will help to illustrate how socio-cultural factors influence the anticipation of outcomes and consequences of action.

The field of motivation research reflected in the context of socio-cultural factors has not yet been fully investigated. Like in today's mainstream psychology, the strong dichotomy between processes of the psyche and the external environment remains (Mascolo/Bhatia 2002). Misra criticises the discipline with following words: "Within

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<sup>5</sup> Detailed explanation of the core theories in psychology follows in chapter 2.

this framework culture is not regarded as an essential ingredient in understanding the human acts of knowing” (Misra 2002: 6). From his perspective, this counts even for social-psychology which continues to analyse phenomena “from the standpoint of the isolated individual” (ibid.). Socio-psychologists still tend to only touch briefly on situational and environmental influences instead of bringing them in as the focus of research. Sociology of education and research of educational decision processes integrate the context of the individuals to some extent but have not yet explored the influence of different cultural backgrounds.

Some earlier contributions to research on motivation and its application to ethnic groups come from David C. McClelland and his team in the 1960s. He assumes the existence of an achievement motive and correlates it with respective economic development. Straub and Thomas mention McClelland’s study as still being part of historical and contemporary meaningful contributions in cross-cultural psychology (Straub/Thomas 2003: 49). His work (e.g. 1961) depends heavily on personal dispositions which are based on Max Weber (1904), rooted in socio (religious) cultural aspects. In McClelland’s theory of economic development, he assumes that the innate and personal need for achievement is a major determining factor of economic growth of a society. In order to measure and compare collective motives regarding the need for achievement McClelland developed a national motive index, the nAchievement (nAch) coding system which he correlated with economic growth (Mazur/Rosa 1977).<sup>6</sup> He believed that a nation’s population is socialized to a certain state of nAchievement which reflects the nAchievement of the nation at that point of time. Personalities with high nAchievement generally engage in entrepreneurial activities which results in the economic progress of a society. McClelland could identify a relation between the high national achievement motive and the economic development of the country. In his approach on the effect of religion on societies, Weber proposes a difference in the intensity of the achievement motive between sociologically defined population groups (Brunstein/Heckhausen 2008). McClelland’s studies support Weber’s thinking that people who are born and raised

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<sup>6</sup> National economic growth was operationalised with the per capita consumption of electricity of the countries for a set time period and the discrepancy between its expected and observed increase. McClelland himself and other authors agree that the relation between the need for achievement and the consumption of electricity of a society is no longer as strong as is once was (McClelland 1984; R.S. Frey 1984).

in a protestant environment tend to develop according to protestant work ethics of independence and reliable personalities and therefore are able to be economically successful (ibid.). According to Brunstein and Heckhausen representative findings for that theory are available for the US and Switzerland (2008); main studies in this field for example are from Reuman, Alwin and Veroff (1984), Veroff, Atkinson, Feld and Gurin (1960) for the US and from Vontobel (1970) for Switzerland (Brunstein 2006).

Later research on motivation and cultural influences can be found in the field of cultural and cross cultural psychology (Thomas 2003; Trommsdorf/Kornadt 2007) for example from H.J. Kornadt, who focuses mainly on motives and their variations in different cultures (e.g. 1993). He analyses in particular the development of the aggression motive during childrearing according to different social and cultural norms and habits. Other contributions include the achievement motive or need for affiliation. In a similar tradition to Kornadt, Markus and Kitayama (e.g. 1991) investigate socialisation influences on the development of the self. They argue in favour of a culturally different construal of the self, such as an *interdependent* self development in Asian cultures vs. an *independent* development in the American culture. These differences also lead to certain consequences for cognition, emotion, and motivation. Regarding motivation, Markus and Kitayama challenge the universality in Western psychology motive patterns (1991). In their eyes, H. Murray's early established motive list and most subsequent research on motives largely encompass patterns of an *independent* self and therefore Western biased view even today. Markus and Kitayama attempt to revise common motives for an interdependent context and emphasise a collectivistic notion particularly for the achievement motive in Asian cultures. As will be shown, the simplistic distinction between collectivistic and individualistic cultures (first by Hofstede) has been widely criticised by cultural and indigenous psychologist as ethnocentric and is considered to be stereotyping. Consequently, the same critique must be given to all researchers who try to apply stable simplistic labels to a whole culture (the so called cultural dimensions), and also concerns Markus and Kitayama's attempt to sort culture into independent and interdependent categories. Cultural differences in motivation have also been touched upon in mainstream theories. Hofstede briefly mentions in his later writings the relevance of his findings to the topics of motivation, management

of employees' achievement, and incentives (Hofstede 2006: 366). But his recommendations remain rather shallow and lukewarm and only touch very briefly on deeper psychological processes. The same applies to studies following in this tradition such as the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004). Nevertheless, all these approaches are widely grounded in the assumption of a socialized motive or need (e.g. for achievement or affiliation) and do not expand on cognitive considerations which lead the individuals to act. They are therefore of only limited use for the present study.

Finally, sociology of education also deals to some extent with motivation for education. Socio-cultural aspects are more considered here as in psychological motivation. The writings of scientists like Raymond Boudon being a scholar of a rational perspective and in completion Hartmut Esser will later play a considerable role in the study. Nevertheless, their approaches also deal with Western-European circumstances and do not consider socio-cultural conditions of transforming societies such as the Indian one.

Other researchers on motivation widely neglect the relevance of the socio-cultural environment and focus merely on inner processes of pure psychological aspects of motivation. This is vice versa in cultural, cross cultural and indigenous psychology: (cognitive rooted) motivation and rational decisions for or against education have not been much of a topic.

### **1.2.3. Research Gaps and Specification of the Research Area**

Seeing McClelland's, Weber's, and other's attempts to explain economic development by psychological and sociological theories supports the example of the suspicion of Markus and Kitayama (1991), which questioned if a theory rooted in a Western biased understanding of the world is sufficient to explain psychological phenomena in other cultures. The above mentioned ongoing discussion on the indigenisation of cultural psychology and sociology reflects those doubts. The described and existing psychological research is based on personal dispositions and early socialized needs of motives. Current cognitive processes in the context of socio-cultural factors have not been found in literature. The here cited cognitive researchers like Heckhausen, Rheinberg, or Brunstein do not consider cultural or contextual dimensions for their theories; expectations which are essential for the

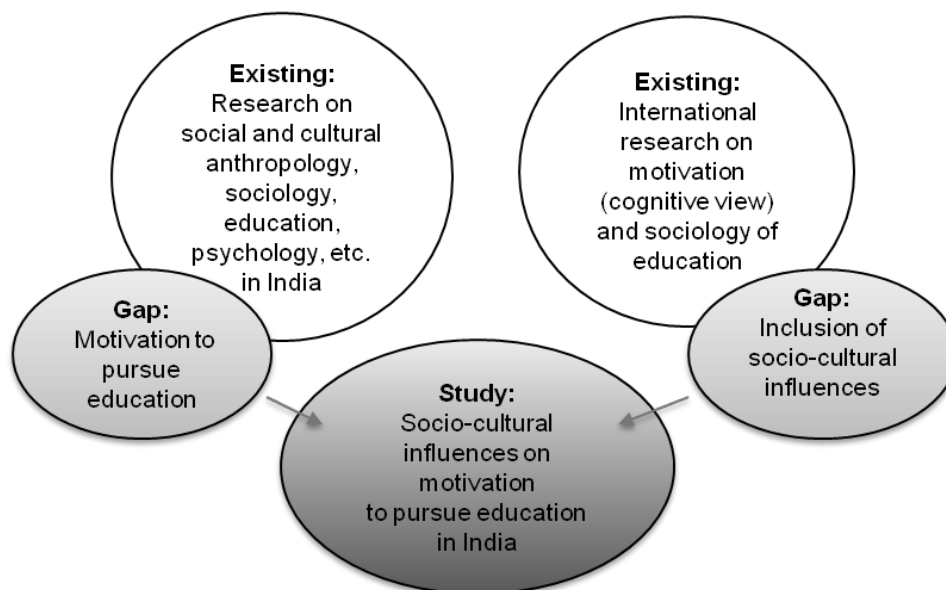


generating motivation are based on their own activity and not on external circumstances. In any case, like many others the mentioned scholars of the cognitive perspective deem their approaches as universally valid.

Seeing the existing research in Indian sociology, social anthropology, education sciences, and psychology as well as in international motivation research in these areas various research gaps appear:

- 1) Indian social science and psychology have been liberating themselves from Western concepts. Sociology, social anthropology, and educational science on India provide broad insights in societal and educational matters but have barely dealt with the area of motivation for education yet.
- 2) In international psychology and sociology there has been, to some extent, an ongoing discussion of motivation processes. One part of the existing psychological research deals with innate personal dispositions (see e.g. Krapp 1993) that exclude widely socio-cultural factors. Other researchers of this perspective who include cultural aspects focus on innate, long before socialized *motives* instead of the current influences on cognitive considerations and the current state of *motivation* (e.g. Markus/Kitayama 1991; McClelland 1961; Weber 1904; etc.); they exclude rational decision processes. The cognitive perspective in psychology (e.g. Heckhausen) however, again excludes widely socio-cultural aspects and the influence of the environment in general. Finally, sociological approaches from sociology of education regard the social surrounding (e.g. Boudon) but were designed for a Western-European context. Both international approaches, psychology and sociology, can be excused for having a eurocentric view.

Therefore, with the presented study, I aim to close some of these gaps by investigating cognitive motivation processes by including socio-cultural factors and indigenous Indian concepts (as figure 1.1 demonstrates).



**Fig. 1.1: Research gaps (Source: own figure)**

### 1.3. Challenges when Analyzing Culture

I have already touched on critical aspects when exploring cultures from a non-native foreign perspective. Before introducing the depending variable motivation and selected heuristic instruments, the term culture (as applied here) as well as methods and problems of its exploration shall be more closely looked at.

In the social sciences, more than 200 different definitions of culture exist, but the majority agrees on their main conclusions (Straub 2003). The term culture includes collectively held values, attitudes, behavioural patterns, shared identities, and common sets of significance which are programmed or learned and not inherited or genetic (Wilkesmann et al. 2010). For the thesis, the idea of binding characteristics is important. The idea that patterns of behaviour differ among cultures underlines the assumption that psychological models, like in the case of the study, are not necessarily to be taken as universally valid.

A prominent area to approach culture is the development of typically perceived characteristics of different cultures. Cultural differences have been interpreted on the base of empirical intercultural research. Major contributions in this field, for example, are from Hofstede (1984, 1991, 1994), Hall (1990), Triandis (1994, 1995),

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), and House et al. (2004) (Wilkesmann et al. 2008). In the research tradition of intercultural communication these scholars aim to develop and to empirically prove the existence of cultural dimensions, mainly of business executives. The GLOBE study (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Programme, House et al. 2004) represents the results of a quantitative data base of about 17.000 managers from 951 organizations in three branches (financial services, food processing, and telecommunications) operating in 62 societies worldwide. The GLOBE study further developed Hofstede's dimensions and operates with nine attributes (power distance, in-group collectivism, institutional collectivism, future orientation, uncertainty avoidance, assertiveness, gender egalitarianism, humane orientation, performance orientation). The two most famous and most often cited attributes are in-group collectivism and power distance. India achieves the highest scores in both dimensions. India's lowest scores were recorded in the dimension gender-egalitarianism. Together with in-group collectivism and power distances this aspect may play a role when looking at educational decisions. For this reason, I will introduce the three dimensions here (given in brackets are the scores for practices on a 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree, along with India's rank among all investigated cultures; House et al. 2004).

1. *In-group collectivism* describes the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. (5.92; 4/62)
2. *Power distance* is characterized as the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels. (5.47; 15/62)
9. *Gender-egalitarianism* is labelled as the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality. (2.90; 54/62)

Unlike other studies of this kind, GLOBE differentiates in its questionnaire between practice and value, which makes the data more applicable for research (Wilkesmann et al. 2010; Hanges/Marcus 2004).

Nevertheless, there are essential critical aspects regarding those approaches that try to apply cultural criteria on whole nations. Hofstede's, GLOBE's and other's point of view in this tradition are Western biased and must be accused of an ethnocentric

perspective. A change of the perspective as suggested by postcolonial studies and indigenous social sciences and psychology has not been taken into account. As already described previously in this chapter in the paragraph on postcolonial perspectives, the transfer of Western approaches and research designs to other non-Western cultures can be found here including the risk to merely affirm the own assumptions instead of gaining real insights. Lisa T. Smith states that Western researchers who focus on specifics as a problem perceived phenomenon in another culture “[...] obviously fail to analyse or make sense of wider social, economic and policy context in which communities exist. Often their research simply affirms their own beliefs.” (Smith 1999: 92) Particularly, the aspect of only proving the researcher’s own beliefs and attitudes by applying Western developed research instruments, as well as ignoring a wider social framework can count against cultural studies like the presented ones by Hofstede or House et al.: In Hofstede’s and GLOBE’s studies both the development of the questionnaires as well as the analysis and interpretation of the results were carried out by researchers from Euro-American backgrounds and were administered without modifications for the cultural contexts. Thus (work) values which are unique to a culture may not be fully identified or addressed (Fusilier/Durlabhji 2001). Pre-designed assumptions and hypothesis from a purely Western position resulting from simplistic pre-existing stereotypes how the others “are” were applied to the alien cultures. The GLOBE study emphasizes its cooperation with native regional investigators in every country and therefore claims to be more culturally sensitive than e.g. Hofstede. The regional investigators were only responsible for distribution and explanation of the questionnaire to the sample population. But they were excluded from designing the questionnaire and from the interpretation of the results, which was performed by Western, mostly US American researchers (Wilkesmann et al. 2010). Another critical aspect is that both studies mainly examined male employees. The typical IBM member of the 1980s (in Hofstede’s case) and the typical manager of the 1990s (in GLOBE’s case) have to be assumed to be males to a great extent. Female thinking as an equally important half of what determines a culture was largely cut out (Wilkesmann, et al. 2010).

To conclude, in studies on cultural characteristics researchers, predominantly of Western origin, make use of simplified stereotypes which allow categorizing and

classifying diverse phenomena by inadequate generalization of individuals, groups, and whole nations. Chakkarath (2007) describes these generalizations as:

“[...] based on very limited, sometimes unreliable and ethnocentrically biased information about ethnicity, race, gender, age, worldview, history, etc. and serve as cognitive matrix of expectations about and interpretations of other people’s behaviour” (ibid.: 2).

The studies on cultural dimensions are of limited use for the present study. Limitations derive from the fact that first their definition of culture is based on a nationwide view of countries due to their political frontiers. As to be shown, one crucial characteristic of India is its huge variety among regions and groups of different social economical status. Second, the data collection in House’s and Hofstede’s studies was conducted either among middle managers (GLOBE) or among employees of multinational company IBM (Hofstede), in the Indian example, the majority of both groups probably belong to middle or even upper class households<sup>7</sup>. The same goes for the large body of literature that exists on Indian cultural values and their impact on leadership and management practices (e.g. Fusilier/Durlabhji 2001; Golpalan/Rivera 1997; Singh 1990; Chakraborty 1993). J.B.P. Sinha and Kanungo highlight that those kinds of studies bear the risk of inconsistent and contradictory results (1997), because the studies often show a heavy dependence on Western definition of work related challenges and situations. They argue that many Indian managers internalize Indian and Western values at the same time and show additionally an above-average context sensitivity and ability to balance in organizational behaviour.<sup>8</sup> For the present study, with its exclusive look at India and at social varieties *within* the society, information about values and cultural dimensions of multinational company (MNC) members are of subordinate importance.

An alternative approach on how to deal with cultural dimensions is presented by the Indian scholars J.B.P. Sinha and A. Pandey 2007 in their study on Indians’ mindsets (also Sinha 2010). They empirically developed the four mindsets (collectivistic, dependence prone, materialistic, and holistic) for the Indian society and then proved

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed description of social classes according to occupational positions see chapter 4 and the eleven-fold layer of classes by Kumar et al. (2002) based on Erikson/Goldthorp (1992)

<sup>8</sup> These factors question by the way the use of quantitative methods for cultural research (Fusilier/Durlabhji 2001), which do not allow “reading between the lines” of data.

that dimensions are not generally valid for all members of a cultural group (here meaning Indians), but that certain conditions evoke them. Their approach differs from the tradition of the formulation of cultural dimensions. They focus on the aspects that operation of mindsets is to a great extent situationally based and closely related to the kind of organisational setting in which individuals (at the moment of study) find themselves. This approach will be integrated when it comes to aspects of collectivism and individualism later (chapter 6). Despite all critique, the approach of cultural indications and dimensions gives a first insight into relevant characteristics of the Indian identity which can be assumed to be valid across all classes of the society (for class distinctions see chapter 4). The dimension collectivism is used by Indian and Western scholars as well, and corresponds with Sinha's and others' identity characteristics of family social institutions and relationships, which will play an important role in the study later (1982; 1997). In the course of this thesis I will come back to the findings on cultural dimensions at relevant points.

#### **1.4. Structure of the Thesis**

Before introducing pre-selected cultural aspects as the main structural component of the study, I will describe motivation as the dependant variable in chapter 2. The chapter contains main core theories and heuristics from psychology of motivation (Heckhausen 1977, 2008) and sociology of education (Boudon 1974). Along with these core theories, further relevant psychological approaches will be described that help to interpret the findings. Chapter 3 outlines pre-considerations on socio-cultural factors. Two approaches are most relevant here. Sinha's characteristic of the Hindu-Indian identity (1982) represents the leading theory in the selection process of rough socio-cultural components assumed to be relevant for education decisions. Sinha describes three main elements as having the greatest influence on the Indian psyche: Economy including poverty, family and social relations in general, and religion. The theoretical approach is complemented by criteria applied when undertaking socio-cultural investigations from a more practical viewpoint. The BMZ (German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) (1999) defines three criteria to analyse when planning and implementing programmes and projects in a certain cultural environment: Socio-cultural heterogeneity, legitimacy, and the social organisation. Together the two approaches provide the theoretical background of the

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three main sections of the thesis. They are called socio-economic conditions, social relations, and Hinduism. Their empirical inquiry and its results are portrayed in detail in the chapters 5, 6, and 7. At the end of each chapter I will connect the empirical findings with motivation theories and formulate hypothesis on how the identified cultural factors influences education decisions. Chapter 4 illustrates the applied methodology for sampling, data collection, and analysis. I use a qualitative approach with the main components of theoretical sampling, semi-structured interviews, and content analysis. The chapter further includes the theoretical backup for structuring the sample according to four class patterns based mainly on the interviewees' occupation and current job situation. The results from the analysis of the data are summarized in chapter 8. It furthermore contains theoretical reflections on limitations of the study, conclusions, and further considerations.

## **2. Motivation: Theoretical Background of the Dependent Variable**

The following chapter of the thesis provides the theoretical background of motivational theories. Motivation and motivation to pursue education is applied as the dependent variable of the thesis while socio-cultural aspects form the group of independent variables. Originally a term rooted in psychological science, motivation can be perceived from different backgrounds. First, I will describe the psychological research, which is also the background for the leading theoretical concept of the study, the extended motivation model by Heckhausen. Later, it will be complemented by a sociological perspective.

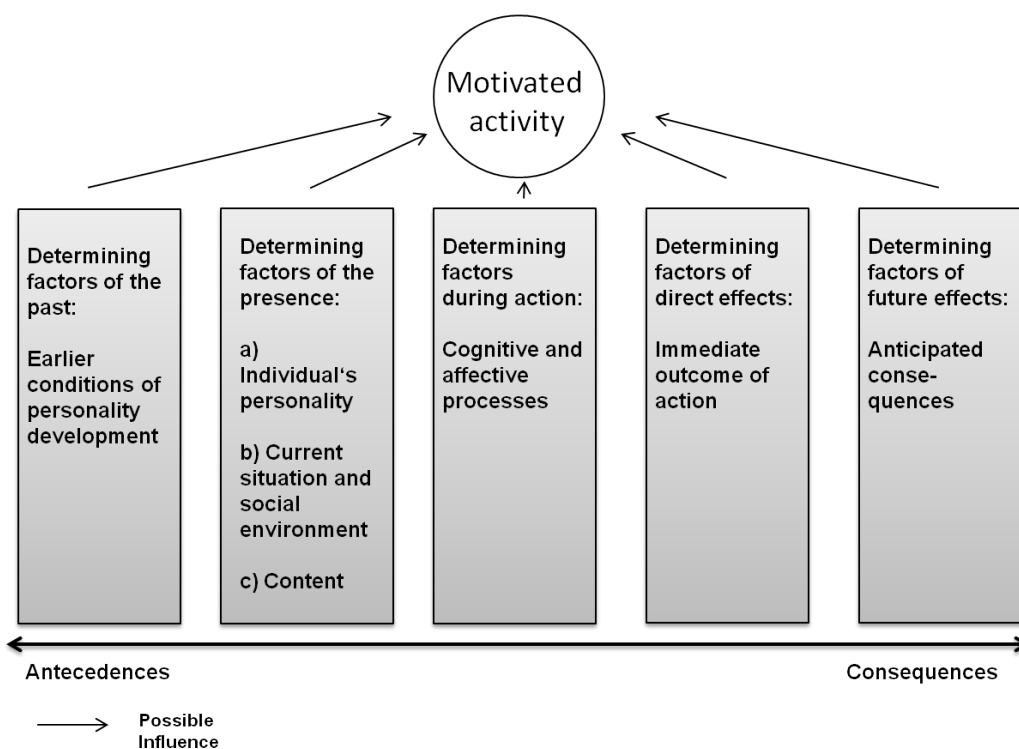
In order to show how the applied core theories on motivation are theoretically embedded, the field of psychological motivation research and important lines of development will be briefly described (2.1.). Although the thesis draws mainly on cognitive based motivation theory, an approach related to personal needs, the need pyramid of A. Maslow, is also of some relevance and will be introduced here (2.2.). The theoretical backbone of this chapter is the cognitive oriented research perspective with the Extended Motivation Model by Heinz Heckhausen (first 1977), explained in detail in 2.3. It functions as a heuristic instrument and analytical concept and will help to explicate motivation as the dependent variable of this study. The section also discusses the distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and its relevance for the study, as well as some relevant side theories related to the model. Next to the cognitive Heckhausen model from the field of social psychology, another relatable perspective from the field of sociology of education is relevant and helpful here (2.4.). French sociologist Raymond Boudon's approach explains decisions for or against education among different social classes, for which he applies a cognitive view (1974). The chapter closes with the transmission of the theory to the field of investigation (2.5.). The final part and core of this chapter marks the application of the motivation model to the research question of the dissertation, the Indian socio-cultural influences on motivation for education. It links this chapter with the following description of socio-cultural factors considered to influence motivation and its empirical findings (chapters 5 to 7).



## 2.1 Perspectives in Psychological Research on Motivation

Countless models have arisen to explain motivation from different angles. I have selected a few relevant approaches to give an overview about the main perspectives in psychological research and later to reason possible influences of the socio-cultural and structural environment on motivation.

As mentioned, motivation to learn plays a role in the main research question, although it is not limited to this specific topic in the broad field of motivation. The model below according to Krapp (fig. 2.1) shows different variables (1-5) which, according to different research perspectives, can all influence motivation and therefore activity.



**Fig. 2.1: Model of different groups of variables in motivation research according to A. Krapp (1993)**

Although the model was mainly developed to demonstrate different perspectives on motivation to learn, it seems appropriate to use for a brief introduction to motivation in general. It shows different possible variables and their relations to one another and also contains universal keywords from the traditions of motivation research. Throughout this chapter I will consistently draw on some of these keywords and, where they seem to be relevant, explain them in detail. The model already includes aspects of Heckhausen's Extended Model, which will be introduced in depth and

subsequently transferred to the main question of the study at a later stage. Some variables will become more relevant than others which will be explained in more detail below.

The model by Krapp chronologically shows the course of motivation and possible influencing groups of variables:

1. Determining factors developed in the past: Earlier conditions of personality development , e.g. socialization and formation of motive dispositions
2. Present determining factors: a) the individual personality, motives etc. b) Current situation and social environment, c) the content
3. Cognitive and affective processes during action (e.g. joy of doing something)
4. Immediate outcome of action
5. Determining factors of future effects of action: Anticipated (indirect) consequences and higher ranking goals

Important for the purpose of the study is the distinction between antecedences of the individual's life course (mainly in groups 1 and 2) and anticipated consequences of the activity (mainly in groups 4 and 5). Different research perspectives focus on one of the two poles, which can be perceived as the opposite ends of a continuum. Both sides affect the behaviour of the individual and can activate action. The continuum shall demonstrate that no research perspective can completely neglect the influence of either antecedences or consequences, but emphasises more or less strongly one side. Krapp (1993) describes the following two main research perspectives:

- a) Perspective of theories based on personal dispositions, e.g. theories on needs and motives, self-determination theory, and motivation by interest. These theories search the reasons for behaviour at antecedences of the individual.
- b) Cognitive perspective, including e.g. classical learning theories, attribution theories, and expectancy value theories. They focus on anticipated consequences of action as a main reason for behaviour.

As seen in other sciences, the different motivation theories and approaches were not developed straight-line. Many phenomena can be observed from different angles and have to be seen as cross cutting theories rather than belonging strictly to one research

perspective. In my study I will rely mainly on the cognitive perspective. The distinction between the two research perspectives (personal and cognitive) will help to roughly structure the broad field of theories according to the study's demands. The difference between cognitive and personal is crucial because the characteristic of the cognitive approach appears appropriate for explaining socio-cultural influences on motivation. The term personal shall represent attributing a person's actions to features and characteristics regarding the personality of the individual. In contrast, cognitive means attributing actions to mental assessment. Nevertheless it has to be taken into account that both situation and personal dispositions are always related to each other.

Before I come to the core theories of the cognitive perspective I will briefly explain some central terms of motivation psychology in order to avoid confusion. In this context I will also introduce one relevant term, the *needs*, which is from the research perspective of personal dispositions. This will also become relevant at a later stage of the study.

## **2.2. Some Central Terms from Motivation Psychology**

The *trait* theories in motivation research focus on personal dispositions which are believed to be key factors to determine activity. The background of these theories is to observe individual differences in behaviour under apparently same situational conditions. Different behaviour is attributed to different traits. Traits can be of very different strength. They are often labelled as attitude, personality, taste, character, or values. All of these terms concentrate on the early development of personal dispositions and therefore on variables of the above shown model of group 1) earlier conditions of personality development, e.g. socialization and formation of motive dispositions and group 2a) the individual personality itself (Krapp 1993).

The motivation psychology emphasises two further terms in particular: *motives* and *needs* (ibid.). Firstly, the distinction between motives and motivation is central (Heckhausen/Heckhausen 2008). The above definition of motivation "the state of being motivated" stands in contrast to the term motive. Motives are defined as individual dispositions which are independent from time and situation, but situational factors or incentives contribute to their arousal, also called stimuli (Scheffer/Heckhausen 2008). Motives are believed to be enduring and generated in

the first ten years of life through the socializing influences of the environment. This includes the development of abilities, skills, behavioural style, personality, or the preference of certain kinds of incentives. Heckhausen and Heckhausen (2008) label those components as implicit motives in contrast to explicit motives, the goals. Although goals are understood here as mainly generated by cognitive processes, personal goals can be also part of early socialisation processes.

Secondly, Heckhausen/Heckhausen (2008: 3) summarize *needs* as the basic physical needs like hunger and thirst. The term need is very prominent in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (e.g. 1954; 1968) explained further below and as well in Deci and Ryan's Self Determination Theory (e.g. 1991; 2000; 2002). McClelland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell use a relatively wide definition and describe a need as a discrepancy between the actual state and a desired state (1953). Actual states are characterized by the absence or presence of certain motive-related incentives. I will take the hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow (1954, 1968) into account when discussing motivation to pursue education. Maslow's approach can be counted among the personal or human based perspectives but situational conditions (which will be shown later as being important for cognitive processes) play an equally important role in his theory. Maslow's approach differs from earlier categorizations of Murray et al.; he describes need groups instead of single needs. In his theory, these groups are hierarchically ordered according to their relevance in personality development (Scheffer/Heckhausen 2008). A need is not persistent; it determines behaviour only as long as it is unsatisfied. Two main groupings can be distinguished: Deficiency needs in the first three levels and growth needs in the fourth and fifth levels. Another differentiation is shown between primary needs on the first level and secondary needs on the four following levels (Hentze 1991: 30). As illustrated in figure 2.2 the five need groups are: Existential physiological needs such as hunger, sleep, and sexuality in the first level, security needs on the second level, social needs for belongingness and affiliation on the third level, esteem needs on the fourth level such as the need for self respect as well as recognition from others, and at the last and highest ranking level the need of self actualisation, expressed e.g. in creativity, actualisation of talents, and the fulfilment of a self-concept. As one of the founders of a humanistic psychology and in dissociation from behaviouristic tendencies, Maslow perceives human beings not as being passively pushed by internal or

external forces but rather as pulled by the above all and general need of constant development (Scheffer/Heckhausen 2008). The model is often portrayed as a pyramid with the basic or primitive needs at the bottom. Until a more basic need has been satisfied, the next level will not be reached. An individual is only able to act upon the growth needs when the deficiency needs have been fulfilled. The higher the levels, the more distinctive the needs become, and the lower the level, the more fundamental.



Fig. 2.2: Pyramid of needs after A. Maslow (1968)

Some aspects of the Maslow model become important later for analysing the data of this study. Maslow states that the higher the need, the less critical it is for sheer survival and the easier it can permanently disappear. They are experienced as less urgent. According to him, living on a higher level of needs means a higher quality of life, i.e. greater biological efficiency, longer life, less diseases, etc.

Scheffer and Heckhausen (2008) already hint at a cross-cultural perspective and at the idea that the definition of self-actualisation may vary between different cultures. According to the examples of Marcus and Kitayama (1991) or Keller (1997), non-western cultures with a rather collectivistic orientation give priority to group-needs and the actualisation of group values in contrast to the western inherited individualistic form of self actualisation (see also Triandis 1997). The suggestion will be examined in a later stage of the study.

Maslow's identification of the five basic need groups lacks empirical evidence and has been the recipient of a lot of critique (Scheffer/Heckhausen 2008). C. P. Alderfer

(1969), for example, criticised that the five need groups overlap each other randomly (Hentze 1991), the need for shelter can be perceived as a physiological need or a safety need. Despite the critique Maslow's model still counts among the most popular and wide spread approaches to explain motivation. Maslow's theory especially attracted interest in the fields of organisational psychology and later in business management studies (Hentze 1991: 30). Other theories also support Maslow's thoughts on the need groups. For example, the needs defined by Deci and Ryan (2000) advocating explanation of motivation partly overlap with Maslow's growth needs. Nevertheless, the Maslow scheme is widely viewed as being outdated in the European and American context. Seeing the different living conditions in India and considering that a large part of the population still lives below the poverty line (see chapter 5), the assumption seems to be legitimate that the fulfilment of basic physiological needs might still be a relevant aspect in the emergence of the motivation to pursue education.

A last briefly mentioned line of research among the personal perspective is motivation by *interest*. It reflects a special person-object-relationship (Krapp 2002: 382). The contents of the action itself shape the interest. The preference of a special content again is dependent on personal traits. Lewalter and Krapp studied interest as a motivational factor in the context of vocational education and occupational choices (2004) that parallels motivation to pursue education. The concept of interest contains a close connection to the idea of intrinsic motivation which will be discussed further down.

The above mentioned approaches of trait theories, motives, needs, and interest represent a mentionable background of motivation research for the presented study and for the question of socio-cultural influences. Although I perceive socio-cultural influences as external situational factors and therefore cognitively assessable, personal factors are never strictly excludable when examining social phenomena and appear in combination with external factors. Heckhausen himself acknowledges this in one of his first writings on a cognitive motivation model: "One can describe motivational processes as interactions between enduring value dispositions, the so called "motives" and motive relevant aspects of the perceived situation." (1977: 284)

Aspects of the perceived situation are cognitively assessed for the possibilities they signal in order to progress towards a certain goal. With this study, I do not claim to analyse the complete range of factors of motivation and motives, but focus instead on environmental influences which lead to a certain perception of the situation (as formulated by Heckhausen above). Therefore I will focus on the cognitive perspective which will now be explained in detail. Once the empirical data has been analysed, personal variables might need to be implied again for generating and appraising assumptions.

### **2.3. The Cognitive Perspective**

The main important research perspective for the study is the second research perspective in the model of Krapp (p. 23) the cognitive perspective. Motivation theories of this perspective focus on consequences of action instead on antecedences of the individual's life course as the personal perspective does (see fig. 2.1 according to Krapp).

The so-called cognitive revolution that started in the 1950s was a response to behaviourism, the predominant research perspective in psychology in that time (Krapp 1993). Behaviouristic considerations such as the widespread learning theory aim to understand and predict how and under which circumstances living beings learn. According to the behaviouristic school of thought, motivation is trained through earlier experiences and reinforcing incentives from outside. The environment shapes behaviour through external behavioural control. In Krapp's model, the above learning theory is located at the end of the continuum, next to outcomes and consequences. In contrast to the cognitive perspective and the extended motivation model, learning theory concentrates on outcomes which are exclusively *externally* reinforced, and which have the potential and intention to manipulate the subject's behaviour. Krapp (1993) criticises that the learning theory approach is limited to man-made test situations, and for the further course of the study it does not play any significant role. On the contrary, in the cognitive perspective, motivated action has the character of instrumentality either for the occurrence of an anticipated desired or for the obviation of an undesired consequence. Activity can be seen as a means to an end, depending on rational valuations and expectations of the individual (Krapp 1993; Heckhausen 1977). The

approach assumes that individuals choose their activities as to maximize the payoffs they receive from immediate activities, their outcomes and long-term consequences (Heckhausen 1977). Accomplishment of an action depends on precursory cognitive calculations and expectations. Possible outcomes and consequences of an activity are sequentially anticipated, analysed and assessed. The cognitive perspective concerning expectations focuses mainly on variable groups 4) (outcome) and 5) (consequences) of the above Krapp model. Additionally, personal dispositions of variable group 1) early socialized traits and 2a) individual's personality come into the picture regarding the aspect of valuating outcome and consequences (Krapp 1993). In this regard motivational processes interact between relevant aspects of the perceived situation and enduring value dispositions. The cognitive perspective seems to be most appropriate for investigating the question of socio-cultural influences. Compared to the other introduced approaches, it concentrates on rational decision processes as the base for motivated action, which is suitable to examine the question of what influences Indians' decisions for or against education. Next to this outcome, the consequences of action are in the centre of interest.

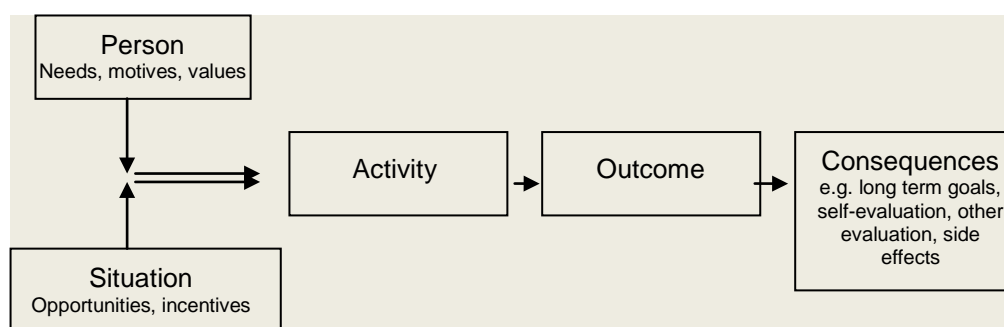
One leading researcher of the cognitive perspective of motivation is the previously mentioned Heinz Heckhausen (e.g. 1977; 1989; 2008). His Extended Motivation Model serves as a main theoretical foundation for exploring the questions of the influences of socio-cultural factors on motivation for education. Following the cognitive tradition, the model concentrates on rational decision processes as the base for motivated action. Rational decision depends on the perception of the potentials of education (e.g. as a way out of poverty and towards better living conditions). The choice to pursue education is made based on cognitive calculations and expectations. Pursuing education or not is instrumental to either foster or avoid certain consequences in the Indians' life. Heckhausen applied his model mainly to the analysis of motivation to learn (Heckhausen 2008; Heckhausen/Rheinberg, 1980; Rheinberg 1989). Moreover, the model aims to explain goal-directed action in general and is not restricted to achievement or learning motivation alone (Heckhausen 1989). Heckhausen's model (first 1977) encompasses many developed parameters of motivational processes that were previously isolated. It combines and further develops different psychological approaches: Expectancy-value-theories, instrumentality theories, and self-efficacy and attribution theories (Rheinberg 2008)



(see below). Though individual motive dispositions are generally accepted as part of the motivation process the model does not deal with motives and their measurements. Instead, it approaches the phenomenon of motivation from the angle of situation determining variables (Heckhausen 1977, 1989; Rheinberg 2008). In this regard, this study will mainly focus on the situation Indians are embedded in and what kind of consequences of education actions their situation allows to anticipate, specified in selected socio-cultural factors (see chapter 3). These socio-cultural factors are assumed to influence the education behaviour. The role of personal dispositions will be knowingly “ignored” as the main intention is to examine the influence of the present environment. Nevertheless, regarding the person-situation relation, Heckhausen and Heckhausen (2008) state a situation is always recognized through an individual’s interpretation. The personal perception and appearance of situations and incentives should be kept in mind.

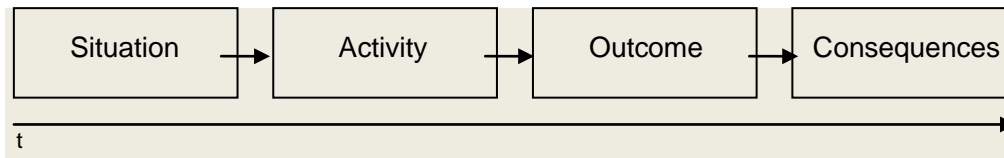
### 2.3.1. The Course of Motivated Activity in the Extended Motivation Model

Figure 2.3 gives an overview of the course of motivated action according to Heckhausen. Here personal and situational factors are still displayed as equal influences on the activity. In certain elements, the illustration looks similar to Krapp’s model (fig. 2.1) to structure groups of variables, which influence motivated activity in different research perspectives.



**Fig. 2.3: Determinants and the course of motivated action: General model (Source: Heckhausen/Heckhausen 2008)**

Because personal dispositions play only an insignificant side role in the following and relevant model by Heckhausen, the model can initially be simplified to four basic stages. Personal needs, motives, and values can be ignored.



**Fig. 2.4: Stages of course of motivation (modified model, based on Heckhausen 1989)**

Figure 2.4 shows the course of motivation in the extended motivation model chronologically on a timeline. The four elements constitute the key structure of the theory and are defined as follows (Heckhausen/Heckhausen 2008):

**Situation:** The initial situation as appraised. Each given situation presents the individual with various action alternatives, temptations, and potential threads.

**Activity:** The individual's own action, driven by motivation to pursue a desired outcome or consequence, e.g. studying or going to school.

**Outcome:** The outcome of the activity. It is directly and in a straight line bound to the activity, e.g. the obtained knowledge as a result of having studied.

**Consequences:** The various consequences which follow the outcome, e.g. because of the obtained knowledge a high score was achieved on a test and a high mark was received. As shown in the first general model in figure 2.3, the aspects of long term goals or self- and others' evaluation remain included. In contrast to the outcome, the consequences are not necessarily and directly bound to the activity and cannot always be controlled by the actor.

The stages are closely bound to another. Each action to change a situation has an outcome which again has a range of consequences. Heckhausen emphasises the role of incentives at every stage:

“Every positive or negative outcome that a situation can promise or signal to an individual is called an “incentive” and has “demand characteristics” for an appropriate action. Incentives may be associated with the action itself, its outcome, or various consequences of an action outcome.” (Heckhausen, J./Heckhausen H. 2008: 4)

Outcome and consequences of an action and its associated incentives influence the perception of the situation; therefore Heckhausen labels the approach as situation-based thinking.

Consequences have certain further characteristics: As mentioned, an outcome can have several kinds of consequences. Furthermore, the same outcome gives rise to

different consequences for different individuals (Heckhausen 1977). An immediate consequence is self-evaluation, which is a necessary step to attribute the outcome to causation. End consequences unrelated to the consequences originally sought are called side effects (Heckhausen 1977). Heckhausen mentions that at the very least, the side-effects are always extrinsic incentives<sup>9</sup>.

Now that the four main elements of the model have been introduced, I will explain their relationship, characterised by expectations.

### **2.3.2. The Role of Expectations**

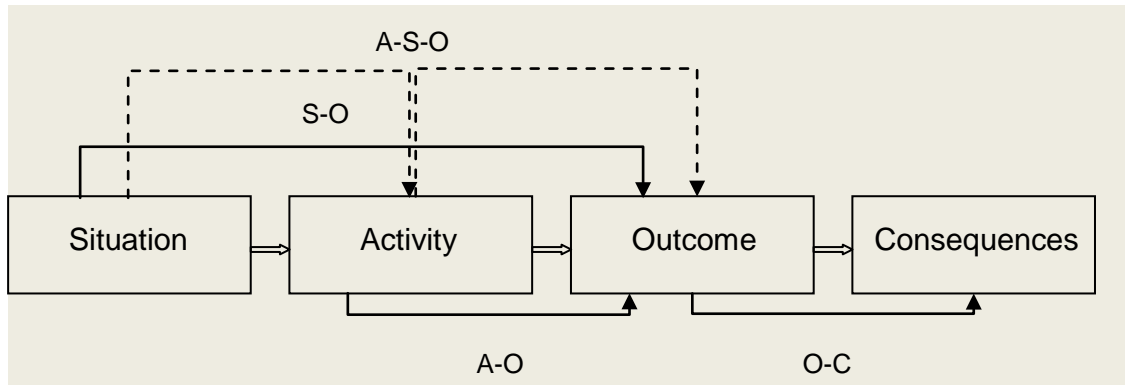
In Heckhausen's motivation model expectations play a centre role. They connect the four stages of the motivation process. The importance of expectations is already represented in the classical learning theory. An activity is executed because of an expected outcome. Heckhausen (1977) criticises that the behaviouristic approach does not take into consideration anything which could follow the outcome of an activity (ibid.). The considerations stop at the point of outcomes. It has only been since the evolution of the learning theory that approaches of motivation have been converted to social contexts (e.g. in the case of exploring work satisfaction). Here, the relevance of the outcome following consequences became apparent. Rotter's Social Learning Theory counts among the first contributions in this field (Rotter 1955; Beckmann/Heckhausen 2008). The expectation concept had been previously applied prior to Heckhausen in expectancy-value theories; this is partly from where he adopted his views. Expectancy or expectations stand for the individual's perception of chances for success. Subjective perception is determined by the belief in the own ability rooted in earlier experiences and the observation, perception, and estimation of the situational conditions. Heckhausen underlines that expectations express both the expected event itself as well as the likelihood of its occurrence (Heckhausen 1977).

To explain the appearance of motivation, he introduces four conditions which connect the four elements of the course of motivation with each other and which all must be fulfilled to create motivation: Three types of expectations of the individual must be met, plus the consequences of the outcome of an activity must be valued,

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<sup>9</sup> A distinction of extrinsic and intrinsic as used in the further course of the study will be discussed below.

(shown in figure 2.5). The above introduced four elements of the model are now linked with each other through the three types of expectations (plus one expectation which does not necessarily have to be met).



1. S-O Expectations
2. A-O Expectations
- 2a. A-S-O Expectations (not necessarily to be met)
3. O-C Expectations
4. Value of Consequences

**Fig. 2.5: Extended model of motivation, based on Heckhausen (1977)**

1. **Situation-Outcome (S-O)** expectation: The person believes that the desired outcome will not ensue without his or her interference. The present situation will not lead toward the desired outcome without the involvement of the actor. Rheinberg explains the first expectation with following example (2008): A red traffic light will turn into green (outcome) regardless of the involvement of a car driver e.g. blowing the horn (activity). In this case there is no need to take action; the S-O expectation is not fulfilled. A person will decide to act only if personal involvement determines the outcome.

2. **Activity-Outcome (A-O)** expectation: The second condition reflects the person's subjective believe that their own action will bring about the intended outcome. The outcome has to be attributable to the own action. It includes the perceived probability that the situation can be changed into a desired outcome. Rheinberg's example here is: If a student believes that the outcome of an exam is dependent on pure luck and not on individual achievement, concentration and right answers, he has a low or no action-outcome expectation in this case.

2a. Another early mentioned but later often excluded expectation introduced by Heckhausen is the **Activity-by-Situation-Outcome (A-S-O)** expectation. This expectation covers the “extraneous and variable circumstances of the situation (e.g. social support or fatigue) which may sometimes facilitate or impede the actor’s action while seeking for a desired outcome” (Heckhausen 1977: 289). Here the person attributes an outcome to external influences. A-S-O expectations affect positively or negatively the A-O, the expectation for the probability of success. But in contrast to the A-O expectation, the happening of external influences of the A-S-O cannot be steered by the actor’s ability or effort. The person is exposed to external influences. In Heckhausen’s later writings on the model, this fourth expectation is no longer highlighted, and is merged into the dimension of A-O expectations. Therefore, unlike the other three expectations, the A-S-O expectancy is not a mandatory condition for the creation of motivation.

3. **Outcome-consequences (O-C)** expectation: This aspect stands for the person’s subjective expectation on certain consequences of the outcome. The outcome has to be perceived as instrumental for reaching a desired consequence. A high exam grade (O) will, for example, have the intended consequence of admission at a prestigious university (C). Or: If a person thinks the promotion in a company is a matter of networks and favouritism instead of hard work and top performance (O), he has a low O-C expectation regarding his activity of personal and honest work effort. The idea of instrumentality of the outcome adopted Heckhausen from instrumentality theory (Vroom 1964; Heckhausen 2008). Vroom described first the degree of subjective probability that a consequence will result from an outcome.

4. The fourth condition regards the **value of the consequences** which have to function as sufficiently high incentives to start action. The admission at a special university must be valued because of factors like reputation, career prospects, etc. otherwise the person is not motivated to put effort into his studies. The definition of a desired consequence can vary tremendously from person to person. Important to consider here is that consequences can be both of positive and negative valence; anticipated consequences also impact behaviour if they are negative, not only if their positive value is high enough. An outcome can be perceived as instrumental to avoid an undesired consequence. The strength of attractiveness or averseness of an event or object determines motivated activity.

Heckhausen himself labelled the outcome-consequences-expectations (O-C) as of especially important. The expected instrumentality of an outcome for a desired consequence determines the value of an outcome and therefore the motivation to act (Heckhausen 1977). In this respect the third and fourth condition, the O-C-expectation, and the value of the consequences are assumed to play a major role when analysing the data of this study. Rheinberg (2008) states that a particular strength of the cognitive model is that it allows diagnosis of different forms of motivational deficits. These deficits are attributable to one or more of the three expectation types or to insufficient value of the anticipated consequences, in Rheinberg's words, insufficient incentives.

A further development of Heckhausen's theory is the integration of the aspects of *attribution* including the idea of *self-efficiency* and *self-esteem*. The approaches shall complement the extended motivation model and appear to be helpful for analysing the collected data. Early researchers in the field of attribution are F. Heider (1958) and A. Bandura 1977. Heider developed a first psychological approach dealing with the perception of causalities or how individuals interpret events and their causes (Weiner 1986). The approach was further extended by B. Weiner (1974, 1980, 1986), who focuses mainly on achievement. According to him, attribution theories ask how people attribute causes to outcomes. Those causes can be roughly distinguished in either internal personal or external environmental causalities. The aspect of (internal) attribution plays a role in the A-O-expectation of the Heckhausen motivation model regarding a certain self-estimation of the own abilities. Further internal components that an outcome can be attributed to are effort and power (Heider 1958). In contrast external causalities can be luck, task difficulty, or others' support or hindrance. The valence of an outcome is higher the stronger an outcome of an action can be attributed to internal causes, negatively and positively.

Beside a positive estimation of self-efficacy, *self-esteem* has an ability to play a major role in motivation (Helmke 1992). According to Weiner there is a strong connection between self-concept, achievement, and motivation. People with low self-esteem or a negative estimation of their self-efficacy tend to attribute failure to their own lack of ability; but success is often attributed to external factors beyond their control. Therefore they avoid ability-success related tasks which prevents against the chance to rise in self-esteem. Their A-O-expectation is naturally low.

Krapp calls those groups underachievers (1993). In contrast persons with a high self-esteem and high perception of self-efficacy are believed to attribute success more likely to the internal cause of their own abilities which increases again their confidence. Failure is attributed to external causes like poor luck or other people's fault. Internal or external attribution is to some extent part of personal dispositions but might be also influenced by the socio-cultural context as I will show in chapter 6 about caste and traditional discrimination.

Before critically assessing the Heckhausen approach, the already mentioned distinction of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation must be finally explained in detail.

*Excursus: Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation*

As previously mentioned, Heckhausen describes delayed consequences as extrinsic incentives. For this study, the differentiation in extrinsic and intrinsic carries some meaning. The question for intrinsic and extrinsic incentives and their effect in the course of motivation and the cognitive motivation approach was validated by Rheinberg (1989). He further developed the extended motivation model and integrated the aspect of the incentive character in the action itself. The feeling of joy or pleasure in the action itself (e.g. to learn or to achieve) had been neglected in the first approach. Heckhausen (1989) agrees in his later writings with Rheinberg. In literature feelings of excitement or peak experiences during the accomplishment of an activity are also analysed as flow.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, if an activity is accomplished because of its outcome or the outcome's consequences, according to Heckhausen it is labelled as extrinsically motivated, which is a relatively narrow definition of intrinsic. The phenomena of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have been studied since the 1950s. Main theories were developed by social and educational psychologist (e.g. Heider in his attribution theory (1955) where he distinguishes internal and external attributions of causality, Bandura in his self-efficiency theory (first 1977), or Deci and Ryan in their theory of self-determination (e.g. 1991, 2000, 2002)). Many researchers have been trying to place their own definitions with different connotations of what is intrinsic or extrinsic which led to a "semantic overload" of the term intrinsic (Rheinberg 2008: 331). Nevertheless, the existence of

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<sup>10</sup> Rheinberg further investigated the phenomenon of flow (1989; 2008) as part of intrinsic motivated action. Also see Csikszentmihalyi (1975).

something motivating beyond external incentives and beyond calculated consequences has to be taken into consideration. Intrinsic or internal motivation can be first defined as engagement in an activity without noticeable external incentives. “The activity itself or its corresponding end goal satisfies a direct need.” (Frey/Osterloh, 2002: 8) The experience of the activity itself can be satisfying, provides a joyful experience or the experience of flow (Rheinberg 2008). Other approaches emphasise identical end goals and the activity itself. Here an action and its desired consequences are located within the same thematic domain (Rheinberg 2008). Means and end are corresponding. Further possibilities to describe intrinsic motivation are linked to Deci and Ryan’s self determination theory and deal with aspects like the person’s belief that he has the possibility to be an effective agent in reaching the desired goal. Here intrinsic motivation arises in the innate psychological needs of self-determination competence (Vallerand 1992: 1004). That means that the results are not perceived to be determined by luck or other external factors but by the individual ability (Deci/Ryan 2002). Results are attributed to internal factors which can be controlled. Individuals engage freely in activities where they experience the innate needs autonomy, relatedness and perception of self-competence and therefore are called intrinsically motivated (Vallerand et al. 1992).

In contrast, extrinsically motivated activities are aimed to satisfy needs which are only indirectly linked to the activity. The motivation comes from “outside”. The extrinsically motivated activity is a tool which helps to meet the actual needs beyond the direct activity. Financial incentives and other material rewards are an obvious example for extrinsic motivation, but threat of punishment or negative consequences in general have also the potential to function as extrinsic motivators. Applying a relatively narrow definition of extrinsic, the competition itself in business or sports can also be defined as an extrinsic motivator. The performers are encouraged by the outlook to win and beat the combatants and not so much by the experience of flow or joy from the activity itself.

It is widely agreed upon that it is difficult to draw a clear empirical line between intrinsic and extrinsic (Frey/Osterloh 2002; Heckhausen 2008; Rheinberg 2008; Krapp 1993; Deci/Ryan 2002). One main problem according to Krapp is the question of where to define the point of reference for what should be called internal and external (1993). Frey and Osterloh apply a relatively wide definition of what should



be counted as intrinsic; they also name equally important end goals of an activity as intrinsic and not only the activity itself of striving for a personally set goal. In the latter, the activity itself does not have to be necessarily joyful, but reaching a set goal for its own sake is defined as intrinsically motivated as well. Another example of intrinsic motivation according to Frey and Osterloh is meeting moral standards for their own sake. One perceives the fulfilment of the moral standard of his activity as existentially important (e.g. helping others and acting upon meaningful deeds).

According to the controversy on how to distinguish extrinsic and intrinsic, there is an ongoing discussion whether and in which form extrinsic incentives undermine intrinsic motivation. Frey and Osterloh call such phenomena the crowding out effect or undermining effect (Frey/Osterloh 2002; Frey 1997) which has been investigated in particular in relation to work contexts. Their research confirms the assumption that extrinsic incentives eliminate formerly existing intrinsic motivation. This counts especially for financial inducements. A person who previously was willing to do a certain job for the activity's own sake now responds to an external incentive and refuses to continue to do the job without being rewarded for it. Intrinsic motivation has been undermined by the reward. Nevertheless, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations complement each other in many activities.

For the leading question of this study a rather narrow definition of intrinsic is applied. In this sense, socio-cultural factors on motivation for education activities are assumed to be rather extrinsic by nature. Cultural and structural influences are external factors of why the results are believed to be concentrated on these aspects. As mentioned above, in Heckhausen's model only incentives related directly with the activity itself and to some extent with the direct outcome can be labelled as intrinsic incentives. Heckhausen and Rheinberg draw a clear and definite line between the two terms. Incentives related to consequences are external. Heckhausen's and Rheinberg's accuracy of discrimination of extrinsic or intrinsic motivation might cause critique in this way. Seeing the various attempts to define intrinsic oriented action, e.g. as altruistic motivated (Frey/Osterloh 2002) or because of reasons of self-efficiency and self-fulfilment (Deci/Ryan 2002), to condense the term intrinsic to the experience of the action itself might provoke some critique (e.g. catching only a single perspective of a wider phenomenon). On the other hand, for the purpose of the present study a clear and rather narrow definition of intrinsic

appears to make more sense than a wide and inexplicit description. A diffuse attempt would not facilitate the analysis of external influences. Therefore the study follows Heckhausen and Rheinberg in their understanding of extrinsic and intrinsic. As I will show when I apply the theory to the research question (chapter 2.5.) I will focus mainly on the situation Indians are embedded in and what kind of consequences the individual social situation allows them to anticipate. Therefore and because of applying the rather narrow definition of intrinsic, the results to be found are assumed to be mostly extrinsic motivators.

*Critical review of the cognitive model by Heckhausen*

Krapp (1993) criticises Heckhausen's theory mainly because of two aspects. The model does not take into account the aspect of content related interest. Indeed interest does not play a significant role for the creation of motivation in Heckhausen's model. However, through the extension of the model by Rheinberg and Heckhausen regarding a purposeless activity and activity-related incentives (see paragraph on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) the aspect of interest is implicitly included. In any case, belonging to the personal perspective of motivation the aspect of interest is not assumed to play a very significant role for the presented study either. The way interest is indirectly included into the model by the aspect of purposeless activities (or activity related purpose) appears to be sufficient for the analysis.

A second point of critique is in regards to the aspect of self-determination that remains, according to Krapp (1993), unattended in Heckhausen's theory. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Deci/Ryan 2000) highlights aspects of self-fulfilment that Heckhausen's theory does not take into account. As stated before, this aspect is also not mandatory for the present study. Self-determination is an important aspect and useful asset when discussing examples like the motivation potentials of work situations and the promotion of intrinsic motivation, which is not in the centre of interest here. For the present study, the Heckhausen model can be applied to the data without referring to this aspect.

In contrast, relevant critique is the concentration of the model on the individual and the inner perception of individual abilities. As to be shown, like most psychological concepts, the Heckhausen model also lacks the integration and consideration of the

situational conditions. Although Heckhausen belongs to a social psychological research tradition and situation is labelled as one of the four core elements in the model, he does not deal with variations of the same. Expectations in the extended motivation model concentrate exclusively on results of the individual activities, purely on the individual itself, but not on behaviour of others or on circumstances resulting from external influences.

Therefore a wider view from a sociological research tradition taking external conditions into account shall complete the theoretical foundation.

#### **2.4. A Completion to the Theoretical Foundation: Boudon's Sociological Scheme of Inequality of Educational Opportunities**

As mentioned, educational decisions and the question to why people pursue education or not can be approached from several perspectives, e.g. a psychological (as described above) or a sociological one. For the sociological perspective, the study mainly refers to the theories of Raymond Boudon (1974; later further developed by e.g. H. Esser 1999, 2000 or Becker/Lauterbach 2006), who examines in his theories of Inequality of Educational Opportunity different perceptions of education factors among different social classes. Although developed in the 1970's, Boudon's approach is still of significance in educational research, especially in sociology of education, research on inequality and just recently in PISA research (Brüsemeister 2008). Various studies confirm that the social effects as suggested by Boudon are responsible for the underrepresentation of working class children at higher levels of education in various countries (as e.g. for Germany Schindler/Lörz 2011 or Becker 2009; for the Netherlands Kloosterman et al. 2009; for England and Wales Jackson et al. 2007; for Sweden Erikson 2007).

The approach of Boudon seems to be a useful and necessary completion of the psychological perspective of Heckhausen. Boudon's theory is, like the here applied psychological extended motivation model by Heckhausen, based on cognitive considerations and is therefore suitable to be combined with the Heckhausen model. Furthermore, Boudon's theory includes aspects which are not covered by Heckhausen. Heckhausen focuses on very individualistic decision making processes, based on expectations built on the individual behaviour and its results. The individual's activity and his inner processes of anticipating outcomes, consequences,

and values are in the centre of Heckhausen's approach. Boudon can be also counted among the approaches which explain inequality of education on a micro, because personal, level. Like Heckhausen, he examines the action of the individual and his decisions (Brüsemeister 2008). But in contrast to Heckhausen, Boudon strongly includes in his theory the social environment of acting individuals and conditions which are independent from the individual action but nevertheless influence expectations and behaviour. He tries to devise a theory accounting for a wider range of external factors (Boudon 1974). Influences of the environment, e.g. the social economic status, are missing in Heckhausen's theory. It has been already indicated briefly that it can be assumed that the social economic background of the individuals in India (and not only there) plays an essential role in the decision for or against education. Boudon's theory is based on this idea and therefore a useful addition of the applied theoretical approach in this study. Boudon assumes - and empirically demonstrates - that decisions of people, whether children, their parents or adults, regarding education are affected by their social background. With Rational Choice Theory (RCT), he examines the rational decisions of parents and analyses their education behaviour. His main interest lays on the perceived situation people are embedded in, which reasons led to which educational decisions and which investigations people were and will be willing to make.

Boudon assumes that on the one hand, people behave rationally in the economic sense; that means they attempt to maximize the utility of their decisions, but on the other hand that they "also behave within decision fields whose parameters are a function of their position in the stratification system" (Boudon 1974: 36). Furthermore he assumes that people aspire to at least uphold or enhance the status of the own economic class (Brüsemeister 2008). In Boudon's approach and according to Goldthorpe's class scheme, socio-economic classes are vertically ranged.<sup>11</sup> To explain strategies of upholding or enhancing the own class status, Boudon distinguishes between a primary and a secondary effect of social stratifications. The primary effect says that the lower the socio-economic status is, the poorer the cultural background<sup>12</sup> of the family and hence the lower the cognitive competencies

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<sup>11</sup> More on social class schemes in chapter 4.

<sup>12</sup> Here cultural background is meant in terms of sophisticated which is said to generate cognitive competences.

and the school achievement of the offspring (Becker/Lauterbach 2006). Students from higher class backgrounds can rely on better cultural resources than students from a lower class background; that likewise affects the school achievement. On the average higher class children show a better school performance than their lower class schoolmates (Schindler 2010: 2).

More important for Boudon's theory and in literature when explaining social inequalities is the secondary effect (Boudon 1974; Brüsemeister 2008; Schindler/Lörz 2011): The influence of the social class background on people's educational *decisions*. The secondary effect focuses mainly on people's different aspirations when taking education decisions. Boudon sees the reason for the division of people from different class backgrounds as different types of educational institutions and educational careers. These decision processes vary across different social classes and depend on the perception of three main factors:

1. the estimation of costs of education
2. the expectation of benefit of education
3. the estimation regarding the probability of success

Boudon presumes that people in general and parents of school children rationally weigh these three factors when taking educational decisions. Here Esser (1999) draws a line to expectancy-value theory which helps to assess the three factors. As shown, the expectancy-value theory and rational consideration regarding benefit and values also play an important role in Heckhausen's motivation model. The cognitive character is dominant in both Heckhausen's and Boudon's approaches. In both theories, people's decisions for or against (in Boudon's case educational) action are rationally justified and depend on individually perceived external factors.

Boudon assumes that the three factors are perceived differently according to the socio-economic class background (Brüsemeister 2008):

1. The estimation of costs of education includes first the idea that education in general costs whether it is strongly subsidized or not. These so-called direct costs include fees, study materials, or potential housing. Additionally indirect costs must be calculated as well. During time of education the person is either limited in working hours or unable to work at all to gain income. Boudon includes also

emotional costs into the indirect costs of education; the individual and family might have to bridge an emotionally exhausting period during education and have to invest in more emotional care than normal. Esser (2000) states that the estimation of future costs of educational investment can be very difficult for families and individuals, and creates a high amount of uncertainty. To reduce the uncertainty people look for basing points and reference systems in their close social environment. Family members, friends, and other people of the same social class serve as these reference points and role models when it comes to educational decisions. They become more important the higher the uncertainty regarding cost estimation is. Esser further emphasises that these role models of education of the same class are even preferred if objectively seen better educational possibilities for the individual exist. They have a stronger impact on the education behaviour than facts.

2. The second factor, expected benefit of education, also depends on the socio class background. The expectations depend on the social status and are higher as one goes up the social strata. This can be demonstrated best with Boudon's words:

“The expected benefit of choosing *a* (a prestigious curriculum, being likely to lead to a higher social status) rather than *b* (a less prestigious curriculum) is an increasing function of the social status. The higher the social status the higher the anticipated benefit associated with *a*.” (Boudon 1974: 30-31.)

As in the first factor, the phenomenon of relying on experiences of other people in the close social environment can be found in the second factor. Boudon and Esser state that if a family member or another close person of originally the same social class has already successfully gained benefit through educational attainment the own expectation of educational benefit will probably be higher.

The benefit of the same educational opportunity is evaluated differently by people and their families. The identical educational opportunity of, say, a vocational course, can mean advancement for someone from a lower class background, while for a middle or upper class person, this educational opportunity might be seen as a kind of demotion. The assessment of the value of consequences depends on the class that one belongs to.

3. Finally the third factor, estimation of probability of success, differs as well among different social classes. Upper classes estimate the probability of being successful in an educational career as higher than lower classes. Lower class members tend to

perceive ambitious careers (which mean for their background uncommon education opportunities) as too risky and too complex. Again experiences of the environment play here a crucial role; middle or upper class members realize more likely that it is not necessary to be extraordinary intelligent to for instance acquire a university degree (Brüsemeister 2008). In contrast lower class members show a kind of respect towards education paths that are perceived as unusual. They focus rather on the danger of shipwreck; the value to avoid failure is dominant over the value to achieve success. This third factor is reminiscent of the before mentioned risk taking model from psychologist Atkinson (2.2.). But in contrast to Atkinson's assumptions, which are based on the theory of early developed success or failure motives that determine the individual's preferences of avoiding or appreciating challenges, Boudon's theory of avoiding or achieving behaviours are rooted in cognitive considerations influenced by the social environment.

#### *Critical review of Boudon's theory*

Boudon's theory also has its limitations. In order to operationalize the model for quantitative research, Boudon differentiates only two ideal types of social class members (Brüsemeister 2008, who here cites Vester 2006; Goldthorp as well falls back on Boudon's approach of only two main class groups, 2000). Boudon distinguishes a middle class, which invests a priori in education for the preservation of the class status, and a lower class, which decides due to its situation on rather less risky, less costly, and less complex types of education. At that point it becomes obvious that Boudon developed his approach for western industrial societies. The assumed lower class is still investing in education in order to uphold a certain status, though maybe in less prestigious options. They still have the opportunity and freedom to decide; and decisions remain as important elements of his theory. Possible socio-cultural restrictions (e.g. based on gender, caste or religion) are not taken into account. As it has been already mentioned when discussing the needs pyramid of Maslow, it must be assumed that in non-western developing countries people of lower class background might not have or not perceive any educational decision opportunity. As to be shown the study applies a condensed but slightly more complex class scheme for the analysis of educational decisions of Indians.

Boudon's significant contribution is to explore and discover the inner logic of the situation that the social classes are embedded in. Hence, he is able to explain rational education decisions and their effects on society structures. In contrast to Heckhausen, he considers expectations which are not only based on the individual activity but also on external conditions. Therefore, for the present study the approach is helpful to complement the cited psychological motivation theory of Heckhausen where social stratifications and the logic of the situation are neglected.

Both the Heckhausen motivation model and to some extent Boudon's approach of inequality of educational opportunity and also the Maslow scheme function as heuristic instruments to explain motivation for education in India. It follows the application of these theories to the research question.

### **2.5. The Theory Applied to the Research Question**

The next application of the introduced models (mainly Heckhausen and Boudon) to the research question represents the core of the evolved conceptual framework of the thesis. As mentioned previously, one main benefit of the Heckhausen model is its potential to diagnose deficits of motivation (Rheinberg 2008; see above). The same count for Boudon's and Maslow's approaches, they specifically focus on deficits and obstacles from the environment which hinder individuals to opt for education. Some of such deficits (but also surpluses and strengths) are assumed to be reasoned in the socio-cultural and including the socio-economic circumstances of a society.

As criticised already, like many other motivational approaches, the original Heckhausen model disregards expectations not derived from the individual activity. Contrarily, in the thesis I see the situation as playing an important role which should not being ignored, because it likewise determines acting or not. Different situations that persons are embedded in, not only allow or forbid acting but cause different anticipations of outcome and consequences or, expressed in terms of the model, cause different development of S-A, A-O, A-S-O, and A-C expectations.

To investigate more precisely socio-cultural influences on motivation to act or not to act, the study differentiates between different social classes of the Indian society. Here, Boudon's theory becomes significant. Social class background is (in addition to overall cultural characteristics) one main independent variable of the study. The Heckhausen model shall be especially deployed as a heuristic instrument in order to



identify deficits and strengths of motivation for education in India and more specifically in various social classes in India.

Although Heckhausen relates his considerations mainly to the motivation to learn, the model can be interpreted and adopted in a different direction. The individual case that the model will be applied to defines the content of the given four elements of the model. I take the opportunity to readapt the prearranged elements according to the study's intention and utilizes the model as a heuristic for the analysis of socio-cultural influences.

As a very first theoretical consideration for the question of motivation for education the four elements of the pattern could be for example concretised as follows:

**Situation** = An Indian man or woman socially and culturally embedded in a certain level of the Indian social stratification system and exposed to various socio-cultural factors

**Activity** = Pursuing education, for example investing a lot in one's own or children's education, making the most out of given training opportunities, etc. (*or alternatively not pursuing education*)

**Outcome** = E.g. becoming skilled, enabled, knowing the learned contents

**Consequences** = Can be manifold and shall be in the focus of interest here, thinkable is e.g. getting high marks, finding a job according to the gained skills and knowledge, reaching a decent, good, or better standard of living, making his/her way out of poverty, maintaining present conditions e.g. a wealthy family background, or to avoid negative consequences from the surrounding.

How the elements are going to be actually redefined in details and how the situation influences the negative or positive expectations regarding the course of motivation will be derived from the analysis of the several cases of the data and differs from case to case. The core questions reflected in the following chapters are how and which socio-cultural factors influence the development of the three different kinds of essential expectations of the model as well as how the valence of consequences are influenced by the socio-cultural conditions.

The fourth mentioned expectation Action-by-Situation-Outcome-Expectation (A-S-O) is assumed to play only a marginal role here. It concentrates on the outcomes,

while the main focus of my research question is on the consequences. According to the model, this expectation is not imperatively necessary for the generation of motivation.

Rheinberg's term of "purpose-related incentives" (2008: 333) which are inherent of the consequence element in the model, emphasises the importance of *purposes*. The purpose of the individuals is one overall principal theme of this study. Additionally, Heckhausen's perspective stresses the necessity of the fulfilment of all four conditions which make a consequence worth striving for. At the same time, Rheinberg gives emphasis to the weakness and the susceptibility of the expectations to interferences from outside. This high sensitivity towards "changes in the situational" conditions can be devolved to socio-cultural obstacles which people from different social backgrounds are facing in a different way and which are the content of the empirical part.

Heckhausen states that outcomes have different consequences for different people (1977). For this study I will adopt the term "different people" and expand it to people from different social class backgrounds. The study asks for the socio-cultural influences on the development or prevention of expectations towards education as well as for the certain value of the consequences *of different social classes* in the Indian context. It is assumed that different classes value different aspects, as Boudon already points out. The perception of possibilities of individuals in different situational contexts to reach better living conditions (or to maintain the present ones) through education is going to be examined. Heckhausen interprets the situation as one central element of the course of motion indeed and at first creates a drastic variation in psychological motivation research. (Before, the research was widely dominated by learning theorists.) But he continues to define the context as given: Situation in his model is circumscribed as "an individual with various action alternatives" (Heckhausen 1977). Circumstances where individuals might *lack* action alternatives because of social and cultural conditions have not been taken into consideration.

The study examines retrospectively the educational history and decisions regarding education of the past. That includes a rational decision that has once been made by an individual regarding education and future plans. The study asks for the former and

current anticipated outcomes and consequences and their socio-cultural anchoring related to these plans. On the way towards realisation, certain influences from outside may have occurred which disturbed the course of motivation and realisation. These disturbances are also considered as socio-cultural influences which have a substantial impact on the motivation and the activities of individuals and are as well of core interest for the study. In addition, motivation regarding education ambitions for an individual's children will be taken into examination and here again anticipated outcomes and consequences as well as situational constraints of the current situation.

I shall accentuate the fact that the deployment of the model is only a means to the end to advance the development of strategies for education on a sustainable base with a special focus on different class members. Lack of motivation, arising from socio-cultural circumstances might be one aspect to challenge. Socio-cultural framework conditions and influences are challenges which (foreign) inventors and developers of educational measures have to face and consider.

The study is based partly on categories grounded in previously introduced and discussed theory and is partly explorative. Which, for instance, valued consequences lead to educational activity or vice versa, what keeps Indians from becoming educated, etc., will be part of the empirical study and the interview series. Overall of interest is: what type of Indians, from which social class background, anticipates which consequences.

Throughout the theoretical part of the study I will steadily relate the following aspects of socio-cultural factors to the Heckhausen model and its application to the research question. At the end of each chapter a paragraph will summarize the empirically affirmed and exploratively found factors as the independent variables mean for the dependent variable, the motivation to pursue education. The research questions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter why Indians pursue education and under which social cultural influences will be answered in form of generated hypothesis for further possible quantitative research.

### 3. Pre-Considerations on Socio-Cultural Factors

In this chapter, I will describe the selection process and criteria of socio-cultural factors theoretically pre-considered.

The German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) defines in its strategy paper "Participatory Development Cooperation" socio-cultural conditions such as experiences, values, symbols and institutions that are specific for a certain society and relevant for its development (BMZ 1999: 6)<sup>13</sup>. Theoretical analyses as well as practical interventions in education investments and general development projects have to be embedded into the local social and economic conditions of a society (GTZ 2007; BMZ 1999). "These so called key-factors must be carefully considered especially when planning [...] projects" (GTZ 2007). The before mentioned epistemology by Durkheim postulates a social context which must be always considered when analysing social life (1950). This can be demonstrated in an analysis of potentials and limits of culture-specific vocational training in India, where the significance of the cultural background in development culture-specific vocational training approaches is emphasised:

"The importance of culture and traditions is by no means an exclusively theoretical question in the context we are concerned with here, but rather a concrete and interactive relationship in development aid and Technical Cooperation [...]." (Diehl 1999: 57)

Diehl adds that education and training especially are direct products of the economic and social conditions and the cultural influences of a country. These factors again also determine the attitude of the members of a culture towards education and training. The complex socio-cultural system in India is believed to play a major role for the question of the motivation to pursue education as it is presented theoretically in the chapter above.

In my study, I refer to two theoretical key sources which aim to explain socio-cultural factors, one from the German Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and one from Indian sociologist and psychologist J.B.P. Sinha. The first source deals with the general assessment of relevant socio-cultural dimensions, which is related to the above BMZ definition. The BMZ recommends in

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<sup>13</sup> The strategy paper "Participatory Development Cooperation" was formerly edited as Socio-Cultural Outline Concept and initiated in 1992.

its cross-sectoral strategy "Participatory Development Cooperation" three aspects of how to measure these socio-cultural variables and their relevance for external and internal interventions (for the following see GTZ 2007; BMZ 1999).

1. *Socio-cultural heterogeneity* means the various significant ethnic, religious and economic groups, and their interrelationships within a country. Gender, age, and social classes also belong to this category. Vocational training and development expert S. Wolf circumscribes the factor with "the question for the composition of the target group" (Wolf 2009: 168).

2. *Legitimacy* stands for the various governmental and non-governmental institutions of a country and their respective power and decision-making structures. The term is also originally meant to explain which institutions are accepted by the target group, but also which socio-economic characteristics determine the country.

3. *Social organisation* of the society subscribes to the wider social framework and general target-group capabilities. The aspect asks for the ability of the target group (ibid.), e.g. which knowledge exists, which organisational forms are in place, how strong are gender disparities like a gender-specific division of labour, how is the perceived position of a (target) group within the society, how is the social self concept of a group, or what decision-making structures exist. This term was initially subscribed with "development status" (GTZ 1997; revised by Bliss/König 2003)<sup>14</sup>.

These criteria are partly applied to find the reason for the decision for the here employed pre-selection of factors to assess motivation for education. The three BMZ criteria groups were originally developed for the analysis of target groups and socio-cultural country conditions and subsequently to enhance the specific design of practical interventions and projects. Nevertheless, the catalogue is also a helpful checklist for deciding about socio-cultural factors. It is important to state that not all listed factors have to be integrated into the study but only the aspects which are assumed to contain contributions to the theoretical analysis of what might influence motivation. The list is neither meant to be complete nor have all mentioned criteria in all analysed cases to be included and taken as relevant.

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<sup>14</sup> The former term "development status" was substituted because of its negative connotation of retarded or delayed development.

As postulated before, the orientations of indigenous scholars and their view of their own culture are extremely crucial when trying to avoid stereotyping and an ethnocentric view (chapter 1). Therefore, the second and even more important foundation is rooted in Indian sociology and in a theoretical analysis of the Indian social and psychological culture itself. The thesis draws on the writings of Indian psychologist and sociologist J.B.P. Sinha, who in his article “The Hindu (Indian) Identity” (1982), names three significant aspects which constitute the Indian cultural character:

“The Hindu identity manifests itself in the triangular configuration of [...]: (a) the religio-philosophical thinking of Hindus, (b) the family-social institutions and relationships, and (c) the pervasive poverty and other properties of the Indian realities” (Sinha, J.B.P. 1982: 149).

Sinha’s first characteristic, *Hinduism*, encompasses a variety of rules and principles which shall guard the Hindu through the circle of life and its hundreds and thousand times of rebirth to ultimate salvation (*moksha*). It includes, for example, a code of conduct (*dharma*), propositions about e.g. gaining wealth (*artha*), and a system of an ideal life cycle (*ashrama*), defined by good activities and deeds (*karma*). According to Sinha, the Hindus’ self is shaped by the given constraints, by their effort to rise above the given, and by the pursuit to reach the ideal.

The counterpart of the spiritual self is the social self of a Hindu, the second characteristic of *family-social institutions and relationships*. Sinha states that it represents a Hindu’s efforts to realize himself within the given social framework. Central aspects are the hierarchic structure of all Indian social institutions. Caste and extended family determine the understanding of “self and others” which defines also the Hindu moral codes towards in- and out-group members.

Third, spirituals and social self are both dominated by the “Indian realities” (Sinha 1982), of which *poverty* is the most dominant one. The fear of poverty and the awareness of limited resources, according to Sinha, is always present in the Indian mind and is reinforced by the Hindu moral goal to gain wealth and prosperity and different social and moral obligations towards the social environment.

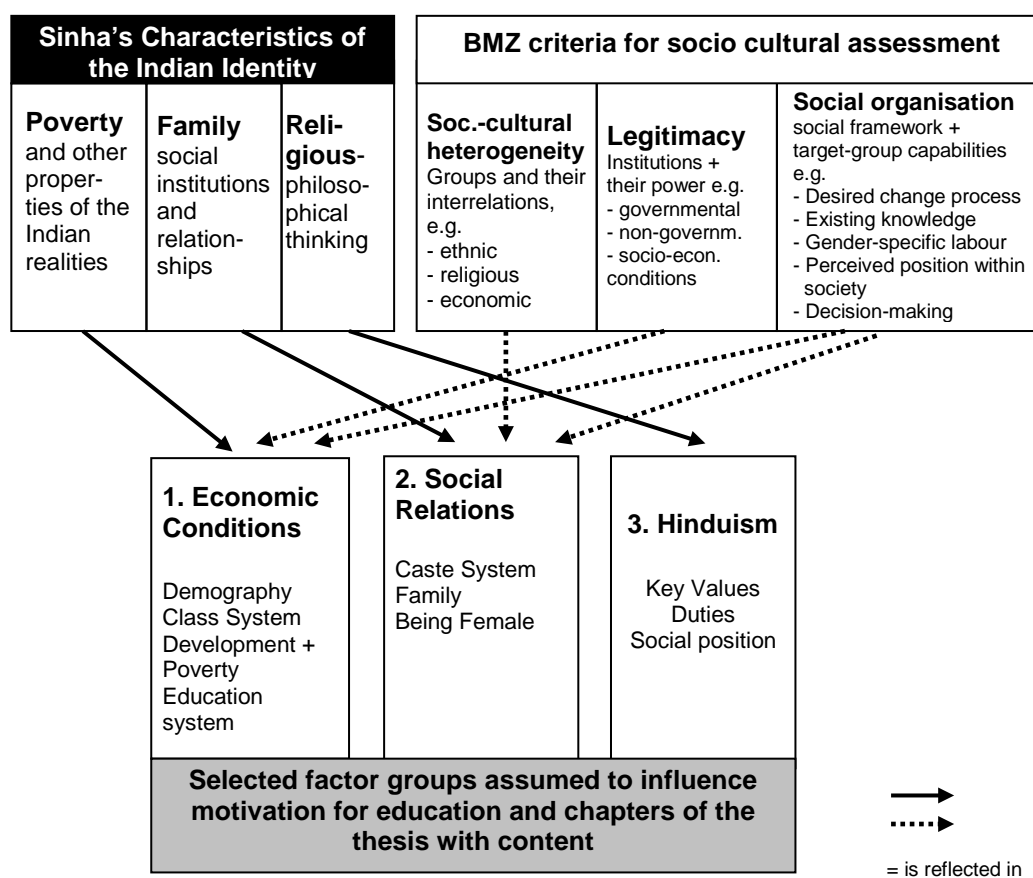
Although written in the early 1980’s, the results of Sinha’s analysis can still be perceived as valid. As to be shown in chapter 5, despite the enormous economic growth since the 1990’s, the masses of the Indian inhabitants remain poor, and

poverty and social disparities are increasing. Also many recent authors describe India's economic growth "undermined, if not threatened by pervasive poverty" (Shiva Kumar 2007: 348). Other Indian authors support Sinha's view on the Indian identity and realities like Mascolo, Misra and Rapisardi (2004) in their proposed model of the Indian Conception of Selfhood. Main elements of the Indian social self are social hierarchies including caste and class differences, the joint family and Hindu core concepts of duties (ibid.). More recent works by Sinha also deal with cultural characteristics and the Indian identity and mainly contain similar definitions but are instead embedded into considerations for international expatriates and business cooperation with India (e.g. 1997).<sup>15</sup> The pure aspects of cultural characteristics as seen by an Indian are best presented in Sinha's early writings, and that is why I have based the thesis on his work from 1982. The three main cultural influences of J.B.P. Sinha are being matched with the above mentioned aspects of the BMZ and with the theoretical foundation for the choice of factors and categories which are discussed and examined in the study.

In order to cover these 2x3 criteria (3 from BMZ and 3 from Sinha) as to what can be considered socio-cultural aspects and what characterizes the Indian identity, three factor groups can be distinguished. The model below (fig.3.1) shows how the three selected main clusters or factor groups, represented in the chapters of the thesis, have been deviated from the three aspects of the Indian identity by J.B.P. Sinha and the three criteria groups of the BMZ.

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<sup>15</sup> In this field, a very large body of academic and popular literature from Indians and non Indians exists (e.g. Budhwar/Bhadnagar 2009; Marian 2007; Wamser 2005).



**Fig. 3.1: Criteria for selection of relevant socio-cultural factor groups (Source: own figure)**

The following description represents a brief overview of the three main category clusters and the argumentation as to what has led to the decision for its content. Each sub-factor will be portrayed at length in the respective chapter. The clusters serve as main and sub categories for the deductive data analysis. In addition, explorative and inductively found further categories will be derived out of the data itself (More will be explained in chapter 4 on the methodological approach of the thesis.)

**1.** The first factor group to be analysed in the thesis “Economic Framework Conditions and Education System” encompasses demographic and economic aspects which are assumed to have an influence of the perception of the individual educational possibilities. The description of the class scheme applied here shall first highlight the social background as one independent variable and characteristic of the examined sample that is distinguished mainly by income, property, and education background. The study assumes significant differences of motivation for and perception of education between groups of different social classes. As to be



explained, the social background will form the main criterion on how to select and categorize the sample. Aspects of national development and poverty are covered here. Sinha's characteristic of *poverty* is reflected in this chapter as a vast determining factor of the life of the masses of Indian inhabitants.

The *social organisation*, a criterion derived from the BMZ considerations is reflected here as well. Existing knowledge and awareness, desired change processes, attitudes and also decision making structures are probably very different between classes. Also perceived positions in the society vary enormously according to class differences.

Additionally the first factor group is also deviated from the BMZ criterion of *legitimacy*. Wolf circumscribes the factor legitimacy with the question of "what the target group wants". The aspect stands for institutions and their power, and for factor group 1 in particular this means the Indian education system. The state of governmental and private educational institutions is essential to examine the question for educational development of individuals. As to be shown, the aspect targets mainly access to education and drop-out rates regarding the structural and regulative properties of the education system.

2. The second factor group, social relations, arises as well out of several of the above theoretical aspects (as shown in figure 3.1). Indian and western scholars agree upon the huge meaning of social relations in the Indian context, whether or not the authors can be blamed for having a western biased view (e.g. Misra 2004; Mascolo et al. 2004; Markus/Kitayama 1991, House et al. 2004). Another model that supports this orientation towards the social is the Indian understanding of autonomy; autonomy of individuals in India is not categorically valued and therefore fundamentally different than in the west (Jeffery/Jeffery 1994; more in chapter 6). Many other sources and scientists state a strong meaning of family bonds and social relations in the Indian culture, like for example the Indian cultural scientist and psychoanalyst S. Kakar, who calls "the Indian ideology of family relationships" one main characteristic which is grounded in the remaining firm institution of the extended family and which again is deeply influenced by the caste system (Kakar 2006: 9).

The second factor group includes the concept of castes. In Sinha's Indian characteristics of typical family-social institutions, the caste is (besides family) the

most important criterion of how to define one's self-identity. In addition, two BMZ criteria are leading to the aspects of castes, *heterogeneity* and *social organisation*. The Indian typical caste system constitutes a unique ethnic and complex group scheme, and obviously contributes to the socio-cultural heterogeneity of the country. The interrelationship and still present influence of the groups and subgroups of the caste system has religious roots and cannot be excluded when analysing Indian socio-cultural factors. Additionally, castes also form economic groups. The *social organisation* is reflected here as well. Desired change processes, existing knowledge, and attitudes towards gender roles as well as decision making structures are highly dependent on kin traditions and castes and a traditional or modern orientation of the same. Perceived positions in the society might also still depend on remaining caste differences. Social organisation as used here is also related to the criteria of existing knowledge in terms of awareness, of actual education opportunities and the general awareness regarding the importance of education, gender specific division of labour and therefore also gender specific attitudes towards education, and the desire to change traditionally entrenched models of occupation and education. The aspect of existing decision making structures on family and community levels is also part of this factor group and the associated theoretical chapter of the thesis.

**3.** The third factor group which forms the last theoretical section of the study is the thematic field of Hinduism. J.B.P. Sinha mentions in his statement on the Indian identity at first stage *religious-philosophical thinking*. Numerous other sources also mention religion as a main Indian characteristic (e.g. Kakar 2006, Misra/Gergen 1993; Misra 2002; Mascolo etc al. 2004). Besides general core values in Hinduism relevant aspects in this factor group are the Hindus' attempt of reaching ultimate salvation through work (*karma*), the role of fulfilment of duties rooted in the inborn status of each society member (*dharma*) and the concept of an ideal Hindu life cycle (*ashrama*).<sup>16</sup> Like Sinha's article, the study deals exclusively with Hinduism and Hindu thinking and its influence on educational motivation and excludes other religions. The great majority (around 80%) of all Indian inhabitants profess to Hinduism (Government of India 2001). In my investigation, I did not target differences between a range of religions and their dissimilar influences on

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<sup>16</sup> Hindu concepts will be introduced in detail in chapter 7.

motivation. That would be beyond the possibilities of the study and not serve the aim of highlighting merely general socio-cultural effects on motivation on the Indian subcontinent. In other words, this indicates that the findings will not be automatically transferable to members of other religions in India.

The described factor groups are assumed to furthermore include criteria of socio-cultural relevance which are not relatable to the criteria of Sinha or the BMZ catalogue but which are nevertheless considered to be important. The above mentioned factor groups cannot claim completeness; the two sources for the selection Sinha and the BMZ only represent one way in which to choose relevant socio-cultural factors for pre considerations. One sub goal of the study is to identify socio-cultural factors which go beyond the already recognized rough categories. To say it in B eteille's words, the above described considerations represent a so called 'book-view' of Indian society, which stands opposite to the following aimed 'field-view' of the study (in Fuller 1996: 4).

#### **4. Consequences for the Methodological Approach**

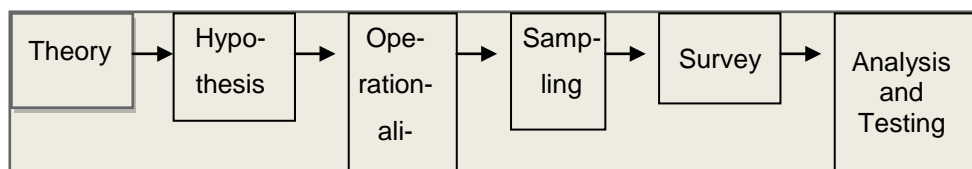
The illustrated research gaps in international psychology include the neglect of an appropriate integration of culture and the tendency of ethnocentric and western stereotyping when analysing data from other cultural backgrounds. This insights lead to certain consequences regarding my research approach. Many studies that are harshly criticised by cultural and indigenous psychologists and postcolonial scholars use a mainly deductive approach. Assumption and hypotheses are pre-developed mainly in the western culture. Those pre-assumptions lead to the tendency to examine and prove only the individual's view and perception and to interpret alien phenomena according to the borders of understanding from the home culture, as well as to overlook new aspects.

Methodological consequences derive out of these concerns. Theoretical criteria to analyse and sort collected data are necessary in sociological as well in psychological research, and to some extent simplifications and generalisations are helpful instruments in order to comprehend different realities. To avoid simplistic stereotyping as much as possible, it seems to be important to also use criteria developed in the origin of the target culture, meaning by indigenous scholars who are aware of the problem of generalisation (e.g. Smith 2005). In addition, the handling of data must be carefully considered. Pre-developed assumptions carry the risk of applying individual views and stereotypes to the findings. Moreover, in the case of the study, the examination of the topic is to a good extent, also explorative. Therefore, an appropriate approach seems to be one that also allows deriving theory inductively out of the data.

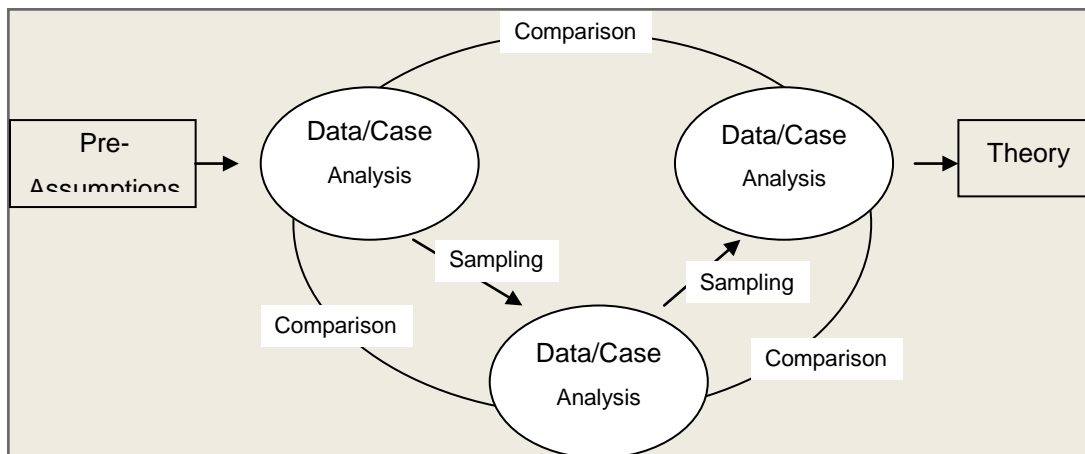
An important feature of cultural and indigenous psychology is its support for qualitative methods (Ratner 2008), though various useful studies using quantitative methods also exist (e.g. Sinha 2007). Flick (2007: 21) calls the assumption that qualitative research is not grounded in existing theory a “myth” that developed based on Glaser and Strauss' writing on theory generation from the 1960s. This is referred to as “grounded theory”. The term refers both to the method and the product of inquiry (Charmaz 2005). Grounded theory as a method epistemologically tries to avoid pre-assuming (Glaser/Strauss e.g. 1967). Variable and categories are discovered inductively from the data claiming not to apply pre-assumptions and

hypothesis based on previous scientific knowledge. The claim appears to be contradictory to the traditional scientific method of research which is based on existing theories that form the base for further assumptions and hypothesis. The grounded theory approach tries to operate in the reverse direction and derives the theory from the initially collected data. Out of the data, meaningful categories form the base for the systematic generation of theory. In accordance to Flick (2007) and many other critics it must be clearly said that grounded theory in its original form can be challenged from various perspectives. Main critiques target the aspect of whether it is really possible to free oneself of preoccupations and theoretical previous knowledge when entering a research field. Critiques also state that when analysing data it is hardly possible to find an area that has not been studied empirically or subjectively (ibid.). Flick clearly states that in qualitative research one has to build on pre-existing theory to some extent. The precise development of a research question as well as planning and preparing the research are also important aspects (ibid.). Nevertheless, Flick does not deny the advantages of an open inductive approach that simultaneously allows the integration of pre-assumed considerations. Important is that assumptions are always of tentative character (Flick 2007a) and are mainly considered in order to be refined and reformulated. The revision of early versions of assumptions by means of empirical data represents a core value of Flick's approach in the here presented thesis as well. Therefore, the inner logic of the analysis is not a linear one but has to be understood as a circular process between (re-designing) pre-assumptions and data analysis (ibid.). The following figure shows two different models of a research process, linear and circular:

**a) Linear model of research process**



### b) Circular model of research process



**Fig. 4.1: Models of research processes (Source: Flick 2007a: 128)**

The first perspective does not meet the explorative demands of the topic because its aim is the analysis of existing theory. Instead, with the help of tentative pre-assumptions and a general openness towards new findings, as well as awareness of the discussed risk of stereotyping, the circular model makes more culturally sensitive research possible when analysing an alien culture.

An example from cultural psychology represents the study on the self in the Sikh community<sup>17</sup> by Kapur and Misra (2003), who study the self-construal of the community and the factors through which the Sikh community has categorised and differentiated itself from other communities. Though being aware of existing literature on Sikhism, the researchers entered the field with the aim to minimize individual assumptions and discovered variables of the Sikh self inductively out of their findings.

The research design applied in my study is not only qualitative but also a loose rather than a tight one. According to Flick (2007) a tight research design is characterised by pre-structured selection procedure and narrow and restricted questions while loose designs use less defined concepts and are appropriate in fields where theoretical constructs are not very developed yet. Many studies on motivation from traditional mainstream psychology employ student populations as the empirical base. The aim of the study is not to produce a statistically representative sample, but to understand

<sup>17</sup> Sikhism (Sikhs means disciples) is a relatively young monotheistic religion in India, founded by Guru Nanak in the 15th century. Sikhism is regionally concentrated mainly in the Indian State Punjab and presents a unique case of a small local group engaged with social and political processes (Kapur/Misra 2003).

the “why” of behaviour from a native point of view, i.e. internal perceptions of how people interpret their situations that have led to their educational decisions and also to gain insights into the wider and very different environmental contexts of people’s social and cultural life. By using this qualitative and loose approach, it is also possible to come across new and unexpected aspects of the topic.

At the front of the illustrated dispute over qualitative methods in literature, the thesis reaches a compromise between openness and theory orientation. As described already, above pre-considerations regarding possible socio-cultural factor groups had been formed before entering the field. It is hardly possible that pre-knowledge would not lead to the formation of any kind of pre-assumptions, which would inevitably be carried onto the research field. The pre-considered assumptions and factor groups functioned as guiding principles when the utilised interview guide was designed. Moreover, at the beginning of the field research, the factor groups turned out to be a helpful asset for getting a first individual orientation as to what could be meaningful to the people in the field. In any case, throughout the research process and during sampling, I was aware of the risk of affirming only the individual perceptions and therefore kept the research process open for new aspects as much as possible. One main aim was not only to prove the considered factor groups but to search for factors in general that had led to the interviewees’ educational decisions and that seemed to be anticipated consequences of education.

#### **4.1. Process of Data Collection and Sampling**

The data of the present study was mainly selected in the greater area of Bombay, also called Mumbai, and the Indian capital New Delhi from July to September 2008.

Figure 4.2 shows a map of India with the locations of the two cities where research took place.



**Fig. 4.2: India (Source: Worldofmaps.net ). Research took place in the capital New Delhi and in Bombay (Mumbai)**

Previously, I had spent a year in India (New Delhi) working and living in a mostly Indian environment where the first research ideas emerged and first observations took place. Beside the “regular” interviews, numerous discussions and interviews with experts in the field of education and training took place mainly in India but also with India experienced persons in Germany<sup>18</sup>. These professionals provided essential information and their views deepened and extended the understanding of education decision processes of Indians.

The data is based on semi-structured, open-ended interviews with mainly Hindu Indians<sup>19</sup>. Topics of the interview guide covered basic demographic information such as family stage, marriage, children, age, residential or regional origin, income, and land ownership and were also oriented on the above described and pre-selected

<sup>18</sup> These persons were an Indian German lecturer at a German university, Indian migrants, and Germans married to Indians.

<sup>19</sup> The reason for the religious selection is simply grounded in the limitations of the thesis which examines only religious influences from Hinduism.



socio-cultural factors. The first interview phase of general subjects as household characteristics was necessary to get a holistic account of the interviewees' life, to determine the people's social status and to warm up and engage in a detailed dialogue about more personal issues such as the meaning of education and social influences on it. It followed questions regarding the person's occupation and job description, along with their educational history, meaning of education in life and knowledge of education possibilities, future plans for themselves, their family members and their children. The interviews were not only aimed to cover the present situation, but also focused strongly on a retrospective view on plans and wishes regarding education and occupation decisions, and what had helped or hindered the people to realize these ideas. At this point, the pre-selected factors came into the picture as sometimes helpful instruments to broaden the view and also to check carefully whether the pre selected-aspects were of relevance or not. In the interviews, the first priority was always to ask the interviewees openly for their own thoughts and aspects that might have been relevant towards their educational decisions. Only after a phase of open brainstorming of the participants were the factors brought up, and this was used mainly in interviews where the conversation did not flow easily and where the interviewee seemed to need some helpful ideas and examples to consider influencing factors.

Theoretical sampling is a method of data collection offering the appropriate openness and flexibility according to alien phenomena (Flick 2007). This had originally been a main characteristic of the generation of grounded theories by Glaser and Strauss. The interviewer does not only work with pre-selected interviewees; the decision of who to interview next and at which site is decided according to the state of findings and theory generation (shown in figure 4.1. b) circular model). Data analysis begins with the first interview and the research is led through the field by the state of findings. The interviewees of the presented study were only very roughly pre-selected and a high level of openness in the investigation field was applied. Snowball sampling (Flick 2007) was employed in situations where interviewees turned out to be very useful in recommending other persons who might be relevant for the study as well. Reasons for a loose approach are varied and mainly found in the above described awareness of avoiding the application of individual perceptions to the field. Moreover the research was not based on clearly defined

constructs as to what educational decision making processes in India could include. The first roughly defined investigation field was “male and female Indians from different social class backgrounds”. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 men and 16 women from the four defined social class backgrounds (see below). Using primarily these few criteria, the sample turned out to be relatively heterogeneous. The age of the participants differed from 14 to 55 years; they lived and worked in urban to semi-urban areas in the city centres or greater surrounding of the cities. The interviews took between 30 and 130 minutes. Some interviewees were consulted twice. (The two respective areas the interviews covered do not play a major characterizing role, as the great majority of interviewees met in companies and also came from all different regions of India in order to work in the mega cities Bombay and Delhi.)

The initial contact to a good number of interviewees was initiated through two multinational companies (MNC) in the metal producing sector operating in India in the area of Bombay. The field access through companies had been chosen based on the expectation that a wide range of employees from different class backgrounds, different education background, age, and gender may be found in companies. Once the data collection was started, it soon became clear that the first data collection in big multinational companies had to be extended to more local surroundings. It was soon discovered that the employees in the Bombay companies (even at a lower occupational level) were almost all from middle to upper class backgrounds and, although mainly Indian run and with only Indian employees, that the companies both were much more internationally oriented than originally assumed. After realizing this, the sample was expanded to two much smaller, family run, local producers of metal products in the area of Delhi. Here, a range of different social class members were interviewed including seasonal labourers on informal contract basis. The contact was made possible through the GTZ office in Delhi and its Business Development Service unit. Members of the GTZ office also served as experts and key informants.

From the starting point of companies and due to the purposive and flexible way of sampling, the sample was systematically broadened to further interviewees mainly from lower class backgrounds and non-working women. For example, in neighbouring distance to one of the MNC in Bombay, construction work was going

on in order to set up a second office building for the MNC. One contact person at the MNC initiated a visit at the construction site where an interview with three construction labourers and helpers, migrants from the state Uttar Pradesh (UP) and from a very low class background, could be conducted. In order to widen the sample to non-working housewives I interviewed additionally two women I knew during my first stay in India, my former landlady and a neighbour nearby.

Another contact source was the provincial headquarters and subsidiaries of the Salesians of Don Bosco in Bombay and Delhi. The catholic international organisation of the Salesians is dedicated to the development of marginalized youth, mainly through education, and operates in 128 countries worldwide. Don Bosco India is the biggest non-governmental institution running schools and offering education and social services in the subcontinent. In Bombay, the main access to interviewees was a Don Bosco development office and service centre offering a variety of services like urban community development, job counselling and job placement of marginalized slum youths, formal and informal training or outreach in slum areas. The service centre was a valuable source for both distinctive talks with experts in the field of education services and for getting access to further interviews with participants from marginalized backgrounds. Here, a number of young women who had just finished their Don Bosco supported further education course could be met in preparation for first job interviews. In addition, it was possible to accompany the Don Bosco social worker during her outreach work in Dharavi, which with over an estimated one million inhabitants is one of the biggest slum areas in Asia, right in the centre of urban Bombay.

In Delhi, two institutions served as main contact bases, the Don Bosco vocational training centre in Okhla, offering formal training in various subjects, and the Don Bosco school in Najafghar in the greater Delhi area with its outreach centre offering informal training courses for women in urban villages nearby. Here, it was possible to accompany the outreach centre coordinator during her work in the villages and meet certain groups of village women and partly participate in their courses.

The social workers in both the Bombay and Delhi outreach centres functioned as experts for accessing the poor in regards to awareness creation for education, organising and holding informal training, as well as the inner organisation, living

conditions and functioning of the slum in Bombay and the village-like living conditions of nearby Delhi. Simultaneously, the individual education history and origin from a poor background of two of the social workers offered an interesting insight and extensive data on its own.

Besides these main sources of obtaining access to the interviewees, further interviews were conducted with persons met coincidentally. In Bombay, I came across a group of jewellery sellers at one of Bombay's beaches, who were also migrants from other parts of India. As it turned out, the women spoke more or less fluent English (despite being almost completely uneducated) due to the fact that during high season they have close contact with many international tourists. Two women in particular were quite open in getting in contact with me and after a period of getting to know one another, two interviews could finally be conducted.

The sample has been structured according to the social class distinctions. As already mentioned, when introducing Boudon's sociology of education, social class memberships tend to have crucial impacts on educational decisions (chapter 2.4). The social class categories used here are grounded on the theoretical approach of classification by Erikson and Goldthorp (1992). The eleven fold model was transferred to the Indian context by Kumar et al. (2002; 2002a). They developed an eleven fold expanded model and in addition condensed eight, five, and four-class versions for the Indian society depending on the purpose of study. In order to make the model applicable for the thesis and to avoid very small sample sizes, the collapsed four-class version is used for analysis (Kumar et al. 2002). The four tiers provide a broad view on the major class divisions which will be applied as the theoretical underpinning for structuring the sample here. (The conceptualisation of the model by Kumar et al. and the extended explanation of reasons for applying social classes in the thesis will be explained in details in chapter 6.1.) The four-class schema applied here distinguishes (Kumar et al. 2002: 2984):

- Class I:** Higher Salariat and Business Class: Professionals and non-routine non-manual clerics
- Class II:** Lower Salariat: Routine non-manual clericals, large farmers
- Class III:** Skilled manual labourers, petty business, routine non-manual service, and small farmers

**Class IV:** Unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers, low agriculturalists, also informal vendors

The model seems to be appropriate for the study because it distinguishes the classes on the basis of factors employment status and employment conditions. Other relevant factors class distinctions can be based upon as qualification background (e.g. skilled or unskilled), savings and other properties and not on occupations per se would provide also information about the actual living conditions and therefore on class belongingness. But these differentiations would cause difficulties in defining the individual class background. The class distinction according to the factor employment was easily identifiable during the interviews.

The approach by Kumar et al. (2002) was developed in order to study national social mobility patterns and educational differences of men in India. Women's employment in India is low and focusing only on their status in the labour market would not provide a complete account of their class membership. Vaid (2007) updated the model to study women's class mobility alongside that of men. Already Erikson and Goldthorp argue that the social class membership of women can depend heavily on marriage markets rather than on labour markets (1992, also in Vaid 2007). Therefore the class origin of non-working women in the sample are defined (beside their own education background) according to their husbands' (or in case of not being married, their fathers') class characteristics.

Following class distinctions are defined when applying education criteria:

**Class I:** Graduate and above

**Class II:** Class X and Class XII

**Class III:** Primary and Middle

**Class IV:** Without any formal education, below primary

This means that class III interviewees should be at least able to write and read on a basic level. Nevertheless, education criteria have been only applied to define the class where occupation criteria are not clearly given.

In order to keep the identity of the interviewees as anonymous as possible, the interviews have been coded as follows: The code provides information about the sorted social class indicated as I-IV, according to their gender indicated as m/f and a

serial number of the interviews. For example, the code IIIf1 means that the interviewee belongs to class III, is a female and has been given the identifying serial number 1. During the description of the findings further individual characteristics of the interviewees will be described where useful.

Class	Gender	Code	Name of Interviewee
I	m	Im1	Mr. J.
		Im2	Mr. N.
		Im3	Mr. L.
	f	If1	Neha
		If2	Nalini
		If3	Aruna
II	m	IIm1	Mr. B.
		IIm2	Mr. A.
		IIm3	Mr. S.
		IIm4	Mr. C.
	f	IIf1	Sunita
		IIf2	Laksha
IIf3		Mrs. N.	
III	m	IIIIm1	Mr. M.
		IIIIm2	Sunil
		IIIIm3	Mr. K.
	f	IIIIf1	Trainee 1 (group discussion)
		IIIIf1	Trainee 2 (group discussion)
		IIIIf1	Trainee 3 (group discussion)
		IIIIf2	Mrs. P.
IV	m	IVm1	Mr. O.
		IVm2	Construction Worker 1 (group discussion)
		IVm2	Construction Worker 2 (group discussion)
		IVm2	Construction Worker 3 (group discussion)
		IVm3	Mr. P.
	f	IVf1	Rhani

		IVf2	Lagini
		IVf3	Village Woman 1 (group discussion)
		IVf3	Village Woman 2 (group discussion)
		IVf3	Village Woman 3 (group discussion)
		IVf3	Village Woman 4 (group discussion)

**Tab. 4.1: Sample overview**

Expert interviews are coded as EX1-3. All experts are of Indian origin. Following expert interviews were included into the analysis.

Expert	Code
Expert on indigenous psychology, German University	EX1
Coordinator Don Bosco outreach centre, Delhi	EX2
Father John, Don Bosco director outreach centre and school, Delhi	EX3

**Tab. 4.2: Overview of expert interviews**

All interviews were conducted in English due to the fact that the author is not able to speak the local Indian languages<sup>20</sup>. (Exceptions included selected expert interviews which were conducted with German key sources.) With Indian interviewees who had problems with English or with no English skills, mainly from lower class backgrounds, the assistance of a translator was utilized. In interviews connected to the Don Bosco projects, the social workers translated. In the multinational companies, no translator was required; the interviews with the construction workers were conducted with the help of one MNC staff member who was unknown to the participants and who was simply introduced as a “research assistant” to the interviewees. In the local companies, I once had to rely on the translation of one of the staff members, at other times my driver assisted (who was also introduced as “research assistant”).

The author is aware of the fact that requiring translation restrains the usefulness of data and its results. Talking directly to interviewees in their own language and

<sup>20</sup> India has over 20 official languages; the main language of the state Maharashtra with its capital Bombay is Marathi, the main language in Delhi is Hindi. Interviewees came also from other Indian regions with further languages but were all able to communicate in Hindi.

understanding their answers first hand is of much more value, especially in an open interview situation. Moreover, the presence of a third person in the form of a local translator might restrict the interviewees from opening up and speaking as frankly as they might have done with a foreigner. This might have been especially the case when the translator was a part of their companies, which was avoided as far as possible. On the other hand, at first glance, some interviewees appeared very shy and cautious in an interview situation. Here, the presence of a familiar person, like the social workers, seemed to be helpful to put the person at ease.

Group interviews were conducted three times with homogeneous groups, twice women from marginalised backgrounds (one in urban Bombay with a group of three young women ages 19-21 and one in rural village-like area in the Delhi outskirts with a group of four women between the ages of 21 and 35) and once with three class IV construction workers in Bombay. The reason for using group interviews here instead of regular one on one interviews was that the persons needed to first adjust to the situation of being interviewed by a foreigner, and seemed to be more open in a well known group than one on one together with the interviewer and the translator.

Most of the interviews were digitally recorded, only a few had to be reconstructed from notes during the interview because starting to record the interview did not seem to fit into the conversation (e.g. the interviewees had already started talking about possible delicate issues; this happened twice when talking to the jewellery sellers)<sup>21</sup>. In addition to the recordings, field notes and interview notes were taken to remember non vocal information and observations. At the end of each interview day, the field notes and interview notes were roughly analysed in order to determine following interviews and the further course of the research.

## **4.2. Data Analysis**

The thesis uses pre-developed considerations as well as an open inductive analysing process in order to meet the explorative character of the research question and to identify new factors influencing educational decisions.

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<sup>21</sup> For detailed explanation of each interview mode see sample description in the annex.



One main approach the thesis is using is the systematic rule guided qualitative content analysis developed by Philipp Mayring (e.g. 2000; 1983). According to the standards of reliability and validity in quantitative analysis, Mayring's approach also aims at inter-subjectively comprehensibility of a qualitative analysis as far as possible. Hsieh and Shannon further differentiate qualitative content analysis into three approaches: conventional, directed, and summative content analysis. The main difference arises out of their origin of codes (2005). Directed content analysis combines deductive and inductive data analysis and derives codes from theory as well as from the text. According to Mayring, two elements are central, the deductive category application on the base of prior formulated, theoretical derived aspects and inductive category development (for the following see mainly Mayring 2000).

Deductive category application brings pre-designed categories in connection with the data. The pre-developed categories and sub-categories are reflected in the prior formulated interview guide. The pre-defined definitions of categories and sub-categories as well as each coded paragraph in the material must be constantly reviewed as to how they help to answer the main research question and to examine the object of the study (also Flick 1998, 2000; Kuckartz 1995, 2007).

The second element, inductive category development, aims to generate categories as the leading aspects for interpretation as near as possible to the material. The demand of openness to aspects directly derived from the field is reflected here. The element is especially of value to prevent the researcher from affirming only their individual pre-assumptions and being trapped by their own ethnocentric view as discussed above. Mayring has suggested several steps here as well. Again, derived from the research question, the material is worked through and new categories are deduced, step by step. In several feedback loops, the categories of tentative character are revised and reduced till they are finally bundled into main categories.

For the presented study and its claimed openness for further aspects beyond the pre-formulated factor groups, the content analysis approach with its two elements of deductive and inductive category application seems to be the best method. Here the analysis constantly circulates between theory and material.

As a first step, Kuckartz recommends the hermeneutic analysis of the cases when it comes to the identification of first broad themes in the material (1995). The

background is the principle of “interpretive understanding (deutendes Verstehen)” (1995: 159) that, as Kuckartz writes, is rooted in Max Weber’s concept of social interaction. He describes Weber’s understanding of social interaction as behaviour to which the actor attaches subjective meaning. ‘Meaning’ is related to the individual and his or her behaviour and is not an objectively correct meaning. Interpretive understanding means primarily to understand the behaviour of the subject. Therefore, Kuckartz pleads for a first step in analysis, where the material is seen as a whole and embedded in its context before it can be divided into its segments. The next step is coding, which is the prerequisite of the data analysis. Theoretically derived and pre-developed codes are allocated and new codes are developed from the material.

The pre-developed categories are oriented at the factor groups described in chapter 3 of economic framework conditions including the Indian education system, social relations including the aspects caste, family and being female, and Hinduism. Out of these very broad categories numerous sub-categories have been developed theoretically on the basis of literature. The open approach during the interviews only oriented at the main research question for influences on educational decision (and before bringing in the pre-defined factors) allows also an inductive category development as suggested by Mayring. More categories were deduced out of the material analysis. Deductive and inductive generated codes mutually assist each other in forming the code system. In addition case variables describe the interviewees’ characteristics. The case variables are gender, age, social class belongings, caste background, occupation and educational background, family status, and children. These variables lay cross to the defined categories in the analysing and interpretation process. Table 4.3 shows the final system of categories and codes as results of the coding procedure.

1. Level of main categories	2. Level of sub-categories	3. Level of coding
<i>Case variables: class, caste, gender, education history, age, family status, children</i>		
<p><b>Economic framework conditions</b></p> <p>Based on Sinha (1982) and BMZ criterion of legitimacy</p> <p>Chapter 5.</p>	Economic growth	Desired branches Medicine, IT, Engineering, Law
		Belief to benefit from economic growth through education yes/no
		Meaning of employment at the formal labor market high
	Poverty	Struggle for daily survival
		Need to generate income / no time for education
		No money for education
		Recognition of any economic development yes/no
	Competition and jobless growth	Perception: chance/no chance
		Prevention of economic downfall
		Working poor
		Perceived insecurity
	Indian education system	Perception of government schools ok/bad
		Importance of schooling high/low
		Tutors/tuition classes needed
		Private schooling
		Fees too high
		Expectations to benefit from school education high/low
		Experiences good/bad
		Treatment perceived as fair/unfair
		Disappointment with the system
	Actual discrimination	
	School dropouts	
	Wish to be part of modernity and advancement through English education	

1. Level of main categories	2. Level of sub-categories	3. Level of coding
<i>Case variables: class, caste, gender, education history, age, family status, children</i>		
<p><b>Social relations</b> Based on Sinha (1982) and BMZ criterion of socio-cultural heterogeneity and social organisation</p> <p>Chapter 6.</p> <p><b>Caste</b> Subchapter 6.1.</p>	Caste tradition and a group's self concept	Caste has a meaning today yes/no
		Quotas for lower castes
		Marriage and caste community
		Intercaste marriage of own children acceptable/not acceptable
		Education as a caste's value
		Education history of castes
		Positive/negative self-concept
		Positive community self-image
		Knowledge of other's caste belongings
		Pride in caste origin
		Naming own castes automatically
		Feeling of responsibility
		Consequences of not following the tradition
		Collectivism
		Lack of alternatives
		Inherited occupations
	Existing caste networks	
	Impact of others' opinions	Trust in caste networks
		Positive view in society
		Negative view in society
		Tradition
		Change of family name
		School experiences perceived as discriminating / promoting
Work experiences perceived as fair/unfair Theory of negative self-image		
Role models from social environment		

		Recognizing caste belongings of others	
		Influences of historical discrimination	
		Perceived discrimination today	
		Subordination under family members	
		Patriarchic structures	
<b>Social relations: Family</b> Subchapter 6.2. Based on Sinha (1982)	Dependence on the family	Decision on marriage by parents	
		Severe consequences of disobedience	
	In-group rivalry		Keeping parent's honor
			Only the core family counts
			Pride of other extended family members/no pride
			Competition with other family members
			Contributing to the wider collective/not to contribute
			Individualistic behavior
		Individualistic intention	
	<b>Social Relations: Being female</b> Based on differences in literacy rate between genders (Census of India 2001; UNDP 2009), and on gender-egalitarianism (House et al. 2004) Subchapter 6.3.	Low self-determination of women	Influence of father, brothers
Own wishes count/don't			
Status through male children			
Patriarchic system			
Envy from environment			
Afraid of gossip			
Need of protection			
Izzat of parents			
Demands on the married woman			High importance of marriage
			High costs of marriage
			Family wanted an educated wife yes/no
			Relation of wife's and husband's education
			Need to please in-laws

		Fear to be sent back
		Influence of in-laws in general high
		Ability to manage children's education
		Gain in status through sons
		Wish to gain independence from in-laws
		Create an educated atmosphere at home
		Household duties
	Intrinsic motivation	Feeling of joy
		Forgetting the time
		Work itself

1. Level of main categories	2. Level of sub-categories	3. Level of coding
<i>Case variables: class, caste, gender, education history, age, family status, children</i>		
<b>Hinduism</b> Based on Sinha (1982)  Chapter 7.	Karma	Definition as work
		Belief in negative/positive karma
		Everybody deserves what he gets
		Influence on own education yes/no
	Dharma	Definition as destiny
		Belief in caste based duties
		Influence on own education yes/no
		Having puja yes/no
	Ideal Hindu lifecycle (Ashrama)	Knowledge of the system
		Education as a value itself
		Influence on own education yes/no
		Older family members retire gradually from social life and are

		more spiritually oriented yes/no
		Plan to retire yes/no
		Enough savings, financial backup for retirement yes/no
		Acting as a householder, taking care for servants

**Tab. 4.3: System of categories, sub-categories and codes**

The interviews were transcribed and analysed with the help of the computer programme MaxQDA. Using software is recommended when undertaking a qualitative content analysis (Mayring 2000; also e.g. Kuckartz 1995). The programme supports the several steps of text analysis on screen and offers tools for handling the text masses, especially when comparing frequencies of codes, the development of new categories, and the finding of text passages, examples, and quotations.

In order to answer the main research question of which factors influence educational decisions represented in anticipated consequences of education activity as suggested by the Heckhausen model, the motivation theories have already been merged with the deductively and inductively developed factors. By means of clarity in the following, the findings are organised and presented factor-wise and oriented at the main bundled factor groups. Inductively found sub-factors are constantly brought in where they emerged. The goal of each factor group analysis is the summary of relevant and influencing factors and the final development of theoretical assumptions derived both out of pre-considered theory and found data.

## **5. Economic Conditions and the Education System**

In the following chapter I will present the first cluster of assumed relevant and empirically and inductively found factors that influence motivation for education. Socio-economic framework conditions of India are found to influence and to determine people's education behaviour to some extent.

The first section (5.1.) introduces the here applied class scheme, according to which the sample has been organised and clustered. The model serves as an underlying schema to differentiate the people's perception of the relevant factors. Section 5.2. deals with the perception of personal and economic conditions and contains two first examined factor groups; 5.2.1. poverty including basic survival needs and 5.2.2. economic conditions, including economic growth and awareness of promising branches. 5.3. describes education conditions in India as background information and analyses the perception of cost of education (5.3.1.) and of the (governmental) education systems including influencing factors such as basic and higher education and vocational training (5.3.2.). More aspects on class will be explained in detail in chapter 6 on social relations (e.g. like correlations of classes and caste membership or the situation for women). Theoretical knowledge based on the pre-considered factors groups will be merged with empirical findings in this chapter (and in the two following ones as well). On this foundation, the formulation of first hypothesis regarding motivational dynamics on educational decisions of the factor groups will be possible (5.4.). The findings will be explained by means of the heuristics introduced in chapter 2, mainly cognitive based psychological and sociological models, in particular the cognitive motivation model by Heckhausen. Other applied heuristics are the motivation approach of Maslow and sociology of education developed by Boudon.

### **5.1. Class Distinctions**

As I have already briefly discussed, according to the heuristic of Boudon's approach on inequality of educational opportunity, class distinctions specify the examined sample. They enhance the view of cognitive motivation psychology where expectations are largely only reasoned in perceptions of the personal abilities. As an exception, class memberships do not seem to be a factor of which the individuals are aware and are therefore not taken into cognitive consideration. However, they are



seen as reasons why certain people consider certain factors as relevant and others do not. The dependence of educational decisions on class memberships has been widely assessed for industrialized countries (beside Boudon 1974 also e.g. Esser 1999; 2000; Becker 2009, 2000). Boudon's view allows the integration of external influences when undertaking cognitive consideration on educational decisions, namely the social class membership of the individual. As Weigl states, for the Indian case, participation in better-off economic activities is certainly related to class and caste (2009). As to be shown, education in India must be seen at least partly as such a better-off economic activity.

The concept of classes applied here is a vertical model. Various social scientists have employed different class scheme when analysing the Indian society (Kumar et al. 2002). The social class system applied here organises classes vertically<sup>22</sup>. It is originally based on the eleven fold class approach by Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992) which has been frequently used in empirical education research. The system can be seen at the forefront of early class approaches of the Marxian and Weberian traditions (Maaz 2006). The main aim of class distinctions can be described with the hierarchical arrangement of members of a society according to socio-economic characteristics.

Kumar et al. transmitted the system that was previously used mainly in the West to the Indian context (2002, 2002a). Similar to the original model, the core of the Indian class structure is the occupational order. The concrete occupational status and employment conditions also determine the class memberships for a huge share of the population in India. One main difference to the western model is the more detailed distinction of rural farming classes, due to the fact that India is still widely of rural character. It is important to mention that the first schema is not yet a completely hierarchical one. The model distinguishes four main groupings and an eight-fold schema:

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<sup>22</sup> An alternative to class distinctions can be to include also horizontally arranged characteristics as values (for more details on social distinctions of groups in the context of educational differences see e.g. Burzan 2007; Maaz 2006)

1. The first grouping is the *salariat*, mainly consisting of salaried employees with relatively secure and permanent employment in business corporations and the civil service, who can be divided into two sub-groups:

a) Higher salariat: executives, professionals, and white collar employees, managers, administrators and officials, elected officials (central/state level); routine non-manual clerical; high grade routine non-manual employees

b) Lower salariat: lower professionals, administrators and officials, elected officials (district level), technicians, supervisors, sales persons, traditional clerks

2. Second is the bourgeoisie or *business* class which is consisting of independents who are directly exposed to market forces:

c) Business: large business (with 7+ employees), medium business (less than 7 employees or family workers)

d) Petty business: petty shopkeepers and roadside business

3. The third group are the *manual labourers* with higher risk of employment:

e) Skilled and semi-skilled manual labourers: e.g. mechanics, electricians, tailors, weavers, carpenters, craftsmen

f) Unskilled manual labourers: e.g. construction workers, sweepers, landless agricultural labourers

4. Finally the fourth group represents *agriculture*, again divided into two sub-groups

g) Farmers: owner-cultivators and tenant cultivators with more than 5 acres of own land

h) Lower agriculturalists: owner-cultivators and small tenant cultivators with less than 5 acres of land

The model has been used by Kumar et al. (2002) to study educational differences and mobility patterns in India. As mentioned, the above model (based on the four groupings) is not yet a complete hierarchical one and some classes can be economically at the same level, e.g. a landless labourer or a construction worker from group f) earns much less than a owner-cultivator with some acres of land in group g). For the analysis of the collected data in this study, a collapsed version of

the detailed cluster is used which provides a hierarchical distinction of the groups and sub-groups. Another main reason to use a collapsed version is to avoid very small sub-samples. The collapsed and hierarchical class model has been suggested by Kumar et al. 2002 and is based on the above mentioned groupings. The members of one class can be seen as approximately at the same level regarding their socio-economic status:

- Class I: Higher salariat and business class:** professionals and non-routine non-manual clerics, large business. With stable incomes and high level of job security
- Class II: Lower salariat:** routine non-manual clerics, medium business. With medium high income and relative high job security
- Class III: Skilled and semi-skilled manual labourers,** petty business, farmers, routine non-manual service like shop assistants. With higher risk of unemployment and lower income
- Class IV: Unskilled and semi-skilled manual labourers, lower agriculturalists,** also informal vendors, construction workers, sweepers, etc. With high risk of unemployment and low income

The approach by Kumar et al. was developed according to occupational orders. They also point out that the model inhibits some degree of arbitrariness in its boundaries. The farming sector in India as a whole is quite diverse and putting farmers in class III might appear as far too rough. Nevertheless, for the study the farming sector plays only a minor role as data collection mainly took place in urban or sub-urban areas. The persons related to agriculture were migrants to the metropolises and now engaged in other activities. Therefore the class model is considered to be appropriate for the purpose of the study.

As I mentioned already in chapter 4, women's employment in India is low and focusing only on their status in the labour market would not provide a complete account of their class membership. The class origin of non-working women in the sample are defined (beside their own education background) according to their husbands' (or in the case of not being married, their fathers') class characteristics. If not so indicated, the cited women of the sample are working women.

Due to the reduction of the class scheme to four layers, the distinction is naturally rough and the four main classes should not be interpreted as being absolutely heterogenic. Nevertheless, a more distinct class description would exceed the possibilities of the study and the rough but informative account of the main class distinctions sufficiently serves the purpose of the study.

When talking about the distinction of classes and their extent in a society, hierarchy plays an important role in the arrangement of the society members. The applied class model is itself a hierarchical schema. The aspect of hierarchy within the society and its actual meaning for the individuals will become more concrete in chapter 6 on social relations. But the described characteristic serves here to already categorise the Indian society and its socio-economic conditions as a whole. Therefore, the aspect of hierarchy as a typical characteristic of the distinct lower and upper layers of a society shall be portrayed here briefly. Several authors and studies call India a culture with high hierarchal differences, or with high power distance (e.g. Dumont 1970; House et al. 2004). In chapter 1, I described critique towards the approach of sorting national cultures according a relatively low number of cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, the concept shall serve here as a simplification to explain certain tendencies in Indian society. In the power distance category of the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004) India ranks in the first quarter of all investigated countries.

Power distance is described as the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power is and should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels (House et al. 2004) and should be shared unequally (House et al. 2004). House and colleagues summarize their findings regarding this dimension that in high power distance societies:

“[...] the rich differ from the poor, and thus economic growth often results in unemployment and, instead of helping the poor, makes their position even less satisfactory. Empirically there is low societal health and little human development (e.g. in education).” (House et al.2004: xvii)

GLOBE uses certain parameters to demonstrate what a society with high power distance characterizes.

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Higher Power Distance</i>	<i>Lower Power Distance</i>
Social inequality	Society differentiated into classes on several criteria	Large middle class
Social mobility	Limited upward social mobility	High upward social mobility
Resources and capabilities	Only a few people have access to resources, skills, and capabilities, contributing to low human development and life expectancies	Mass availability of tools, resources, and capabilities for independent and entrepreneurial initiatives, as reflected in wide educational enrolment

**Tab. 5.1: Selected parameters in higher and lower power distance societies (Source: House et al. 2004: 536)**

As to be shown, social inequality in India manifests itself in forms of huge economic disparities, an enormous lower (and poor) class, a smaller middle class and a very wealthy upper class. Together with limited upward social mobility, it is assumed to have some influence on educational decisions; that counts even more for the third parameter in terms of (here educational) resources and capabilities.

Class distinctions have been illustrated above already; it follows a description of findings regarding economic personal and general conditions and education conditions that were identified as influencing factors and also being in line with the GLOBE parameters. In the following chapters 5.2., 5.3. and their sub-chapters, I will present the empirically found factors as far as they are related to socio-economic framework conditions. They influence education decisions of different shares of the sample.

## **5.2. Perception of General and Personal Economic Conditions**

As it has become already clear in Sinha's presentation of Indian characteristics (chapter 3), huge shares of the population of the lower classes are vastly dominated by poverty, concentrated in the lowest classes (here class IV and also partly III). In close connection to poverty, Sinha mentions "other properties of the Indian realities" (1982: 149). Together with poverty (5.2.1.), economic development (5.2.2.) of the country (in its meaning for the individuals) is taken here as part of those properties

and combined under the category of general and personal economic conditions of the interviewees.

### 5.2.1. Poverty

In seeing Sinha's distinction, but also based on sociological theories of education like Boudon's writings on economical inequality of education (1974), poverty has been assumed to be an influencing factor on education decisions. The examined sample includes the phenomenon of poverty. The class IV interviewees all have a very low household income in common, which has to be considered hardly above the poverty line. Among the various methods and approaches to measure poverty the formula "less than 1.25 \$US a day" (formerly 1 Dollar a day) of the World Bank is a widely accepted and minimum definition of absolute poverty which bases on people's income. The interviewees considered as poor have an average annual household income up to Rs. 60.000 (roughly € 950,-<sup>23</sup>) for at least 3 household members or many more. Some of this group range lower and have between Rs. 30.000 and 60.000 annually and so less than 1.25 \$US a day. In order to measure poverty on a broader and more holistic approach, the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Human Development Report which has been published annually since 1990. Indian economist and Nobel Prize laureate Amartya Sen was one of the originators of the index (Prabhu 2007). The HDI applies (besides financial capacity) three main dimensions of human development: Living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy), being educated (measured by adult literacy) and having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity = PPP, and income) (UNDP/N.N. 2007/2008). The HDI measures the factors on a scale from 0 to 1 with 0 no and 1 full development.<sup>24</sup> Countries with a HDI value of 0.8 and above are considered to be high human developed countries, those between 0.5 and 0.79

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<sup>23</sup> At the time of data collection

<sup>24</sup> The HDI-index has been criticized as rough and for including only a small number of variables of what could define human development (e.g. Sen 2000). The UNDP mentions explicitly that the index is meant to give only broad estimation about the relationship between financial and well being; e.g. it does not include the difficult to measure but important aspects of political freedom and respect for human rights. It also has to be noticed that for collecting the data the UNDP is partly dependent on the cooperation and provision of data by the assessed countries, which can lead to not a 100% reliable figures (e.g. the literacy rate of Georgia is denoted with 100%, which must be doubtable for any country.) Nevertheless the figures provided by the HDI and HPI-1 to measure development and poverty serve the aim of the study in adequate way as broad tendencies are sufficient here.

belong to the medium human developed countries, and those below 0.5 are said to be countries with a low level of human development (Prabhu 2007). In the Human Development Report 2009 the data cover the period up to 2007 (which are the latest reporting data for India). As shown on table 5.2<sup>25</sup> India has a HDI of 0.609, ranks 128<sup>th</sup> in development of 177 examined countries and belongs to the back end of the group of medium developed countries. It ranks in the low third of all measured countries; in the category adult literacy with 66% at 120<sup>th</sup> of 151 even in the lowest quarter.

<b>2005 Human development index (HDI value)</b>	<b>Life expectancy at birth (years)</b>	<b>Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and above)</b>	<b>GDP per capita (PPP US\$)</b>
1. Norway (0.971)	1. Japan (82.7)	1. Georgia (100.0)	1. Liechtenstein (\$ 85,382)
22. Germany (0.947)	17. Germany (79.8)	(Fig. for Germany not specified here, approx. 99%)	24. Germany (\$ 34,401)
92. China (0.772)	72. China (72.9)	56. China (93.3)	102. China (\$ 5,383)
128. India (0.612)	128. India (63.4)	120. India (66.0)	128. India (\$ 2,753)
177. Niger (0.340)	176. Afghanistan (43.6)	151. Mali (26.2)	181. Congo (Democratic Republic of the) (\$ 298)

**Tab. 5.2: Selected indicators of human development for India (plus figures for Germany, China, and first and last rank of each category, based on UNDP Factsheets 2009<sup>26</sup>)**

<sup>25</sup> The figures of China are chosen here for comparison as the development of the two countries have been very often put side by side in literature (e.g. Sen 2005; Dreze 2004); similarities of the two nations can be seen in terms of e.g. economic growth, demographic development, history, etc.

<sup>26</sup>[http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_IND.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_IND.html)

[http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_CHN.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_CHN.html)

[http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country\\_fact\\_sheets/cty\\_fs\\_DEU.html](http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_DEU.html)

all 18<sup>th</sup> Feb 2010

### Classes III and IV

Starting with the perception of the situation in the low end of the society, class IV and also III, the analysed interviews show main concerns of people when talking about poverty and their own economic situation. One main aspect is the existing fear of not being able to take care of and feed their own children and family. Although no one mentioned concrete situations of hunger or even famine, being able to provide proper and enough nutritious food and in general taking care of their children was a serious concern for almost all interviewees, primarily in class IV and also in III. “Important for me is my family. I work to feed my children, to be a good father. Children need good food. Every day.” (III<sub>m1</sub>). The topic became a more severe issue in the lower social classes and the lower income brackets of the people. A young girl around 14 called Rhani and one of the jewellery sellers (class IV) who was met coincidentally at a beach and interviewed later talks about her family’s economic situation. She is able to speak surprisingly good English, which she obtained mainly from her contact with tourists. She said (IV<sub>f1</sub>):

“We need to earn money every day because we are many in the family. My younger siblings are there, they need to eat. We come from a village in Karnataka to earn more money. Here we also work every day to get along. We don’t have land or anything.” (IV<sub>f1</sub>)

Another jewellery seller met at the same beach tells the same story (IV<sub>f2</sub>). What they earn during a day is used mainly to buy food and to satisfy very basic living needs. Saving is not possible. A loss of earnings when visiting e.g. a kind of training or sending a family member to school, seems to the people hardly compensable (IV<sub>f2</sub>). Especially those in casual working conditions on the informal labor market with an irregular income (e.g. the construction workers) emphasize this aspect (IV<sub>m2</sub>; also IV<sub>m1</sub>). The construction workers in Bombay are considered the urban poor and also belong to class IV recounted the reasons why they left their home region and migrated to the far away metropolis of Bombay. Here again, satisfying basic needs seems to be the main driver for their effort to migrate to a far away area and they say also for their lack of education (IV<sub>m2</sub>). The construction workers as well as the jewellery sellers are typical urban slum dwellers. They both have precarious living conditions typical for poverty in Bombay which are described by a Don Bosco coordinator for outreach activities (EX2) as: “Too many family members depend on a small total family income, they have no savings at all, no social security, no



financial back up for emergency situations, no land ownership. So people depend on their daily income. It is from hand to mouth.” As described, those people live from mainly manual hard physical work, also the women likewise, and there is a high pressure on all family members to work. In both cities relevant for the study, Bombay (roughly with over 12 million<sup>27</sup> inhabitants the biggest metropolis in India) and New Delhi (with approximately 8 million inhabitants), over 50% of the population are slum dwellers or live on the pavement (Ministry of Housing 2009; Menon 2007).

The interviewed class IV members, as well as those met in the small Indian companies and also to some extent some people from class III who are not employed on a permanent basis belong to the group of working poor. Their main concern is becoming underemployed and not able to earn enough with their work. This fear is much bigger than becoming totally unemployed. A construction worker states:

“I have to earn enough in a week. Sometimes this is not so easy. It depends on the assignments I can get. This varies. Or the payment is lower than the week before for the same job and if I don’t agree I can go.” (IVm2)

Here the aspect of insecure and unstable working conditions becomes clear. Seeing the phenomenon of working poor and according to the Planning Commission study from 2008, the total labour force is declared to be 458 million (45.8 crore; 1 crore = 10 million) and the number of people employed with 447 million. 11 million people were unemployed in the year 2008. This number (less than 3%) appears low compared to the total labour force of almost half a billion, but the majority of the Indians work with low productivity and low income levels, and over 90% in the informal sector (Ghose 2007; Chatterjee 2007). The informal sector includes all work activities which are not covered by the modern economic sector. Informal-sector workers can be e.g. construction workers, agricultural workers, street vendors, home working seamstresses, or labourers in small industrial enterprises (Chatterjee 2007). According to Breman (2001: 196) the term informal labour focuses on the modality of employment and shall be circumscribed with

“[...] the income from work, performed either on one’s own account and at one’s own risk or as waged labour, for which no explicit written or oral contracting stipulating the rights and obligations of the parties has been agreed,

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<sup>27</sup> It is hardly possible to determine the exact number of inhabitants in Indian metropolises as huge share of the population is not officially registered. People from rural areas are constantly flocking into the cities.

where there is no legal protection for the conditions of employment, and the activities are only sketchily recorded in the governments accounts, if at all” (ibid.).

This definition concentrates on the personal situation of employees in the informal sector. A huge share of people belonging to the informal sector is self-employed in small enterprises as (sub-) contractors or so-called jobbers. Their wages are paid by piecework and not on hourly basis. Informality also does not imply that it is unskilled labour, but skills are mainly acquired outside the formal education system (ibid.). All definitions of the informal sector have in common the absence of government regulations, which means also the absence of taxation, registration, inspection, and protection of labourers, regularity of income, and formally recognized training at work (ILO 1998). Informal labourers rarely become totally unemployed. One reason is the very low wage rates in the informal sector which makes building up financial reserves for times of unemployment and/or training impossible (Breman 2003a). The different income levels between the formal and informal sector matter when people are considering education investments. The wage differential of the informal and organized sector is immense as Rothermund states (2008: 211). For example, in the public sector the average daily per capita income is RS 681 (= roughly €10 in 03/2009) plus the advantage of job security; in contrast a male casual worker earns RS 75 at an average a day in cities and RS 56 in rural areas (which is with \$US 1.09 below the World Bank formula for absolute poverty of less than \$US 1.25 a day); women are paid even less with RS 44 and RS 36 respectively (ibid.).

Living in a permanent situation of insecurity and the danger of underemployment seems to not leave the interviewed individuals in class IV and partly III much room for aspirations regarding further investigations into their education. They are occupied with satisfying basic needs every day. That also includes their future plans for their children. Poverty and daily job insecurity seems to hinder the development of expectations based on education and therefore hampers educational activities.

### **Classes I and II**

Contrary to assumptions, higher class members also express their concerns about satisfying daily needs. Mr. J., 48 year old engineer in a Bombay MNC with an annual income of 8 lakh (Rs. 800.000 ~ EUR 13.000) states:

“I have the wish to provide the best for my family and children. To live a healthy life you have to feed yourself with good and natural food [...] and if you observe India there are many people who are not getting two times food a day.” (Im1).

Here the interviewee mentions the obviousness of poverty in every day India. Also a good share of the class II interviewees (e.g. IIf2; IIm4) mention in the interviews the importance of providing housing and food to their families. Out of the collected data, it can be condensed that the concern about being able to feeding and generally taking care of one’s own children is not only a statistical phenomenon but part of people’s daily reality which also influences their decision regarding education. The omnipresent signs of poverty like huge slum areas and people living on the pavement in almost all parts of the cities seem to make the people more aware of their own living conditions. The satisfaction of basic needs as food, housing and safety and their ability to provide for it seem to be very present for the interviewees. Physical needs seem still to be much more of a topic than in fully industrialized western societies. That counts even for the “better off” classes like class II and even class I, though in a less serious manner.

The observation of the cited class I participant “many people who are not getting two times food a day” (Im1) above can be reflected in front of the poverty definition of the Indian government, which has included nutrition criteria (Rothermund 2008, 206; Borah 2000). Its calculation is based on a minimum of calories to be available plus marginal allowances for other basic needs. According to the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan 27.8% of all Indians live below the poverty line and suffer from some kind of undernourishment (around 300 Million). Sen (2005) emphasises the obvious incidence of poverty in India and focuses on the vast inequality throughout the country. Nutrition is one paradigmatic illustration. “Indian’s overall record in eliminating hunger and under nutrition is quite terrible. [...] India does worse in this respect than even sub-Sahara Africa.” (Sen 2005: 212) As Sen states and figures show (although there are no severe famines) the undernourishment of Indian children is at 47% in contrast to 29% of all Sub Sahara children (UNDP 2005; Shiva Kumar 2007); half of all Indian children are chronically undernourished and more than half of all adult women suffer from anemia (iron deficiency). That means that India has the largest conglomeration of undernourished people in the world.

The first described factor of group poverty influences education decisions mainly in the lower end of the society; satisfying basic needs and the constant danger of underemployment seem to be of special importance when discussing factors which hinder aspirations on education. Other factors regarding the ongoing economic development are assumed to influence education decisions of participants from higher class backgrounds as well.

### **5.2.2. Economic Development**

The interviewed sample was asked for their perception of the current economic situation and if economic trends have been influencing their educational decisions. As I will show in class IV and partly III, influences of a growing economy that might mobilize concrete education activities could not be found, but for higher class members the data shows other findings. Results are portrayed in front of the ongoing massive economic changes and developments India has been experiencing in the last decades.

India opened its markets to the global economy in 1991. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and his finance minister Manmohan Singh (who later became Prime Minister in 2004) initiated the liberalisation and abolished the licensing of investment. The reforms ended many public monopolies and allowed automatic approval of foreign direct investment (Ahluwalia 2007). Since the market reforms, India has been showing an economic growth rate of 6-8% per annum. The government aims to increase the rate to 9% by the end of the current Five Year Term in 2012 (Government of India, 2008, National Planning Commission). India belongs to the fastest growing economies in the world; in an international comparison the figures are only surpassed by China (Subramanian 2007). According to the World Bank's prognosis, India's economy will be the fourth largest in the world in 2020 (World Bank 2004).

Seeing the employment structure of India, there has been a decline in the share of agriculture and an increase in the share of industry and services in total employment (Tab. 5.2). But according to most experts (e.g. Papola 2007; Rothermund 2008) the structural changes have been low. Between 1993 and 2000 the share of the agricultural sector has declined by 3.68%; the share of industry has increased by 1.74% to 17.56% and that of services has risen by 1.94% to 25.74%.

	<b>1993-1994</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	60.38	56.7
<b>Industry</b>	15.82	17.56
<b>Services</b>	23.8	25.74

**Tab. 5.3: Development of employment shares of major economic sectors (%) in India (Source: Papola 2007)**

The contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the three sectors shows an asymmetry between the income and employment shares. With almost 57% employment in agriculture this sector contributes only 22% to GDP, while the service sector with 26% employment contributes 52%. The differences in the contribution to the GDP or the relative productivity of the three economic sectors are one aspect to reason the above described poverty and inequality (Papola 2007) as the income in the sectors shows high variations. Despite the vast increase of GDP growth rates, India remains predominantly poor and overpopulated (Bose 2007) and is dominated by huge regional and social disparities. More than 60% of the total Indian population are still sustained on agriculture and allied activities (World Bank 2006).

Relevant here is the sample's perception of the economic situation and if trends have been influencing their educational decisions. As assumed, the perception of market developments is different according to class backgrounds.

### **Class I**

The upper class interviewees perceived the market growth as a perfect chance that merely has to be combined with a profound education. One male interviewee from upper middle class background (class group I) and employed in a local medium company in Delhi as head of human resources states:

“My family has been in trade for many years. The market change has been opening many doors for us. India will be one of the leading countries in the world soon. For example we have the best IT specialists. If you are smart and well educated everything is possible. Now is the time.” (Im3)

Other interviewees of class I see the situation similarly positive and perceive the market development as a good chance for their occupational development (e.g. If1;

Im4; If2). Almost all interviewed participants of class I show a profound knowledge of the political and economical development and many speak about the country's development with a kind of pride. These groups picture themselves to be the benefiteres of the economic growth, which is also reflected in their own educational and occupational aspiration, as well as for their offspring. They mainly expect education to provide the access to adequate job opportunities, job security and a high salary (which is now perceived to be possible more than ever). Class I members also state that they are looking for a challenging job with decision making power and responsibilities (e.g. If1; Im2).

### 5.2.3. Competition and Jobless Growth

#### Class I

Beside this basically positive interpretation of the economic growth for themselves, the upper middle class also feels some kind of pressure regarding the job market in the future. Mr. J., the 48 year old MNC engineer states:

“You have to show a good performance, in school and later on the job. There are many who want to benefit from the development. That means job security, success and a good income. I for myself feel very safe but my children have to be very good in school to reach a good position and we do a lot to promote them.”  
(Im1)

The participants of class I are aware of the fact that being highly qualified is necessary to compete on the labour market. Only then will their children be able to benefit from the economic growth. The perception is that the labour market is tightening because of the growing number of qualified people. (The labour market they are talking about is the formal labour market and that is the labour market that comes into consideration for this section of the society.) The possibility about a loss of economic and social achievement is expressed (Im1, Im2, If2). “My fear is that the rich become more richer, the middle class will move towards the poor category and after some time it will be very difficult to survive for the poor persons.”(Im1) Mr. J expresses that education is clearly perceived as the way to become able to compete and as a preventative against social and economic downfall.

**Class II**

The same phenomenon can be observed even more with class II interviewees. The awareness of growth and growing competition at the same time generates the conviction that education is the only way to benefit from the development and not to decrease in status. Also here the interviewees are fully aware and informed about ongoing economic trends and market developments. Perceived competition functions as a signal for education activities. The competitive situation on the labour market can be handled by being educated (e.g. IIm3).

The perception of competition in the two higher classes can be reflected by the phenomenon of a jobless growth that has been occurring in India for the last decade (Rothermund 2008). The enormous economic growth in India has mainly increased the informal sector; the number of employees and therefore the number of jobs in the formal sector has almost stagnated. This becomes clear in the cited sector contribution to the GDP, e.g. the service sector – with far less jobs compared to the agricultural sector – contributes 52% to the GDP with 26% employees. With good cause, class I and class II perceive the labour market as tightening. Between 1990 and 2000 the Indian labour force was growing at a rate of 1.8% while formal employment grew only at a rate of 1.3% per annum (Ghose 2007). Also caused by the continuous migration from the villages to the big cities, the formal urban sector is too small to cope with the growing number of job seekers. Out of 447 million employed people 26 million are employed in the formal sector in 2008, the great majority of 421 million (>90%) works in the informal sector. The growing employer preference for casual employment and contract labour is mainly caused by enough supply of cheap labour. The poor can hardly afford to stay completely unemployed (Bose 2007) and rather take jobs on casual basis (see also above the description of working poor). The interviewees who were met in the international companies in Bombay are all working on a permanent basis and belong to the formal employment sector, while parts of the Indian companies' employees can be seen as part of the informal sector (as defined above). Although a number of them are working in formally registered companies, they are employed as contracted workers or informal jobbers which mean their income is not received on a regular basis and they do not have the job security of their formally hired colleagues.

When exploring the question of how the economic situation and development influences their decisions for or against education, the interviewees are of course not talking in terms of formal or informal work but instead describe their personal situation and work conditions. Class II interviewees are all found to be formally employed which helps to perceive the economic development as positive. "I think I can be satisfied, I have a good contract with bonuses and even a health insurance is paid. I got what I wanted when I studied. [...] And I like the atmosphere of departure here in India." (IIIm3) As expected, formally employed interviewees perceive their work conditions as much better than the part of the sample in the informal sector like class III and IV interviewees. As I will show in the next paragraph on class III members, a main difference that was often mentioned was the fact that the interviewees were employed on permanent or on contract basis.

### **Class III**

Class III interviews are often employed on contract basis as in the local SME. Mr. K. (IIIIm3) is the only one employed on permanent basis and the only one who considers the conditions as comfortable. The others don't see much access to better work conditions and do not perceive the economic development as a benefit for them. A class III contract worker in the small Indian companies state the same regarding his personal work situation: Getting a permanent job is hardly possible although he and some of his co-workers have been working for the companies for quite a long period already.

"I hope here to get employment on a more regular base with longer periods but that does not happen. The economy is difficult says the boss always. I can go to other companies but it is the same there. My colleagues tell the same. We get along but with more job security life would be better." (IIIIm1)

The interviewee (Mr. M.) is a welder in a small local company; he has 10 years of school education, holds a Matric and has several years of work practice. That means he is relatively well educated and trained. His income is around Rs. 7.000 a month (EUR 100). He is convinced that reaching a job with more security and other benefits is almost impossible, although he states his educational background is reasonable. He does not feel that further training would change anything. While class I and II members perceive the economic development as predominantly positive and invest in education, the interviewed lower class members are less likely to do so. The



economic development, leaving behind the informal sector, is not expected to be positive for their own job situation and competition is not considered a relevant factor to pursue more education.

#### **5.2.4. Awareness of relevant branches and perception of access possibilities**

At this point the analysis of the empirical findings show another factor which was not considered before and which shall be characterised here. In India, it is not respected if a person is educated in general and obtains (academic) qualifications of any kind; education has to be in certain branches. These branches are pre-selected: engineering - mainly IT -, medicine, and law. In almost all interviews the participants mentioned these three sectors, independent of whether they came from an upper or lower class background. "I wish that my sons should become an engineer. IT is the future. India is best nation in IT."(IIIIm1). And "Of course it depends on the child but he should be a computer specialist, a medical doctor or a lawyer."(IIIm2) The perception is that market growth is taking place in these branches. If one has access to education opportunities in these sectors, the chances to benefit from the economic development are perceived to be high. The awareness that these sectors are the "only" ones which promise success is widely known, even down to class III. This may also have cultural reasons, but could not be fully clarified in the study. Only some interviewees in class IV did not mention these branches immediately. Naturally, the majority is not aware of the exact figures mentioned above regarding the sector employment and GDP shares, but the awareness that "something is going on" has trickled down to almost all classes.

First, almost all interviewees speak with enthusiasm about careers in IT or engineering as their wish for their children. Only after further discussion in the interview with class IV and most class III members it becomes clear that they consider these jobs as being out of reach for their family members.

Drèze (2004) is convinced that the majority of Indians do not know that economic change and development is going on and that they have no idea about any kind of growth. The findings of the study of a certain awareness of "something is going on" as the promises of the IT sector appears contradictory to Drèze at first sight. But it has to be taken into account that the study concentrates on interviewees from urban background, individuals who have been living in urban areas for a long period of

time or migrants who have left their rural homeland in the hope to benefit from the development in the cities. Economic change as well as growth must be assumed to be much more obvious and noticeable in urban settings, which could be the reason for class IV interviewees' slight awareness of a kind of change in India.

Drastic differences between the classes are found in the concreteness of plans regarding education decisions. This becomes especially clear when talking about future plans for children:

### **Class I and II**

Members of class I and II not only have concrete conceptions regarding their offspring's future occupations, but also how to obtain and realize these plans in the desired branches. Qualifications should be obtained in a well known institute and the costs require more or less serious financial cuts for the families. In these groups it is not a question of "if" regarding higher education but of "how" to finance the entrance into one of the aimed sectors. "I will do everything for my children to study of course that was never in question. Something else is not an option. Luckily we do not really have to suffer for it. But I would for sure." (Im3) Other members from class II state the same (e.g. IIm3).

### **Class III**

Members of class III also mention instantly that education is important and emphasise engineering as the aimed sector for their children immediately when asked for educational plans for their offspring. But the lower the class membership, the less the interviewees have concrete ideas of how to achieve the access to the promising branches. "I wish my son to become an engineer" remains often the only statement they can make, and questions how they think to realize this plan often remain unanswered in class III. After a pause of thinking the participants often have to admit that they feel that those branches are unreachable for them and their surroundings. An often mentioned criterion is lack of money for proper schooling.

### **Class IV**

Even some interviewed members of class IV have common knowledge with the other classes in that they are aware of the promises of a career in the IT sector for an

Indian, although they have no idea how to enter this sector. Certainly the lack of financial possibilities is one main obstacle that hinders higher expectations for the offspring, but often it is mixed with a diffuse feeling of unattainability, deficiency, and the belief that these sectors are simply beyond their reach. One trainee of a Don Bosco outreach centre states “These branches are not for us.” (IVf3) and hints already to social factors that will be discussed in chapter 6.

Bottom line of the described findings is that education activities are not connected with expectations regarding better-paid job opportunities and better living conditions. Those consequences of education are, though highly valued, not *really* within the imagination of class IV and partly class III members, even if they mention education as generally important and if they show certain awareness of it. They work to survive and still remain in more or less precarious living conditions.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the GLOBE study’s parameters of a hierarchical society seem to be true for the Indian case. The data shows a picture where rich and poor differ enormously and the society is characterised by stable social inequality and “low societal health” (House et al. 2004: xvii). The lower classes do not benefit from the economic development and the unsatisfactory situation circumscribed with “little human development” (ibid.) is also not compensable through education efforts. Furthermore as GLOBE states, resources and capabilities are unequally shared in a hierarchical society. That counts for education matters as well. The great majority of the lower ends of the society are not educated or are undereducated. A profound look at the Indian education systems helps to better understand this connection to motivational dynamics.

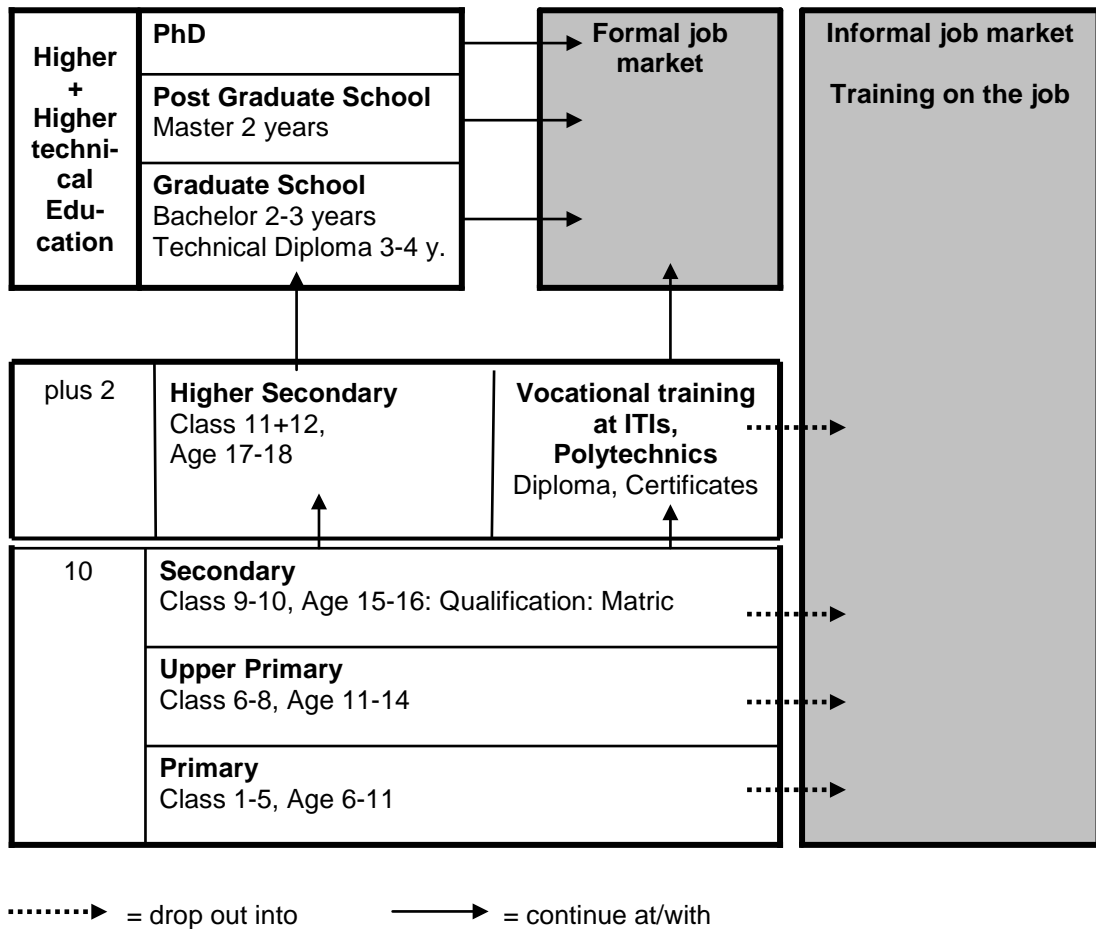
### **5.3. Education Conditions**

One main important part of the interview was the education history of the participants. Prior to this, a brief introduction into the Indian education system is needed. Such background information is necessary as reasons for education decisions were assumed to have a connection to what people experienced at school and therefore also to have a connection to the system itself.

The Indian education system is divided into a 10 plus 2 structure that includes five years of primary education, three years of upper primary education or middle school and two years of secondary education. The 10<sup>th</sup> standard ends with the matriculation

exams (also called Matricular or Matric) which are the first national board exams or state board exams. After the 10 years follows the plus 2 level, higher secondary, in the classes 11 and 12. Successful completion of the higher secondary level (10+2) allows participating in the entrance examinations of the universities and technical institutes. Beside the higher secondary school level a vocational training segment offers full and part time courses, administered primarily through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) under the Indian National Ministry, which shall produce skilled personnel for the industry. Higher education is divided into graduate (Bachelor) and post graduate (Master) courses at state and private universities; higher technical education (as part of higher education) takes place at technical institutes, graduates receive a diploma after 3-4 years (Debroy 2007). The constitution of India is federal in character. Primary and secondary education up to class 10+2 is in the responsibility of the states while higher and technical and vocational education was moved to central responsibility in the 1970s (ibid).

Figure no 5.1 shows the different levels of the formal Indian education system and different ways into formal and informal job markets. As demonstrated already above, more than 90% of the Indian workforce is employed in the informal sector; access to the small organised sector is widely impossible due to lack of qualification of the majority of the job seekers, lack of employment opportunities in general and other socially bound reasons which will be analysed later. Even for the increasing number of people who obtain a qualification at secondary or even tertiary education level, the formal sector does not provide enough employment opportunities.



**Fig. 5.1: Formal education system and access to formal and informal job markets in India (Source: own graphic)**

The educational background and history of education of the interviewed sample is very different. Education background correlates as expected strongly with class belongings, occupation, and income. The education background of the interviewees in the here applied class schema can be differentiated as follows:

**Class I** members visited all primary and secondary school and received a sound higher education. Many hold in addition to their university degree, often in engineering, an MBA or another continuing education degree.

**Class II** members of the sample also have a sound education background; they mostly spend 10 or more years at school, hold a matriculation plus a form of formal qualification.

**Class III** shows a less profound education background, although the group is more heterogenic in this aspect. The interviewees have writing and reading skills obtained

at school. Some have visited a kind of training afterwards but not all hold a formal vocational qualification.

**Class IV** members don't have a sound education background. Half of this group can be counted as completely illiterate; they either never visited a school at all or dropped out after a very short period. The rest visited a government school for a couple of years, none of them holds a formal school certificate or had any kind of formal training.

The UNDP HDI-figures (presented in 5.2.1.) show an illiteracy rate of 39% in India. A high illiteracy rate is set as one characteristic of poverty. (For comparison in Germany and in most of the industrialised countries of the North the illiteracy rate is below 1%). The general literacy rate increased from 18% of the total population in 1951 to 61% in 2005. In the 1940s India and China had similarly levels of literacy; today China is far ahead with 90% literacy rate. With 61%, India has an equally low literacy rate to Sub-Sahara Africa with 61.3% (UNDP 2005; Shiva Kumar 2007). India especially has widespread illiteracy in younger age groups, a problem many developing countries have managed to resolve. The gender gap is particularly striking in India; e.g. near half of all adolescence girls were illiterate in 1991 (Drèze 2004). The economists Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen have been discussing the connection between education and socio-economic situation of Indians, mainly in the field of basic education provided by the state. They see a bundle of social dimensions being responsible for the fact that so many Indian children lack basic education, connected with accessibility, affordability, and quality of schools (Drèze/Sen 2008; Sen 2005; Drèze 2004). It must be proved if and how these factors are perceived by the individuals and how they influence their decisions for or against education.

A deeper look into the system starts at the primary level. The Indian Right to Education Bill was introduced in 2005 and the 86<sup>th</sup> modification of the Indian constitution in 2006 makes education a fundamental right for all Indians between 6 and 14 years of age, currently around 200 million (Seminar 2006). This means that it is mandatory for the state to provide eight years of free education to every Indian child, which is the primary and upper primary level. V. Raina presents current

numbers of children attending school<sup>28</sup> in his article “Where do children go after class VIII?” (2006). According to him, of the 200 million children in the school age, 30 million remain completely absent from school. Of the remaining 170 million enrolled children, 35.9% drop out during primary level between classes 1-5. The number of drop outs increases to 52% in the group between classes 1-8. That means that less than 82 million of the 200 million children attend the 8 years of obliged school education; more than 118 million do not enjoy their right of free primary and upper primary school education (see fig 5.2). Raina calls the fact of such a major exclusion “educational infanticide”. He is confident that these children belong mainly to marginalized groups of the society like Dalits (the former untouchables), Adivasis (tribals), OBC (other backward castes) and girls (more about discrimination in schools follows in the next chapter 6 about classes and castes).

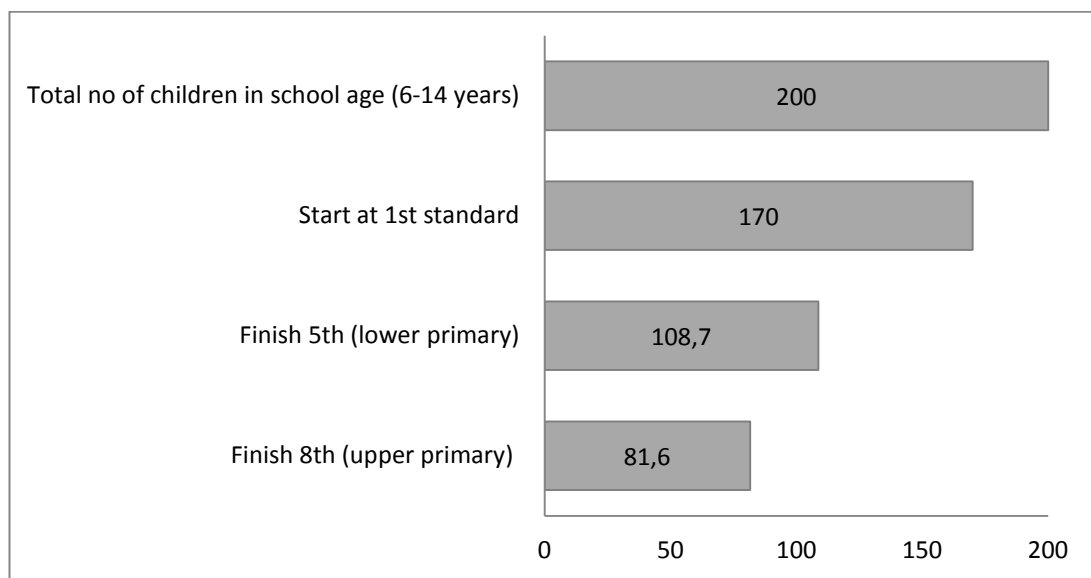


Fig. 5.2: School drop outs in India in Mio. (Source: own figure according to Raina 2006)

### 5.3.1. Expenses for Education

As partly indicated by other authors (Sen/Drèze 2008) a connection can be drawn between literacy and affordability of basic education. Starting with findings in the lower classes proves this view.

<sup>28</sup> Raina draws his data from various sources: Indian Census 2001, Selected Educational Statistics MHRD 2003, the Ministry of Labour, etc., which have been compiled in the Manpower Profile - Indian Yearbook 2004, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, New Delhi.

**Class IV**

Rhani (IVf1), the before cited 14 year old jewellery seller, tells about her educational history:

“I really liked going to school. I liked to learn. Sometimes we did not learn and there was no teacher but most of the time I liked it. I went for 4, 5 standard. And I would have liked it to continue. [...] But then my father said it is better to leave, it is enough, and decided that I should work and help my mother selling jewellery at the beach. She cannot speak English. We need the money. And the school was also too expensive, the books and uniform [...] I have some younger siblings. We also work as servants in other people’s house.” (IVf1)

Here economic pressure and expenditures for school utensils seem to be one essential reason why the girl did not continue with education. As explained above the living conditions of those informal vendors and servants like Rhani’s family are often extremely precarious. They have several jobs at minimum and very unreliable income basis, and their daily living can be described as hand-to-mouth. Normally all family members are somehow involved in gaining income from early childhood onwards. Rhani states that free of charge schooling still meant costs for her family.

Despite the constitutional direction of free primary and upper primary education for each child, this term has been interpreted differently from state to state, mostly in the narrow sense that there should just be no fee (Drèze, 2004). Elementary education does involve a lot of expenditures for parents. For example, an agricultural labourer in Bihar would have to spend more than a month’s earning each year to keep two children in government primary school, although there is no direct school fee (ibid). Despite of the postulated right of education, education is a question of finances as Sen states. “Effective elementary education has in practice ceased to be free in substantial parts of the country, which of course is a violation of a basic right.” (A. Sen, 2005: 217). Economically caused educational deprivation has been often discussed in the context of child labour<sup>29</sup>. India has more child labourers than any other country (approximately 60 million), who work 12 or more hours a day (Saminathan 2007). Poor families depend on child labour, and most school-age drop out children take up productive work (like in Rhani’s case). Nevertheless, Drèze

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<sup>29</sup> The term child labour depends on the definition of the terms labour and childhood. According to ILO definition (1973), no person below the age of 15 is considered suitable for employment. Swaminathan warns that the number of child workers in India can be easily undercounted due to the huge estimated number of children working in hidden urban locations in the informal sector, in subsistence production or are engaged in housework that lie outside of official accounts (2007).



(2004) argues that it is difficult to see a simple causal link between child labour and educational deprivation; the timing of most schools would allow combining some kind of work and attending school. If a combination of school and work would have been possible for Rhani could not be examined. In her story the parents' perception of schooling in general seems to be more relevant. She talks about her parents' decision regarding her school career (IVf1). Her parents did not receive any school education. Her father decided that she should leave school after 4 or 5 years. Beside the pure necessity to create some income as one main reason why she is not pursuing more education, her parents' illiteracy has also to be taken into account as one factor: "My parents don't know much about school, they never went." (IVf1).

The phenomenon is confirmed by the Don Bosco coordinator (EX2): "Here so many times the girls are 8<sup>th</sup> pass or 6<sup>th</sup> pass or no education. It's the mentality of undereducated, if the mother is not educated why should the daughter? This is typical of lower classes: no education."

The parent's education background often decides about the education career of the offspring. As Rhani states, her parents sent her to school initially; but then after some years the necessity to work overshadowed good reasons for schooling. Nevertheless, the fact that they sent her at least for 4-5 years, although they themselves never visited any kind of school, can be interpreted as some kind of awareness in the importance of education. (One reason for some education can be seen in the perception of better marriage opportunities for Rhani, as will be analysed in chapter 6.)

### **Class III and above**

Those who send their children to school (and from class III onwards) state that they pay a lot for private tutoring in addition to the regular school classes (if they can afford the cost) (e.g. IIIf5; IIm1). Extra tutoring seem to be important for many parents because competition begins in primary schools where pupils are already urged to perform at a high level at a young age. That was affirmed by many interviewees, especially from class II and I backgrounds (If3; Im3; IIm2). During my first and second stay in India, I noticed a vast number of autumn activities for school children from a young age onwards. Almost all children whose parents can afford it visit private tutors in the afternoon after the regular classes. For a number of

interviewees, being able to pay tuitions or even a private teacher in addition to the school fees is one main concept which promises better paid jobs (ibid). The anticipated valued consequence of investing in the individual (further) education is often found to be able to pay for the best institutions and the best teachers for their offspring. The expenditure in being able to pay for e.g. tutors and study material influences access to secondary and higher education: The national or state board exams, Matric (the first state exam after class 10) and entry exams to higher education facilities are perceived as highly difficult and selective.

That view is supported by the continuity of the above mentioned tendency for children to drop out in the secondary education level. Of the 82 million students in class eight, 22 million continue in class nine and ten (see figure 5.2). This means that the remaining 60 million will drop out. So a little more than 10% of the 200 million of the age group 6-14 years remain to obtain education after class eight and receive a first formal qualification after finishing the tenth standard of high school by passing Matric. Only a minority of the appropriate age group of youths manages to get access to tertiary education (fig. 5.2.) Out of the 22 million or 10% of youth pursuing education after class 8, in class 11 and 12 this number reduces by half to 11 million; only a little more than 5% enter higher secondary education stage. At graduate and post graduate level, the enrolment is around 7.6 million. Other authors present more or less same low figures (10 million students are enrolled at higher education level according to Debroy 2004).

Based on the findings, costs can be assumed as one reason why 90% of all Indian children and youths terminate education at class 8 at the latest (or much earlier like the girl Rhani in the sample). Only a small group leaves the education system more or less fully educated.

But it is not only perceived costs of education, whether direct financial or indirect social costs, that are found to influence education decisions. The quality of the Indian education system has been often discussed, and is also assumed to influence expectations regarding education.

### **5.3.2. Perceived Conditions of the Education System**

There are primarily two types of schools operating in India: governmental and private (the latter are also sometimes referred to as public schools). About 17 percent

of all kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools are in the private sector; the proportion is much higher in big cities (Srivastava 2009).

### **Classes III and IV**

The data shows that even people at a lower economic level state that they try to send their children to a private school. One clear essence of data analysis is that the governmental school sector is not only diagnosed to be of bad quality by education experts, but is also perceived to have a very bad reputation amongst almost all interviewees of all levels. Interviewees of class III (and also class IV if they have attended school) in particular have had their own experiences with the governmental education system because they often don't have the financial opportunities to finance private education. They give testimony regarding their disappointment in the system (e.g. IIIm4; IIIf2).

One 29 year old contract labourer of class IV left school after 5 years and states:

“What is schooling? The school teacher was often absent. Me and my siblings sometimes questioned what we shall do at school but most of the time we only hang out with the other children doing what we wanted. I don't know why somebody should do all the long way to school for this waste of time. Having me on the farm was better for my parents.” (IVm3)

Here the bad experiences with the school system become obvious. The same group who had negative school experiences also don't seem to expect much out of governmental schooling for their children. But they invest at least to some extent in education for their children. Again the above cited labourer (who has 2 children):

“I send my children to a governmental school. Private schooling is very expensive and we also pay a lot for all the other things, books, you know. But I try to give my best to send my children to a school at least. To find a job is easier if you have a background.” (IVm3)

Depending on governmental schooling seems to severely hinder higher expectations for their children; nevertheless the motivation to invest at least in primary education seems to be activated through the hope that the children will have an easier time finding a job with an educational background. That also shows the figures of enrolled children at the primary level. Nevertheless, even the group who was disappointed in school perceives education in general as an important and worthy achievement to invest in. Like their high class counterparts, they immediately named

IT, engineering and medicine as the best occupations possible for an Indian (see above).

Regarding the government school system and its bad reputation, Dash states that the effectiveness of a school is related to the extent of facilities available in the school (2002, found in Srivastava 2009). The correlation between facilities in different types of schools and learner achievement was shown by Verghese (1995). About 86% government schools had either poor facilities or no facilities. 94% of all private English medium schools were categorized as either having good facilities or very good facilities. Pupils' achievements improved systematically with enhancement in school facilities. Also according to Sen (2005; Sen/Drèze 2008), the biggest problems of the Indian school system are the lack of enough facilities as compared to the number of students, and the weak institutional structure of the system. Other authors reconfirm this view (e.g. Kochar 2007). Sen found evidence in a study among Indian primary schools that many schools are inefficiently run, and that the institutions suffer from teacher absenteeism (PROBE 1999). In 75% of the unannounced visited schools during the study, severe numbers of employed teachers were absent (although their salary had gone up drastically in the last decades due to the power of strong teacher unions, around RS 10.000/month). In A. Sen's study, more than two-thirds of the tested children in class 3 and 4 were not able to write their names. Although the number of primary schools has increased more than three times between 1950 and 2000 to 642,000 schools, the student-teacher ratio has worsened dramatically from 24 in 1950 to 43 in 2000 (Kochan 2007). Due to a national policy to broaden the net of primary schools, the increase in quantity of schools has lead partly to very small school sizes (50 or less students) in rural areas with a very low number of teachers. Here, multi-grade instruction is the norm with teachers simultaneously instructing students in several grades. In 2002, 28% of all rural schools had one or less teachers on average, 64% had two or less. Most have only one (if any) classroom (ibid.; Drèze 2004). Common teaching methods are not sufficient to sustain the interest of the children<sup>30</sup>. Due to different state policies and priorities towards education, decentralisation has additionally had a hand in partly decreasing the quality of education regarding student teacher ratio and quantity of

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<sup>30</sup> Further social forms of child discouragement were found and will be discussed in chapter 6.

facilities, etc. The decentralisation has not resulted in greater efficiency of input use. Many believe that reasons for the poor quality of schooling and low schooling budgets are found in “the apathy of local elites towards government schools.” (Kochar 2007)

Many authors have been harshly critical of the present Indian government education system regarding quantity and quality of (existing) facilities at all educational levels (e.g. Sen; Drèze; Kapur/Metha; Debroy; Jefferey; Raina). As Debroy (2007) states and according to Census of India figures, in 2001 India had more places to worship (2.4 million) than schools and colleges (1.5 million) and hospitals (0.5 million) combined.

### **Class III and above**

Because of its bad reputation, parents with adequate financial resources are not even taking governmental primary and secondary schooling into consideration:

“For my husband and me it was clear that our child will visit only the best school, for that we are willing to make contributions. I went to the same institution already, it has a good tradition and I am thankful for the good education that helped me a lot becoming what I am today.” (If3)

A response to the inexpensive but inadequate and deficient government schools is the preference of private institutions. Almost all interviewees in class I, II and even down to class III visited private schools or send their children to a private school which can mean huge financial burdens for the families (e.g. IIIf5). The class III members of the sample have an annual household income between Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 120,000 (€950,- to €1900,-). Many of the class II members also state that they pay more than one third of their income for their children’s education, which is mainly spent for school fees. “I earn 1 ½ lhak (150.000 RS.) in a year. Schooling for both of my children is around Rs. 50.000 a year. They visit a convent school which has a good reputation.” (IIIm3). His wife is a housewife and does not contribute to the household income. The bad quality and reputation of the government school sector seems to be well known throughout the classes. In addition, private schools offer an English standard education which is perceived as the kind of schooling of advancement and modernity (IIIm3, IIIm1) (also Weigl 2010). Parents seem to expect to be part of modernity when they send their children to an English school as one woman, Sunita, confirms: “We are part of a modern world and that is also why we

send our kids to an English school. That is the time. Everybody wants to be part of modernity nowadays and that is very important I believe.” (Iif1)

Due to the rapidly increasing demand of workforce and graduates since the 1990s private primary education institutes have been mushrooming all over the country and at all levels of education, which has led to the development of a private education sector as an important segment of the Indian economy. Depending on the reputation of the institution, the fees can vary extensively. Tuition amounting to several hundred thousands of Rupees is not unusual. A range of scholarship and loan schemes exist, but are very limited in numbers.

The same counts for higher education. The number of private higher education institutes has also constantly increased, e.g. in 2003 the private sector accounted for nearly 87% of all seats of engineering colleges (15% in 1960). The “de facto privatization” (Kapur/Mehta 2007) continues also in other prestigious scientific fields like medicine, law, and economics, also driven by increasing demand and profit motives of the institutes. One possibility to increase the reputation (hence the financial gain of an institute) is the introduction of challenging entry examinations and sophisticated candidate test systems, where institutes sometimes invest more than in the education itself (*ibid.*). It emphasises again the meaning of additional promotion of the children (e.g. through private tutors as often stated by the interviewees). Beside the private sector, there are more than 300 governmental central and state universities, out of those 18 central universities including the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU, established in 1985) have a focus on distance education (Debroy 2007). In contrast to the primary and secondary systems, governmental higher education is said to be of better quality, but the number of seats available is far too low to accommodate the masses of young Indians who are looking for higher education. Among the universities are 13 so-called Institutes of National Importance, the six Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) and the seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT), with an excellent worldwide reputation and among the country’s premier education facilities. The IITs and IIMs each enroll around 4000 students each year. Around 1600 colleges operate under the universities. The state emphasis of tertiary education is on science and technology. The 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan focuses strongly on higher education. (Chapter 5 of Volume 1 called “Inclusive Growth” of the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan is dedicated to “Skill

Development and Training”).) This is often called an “overemphasis” of higher education, especially the development of few elite institutes, and is partly being made responsible for the neglect of primary and secondary education by the Indian state (Kapur/Metha 2007), including the vocational training sector.

This sector is especially important to focus on in order to understand the meaning of the low numbers of students who pursue education after class 8. Vocational education is meant to be an alternative post-school career preparation pathway next to higher education at universities and college where graduates receive degrees. Vocational training qualifications obtained at Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics are based on diplomas and certificates. In general, the occupational prestige of vocational training seems to be lower than that of university and college degrees (Arulmani/Nag-Arulmani 2006). Vocational education in India is structured in two main streams (Diehl 1999). One small formal system exists, mainly ITIs after class 10 (the students in this segment represent the remaining 11 Million together with higher education after class 12) and a large informal component. ITIs have roughly 750.000 to 1 Mil. students enrolled (Kapur/Metha 2007). The National Sample Survey’s 61<sup>st</sup> Round affirms that only 2% of the total Indian population is reported to have received formal vocational training and a further 8% have attended non-formal vocational training courses. The Government of India admits that this rate of around 10% trained along with a graduation rate of under 5% among youth between the ages of 20 and 24 entering the labour market is one of the lowest in the world (Government of India 2008: 87). The independent Indian journal on social sciences “Seminar”<sup>31</sup> attests to the importance of the topic of relating education to the working world in a July 2006 issue entitled “Education and Livelihoods”. The huge group of untrained youth “remains trapped in a cycle of low opportunity and returns – a monumental wastage of talents and enterprise.” (Seminar 2006: 12) The above mentioned bad conditions of the primary education system are also valid for the secondary and post school education and training system. The system must be seen as disconnected with the real life context of its target group. Most ITIs are of very poor quality. Not only is the gross number of existing institutional capacity and infrastructure far too low, but most institutes are also reported as outdated and

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.india-seminar.com/>

inefficient (ibid.). The ITI sector remains a neglected part of the educational system, focusing on degrees instead of actual development of useful skills. Beside a handful of outstanding institutions with an excellent reputation, the ITI sector is perceived as incapable of producing graduates who have skills and knowledge. It is only due to the sheer number of students and the “Darwinian struggle” to gain admission into the few good institutions at the secondary level, that the system produces a noticeable number of high quality students and graduates at all (Kapur/Metha 2007).

### **Class I and II**

The data gives the impression that vocational training is not an option for class I members’ children. Their aspirations are concentrated on higher education. Class II members, though not fully academically educated themselves, are also not taking governmental vocational training into consideration. Again, the inferior quality of the system is reflected in its bad reputation:

“I would never send my kids to a public ITI, the quality is very bad there. Quality and reputation matters most. The ITIs might be for others [...] you know other groups [...] We have thank God better opportunities.” (IIIm2)

With “other groups” the interviewee, called Mr. A., means the less educated and underprivileged sections of the society. Here, we see the hierarchical thinking in its social dimension, as mentioned by the GLOBE study (2004, see above), coming into the picture. The society and the mindset of the people is dominated by sharp hierarchical thinking between high and low in all kinds of matters, and in educational issues in resources and capabilities, from which only a few benefit – one of the GLOBE parameters.

### **Class III**

The negative reputation of the government vocational training system is not only evident in higher classes:

“These schools from the government are not where the people learn a lot what they need here. I learned everything on the job and none of my co-workers went through that kind of (official vocational) training. Once two neighbours did but no boss did like it. One is a jobber as I am. It was a waste of time. The other one never finished the training” (IIIIm3)

The interviewee, called Mr. K., expresses here that he feels the relationship between training and real work life to be defective and that he does not expect any positive



consequence to come from governmental vocational training. Furthermore, Mr. K, along with others from class III, state that they never received official information or even informal counseling on which training might be meaningful, of use or what would have been possible once the training was completed. A group of female clients between 19 and 23 years of age who come from a Don Bosco<sup>32</sup> service centre in the Bombay slum area, Dharavid, agree with this view (IIIIf1). They are attached to class III in the study, despite their low family background, because they all attended school until class 10 and successfully participated in a vocational training course provided from a Don Bosco training school. The NGO provides counseling and qualitative training possibilities which helps to create positive and realistic expectations regarding a decent livelihood. The government system fails to provide this. As other clients have already discovered, the girls all expect to find regular employment in one of the bigger companies in Bombay due to their sound education and training. According to Raina (2006), the Indian education system has paid little attention, if any, to the small formal training sector and only to the few reputed institutes. The mass of the population, without any access to formal training, remains unattended. Beside the lack of facilities, a vastly larger challenge is “[...] equipping our youth to [...] exercise informed choice about livelihoods and life.” (Seminar 2006, introduction: 13). The Seminar journal emphasises the lack of awareness creation for youth regarding education and job orientation. As also seen in the interviews, guidance and counseling is mostly done by educated family members and in private schools, and seems to be a privilege reserved primarily for those who are better educated or who are lucky to benefit from NGO services. In examining the data, it is mainly children from privileged backgrounds with an awareness of their situation who have a chance to understand the choices in occupation and learning paths that are open to them.

#### **5.4. Motivational Dynamics of Education: Economic Conditions and the Education System**

In the context of framework information regarding the country's current state, several factors have been flagged in the interviews mentioned in the chapter above.

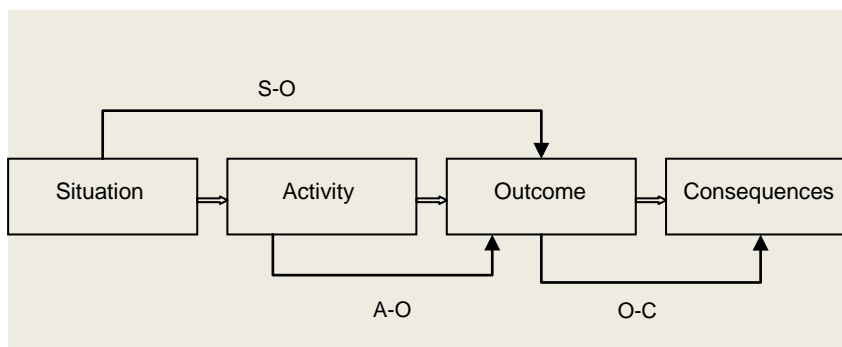
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<sup>32</sup> Don Bosco is one of the leading NGOs in the education sector in India.

This leads to first hypotheses on their possible influence on motivation for education.

- a. Remaining poverty, especially regarding aspects of satisfying basic needs
- b. Perceived economic development
- c. Perceived competition in the labour market and jobless growth
- d. Awareness of promising branches and perceived access possibilities
- e. Expenses of education
- f. Perception of inferior quality of the government education system

The aim of the above paragraphs is to show which factors were discovered and how they are perceived. Next, with the help of several motivation theories introduced in chapter 2, (mainly the extended motivation model by Heckhausen (1977) enhanced by Boudon's approach on social disparities in education (1974)), it will be derived how the perception impacts the motivation to pursue education (fig. 5.3).



1. S-O Expectations
2. A-O Expectations
3. O-C Expectations
4. Value of Consequences

**Fig. 5.3: Extended model of motivation, based on Heckhausen (1977)**

The first socio-economic factor that already been presumed on the base of Sinha's characteristic is a) the evident *poverty* in India. As the UNDP definition for poverty states (and as authors like A. Sen have analysed), main characteristics of poverty in India is undernourishment and in general problems of satisfying basic needs.

The interviewed members of class IV and parts of class III (like the interviewed construction workers, jewellery sellers and informal labourers in the local companies) all have one thing in common: the concern to permanently satisfy very basic needs. From a motivational point of view, the aspect of satisfying basic needs can be best explained with the need approach of Abraham Maslow (1954, 1968), introduced previously in chapter 2. In his pyramid of needs, he distinguishes hierarchically ordered need groups according to their relevance in personality development. A need determines behaviour as long as it is left unsatisfied. Until a need has been satisfied, the next level will not be reached. An individual is only able to act upon the higher ranking growth needs when the deficiency needs on the lower levels have been fulfilled. For the above cited interviewees, the fulfillment of the existence needs is not yet a sure thing in their daily lives. If education is defined as a growth need, the basic needs are too dominant to allow the upcoming of a higher ranking need such as improved self-esteem or even self-actualisation through education. Although the Maslow model is widely assumed to be outdated in western industrialized settings, it may still have some relevance to explain the educational behaviour of people in the Indian context, with its vast economic differences and wide spread poverty. On the other hand, the model reaches its boundaries when viewing the hierarchical position of social or relatedness needs. Maslow strongly emphasizes this aspect when stating that until a lower need (like food) has been satisfied, a higher need such as belonging to a social group is not activated. This relatively strict definition seems to be (at least in the Indian context) doubtful, which will be shown when discussing the findings on social relations in chapter 6.

As the data shows, the need to strive every day for enough income to feed oneself and one's family does not allow for room to deal with many other aspects of life other than survival. Education related needs such as self esteem through achievement and self fulfillment are among the higher ranking needs in Maslow's model. The interview results confirm that higher defined needs regarding education are not in the focus of most individuals of the lowest society segments. Seeing the poverty figures for India, where 47% of all children under the age of 5 are undernourished, Maslow's theory seems to be justifiable for the Indian case. Higher defined needs are hardly in the focus of individuals who belong to poor segments of the society. The average, very low, daily income of RS 75 to RS 36 in the

dominating informal sector, which spans from slightly above to clearly below poverty definitions, also supports that assumption. Transferred to the four elements of the extended motivation model, this would mean that people dominated by poverty in India lack motivation due to the situation that they are embedded in. There is no anticipation of educational desired outcomes or even valued consequences, which are necessary for the occurrence of motivation. Indians are occupied with satisfying basic needs and securing the survival of their family. They do not have the capacity to pursue education, either for themselves or for the education of their children. Poverty inhibits investments in general. In educational matters, this is nothing new, but serves here as important background information.

The second factor reflects a contradictory trend to the remaining poverty and is closely linked with the ongoing growth of the economy. Factor b) *the perception of the economic development* stands in close connection with factor c) *the accompanying trend of jobless growth in the formal employment sector and growing competition*. The data signals the growing need for future job seekers of class I and II to compete with others on the labour market. The meaning of education will increase for individuals regardless of their social class and therefore the motivation to pursue the same. Adapted to Heckhausen's model, the need for qualified workers and the perception of growth of certain sectors on the labour market will probably function as a positive incentive to pursue training and higher education. High class interviewees mention valued consequences (C) such as benefiting from the growth of the economy by successfully entering important branches, high job security and good income possibilities which promise good care for the family and children. When people are informed about market trends and understand which industrial sectors will be in need of skilled workforce in the future, investment in their children's education will also be perceived as a positive incentive for the growth of the economy. Also, the perception of the tightening informal labour markets and the perception of competition leads to motivational dynamics in the expectation that being educated in the right area (O) brings with it a secure and vital job. Therefore a first hypothesis can be formulated:

*H1) Indians from class I and II are aware of the economic development including the necessity for competition. They are motivated to invest in formal education*

*because they expect to enter the formal job market, which they perceive as tightening, and have job (and social) security, along with a high income.*

In contrast, low class members don't expect their work conditions to change due to the growth. A contrary cognitive process can be derived: Low class members expect to remain in insecure work conditions (C) and not to participate from the economic trend (C) despite being trained and educated (O), which hinders their motivation to pursue further education (A). Here the anticipated consequence "remaining in insecure work conditions" is of negative value and therefore education is not worthwhile to pursue. It already becomes obvious here that the individuals to be analysed have to be more precisely differentiated also according to gender, caste or in-group relations (in chapter 6) that may also influence the access to certain work and working conditions.

The next aspect found through exploration in the interviews and not previously considered is d) *awareness of branches and perceived access possibilities* reflected in the concreteness of plans for the realisation of worthwhile educational investment. An awareness or perception of certain branches which promise success on the tightening labour market of the growing economy (Engineering/IT, law, medicine) is noticeable from interviewees in both high and low classes, across the classes I to III. That means that some awareness is there. It becomes obvious that growth can function as a positive signal, and how important information, knowledge and awareness of ongoing trends as well as access to possibilities leads to positive anticipation of consequences. Drèze (2004) is convinced that most Indians do not even know that economic reforms are taking place. In contrast to his view, even the low class interviewees showed some awareness of important branches and the general importance of education. This could be due to the urban background of the whole sample and must be further investigated in rural areas as well.

Differences between classes are marked in the formation of plans to gain access to the desired branches. The higher the class membership, the more concrete the plans to achieve education in the sectors perceived as promising become. Reasons for the differences can be found in a general feeling of unattainability of the desired branches and in a lack of knowledge about how to access those possibilities. This represents not only awareness of education but also a perceived social proximity or

social distance towards education. As explained, according to Boudon, the decision for education and for education decisions for one's own children depends on the estimation of three main factors: cost of education, return of education, and the probability of success due to education. Overcoming high social distances increases the perception of the indirect costs of education (Becker 2009). Despite the awareness of branches, low class interviewees tend not to have a concept of how to make use of economic trends or how to access important fields because the social distance of high educational targets seems to be too high. Therefore, the data from the lower class individuals shows that the general awareness of economic development does not really activate concrete motivation to pursue education here. In the sample, the motivation to actually pursue education for one's own children depended heavily on the individual's level of education. That is valid for all examined classes. When it comes to concrete realisation activities, the lower class members show less motivation and their children remain more or less on the same educational paths as their parents. Most low class individuals are undereducated and come from illiterate or undereducated family backgrounds. In the sample, they are early school drop-outs or never attended a school at all, and have illiterate parents. As Esser states in his analysis of Boudon's sociological theory of education (2000: 217): "Der Apfel fällt nicht weit vom Stamm; denn seinen Baum kennt der Apfel ganz gut, den Rest der Welt aber weniger." (The apple does not fall far from the tree; the apple knows his tree very well, this is not true for the rest of the world.)

An individual's lack of education means a higher social distance to higher education goals (Becker *ibid.*). This leads to a higher estimation of the indirect cost of educational investments for the offspring.

The indirect cost of overcoming social distances towards education and certain branches seems to be perceived as higher in class IV and III, and poverty as an indicator of low social class membership directly influences the estimation of factor *d) expenses of education* or direct cost. As explained in the context of the conditions of the system education in India, it is not free of cost and expenditures are often seen as very high. The factor expenses for education in India boosts the higher estimation of cost due to high social distances from education among the interviewed lower class members. The following assumption can be extracted:

*H2) Indians from lower class background tend to invest less in education because they perceive the indirect cost of education (meaning to overcome social distances to educational and economic trends) as well as the direct cost of education as too high.*

Finally a main factor of the education system itself, (beside the already in *H2* comprised factor expenditures for education) is *g) the perception of inferior quality of the government education system*, also leading to a hypothesis for further verification. As the interviews show, the insufficiently equipped infrastructure, the lack of proper instruction and so on create a negative attitude towards the education system, especially among parents who have had negative experiences with the Indian school system themselves. Nevertheless, parents of classes III and IV still decide for government education at the primary level.

Expectations and so motivation to invest in education are hampered at the secondary level due to the bad reputation of governmental post school training system, topped with a lack of systematic counselling and creation of awareness. The interviewees are convinced that the existing governmental training system does not produce skilled and demand-oriented workers, and that the graduates won't find adequate jobs. The few outstanding higher education institutes do not offer enough facilities for the potential numbers of students and are beyond the reach of most class III and IV members. The study shows that not only those who can afford private education avoid the public training system. The interviewees who have not been able afford private secondary education have in fact invested much less in education after class 8. So it must be assumed that:

*H3) Indians who depend on government post school education are less motivated to choose vocational training because they do not expect (their children) to receive sufficient knowledge and skills in the government system, and don't expect to find adequate jobs afterwards.*

Both the A-O and the O-C expectations are not fulfilled here. The bad reputation of the government training sector and the limitation of quality higher education institutes probably only creates negative aspiration or simply does not play any role in future plans of Indians. A considerable hint is the very high dropout rate among students of the government education system after class 8.

The high dropout rate might function as a signal among the population. Boudon states that observed behaviour of the peer group is essential for education activities of individuals. Depending on the social class that an Indian belongs to, drop-out behaviour might be considered a common practice. The aspect will be discussed in detail in chapter 6 on social relations.

As already suggested by Boudon, the first results show that educational behaviour is widely dependent on the social class background. The socio-economic situation is an important independent variable which influences attitudes and behaviour of the interviewees. But the first hypotheses made on the basis of general socio-economic framework conditions of the country also propose a deeper look at the social living conditions and surrounding of the interviewees.

The following chapter therefore deals with the different kinds of social relations that the interviewees experience in order to derive factors that may further influence educational decisions. The results will again be transferred to motivation for education and the selected motivation models; further assumptions will be compiled and existing ones expanded upon or more precisely formulated.



## 6. Social Relations

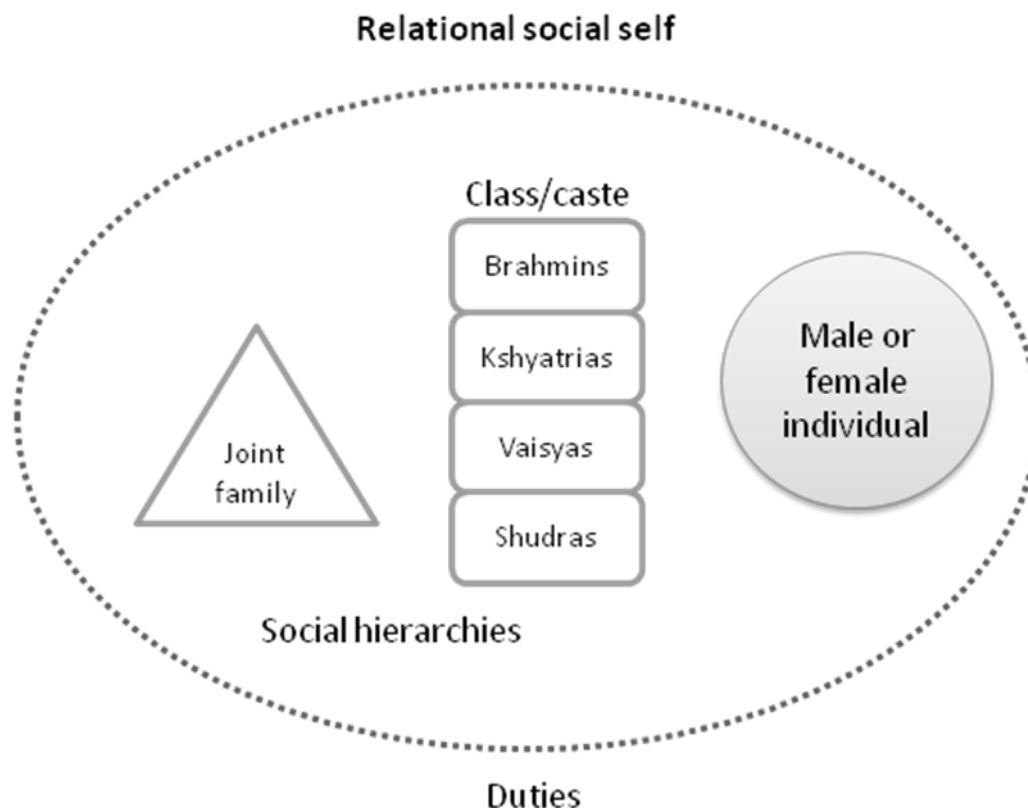
One of Sinha's three characteristics of the Indian identity (1982; chapter 3) is the social self of a Hindu, including the *family-social institutions and relationships*. As in chapter 5, I will follow a deductive as well as an inductive approach. Based on Sinha, the aspect of social relations deductively forms the second important factor group of socio-cultural influences. According to Sinha, the social self represents a Hindu's efforts to realize himself within the given social framework. This framework is formed to a great extent by the joint and extended family and the caste system. These concepts are two of the main foundations of the following chapter.

The pre-considered BMZ criteria of *social organisation* and *heterogeneity* are also reflected in the aspect of social relations, in particular in the aspects of caste belongings and family structures that are perceived to influence the awareness of education and educational decisions. That means that in contrast to the previous chapter on factors mainly from public and structural spheres, this chapter deals primarily with factors from the private areas of the subjects' lives. The concept of caste has been integrated into the overarching headline of social relations as the idea of caste is still a predominantly social one.

Mascolo and others (Mascolo et al. 2004) structure the Indian self within the social and spiritual self. Fig 6.1 shows the social self and its component family and caste/class hierarchies. Certain duties determine the individual's interaction with different caste and family members.<sup>33</sup> The gender of the individual in the Indian social context is also believed to determine different duties and therefore behaviour.

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<sup>33</sup> The complete model of social and spiritual self will be discussed in chapter 7 on Hinduism.



**Fig. 6.1: The social self in the Indian conception of selfhood. (Source: Own figure based on Mascolo et al. 2004: 11.)**

The concept will be introduced as a hierarchic system (6.1.), followed by field findings of caste impact and remaining influences of caste membership on people's behaviour regarding education (6.1.1. and 6.1.2.). Collectivism has been often described as a main character of the Indian society, which is reflected again in the meaning of family (6.2.), followed by field findings (6.2.1. and 6.2.2.). A third main factor includes the importance of gender and different conceptions of gender roles (6.3). The focus will be on the aspect of being female as a socio-cultural construct and what this means for educational decisions in different life stages of women (before and after marriage).

Again at the end of the chapter, I will summarize factors found as relevant for educational decisions and transfer them to the motivation theories in order to formulate hypothesis on the motivation to search for education (6.4.).

### **6.1. The Indian Caste System**

So far, the individuals who have participated in the interviews have been described according to their socio-economic background and sorted according to four class groups (chapter 5). In order to look more closely at the subjects, the topic of castes could be used, as this still differentiates and describes Indians to some extent. But due to vast changes in the caste orders in the last decades, castes functions as a socio-cultural factor which is assumed to influence motivation for education but does not seem to be appropriate to differentiate the sample as a whole. Nevertheless, the caste system was considered for many years to be “the” method to sort the Indian society from top to bottom, based on Indological records of classic ancient Hindu scripture and also on anthropological ethnographic field findings from Indian villages (Béteille 2005). But in contrast to class distinctions, caste is no longer relevant to the demand for a model of socio-economic structures of the Indian society (see also chapter 5).

Indian and western sociologists have been intensively discussing both the phenomenon of castes itself, as well as the leading question if whether in modern India the system is still widely valid or not (e.g. Srinivas 1996; Panini 1996; Béteille 1996, 2005, 2005a; Vaid 2007; Hoff 2004). According to Indian sociologist André Béteille (1992), the writings of three German and French sociologists and social anthropologists have been most influential theoretically: Max Weber, Celestin Bouglé, and Luis Dumont. All three differ greatly in orientation, scientific approach, and data collection, but have in common their conviction that the caste system is the key to understanding the Indian society and culture, which they contrast clearly with their own cultural (European) background. Because of caste, they portray the Indian society as extremely rigid, immobile and unchanging. Weber (1958, also 1978) concentrates on Hindu religion as the root of caste thinking and he contrasts it with Protestant ethics of western societies and their economic dynamism. Bouglé (1971) points to the historical continuity of the caste system and draws attention to the inseparability of caste and Hinduism. Finally, Dumont’s comparative studies on caste (e.g. 1970) have influenced social anthropological studies of India for decades (e.g. Marriott 1990). Dumont’s writings mostly concentrate on the aspects of hierarchy and holism within the Indian society. In contrast, the west is portrayed by the attributes of equality and individualism. Dumont’s credit is that he draws

attention to the preoccupation, or in B eteille's words, even obsession, with distinction, rank and status in Indian society, a characteristic that, according to B eteille, persists in India even today (1992; 2005).

Srinivas (1996) states that many beliefs in sociological textbooks written by non-Indians about the caste concept reflect western stereotypes of Indian society, something Dumont has often been criticised for. Perceiving the topic of castes as a relatively sensitive field, the study tries to draw mainly on Indian experts and Indian literature.

The caste system is structured into four *varnas* (major castes) which are arranged strictly hierarchically: Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (menial workers) (Gaiha et al. 2008). A fifth group is formed of the Anti Shudras or Dalits (the former untouchables), which were seen in the classical social order as too low to be counted within the system. That means the Dalits were figuratively nobodies and did not exist (EX3). The four *varnas* and the untouchables are divided further into thousands of sub castes (*jatis*). The Dalits were traditionally associated with occupations dealing with dead material, excrements, filth and dirt, which is linked to the Hindu construction of purity and impurity of social groups (see below; Hoff 2004). If an occupation was perceived as more pure, the caste rank was higher. The role of food habits is closely linked to the understanding of occupational purity or impurity. The rank of a caste depends to a great extent on the avoidance of foods and liquors that might be perceived as impure (Srinivas 1996). Relations between castes are governed by this purity-pollution concept. The more pure that a group is perceived as, the further up it stands on the social ladder.

A division of the society in the four *varnas* is mentioned in the Veda, one of the most influential Hindu ancient religious scriptures, compiled around 1500 BC to 1000 BC. The body of literature called the Veda (which is often translated as knowledge or wisdom) is the major source of knowledge about the religious life of the ancestors (Madan 2008). The Veda is believed to have always existed and therefore not written by a human author. The formation of the castes is described as the sacrifice of the first man created in order to give rise to the four *varnas*: "The Brahmin was the mouth, his two arms were made the ruler (Kshatriya), his two thighs the Vaishya (traders), and from his feet the Shudra (labourers) was born." The

connection between religion and the caste system also becomes clear in the rules regarding the execution of sacred rituals and in the understanding of duties (*dharma*, see chapter 7). The Brahmins (who are seen to be the purest and so the highest castes) held and still hold the priesthood (Dube 1996).

Officially, the age old caste system was eliminated in post-colonial India in the year 1950 by the Indian government when, as a consequence of independence, the constitution of India came into force (Béteille 1992). Among other difficulties, the caste system was perceived as a barrier in the way of progress of the new constituted nation. The new constitution renounced the hierarchical design of caste, and the 2000 year old privileges and disabilities of caste were no longer covered by legal directives. Now, caste distinction is legally forbidden and any discrimination is in conflict with the law, whereas in the past the direct opposite was true.

But despite the legal change in the constitution, customs still take account of caste distinction in contemporary India (e.g. Béteille 1991; 1992; 2005). Present caste thinking is assumed to still play a major role in daily life of most Indians (for more on the scientific discussion about the role of caste today, see below). According to Karanth, any analysis of contemporary caste thinking and its impact requires an understanding of the original ideology of the institution. An oft-cited early passage by Srinivas (1962; Karanth 1996) is helpful to refer to the features of caste:

“Caste is a hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by the concepts of pollution and purity, and generally, maximum commensality occurs within caste.” (Srinivas 1962: 3)

Srinivas’ definition contains the following features of caste: First, caste membership is defined at birth; second, a caste is an endogamous unit, which means members generally marry within their own group. Third, caste membership was traditionally bound to an occupation or trade to pursue; fourth, castes are graded in local hierarchy, and fifth, notions of purity and pollution govern the nature and extent of the relationship between the castes (also Karanth 1996).

Seeing the first of Sriniva’s characteristics in the close stratified caste system, it is believed that people are inherently different by birth. These differences cannot easily be detected by the senses as in other stratification systems (e.g. that of ‘race’) but

exist in the nature of coded substances (Gupta 2008). Different castes are said to have entirely different lifestyles, such as different rituals and practices, or different food habits.

One visible aspect is the norm of caste endogamy and marriage customs. Ancient Hindu scriptures warn against any sexual or marital liaison across castes (Gupta 2008). These texts say clearly that the offspring of inter-caste unions would not belong to either of the parent's castes or to an in between caste, but that the child would be excommunicated, or cast out from the original parent's castes and would end up in a caste far lower than that of both parents. As Gupta further states, this is the reason that the ancient texts give for the existence of very low castes like Chamars or Chandals (2008). Some decades ago, another consequence of inter-caste marriage was a very severe problem for whole families: the marriage prospects for other unmarried girls and boys in the respective families were often damaged (Karanth 1996). Public lynching of the inter-caste married couples was also known to have occurred. Today, society is more tolerant of inter-caste marriage, though Karanth reports that mixed couples often emigrate from their village (*ibid.*) (for more on marriage customs today, see below).

Regarding the third aspect, the association of castes with certain occupations, the growth of new professions and the development of new economic sectors have been important aspects of social change in India (Dube 1996). Branches which have never been associated with and occupied by certain castes are free from traditional caste norms and therefore are theoretically open to all Indians. A prominent example is the IT sector (see more in 6.1.2.). Karanth further reports that there is a growing dissociation with hereditary occupations and that it is no longer possible to deduce a person's caste by looking at his or her occupation. Before the new constitution averted caste distinction of legal hereditary rights, obligations of each caste were strictly observed by local caste *panchayats* or caste councils (Karanth 1996). This quasi-judicial institution regulated the conduct of caste members in all matters including their occupational rights. After independence and the official annulment of the caste system, the *panchayats* became redundant, and with it the exclusiveness and prohibition of occupations for certain castes. Caste status no longer inhibited the free choice of a desired occupation and so members of middle and upper castes especially tended to move away from traditional occupations. Despite the official changes,

Dube stresses that there are significant continuities in the link between caste and occupations, especially in the lower castes (1996). Karanth (1996) supports this view. It can be observed that duties associated with pollution are still carried out by lower caste members (for more on existing caste discrimination see 6.1.2.). Panini (1996) also shows the existence of higher caste clustering in higher levels of occupation, as managerial and professional occupations, and government services. Certain castes continue to be prominent in particular occupations (for more see below on the relation of caste and class).

Before talking further about the characteristics of hierarchy as described by Srinivas, we will examine some brief examples on the purity-pollution concept that structures inter-caste relations. Traditionally, higher castes were prohibited from accepting cooked food and drinking water from a member of a lower caste. Lower caste members were prohibited from coming into close physical contact with higher caste members or from entering the inner parts of their houses. The low castes were forbidden the use of the streets where the high castes lived and, in the case of the untouchables, the use of public wells and entry into high caste temples and eating places. As mentioned, low caste members hold occupations associated with dead material and any kind of pollution. As Karanth states (1996: 98), such notions of purity and impurity are weakening, and patterns of behaviour are changing, though the concept of purity pollution can still be observed in action.

Regarding the last remaining aspect, there has been ample scientific discussion on Sriniva's definition of hierarchy. As mentioned, French anthropologist Luis Dumont has especially highlighted the aspect of hierarchy among castes. With the external view of a Non-Indian, and in accordance to Célestin Bouglé, he describes his cultural studies of the Indian caste society of 1970 as distinguished into different groups by the three characteristics:

“[...] *separation* in matters of marriage and contacts [...], *division* of labour, each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits; and finally *hierarchy*, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another” (Dumont 2008: 21).

Similar to Srinivas's theories, Dumont found that next to separation and division of labour, hierarchy is one of the main characteristics of caste thinking. In contrast to

Srinivas, he reasons that all three characteristics are the base of religious roles such as purity and pollution.

Seeing the concept of hierarchy that was first described in chapter 3, the cultural dimension of power distance of the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004) aims to represent this hierarchical thinking. As mentioned in Dumont's definition, the aspect of castes corresponds largely with the meaning of hierarchy in a society and the Indian caste system is highly dominated by hierarchical thinking. L. Dumont's often discussed concept of the "Homo Hierarchicus" (1970; 2008; Banerjee-Dube 2008) emphasises on the system's deep roots in pure hierarchical thinking. Dumont declares the religious principle of purity and pollution as the key principle of castes which hierarchically grades social groups. The Brahmins are perceived as the purest group both in profession (priests) as well as in practice (e.g. the avoidance of food perceived as impure and their vegetarianism, among other ritual restrictions) stand at the top of the system and each following caste ranks according to the degree of purity in relation to the Brahmins.<sup>34</sup>

In the cited GLOBE study, applying data from the 1990s in the dimension of power distance ranks India at 15 of 63 investigated countries. With a score of 5.47, the country can be labelled as a culture of high power distance, where a high degree of members of the society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels (House et al. 2004). Along with the question of how strong caste thinking can still exist in modern India comes the question of how effective hierarchical thinking is in daily life and regarding educational decisions.

#### *Caste figures today*

Nowadays, caste based communities are distinguished officially in certain categories according to their social and economic forwardness and backwardness (Census of India 2001<sup>35</sup>; also e.g. Shah 1996). The groups that are considered to be backwards are qualified to Government of India Reservation Benefits, set quotas for political

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<sup>34</sup> The purity vs. impurity concept also exists (against common assumptions) among non Hindu communities in India such as Muslims and Christians. Nevertheless, this thesis focuses on Hindus and cuts out other groups. According to Bhatta this is true mainly for groups who have converted from Hinduism to another religion in order to flee casteism. Bhatta utters that the phenomenon of caste in non-Hindu religions in India means that the dogma of equality in the other religions has not been strong enough to eradicate the concept of inequality (Bhatta 1996).

<sup>35</sup> The latest Census of India 2011 provided only provisional population trends and no figures on caste and religion at the time of the finalization of the study.



representation, education, and government employment and a central government policy started in the 1990s. The figures below (table 6.1) show that the forward castes (peasant and non-peasant) make up a current share of 26.9% of the total population. They roughly include the first three of the four varnas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas. The majority is the group of backward castes. The so-called higher and lower other backward castes (OBC) are distinguished from the scheduled castes (SC) and make up a share of 29.3%. Scheduled castes (13.7%) and the scheduled tribes (ST, 13.2 %) are groups that are officially recognized and listed – “scheduled” – by the Indian constitution as the former untouchables. Previously under the British government these groups were referred to as the depressed classes. OBC and SC together make up 43% of the total population; together with the ST at least 56.2% of the population is considered to be backward; not including other non Hindu minorities like e.g. the Muslim minority of about 10-12% of the total population who are living under precarious living conditions (Weigl 2010).

In this study, I focus on the three Hindu community categories: forward castes, OBC, and SC, which covers 69.9 % of the Indian society (tab. 6.1).

Forward Castes	26.9 %	69.9%	43%	56.2%
Other Backward Castes (OBC)	29.3 %			
Scheduled Caste (SC)	13.7 %			
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	13.2 %			
Other non Hindu religions and minorities (Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc.)	16.9 %			
Total	100 %			

**Tab. 6.1: Caste based communities in India (Source: Census of India 2001. Grey fields are communities of interest for the study.)**

It might be argued that the distinction of these three broad categories applied here for forward castes, OBC and SC is too vague when considering the complexity of the Indian caste system. But a detailed examination of single jatis or subcastes would

definitely exceed the possibilities and the purpose of the study. The three major categories cover the major constitutional divisions recognised by the government of India (see also A. Deshpande 2001; Vaid 2007). The community of Scheduled Tribes (ST) will not be included into the analysis of Hindu Indians. Although the ST partly follow Hinduism the huge religious diversity of the community gives reason to exclude them from the analysis. Many ST also follow Animism, Buddhism or Christianity.

There is a close connection between the terms caste and class, and there are many points of similarity as well as of differences. Both rank the society hierarchically from top to bottom. Attributes connected with certain castes are often of socio-economic character as it is in the distinction of classes (see chapter 5).

In addition to occupational differences between classes as well castes, castes are in contrast to classes subject to various biased characteristics that go beyond socio-economic aspects and which are deeply rooted in a society's common sense of history. Social honour in the caste system is closely tied to ritual values. Highly esteemed lifestyles are closely associated with a large number of ritual restrictions which uphold the high level of purity of the caste in question. Another difference is that classes are relatively open, whereas castes are not (Beteille 2005a). Upward and downward mobility within the caste system is in theory not possible due to the fact that a caste position is inherited. In practice, there is some movement, but this is much slower than in the class system.

Nevertheless, the concept of caste has been softening, especially regarding the aspect of occupations and wealth. We can find examples of destitute Brahmins as well as upward oriented and economically well off OBCs and SCs. Class distinction allows a more precise differentiation and socio-economic description of the sample than a distinction according to caste. That is the reason why the study mainly concentrates on class background instead of caste.

The connection of caste and class has been a topic of scientific research. For example, Vaid and Heath (2011) draw a connection between castes and class distinctions, based on the applied class scheme of Kumar et al. (2002; 2002a, described in detail in chapter 5). According to their quantitative analysis of Vaid and Heath 2011, there is an over and under representation of forward and scheduled castes in certain class

origins: Forward castes are significantly over-represented among higher and lower professional, non manual and large farmer classes. In the study these are the classes I and II. Forward castes are significantly under-represented among lower manual and lower agricultural classes, which is class IV here. Reverse patterns are evident among scheduled castes: SCs are under-represented in higher and lower professionals and over-represented among lower manual and lower agricultural classes.

Vaid and Heath (*ibid.*) also state that these patterns of over and under representation have tended to become stronger over time. But they also found that caste has a weaker association with current occupation than class origin. Their findings affirm that a strong connection still exists between caste and class origins, although caste membership cannot be simply derived from occupational aspects of a person anymore.

As mentioned, other researchers also discuss a weakening connection between caste and occupation today (Dube 1996; Karanth 1996). The dissociation with heredity occupation in urban as well as rural India is said to be one of the most significant changes in caste today (Karanth 1996). Srinivas (1989; Jayaram 1996) formed the term 'Sanskritization' to describe the attempts of low caste members to improve their position within the caste hierarchy by adopting rituals, customs, beliefs, ideology, and lifestyle of an upper and dominant caste. The term is derived from Sanskrit literature, where habits and rituals of purity as well as the values of higher castes are described. Habits and values are copied by lower caste members in order to elevate their status.

Due to the rapid change in Indian society, the concept of caste is also changing and both the Indian society and the caste concept are no longer the same as at the beginning or middle of the last century. The retreat of caste is not to be attributed to a retreat of religion alone, although caste can be originally seen as a religious Hindu concept (see also chapter 7 on Hinduism). But there are further factors and developments involved such as urban-rural differences, or education that cause a retreat in the official meaning of caste. Karanth (1996) states that caste, as well as family and kinship as original institutions of the Indian society have undergone considerable changes in the last decades as a consequence of urbanization, industrialisation, democratization, spread of education and more.

Indian intellectuals, who belong in the majority to higher castes, are deeply indifferent to the significance of caste in the contemporary Indian society. High caste members often officially claim that the caste system is no longer in existence. B eteille assumes that the idea behind such statements might be the opposition against the quotas for low caste members in education, politics, and government employment (B eteille 2005). In contrast, lower caste members are more interested in the official acceptance of still existing inequalities, because the burden of caste weighs more heavily on lower than on upper caste persons (ibid.). Finding official acceptance for these burdens means benefits for the groups in question. The ongoing scientific and political discussions alone can be seen as a hint towards the remaining meaning of caste for the Indian society (e.g. Banerjee-Dube 2008; Gupta 2008, 2004; Ghaia et al. 2008; Searle-Chatterjee/Sharma 2003; Fuller 1996).

Gupta (2004) is positive that the caste system, with its formerly strict distinction of Brahmins at the top and Untouchables at the bottom of the societal ladder, is no longer valid as it was in the past. Seeing caste and class connections and the question of upward mobility through education, Panini (1996) advises against western stereotypes that portray the caste system as a closed and rigid system which does not allow individuals to change their hereditary occupation. He refers to several sociologists who have highlighted a kind of flexibility in the system (e.g. Ghurye 1961; Lerche 1993). Moreover, he argues that several fields were always open to all castes such as cultivation, military services, and administration. Panini believes in a weakening impact of the economic development on caste structures and its meaning in society:

“As economic controls are lifted, the privileges enjoyed by groups because of their social connections are likely to disappear. In the severe competition that is entailed only entrepreneurs who are innovative enough to reduce cost and increase productivity are likely to survive, not those who are capable of manipulating caste and kinship networks. [...] workers do not have to ply their caste background to get jobs. Hence in the long run liberalisation has the potential of ‘annihilating caste’ and abolishing poverty [...]” (Panini 1996: 60)

He argues in favour of an Indian variant of the modernisation theory (Vaid 2007). That means that in addition to an expected decline of the meaning of characteristics of, for example, the father’s class through modernisation as it happened in western societies, for the Indian case it is expected that there will also be a decline in the meaning of caste through liberalisation of the market and economic developments.

According to Panini, this development will extensively affect job recruitment in that it will no longer be influenced by caste thinking but instead by economic considerations. Also, Srinivas supports the theory that market liberalisation reduces caste ideology in Indian society (1996).

But not all scientists share this opinion of declining tendencies in caste impact through modernisation and liberalisation. Benefits of liberalisation are not enjoyed equally by all castes, especially not by backward castes; among them often only a so called creamy layer<sup>36</sup> is able to make use of the preferential policies. Béteille observes that in single sections of the society, in particular in the middle and upper urban classes, there is a diminishment of the meaning of caste (1992; 2005). Great shares of the Indian society have not yet benefitted from market opening and the developments as foreseen by Panini in the 1990s and remain in the conditions of caste hierarchy (e.g. Béteille 2005; Gaiha et al. 2008; Rothermund 2008). In contrast to Panini, Karanth (1996) notes also in the 1990s that lower castes especially still find it difficult to change their inherited occupations in order to move up the social ladder. One reason is the lack of alternative income possibilities, especially in rural areas, but also due to pressure from upper castes to continue the existing traditional patron-client relations.

“Members of the dominant castes bring economic and other pressures on dependent castes to ensure continued master-servant or patron-client relationship. [...] The legal abolition of ‘untouchability’ and even the benefits of a policy of ‘protective discrimination’ have not succeeded in removing the economic dependence of the former ‘Untouchable’ castes on the members of the dominant castes.” (Karanth 1996: 92).

In Karanth’s eyes, caste origin still hinders upward mobility. In addition, the phenomenon to associate certain castes with contamination, thus preventing them from ‘clean’ occupations is still observed. Dube also agrees that certain ritual ‘polluted’ occupations like the curing and tanning of hides, the removal of dead animals, scavenging, and barbers or midwives are still associated with specific low castes (Dube 1996). In their essay “Has Anything Changed?”<sup>37</sup> Gaiha et al. (2008)

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<sup>36</sup> Used in Indian politics, the term creamy layer represents the relatively better educated and wealthier parts of the OBCs (for criteria see Government of India National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) 30/01/2011)

<sup>37</sup> The essay is based on a detailed study on “Endowments, Discrimination and Deprivation among Ethnic Groups in Rural India” (Gaiha et al. 2007).

challenge forecasts of a decline in caste meaning because of economic development and argue that the disadvantage for low caste members is still ongoing due to the mental impact of centuries of historical discrimination.

Béteille remarks that it would be strange if something that had occupied such a central place in society for millennia were to lose all significance for its members because of a change of laws (2005). The law of a society is not the essential piece of the puzzle, instead it is the ongoing and practiced custom among the society members. Fuller (1996) notes in this context the emergence of a more or less acceptable public discourse about status which is coded as 'cultural difference' as caste hierarchy can no longer be legitimately defended in public. Instead of speaking openly of caste members as being unequal, people describe them as different and even avoid the terms caste or jati, and refer instead to community (ibid.). As will be shown, the same phenomenon could be observed in the interviews, which hints at the fact that caste thinking and also the justification of inequality still remains. I reference Béteille's and Fullers argumentation in assuming that along with the discussion of classes, the caste background also still plays a major role in the aggregation of education decisions.

Phenomena of caste thinking today can be easily observed in the Indian lifestyle. Returning to the aspect of endogamy as one characteristic of castes as defined by Srinivas (1962): Ideal marriages took place and still take place in one's own caste, often even within the narrowest sub-divisions. Even today, more than 90% of all Indian marriages are arranged. Love marriages are said to be western concepts and are still rare. The matrimonial pages in Indian newspapers, where Indian parents are looking for appropriate spouses for their children, are sorted according to caste backgrounds and categories and are only one prominent daily life example showing the remaining importance of the caste system.<sup>38</sup> Inter-caste marriages are still considered a great exception to the rule. If the fear of consequences of mixed caste parentages as described above (Srinivas 1962) is still the reason for marrying within one's own caste today, cannot be explored further here. But the binding character that caste membership means to the subjects is obvious.

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<sup>38</sup> The fact can be also easily observed at countless matrimonial web-pages like Bharat Matrimony <http://profile.bharatmatrimony.com/register/countrylandingpage.php>, where questions for caste and sub-caste are standard categories for registration.

The question if the social impact of caste origins is weaker than that of economic and other class related origins nowadays cannot be answered here. Nevertheless, the findings of the study along with other literature suggests that historical disabilities, as well as ongoing customs, have persistent effects on the behaviour of individuals and the development of social groups regarding educational decisions. Some studies have empirically proven that backward caste groups lag behind the higher castes regarding enrolment and completion at each educational transition stage (e.g. Breen/Vaid 2008; Dreze/Sen 1995; Vaid 2004).

The question for the study is what does a particular caste background mean for the education decisions of Indians today? Is there any influence regarding the motivation to pursue education? What demands, in the context of education, can caste membership still make on a person?

The above discussed keyword of a binding character of caste leads into the first factor group found in the data that influences education decisions. This information will be summarized under the category of traditions and self-concept.

#### **6.1.1. Caste Traditions and a Group's Self-Concept**

The following paragraph summons the findings regarding the influence of caste clustered under the first category of caste traditions. The aspect of tradition is closely bond to family structures (to be discussed later) as well as to caste. The findings are again structured according to the class distinctions introduced in chapter 5.

Before the findings are portrayed, I will present a brief sample overview according to the interviewees' caste belongings. Many companies register the caste background of their employees in their personnel records. The company owners in the two smaller Indian enterprises that were interviewed were able to immediately identify which castes groups they employ. That was helpful to indicate the caste origins of the sample. As to be demonstrated in the two multinational companies, interviewees gave the information about their caste background freely, without being questioned. It soon became clear that all of those employees are members in high caste categories.

The sample of 31 interviewees contains members from the three broad categories as defined by the Census of India 2001 and described already in table 6.1: Forward

castes, OBC (Other Backward Castes), and SC (Scheduled Castes). All 13 interviewees from class I and II belong to forward castes, one more forward caste member was found in class III (Mr. M. IIIIm1; ). Among the forward caste members are seven Brahmins (Mr. J. Im1, Mr. N. Im2, Mr. L. Im3, Mr. A. IIm2, Neha If1, Nalini If2, and Laksha IIf2).

The remaining 17 interviewees from class III and IV are dominated by low caste origin. Six interviewees are from OBC background, five of them are in class III (Mr. K. IIIIm3, Mrs. P. IIIIf2, and three women participating in a group discussion IIIIf1), and one in class IV (Mr. O. IVm1). The sample contains nine SC members (Sunil IIIIm2, three construction workers interviewed in a group discussion IVm2, Mr. P. IVm3, and four women interviewed in a group discussion as well IVf3). In the case of two further interviewees, the jewellery sellers Rhani (IVf1) and Lagini (IVf2), it was difficult to determine the caste origin as they don't belong to one company. However, both definitely belong to a lower caste background and are either OBC or SC.

Due to a certain sensitivity of the topic of caste, the interviewees were first asked how they perceive the current existence of the caste system in India in general, followed by a discussion on how caste and education might be interlinked. After making some generalizations, many interviewees began talking about examples from their personal surroundings in order to make their point clear, and then started also talking about themselves and what meaning caste has for them today.

### **Class I and II**

The interviewees of class I all belong to the group of forward castes, mainly to the varna of Brahmins. At first, the question of how important caste might still be in Indian society was discussed. Most upper class members state something similar to Brahmin Mr. L.:

“Caste does not exist anymore in India. The system was eradicated after independence. There is no caste thinking or discrimination. Only in politics it is an instrument for some groups of the society to receive more benefits. We are disadvantaged because of that. Our children have difficulties getting accepted at good universities because of the reservations for certain communities. That is a problem.” (Im3)



With benefits, the interviewee means the quotas for SC and OBC which is a matter of deep disagreement in Indian society. Whenever caste was discussed with class I members, the interviewees mentioned first (and as the only remaining aspect of caste) the reservations and the disadvantages for forward castes (e.g. Im1; Im2; If). Here caste seems to have a negative meaning. Nevertheless, the aspect of reservations and the perception of being disadvantaged do not seem to have any relevance for their or their children's educational decisions.

But despite the first statements of these groups that caste does not have any further relevance, caste seems to influence to a greater extent their social and individual identity<sup>39</sup> than first admitted. Their behaviour in denying the ongoing meaning of caste can be interpreted in different ways. One possibility is that some upper class interviewees do not want to admit caste or any caste thinking is relevant because it does not fit to their goals of modern and western oriented way of living. An alternative explanation may be that they are not fully aware of the meaning caste still holds for them. As they belong to the upper classes, the phenomenon of caste simply may not have any relevance for them. In order to come closer to the question of what role caste really plays in the life of the subjects, I raised the issue of marriage and inter-caste marriage in the interviews. This strategy stands in alliance with B eteille (e.g. 2005) who argues in favour of a strong connection between caste and marriage. As mentioned already, marriage is a core topic in the Indian culture and lifestyle, and inter-caste marriage was socially condemned for a long time. In a couple of interviews, the relevance of caste became suddenly salient after asking about the issue of marriage customs. After a while, the same person goes back against their previous stance on the irrelevance of castes in today's society:

“See, here in India marriage is a very important issue and I think two people should be from a similar background. Because of the customs you know. People from the same community share the same customs and habits, they have the same traditions. Also seeing the background of the families, that should also fit. We here in India don't have divorce so much as in the West and that is why the same background is essential. [...] Yes, that is the same caste.” (Im3)

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<sup>39</sup> The term identity refers to a wide field of different approaches in social sciences and holds various meanings (main contributions are made by e.g. Simmel, Mead, Parsons, Erikson, Krappmann). It shall not be subject of deeper discussion here. That would exceed the thesis' goals and possibilities. Nevertheless, the term shall be used to describe the interviewees' self-image and conception as individuals and as members of a group.

The interviewees' personal belief in caste becomes clearest when they are asked how they would react if their own children wanted to marry outside their own caste. Here caste seems to be very significant and a spouse from outside one's own community is not acceptable. Mr. L. states:

“For my own children I will look for someone proper. From our community of course, yes. I will choose a good person. That is the best and I want to give the best for my children. And it is important to have somebody from a good family. The background is definitely important.” (Im3)

Other interviewees state the same (e.g. Aruna If3; Nalini If2). The meaning of caste that was previously denied becomes evident. As portrayed in 6.1. endogamy was and still is an important characteristic of the caste system; upholding the aspect as an important value proves that the sample still finds caste thinking to be relevant. As B eteille also mentions that statements from educated Indians asserting that caste does not exist anymore “should not be taken as face value” (B eteille 2005: 180). But the effect of caste seems to lie deep, so that a person may not even be fully aware of its meaning to them. That also becomes clear in several interviews with class I members (e.g. Im2; If2). B eteille states that the growing ambivalence to caste and its meaning in the upper classes entails an element of self-deception (2005). To his mind, educated Indians are unclear and troubled about what the age old and traditional concept of caste means to them as members of a modern world. Seeing the interviewees' behaviour in first denying any significance of the caste system and then exaggerating its meaning as in the context of marriage seems to be a typical reaction which shows feelings of uncertainty regarding caste.

Another aspect that proves the ongoing significance of caste for this class is a kind of pride regarding their high caste origins. When talking about their background in general (“Let's talk a little bit about your background”) many name their caste origins automatically, without being asked (e.g. Im3, If1, If3). In other social strata, I have not experienced such behaviour and in the Indian context, caste background is not usually something that one would immediately mention in a conversation, especially not to a foreigner. The majority of the interviewed class I members are Brahmins (Im2, Im3, If1, If3); other class I members were found to be from the group of Kshatriyas (Im1, If3), the second highest perceived varna (the warriors). Naming one's own – high – caste origin as several interviewees of class I did hints at the importance of the caste status to the interviewees. Although most interviewees of

this group deny any deeper meaning of caste for society, they are proud of their community background and willing to talk about it frankly. Their self-concept seems to be strongly connected to their caste origins. Though especially interviewees from class I and also class II background try to evoke a very modern, progressive, liberal, and often western oriented picture of themselves, the strong meaning of tradition in conjunction with their caste background for their life is apparent.

In front of the described ambivalence to the idea of caste – a partly hidden but apparently still strong meaning of castes for the self-concept of the class I – education decision and caste now become obvious. When talking about education, some interviewees point to their long community tradition of education: “We are from Brahmin background. Education was always important for my family, my father is also educated. [...] And with education you get a good job and maintain the tradition.”(Im2) High caste members, especially from Brahmin communities, highlight a feeling of responsibility towards their inherited education tradition based on their caste background. That is also true for lower class high caste members, as in the case of interviewed Brahmins from a slightly lower economical background: “I feel the obligation to be good educated and to educate my children best because we are Brahmins, that is in us. It is the tradition. Brahmins are priests and are educated.” (IIm1). The here cited class II interviewee Mr. B. is a diploma holder and works in one of the smaller companies at a medium level position. Also for him, the meaning of education seems to be deeply rooted in the self-concept of being a Brahmin.

Education has always been the Brahmin’s “main symbol” (Chakkarath 2010: 94). Historically Brahmins held the occupations of priest, scholars, and teachers which led to a high level of education among this caste. In the colonial era, Brahmins and other certain castes of scribes were the first groups who took advantage of the educational opportunities opened up by British rule. The traditional association of learning with these groups provided them the initial cultural advantage to quickly adjust to the demands of the British system (Panini 1996). Due to their traditional link to education, certain Brahmin sub-castes received early training in marketing and financial management by the British conquerors. They were assigned leading positions in the British administration system, which enabled them to benefit from the expanding trade network installed by the British (*ibid.*). Seeing this traditional background of Brahmins, the meaning education holds for this group even today

becomes clear. All interviewed Brahmins point in the direction of tradition when asked for the reasons for their educational background. The community tradition is also based in part on education. Even more, education seems to be part of the community concept itself. Brahmin communities put a lot of effort into upholding the Brahmin tradition of education<sup>40</sup>. Education is one central recommendation of Brahmin organisations to live a proper Brahmin life. Next to the goal of being educated as such in order to safeguard quality of life, education is also seen as the possibility to ensure continuity of Brahmin traditions. It is perceived as the way to create commitment towards the Brahmin community and to Brahmin goals. Community members are called on to maintain the Brahmin culture through intensified education efforts of their children, and education is lauded as a communal priority. Educational decisions of the interviewees are formed by these ideas of community concept. Being a Brahmin means to be educated. Education and being Brahmin belong inseparably together. The following cited answer is typical: “As a Brahmin you simply *are* educated” (IIf2).

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked what it would mean to them not to follow this historically laid pathway. Not being educated as a Brahmin seems to mean a loss of community membership for individuals, as Mr. A. from class II background states:

“Not going for education is not an option for people like us. We are aware of the importance of education and also our children know that. Not giving the best and trying to be the topper in class would violate the tradition. We know who we are and where we are coming from. Education is in us.” (IIm2)

Community membership is more important than the freedom to make individual, essential decisions. In caste society, the individual has certain obligations to the group of which they are a member by birth (Béteille 2005). Next to the hierarchic characteristic of caste, the system implies also a strong collectivistic element (Béteille 2005a: 193, also Triandis 1995, 1994; Triandis/Bhawuk 1997). House et al. (2004) state in their GLOBE study that a strong collectivistic orientation of the Indian culture exists (explained previously in chapter 1). India ranks with 5.92 scores at 4<sup>th</sup> position among 62 examined countries in the dimension in-group collectivism

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<sup>40</sup> e.g. see Recommendations to Brahmin Community for a proper Brahmin life. URL: <http://www.vepachedu.org/Recommendations.html> 13/10/2010

and can be therefore labelled as highly collectivistic oriented. According to the GLOBE study, the society is characterised by large cohesiveness to group norms and standards. Seeing the analysed data education seems to be a group standard as such. Ideologically, the individual identity seems to be less important than the group concept. The subordination of the individual under the idea of the group is, in the case of the Brahmin caste, essential for educational decisions. By following the group norms of obtaining as much education as possible, the individuals are able to meet the group's expectations and maintain their own self-concept (which is strongly bound to the group's self concept). The self-concept of a caste or sub-caste is maintained and reproduced through endogamy, a marriage practice which is still widely in use. Due to strong collectivistic elements, the caste concept shapes to a great extent the self-concept of the individual. In the case of Brahmins, their self-concept is characterised by being educated and as the data shows, changing these patterns is out of question for the individuals. The commitment towards those characteristics seems to remain very strong. As the above cited interviewee puts it, to not follow these obligations would "violate the tradition" (IIm2). It is not so much an open communicated pressure from the community to keep a high education standard, but rather an indirect personal feeling of obligation to keep the traditions. Not following the tradition of education seems to be almost taboo for the interviewed individuals. Even as ritual taboos and rules of caste thinking of the past fade for modern Indians today; not striving for education as the tradition dictates seems to be an equally strong taboo which is still very present. The community self-concept of education is not allowed to be touched upon, and the interviewees do not even think and talk about alternatives other than striving for the best in education. Although castes bonds of the past regarding tight occupation rules are diminishing and among class I members "the obligation to one's occupation exists independently of the obligations to one's caste" (Béteille 2005: 169), the sense of caste obligation of being educated remains among the interviewed Brahmins.

One interesting case in this regard is Laksha, the 30 year old assistant of the manger of a Don Bosco technical training centre in Delhi and a Brahmin. She was formerly a student of the centre and as her family could not afford a regular institute or university study, she was promoted by the school because she was at the top of her class. Due to economic difficulties throughout her family history, her parents were

unable to enjoy any kind of higher education, but were always aware of the importance of education. As she reports, her pursuit of education and educational excellence was mainly encouraged by her father, who always challenged her to bring out her best. She mentions her Brahmin caste background when reflecting on the reasons for it. “We know about the importance of education. My father always wanted me to study. We are Brahmins. If we don’t send our children to study we disturb somehow our concept of life.” (IIf2) In Laksha’s case, her family is less bound to the family tradition as in the other interviewees from Brahmin background. Here the aspect of education for high castes as an internalized concept because of group membership becomes especially clear. Like Mr. L., the interviewed Brahmins are more or less aware of the relationship between their caste membership and their pursuit of educational excellence. After thinking about and discussing the points, the interviewees draw at least a connection between the two. Caste matters in various aspects regarding the interviewees’ attitude towards education, based on the strong importance of long-lived traditions and a group’s self-concept.

In contrast to the Brahmins, the other class I interviewees from Kshatriya communities do not mention any direct relationship between their caste background and their educational decisions. Instead, it is the family traditions and not caste that are highlighted, which leads to another factor group that will be discussed in detail further down (see 6.2.).

### **Class II and III**

In the medium and lower strata (with the exception of Brahmins) the meaning of caste for the interviewed individuals is not as obvious as among class I Brahmins where the members express a kind of pride about their caste background. Medium and lower class members do not mention their caste origins when asked for their background in general. This does not necessarily mean that caste is not important to them, but can be interpreted in the way that an attitude of pride is missing. Some interviewees mention that they are from general background which means that their community belongs to the huge group of forward castes (e.g. IIm3). Others do not broach the topic of caste by themselves, which can be interpreted as a hint towards their lower caste background. However, regardless of class almost all participants react to the question of an inter-caste marriage as a possibility for their own children

with refusal. Caste considerations and its importance seem to be always salient when it comes to the question of marriage. Regarding educational decisions, caste seems to matter less in this societal strata than it does in the upper classes. Though caste seems still to play a hidden role in their thinking and is still practiced in certain sphere as family planning, the interviewed middle class members do not draw any connection between their educational decisions and their caste background. “We don’t do the same occupation of our forefathers and so our children are not obliged to follow me. That was in the past. Caste doesn’t matter.” (III<sub>m3</sub>). The cited interviewee is from a general caste background. According to literature, there is a growing dissociation with heredity occupation across all classes in India. That is especially true in urban India, but is also more and more the case in rural areas as well (Karanth 1996; Béteille 2005). Class II and class III members do not feel that they have a duty to encourage their children to continue in their father’s occupation or in the occupation of their ancestors (Béteille 2005). Due to this fact, education decisions also do not seem to be influenced by caste thinking. As already indicated in the previous paragraph on class I members, it is rather influences of the family that play a crucial role when it comes to educational decisions, which will be discussed also for these classes below.

### **Class III and IV**

As mentioned and investigated e.g. by Vaid and Heath (2011) class and caste are, though not to be taken as similar, congruent to some extent. In this regard, it is not surprising that most class IV members of the sample are members of the OBC or SC. Some class III members also belong to these groups which is why they are partially included here.

As mentioned before, members from low castes and the former Dalits still find it difficult to move away from their traditional occupations (Karanth 1996). Along with the problem of lack of knowledge and orientation regarding alternative occupation possibilities comes the lack of education. For reasons unknown, low caste members opt less often for education than other members of the society. There is empirical evidence that the literacy rate among disadvantaged castes is much lower than the average (Drèze 2008). As Drèze states, the reasons for these inequalities can be

partly found in economic deprivation but that the phenomenon has not yet been clarified fully:

”It is not clear yet why this contrast happens to be so sharp and resilient, even when castes share the same schooling facilities. Economic deprivation among the disadvantaged castes helps to explain this pattern, but there is much evidence of strong caste bias in literacy rates even at a given level of income.” (2008: 351)

He names several studies that support this view low castes as being under-educated (Drèze/Sharma 1998, Jayachandran 1997, and Labenne 1995) but also mentions the lack of scientifically approved explanations for this fact. The aspect of economic disadvantage as a reason for a lower literacy is one aspect, but is insufficient to explain the phenomenon entirely.

The collected data of the study presented here represents the patterns of low education level among low caste members. That is one reason why most low caste members are attributed to low classes in the sample. The majority of interviewees of OBCs and SCs are found to be class IV members due to their occupation and in addition with a low education background, and are from households with a low income level. They are typically engaged as helpers or jobbers on a non-permanent basis in the local companies or are even self employed as with the example of the jewellery sellers (IVm1, IVm3, IVf1, IVf2). The data shows that it is typical for the parents of those in the low caste not to have received any education. Most low caste interviewees attended school for at least a few years, which is an improvement in comparison to their parents. The majority are school drop outs along the education path and found some kind of wage or self employment in the informal labour market or in the local companies on non permanent basis (e.g. IVm1, IVm2, IVm3, IVf1, IVf2, IIIf2).

Nevertheless, a direct link between educational decisions and possible inherited occupations could not be found in the study. This might be due to the fact that mainly urban dwellers were interviewed. Often these low caste members left their villages and with it their traditional and inherited fields of activity in order to search for new jobs in the metropolises of Bombay and Delhi. When asked for reasons behind their educational decisions, the interviews often state that their education decisions are influenced by a lack of alternatives and not because of obligations based on traditions.



“In my case there is nothing like that. The Jados have not this pressure, but other people I know still live like that. Cobblers stay cobblers or zadu makers stay zadu makers. This are brooms. But I think this is also because many people do not know anything else. They have no idea of other opportunities.” (III m1).

The cited interviewee, Mr. M., is a general caste member in one of the SME. Other low caste interviewees give similar statements (e.g. III f2). Those who remain in the occupational field of their family members, of their parents and grandparents do so because they lack alternative ideas on which other occupations might be appropriate, reachable, affordable and rewarding. The wide issue of lack of alternative job opportunities in the countryside and also in urban settlements hints again to the aspect of lack of job counselling of youth which has been discussed already in chapter 5 in the context of the education system<sup>41</sup>. In contrast to the upper caste interviewees who express education as part of their inherited self-image, self-image does not seem to play a certain role among low caste members, but also not in a negative way. Gupta (2004a) argues in favour of identity connected with pride that is grounded in one's own caste background that dominates the aspect of hierarchy between the castes, also in the lower strata and lower castes. This might generally be the case, but is doubtful in terms of education matters in lower castes. As to be shown in 6.1.2. low caste members are discouraged because of negative experiences throughout their life, but an inherited tradition does not seem to play a crucial role here. In contrast to the identity of education among some high caste members, there is no inherited “tradition of being uneducated”.

To sum up, tradition and the idea of self-image seems to be especially meaningful for educational decisions in the upper extremes of society. As shown in the very high classes, individuals feel traditionally obliged to follow inherited educational patterns as in the case of Brahmins. To preserve the status of being educated in the family is one main driver to pursue education. Occupational traditions do not play a crucial role anymore in low caste communities and their educational decisions as demonstrated. Nevertheless, the fact that caste is still an important concept in the low strata will be shown later. How caste influences mainly low class, class IV members in their educational decisions shall be portrayed in the next factor group on caste

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<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, this broad field of lack of alternatives cannot be analysed in the context of the thesis and would be beyond its opportunities and goals.

perception. As previously discovered, high caste members appear to be influenced as well.

### **6.1.2. The Impact of Other's Opinions**

The next determined factor group can be summarised under the heading of opinions of the environment on different castes and how caste members are influenced by how they expect to be perceived. Here the sharp difference between very low and very high caste is most apparent. In contrast to the previous class order from class I to finally the description of class IV, I will first explain the results from low classes and low castes and then contrast it with results from high castes. Findings from high castes may be more understandable when low caste perceptions are known and the order shall underline the sharp gap between bottom and top.

#### **Class III and IV**

Despite officially banned caste distinction and officially eradicated entry regulations to all industrial sectors, the phenomenon of negative influences of caste on educational decisions becomes evident in the collected data. The interviews show caste discrimination is still a topic even today when it comes to educational decisions.

First, the perception of discrimination in general shall be explained. A phenomenon found in the interviews and which is said to be common knowledge among Indians is the fact that it is not possible to hide one's own caste background. As interviewee Sunil from SC background says:

“Everybody knows, we know and feel that. We also can tell who is which caste here in the company and who is lower than us. And people normally help those who are from their same community. Also the boss acts like that.” (III<sub>m2</sub>)

Some families of low caste interviewees, like the construction workers (IV<sub>m2</sub>), had left their hometown or village where they were known as member of a specific caste and had moved to a bigger city or metropolis hundreds of kilometres away. But migration does not mean that individuals can leave their caste background behind them, and caste membership still matters. An interviewee was asked to estimate the caste origins of his colleagues, because I felt that it might not be appropriate to ask the other participants directly for their caste origins. The interviewee is a contractor in SME1 and supervises around 15 non-permanent jobbers who are under his

contract. He states that one of the indicating criteria to determine an individual's caste membership is through the surname:

“I know he is from SC background. The family changed the surname so you cannot tell anymore by the name but I know that he is SC by origin. Somebody told me and you can see it in the way he behaves, the way he talks, how and what he says. And also the way he looks like.” (IIm4)

Regardless of whether his estimation of the SC background is accurate or not, the statement affirms that Indians use the original family name and other indicators related to the appearance of a person to determine which caste category that an individual belongs to. (The same is valid for high castes: “I can tell from the surname. Mr. D. and I are from the same caste, we are both Brahmins.” (If1)) Surnames in India still function like an identification card for caste. That is the reason why many low caste members and Dalits attempt to change or have changed their surnames to less caste linked names (EX1) in order to be perceived neutrally, a phenomenon which foretells the meaning caste still holds in daily life. The above cited expert (EX1) is an Indian German scientist for indigenous psychology at a German University. He makes clear that the caste background is a fact that people immediately try to determine when talking to another person. Asking for the background is seen as inappropriate, but it is one of the most important facts which is registered when Indians meet. In addition to the name, the place one was born, the family's status and the family's job history are indicators of the caste background (EX1).<sup>42</sup> Existing discrimination is a fact of life in educational settings. This is expressed by another expert, the coordinator of Don Bosco outreach training activities in the semi urban area of the Delhi outskirts. She reports in an expert interview:

“Caste still matters. Not officially of course but people see what caste you are and you will be treated accordingly. I experience that frequently when I visit my clients. Many children from low caste background experience a bad treatment at school. Teachers hit them. Years ago it was normal that low castes were not allowed to drink out of the same water tank as the other pupils from general caste background. And today sometime this still happens, at least in the more remote areas. Officially you can't do a lot anymore and people are protected but children are sensitive and feel that kind of hidden discrimination.” (EX2)

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<sup>42</sup> This remembers of Pierre Bourdieu's considerations on class distinctions based on aesthetic taste in his work “Distinction: A Social Critique on the Judgment of Taste” (1984). He says that people can be identified of their class membership by their inherited social attitudes.

In the expert interview, the coordinator gives various examples of ongoing caste discrimination among school children. In rural and semi rural areas as well as in poorer communities in cities without running tap water, schools and other public facilities used to have and still have big water bowls or clay tanks for the pupils to scoop water from. Before caste distinction was officially banned, there were different water tanks for high and low caste members. SCs and OBCs were forbidden to drink from the same water as the general caste members. This has been officially eradicated, but the habit of not sharing the same water supply with different caste members seems to be still active (EX2). As incidences show, parents of high caste members as well as teachers try to prevent low caste children from using the same water as the other pupils (at least in rural areas), a sign of ongoing caste discrimination.

The already described idea of purity and impurity between different caste groups is obvious here that hints at caste deprivation. High caste and high class Neha (If1) states frankly:

“I don’t have anything against anybody here in the company. It is only that my father advises me not to share food with everybody. Other communities have other customs you know. That is his wish and I follow that. He has much more experience and I also share his view. I rather eat separate. That is our custom not to eat with everybody.” (If1)

Neha expresses her family’s views on maintaining separation from other lower communities when it comes to eating habits. The question of sharing food and inter-dining makes caste deprivation obvious. High caste interviewees as Neha and others state that there are certain sentiments against such low caste members as SC:

“The issue is if they are accepted culturally: There is only one segment which is SC and ST they are not looked upon very good. Apart from that all other castes today are equal to one, except Brahmins they love themselves they think they are great. All other are the same. But ST and SC are not looked upon very nicely because they are considered to be from a poorer race.” (If1)

The interviewee explains the opinion of a lower status with the lower castes’ lineage from a “poorer race”.<sup>43</sup> The uncommon occurrences of inter-caste marriages and the warnings of ancient scripture regarding the consequences for the outcast children of

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<sup>43</sup> It is important to add that this attitude expressed in parts of the sample must be treated carefully. By no means do I aim to imply that in general high caste and high class Indians think in discriminatory dimensions.

mixed caste couples has been discussed previously (see above; Gupta 2008) and literature backs up this aspect of caste discrimination. Gupta (2008) gives the example that it is impossible for a Brahmin to have an Untouchable cook because of still effective ideas about a hierarchy of purity and pollution of different castes. Neha's statement regarding eating habits as along with the example of the different water tanks at schools underlines this aspect. The question of who can share food or water with whom and who cannot makes caste and its hierarchic character evident. Caste discrimination can be found in early sacred Hindu writings, as in the Laws of Manu. Manu is said to be the legendary first man, and a collection of laws is attributed to him. Chapter X, verse 129 says: "No collection of wealth must be made by Sudra, even though he be able; for a Sudra who has acquired wealth, gives pain to Brahmins." (Bühler 1886, chapter X., verse 129). Sudras or shudras are the lowest category of the four fold caste system, the labourers. Hierarchically they rank directly above the Untouchables. The scripture is clear about the unequal distribution of wealth between high and low castes and forbids the labourers to rise in economic status. Indian social scientists such as A. Deshpande (2001) are convinced that caste inequality still exists and is wide spread. A. Deshpande (2001) examined inter-caste deprivation and the standard of living and economic status among different castes. He empirically proves that caste still matters in various aspects such as occupation, education, and land holding. As stated before, SCs today are arranged over-proportionally on the lowest end of the economic ladder (e.g. Gaiha 2008). In the past, Dalits held occupations related to dirt, dead and impure materials. Even today, the majority works as cobblers, street sweepers or toilet cleaners, as rickshaw pullers and dirt pickers (ibid.). A Don Bosco father and director of the outreach activities and a school in the semi urban area around Delhi (EX3) gives an example how some high castes think about education for low caste members:

"In the villages it is very obvious. We wanted to start a nursery school for the children. The high castes came to me and ask me very directly: why are you educating all this SC children? If they all become educated, who will look after our cows? Who will come to work in our fields if they are all educated?" EX3

Uneducated low caste members mean cheap labour force to high castes and educating them is not a goal all high castes share.

After the perception of discrimination of the low caste interviewees has been made clear its influences on educational decisions shall be portrayed. The consciousness of

one's own caste background and of ongoing caste discrimination in the society influences the decision for education as I will show in the following paragraphs.

To begin, an indication regarding the still ongoing meaning of caste for education is described in the expert interview with the scientist for indigenous psychology (EX1). He is convinced that caste barriers still play a crucial role in occupational decisions. He describes the caste system as a system that has always been quick in adjusting to social change and in setting up new norms and regulations. When new industries spring up, there are immediately new regulations formulated by religious leaders as to which castes have entry to this industrial sector and which groups are allowed to perform which jobs. An exception is the software sector where these caste regulations never have been articulated. As he describes the phenomenon, there has been a massive influx of low caste members to the software industry. Low caste parents send their children specifically to this sector and the number of low caste members who have been able to make a career is over-proportionally high in this sector. The reason can be seen in the lack of caste regulations. Another example that hints in the same direction is the upcoming leather industry that has always been open to low castes. In the past, leatherying, tanning and skinning were occupational fields for the group of untouchables because the sector deals with dead material and were therefore recognize as polluted. In the last few decades, the leather industry has experienced an economic boom and a successful career with the possibility for wealth accumulation has became possible for low caste members here (e.g. Jeffery et al. 2005). Both examples from the two industrial fields show that caste influences regarding occupational and therewith education decisions still exist, although the caste system has been officially eradicated. The conglomeration of low caste members in industries without caste regulations or without entry barriers must be interpreted in a way that caste still matters today when it comes to educational and occupational decisions.

Coming now to the view of low caste interviewees themselves, they verify the before explained discrimination in education settings. Low caste members who are also attributed to a low class mention the aspect of disadvantage regarding their educational history. Especially class IV members who belong to low caste categories share their feelings of disadvantage which they link with their caste background (e.g. IVm3). In addition to school settings, segregating experiences continue on the job.

Mr. P., a fitter from an OBC community who works in one of the SMEs, states: “We are from this community and one knows what this can mean. People judge people because of their background. That is normal. Everybody knows where you are from. And at work it is the same.” (IVm3) The cited person expresses a feeling of being assessed at his workplace, although he perceives this as normal for the society. In contrast to the above described phenomenon in the IT and leather sectors and of low castes who pursue education in non-caste occupied sectors, many of the low caste interviewees tend to rather feel discouraged to pursue education. This might be due to the fact that the study was not conducted in those ‘caste free’ sectors but in metal producing companies which are rather traditional in this sense. Some interviewees of the sample directly link caste deprivation with their low education aspirations:

“In my community people cannot be very ambitious. Even if they might try. Many are not so lucky. So how shall we strive for more education? Will it help? Will we get forward? I don’t know and education is expensive. So we better take a job where we get some money from.” (IVm2)

The interviewee is a construction worker and doubts that he will be able to benefit from education. He is aware that other members of his community with the same caste background have had negative experiences, and he links it with caste discrimination. When low cast interviewees speak about their job situations and their perceived chances on the labour market, the collected data shows that the participants of lower caste origin consider their chances on the formal but also on the informal job market as lower compared to their higher caste rival applicants. A SC woman in the group discussion (IVf3) in a meeting with participants of a training seminar for self employment supplied by a Don Bosco outreach centre in a semi urban area near Delhi asks:

“Who would hire somebody like us? Some people think we are not trustworthy, they don’t like us being around or they think we should not do certain kinds of jobs. Getting a decent job is not easy. People know where we are coming from. Many of us here experience that.” (IVf3)

To her mind, castes negatively influence the chances on the labour market. Here she points out the fact that caste thinking is still bound to the idea of purity and impurity, and with certain views in the society regarding caste memberships. Also, the awareness and sensibility of people regarding other people’s caste background is mentioned. The women in the group and also their families are very aware what caste membership can still mean even in modern India. From their point of view,

caste still matters a lot. This might be partly increased due to the fact that they live in a semi urban surrounding with close neighbourhood connections. Another estimation mentioned by low caste members is that their employers may treat them in a different way than others and their chances to advance may be lower. This is directly connected with the employer's knowledge of which castes their employees belong to, as shown above. In the expert interview with the coordinator of the outreach training activities, the impact of caste discrimination becomes even clearer:

“The people I work with deeply doubt that they get forward in life, not through work and also not through education. They are not lazy or not willing but they have made bad experiences regarding their background. They are mostly SC and backward castes. When we encourage them and provide training in a different atmosphere they do very well.” (EX2)

The coordinator is convinced that missing education aspirations are bound to the discriminating experiences the clients have made over time in regular educational and work contexts. Interviewees such as Mr. P. state the same:

“I often felt at school that the teachers who had to give us marks did not judge us in a fair manner. They often said they think that we have done this or that or that we would misbehave. But they very often did not have any reason for it. The same you can find in other manners e.g. if there is a social offences. If there is anything happening, my community is very often being blamed for it.” (IVm3)

The interviewee talks here about his feeling of being prejudicially judged in various societal manners. That made him less confident in his hope to receive good marks, a degree or a decent job due to school performance. The same person states further: “So why should I try to perform good? I dropped out of school because I did not want to be treated like that. And also did not know what to do later with school marks. They won't help a lot.” (IVm3) Other interviewees (IVm2) talk about same experiences. All in all the low caste interviewees report about ongoing caste discrimination which makes them expect the same treatment on the labour market. This diminishes their educational aspirations and motivation.

Summing up, ongoing caste discrimination, whether hidden or openly practised, seems to have some effect on the educational aspiration of low caste members. Extreme caste discrimination such as denying school facilities to certain castes has officially – and also widely in practice – disappeared, but subtle forms of discrimination remain widespread. This creates doubt among the lower castes that they will receive unbiased treatment and a worthwhile return on education.



Drèze also mentions discrimination as one possible reason for the huge remaining educational differences in India among different castes (2008; also in Drèze/Sharma 1998 or Sinha/Sinha 1995.). The literacy rate among low caste groups is much lower. In the latest Census, figures published on caste from 2001 showed a literacy rate of 54.69% among SCs against the national average of 65.38% (Census of India 2001). The caste gap in education must be considered in the historical development of education in India. From the beginning of the first millennia, Brahmins had traditional control over crucial aspects of education: Only upper castes received training in reading and writing. Furthermore, only the Brahmins determined the contents of education, such as what literature was allowed to be studied and which topics were allowed to be discussed (Chakkarath 2010). Whenever Hinduism and therewith the castes system was the main ideological force, the Indian education system was elitist by nature.

Another example that supports the lower castes' doubt of receiving equal treatment is the case of young SC Sunil (III<sub>m</sub>2) who finished his studies successfully but currently works as a simple assistant in one of the local companies. His studies were financed by his parents in the hope that he might find a better job, preferably in a government institution, in order to reach a better social and economic status than they had. He reports that government-set quotas at universities for low caste members played a big role in helping him get into university. After he had successfully finished his studies, he started looking for employment. When applying for a job with the government, Sunil was asked to pay very high bribes that his family was unable to afford. For him, the immense sum of the bribe is related to the fact that he is low caste:

“You are always asked to pay some money when you want a job that is clear. Everybody does, especially in government. But we have the feeling that the sum we were asked to pay was so high because we are from a lower community. The lower you are the more you have to pay. And of course we don't have the right connections.” (III<sub>m</sub>2)

As mentioned, Indians can easily identify the caste background of a person by their name and appearance. In addition, when applying for a job, also in the government, registration of one's caste background is still very common. The young man Sunil is convinced that his background as a member of a low caste created a negative perception of his person on the labour market. His education history proves that his

and his family's expectations regarding promising educational path. The main problem is seen in the negative perception of their caste background by others when it comes to jobs. This negative view is held responsible for the situation. They feel that they are being treated unfairly when they have to pay more bribes than others because of their low caste status.

Another factor named in Sunil's case that is closely interlinked with the request for high bribes is the lack of connections and networks that are said to be essential for obtaining good jobs. The importance of caste networks counts in all classes and for all levels of employment. EX1 states that high castes are still over represented in government institutions, but also in the military and other well reputed organisations. This is the fact although the government installed caste quotas to help low caste members getting access to official employment. The company owner of one of the SMEs that was visited reports that employees are normally recruited through the contact of other employees. This is seen as a reliable channel and this practice is also used for low positions. He states that in his company there are higher than average numbers of members of certain castes. The individual's caste forms an in-group that bonds can be stronger than those of professional work relations and competencies, and members from the individual's caste seem to be favoured when it comes to job appointments. The phenomenon of caste accumulation in companies occurs across all classes. In the visited multinational companies castes – mainly high – are also conglomerated. This will be further explored in the next paragraph on class I and II. (Nevertheless, this is also due to the fact that high castes are often much better educated and therefore employed by MNCs.) For Sunil, his lack of connections in the government institutions where he applied seems to be typical for people from low castes, as they are generally underrepresented here. Instead, he ended up in a private company in a position seen as typical for his caste level. Here as well, the opinion of the interviewee is that this is because of his low caste status and his lack of family connections and in-group relations in the government that normally help to find employment. Whether this combination of low caste and lack of connections is the real reason for his under employment or if other factors might play a role as well could not be clarified and are not relevant here. Important is the personal analysis of the individual, who perceives his caste background as a stable negative characteristic

which cannot be easily eradicated by educational endeavours. This lesson leads him to make the following statement:

“If I knew before how difficult it will be and what problems I am facing maybe I would not have studied. Maybe my parents better would have saved the money spend for my education. That is what I have to tell others and also my future children.” (III<sub>m</sub>2)

Coming now to the topic of motivation: Sunil starts to regret his education effort and hints at the point that this may also later affect his educational aspirations for his children. He states that other family members and friends in his community see his story as a negative example that impacts their educational considerations. Sunil reports that they feel deterred by the outlook of being underemployed despite having a profound academic background (III<sub>m</sub>2). This hinders their pursuit of education. The low caste members have a deep doubt of the environment’s perception regarding their abilities. Positive anticipations such as benefitting from the economic growth or upward mobility through education are decreased through the low confidence in the environment’s perception of their caste background.

Drèze assumes that different economic and other returns that low caste members may receive for their educational achievements are one reason for the low literacy rate among low castes (2008). Well educated upper caste members might have better chances to find a well-paid job than low caste members. The data shows how the low caste members themselves perceive their chances, how they anticipate the returns of education, and finally how these anticipations lead to educational decisions. The case of Sunil shows first that low caste members have difficulties in believing in the returns of education. Second, it demonstrates that they trace their difficulties back to the fact that low castes are perceived negatively and treated unfairly by others. The cases of the previously mentioned Don Bosco training course women (III<sub>f</sub>1) show the deep rooted doubt that their background and their abilities will be given a fair chance.

In literature, caste discrimination and its relation to economic aspirations has been discussed to some extent. World Bank research economist Karla Hoff (2004) and also Gaiha et al. (2008) attribute low aspirations of low caste members to the effects of historical discrimination. Hoff (2004) undertook an experimental study among a group of North Indian untouchables from the Chamar caste in rural Uttar Pradesh to

investigate if the inheritance of discrimination against low castes in rural North India reduces the low caste individuals' response to economic incentives. Hoff's main question is how much the stigma of untouchability still influences expectations and attainment. She refers to economist G. Loury (2002), who argues in his *Anatomy of Racial Inequality* that the ideological legacy of slavery continues to stigmatise African Americans in the US, even today. That stigma may be a major factor for the persistent economic inequality between African Americans and those of European descent. In Hoff's experiment, she discovered that the performance of the low caste members was significantly lower when their caste membership was announced to the experimenter during a round of performance tests. For Hoff, the reason is the impact of historical discrimination and durable inequality that the Chamars experienced for centuries. "The past shapes belief systems that shape individuals' response to opportunities" (Hoff 2004). She explains the lowered performance is due to the belief system of the low castes, and that this makes them lose trust in the reward system when their social identity of caste is activated. Centuries of caste discrimination function like a social training that teaches the low castes to expect discriminatory treatment just because of the fact that they are low castes (ibid). Hoff refers to Rao and Walton (2004), both of whom underline that culture may preserve inequality within a society. Internalized statistical chances of success or failure were transformed to aspirations and expectations of individuals. Ghai and colleagues' approach points also towards the impact of historical and also ongoing discrimination (2008). For them, this is the reason for current economic inequalities between groups of high and low caste origin. The low caste interviewees in the here presented study talk about their doubt of receiving fair chances in education and job settings. This doubt is based on reflections of their past experiences with caste in daily life.

Beside the inherited doubt of receiving equal chances, another assumption related to low caste status and centuries of discrimination can be thought of. It is mentioned in literature (Steele et al. 2002; Steele/Aronson 1995; also Hoff 2004) that public stereotypes can affect performance. The phenomenon called stereotype threat (Steele/Aronson 1995) can be observed when an aspect of the social identity (race, gender, ethnicity) is associated with a negative stereotype (dirty, weak, lazy, less intelligent). The combination of a social identity aspect with a positive stereotype

(e.g. the Germans and the ideas of good workers, punctual, correct; Brahmins and educated) raises self-confidence and the individual's performance. Steele and colleagues tested their hypothesis among African American and Caucasian students in the US. When race was made salient in a test situation the performance of the African American students lowered significantly. Steele et al. interpret the results as a loss of self-confidence when the social identity is activated.

For the Indian case, it could be possible that low caste members might not dare to choose higher educational paths because they lack the self-confidence in their own abilities. The social training of caste discrimination may lead to a negative self-perception that makes the individual believe that they are unable to cope with educational and occupational challenges. Hoff (2004) also discusses this possibility for the Chamars in her study. In India, the social identity of low caste is still associated with the negative stereotype of impurity and that education might not be appropriate for them. Caste is already and always salient in daily life as I previously discussed. According to the above-cited studies on stereotype threat, it could be possible that low caste members suffer from an inherited low sense of self-confidence. Therefore, they may not opt for challenging education channels. But the data shows a different picture. As discussed also in paragraph 6.1.1., there is no negative self-concept among the low castes that influences their educational decisions. They are discouraged due to negative experiences. That becomes clear when the education setting is changed. An example is the cases of the female clients of the Don Bosco training centre in Bombay who have passed their Matric exams and are about to finish a further training course. In a different learning and working atmosphere, where caste does not matter, the participants are encouraged and motivated to strive for more: "Here we don't have the feeling that our background counts. And they will help me to find a job in a good company. That is what I like here most. I want to continue with the course." (III f1) The NGO training takes place in a setting where instructors and teachers are sensitive to the precarious situation of the individuals. Furthermore, the training is linked with support structures to assist in finding an appropriate job afterwards. The coordinator assumes that the fact might be relevant that the organisation is not rooted in Hindu traditions, and that many instructors are not Hindus, but belong to communities of other religions which do not have a caste structure. As to be discussed in chapter 7, caste thinking is closely

linked to Hinduism and is an original part of spiritual thinking. When given the possibility to find employment under unbiased conditions where caste does not play any role, low caste members do not reject the choice of a higher educational path in general. Sunil's step to opt for a university study also hints at this aspect. It shows a normal level of self-worth and belief in one's self, also among lower castes. People with low self-confidence in their general abilities or talents (e.g. because of their caste background) would probably not choose higher educational paths, but would opt for education with lower levels of difficulty than that of academic study. In the interviews with SC and OBC, a low sense of self-confidence in general could not be found. The class III and IV participants who were from low caste backgrounds never mentioned that they think they might not be able to perform well at work or in school due to their caste background. Their educational decisions did not seem to be linked to a lack of self-worth or doubt of their abilities because of caste. The following statement emphasizes this aspect:

“I think that people like us are not always getting the right treatment in public. At school, teachers tend to hit us when they thought that we are not behaving. They said this is typical for us. And I can still sometimes feel it. But education in general is also for us, not only for the higher castes, that is a mistake.” (IVm1)

Here an OBC member reflects on his experiences with biased caste treatment years ago. He is convinced that there is a negative bias against low castes and that some people believe that education for his community is inappropriate. He points out that receiving biased treatment because of caste may lower the expectation of being successful in society, but does not affect one's belief in their general abilities.

Hoff (2004) interprets her results among the Chamars in the way that “social identity tends to reproduce themselves over time” and so does the negatively stereotyped social identity of disadvantaged low castes.

”The difference in behaviour is not a consequence of a “culture of poverty” of the disadvantaged social groups, but a legacy of the historical process that divided human beings into categories and shaped their beliefs and expectations.” (ibid: 32)

For Hoff, the main reason for the low performance of the Chamars is historical discriminations that formed the Chamar's expectation system for centuries. Hoff reasons that social groups respond differently to economic incentives when their social identity is made salient. In contrast to the assumption of the impact of

historical discrimination, the interviewees that are analysed here point mainly to the negative experiences of ongoing biased treatment in their daily life. A possible inheritance of negative expectations through generations may be an aspect as well, but was not clearly identified in the data. A social identity that is potentially experienced as negative does not have to play a crucial role if the individuals perceive that they are being given an unbiased chance to reach a required employment position. What has become clear in the interviews is that biased treatment creates cognitive considerations: In the case of low castes it is doubtful that they will receive an unbiased assessment and therefore an adequate reward for the effort of education. This thinking minimizes positive expectations and so influences educational behaviour. The interviewees state that they believe that success regarding education is often dependant on subjective judgement of teachers and supervisors. The experience of caste seems to affect motivation to pursue education in a social reality, where performance is constantly exposed to subjective judgement. This phenomenon can be seen with high and low caste participants. The expectation of a biased treatment is manifested in the educational behaviour of low castes but also of high castes (as will be shown next). Certain expectations of a biased treatment influence members of upper social strata and high caste origin in their decision processes regarding education as well.

### **Class I and II**

The belief in the societal value of one's own caste background of high caste members can intensify motivation regarding success and educational decisions. Srinivas (1996) underlines the fact that in the last 150 years, with the rise of economic opportunities, the caste as a social network has continually gained in (a kind of positive) importance. For example, the caste as a support base would be particularly important for villagers who seek salaried jobs in the urban areas. What Srinivas describes for rural classes seems also to be valid for originally urban settings. The interviews show strong caste bonds and in-group tensions in the higher urban classes of the sample. The case of a class II Brahmin employee, called Mr. B., shows that a high caste background produces trust in the future and in appropriate job opportunities. This positively influenced his educational decisions, as will be shown. The interviewee is a Diploma holder, and because of financial constraints his

family was not able to pay for a technical BE, which would have meant a better education background than “just” a Diploma (see chapter 5 for detailed description of the Indian education ladder). He talks about his access to the current job in one of the local SMEs:

“To the company I came through Mr. N., we are from the same category. He called me immediately when he knew that there is somebody needed in the company. We are also from the same area and he knew about my education and my family.” (IIm1)

With “same category”, he means their Brahmin and sub-caste background. Mr. N. is a class I Brahmin engineer and holds the leading position in the company, a local Indian metal producer. Mr. B. works directly under him. His salary is RS 22.000 per month. Because of his job position, he is considered to be class II here. His family background must be defined as class III. His father works as a Hindu priest and as a cultivator at the same time. The family was not able to fully finance Mr. B.’s education due to their low income and job profile. However, investing in the Diploma meant a relatively high burden on the family, but the expected output had been never questioned. Another indicator of his low class origin is Mr. B.’s relatively broken English. It was possible to conduct the interview with him but he was nowhere near the fluency of Mr. N. or other high class interviewees. Mr. B.’s family is an example for low class but high caste Indians. Despite his low class background, he has been always confident that his pursuit of education would be rewarded due to his community connections. Mr. N. confirms the fact that he felt naturally committed to bring someone from his own caste and community background to the company, and states that this is viewed as normal in the Indian society (Im2). For the cited employee, Mr. B. (IIm1), the caste ties imply a personal advantage he can trust in. Being part of a certain caste, he can be relatively sure that he will find an adequate job with the help of other community members. The access certain casts have to favoured branches and job opportunities is essential as in the case of Brahmins and their sub-castes. He states that when he decided on his educational path, he felt quite convinced that he would not fail in the labour market due to his social network, based on caste. His social background creates trust in future success because of reliable social ties. This trust allows him to anticipate a positive perspective. He believes the same will be true for his children and investment in their education is based on his conviction that they will be able to



succeed in life as he did, because his caste-based social structures are well maintained.

Panini (1996) also affirms the remaining importance of caste, especially in the rural areas despite the introduction of rural development schemes and land reforms. Caste is still an important unit especially in the rural economy. Beside negative impacts of a rigid and closed system, caste membership can also imply positive aspects for its members, irrespective of the group's status within the system. Caste members are part of a person-based social network which controls insiders' information about economic opportunities, where skills are transmitted, and a variety of human and material support is provided (Panini, cited in Srinivas 1996: xi). As mentioned, several studies call India highly collectivistic oriented (e.g. Triandis 1994; House et al. 2004; Sinha et al. 2001). Such collectivism is also reflected in the above description of the person-based social network of caste by Panini that in general contains a supporting function for its members.

Nevertheless, next to his trust in social contacts because of his high caste membership, Mr. B. also emphasises the importance of good school performance by his children. "My children should be always the topper. That is very important." (IIm1) High caste networks alone were not found to be perceived as a sufficient condition for occupational success. They have to be combined with a profound education, and that creates positive expectations that investments in education are worthwhile.

Brahmins themselves have a very positive view about their own community and their background. Neha (If1) describes it with "the belief in the superiority of the race":

"But some people and we also believe in caste system because we believe in the superiority of the race, so that Brahmins are superior a lot. [...] Brahmins have an air of superiority amongst themselves. They feel that the race is good. [...] Apart from that all other castes today are equal to one, except Brahmins they love themselves they think they are great." (If1)

She being herself a Brahmin affirms the very positive self-view of the Brahmins. Beside positive network ties and a high level of self-confidence based on membership in a high caste, another aspect of belief in the impact of being from a higher category is created through the positive image high castes (especially

Brahmins) hold in the society. Just as low castes are associated with negative attributes as previously demonstrated, so too are Brahmins associated with positive characteristics. A class I member, Aruna, states about Brahmins:

“My family runs their own company. My father is a businessman. And he would only hire Brahmins for accounting. They are known for their competencies and their reliability. We never had other categories for this kind of job and my father would never take somebody else.” (If3)

The interviewee's background is from the Kshatriya varna, the second highest caste group. Her opinion about the general trustworthiness of Brahmins clarifies here why they are favoured for certain jobs as in her family's company. Brahmins seem to enjoy a special kind of public confidence. This positive public opinion is based on the occupational traditions of this caste. As mentioned already above Brahmins have historically held positions in the priesthood, as well as the majority of scholars and teaching positions. Laws and social norms were often instituted by Brahmins because of their status in the society. The group has been seen as being able to interpret the will of the Gods more accurately than others which led to extensive power and influence in this caste. As said before, Brahmins were perceived among the British Empire as being especially talented in intellectual and cognitive tasks, and were therefore authorized to fill higher positions of administration. Their high level of education has led to the exaggerated tendency for others to value and respect members of this caste in general. This view perpetuates many of the inter caste inequalities even today. This seems to influence trust in the positive perception and appraisal of others and with it the expectations to be successful when it comes to educational and occupational matters. The positive belief in one's own caste background influences the decisions for education. Mr. J. (Im1) holds a leading position in one of the two visited MNCs. He has received respect from other castes members throughout his whole life because of his high caste status as a Brahmin, as the following interview sequence demonstrates:

“[...] of course, I am proud of that. Because as I said Brahmin is one of the most important caste in India. Because Brahmins used to rule the other religions. Now the situation has changed but still the others give respect to Brahmins.” (Im1)

That makes him self-confident, also in education matters:

“I always knew I can make it. My father often told me to think at my background and that it will help me. Of course you have to perform very well. That is one

thing. And being a Brahmin means also that I will be able to do so. People look at us Brahmins. Therefore we are successful and get good jobs.” (Im1)

The interviewee is convinced that he will not fail because as a Brahmin he is able to perform well. That motivated him to pursue education, also enlarged by the success stories of his community members. He can rely on a very positive perception and treatment from his environment. Returning to Neha’s (If1) cited statement and other Brahmins’ attitude of being “great” combined with ongoing positive feedback from the environment creates a belief in a totally positive perception and a huge amount of confidence in one’s own future, in the return on education and in excellent occupational opportunities. High caste members feel encouraged to pursue education.

If the belief and doubt of the high and low castes in positively and negatively biased assessments of their persons and abilities is legitimate in Indian reality or not can neither be explored further, nor is it relevant here. It is the individuals’ view as it impacts their educational decisions and behaviour that is more essential here. But certain indications from high caste members about their opinion of lower castes seem to actually support the concerns of the lower castes. To complete the aspect of the impact of other people’s opinions on caste, a quote from the upper class Mr. L. on education and the appropriateness of it for certain class and caste members shows that higher class members are doubtful of the general talents and abilities of the respective groups:

“There would still be a difference between even an educated from a well established background and maybe an upcoming educated person from a lower background from a village. The migrants and the labour class people are different. They are extreme. That is also because of their community background. They cannot do certain things and other class members can do a lot. It is like that. Here in this company people are very motivated, educated, because they are from excellent background.” (Im3)

This kind of attitude asserts that there is a general difference in different caste members and a certain subtle form of discrimination seems to influence the lower castes’ as well as the upper castes’ belief in two kinds of a biased assessment, a negative and a positive form. It shapes their perceptions of their future outlooks and so their pursuit of education. To sum up this subchapter, casteism influences educational decisions at both extremes of the society, although it is due to different reasons. At the high end it is mostly tradition, the binding character of a group’s self-

concept, and belief in existing social networks and a positive perception of the high caste members. At the low end it is mainly doubt in a benefit of education effort based on daily life experiences of discrimination and based on the belief that they lack important social connections. That means there is an influence of caste background on cognitive considerations (in the case of the thesis) regarding educational decisions in all society layers, both positive and negative.

Observing social relations, next to caste background, the family is the main social institution of the Indian society and plays an equally important role for many interviewees as I will now show.

## **6.2. The Family**

Sinha mentions in his characteristic of the Indian Hindu identity family social institutions and relationships as one main and important aspect in Indian society (1982). Before further findings regarding this field will be represented, a brief overview about the state of family research for the Indian subcontinent will help to contextualize my observations.

The worldwide phenomena of family and kinship ties has been analysed extensively (e.g. for developing countries by Platteau/Abraham 1987, Elwert 1982, Fafchamps 1991, Fafchamps/Lund 2003, Karduck 2006; or e.g. kinship functions in poor urban communities in the USA by Stack 1974). Charles Wolf (1955) describes the kin system as a system of shared rights and obligations encompassing a large number of near and distant relatives. Family obligations manifest themselves in the performance of rituals, marriage obligations, and in ownership of assets, properties, and sharing of economic responsibilities (*ibid.*). The thesis follows an understanding as presented in a World Bank study on the economic effects of kinship by Hoff and Sen (2005) and views the family system as a social contract of mutual assistance as well as duty among its members.

The Indian family has been subject to vast sociological and anthropological research for decades (e.g. Mandelbaum 1948, 1970; Ghurye 1955; Parsons 1959; Goode 1963; Mies 1986; Srinivas 1996; Deshpande 2003; Donner 2005; Assayag/Fuller 2005; Dasgupta/Lala 2007; Varma 2007; Uberoi 2008). The family as an institution is a key to understanding the contemporary Indian society as such and its social arrangements including its ideas, beliefs and values (Béteille 1992). India and its

joint family system is a textbook case in comparative sociology of the family (Uberoi 2008). Nevertheless, many questions regarding the joint family as its definition, extension, composition, function, and future are said to remain confusing in social sciences (*ibid.*).

Historically, the construct of the Indian joint family system evolved from the Indological approach of Indian family studies. Through the study of sacred Hindu texts such as the *Darmashastras*, the British colonial administration identified the Indian patriarchal joint family as the typical and traditional form of family organisation in India (Uberoi 2008). It has been criticised that the view of the joint family as the typical Indian way of living has dominated scientific and other literature on the Indian family for ages, although other forms of family living have emerged and been widely identified as well (D’Cruz/Bharat 2001). ‘The’ traditional joint family of literature is mainly the patrilineal family construct, mostly found in northern India. It is described early by Karve (1953, cited in Uberoi 2008: 280) as “[...] a group of people who generally lives under the same roof, who eats food cooked on one hearth [...], holds property in common [...], practices in common family worship and who are related to each other in some particular type of kin.” The joint family is headed by the most senior male, who holds decision making power. The male family members stay in the household throughout their life and are all blood relatives; female members are mothers, wives, unmarried daughters or sisters or widowed relatives. That means that a traditional joint family can be composed of several brothers with their wives and children, their son’s wives and children, as well as their parents and aunts.

Several aspects regarding the Indian family as a sociological and anthropological phenomenon have been occupying experts’ attention for a long time. The question whether the concept of the Hindu traditional joint family has been declining in favor of the more western idea of nuclear family structures has been discussed for decades in both scientific and popular literature (e.g. Parsons 1959; Mies 1986; Varma 2007; Uberoi 2008). As a result of modernisation processes, the nuclear family type, focused on one conjugal couple, is believed to be best adapted to the requirements of an industrialised society. In contrast, Srinivas points to the ongoing importance of the collective for upward mobility in India (1996). Other current authors also state that there is still great importance placed on family ties and kinship relations, though

they note also crucial changes (e.g. Donner 2005). Varma underlines the importance of kinship and the traditional loyalties to family, kin, community, and caste for social relations generally among all levels of social classes (Varma 2007). Nevertheless, he notes a decrease in the meaning of the Indian joint family for Indians of the middle class. According to him, empirical data shows the continuing existence of the importance and significant role of family ties when it comes to capital formation and economic networking; but regarding obligations, responsibilities and control, the institution of the kin system is said to decrease in meaning for the middle class.

In contrast to the middle class, for Indians of lower classes and with less economic opportunities, which is the large majority of the nation (see chapter 5), the family fills the role of a social security network as e.g. Hoff and Sen prove (2005). Especially in developing societies that do not have a social welfare system, the function of the kin system is still widely used to provide community goods and beneficial arrangements (Uberoi 2008). Here the term extended family can be distinguished from the joint family. While the joint family describes the style of living in one household as mentioned above, the extended family encompasses a greater number of distant relatives who do not necessarily share one household.

Next to the subject of a fading joint family system and description of the basic family unit, another concern is how to distinguish between family and household (Karlekar 2008). In the scientific discourse, the question has been attempted to be addressed by the preferred usage of the more precise and quantifiable concept of household over the rather vague term of family. Several existing household-classification schemes have been developed by sociologists in order to capture the great variety of the Indian social reality (e.g. Kolenda 1968, 1987; Shah 1973, 1998). In contrast, Uberoi (2008) advocates the recovering of the term family which is more applicable to include the wide functions of family life and relationships than 'household'. For findings of the study presented here, the meaning of relationships within families – irrelevant if joint, extended or nuclear – and their influences on the individuals are the most important points.

One aspect must be kept in mind when analysing the collected data on family importance. Uberoi (2008) emphasises that the picture of the extended family and its supporting value system has long been an important part of the national self-image

of Indians and expresses most valued aspects of Indian tradition and culture. Therefore, the distinction of what is fact and what is value might sometimes be difficult. Also Karlekar (2008: 309) notes that the cultural ideal and the important aspect of honour in the Indian culture can make the exploration of negative notions of the Indian family difficult. The facade of a positive picture of the Indian family can limit research and discussions on critical aspects of the family as a stressor in order to preserve the well being of its members. Uberoi's and Karlekar's critical objection must be kept in mind for the discussion of the findings. The interviewees of the study also primarily mentioned family issues only in a positive light. Almost all interviewees demonstrated that they would immediately refer positively to the meaning of their joint family, which might be due to the fact that family is a central aspect in their personal and collective value system. Only after prolonged discussion did the participants also hint at possible negative aspects of strong family influences and some negative connotation of what family means to their education decisions come through.

Turning now to the analysis of the empirical findings, the interviewees of the sample were asked for their educational history and who and what has influenced them on their educational and occupational path. The interviewees confirm the huge importance of the family in general and as well for their educational choices as to be shown in more detail in the following paragraphs. The vast majority of the participants mention immediately one or more family members, their whole family, and also extended family that might have had an impact on their decisions. Family is a topic that all participants are able and willing to talk about frankly throughout all class categories. The dependence on the family's opinion as such will serve as a general factor group when analysing reasons for education decisions here.

### **6.2.1. Dependence on the Family**

Most interviewees still practice more or less the joint family concept of living with the husband's parents in one household. Those who live alone with their closest family members (married couple and their children) state that this is because of external circumstances such as the need to migrate from their place of family origin. Keeping this in mind, the term family will describe this form of joint household composition.

### All classes

As already briefly discussed in the paragraph on caste and its implications for education in different society strata, the aspect of family and its importance is dominant in class II and III over caste influences. While in the extremes of society in the upper strata of class I as in the lowest classes caste seem to have an essential influence on educational decisions, the interviewees of class II and III constantly refer to the meaning of their family and their influence on all kinds of life decisions.

“We are what we are because of thanks to the family. I work for the wellbeing of my children. And for my parents. I owe my parents a lot. They stay with me and my wife. There is also my brother and my brother’s wife and children in the house. My family counts a lot. We discuss all things together and I ask my parents frequently. Caste – no, not so important.” (IIm2)

The here cited class II member, Mr. A., is 43 years of age and holds a position as an assistant in one of MNCs in Bombay. The interviewee lives in a joint family with different generations in one household. His statement gives evidence to the general importance of the Indian family and their voice in all kinds of matters. Caste does not heavily influence his life decisions. According to B eteille (1992), the Indian family as a societal intuition has withstood the changes of the last decades and centuries more successfully than caste. He writes about the importance of the Indian family in contemporary India:

“Many Indians, particularly those who occupy strategic positions in the professions, in administration and in management, have withdrawn their commitment from caste, but continue to be deeply committed to the family. It is in this specific sense that caste as an institution is in decline, whereas the family remains as one of the strongest institutions in Indian society.” (1992: 14)

B eteille (1992: 13) suggests not to concentrate merely on caste as has been done intensively for decades in social research, but instead to focus on the family as a socio-cultural institution. While caste seems to lose its meaning for the Indian middle class, in contrast the meaning of family and its normative basis remains very strong.

Nevertheless, the sample shows that in contrast to the members of class II and III, members in the higher classes family and caste still seem to be very much interlinked. Again, the example of marriage from class I, Neha, shall demonstrate this:



“If I would want to get married to a person from ST or SC my parents would not accept that at all. Because we are Brahmins and I would be outcasted from my entire community if I would do that. We would not be part of any social gathering or anything. It is very severe.” (If1)

Neha makes clear that her father will make the decision on whom she will marry. The relevant core message is that to disobey the family and community rules and norms would mean severe consequences for the whole family. As in class II, family is the most important institution. In addition, in class I rules and norms encompass caste thinking.

Before coming to the meaning of family in regards to educational decisions, the aspect of family shall once again be more deeply explored. As cited previously in the context of caste, the GLOBE study (House et al. 2004; chapter 1.) and other sources (e.g. Triandis 1995, 1994; Triandis/Bhawuk 1997) refer to India as a highly collectivistic society with high scores of in-group collectivism<sup>44</sup>. The dimension corresponds with Sinha’s description of identity characteristics of relationships (1982). As Uberoi notes, the collectivistic supporting system of the Indian joint family has been often labeled as ‘familism’ in contrast to the term ‘individualism’ (2008: 276). The question whether cultural studies in the tradition of GLOBE, earlier Hofstede and others *really* represent the Indian character can be critically discussed. As already discussed in chapter 1, such studies observe behavior in a work context where the individuals know that they are expected to behave in a collectivistic and cooperative way. The idea of India as a highly collectivistic society can be challenged; if the observed collectivistic behavior really happens because of collectivistic thinking or if it is due to other, possibly egoistic motives will be discussed again in chapter 6.2.2. Nevertheless, what could be demonstrated already is that from a core family perspective, the behaviour of most Indians appears collectivistic, regardless of what the deeper motivation behind it might be. The core family has overarching priority, the opinion of family members is most important for life decisions. It will be shown in the following that this is also true for educational decisions.

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<sup>44</sup> For the question of the thesis and regarding the behaviour of individuals in mainly private arrangements, GLOBE’s second collectivistic dimension ‘institutional collectivism’ is of lower importance and therefore will be disregarded.

Regarding the question of how the family opinion impacts educational decisions of its members, the data of the study also suggests in this regard that there is a strong interrelation with the family throughout all societal strata. One male interviewee called Mr. K. from class III points out:

“I did not really feel to be in the position to choose the occupation. That is fine. My father and also my uncles and my mother had a debate about it. That was also with my siblings. Regarding my younger sisters I was also asked by my father what I considered as right for them.” (III<sub>m</sub>3)

Other statements from male as well as female interviewees from all classes also show that the decision making process is not an individualistic act, but more of a collectivistic nature. The collectivistic system contains a set of control mechanisms, like internal rules and instructions for the regulation and governing of actions. The rules have to be obeyed by the system members in exchange for community membership and its benefits, like insurance arrangements which help to survive as an individual (e.g. Hoff/Sen 2005; Platteau 1991). Disobeying these rules and regulations can result in strict sanctions, which can ultimately lead to exclusion from the community. It seems to be taboo to act autonomously when making educational decisions. Nevertheless, the interviewees refer mainly to the core family, namely parents and elder brothers when talking about external influences. Neha, who occupies a leading position in a MNC, points out the fact that her occupation was originally not the wish of her father and talks about having difficulties when she disobeyed his wish that she follow the family medical tradition:

“Well, all my family are doctors but the sight of blood sets me off. My dad wanted me to be a doctor also. And because of the quota system it is very difficult for Brahmins to get seats. But my elder brother and me are very good, so my father had a lot of hopes in us. My father did not talk to me for a month because I rejected his dreams for me. But then he let it go. But I followed the tradition in the way that I am equally successful.” (If1)

Neha describes her difficulties to act autonomously in her educational career and her occupational decisions. Only because of her inability to deal with blood – a necessary precondition to become a medical doctor – did her father eventually accept her alternative career. Nevertheless, the young woman had to face some sanctions when her father refused to speak with her for a month because of his feelings of disappointment.

Both of the examples described above of Mr. K. and Neha point to the aspect of missing autonomy. The concept of autonomy briefly mentioned in chapter 3 underlines the idea of the overarching priority of the decisions of family members for the individual. Roughly summarized, the term autonomy is primarily of western tradition (Greenhalgh 1995; also Jeffery/Jeffery 1994). It is a central value of Kantian tradition of moral philosophy and the Enlightenment concept (Hillmann 1994). The concept has been the subject of various controversy and debate. Autonomy in demographic literature is understood as having the possibility to act in an individualistic, rationalistic and de-contextualized manner, and with no influence of external constraints (Madhok 2006 cited in Weigl 2010). In the field of organisational development and work psychology, Hackman and Oldham (1980) introduced an idea of autonomy in the context of the motivational potential of work features. In their Job Characteristics Model, one of their work characteristics that is believed to enhance work motivation is autonomy. They define autonomy as “[...] substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out.” (1980: 79) According to Hackman and Oldham, individuals who can act autonomously in their sense of the definition are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to work. Their theory can be transferred to motivation for education to some extent. The relevant core message of Hackman and Oldham’s theory is that the feeling of autonomy is related to the development of motivation. That could be applied when it comes to educational decisions that are missing autonomy in decision making, the lack of freedom, and fewer opportunities for individual behaviour. As found for the Indian context in the interviews, this might also hinder the person’s motivation to pursue education.

However, Greenhalgh criticises the fact that the idea of autonomy and the value of de-conceptualised individuals who are free to make their own decisions is strongly related to the west (1995). According to Patel (2006) and as already demonstrated above, the Indian society is characterized by collectivism with an all-embracing family concept. Jeffery/Jeffery (1994) analysed the Hindi and Urdu<sup>45</sup> words that are similar to the western term autonomy. They conclude that a proper equivalent of a

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<sup>45</sup> Urdu is an official language of Northern Indian states.

word like autonomy is missing in Hindi and Urdu. That could mean that the notion of autonomy and individual decision making as used in the west is of rather questionable value. As Weigl (2010) summarizes, a deeper look at possibly related terms in Hindi and Urdu suggests rather a negative connotation of the idea of autonomy in Indian culture. This connotation is more or less connected with inappropriate and shameless behaviour or a frightening and unattractive life concept. Seeing its western point of origin, it is questionable if the term autonomy is suitable for the Indian context. The discussion described above aims to demonstrate the high meaning of external forces – that is the family and its collectivistic structures – in the individual's life. The value to act in an individualistic, rationalistic, and de-contextualized manner (Hillmann 1994), or to act with “freedom, independence and discretion” (Hackman/Oldham 1980) do not seem to be very desirable to the interviewees of the study when talking about their decisions along their educational pathway. Beck and Grande's (2010) and others' postulations regarding an ending of the western oriented and eurocentric research perspective when dealing with non-western cultures becomes justifiable here once more.

Returning to Neha's case (If1) and other interviewees as Mr. K. (IIIIm3), they show that external constraints and a lack of autonomy do not hinder motivation to pursue education in high or in lower classes. Both interviewees have been pursuing education in an extensive manner. Neha's difficulties to act against her father's wishes point to another theoretical explanation: A second Indian cultural characteristic mentioned already (chapter 1.) and discussed in literature is the dimension of power distance. Dumont (1970) has previously described India as a society whose relationships are structured by hierarchy. Also for social relations, the dimension encloses some relevant aspects. Power distance plays a role in the context of education when the question appears as to who has made the decisions regarding a specific educational path. Neha's father is convinced that he holds the power and right to choose the occupations for his children, as he had done already for Neha's brother. The concept also seems to be acceptable to Neha. Power distance within a family is a regular concept. The patriarchal idea of concentrated power at the top of the family shows its strong hierarchic organisation (Karlekar 2008). Neha (If1) faced relatively mild consequences when she disobeyed her father's wishes. Other interviewees hint at more profound consequences: “Nobody wants to be alone. The

family is the most important backup one has. So it is better to follow some rules.” (IIm3) In his statement, the class II interviewee called Mr. S. tentatively touches on the risk of losing the family support by not obeying rules maintained through its hierarchic structures. He follows the rules that education and occupation cannot be chosen independently. The family backup is a value nobody would want to risk, even when it comes to life decisions such as educational and occupational pathways. The young individual depends on the family and its idea of their future. B eteille is confident that Indian families demand subordination from their younger members (1998) which reproduces inequality between different age groups. As seen in the cited interviews, the older members dominate the younger family members and force them to act upon their ideas for the future. Age hierarchy has the power to produce an oppressive family structure and to maintain this ideology over generations.

In contrast to B eteille, Mines challenges the long time proclaimed subordination of the Indian individual to collectivistic and hierarchical set goals in family systems when it comes to life decisions (1988). He argues that reaching individual autonomy becomes essential as Indians age. He is convinced that the dominant role of hierarchy and collectivism in scientific descriptions of the Indian society is misleading. In the context of the study, it is essential that educational decisions mainly take place in early ages, during adolescence and early adulthood. The Indian family concept bases to a great extent on the understanding of seniority and the respect towards age (Karlekar 2008). Seeing the data, Mines’ view of striving for autonomy and rebellion against family hierarchies when Hindus define life goals is not applicable here. Education decisions are still subject to great hierarchic thinking within core families. The dependence on the family of the individual is defined by the discussed aspects, collectivism and involved lack of autonomy as well as hierarchical thinking among family members.

While the previous findings concentrate on the Indian core family, another specific aspect of family dependence focuses on the extended family and shall be portrayed in detail in the following subchapter.

### **6.2.2. In-Group Rivalry**

Another new factor which has not been considered previously in literature but was identified in the study is called in-group rivalry. It stands for resentments and the

feeling of jealousy within the in-group. The in-group shall be understood here as the extended family of one caste community in contrast to the joint and core family which was the main subject of the previous chapter. Mainly members of classes I and also II express the influence of the in-group when thinking of their social relations as I will now show.

### **Class I and II**

In these strata the social surroundings mainly consist of extended family members and members of the same sub-caste and were found to modify the behaviour and performance of an individual. Uncles, aunts, cousins, and second cousins seem to monitor the (educational) performance of an individual very closely, as confirmed by several interviewees:

“One main drive for me has been always to make my parents proud and that means I perform at least like my cousins. All of my cousins are engineers. Others went abroad to Canada and work as medical doctors there. They come back home every year and our parents are in close contact. They always ask what I am doing. It is important that I reach at least this kind of status. Otherwise it would be a huge disappointment for my parents.” (Im3)

This statement from Mr. L represents what many interviewees from class I and II mentioned. The in-group of the extended family is not only a source of assistance and support or a structure their members benefit from. It is also a source of pressure through the constant and direct comparison with successful other in-group members. The collectivistic structure of the extended family system and the in-group has been discussed often as seen above. In the interviews, a new aspect of the in-group becomes obvious which is true for male and female interviewees alike. The collective also contains the potentials of strong rivalry, especially on the level of coeval family members as cousins. A certain level of competition between family members might be commonly considered as “normal” and not an aspect to mention. But the interviews show that the level of rivalry seems to be taken so seriously that it sustainably influences the behaviour of the in-group members:

“We are constantly in contact with other family members and also close with neighbours. They have of course inside into our life and sometimes my father said ‘Look at Arun’ that is my father’s brother’s son, ‘he is doing very well at school. He will visit a college afterwards.’ I always wanted to make my parents proud. It was clear for me to perform as good as I can. So others don’t have a reason to talk.” (IIm3)

As the cited interviewee Mr. S from SME 2 states, being unable to perform as well as a perceived competitor in the social environment means being unable to make one's own parents proud. The view and opinion of parents seem to play a key role when it comes to inter-familial competition. The feeling of competition can put a lot of pressure on the individual which was often mentioned as one main driver in the desire to obtain education (e.g. IIm2). The women and mothers are very often housewives and not working during the day and visit each other constantly. These afternoon visits are part of the cultural and social life of Indian families. As some interviewees state, the mothers boast about their children and their performances in school and at work when they get together with other mothers. Often in such meetings, parents exaggerate and share accomplishments that the offspring has not yet achieved, especially in cases of almost grown up children who are on their way to an occupation or about to choose their course of study. Participants state that this increases the pressure on the children and enormously raises the expectations from their social surrounding (e.g. Mr. A. IIm2; Mr. S. IIm3). Talking about the children's success is an important element of forming the family's reputation. Parents nourish the atmosphere of competition within the in-group by pitting their children's (future) performance against each other.

“My mother met very often other women and they invite each other constantly into their houses. She told the neighbours and cousins always about my future occupation and that I was doing very well at school, that I will visit one of the best colleges, that I will pass the entry exams soon. So I did not really have an alternative. Thanks Good I really could make it.” (IIm2)

The interviewee, Mr. A., dares not to think about the consequences if he had not been able to accomplish the foretold success. The risk of damaging the parent's reputation in the social environment by not meeting the parent's expectations and what they have told the neighbours and friends seems to influence the educational decisions and education activities of the individuals to a great extent. The individuals feel that it is their duty to try their best to bring the parent's proclamations about their educational deeds into reality. Otherwise they risk shaming their parents in public.

Another female class I interviewee, Neha, tells about the extended family who always questions her lifestyle:

“Recognition from my core family is the topmost thing. My extended family don’t think of me very well because I am not married and a working woman. They are very envy. [...] I know that and the mothers compare always. There is a huge competition I think.” (If1)

She states that the described enviousness and competition within the community was one main reason why she felt obliged to perform as well as possible. Her own reputation, as well as the reputation of her father, is her highest priority. If the gossiping family members perceived that she is unable to manage her life and her job, her father’s name would be at risk and she would disappoint his belief in her in front of others.

This fear of disgracing one’s own core family is related to the South Asian concept of *izzat*. The term *izzat* is of Arabic origin and stands for honour and reputation (Mandelbaum 1988). It can be used in regards to people as well as institutions and organisations. The Indian family as such is widely subject to *izzat*. Individuals fear that parents might be in danger of losing their honour in front of the whole in-group. According to the concept of seniority, the *izzat* of the higher ranking parents must be protected unconditionally.

There is a body of literature on *intra*-group competition from the field of social psychology and sociology (e.g. Boudon/Bourricaud 1984 on social rivalry between elites). The aim of such rivalry and conflicts between groups are conflicts of interest and the preservation of power. But there is a lack of findings on rivalry within groups of a collectivistic surrounding.

First the findings on in-group rivalry behaviour can be brought into connection with the idea of children being extensions of their parents. Parents project their wishes and aspirations onto their children. Bétéille is convinced that Indian families aim to transmit their cultural and social capital to younger members (1998). Processes of modernisation and economic development in India enhance parents’ aspirations for their children. This phenomenon is mainly found in the upper strata of society. The perception of children being an extension of one’s self can be seen as one reason for ongoing pressure on younger family members as well as the generation of in-group rivalry. The here cited participants are all part of an upper class elite that are mostly also of higher caste status. The reason that this aspect was mainly found among I and II class persons might be due to the fact that economic developments affect the



middle and upper classes much more than lower classes (see also chapter 5 on benefiting from economic growth). Lower classes often hardly realize that any economic change that could raise their aspirations is happening, which is one explanation why in-group competition and the pressure to satisfy parent's future dreams was only found in class I and II. In addition, those interviewees of class I and II were all able to express themselves and their feelings very well. They were used to reflect their attitudes and abstract phenomena in a conversation. Nevertheless, it may be possible that in-group rivalry is not so much dependant on class membership and that the same might be found in lower classes, although the influences of modernisation and industrialisation is probably lower here.

All in all, the findings on in-group rivalry hint at one important aspect: the fact that the almost proverbial collectivism of the Indian society must be challenged. The dependence on the family discussed in chapter 6.2.1. focuses mainly on parents and the very inner core family. Here obedience is still considered to be most important. Now, the greater system of the extended family and its often stated collectivistic character is in the centre of interest. Seeing in-group rivalry, the before discussed factor of collectivism (6.2.1.) must now be modified slightly. Again a look at the definition of collectivism formulated in the GLOBE study is helpful: "In-group collectivism describes the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families." (House et al. 2004: 13) India scores very high in comparison with other countries and reaches the 4<sup>th</sup> rank among 62 examined cultures. India is labeled as a highly collectivistic culture by many authors (Triandis 1995, 1994; Triandis/Bhawuk 1997; Verma 1999; Sinha, J.B.P./Verma 1987) who more or less apply the same definition for collectivistic behavior as in the GLOBE study. Apart from the aspect that the well being of the whole group is more highly valued than the interests of the individuals, the aspect of pride and loyalty highlighted in GLOBE's definition is important for the interpretation of the identified phenomenon on rivalry. According to the definition, the relationship between the group members is mainly characterized by a great level of solidarity and pride in the effort of other group members. Pride in others means individuals feel satisfied when other group members are successful in certain matters or reach a high level e.g. in education or job matters. Rivalry and jealousy within this collective of the extended family and not merely between different groups stands contrary to the

main character of a collectivistic society as defined above. Therefore the phenomenon of in-group rivalry can be interpreted as a sign for individualistic thinking. The value of expressing pride has taken a back seat here. The interviews show that the individual's interest or that of parents is favoured. Moreover, the success of others is not only taken as an incentive to perform better but has a clear negative connotation and is a source of negative feelings such as jealousy and anger. In a clear collectivistic scenario it would probably be irrelevant who studied and worked successfully abroad. Important would be rather the fact that some members of the collectivism do so, which is sufficient to make the others feel proud and satisfied. But the strong rivalry within the Indian high class families hints at strong individualistic tendencies. In addition, it could be thinkable that like in intergroup rivalry also *within* the extended family dynamic the preservation or attainment of power is a reason for the rival behaviour of core families. These smaller units can be understood as individual subdivisions of the extended family. As discussed already, the extended family is strongly hierarchically structured and gaining power or influence within the system might be one hidden goal that determines this competitive behaviour.

The deeper reasons for the found in-group rivalry could not be fully revealed and may be subject to further research. Nevertheless, the idea of the family as the unconditional and collectivistic acting in-group in Indian society must be certainly questioned. The data shows that individualistic thinking and behaviour dominate over collectivistic characteristics. In fact, the findings suggest a crucial change in the orientation of upper class Indians regarding their family system. Modernisation and western influences may be one driving force here. It may also be possible that the social phenomenon of in-group rivalry within Indian families is nothing new, but has been previously in existence without being observed. It may have been also disavowed or ignored in favour of the highly valued idea of collectivism and family backup.

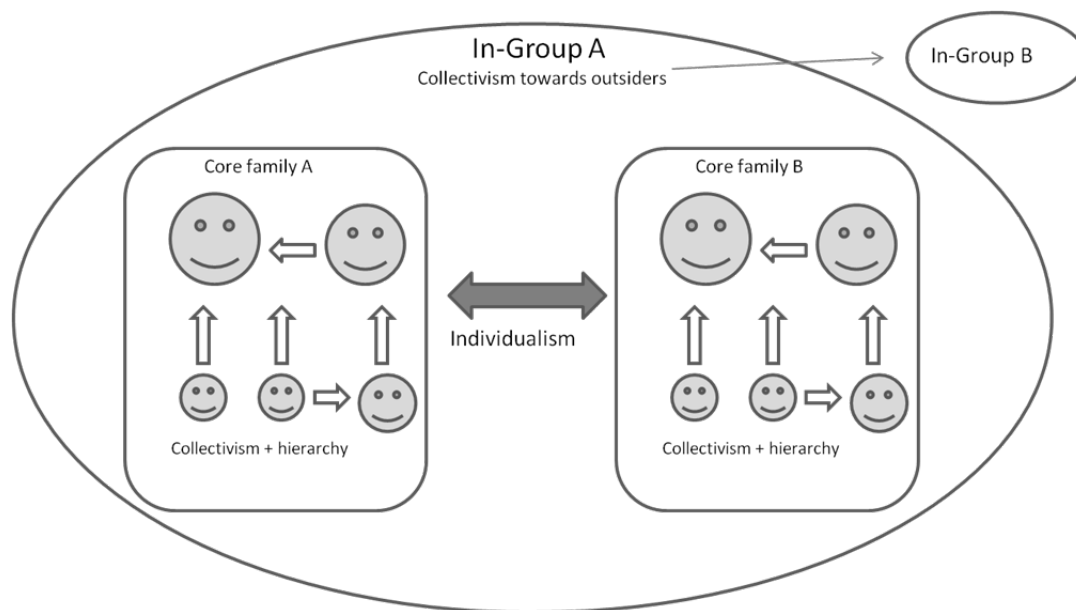
Apart from the studies mentioned above that claim the collectivistic orientation of the Indian culture, there are investigations that suggest the coexistence of individualism and collectivism for India depending on certain context factors (e.g. J.B.P. Sinha/Kanungo 1997; J.B.P. Sinha/Tripathi 1994). Sinha and Tripathi (1994) found empirical evidence that individualistic behavior is shown more often than

collectivistic behavior in crucial matters of the personal life, such as career goals or medical treatment. J.B.P Sinha, T.N. Sinha, J. Verma, and R.B.N. Sinha (2001) differentiate between behavior and intentions that can both vary between collectivism and individualism orientation in different combinations as collectivistic behavior with collectivistic intentions, both individualistic behavior and individualistic intentions or collectivistic behavior with individualistic intentions and vice versa. Sinha's and colleagues' example for individualistic behavior and collective intention is a person who leaves the collective behind and lives an individualistic lifestyle, but sends the majority of the money earned back to the family members (2000). Collectivistic behavior combined with individualistic intentions may be found in Hinduism and the aspect of increasing one's own karma<sup>46</sup> through good deeds towards others. Moreover, Sinha et al. argue that the specific combination of individual or collective orientation depends on the nature of the situation. The setting of e.g. an organization or urban surrounding that is perceived as impersonal is more likely to generate individualistic thinking as opposed to a very personal setting like the in-group of one's own family or a small rural setting. Relating this to the findings presented here, the following can be established: The graphic below (fig. 6.2) summarizes the collectivistic and individualistic tendencies of in-groups as found in the study. Collectivistic thinking is found among core-family members as well as in demarcation towards in-groups of other extended families while individualistic behaviour could be identified between core families within the in-group. Following Sinha's et al. termination (2001), both behaviour and intentions are found to be individualistic when it comes to educational matters. No interviewee mentioned any intention to serve the wider collective with educational attainments. From the perspective of the whole in-group, the intention to keep the core family's honour shall be interpreted as individualistic thinking here. That means that the findings confirm Sinah and Tripathi (1994) and go beyond Sinha et al. (2000). A personal topic like education and career orientation (of oneself or of one's own children) generates individualistic intentions and individualistic behaviour as Sinha and Tripathi (1994) found already. In my study this is shown to be the case, although the setting of the extended family as an in-group is a personal and not an

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<sup>46</sup> Karma is briefly understood as the sum of deeds that determine the individual's status in future lives. I provide a detailed explanation in chapter 7 on Hinduism.

impersonal context as Sinha et al. (2000) proposed as being typical for individualistic intentions and behaviours.



**Fig. 6.2: Individualism within the in-group (Source: Own figure)**

Condensed, the analysis leads to two central findings: First individualistic interests are strong enough to dominate behaviour even when they take place in a collectivistic setting. Second, educational decisions that manifest in individualistic behaviour are not meant to serve collective goals but are based on individualistic intentions.

### 6.3. Being Female

Up until now the findings have not differentiated between male and female participants. Nevertheless, a gender gap in various life aspects worldwide is a relevant topic and has been explored widely in literature.<sup>47</sup> Along with Metz-Göckel (e.g. Metz-Göckel/Roloff 2002) gender refers to common expectations and norms in a society about appropriate male and female roles, responsibilities, behaviour, and the interaction and relationship of men and women. This includes power relations

<sup>47</sup> Gender gaps in various life aspects worldwide continue to be topics of scientific investigations. One prominent interdisciplinary field is women's studies (see e.g. Faulstich-Wieland 2006; Metz-Göckel/Nyssen 1990). For current investigations and worldwide statistics on gender gaps see e.g. Global Gender Gap Report 2010 and the Indian Gender Gap Review 2009 <https://members.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/GenderGapNetwork/index.htm> [27/07/2011]

between men and women, as well as “structural contexts that reinforce and create these power relations” (Barker et al. 2011: 14; also Gupta, G.R. 2000). With Barker et al. gender is understood as relational and structural here.

A look at Indian illiteracy rates according to gender gives a first simplified hint on the connection between gender and education in India. According to the Census of India from 1981 to 2011, literacy rates are continuously different according to gender:

	<b>1981</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Male</b>	56.37	64.13	75.85	82.14
<b>Female</b>	29.75	39.29	54.16	65.46
<b>Discrepancy Male-Female</b>	<b>26.62</b>	<b>24.84</b>	<b>21.69</b>	<b>16.68</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43.56</b>	<b>52.20</b>	<b>65.38</b>	<b>74.4</b>

**Tab.6.2: Literacy rate (%) in India 1981-2001 (Source: Census of India, for the relevant years)**

In 2011 about 34% of the total female population is illiterate compared to around 18% of the total male population. Since the 1980s, the gap between the genders regarding literacy shrank only minimally (10%), while the general literacy rate of the total population increased over 30% to 74.4% in 2011. The UNDP development report from 2009 shows a similar picture (see chapter 5) and points out that the situation between the genders has not changed much in the last ten years. According to UNDP figures, the female adult literacy rate ranks at 54.5 % in the 134<sup>th</sup> position worldwide. The male adult literacy rate is 76.9% (UNDP 2009).

I will look not only at the considerations of literacy figures from the theoretical base of the following chapter, but also at another cultural dimension which was previously introduced in chapter 1 from the GLOBE study on cultural characteristics (House et al. 2004), namely pre-considerations of socio-cultural factors. The dimension is called gender-egalitarianism and is described as the degree to which a society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality. India scores here with 2.90 on a 5 point Likert scale and sits at the 54<sup>th</sup> slot of 62 examined countries. These relatively low figures mean that the Indian society is not a gender equality promoting culture. Gender role differences have to be considered as widely

accepted and the society puts minimal effort into minimizing the differences. The International Centre for Research on Women conducted the quantitative survey IMAGES (International Men and Gender Equality Survey) between 2009 and 2010 on men's attitudes and practices related to gender equality among six countries in different geographical regions worldwide. Topics of the study included gender-based violence, health practices, household division of labour, and men's participation in caregiving and as fathers. The survey indicates India as a country with very high inequitable attitudes among its urban male population (Barker et al. 2011). Indian men in metropolitan settings show the lowest acceptance of gender equality and are for the most part unsupportive regarding the promotion of women rights both in theory and in practice. These stable internalized gender norms influence men's as well as women's behaviour in a wide range of issues as health care, family planning, domestic chores or use of physical violence as data could prove (ibid.).

It has to be pre-considered that the gender of the individuals also has a crucial impact on educational decisions. Otherwise the gender gap in the literacy rate would not be so immense. Being female (or male) must be understood not only as a demographic attribute of individuals but as a general structuring principle in India which determines all aspects of social life. What being male or female implies in India is a socio-cultural factor and depends on the societal role that is pre-determined for the genders. It also influences educational decisions which shall be demonstrated for women in the following.

### **6.3.1. Women's Self-Determination**

Not surprisingly, during the first interviews it soon became clear that different understandings of the genders seem to be an enormous factor when talking about educational decisions of Indians. In the study 16 women (excluding interviews with female experts) from all class backgrounds and all age groups were interviewed. The female interviewees were carefully asked for their opinion of what role gender plays in their educational decisions. Almost all women of all classes agree that their gender had significant influence on decision making processes regarding their education.

The first factor that could be identified among all classes is called women's self determination. Here a class differentiation could not be recognized, therefore the following paragraph includes all four here applied classes. One interviewee, Mrs. P.,

states: “As a woman you don’t decide much on your own. My parents and also my elder brother discussed the issue of my schooling.” (IIf2) The women’s self-determination can be identified as low in education decisions as well as in general. Women are not supposed to decide on many aspects regarding their life on their own. Upper middle class women also confirm that aspect: “You know, patriarchy is a principle till today in our society” (IIf3)

In addition to the mentioned age hierarchy within families, Kaldekar (2008) emphasises a gender hierarchy that produces deep gender inequality within families (2008). In her opinion, women in every stage life are victims of these institutionalised structures in different ways. A huge body of literature has been written dealing with the status of women in India and female suppression in the Indian culture (e.g. Ghadially 2007; Khullar 2005; Rudd 2007; Chanana 2005). Women’s studies, research on the situation of women and gender has found its own niche as an academic discipline within the social sciences in India. A useful overview on the development of women’s studies has been provided by Khullar (2005). Early forms of Indian women’s movements can be traced back to colonial times when the gap between the genders regarding all kinds of circumstances, including education, became more and more obvious (ibid.). Until the 1970s, the major focus of research on women was their role in family, kin, and tribal communities. In the 1970s, several research studies on the status of Indian women tackled the total failure of the education system to include women’s problems, experiences, and knowledge, which led to the establishment of the Indian Association of Women’s Studies in 1982. One major issue that has been addressed in the last three decades by contemporary women’s studies is the topics of violence against women in all types of households, communities, society, and states. Another topic of importance address was the political participation of women. Providing education to all Indian citizens became a constitutional right in 1951, but current data shows that the literacy rate of women remains far below that of men (see above). The inequality of women remains a tremendous issue in other sectors as well. Rudd calls it an economical/political/patriachal mix that even today ensures that the status of women in India remains low (2007) and therefore results in a lower level of self-determination.

An often mentioned example that can be interpreted as a factor in low female self-determination is the topic of marriage. This aspect was immediately mentioned in almost all interviews and throughout all classes. A class II interviewee, Mr. A, and father of two children relates:

“I really wish the best for my daughter and wish for her a very good future. I will do everything to find her a suitable husband. That is most important for a girl. Therefore I work hard. [...] For my son should become a computer specialist and my daughter, hm, a teacher would be good. That is a nice and appropriate job for a woman. Then she will find a good husband” (IIm2)

The interviewed father of a daughter and a son clearly states that his future plans for his children are very different. For his daughter, his first priority is to find a suitable spouse and his comment that he must work hard for it hints at the financial burden which is connected to it. His daughter's education is closely linked to the aspect of marriage and is seen as a means to an end: to find an appropriate husband. In contrast, his son is meant to make a career in the promising IT sector. As described already in the context of family (6.2.1.) both girls and boys are supposed to follow the instructions of elder family members regarding educational decisions for them. The limitations which female family members face are of a certain type and can be viewed in the context of present marriage practices and their value. A brief excursion into the practiced marriage customs in India shall help to understand the findings related to a lack of self-determination in women.

*Excursion: Importance of Marriage and Motherhood*

In Hindu India, kinship linkages are normally traced through men (Mies 1986). Marriage in India is virilocal (Assayag/Fuller 2005); a woman becomes a member of her husband's kin system through marriage and leaves her parent's lineage. The young woman moves into the household of her husband's family (who in most cases, she barely knows as over 90% of all marriages are still arranged by the parents, and husband and wife do not meet one another beforehand). The greatest obligation of Indian parents is to marry their daughters off to an appropriate spouse and family (Meenakshi 2007). Postponing or not fulfilling this duty would mean that parents (and especially the fathers) would lose credit in the eyes of their social environment and be recipients of a lot of critique and rumour. Being perceived as being unable to establish their daughters properly is one of the biggest dishonours in Indian society.



“Therefore it is important for parents to know their daughters are married off before they die. Marriage is a must for every Indian woman - regardless of class, caste, community, and region. Marriage is nearly universal in India and a woman’s life cannot be perceived without being bound to a husband.” (Weigl 2010: 76)

When a girl reaches puberty, she leaves childhood behind and enters into womanhood. According to Säävälä (2001), an unmarried woman is perceived as an abnormality. The real meaning of womanhood is to generate life, meaning to have children, but an unmarried woman cannot legitimately be a mother (Säävälä 2001). Kakar (1988) analyses the main roles of a woman in the Indian society as being a mother. Irrespective of caste, class, religion or region, motherhood is perceived as a woman’s most important and often only duty. Even if this concept may have slightly changed in some upper class sections in the time since Kakar’s analysis in the late 80s, motherhood is still the most respected position a woman can reach. In rural areas and also in lower urban classes, the number of male children still is the first indicator of a woman’s status. Therefore, the wedding (as a precondition of motherhood) is the most important event in an Indian woman’s life, no matter which social class she belongs to and marks a conversion in her social status.

To marry off a daughter, Indian parents are obliged to give expensive presents to the groom’s family, although the concept of a dowry is officially prohibited by Indian law. The marriage as well as the amount of presents to be given is negotiated between the two families and is mainly based on several quality characteristics of the bride and also groom, among them the bride’s good reputation (meaning that she has not previously been with another man), her age, aspects of her looks including the skin colour (the lighter the better), the reputation of the bride’s as well as the groom’s family in general, and the groom’s status, including his economic and educational background. The expenditure for such presents often financially ruins families if they have several daughters to marry off. The wedding is completely or largely paid for by the bride’s family, which often means that parents are forced to go into debt in order to afford the expensive costs of the celebration involving several hundred guests. Again, being unable to afford a sufficiently large wedding means a loss of honour and reputation for the parents. Girl’s parents spend a lot of money and lose a family member, while sons continue to live in the parents’ household for their whole life and take care of the family members in their old-age.

Parents who lack of male offspring are often in great need when they become old. Apart from the around 17 million government servants who receive a pension after retirement, there are few low or lower middle class families with a retirement plan or old-age insurance. Therefore in the Indian society, male offspring are still much more desirable than daughters. The attitude is revealed in the female-male ratio of 933 women per 1000 men. Reasons for the perception of female children as a burden are the different value for the genders described in the Indian culture. Having one or more daughters increases the pressure to marry them off to a good match that ensures (as far as possible) that the marriage will last. Also educational matters play a role in parents' concerns about marriage (as will be shown).

Returning to the findings on self-determination, the sample also contains some female interviewees who are not married, although they are already of an age or beyond where marriage is the norm in India. The before-cited Neha (If1), a 30 year old class I woman, works in a leading position in one of the MNCs. She holds both a technical Master degree and an MBA from very reputed institutions; her monthly salary is about Rs 50.000. Neha tells that she is not very interested in marrying, although she feels a pressure from her surroundings. Her father presents marriage candidates from time to time, but there has not been anything arranged yet. She states that sooner or later she will choose one of her father's favourites, but not in the near future. She also perceives her high educational background as a burden when looking for a groom:

“I need a man who is at least at the same education level than me or even more successful. I would never take somebody who is below me and also no man would do that. In Indian the man has to be the first, has to be superior.” (If1)

Here, the aspect of hierarchy between husband and wife is brought into the picture. Neha describes the societal obligation that the husband should always be at least at the same education level as the wife, and even more educated is preferable. This is part of the ideology of hypergamous marriage, which means that a woman should marry “up” in the social scale (Dréze/Sen 2002: 162). For the cited class I interviewee, the need to find a suitable educated husband seems to be mainly a problem of like and dislike of the person. She emphasises that financial constraints were never a problem in her family and she still lives her life independent from economic concerns. In contrast for women with a less wealthy family background,

finding a suitably educated groom can mean a great financial burden. As described, the wife's family is still obliged to pay a kind of dowry to the groom's family, where the amount paid depends to a great extent on the social status of the prospective husband. Neha relates her observations that even some well positioned families are reluctant to give their daughters every possible chance at education because of a fear of "overeducating" their daughters (If1). In her eyes, people are afraid of being unable to marry off their daughters if they are highly educated. The better a daughter is educated, the higher the groom's education level must be as well as the dowry the bride's family has to pay (Dreze/Sen 2002). Again women's self determination regarding education is limited by social constraints and subordinated to the all-embracing social necessity for girls to get married. That is valid for all classes as the statement from a class III interviewee, a CNC operator in a local SME, shows:

"Our daughters don't have to be too long in school. Education is important yes, but getting married is the topmost thing. Having a family you know. We have to prepare our girls to get married. Being very long in school does not help really and the groom's families don't like it sometimes." (IIIIm3)

Social relations characteristics (especially of rural life in the north but also in urban areas) are dominated by a very traditional and conservative attitude; life is extremely patriarchal, and extremely hierarchically organised (Rothermund 2008) which heavily affects gender based role models.

Another aspect of marriage that affects the educational career of girls is to protect her reputation. One woman, Mrs. P., states:

"My parents took me out of school when I was around 14, they did not want me to travel to school alone. People are talking all the time, and when a girl leaves the house there can be rumours quickly. There was nobody in the house who could accompany me on my school way." (IIIIf2)

Mrs. P. is a 35 year old woman working in a local SME in a lower position. Her income is around Rs. 3.500 per month. Her education terminated early because of her family's concerns regarding her reputation. Families with fewer economic opportunities who cannot guaranty the girl's safety by sending her to e.g. private girl schools or by protecting her on her way to school often opt against a girl's further education. It has been recognized already to some extent that parents are far more willing to send girls to primary school if the school is in the close neighbourhood (Sudarshan 2005). Unmarried daughters across all classes are often not allowed to

leave home alone. Being alone in the public is not considered to be respectable behaviour. Neighbours could talk about where she is going, and as Mrs. P. states, that can easily reduce a girl's marriage value (III f2). The fear of the loss of the girl's reputation seems to be predominant over the wish to educate her. The anticipated consequence of the parents is again to bolster up the girl's chances at marriage.

Although child marriage is prohibited in India, many girls are married off as early as their teenage years. In 1998, the average marriage age of women was 16.4 years of age (Rothermund 2008). This young marriage age often means that women drop out of school early, not only because of the direct event of the wedding, but also to protect the girl's reputation before marriage. A young marriage age is perceived as an indicator that the girl has not been spoiled and her marriage relieves the parents from the responsibility to protect their daughter's reputation (ibid.).

When talking with Laksha, another young woman, who now works for a convent secondary school and training centre as first coordinator for the school dean, states that some rumours are often started intentionally:

“People are very envious, especially when it comes to education and potential chances of others. In my parent's neighbourhood people also began talking like that when I started with secondary school, and had to leave the house alone. But my parents ignored them.” (II f2)

Laksha is from a rather low income household (class III); she is sorted into class II because of her current job position educational career that was promoted by a convent school. In her position as assistant of the dean of a huge training centre, she holds a considerable level of individual responsibility. Another closely connected factor, next to the aspect of maintaining a girl's good reputations by keeping her away from public education facilities, seems to be a kind of envy for the performance of other individuals in the close surrounding, as Laksha's statements show:

“People observe constantly the ways of the other children. And they constantly compare and also talk. Talking can be bad you know. You are always under observance. Especially as a woman. That is why many parents are afraid of such envy and rumours it can create.” (II f2)

Laksha is 30 years old and still not married. In her case, her parents did not bow to the public opinion, and she perceives herself to be an exception. In her surroundings, she has observed the opposite. As cited above, she talks about a high level of social

pressure on families when exploring their daughters' education possibilities. The fear to be disgraced in the eyes of others often dominates over the value of education. Once the reputation of a girl has been ruined through malicious gossip, it becomes almost impossible to find a suitable spouse. Again, a woman's self determination regarding education is limited through the social constraint of becoming the victim of defamation and then losing the chance to find a husband. Laksha states that in her own case, education has been always very important to her parents and that they have promoted her education pathway despite social constraints. One explanation as to why her parents defied the opinion of others is the family's caste background. They are Brahmins and live a tradition of education (see 6.1.1.) As previously explained, education itself is a valued aspect for Brahmins. Unlike in Mrs. P.'s case, the family did not terminate Laksha's school career in order to find a spouse, but instead promoted her education.

Finally, besides the meaning of education as such, there is an underlying concept of occupations that are perceived as appropriate for women. Certain education pathways and branches are perceived as most appropriate for daughters and wives. As demonstrated already in chapter 5., it is not only education itself, but also the relative branches of education that are considered to be of value. This is even more valid when taking a gender perspective into account. The cited preference of a career in engineering, law or medicine (5.2.4.) is mainly a desired future concept subject for sons. The wishes go in a different direction for daughters in the middle classes II and III. The main occupation considered appropriate (if any) for a female child is that of a teacher. I cited already Mr. A., father of two children and his opinion regarding different ambitions and appropriate occupations of the genders. While his son could become a computer specialist, he considers teaching as the best option for his daughter with the highest chances of finding a husband (IIm2). As already analysed, the marriage outlooks determine the concerns of parents and also the choice of which kind of education to choose for their daughters.

Career woman Neha, holding two master degrees and a management position in human resources, remarks on the common attitude of Indians:

“We are still very conservative, even if women have started working now, men think even now that the only profession for women is teaching because than you are safe and the chance of compromising on dignity is very less. Whereas in

other professions men are not comfortable because they feel that she is compromising on what he things is dignity.” (If1)

Again the risk of losing the daughter’s or wife’s honour comes into the picture here. If a woman is “compromising on dignity”, as Neha calls it, she runs the risk that colleagues will not respect her in the same manner as male competitors. That can mean a great loss of honour for the individual and for the whole family. The profession of a teacher or in a government job is often the best and sometimes only job middle class women can strive for. Seeking other occupations bares these negative consequences. This has again, of course, impacted educational decisions. In conclusion, women are neither free to choose the level of education nor the type.

### **6.3.2. Demands on the Married Woman**

The structuring principle of the sub-chapter on being female is oriented at the aspect of being non-married and married. This reflects the fact of how marriage structures and influences an Indian woman’s whole life.

The following found sub-factor of gender roles analyses the special role of being a wife and certain demands on the married woman. They influence further educational decisions of the married woman as well as affect educational decisions previously made much earlier in a girl’s life. The sample contains 11 married and 6 non-married women throughout all classes. Relevant findings were made in class IV as well as in the upper classes. The analysis starts with class IV.

#### **Class IV**

The focus group discussion with four women from class IV background in the rural-urban surrounding of Delhi shows that the wife’s status among her in-laws plays a major role over her chances to achieve her own plans and wishes. The women interviewed are between their late 20’s and mid 30’s, have been married for 10-15 years and are out of their childbearing and nursing phase of life. They participated in an informal training course which is coordinated by the Don Bosco outreach centre with the aim to reach marginalised women who normally do not have the chance to receive training outside their villages. The trainings are organised in local facilities where they do not have to travel far from their homes. In mid-term courses, the women are taught dressmaking, beauty culture and relevant soft skills with the aim to enable them to engage in income generating activities.

During the group discussion, the consensus is that the in-laws are not interested in investing in any kind of further education for the young wives of their sons. One woman participating in the group discussion, age 29, with three children states:

“I married with 15. I had gone through some years of schooling and I had liked it. But my in-laws said that I should stay in the house now and take care for my husband. They did not allow me to continue with school. [...] It was important that I get children very soon. Now I have two sons and one daughter.” (IVf3)

As analysed before for the pre-married life stage, the women’s self-determination is constrained here as well. Now in the life stage of a young wife, the in-laws define her way of life and also her educational decisions. The women participating in the group discussion almost all live in joint households together with the husband’s parents and various other extended family members. Only one woman lives in a so-called simple or nuclear household with only her husband and two children. As the Don Bosco outreach coordinator (EX2) explains, it is public opinion that for the majority of Indians, especially in rural regions, the only proper kind of living for a couple is with the husband’s family. In other areas where more migrated couples live, the number of simple households can be higher, because often migrants have to leave their family members behind. Except for this reason - migration due to economic reasons – couples are expected to live together with the parents of the husband and his kin (EX2). The coordinator furthermore states that after marriage, the hierarchical relationship between a woman and her in-laws takes effect. In joint family households, the young married woman often stands under pressure from her relatives and is unable to make her own decisions e.g. regarding continuing with school or further education. The young woman is subordinate to her in-laws in all manners. The mother-in-law now delegates household tasks to her daughter-in-law and caring for the new family becomes the young woman’s main duty. She is exclusively responsible to take care of the husband’s family and parents. This is the norm at least in rather traditional oriented families. The rules in the conjugal home are determined by the superior in-laws. Being obedient is a desirable quality of an ideal Indian woman. The strong power of the in-laws has already been widely discussed in literature. As Rudd points out, apart from her dowry, a daughter-in-law is often neither welcomed nor valued in her new family (2007). Domestic violence against the daughter-in-law including dowry-murder are common phenomena in Indian daily life (e.g. Rudd 2007; Kaldekar 2008). Even today, several laws such as

the Dowry Prohibition Act from 1961 or the Succession Act from 1965 that entitles women to inherit equally along with their brothers remain unchanged in regards to the actual situation of women (Mies 1986; Rudd 2007). A woman's inheritance goes directly to her husband's family. A young woman is completely inferior to her in-law family members. The hierarchical gap between the woman and her new kin, especially her mother-in-law is of particular importance here. A participant of the group discussion says:

“My mother-in-law and also the other family members like her sisters or my husband's elder brother's wife watch all my activities. I consult mainly those women in all decisions because they are also in the house the whole day. My husband works the whole day.” (IVf3)

The extended family plays an important role as a corrective institution for the young woman's activities. It is not so much the husband who is determining the woman's decisions as the extended family, mainly the female members. The women talk about consequences if they do not behave as expected:

“This is not an option. One girl in the neighbourhood was sent back to their parents because the in-laws were not happy with her behaviour. That is a disaster. The parents were ruined. Everybody talked about it and how will she ever find another spouse?” (IVf3)

The statement shows the seriousness of the wives' need to please the in-laws. The cost of not behaving according to the in laws' and the husband's wishes involve a worst case scenario for every woman: The husband's family returns the woman to her parents. As marriage is the most important event in a woman's life, the idea of a divorce is horrifying. A divorce would mean a serious loss of honour for the woman and her parents, the ruin of the family's izzat. Re-marriage is usually not possible for a woman, while for a man, a divorce is not problematic. In addition, the high costs spent by the woman's family on the wedding and the dowry are gone for good. Parents are often unable to carry the same financial burden a second time, and the prices may be even higher because of the daughter's ruined reputation.

The women cited above who participated in the group discussion (IVf3) are now allowed to attend in the training course. As the data shows, an early marriage age may prevent a further educational career for young girls, but educational possibilities may emerge after the phase of child bearing and rearing is concluded. The change in a woman's status after she has children can later have a positive influence on



educational chances. When the woman has reached a certain position in her husband's family (due to the birthing of sufficient male offspring) she is perceived as having fulfilled her duty and enjoys more freedom in making individual decisions. One woman of the group says:

“My in-laws allowed me to come here. They don't encourage me but they did not say no like they did before when we married. Now they are pleased because I have done my duties. I have a daughter and two sons.” (IVf3)

The woman's elevation in status enables her to pursue education that was previously considered impossible before getting married and becoming a mother. After having discussed the hindrances for Indian women to pursue education, taking a look at reasons why Indian women do pursue education, in spite of the identified challenges, is essential in relation to my study. The women state that the initiative and promotion of Don Bosco social workers in their area brought the course to their attention and then they asked their in-laws for permission to attend the course. The participation promises a kind of freedom and independence from the influence of their mother-in-law and other family members. The same woman says: “I like the idea of becoming a bit more independent. And even more when I am able to open my own shop.” (IVf3) Gaining the feeling of independence and becoming a bit more self-determining seems to be an important aspect for many women to pursue education at a later stage after having fulfilled their family obligations. The knowledge gained and even more the outlook to be able to work independently in one's own little shop imparts the feeling of sovereignty. It seems to add considerably to the self-confidence of the women as the following statement shows:

“I felt very happy when I could start the course. That is I do something the others in my family don't. Thus I can be a bit more on my own. And I learn things the others don't. And later I can use the skills and work on my own. That makes me feel stronger.” (IVf3).

Although the aspect of autonomy apparently does not play a crucial role in the Indian culture (see previous discussion), the idea of being a slightly more independent motivates the class IV women to pursue education whenever it becomes possible.

A further reason why the women participate in the course is the aspect of social gathering and is also connected to the idea of gaining some independence. The women mention “Coming together with the other women here is nice. We chat and can talk about what we do and how we feel. The teacher encourages us to share our

situation. That is good.” (IVf3) Living in the atmosphere of a semi-urban, rather backward area with traditional gender roles that manifest in the families does not often provide the women the chance to talk and discuss their situation without being observed by their families. Kaldekar (2008) writes about the situation of women in the conjugal home where individual self-expression is often repressed in favour of the collective (2008). The coordinator states that one main purpose of the course is to provide the women with a protected room where they can develop a sense of self-assurance and a certain degree of freedom from the limitations in their in-laws’ household (EX2.)

And finally, the economic aspect of further education is also very important to the in-laws. The course in income generating activities promises the women and their families that they will be able to contribute to the family financial situation and general well-being. Another women in the group discussion states: “My husband’s family like me to come here because they trust me. They hope I can earn some money later. And I hope that also.”(IVf3). This woman is 32 years old and has two sons. Her family background is now more or less supportive regarding her educational plans. The woman has gained status through the upbringing of two sons and the family has confidence in their daughter-in-law. They, as well as the woman herself, anticipate economic benefits from her educational attainments.

After having discussed the cases of the class IV women in the group interviews, a look at higher class women will show similar findings. The findings again drive the focus on the influence of the in-laws of a married woman and on certain constraints she faces in her husband’s family.

### **Class I and II**

Education has a different meaning for women and men in the higher classes. In the sample, four female employees in the MNCs from class I (If1, If3) and II (IIf2, IIf3) (and later two non-working women) were interviewed. Also middle and high class women experience a strong influence from their in-laws regarding educational decisions.

The interviewed class I and class II women are highly educated in the same manner as their male counterparts; and when they work they hold positions as middle managers, engineers or coordinators. Nevertheless, almost all of these women state

in the interviews that they perceive their status as being unusual for the Indian society. Taking a look into literature, it shows that although middle class women have entered high-profile positions in government and have sought professional careers, the rate of female employment in professional positions in India compared to other developing countries has remained low (Banerjee 2002). The majority of the interviewees were found in workplace settings in companies and for this reason, almost all of the female middle and high class interviewees belong to the group of working women. This is not considered to be representative for the Indian society (ibid.). Once this fact was discovered, the sample was extended during the phase of data collection and two non-working women of class I and class II, Nalini (If2) and Sunita (Iif1) were interviewed as well.

The greater part of the middle and high class women comes from a background where education is naturally of high value. (This fact might be connected with the high caste membership of some women, where education has been shown to be a traditional value). In the group of female interviewees from higher class backgrounds, education in general for women is seen as more or less as a matter of course whether they are working (as in Aruna's (If3) case) or not (as in Nalini's (If2) case). Nalini is 43 years old and comes from a wealthy family background. She holds a BA from a reputed college in New Delhi but has never worked. She has two almost grown children. Housewife Nalini states:

“Education was always very important and I was of course sent to one of the best colleges in Delhi. My husband's family is also from an educated background so we match perfectly and they wanted an educated woman. I always have been looking very precisely for my children's education. My daughter also visits one of the best schools and my son has been graduated already very successfully.” (If2)

Working woman Aruna states:

“It was never a question if my sister and I get educated. We have also a brother and during primary and secondary school, there was never a difference being made between us. [...] and also for my husband's family education is very important.” (If3)

Aruna is 41 and has two children. She is engineer and head of a department with 50 employees in one of the MNCs. She earns around Rs. 55,000 a month. She holds a technical diploma from one of the leading universities in India. Both statements from the two women show that education was important for their in-laws when it came to

the arrangement of the marriage. Also in the high classes, the fulfilment of expectations of potential in-laws plays an important role. Education of women is appreciated for different reasons than in the case of males. It is a sign of the “quality” of a woman if she has received a good education. That is shown in Nalini’s case. It demonstrates the parent’s ability to afford costly schooling for the daughter, which is not an economic investment as in the case of sons, but seen as a kind of luxury. A valued consequence of educational decisions of middle class daughters is a good reputation of the family and the daughter herself and therewith the better marriage chances of an educated woman in the upper and upper middle classes I and II.

A differentiation of the genders comes into the picture at the point of the purpose of education. Boys fulfil society’s expectations of being the provider and the successful caretaker of family members and therefore should reach a high competence and qualification level. Women, in contrast, are expected to fulfil another gender role which is to take care of the inner affairs of a family. Aruna states:

“Most of my friends from school and university are now housewives; after their BA they got married, have children and never worked. [...] That is the norm here in India I would say. Men wish to have an educated wife but don’t want them to work.” (If3)

Upper class men are looking for educated spouses. In the sample, all interviewed men of the classes I and II have educated wives, but the majority of them are not working<sup>48</sup>. A crucial aspect as to why women should be educated but not working seems to be the aspect of educating the children. The upper middle class males interviewed in the study who are married with a highly educated woman who does not work state that for them the ability of their wife to take responsibility for the education of the children is most important. Although Aruna has two children, she does not feel the necessity to stay at home and take care of the family. She mentions that this is what is often expected from other well educated women.

“Women do their degree at very well known and expensive institutions and then they stay in the house their whole life. The family expects that she takes care for the children’s education. You know today children are very demanding and need

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<sup>48</sup> Background information here is the fact that being a fulltime wife and mother is not so much a necessity of the family structure as it is in the German culture the case where the idea that the child needs the fulltime mother is still a widespread norm. Indian children are anyway looked after by other members of the extended family and servants a lot.

a lot of support to compete in school. Providing children the best education to become an engineer or a doctor is very important". (If3)

She mentions some aspects which have been discussed in the previous chapter. The middle and upper middle class perceives a strong competition on the labour market (see chapter 5.) The awareness that the best jobs are found in certain areas like IT and medicine is widespread as well as the knowledge that these jobs in the formal job market and in growing sectors are limited in numbers. The competition starts as early as primary schools where pupils at a young age are already urged to excel at a high level. That was affirmed by many interviewees, especially from class II and I backgrounds (e.g. If3, IIm3). A vast number of privately initiated fall classes for school children from the youngest age onwards can be observed in urban India. According to Beteille (1992), this is an almost proverbial phenomenon for modern India. Almost all children, whose parents can afford it, visit private tutors in the afternoon after the regular classes (discussed already in chapter 5). That is also the case for lower class members of class III. The interviews show that the reason why women in the higher classes should be educated is so that they can monitor and manage the children's education. Almost all additionally interviewed women and men state the same. The educational background of women in their role as mothers receives a new meaning. Education is not necessarily a way into employment but increases a woman's likelihood of being a mother who is able to provide the children with the best possible support in educational matters. These abilities are reflected in better marriage chances for educated women because they meet expectations of the husband's family. As housewife Sunita perceives it: "My in-laws were pleased that I am able to take care for the children's homework and manage their school career in general. My education is what they and my husband appreciated when I got married and why they liked me right away." (IIf1) The meaning of education for a woman is also confirmed when reading through the matrimonial pages in daily Indian newspapers or popular Indian matrimonial web pages. As mentioned, marriages are widely arranged between the parents of the couple; a groom or bride is sought in the newspapers or internet. The advertisements include as one of the first aspects the educational background of a woman and whether she is working, and if she desires to continue with her job or not. So although only a small number of women actually work as employees in a company, women of the middle class pursue education and a main driver is the anticipation of better chances on the wedding market. Nalini tells

about her daily job in managing her children's education: After school she monitored their homework, accompanied them to their afternoon classes and held lessons in the evening where her children had additional practise in certain subjects (If2). The aspect of growing competition in primary and secondary schools and its implication on household compositions has been explored already and those outcomes help to explain the motivational dynamics of education in the case of women. The position of an Indian woman is still widely seen at the side of a husband and that implies being mainly in the house, handling domestic responsibilities and taking care of the children and other family members. Donner (2005) and others (Chatterjee 1993; Walsh 1995) state that in the middle class, women, though often well and formally educated, are still perceived according to the colonial period picture of a "virtuous wife in the well ordered home" (Donner 2005: 121). The middle class identity is oriented at this concept of domesticity. Donner conducted a study of middle class households in Calcutta (Donner 2005) on the changing role of women within the household. Donner defines the middle class backgrounds of his sample according to the attributes "male employment in white-collar-jobs" and "oriented towards professional careers in the formal sector or in government services". That resembles the classes I and II of high and low salarieds of the applied class model in my study. Donner describes in his study a partly changing situation of housewives. The women in his sample are more and more occupied with the education of their children and less with classic household duties. Often young mothers mainly look after their children's education instead of being responsible for the household (Donner 2005), which is instead managed by other household members such as the mother-in-law. To ensure an education is completed in desired branches to later secure a job in a multinational company or in other new businesses in the formal sector, the mothers devote a huge daily share of their time and energy in educational strategies and school-related activities of their children, as Donner shows. The extreme competition for admission to a 'good' English medium schools demands huge parental involvement and an effective management of the school career of their children.

The data compiled in the here presented study shows that the high and middle class and their motivation regarding education for their female members seems to have already adapted to the phenomenon of a highly competitive atmosphere at high school level. Families are motivated to educate their daughters to enable them to

keep up with other educated mothers in managing their children's school career. As the data shows, education of middle class women is seen as a precondition for marriage and a successful motherhood. These demands on married woman influence the educational decisions of teenage girls. Nalini (If2), mother of a 16 year old daughter, states: "Sure my daughter gets the best in education. That is important for the future. She can work for the best companies if she wants that. [...] But she does not have to." And "When time is coming we will look for a husband from a very well family. She is so educated and all, she will be a perfect daughter-in-law and wife. And also mother." The mother hints at the fact that her daughter's future will be that of a wife in a family. Like herself, she pictures her daughter taking care of the education of her children. Nalini tells how her own sound educational background helped her in managing her children's education in all matters. She was able to achieve the high expectations and demands of her husband's family. Providing her daughter the best in education promises the best future as an accepted and respected wife in a future conjugal household. In her own core family, the opposite was true. Her son married, against the wishes of his parents, a girl he knew from school. Nalini does not explain in detail why the parents and especially her husband did not accept this autonomous behaviour of their son in general or his choice of a bride. The consequences were severe. Nalini's husband refused to talk to the young daughter-in-law for the whole first year of their marriage even as they lived closely together in one household. Also Nalini could not find positive words regarding their daughter-in-law and explains that it is absolutely essential that the bride-to-be finds favour in the eyes of the parents. Therefore the son has to leave the choice to the parents. Nalini highlights again that a most important criterion is the wife's ability to manage the children's challenging education.

Theoretically, the findings can be reflected in a cultural dimension of gender egalitarianism (6.3.1.; House et al. 2004) saying that India is a culture with accepted strong and manifested gender role differences. My findings support this. Gender models seem to play a crucial role when it comes to educational decisions. Individuals seldom make educational decisions on their own but, as demonstrated, follow certain external restrictions. Gender concepts take control at this point. Educational decisions of the decision makers for boys or for girls vary strongly

between the genders. Regarding education, gender egalitarianism is minimally implemented in society.

### *Intrinsic motivation*

Finally I return to the example of the high class working women who do not face the above described demands to stay at home and manage their children's education. Their motivation structures show the following. Shortly after giving birth to her children, Aruna (If3) went back to work again, which was not a problem because of the support of her family members. She also perceives her career as not being the norm for the Indian middle class. She explains the aspect of why so many women of her class sought education or are educated by their parents but never enter the labour market:

“If a wife works, sometimes people start talking if the husband is not able to take care for the family on his own. I always state that I work for my own interest, that I love my job. It is not for the money. Money was never an issue in our family.”(If3)

What Aruna expresses here about her motivation for pursuing education and later performance in her job can be labelled as intrinsic. The family is not dependent on the money she earns and there is also no other anticipated consequence mentioned with her working and also educational background. The other class I and class II female interviewees who work confirm the view of being intrinsically motivated to some extent (If1; If3; IIf3). As described already in chapter 2, the study applies a narrow understanding of intrinsic motivation following Heckhausen (1989). A person is intrinsically motivated if an activity is done for itself and for the pleasure that is derived from doing the activity (Deci/Ryan 1980; 2000; Ryan/Deci 2002). Keywords that describe the innate state of intrinsic motivation are interest, pleasure, enjoyment, and inherent satisfaction. Class II interviewee Mrs. N. says: “I feel deeply satisfied when I can do a good job. Just because I like my work. When I am deeply concentrated on my topic time rushes. That satisfies me in my work.” (IIf3) Mrs. N. is in her late 40's and is also economically well situated due to her husband's income. She holds a BA degree and works in one of the multinational companies in a medium position. What she experiences comes close to the phenomenon of flow effect; it is a deep satisfaction while working for the task's own sake. That indicates a high level of intrinsic motivation.



I assumed that when viewing social influences on educational decisions, the findings would mainly consist of extrinsic motivation (chapter 2.3.1.). Extrinsic motivation is related to behaviour that is not done for its own sake but due to various external reasons. A great variety of those reasons could be already shown in the described empirical findings in the previous chapters. Seeing the cases of some highly educated and working class I and economically well situated class II women, their motivation in their work subject as well as in their education decisions seems to be actually of intrinsic character. It seems to be that those women can afford to orient their educational decisions on intrinsic matters and interest in the subject itself.

Aruna remembers:

“At university I really enjoyed when I dealt with my topic. It gave me great pleasure when I could acquire more things about my subject, and to get to know more was wonderful e.g. in a discussion with others, or in a class with a great lecturer. And still today it’s like that when reading a professional magazine or something equivalent.” (If3)

Here Aruna describes an innate psychological experience of pleasure when engaging in her profession and dealing with her topic. Acquiring more knowledge in further trainings, through professional discussions with colleagues or professional literature is desirable for her because of her interest in the topic as well as the feeling of pleasure she gets when acquiring more knowledge. That was also one main reason why she decided for a university study.

The aspect of being intrinsically motivated is not directly interlinked with the socio-cultural factor of being female and the connected expectations from society. Nevertheless, the findings on intrinsic motivation have been placed at the end of this chapter because in the interview series only women were found to be intrinsically motivated. High class women seem to be a bit less occupied by external constraints such as feeling responsible to take care of the economic wellbeing of the family or to fulfil other career oriented expectations. It appears that for men the concept of being the head and provider of a family or various other socially determined aspects develop mainly external incentives as to why to pursue education. Intrinsic motivation was not an aspect mentioned by male interviewees (regardless of class) when asked about their educational decisions and work motivation. Lower class women as well as men also mentioned a certain level of innate interest in education

matters itself, but their motivation was dominated by external reasons why to pursue education as shown.

#### **6.4. Motivational Dynamics of Education**

In this chapter I described certain factors regarding the broad area of social relations that have an influence on motivation to pursue education. Out of the above analysed data and consulted literature, the following categories can be derived that affect educational decisions and this allows for the formulation of the following hypothesis:

- a) Traditions and self-concept of an high caste background
- b) Supposed public caste perceptions and doubts and believes of high and low caste members in the same
- c) Keeping the parent's honour disregarding collectivism or individualism
- d) Low self-determination of women in general
- e) Demands on the married woman

Again, several motivation theories introduced in chapter 2 are used to outline motivational dynamic in social relations.

The findings on the factor group called Indian caste system show that caste still is of some relevance for the development of motivational dynamics of education. Despite a declining tendency of its meaning for Indian society today, as announced in literature, caste seems to have essential impact on decisions regarding education. Seeing the first factor group of caste background, Raymond Boudon's theoretical approach (1974) to explain inequalities of education is helpful to analyse the findings and the role caste memberships play in educational decisions. The first found sub-factor of the category caste is a) *tradition and self-concept of high castes* and therewith high classes. As discussed extensively in chapter 2, according to Boudon, decision processes regarding education vary across different social classes and depend on the perception of three main factors:

1. the estimation of costs of education
2. the expectation of benefit of education
3. the estimation regarding the probability of success

Overcoming high social distances increase the perception of indirect cost of education (Becker 2009). The high caste members, especially the Brahmins, perceive the cost of education as being lower than the low caste members because their social environment is mainly composed of educated people. As Boudon explains, the social environment is taken as the first point of reference when estimating the cost of education. Because of the traditions and self-concept of being educated, especially among Brahmins, individuals are constantly exposed to role models who are on the average highly educated and who have proved to be successful in their educational decisions. That essentially lowers the estimation of the cost of education. Education is perceived as reachable without the necessity of high investments. That allows individuals to have high educational ambitions.

In addition, the long lasting tradition of being educated among the high castes and especially among Brahmins is related to a certain status of this caste. The members are most interested in the maintenance of this status and the reproduction of the educational tradition. According to Boudon (1974), the benefit of education for high classes is to maintain the high class status. Status is maintained by their level of education. The high castes estimate the danger of losing their status of being educated as more severe than the lower castes. Their expected benefit of education is the possibility to maintain the tradition of being educated and so to keep their high status at the top of the society. As in Boudon's theoretical approach, the estimation of the benefits of education differs among different castes, which is also valid for different social classes. It can be summarized that in India, caste status plays a crucial role in the estimation of educational benefits. It can be formulated as follows:

*H4) High caste Indians are motivated to pursue education in order to maintain their high status.*

The second found factor is b) *supposed public caste perceptions*. Different castes believe in or doubt those perceptions. The third factor of Boudon's theory of inequalities of education (1974), the estimation of the probability of success, is especially helpful in theoretically explaining these findings. Boudon relates the estimation of probability of success to the success in finishing the chosen education path. Boudon's understanding shall be minimally widened at that point: In the examined cases of the study, also the estimation of the probability of being

successful on the labour market and to get the desired good job influence the educational decisions of the participants. Experiences due to caste background influence these estimations of the probability of being successful on the labour market. To begin with, due to cultural concepts, high caste members can trust in the positive view of the society in regards to their abilities; additionally they hold many network ties in higher positions. Both allow them to anticipate high probabilities of success when later looking for a desired job that corresponds with their educational investments. Even if high castes are from originally low class background (as in the case of Mr. B. (IIIm1)), they consider a high probability of success as a result of their education effort because of their belief in a positive perception of their person and of their abilities and because of their belief in positive network ties which proved to always be reliable and helpful.

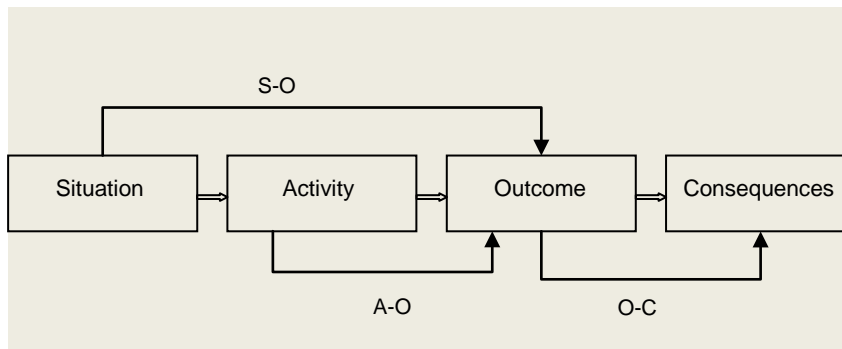
In contrast, among the low castes the estimation of the probability of success is very limited. The reason for this is the low castes' negative experiences in education settings and beyond, which they attribute to their caste background. The low success expectations are bound to the estimation of the perception of the environment, negative stigmas, and possible negative subjective judgments because of caste. Low caste individuals are more hesitant than high caste individuals to take a risk and pursue education or even to opt for a higher education path at all. Boudon's second factor influencing the inequalities of education, the cost of education, can also serve as an explanatory approach here. As low caste boy Sunil (IIIIm2) reports, his social environment takes his experiences as a negative example that raises their perception of the cost of education. Other people of his social class and caste hesitate to pursue education because of his story. Again, the social environment is taken as the first point of reference for the estimation of cost. Investing in an educational path as Sunil did is perceived as costly in economic, as well as in social matters. Sunil's model is taken as evidence for the need to lower the individual aspirations. The costs of education are estimated as being higher in the lower castes.

At this point, limitations of Boudon's theory for the application to non-western societies become partly obvious. As I discussed in chapter 2., Boudon assumes that individuals from all classes are free in theory to decide for or against education and are mainly limited by their own aspirations and assumptions regarding their own abilities and about future outcomes. In the Indian case, the low class individuals

experience real and concrete obstacles in education and occupational contexts because of their castes background. At least parts of their anticipation of negative consequences are based on real hindrances as in the example of Sunil and the bribes required to get a job. It is not only a question of perceptions and willingness to take a risk that determines one's educational pathway. Real social barriers are manifested in Indian society that handicap access to education for certain sections of the society.

The low caste members are not necessarily 'underachievers' in psychological terms. This term was introduced in chapter 2. and stems from motivation psychology by Krapp (1993). As explained, the behaviour of so-called underachievers is driven by the avoidance of ability-success related tasks. Underachievers are understood as people who naturally try to avoid failure instead of pursuing success based on their abilities (ibid.). They naturally expect only a low level of positive outcomes from their activities. The low castes members of the study are not underachievers by nature. This is demonstrated through the portrayed cases of Sunil (IIIIm2) and other low caste members like the Don Bosco trainees (IIIIf1) who chose a relatively high educational path when given an opportunity that they perceived as fair. The self assurance of low castes is not minimized through caste discrimination. Some low caste interviewees report an expectation that their own abilities would be sufficient for a desired outcome like gaining knowledge and skills; and so they anticipate decent job opportunities.

A helpful pattern that is prominently applied here is the extended motivation model by Heckhausen (1977) that can be also applied at this point. To remind the audience, the model will be presented here again (fig 6.3):



1. S-O Expectations
2. A-O Expectations
3. O-C Expectations
4. Value of Consequences

**Fig. 6.3: Extended model of motivation, based on Heckhausen (1977)**

Drawing on Heckhausen's motivation concept, anticipated decent job opportunities stand for consequences (C) in Heckhausen's model. Also the value of the consequences (Heckhausen's fourth condition to create motivation) – which was represented in the interviews by government jobs or other reasonable placements – is high enough to function as a motivational factor. The reasons that other low caste members do not strive for education is that they lower their aspirations due to a negative outcome-consequence expectation (O-C): They doubt that they will receive fair treatment on the labour market. They do not believe that a positive outcome like gained knowledge and skills are followed by the desired consequences. This can be due to past experiences with caste perception. The expectations of being rewarded for e.g. performing well in a task or for obtaining formal qualifications is not expected to be equally rewarded as for higher caste members.

Seeing here the various applicable theoretical explanation approaches for motivation to pursue education, it can be assumed:

*H5) Indians of low caste origin are less motivated to pursue education because they expect to receive biased treatment on the labour market.*

Educational outcomes are being judged by humans who are believed to be biased in their assessment of people of different castes. The opposite is also valid for high caste members. In contrast to their lower caste neighbours, high cast members can

believe that anticipated consequences are likely to be achieved because of the positive attitude people adopt automatically at seeing their cast background.

The next category of this chapter is the family, including the core family living together in one household, as well as the extended family composed of a high number of near and distant relatives forming together one in-group. The findings show certain ambivalences between collectivistic and individualistic tendencies that determine behaviour. Both aspects will be summarized under one factor c) *keeping parent's honour*. The first aspect, dependence on the family, describes the importance and influence of the core family as such, being constituted by high collectivistic as well as hierarchical structures. Through the lack of the concept of autonomy, family members do not decide on their own which educational path should be chosen but subject their future to the will of superior and senior core family members. Again, tradition plays a major role here. Obedience and following family regulations promises the individuals security and affiliation to the collective, a value whose loss is not to be risked. Results from research in achievement motivation from the field of Indian indigenous psychology support these findings. Singhal and G. Misra found in their situation-context analysis of achievement goals (1992; 1994) differences between western and Indian samples. In India, significant others and familial considerations are essential parts of achievement goals while westerners emphasize the individual aspect of achievement.

The second factor of the factor honour giving that influences the pursuit of education is in-group competition. This describes the atmosphere of rivalry between extended family members and their environment. As shown, children, being extensions of their parents, are meant to fulfil parents' ideas of what it means to be successful. Those ideas are often prematurely proclaimed by parents as being completed in front of the in-group. Individualistic tendencies of the parents are dominant here over collectivistic thinking. Because of in-group rivalry, the *izzat* of the parents' can only be kept through a child's good performance and by following through with the parent's proclamations. This legitimizes individualistic behaviour within the in-group. The collectivistic understanding of in-groups seems to be weaker as suggested in literature (e.g. House et al. 2004; Hofstede 2006) and individualistic tendencies have the potential to govern behaviour of family members.

Although the above portrayed phenomena of familism (Uberoi 2008), dependence and rivalry, seems to be contrary at first glance, both categories point out the same aspect and are therefore summarized in the same factor: to keep the honour, the izzat of one's own core family. Here, to pursue education and also the type of education to look for is subordinate to the aspect of honouring the core family and respecting their wishes and rules. To analyse the phenomenon again with Heckhausen's model, the consequence (C) of each action is being able to respect the family's wishes and to keep their izzat. If the izzat concept is not followed and one's own education wishes are not seen to be submissive to the ideas of superior core family members the risk of being punished is a possibility, a consequence which must be avoided. From the perspective of the wider collective of the extended family, thinking is understood as individualistic intentions. It can also require individualistic behaviour towards other in-group members of the extended family. The following hypothesis can be suggested:

*H6) Indians are motivated to pursue education in order to keep their core family's reputation and honour, which legitimates also individualistic behaviour within the in-group.*

The third sub-factor of the chapter, the category of being female, can be reflected in two main influencing factors: d) the general understanding of *women as being less self-determining* than their male counterparts and e) the *special demands that married women have to face* throughout all classes. The first aspect impacts women's educational paths beginning at early stages; the second influences the education ambitions of women at a later life stage after getting married. Both aspects point out the importance of being a wife in an Indian woman's life. Educational ambitions at all stages are led by the wish to either reach or to keep the status of being married.

Seeing the pre-marriage stage in lower classes, there are anticipated negative consequences of the education of females: either to risk the girls' reputation by sending them to school from a certain age onwards or to overeducate their daughters. Both aspects bear the risk of not being able to find a suitable and affordable husband. In the same social stratum in case of the already married woman the in-laws seem to hinder the further educational ambitions (if there are any) of their daughters-in-law.



Young wives are meant to stay in the house and only when they have reached a certain status through becoming a mother can they pursue further education and gain some independence. Participating in a further education course promises as an outcome of gaining knowledge that again allows anticipation of the escape from the limitedness of the in-laws' household to some extent. The findings from low class women can be bundled in the following hypothesis:

*H7) Indian women from a low class background are motivated to pursue education only at a later stage in life when they have gained status through marriage and motherhood in order to reach independence from their in-laws.*

Reviewing the findings, higher class background Indian women also face certain demands and are likewise limited in their motivation to pursue education, but this is because of different reasons. For most families, education of their daughters is a natural must. Up to university level, parents are equally motivated to educate their daughters in the same way as their sons, although their future wishes point already in different directions. As in the lower classes, likewise the middle and high class parents' first aim is to find a suitable husband for their daughters. An educated daughter signals to the prospective in-law family that she will be able to supervise the children's education. Theoretically, Boudon's writings comprise those considerations as well although they have been conducted in a very different cultural setting. He differentiates between the primary and secondary effects of family background on educational transitions (1974; Beck 2009). Primary effects describe the impact of the family's educational background that is being transferred to the children. Cognitive abilities are believed to derive from different education levels of the parents and from an educated culture in the parental home. While the theoretical underpinning of this thesis refers mainly to the secondary effects when it comes to motivational dynamics and the influence of cultural aspects on educational aspirations and decisions, at this point Boudon's view on the *primary* effects is found to be best applicable. Children's actual academic performance is closely connected to their class background, and mainly to the educational level of their parents and their capability to promote and support the children's abilities. Higher class parents are able to create an environment of positive preconditions that promote learning and cognitive abilities in general. The development of cognitive abilities is found to be dependent on the parents' educational background. The findings among

the Indian upper and middle class show that the idea of what Boudon describes as primary effects is considered when a wife is chosen. An educated wife signals positive primary effects: an educated culture and atmosphere in the child's environment and thus children with sound cognitive abilities who can compete at school. This picture of an ideal wife is transmitted to the education of girls and must be taken as one main reason that parents are motivated to educate their daughters in the higher strata. In Heckhausen's terms, the anticipated consequences of a profound educational background for a girl are that she meets the demands of a modern Indian family with high ambitions for their offspring. Again, as in the lower classes, the purpose of finding the best possible marriage match is the anticipated consequence (C) of activity, in the high stratum these activities are vast educational attainments. It can be formulated:

*H8) Indians from higher class backgrounds are motivated to educate their daughters in order to raise their chance to find an appropriate spouse because of their abilities to manage their children's education.*

Finally, the aspect of intrinsic motivation was addressed. While indications on intrinsic motivation in relation to pursuing education and later work could not be identified among male interviewees, some high class working women like Aruna (If3) mention intrinsic aspects as their main reason for pursuing education and why they now work. As introduced in chapter 2, a rather narrow understanding of intrinsic motivation is applied here. Heckhausen explains: "Action is intrinsic if the means (the act) thematically corresponds to its ends (the action goal); in other words, when the goal is thematically identical with the action, so that it is carried out for the sake of its own objectives" (1991: 406). According to Ryan and Deci (2000) extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can exist parallel to one another, although one status is often dominant over the other. Based on Deci and Ryan, Vallerand et al. (1992) developed the Academic Motivation Scale in order to measure the extent of intrinsic and extrinsic academic motivation. They further differentiated intrinsic motivation in a) "motivation to experience stimulation" that means behaviour is shown because of the stimulating sensations one experiences during the activity itself, b) "motivation toward accomplishment" which means the experienced pleasure when creating or accomplishing things, and c) "motivation to know, that describes the pleasure one experiences while learning and acquiring knowledge. The

last type can especially be found in Aruna's statements (If3) and complements the analysis of Aruna's type of intrinsic motivation. Even today, Aruna feels intrinsic motivation to know more when she deals with her topic. Also, in her current profession, she shows intrinsic motivation to acquire more knowledge and to pursue further education in a broader sense.

Male interviewees primarily showed extrinsic motivation. All male interviewees from class I mention their income as the main source of motivation, which means motivation comes from outside the person in question. One culturally rooted explanation as to why the phenomenon was only found among women may be the different understanding of the genders regarding the role of a caretaker for the family. The Indian ideal husband must be able to be the provider of the family. Women can afford to work for the sake of working, while men have to be focused more on financial aspects. Culturally determined role models of the genders also influence male Indians in their reasons to pursue education or at least seem to influence the picture they aim to create in the interviews. External factors as described seem to dominate over intrinsic motivating aspects like sheer interest or pleasure. The theoretical approach applied here of intrinsic motivation by Deci and Ryan (2000) allows the coexistence of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, but an alternative explanatory approach has to be considered here. In chapter 2, the ongoing discussion on the question was portrayed whether and in which form extrinsic incentives undermine intrinsic motivation. The crowding out effect or undermining effect (Frey/Osterloh 2002; Frey/Jegen 2001; Frey 1997) has been particularly investigated in work contexts. Frey and Osterloh show that extrinsic incentives eliminate formerly existing intrinsic motivation. This is valid in particular for monetary inducements. Seeing the results from interviews with male employees in the higher strata, it must be assumed that extrinsic incentives, especially the high salary they earn, has undermined possible intrinsic motivation. In the view of the ongoing economic growth in India and the possibility of very high incomes in certain sectors (especially in comparison with the majority of the Indian population) supports this explanatory approach. Male interviewees mentioned interest as one motivating factor when they started their university study, but not as their main reason to decide on a certain educational course of study. The question whether there was intrinsic motivation before it was undermined by their increasing income

demands further research and cannot clearly be answered here. The theory of the crowding out effect may be one explanation for the gender differences found regarding extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

## 7. Hinduism

In this chapter, I will discuss my findings regarding the influences of Hinduism and spirituality on educational decisions. There are various reasons as to why religious orientation has been adopted as a main cultural influence here: The spiritual self (Sinha 1982; also Chakkarath 2010) plays an important part in the Hindu concept of self. Sinha, in his writings about the Hindu (Indian) identity, identifies the meaning of religious and philosophical orientation in the Hindu everyday life. Spirituality, along with economic constraints and the family, is one of the three main pillars of his description of the Indian identity (1982: 149). In chapter 1, it has already been mentioned that Indian psychologists and advocators of an indigenous psychology demand the integration of specific cultural characteristics into the analysis of psychological and social phenomena, of which one is spirituality. Beck and Grande (2010) postulate in their recent analysis of sociological research that the deconstruction and redefinition of western modernisation approaches is necessary in favour of individual perspectives on independent types of cultures. For the Indian context, this must also encompass philosophical and spiritual ideas and beliefs. For G. Misra (2002), the interpretation of psychological and social functioning in an Indian (Hindu) context must be entrenched in spiritual dimensions for understanding and explaining Indian reality. He is further convinced that spirituality and religion still hold great importance and that worshipping Hindu deities inhabits a large part of Indians' thinking and reality (Misra/Gergen 1993). As confirmed empirically (e.g. Mascolo et. al. 2004; Saraswathi/Ganapathy 2002), Hindu concepts have an influence on values, attitudes and judgements, and relationships between groups and individuals even today (Chakkarath 2005).

The above cited statements on the meaning of spirituality when looking at social phenomena in Indian society will be accommodated by means of applying Hinduism as one of the three main socio-cultural factor groups (in addition to socio-economic aspects (chapter 5) and social relations (chapter 6)). In this chapter, selected key concepts of Hinduism will be introduced, from which factors will be derived that are seen to have an influence on education. Finally, the identified factors will be applied to motivational dynamics of education.

Because of its limitations, the thesis concentrates exclusively on Hindus, and not on other religions found in India. Hindus make up the biggest share of the Indian population with around 80%, as table 7.1 shows, presenting the figures of the census of India 2001.<sup>49</sup>

<b>Religious composition</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>%</b>
Hindus	827,578,868	80.5
Muslims	138,188,240	13.4
Christians	24,080,016	2.3
Sikhs	19,215,730	1.9
Buddhists	7,955,207	0.8
Jains	4,225,053	0.4
Others	6,639,626	0.6
Not stated	727,588	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,028,610,328</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Tab. 7.1: Religious composition in India (source: Census of India 2001)**

Worldwide, Hinduism is the third largest religion after Christianity and Islam and most devotees are Indians. It is often defined as a way of life rather than a religion (e.g. Dumont 2008; Fusilier/Durlabhji 2001). The term ‘religion’ must be differentiated when discussing Hinduism. Hinduism is an accumulation of religious teachings without any standardised practice and as Madan (2008) formulates it, unlike other religions, Hinduism is a federation of faiths rather than a single homogeneous religion. In Hindu mythology, millions of Gods and Goddesses exist together, which symbolizes the complexity of the divine powers. Out of this large quantity, most Hindus and Hindu families worship their favourite God or Goddess. Among the most popular and important Gods are the trinity of the creator Brahman,

<sup>49</sup> Other religious groups like e.g. Muslims (13.4% of the population) or Sikhs (1.9%) would be equally interesting to investigate. Also e.g. the comparison of different religious groups in India regarding their attitudes towards education and their expectations concerning education as a possibility to advance in social status presents a wide research field but goes clearly beyond the scope and the possibilities of the thesis.

the preserver Vishnu, and the destroyer Shiva. Other deities that are often adored are Ganesha, Krishna, or Lakshmi. Hinduism does not have a single founder and was developed out of several traditions. Religious beliefs and practices can vary throughout the country and between the broad cultural regions.

An early important period for the development of Hinduism is the Vedic-era from around 1500 BC to 500 BC. The body of sacred literature from this period is called the Veda (which means wisdom or knowledge) and is believed have always existed and be without any human author. Some of the most influential writings of the Veda, including the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishad and the Rig were created in this epoch (Madan 2008). The Vedas comprise many rules on a great variety of subjects, social ethics, laws, and manuals of ritual performances of domestic and public meaning (ibid.). From 500 BC until 700 AD, Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted as the two major religions in India. Between the first Islamic invasion in 711 AD and around 1700 AD, India was under Muslim regime. Between these periods, Hinduism once again became the dominating religion of the subcontinent, and remains so to this day.

Spirituality plays an important role in the daily and social life of most Indians. As previously mentioned, India has more temples and places to worship (2.4 million) than schools and hospitals together (see chapter 3). Hinduism determines essential social norms and rules and represents a fundamental principal of the society. Mandan (2008) describes the all-encompassing meaning of religion to India as a hierarchical relationship between Hinduism and other life aspects: “Hinduism permeates virtually all aspects of life [...] in an integrated, holistic perspective.” (Mandan 2008: 204) Religion in India is not a discrete element of everyday life that is distinguished from worldly issues or that is subordinated to other concerns of the people. “[...] the secular is being encompassed by the religious [...]” (ibid.). That leads to the assumption that education matters and educational decisions are also influenced by religious thinking of the individuals. Most Indians are exposed to religious and spiritual ideas and values through the Bhagavad Gita, assumed to be the most widespread religious vedic text in India. It is part of the Mahabharata, which is counted among the most prominent texts in Hinduism. Fusilier and Durlabhji name these epics as foundational beliefs that “tend to guide the culture” (2001). This statement already points to Hinduism’s meaning for the Indian concept of self. In social

sciences and other related fields, the writings are often used as a source for identifying basic cultural beliefs and their corresponding values.

The following subchapter discusses certain selected key concepts of Hindu thinking that are believed to influence educational decisions in one way or the other. At this point, the research approach practiced in the former chapters changes to some extent from a mostly inductive to a deductive view. Unlike the other topics on economic constraints and social relations, the key concepts that are examined have been pre-selected before entering the field. The approach is therefore less explorative. The main reason for this is to narrow down the complexity of spiritual thinking that encompasses Hinduism, and to concentrate on the key aspects that a majority of Hindus can agree upon. Nevertheless, the approach also tolerates individual and further aspects that go beyond the pre-selection also mentioned by the interviewees.

First findings regarding the importance of the spirituality will be briefly summarized, followed by an analysis of the meaning of selected key concepts of Hindu thinking in regards to education.

### **7.1. Confirmation and Discouragement: Hindu Key Concepts**

Before significant components of Hindu thinking are theoretically and empirically discussed, empirical results shall first show the relevance of Hinduism in general among the sample. The participants were first asked for the role Hinduism and spirituality plays in their life and how important it is in general. All 32 interviewees belong to a Hindu context and are formally Hindus. That means their family is of Hindu Indian background and call themselves Hindus. Some are strong believers, other do not practice their spiritual background. The interviewees were asked if they are believers and how their faith is realized in their life. Almost all interviewees across all classes immediately agree that they are spiritual in some way or another. Two examples from class II and class IV shall be mentioned here: “Yes we are Hindus. You can see that also when you come to our house where we have our deity and we bring her fruits and some nice things every morning.” (IVm1) And from class II Sunita:

“I think one should follow some spiritual things, it is important. It helps you a lot, your inner peace you know. And we are called to do so. For example we invite the priest when there is something, like when my brother got his new car, we made a puja and the priest came and blessed the car.” (IIf1)



The interviewees describe their customs in practicing their belief. They mention a puja, which their families celebrate at home. Puja is the Sanskrit word for adoration, honour or worship. A puja is a time of prayer and involves offerings performed by Hindus in the temple, at home or anywhere else. It is normally addressed to one or more deities and can take a great variety of forms, extents and occasions. Home pujas are mostly dedicated to the family's personal deity, as the above quoted interviewee describes. Many families have a home shrine or little altar in their house where they perform their daily puja rituals. Often some small gifts are offered during the ceremony such as a candle or oil light, water, incense, fruits, sweets or other kind of food. The puja is meant to invite and serve the deity in order to win his or her favour and blessings. Celebrating a daily home puja and also at important occasions proves the interviewees' faith, belief and spiritual attitude. Out of the 31 interviewees, 19 practice a puja in their home more or less on a regular basis.

Regarding the influences of Hinduism, the thesis first follows a deductive approach. Already existing and well known principles of Hinduism functioned as the theoretical foundation for questions in the interviews. Further findings inductively enrich the implications. The huge diversity of traditions and thoughts of Hindu philosophy makes it difficult to list rules and norms that all Hindu traditions would accept (Mascolo et al. 2004). But there is a group of core beliefs that are more or less universally shared and well known by all so-called Hindus. Nevertheless, the listing can merely be exemplary. As Hinduism counts among the oldest and most diverse traditions of philosophical thinking, it is impossible to cover here the whole range of ideas that might be meaningful in understanding Hindu viewpoints. Those aspects of the Hindu belief which are assumed to have a vast influence on motivation for education are explained in the following paragraphs.

### *Karma*

*Karma* literally means deed or act. The law of karma can be described with action and reaction: good deeds translate into good results, bad deeds into bad results and therefore into a bad quality of life. It is closely connected with the belief in reincarnation or rebirth. A central belief in Hinduism is that life means suffering and that the human condition is miserable as such; therefore ending the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*), reaching salvation (*moksha*) and becoming one with the world soul is the

ultimate goal of the Hindu (Chakkarath 2005). Rebirth is therefore perceived negatively. The driving force behind the process of rebirth is the accumulated sum of the individual's good and bad deeds. Every action bears fruits, either in this life or in some future lifetimes. The idea that everyone gets what he or she deserves is directly linked with karma, and determines whether the individual is born as a member of a high or low caste, as an animal, a plant or as a stone. The deeds done in the past determine the present circumstances of life. In the influential Hindu scriptures Upanishad (Schlensog 2006), rebirth is described as follows:

"Now people here whose behaviour is pleasant can expect to enter a pleasant womb, like that of a woman of the Brahman, the Ksatriya, or the Vaisya class. But people of foul behaviour can expect to enter a foul womb, like that of a dog, a pig, or an outcaste woman" (Chandogya Upanishad, 5.10.7, in Schlensog 2006: 83).

The passage explains that the circumstances of each rebirth depend on the behaviour of the person in the former life. The biological, as well as the social conditions, whether one will be reborn only as an animal or as a person in a higher ranking caste, are determined by the accumulated karma. The behaviour of a practising Hindu can be assumed to be influenced by this rule. Trying to accumulate good karma is seen as a major life goal. Furthermore, the law of karma allows the practising Hindu to accept the apparent injustice, which, in a country with huge social and economic inequalities, is an essential aspect. Each individual can perceive the current social reality of themselves and others as being a result of deeds done in former lives. As Chakkarat (2005) states, this view has helped stabilize the elementary structures of Hindu society for thousands of years. People tend to accept their situation instead of revolting against the system. Schlensog (2006) is convinced that *karma* and reincarnation have been, and continue to be, of essential meaning to the religious and cultural self-concept of Indians.

For the presented thesis, the question is if there can be any connection drawn between the understanding and belief in karma and the educational decisions and aspirations of people. How far does the belief in karma and rebirth influence the motivation to strive for education and expectations regarding education as a means to increase or maintain one's own living conditions or those of family members? Does it still have any value? Does the understanding of karma encourage hard work or

does it instead encompass fatalistic tendencies? Are there differences between the social classes?

### **Class I**

Before discussing the different classes one by one, I would like to mention the following observation: In the interviews, participants of all classes mention the karma core concept directly when asked to explain what they believe in. Mrs. P. says: "I believe in karma. That is the work you do." (III<sub>f</sub>2) Others were asked if they are aware of the law of karma and what it means to them: Mrs. S. is 23 years old and says "Karma is important yes definitely. That is work. What you do comes always back to you. I believe in that and everybody should face it as a matter of fact. You are what you have done, briefly said." (II<sub>m</sub>3) At first glance, karma seems to be a popular concept throughout the society layers, in different age groups and among forward as well as backward caste members.

Not surprisingly, a strong agreement about the law of karma was found among the higher class members of the sample. The conviction in the aspect that individuals receive the social status that they deserve was mentioned by several interviewees of class I (e.g. I<sub>f</sub>1 or I<sub>m</sub>3)

"You asked me for karma. Yes that is work. Karma means work. See what you do, what you work has an impact on you as a human being. And onto your whole life. And everybody gets back what he has done, that is my opinion. So nobody should complain. And that is why I try always my best. And so I can be satisfied with my life. Now I enjoy the fruits of my work and effort." (I<sub>m</sub>3)

This interviewee, Mr. L., implies that the belief in karma is seen as a reason to always try one's best and to work hard to achieve high life goals. For him, karma is an encouraging concept and promises that the present positive life will continue, even in future lives to come. The person who is a member of a high class with a wealthy background interprets his situation as having had his past karma rewarded with a good job and positive life circumstances. He attributes it to his own past effort. Like many class I interviewees (e.g. I<sub>m</sub>2; I<sub>f</sub>2), he is convinced that one is able to change one's own life course through effort and achievement and can actively influence the future enough effort is given. Through the karmic effect, he receives the positive fruits of his labour.

Devolved to his education path, this means there will also be an ongoing effort for him:

“Yes of course that influenced my education decisions. You have to try best and be always the topper. Reaching always for more that is my life motto. And that is all your karma. All is connected with everything. And I experienced that when I do good deeds and try hard I get rewarded what I deserve. Everybody should act like that.” (Im3)

His educational decisions to study and to become an engineer are interlinked with his faith in the law of karma. Retrospectively, he traces his success in educational and occupational matters back to the fact that he has always been focused on his karma and therefore focused on success. The interviewee has always been very self-confident in the fact that he has been doing the correct things and that important life decisions were correct. That is probably influenced by his positive general situation and profound economic and class background. As shown in chapter 6, class I as well as class II members were found to have a tendency of strong self-confidence and belief in their personal success, which is strongly related to their high caste background.

Class I members show relatively high levels of relation to the concept of karma in their life. The interviews show that the concept still resides in people's understanding of their way of living and that it is considered to be relevant for one's personal life in this group.

### **Classes II and III**

In class II and III the effect of karma seems to be lower. Most interviewees respond in the affirmative when asked if they know the laws of karma and if they believe in the concept. They can explain roughly what karma means in general in Hinduism. But it does not really seem to influence their educational decisions as described for class I. Karma is viewed rather as a theoretical construct based in religious areas and more or less detached from the daily life. Practical aspects of how to manage the daily challenges as well as possible are the main topic of the interviewees, instead of spiritual thoughts. A brief statement from a member of a lower forward caste shall summarize the general attitude found in these classes: “Well yes there is karma. Some believe strongly in it. For me I don't know to be honest. What can I say. Work

is always important, sure. One not only for the Hindus.” (III<sub>m</sub>3) HE expresses that everyone has to get along and manage the life. That counts.

#### **Class IV**

The lowest class members among the interviewees show a slightly different attitude to the karmic principles. Some low class members talked about karma as a relevant principle for them. Here the belief in karma can also be found, as well as a certain impact on life decisions. One of the class IV women who participated in the group interview and lives in the semi-urban neighbourhood states: “What can we do? It is our karma. Bad karma.” (IV<sub>f</sub>3) The interviewee believes in an influence of karma on her life, but in a negative manner. But in contrast to the class I interviewees, she seems to perceive karma in a different light. For her, it seems to mean destiny or predestined fate. Whether understood as a deserved consequence or as punishment for wrong behaviour in the past or not, it is viewed as something that cannot be changed in the present life. The woman makes her karma partly responsible for her rather miserable situation as a class IV SC woman. She shows fatalistic tendencies when thinking about her situation and exhibits an attitude of resignation; a way out of her desolate situation is hardly expected or imaginable for her. Her belief in her negative karma creates a feeling that activities in order to improve her life are up to fate, and that any efforts to influence her life are useless. In her argumentation, striving for education cannot make any difference in her life and that hampers her ambitions. Other women in the group interview agree partly with her view and also name karma as an influencing factor in their life path. Nevertheless, they decided to participate in the Don Bosco training for job skills. That hints that her negative and fatalistic attitude does not completely determine the woman’s educational decisions.

All in all, the statements of the interviewees regarding the effects of karma on their educational decisions remain rather vague. They are willing to talk frankly about their belief and what they think about the law of karma, but do not make concrete statements about how it influenced their educational decisions directly. Their bad situation is viewed as a result of destiny or fate and is not directly linked to wrong behaviour in the past or a former life. Fatalistic tendencies regarding the behaviour including educational decisions must be assumed, but lack empirical evidence.

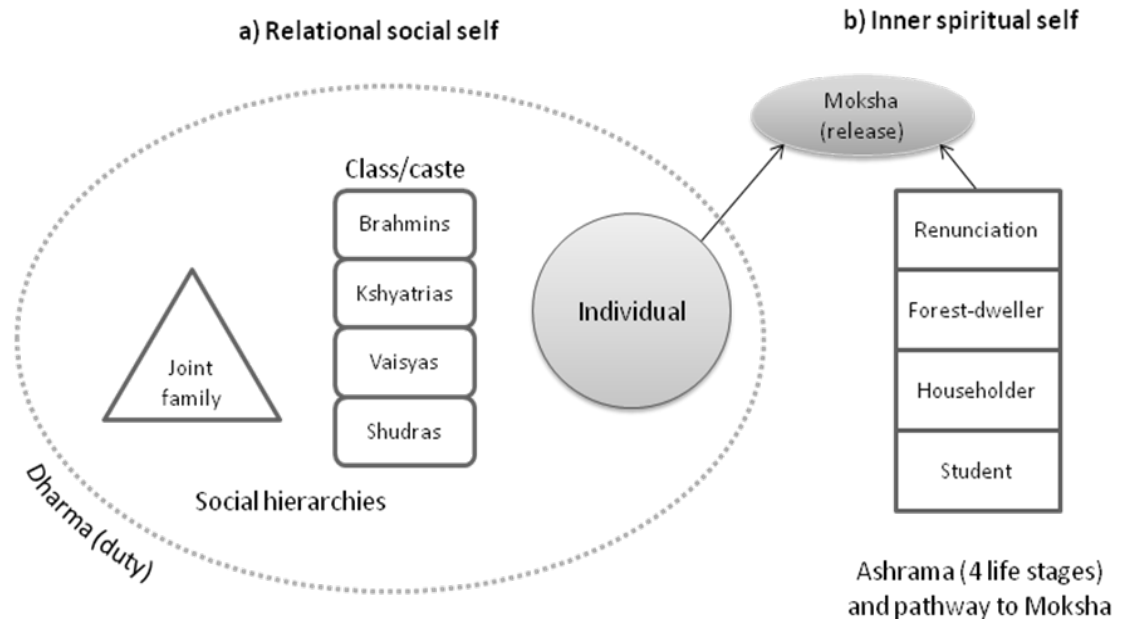
### *Dharma*

A second important key concept is the understanding of *dharma*, which refers to the conduct of individual, social, and religious duties for a righteous life. They form another key concept of Hinduism which is closely connected to karma and the idea of rebirth. The position in the current life is determined by the compiled karma, which is a result of a followed or neglected cosmic law of being and its duties for each and everyone.

The source of the dharma is the Vedic corpus. Domestic life has two key principles, *varna*, the social class (caste), and *ashrama*, the stage of life (Madan 2008). Both outline the definitions of appropriate rituals and worldly affairs. Hinduism has been also defined as *varna-ashrama-dharma* (ibid: 207).<sup>50</sup> Dharma, or doing one's duty, does not only include behaving according to religious and ethnical norms, but is also strongly dependant on one's class and caste origins. Particularly duties depend 1. on different classes or castes that one is born into due to their deeds of the past, the past *karma* and 2. on the stage in life cycle one is presently in. Figure 7.1. summarizes the understanding of traditional Hindu philosophy of the individual's self between *dharma* and *ashrama*.

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<sup>50</sup> The aspect of *varna* (caste) has been discussed in the previous chapter. The principles of *ashrama*, the life stage concept, will be explained further in the coming pages.



**Fig. 7.1: Indian conception of selfhood (Source: Mascolo et al. 2004: 11, slightly simplified).**

The individual is residing between a) the relational social self with its duties towards social hierarchies of classes and castes and the joint family and b) the inner spiritual self, chronologically structured by the four life stages. The ultimate goal is to reach *moksha*, the final spiritual emancipation and the ending of the sequence of birth, death and rebirth. Dharma, performing one's duty as it has been given by birth and by stage of life, has traditionally been an essential Hindu ideal. Madan (2008) writes that "[...] the varna identities (including occupation) and ashrama identities defined the appropriateness of behaviour in particular situations." (: 207) Caste and life stage are the pillars of life orientation. Living by the law of dharma achieves good karma.

The belief in a spiritually based code of conduct that orients at the social status and the life stage must be seen as influential regarding a Hindu's life decisions. The aspect of social status that defines the dharma, namely caste, will be discussed first while the life stage approach will be analysed below in its own subchapter. According to Chakkarat (2005), in the traditional Hindu understanding caste rules are especially important for reaching salvation and therefore caste shall be the main focus of interest here. While chapter 6. has already focused on social relationships including the social aspect of caste and the joint family, here the spiritual meaning of castes, expressed through the understanding of dharma will be in the focus of interest. The faithful obedience, primarily of the caste rules, is of utmost importance

for reaching the goal of release from the cycle of rebirth (Chakkrarat 2005). Dharma together with karma and rebirth is strongly backed up by the caste system, where inequalities in the present life are results of different past karma. The Bhagavad Gita says the following about the fulfilment of duties: "Your own duty done imperfectly is better than another man's done well. It is better to die in one's own duty; another man's duty is perilous" (Bhagavad Gita, 3.35, in Schlensog 2006: 75). The dharma concept highlights the idea that different inborn positions in the caste (and family) systems hold different duties.<sup>51</sup> Different castes have to fulfil different obligations. The four main castes are advised not to depart from their caste-specific inborn and hierarchically ordered duties. Passing these caste borders is not allowed. The role of dharma is to preserve a balanced world, in which everything and everybody has their own defined place and function (Chakkarath 2005). Each Hindu must fulfil their duties to keep this balance. Traditionally the Brahmins at the top are supposed to be the priests, to study, to teach and preach, the Kshyatrias are to be rulers and soldiers, who also are supposed to study, the Vaisya are engaged in agriculture and trade and are also supposed to study. Finally, the Shudras serve the members of the other three higher groups (Schlensog, 2006). In contrast to the other three groups, their duty is not to study. The Dalits are located outside the caste system and rank below the Shudras. Shudras and Dalits have the possibility to hope for improved circumstances in their rebirth due to the honest fulfilment of their duties. Satisfaction of physical, mental, and emotional desires is possible as long as it does not conflict with dharma. Although in modern India occupations are much more diverse than these four rough groups, the order still describes broad tendencies of different duties and tasks. Conveyed to the here applied official caste distinctions, the group of general castes are formed by the first three traditional caste groups, Brahmins, Kshyatrias, and Vaisyas. Shudras were traditionally understood as backward and belong mainly to the OBC or SC. This counts even more for the Dalits, where the majority are officially listed as SC. The spiritual phenomenon of caste is understood in two ways: social and spiritual. As a social phenomenon caste members belong to a certain group with their own self-concepts and public image. This social side of caste has an impact on the individual and their educational decisions as analyzed in chapter 6. In

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<sup>51</sup> Like in the caste system, positions are well defined within families. E.g. older brothers are always superior over younger sisters, while the relationship between an older sister and an older brother may be more equal (Mascolo et al. 2004).



the lower castes, it is mainly the belief that they will receive biased treatment from others because of their caste background. As a spiritual phenomenon, caste may impact the individual as well. Caste is closely bound to certain roles that are rooted in the spiritual understanding of a group's dharma. The influence of spiritual thinking again includes caste thinking. As cited above, studying or being educated in general was a duty (or rather privilege) reserved for the higher ranking varnas, while the others were supposed to serve. The study asked if this spiritual understanding of caste membership might have some influence on educational decisions even today.

### **Class I**

The interviewees from the upper class who are all general caste adopt the *dharma* concept, including the spiritual meaning of caste to some extent. They interpret their inborn roles and duties as a promoter of education. As already shown in chapter 6, especially Brahmins seem to feel obliged to pursue education, which is not only bound to the social obligations and expectations from the surroundings but also derives from their understanding of their caste duties. As shown, in addition to the described social responsibility, some interviewees express a spiritual calling to follow the inborn dharma. The principle of defined place and function as described above (Chakkarat 2005) favours higher caste members and is unsurprisingly widely accepted and adopted in these class groups. Those high caste interviewees who seem to be relatively strong believers and who practice Hindu rituals regularly on a daily basis are also convinced that their educational decisions have a spiritual dimension to some extent (e.g. If1, If2, Im3) as the following statement from Mr. L. demonstrates: "Brahmins are meant to be educated, that is in the scriptures. There you can read about inborn destinies and roles for everybody." (Im3) These roles are interpreted as a privilege to study for the higher castes and classes. Lower castes are not necessarily seen as being meant to be educated. A caste dependant understanding of dharma influences educational decisions of the high classes.

Nevertheless, no interviewee could be found who mentioned spiritual duties as the leading factor when choosing their educational pathway. It seems to be rather one aspect among many. Mr. N., high class Brahmin, explains this view in the following way:

“Of course I am a Hindu. Yes. That is very important to all of my family. We fulfill our duties, we pray, we have our goddess we worship. That is all very important and it is a beautiful thing to do. [...] The concept of *dharma* is there of course and we believe in that. It somehow can guide you but more in an inner way. Maybe not too much in practice. Education decisions are very practical oriented. Many other things are important when you go for education. You have to feed your family.” (Im2)

Educational decisions are not directly related to any spiritual thinking, although there is a general orientation towards the educational dimension of *dharma*.

### **Class II and III**

The majority of class II and III belong to medium high castes as the general castes and some have an OBC background. Their upper and medium caste membership may have an influence on their neutral attitude towards the *dharma* concept. Here, spiritual aspects do not play a major role when talking about education. The majority is not aware of certain duties in the castes regarding educational matters. Also, occupational specifications of the castes are not really present when it comes to occupational decision. As already found in the context of *karma*, when asked for spiritual aspects when making educational decisions, the interviewees respond rather reluctantly and hesitantly. Hinduism does not really play a major role in educational paths and the interviewees don't feel obliged to follow a certain spiritually pre-determined route.

### **Class IV**

The neutral attitude about the *dharma* concept is even valid for class IV members, with some slight differences. As already described above, some SC members of class IV interpret the concept of *karma* as fate or destiny. This interpretation comes close to the actual meaning of *dharma*. Here, the spiritual aspect seems to have some limited relevance for this group. The concepts of fate and destiny serve here as an explanation for the current life situation and seem to help the individual to accept their own path of life to some extent (IVf3). It could not be fully clarified in the interviews if this view actually hinders the pursuit of education of class IV members in general. The interviewees who talked about their belief in predestination and destiny were all participants in some kind of education and training. They have all engaged in educational activities that shall help to change their present income and life situation, regardless of a possible predestined life course. The belief – if any – in

predestination and low duties bound to their caste background does not stop the interviewees from trying to improve their situation. The influence of Hindu key concepts are only marginally higher here than in the other classes. Spiritually based caste concepts seem to be invalid today, at least for the self-concept of the low caste members. As discussed already in chapter 6.1., low caste members do not have low self-esteem regarding their abilities and talents because of their low caste status. Caste is mainly effective as a social phenomenon: in assumptions regarding the perception and judgement of others. The findings regarding a spiritual orientation and the role of dharma confirm these conclusions.

#### *Ashrama - The Ideal Hindu Life Cycle*

As mentioned, the kind of duty one has to fulfil depends not only on the inborn class and caste as in the dharma concept, but also on the stage of life one is presently in. Figure 7.1 presents the life stage concept as a main component in the conception of the Hindu selfhood (Mascolo et al. 2004). Chakkarat argues that the Hindu life span concept is not only of ideological but also of great psychological importance for cognitive and emotional processes in a Hindu's life (2005). He perceives this combination of ideology and psychological aspects as the reason why Hindus regard their religion as a code of conduct. The model as a structuring principle guides a person's development and accompanies the Hindu from stage to stage (2005). According to that fact, it is assumed that the age and therefore the current life stage of the interviewees play a relevant role when looking at motivational processes. Theoretically, the role of life stages can be described with the concept of the ideal life cycle of an ideal Hindu, the *ashrama* concept.

*Ashrama* describes four main stages in life, presented in the following table (7.2):

Student	The first stage is that of a student, it begins when a child enters school at an early age and lasts until he or she has finished all schooling. The main goal of this stage is to learn to take responsibility and to acquire knowledge (Mascolo et al. 2004).
Householder	The next stage is that of a householder. It begins with marriage and the start of a proper profession. Marriage is the starting point of a process where the spouses enjoy righteous living. (Mascolo et al. 2004). A special duty of this stage is having a son because of certain religious ceremonies that must be performed by male relatives. Without male offspring the performance of these

	<p>religious duties is not possible (Chakkarath 2005).</p> <p>Another key principle of Hinduism gains special attention here, <i>artha</i>, the duty of private gain, understood as gaining wealth, material prosperity, self-interest, and in general the aim of getting ahead in the world. In the second life stage the individual is encouraged to pursue the accumulation of wealth (ibid). For education decisions it may play a certain role.<sup>52</sup></p> <p>Well-defined social obligations towards relatives, caste members, and the village community have to be also met, following a code of conduct fixed by the caste and the scriptures (ibid.). During this stage of life the householder has the duty to support other community members through gifts and alms.</p>
Forrest-dweller	<p>The third stage of life is called forest dweller and starts when one's own children have reached adulthood and most social obligations have been met. The name forest dweller derives from the traditional picture of a Hindu who may go and live in the forest and begin an ascetic life seeking spiritual enlightenment (Mascolo et al. 2004).</p> <p>At that point one gradually detaches from active life and begins spending more time with the study of scriptures and meditation. It includes loosening the interpersonal bonds bit by bit and focusing more strongly on the goal of salvation.</p>
Renouncement	<p>The final stage of life is characterised by full renunciation from society. At old age, an individual mentally renounces all worldly ties and should spend all time in meditation and seeking perfection in the supreme goal of moksha, which means absolute spiritual emancipation and freedom through the ending of the rebirth cycle (Mascolo et al. 2004).</p>

**Tab. 7.2: Ashrama - The four life stages of an ideal Hindu development**

The main difference between the last two stages and western ideas of retirement can be described in a way that people in the west normally look forward to a time of comfort, economic independence, and time for active leisure time once retired. In contrast, according to the ideal life cycle, practising Hindus look forward to

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<sup>52</sup> For completeness of central Hindu life goals, next to *artha*, *dharma*, and *moksha* there is also the goal of *kama*, which is the satisfaction of the body and mind in the form of passions, emotions, and drives. For the question of education decisions *kama* is considered to play a minor role.

becoming independent of any kind of economic values, being indifferent to comfort and discomfort, and totally liberated from any kind of social and wealth obligation. Then the ultimate goal of human effort is expected to be achieved (Chakkarat 2005).

The interviews aimed to identify any meaning of the model for today's Indians and if it functions as a system of orientation when making educational decisions. The fact that the model mainly addresses male Hindus might be one reason why female interviewees of all classes responded only very vaguely to the model. They know the model as a theoretical concept of Hinduism, but do not show any deeper association when asked for any personal meaning of the model. Therefore only the findings obtained in interviews with male participants contribute to the following paragraphs.

### **Class I and II**

For the higher classes, evidence was found that the *ashrama* concept is still valid. An interviewee, Mr. J., 48 years of age who is in the second life stage of a householder shall portray the role here perfectly. He was asked how he perceives his general situation and personal role at the moment. He talks about his position and responsibilities as a father and husband. He has already gained some wealth and holds a proper position as a manager in one of the MNCs. He further states:

“See I support my servants in the house. I helped the lady who comes every day to send her kids to school. My neighbours and I founded an organisation that organises book donations and clothes for the kids that they can visit a school. One should do all this and help others in your community. I have gained a lot and now I shall act like that.” (Im1)

The interviewee is a Brahmin. He describes precisely the duties of a householder. Taking care of subordinate subjects of the wider household is one main householder obligation, as described above. The interviewee further states that he feels obliged to act because he perceives it as his duty as the head of a family. The idea of helping others is limited to the people in his close environment because they belong to his community. He differentiates his activities from a general support of the poor, which he feels is not in question. His social responsibility is rooted in his understanding of his role as a householder. He knows the concept well and is willing to act accordingly.

In order to determine if the life stage model also affects other life stages, the interviewees were asked to describe the behaviour of older family members. The

above cited Mr. J. explains that he perceives that his parents have been retreating gradually from monetary concerns in the past few years. Their life has become much slower and quieter and instead they have intensified their spiritual activities. His father meets other friends his age from time to time to discuss spiritual thoughts and ideas. Mr. J.'s (Im1) observations seem to reconfirm the stage of the forest dweller, as suggested by the model.

Coming now to the question for educational decisions, the cited class I interviewee gives evidence that the concept is relevant here as well. "Now is the time to be successful. I have to make the most out of it now. And therefore I was send through a good education also. Now you are mature enough and one should be very active." (Im1) Mainly in the matter of occupational success and effort, the interviewee states that there is also a connection to his former educational decisions. The life stage of a householder, whose aim is to gain wealth and prosperity and also to enjoy the fruits of the effort in this period seems to function as a motivating factor to some extent. Another interviewee from class II, 40 years old, points even more to the aspect of education in the first stage. "You have to gain knowledge when you are young. See tradition says that the young boy will be send to a guru from his fifth year onwards in order to acquire knowledge of all kinds. Not many people do that today but that is the sense of it." (IIm4) The interviewee brings up the traditional concept of the first life stage of a student, where the young boy typically lives in the house of the guru (teacher) to be taught in philosophy, sciences and to learn to live according to Hindu conventions (Mascolo 2004). There is an emphasis on enabling the child to study the textbooks and sacred writings in order to learn about the phenomenal world (Chakkarath 2005). Although the custom to send a child to a guru is no longer widely practiced, the idea of education is rooted in the first life stage and is strongly and spiritually backed by the Hindu concept. The development of intellectual cognitive abilities is a main aspect in Hinduism. That counts not only in the first life stage but throughout the stages of the concept, and is again emphasised in the later stage where the individuals are called to focus on meditation on spiritual thoughts and writings.

### **Class III**

Among this class group, the model of the four life stages seems to not carry a lot of relevance. The low, middle class interviewees of class III have a relatively low education level, but have gained some economic livelihood. The model is more or less known to the interviewees, but does not hold a great importance among them. Their activities including educational decisions are of practical meaning and free from spiritual thinking. As already found in the other two Hindu key concepts, class II people's idea of an ideal way of life is in general not very oriented around spiritual ideas. Decisions for or against obtaining education are oriented around the idea of well being and accumulating money. This becomes obvious when seeing the last two stages of the model and the idea of withdrawal and retirement. Being able to save for a time without work was mentioned by some class III members as a reason to strive for a good job and also for education. As opposed to the higher class interviewees, retirement here is free from spiritual dimensions and means mainly the possibility to stop working as an elderly person. As 42 year old Mr. M. shows: "When I was young I could not think of money for my old age but now I tell my children to do so. Although we have our family it is good to have some backups. Like my own house." (III<sub>m1</sub>) Educational decisions for one's own children seem to be influenced by the idea of financial precautions.

Retirement is still widely seen as a family obligation and retired people will be dependant mainly on sons. As discussed in chapter 6., sons are necessary in order to assure that parents will be looked after in their old age. The interviewee cited above has only daughters, which can be seen as one explanation for his opinion that he will have to take care of himself in his old age. But other interviewees also share his view that it is important to teach one's own offspring to save for their old age (III<sub>m3</sub>, III<sub>f2</sub>). Although India is widely characterized by collectivism (e.g. Sinha 2010) where family ties are said to function as old age assurance, the idea of being able to have some reserves for something like a retirement is present in the low middle classes as least. This may be seen as a hint that the often stressed in-group orientation of the society as a social security system is about to move towards the western idea of individual economical precautions. Nevertheless, the lower middle class is still hardly able to build up savings and a real retirement strategy is not a realistic goal for this strata. Financial backup often means individual property, as the

interviewee above states. As in many other developing societies, micro-banking systems have been implemented widely in India in order to provide the poor population with saving possibilities, with the main purpose aimed at becoming independent as an entrepreneur. Despite this, saving systems for retirement are widely absent. Old age security seems to become a reason to encourage one's own children to pursue education, but merely out of economic reasons, not because of a spiritual dimension related to the life stage model.

#### **Class IV**

Like the portrait, class III as well as class IV members show little connection to the life cycle concept. They do not talk about a spiritual dimension regarding ideal stages of a Hindu. This becomes clear both at the first and latter life stages. Most of them can afford neither an extensive time to study (see chapter 5 on economic constraints) as required for the first stages model, nor to retire at a relatively early stage in life (if at all) in order to spend more time on spirituality. The phase of the forest dweller is understood as an age where an Indian is still able to work. To stop working at this life stage does not seem to be an affordable luxury. When one's own children reach adulthood, the point when the forest-dweller state begins, a low class person still faces the necessity to work in order to survive or to at least contribute to the family's income. Withdrawal from work and social obligations is not an option as an interview with a construction worker shows. "My father is 62 years old and keeps on working as a watchman here around. This is good money for us." (IVm2). And a second construction worker states: "We all together work, all have to help. The little ones and the old. How can one be excluded from it until he is able to do something? We honour our older people of course but they also contribute if they can." (IVm2). Often whole families work and live all together at one construction site and are paid for their daily work. As part of their earnings, there is the possibility of residing at the construction site in the half completed buildings. Here in this low stratum, the family income needed to survive can be only reached when all family members work as long as possible (also e.g. IVf1), or are at least responsible for a job in the house (as the women group reports about their in-laws) (IVf3). A detachment from work due to spiritual reasons is not possible. Thus, the understanding of the different life stages, as given in the Hindu model, seems to be



irrelevant here and also does not function as an influencing factor for educational decisions. As discussed in chapter 5, survival needs must be satisfied, primarily among the low classes. That occupies all life stages.

## 7.2. Transfer to Motivational Dynamics of Education

As done in the previous chapters, the findings will be again transferred to motivational dynamics of education and appropriate motivational theories. Regarding the influence of Hinduism, the following socio-cultural factors were empirically reconfirmed of having some impact on educational decisions of Indians of different social class origins:

- The law of karma
- The laws of dharma
- The life cycle concept of an ideal Hindu, ashrama

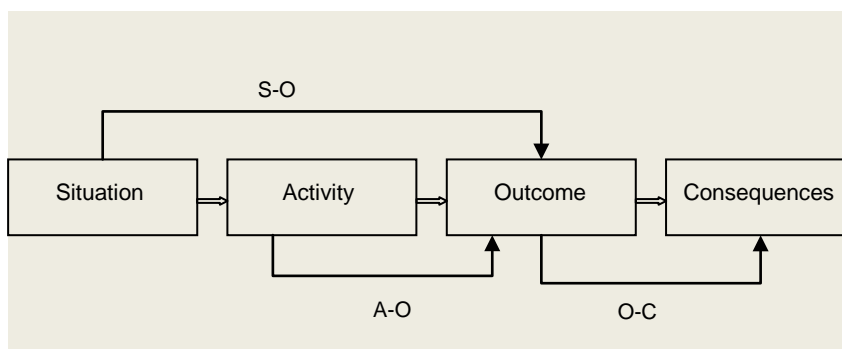
It can be concluded that spiritual Hindu concepts bear some relevance on psychological conclusions regarding educational decisions.

Seeing the first factor, the law of *karma*, the interviews show that in class I the concept of *karma* is still of some relevance to its members. It can be recognized that the very high classes ascribe their present life situation to the influences of *karma*. The question has not been clarified yet in literature as to how the concept of *karma* affects the attribution style of Hindus (Chakkarat 2005). A first hint can be found in Misra (1994), who has observed causal attributions concerning success and failure. He draws attention to the fact that attribution in India emphasizes a combination of both ability and luck, while in the west success (and failure likewise) is rather attributed to human agency.

Attribution theory seems to be appropriate here to theoretically back the findings. I discussed attribution theory in chapter 2. in the context of relevant motivation theories (2.3.2.). The approach deals with the perception of causalities, how individuals interpret events and their causes and questions on how people attribute causes to outcomes. Attribution can be seen as either external or internal. Internal and external attribution can be reasoned - in addition to personal disposition - to some extent also in cultural influences such as here in the concepts of karma. The law of karma as a concept of causation influences a Hindu's individual attribution

style and therefore also educational decisions. In the case of class I members, it could be shown that positive outcomes of educational decisions are attributed to the person's positive karma. In this regard, karma functions as a reason for internal attribution. One's own work and effort in a former life or in earlier times (which is one's own karma) are seen as being responsible for the positive outcome. If this model is viewed from the opposite angle, the internal attribution style leads to ambitious education decisions: The belief in a positive personal karma allows for anticipation of good results and positive consequences as a good job and general well-being. Their occupational success and general well-being reconfirms the high class members' decisions and their belief in their good karma. Spiritualisation fosters educational decisions here.

As in the previous chapters, I will again use Heckhausen's model on motivation to show the idea of the influence of karma.



1. S-O Expectations
2. A-O Expectations
3. O-C Expectations
4. Value of Consequences

**Fig. 7.2: Extended model of motivation, based on Heckhausen 1977**

The class I individual cognitively considers their good karma when expecting a positive outcome and positive consequences of education activities. Because of the assumption that success is based on a good karma, the individual can assume that educational activities will have a positive outcome that will be followed by desired consequences. Positive outcomes are defined as acquiring knowledge and skills from their learning activities. Desired consequences are determined to be manifold, such as receiving good formal qualifications that lead to certain occupational and societal status. The activity-outcome expectation (A-O) as well as the outcome-consequences

expectations (O-C) are met. Prerequisite is that one's own karma is seen as positive, which is widely the case among class I members due to socio-cultural influences.

While the medium classes II and III did not make any statements regarding the meaning of karma for their life and educational decisions, in the lowest stratum it was found to have some meaning. Applying again attribution theory, the members of class IV instead attribute their life path to external causes. For them, karma functions as an explanation for foretold life paths that cannot be changed. They explain cognitively their difficult situation with their negative karma. In contrast with the class I interviewees, who show a similar importance regarding karmic principles in their personal life, the low classes do not perceive karma as internally rooted, but apply external attribution. It could not be determined that they hold their personal behaviour responsible for their negative karma. Because of external attribution, all efforts to change one's own situation are seen as hopeless. The factum of a negative karma is perceived as unchangeable. This perception hinders their educational ambitions to some extent. Their belief in a negative karma has the power to impede the people's own initiative and leads to fatalistic tendencies. The attribution style of believing Hindus regarding the karmic principles depends on the individual's class status and a perceived positive or negative life situation. The high caste interviewees tend to attribute success to internal causations and failure, presented in a disadvantaging life situation, to external causations. Thus, the law of karma is interpreted in different ways. Also in the case of class IV, the motivation model of Heckhausen is appropriate to highlight the cognitive process in regards to the influences of karmic thinking on educational decisions. The belief in negative karma leads to negative activity-outcome expectations (A-O) and negative outcome-consequence expectations. The desired consequences cannot be expected because of a per se negative karma.

The second key concept examined, the understanding of dharma and certain duties related to different castes, has an impact on the motivation style of high class individuals to some extent although the impact was not found to be very strong. Class I interviewees are influenced by their spiritual responsibility to be educated because of their belief in caste predestination. Nevertheless, the impact seems to be rather marginal. The interviewees do not expect negative consequences nor hope for direct positive outcomes related to a spiritual dimension when not acting according

to their understanding of dharma. Their motivation for education decisions is rooted mainly in practical considerations, as shown in the previous chapters, and not in an understanding of certain duties. Nevertheless, if there is any influence of dharma thinking, it was found among the high class members. I discussed the social influence of caste previously in chapter 6.

Coming now to the third Hindu key concept of *ashrama* and the four life stages: All in all the systems of the four life stages can be understood as a motivational model itself. It guides the individual through the different life stages and ages and describes an idea of correct behaviour. It defines times to study, phases of effort and work, and periods of retreat. The stage of the householder is especially described and perceived by the high and medium high class interviewees as a phase where the (male) individual is meant to be effective, successful, and also able to take responsibility for others. The previous period of the student is meant to prepare the person for this life stage. Education plays a major role for fulfilling the model and must be seen as a prerequisite to follow the stages in the right way. That is the reason why mainly high class and educated participants agree that there is a certain relevance of the model. Low class interviewees tend to lack the necessary educational background, which make the fulfilment of the role of an economically successful householder more difficult. Nevertheless, also in the lower strata the male interviewees state that they understand that their role is to act as the head of the family and as a householder, which is rooted also in a spiritual dimension. Another main difference between low and high class members was found regarding the third stage of a forest-dweller and also the phase of renouncement. These stages are often simply not affordable for lower and therefore poorer class members. Low class interviewees were reported and found to remain in the working phase much longer than economically well established persons, which makes the realisation of the required retreat from monetary concepts more difficult. The realisation of the model out of spiritual reasons alone was not found to act as a motivating aspect to pursue more education for the lower classes, although the idea to be able to save money for retirement was a motivating factor that influences educational decisions to some extent.

Seeing all three analyzed criteria of Hindu thinking, the following can be summarized:

*H9: The higher the social class origin of Indians, the greater the influence of Hindu concepts on positive decisions for education can be.*

The belief in karmic principles hinders or fosters educational decisions, depending on class membership. Furthermore, the understanding of certain duties related to individual castes promotes education for higher castes and therefore high classes. Decisions for education are more likely. High class individuals show more freedom from daily obligations to spend time with spiritual activities, which promotes the presence of Hindu thinking for educational decisions. In addition, higher classes have the economic freedom to act independently of financial constraints, which opens the possibility to follow Hindu guidelines to study and to retire.

## 8. Conclusions

In my study I aimed to identify socio-cultural factors for pursuing education throughout the Indian urban society. The leading research question was why Indians do or don't choose to pursue education and which factors are considered while making these educational decisions. The main concept was to show important factors that Indians base their educational decisions on and also to gain insight into the consequences of their educational decisions. The initial idea was that the socio-cultural environment which individuals are embedded in has a crucial influence on decision making and motivation processes that have been disregarded in socio-psychological research so far.

The result of the analysis is a range of factors from different areas of the Indian social sphere. Explanations for educational behavior range from socio-economic properties such as poverty and the education system, to social institutions like the strong family bonds and the still existing influences of caste thinking, to gender related role models. Religious aspects were also considered and examined.

I follow findings from educational sociology that decisions for or against education can vary tremendously across different social society strata (e.g. Boudon 1977; Esser 2000). Therefore, I examined Indians' education behavior within different social classes and structured my sample according to four broad class categories; applying a condensed four class scheme from Kumar et al. (2002; 2002a) that bases on class distinctions from Goldthorp and Erikson (1992).

The area of fieldwork was urban settings in the two metropolises, Bombay and New Delhi. Therefore, the results of the study are limited to urban populations and are not readily translatable to rural settings. Because of the huge variety of regional backgrounds of the inhabitants of the Indian mega cities, the interviewees of the study can be handled as one sample, although the two cities where data collection took place are located several hundred kilometers away from each other. Like most urban families, the interviewees have a common migration history and their families hail from different regions all over India. Therefore, I considered them to be comparable. The sample was mainly composed of employees in the metal production sector in four companies. Due to the method of theoretical sampling, the sample was gradually extended as for example to class IV non-working women who were not

associated with the above-referenced companies, but whose cases I considered as relevant in answering the research question.

Similar to nearly every study, the presented one also has limitations and room for further research that I will discuss before outlining the results. A first aspect that limits the findings is the qualitative methodological approach used here. Due to its explorative character, I decided investigate the topic using a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews. One advantage was that the sample could be systematically extended during the research process following the methodology of theoretical sampling. The cases were selected according to whether they contained typical characteristics such as social class membership, caste status, employment status or gender. Furthermore, it was possible to adapt to new insights and developments during data collection and the interview guide was modified continuously. Nevertheless, as for all qualitative research, the results produced here are only valid for the particular cases. All further general conclusions are of propositional character. In addition the number of analyzed cases is naturally restricted for one single researcher. I analyzed 31 cases, which means that every of the four classes is represented by a relatively small number of six to ten individuals. In order to seek empirical support for the generated hypotheses, a quantitative study is necessary. Fusilier and Durlabhji question the use of quantitative methods for cultural research (2001), which do not allow for the “reading between the lines” of quantitative data. They ground their view on the previously discussed aspect that many Indian executives in professional work settings internalize both Indian and Western values at the same time and additionally show an above-average context sensitivity and ability to balance organizational behavior (Sinha/Kanugo 1997). This can distort results collected in questionnaires. Keeping this in mind, I nevertheless suggest the development of a quantitative follow up survey in order to test whether the findings are statistically significant or the product of chance. A culturally sensitized procedure is essential for such a project. The risk of becoming trapped in ethnocentric thinking must especially be reduced as much as possible. Indigenous knowledge and Indian experts from the field of indigenous psychology and social sciences should be included in designing the survey and its items as well as in interpreting the results.

The approach to compare different social classes may be challenged regarding its rough differentiation. Condensed theoretical schemes like the class model applied here always bear the risk of not being differentiated enough. Furthermore, the classification of the interviewees is merely rooted in their current occupational position according to the applied model and its differentiation of Kumar et al. (2002). Other factors such as financial reserves or other kinds of capital as estate and land were not systematically integrated into the differentiation. The same can be said for the educational background of the interviewees. Though it was widely considered, it was only integrated into the class attribution where job characteristics were not specific enough (for example as in the case of unemployed women).

Another limitation is the fact that some interviews could only be conducted with the help of a translator due to language barriers due to the local Indian languages that many interviewees used. Communicating directly with the interviewees without a third person present during the interview is assumed to be more successful in creating an open and trustworthy interview atmosphere, where interviewees are more willing to address personal and problematic issues as well. In addition, any translation is a handicap and holds the risk of distortion or loss of some of the content or a failure to capture what the interviewee really intended to say.

I covered a wide range of factors from a variety of social aspects of the Indian reality. The study intentionally has the character of providing an overview of this huge diversity of socio-cultural aspects which have an influence on educational decisions. Due to the study's natural limitations regarding length and extent, each factor could not be examined and exhausted in its full broadness and therefore leaves open a large potential for intensified research. Especially the newly identified factors such as the aspect of in-group rivalry and the relationship between core families within an in-group involves research gaps. The question of gender related differences in education and educational decisions alone could also provide enough content for a full study.

In my investigation, my aim was not to look at differences between religions and their dissimilar influences on motivation. That would be beyond the possibilities of the study and would not serve the aim of highlighting general socio-cultural effects on motivation on the Indian subcontinent. Vice versa, focusing only on Hinduism



(chapter 7) would also mean that the findings are not automatically convertible to members of other religions in India. Considerations regarding the influences of other religions in educational decisions may also be of interest for further research.

I have repeatedly stressed the importance of minimizing the risk of ethnocentric thinking when assessing cultures from an outside position. Nevertheless, for my analysis I myself used various theoretical approaches and heuristics that originated in the West (e.g. Heckhausen's extended motivation model 1977 and theoretical assumptions to explain social disparities in educational decisions rooted in Boudon 1974). My study can also be criticized for applying foreign theories and approaches to another culture. Being aware of this aspect, the main reason for employing the Western theories is that at the time, I could not identify comparable approaches for the Indian context and according my latest stage of knowledge, these approaches are still missing today.

## **Results**

As a result of the explorative research approach, I condensed my findings in nine hypotheses at the end of the respective chapters. The hypotheses constitute the essence of the analysis. The core theory of motivation psychology is the extended motivation model from Heinz Heckhausen (1977; 2008) and from sociology theories on social disparities in educational decisions based in Boudon (1974). Both approaches proved to be helpful for the explanation of educational reasons, as they are grounded in cognitive considerations of the individuals. Especially my findings regarding the social disparities in education in India are reminiscent of the current discourse on remaining inequality of educational opportunities in Germany (Becker/Hecken 2007, 2008; also Becker 2009a). In the following summary of my results, I will draw on the German case again.

The first factor group describes socio-economic conditions and its impact on educational considerations. Seeing the dire economic situation of many Indians, the necessity to satisfy daily survival needs gains special importance in the Indian reality. It is not surprising that poverty prevents opportunities to pursue education. Following Maslow (1968), Indians occupied with satisfying basic needs and securing the survival of their family do have not the capacity to pursue education, whether for their own sake or regarding the education of their children.

Reasons why Indians do pursue education also cover socio-economic aspects, especially the economic development India is facing. This is obvious in the higher classes I and II. Indians in these strata are aware of the economic development, including the necessity for competition in terms of formal qualifications and in the labor market. In terms of Heckhausen's motivation model, this awareness constitutes the situation of the high class interviewees as the first element in the motivation model, the situation. Obviously the situation and how it is perceived are strongly dependant on the socio-cultural background. Reasons why Indians pursue education are rooted in expectations of keeping up with the enormous number of competitors and to be able to benefit from the economic growth. A main motivator here is status maintenance and the prevention of economic downfall, factors that have previously been considered in Boudon's approach (1974). Comparing the Indian phenomenon to findings from research on persistent social disparities in educational decisions in Germany (Becker/Hecken 2007 and 2008), cultural differences become evident. In both cases, for the high classes academic education primarily means status maintenance. But in contrast to India, educational decisions of the high classes in Germany are relatively independent from developments in the job market, as Becker and Hecken highlight (2008). Being academically educated is a value in and of itself. In India, educational decisions are vastly oriented towards occupational trends in a handful of desired branches such as the IT sector, medicine, and law. Status maintenance means pursuing a career in a promising sector, but not necessarily being academically educated in any discipline.<sup>53</sup> High class Indians show a very practical and vocational orientation in their decisions for pursuing formal higher education. My first hypothesis states:

*H1) Indians from class I and II are aware of the economic development including the necessity for competition. They are motivated to invest in formal education because they expect to enter the formal job market, which they perceive as tightening, and have job (and social) security, along with a high income.*

Lower class individuals with only a low educational background are often unaware of the tremendous economic changes and developments. Even if they are able to

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<sup>53</sup> Another observation confirms this view: Indian university teachers and researchers from different subjects than the desired ones, e.g. from the social sciences, do not enjoy a great level of public recognition or respect for their profession. Academic excellence alone seems not to be of high value.

recognize the change, the perception of benefiting from the growth differs widely from high and middle class Indians. Again, theories in alignment with Boudon's research (1974) can be applied where the estimation of educational costs plays a major role in governing educational decisions. My results from the Indian context are again reminiscent of findings from Germany. Becker and Hecken (2007; 2008) could empirically prove that the subjective estimation of educational cost is particularly responsible for a lower enrollment rate of lower classes at German universities. The same seems to be the case for India. The Indian lower classes confirm that they have a high estimation of both direct cost and indirect cost of education, such as overcoming social distances towards educational and economic trends. Apart from the governmental schools, education in primary and secondary schools in India is generally not free, a fact that additionally increases the perception of high direct costs. The findings are summarized in the second hypothesis:

*H2) Indians from lower class backgrounds tend to invest less in education as they perceive the indirect cost of education (meaning to overcome social distances to educational and economic trends) as well as the direct cost of education as too high.*

The Indian school system plays a particular role in the perception of worthwhile investments in education. In the low society strata, it is evident that those who cannot afford private schools harbor a strong feeling of disappointment in the school system that is rooted mainly in their own negative experiences with the government educational system. This phenomenon influences decisions regarding sending one's own children to school, as well as decisions for or against post-school training. Higher education is perceived as unattainable for various reasons, but vocational training is not perceived as an alternative. The individual's experiences with government schooling leads to a strong negative image of the government vocational training system in particular and intensifies the tendency to terminate education at a very early level. The secondary and vocational education systems in particular is not perceived as a worthwhile investment. Therefore it must be assumed:

*H3) Indians who depend on government (post-school) education are less motivated to choose vocational training because they do not expect (their children) to receive sufficient knowledge and skills in the government system, and do not expect to find adequate jobs afterwards.*

In the second factor group, I discussed findings related to social aspects and relationships. This broad category encompasses the aspects of caste, family and gender. From the perspective of high castes, education serves the purpose of following a specific tradition. This must be differentiated from the findings summarized in H1) saying that high social classes pursue education in order to prevent social downfall (which is impossible in the caste system, as caste is inherited). The positive view in society regarding high caste members additionally supports their expectations of their educational success and its desired consequences. The next hypothesis is:

*H4) High caste Indians are motivated to pursue education in order to maintain their high status.*

One explanation for the under-representation of low caste members at higher education levels is the perception of caste in public. The doubt or belief in these perceptions tend to govern educational decisions. The findings show that low caste members decide against educational paths because they do not believe that the educational effort will bring them fair treatment on the labour market. My findings are aligned with Hof and Sen (2005) regarding historical caste discrimination that seems to influence low caste behaviour even today. It results in low educational ambitions compared to forward caste groups, at least in the conventional economic sectors that were traditionally bound to religious limitations regarding caste access (such as the metal producing sector where my data collection took place). The findings again show parallels to theoretically expected aspects to explain social disparities in educational choices. In Germany, the lower level of subjectively expected success at university leads the lower classes away from higher education (Becker/Hecken 2008). Here, subjective estimation of success is primarily related to internal factors of the person, i.e. the assessment of one's own abilities and personal talents to study. In India, the estimation of success among the lower stratum seems to be bound instead to external mechanisms, which means subjective success estimations depend strongly on the evaluation of one's own background by others. This is especially effective when it comes to the estimation of employment possibilities as a desired consequence of educational attainments. The findings can be summarized as follows:

*H5) Indians of low caste origin are less motivated to pursue education because they expect to receive biased treatment on the labour market.*

Apart from caste membership, family bonds were also found to be of high importance on variant life and educational decisions of Indians. Interestingly, the factor of in-group behaviour often described in literature was mostly found to be effective merely within the inner core family, while extended family relationships seem to be of lower importance and could even bear a negative connotation regarding the pursuit of education. Collectivism in family settings is characterised with a high level of pride for the efforts of the whole community. My observations on rival behaviour and negative tensions between members of one extended family collective challenge the common theory of a high state of collectivism. Uberoi's term "familism" (2008) (introduced in chapter 6.) must be modified in favor of the core family. Educational decisions are made to best serve the core family, mainly the parents and their goals and honor. Extended family dynamics often believed to evoke collectivistic thinking even today could not generate collectivistic intentions and behavior when it comes to making educational decisions. The following can be summarized:

*H6) Indians are motivated to pursue education in order to guard their core family's reputation and honour, which also legitimates individualistic behaviour within the in-group.*

Another aspect of social relations that I found to be relevant is the gender component. Disparities between men and women are widespread in various areas of the social life. Educational limitations for women can be found at both extremes of the social ladder, but are due to different reasons. The lower classes are mainly characterized by neglecting their daughters' education in favour of their marriage opportunities. Low class women terminate their education early and their life is concentrated on their household duties. Once women have fulfilled their role as a mother and housewife, there is some leeway for educational activities. A major motivator of married women to pursue education is to gain independence from their in-laws, who are often perceived as highly manipulative and restrictive. Nevertheless, the aspect that mature low class women are given the possibility to

pursue education at all has to be considered as a phenomenon of societal and economic change. It can be assumed:

*H7) Indian women from a low class background are motivated to pursue education only at a later stage in life when they have gained status through marriage and motherhood in order to gain independence from their in-laws.*

In the higher classes, the findings show a contrary picture. Once again, marriage opportunities are in the centre of interest for the girl's parents. Parents feel the need to display the girls' abilities to manage the education of any future children. In order to be able to compete in desired branches in a labour market that is perceived as tightening, and to prevent social downfall (see H1), children have to be given the best possible education. In the higher classes, a wife's main duty is to manage her children's education. A profound educational background of the mother is a prerequisite to the children's educational success. In the higher classes, the education of the young women is therefore perceived as an investment in their marriage opportunities. The women's main vocation remains that of a housewife, although an educated one. It can be concluded:

*H8) Indians from higher class backgrounds are motivated to educate their daughters in order to raise their chance of finding an appropriate spouse because of their abilities to manage their children's education.*

The last factor group deals with influences of Hindu core concepts on educational decisions. All in all, religion was not found to be a major component in making educational decisions. Especially the middle class, participants did not see a relationship between their educational paths and their religious beliefs. Neither karmic principles, caste related duties nor the Hindu life model seem to play any role regarding education here. Low class and low caste Hindus feel some general connection between their low status in life and the religious idea of predestination. Their individual interpretation of Hindu concepts plays a small role here regarding their education decisions, albeit a marginal one. Only high class participants mention that Hindu core concepts made a positive influence on their pursuit for education. They interpret Hindu ideas in favour of their upscale life status, which fosters their positive anticipations regarding the consequences of education endeavours. Therefore it can be formulated at last:

*H9): The higher the social class origin of Indians, the greater the influence of Hindu concepts on positive decisions for education can be.*

### **Final Conclusions**

As postulated at the beginning of this thesis, the data proves that educational decisions and motivational dynamics regarding education should always be interpreted in the socio-cultural, economical, and local contexts of the people's lives. Educational decisions must be understood in context of other circumstances which they are embedded in. Seeing the analysis with the Indian society, educational decisions must be perceived as distinctive and unique in each cultural background. At the same time, overly plain and simplistic cultural patterns which were developed with the aim to categorize whole societies provide mostly a stereotyped way of thinking and should be avoided. As already postulated by researchers of an indigenous research tradition like Misra (e.g. 1996), it was demonstrated that indigenous theoretical approaches must be integrated into the analysis of socio-phenomena. This is also valid for the design of international programs and projects, for example, projects for the development of the educational system. Finally, returning to the key factors proposed in chapter 3 regarding the BMZ framework concept for the integration of socio-cultural criteria: Legitimacy (acceptance), social organization (development status), and socio-cultural heterogeneity. In this study, these general criteria served as an instrument for the theoretical selection of criteria to be analyzed. They must be constantly observed when transforming theoretical insights into practice. For the specific Indian case, the identified factors influencing educational decisions of Indians, among others, should also be considered. In theory, following indigenous approaches, indigenous thinking and acting should likewise govern each and every activity. This means local experts and target groups should be closely involved when it comes to research and practice.

All in all it seems that despite public declarations regarding a modern orientation, development and transition of the Indian society, traditional concepts are still widely in use. These concepts have the potential to govern educational decisions not only at the bottom of the society but also in the higher strata. Examples are the remaining caste perceptions still in use, gender roles that change a married woman's purpose to be educated but not her vocation as a housewife, or the power of family bonds.

Socio-cultural aspects play a crucial role in educational decisions throughout all layers of society. Differences in reasons for educational disparities between the classes in Europe and Germany are apparent, particularly when it comes to secondary effects of social origin and especially in expectations regarding the probability of educational success. In India, expectations of success and return on education are strongly governed by external factors such as public opinion of different castes, while in Germany such external factors play a marginal role. According to the diversion thesis by Müller and Pollak (2007), German lower class members are believed to have been led away from university access due to the attractiveness of alternative vocational training opportunities (Becker 2009a). In India, attractive alternatives do not exist, especially in view of the weak constitution of the public vocational training system. Low class Indians are not led away, but are rather deterred from tertiary education because of their doubt of receiving fair treatment in the labor market.

Nevertheless, the Indian economic development and accompanying societal change processes are facts that cannot be doubted. Traditional concepts do not hinder these developments, but in contrast seem to provide the ground for the Indian society's economical upcoming. On the base of my results, a vision of India in 10 years might portray the country as a society with great developments in economy and science. The considerable segment of well-educated middle class Indians is an important asset to the country's present and future success in sciences and industry. On the other hand, traditions can be blamed for leaving huge shares of the society behind, as remaining poverty figures prove. The in chapter 1 described demographic dividend is already alerting (Government of India 2008). The mismatch of unskilled workforce on the one hand and on the other the shortage of skilled manpower for the industry will become dramatic very soon. It is doubtful that the distinctive social inequality in education will disappear gradually. Next to the general stability of these differences, an important factor is the weakness of the Indian education system. This is also true in other countries such as Germany (e.g. Becker 2009a). Institutional reforms at all educational levels, from primary to secondary, vocational, and academic education are necessary to create requirements that allow the majority of lower classes to access sustainable education and the country to generate skilled workforce. Even if further educational expansions of the Indian Government are successful in the future,



the empirical findings from Germany and other regional contexts show that social inequalities in education remain (e.g. Becker 2006; Müller/Pollak 2004; Allmendinger/Aisenbrey 2002). The stable inequality in education and the question for upward mobility through education for lower classes in Germany is amongst the most debated themes today (for example see the latest publication of German sociologist Heinz Bude “Bildungsparadoxie” (2011)). For the German case, Becker and Hecken (2008) consider possibilities of how to narrow the social gaps in accessing higher education. They reflect on canceling out the secondary effects, as well as the different considerations and expectations between the classes when it comes to educational decisions. Approaches have sought to reduce direct costs of education through educational loans or the abolition of tuition fees. But even for the German case, this has achieved very limited success. Seeing the identified socio-cultural factors that determine secondary effects in India and that are deeply anchored in traditional and societal understanding, it is questionable if this can be the main answer for India. The current policy of the Indian government provides a caste based quota system in higher education and public employment, but this does not seem to be sufficient in decreasing the social inequality in education. Motivation to pursue education is dependent on a variety of factors and to a great extent on external influences that cannot be eradicated. Erikson concludes (1996; also Becker/Hecken 2007) that for industrialized countries, the higher the social disparities regarding general living conditions and the allocation of wealth, the higher the social disparities in education. Societies with general low economical insecurity, e.g. a low risk to all classes to become unemployed or poor, show a relatively high educational equality. India, although economically prospering, is a country with very high general social inequalities. A first and main prerequisite for a wider social equality in education would be the decrease of these disparities. I very much doubt that the developments in Indian politics and economy will allow for the pursuit of this objective in the next ten years. The country has a poor prognosis for a sustainable decrease in educational inequalities. Nevertheless, positive experiences with educational environments where external influences and therewith secondary effects can be reduced should be the point of orientation. The people whom I came in contact with during my data collection prove the importance of such initiatives.

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**Annex**

## **Interview Guide**

The interview guide provides an overview about the thematic area the interview partners were asked about. Due to the methodological approach of theoretical sampling the interview guide was constantly further developed and extended, especially at the beginning of the course of interviews. The flexible handling of the interview guide reflects the inductive approach of the study to generate theory out of data (see chapter 4).

The order of questions was changed due to the development of the conversation. Many interviewees named automatically important aspects of questions without being asked directly and many interviews ended up in a discussion about one or more particular topics. Moreover, not all interviewees were willing or able to talk about all aspects but most interview partners showed a great level of cooperation and willingness to share their opinion.

### **A) General**

Can you first tell me a little bit about yourself?

What is your background? Where do you come from? How old are you? How many family members live in your household?

What is your job (here)? How do you earn your living?

Can you tell me your job history?

What is/was your parents' occupation?

How much do you earn? What is the monthly family income?

How do you live? What kind of housing do you have?

### **B) Education and Economic Developments in India**

What is your education background?

What is the education background of your parents? What is the education background of your siblings, your family in general?

What do you think about the importance of education in general and for your own life? How do you expect to benefit from education? What did you anticipate when you decided for your education path?

What were your education plans when you were younger? Could you fulfil them? What was helpful? What hindered you?

Do you think with education social advancement is possible in India?

Is this true for everybody?

What motivates you to perform as good as you can?

To what kind of school do you send your children? (private or government?)

What experiences did you make with education? How have you experienced the Indian education/school system?

## **B) Social Relations**

Did you take your education decisions on your own?

Who advised you what to do in life? Who encouraged you to pursue education? Why was/is it important for you to follow the advice/the wish of these persons?

Did you follow any kind of tradition regarding education and your occupational choice? Why? How do you expect to benefit from following these traditions?

Did you feel any kind of social pressure?

What are your education plans for your children? What are the reasons for these plans?

Do you think your children can reach them? What has been helpful? What has been or could be a problem?

How do you expect your children to benefit from education?

## **C) Class and Caste Significance**

What do you think how important is the class background in the Indian society?

How do you think is social class background and education interlinked?

What about your own life? How important is status for you and your family?

How do you perceive the existence of the caste system in today India in general?

Do you think caste still plays an important role in India today?

Do spiritual aspects and caste thinking play a certain role in your life? How? To which extend?

How important is your own category/caste background for you?

What do you think in general: Should one marry within the own caste/category?

How would you react if your own child wanted to marry outside your own caste?

How do you think are caste background and education interlinked?

How is your caste background interlinked with your education decisions/with your occupational choice?

How did you experience caste at school?

How do you expect to benefit or suffer from your caste background regarding education and job chances?

Questions to head of department or company manager:

Can you give me a rough estimation of the cast background of the employees I have talked to? Are they members of a rather low or high category, OBC, SC?

Questions to women:

Do you think there are differences between men and women when it comes to educational decisions?

How influenced the fact of being female your educational decisions?

Why is education important for Indian women? Why are many Indian women very well educated but never work?

What does your family/your in-laws think about education for women?

What education do you wish for your daughter?



**D) Hinduism**

Do you think you are a religious person? Why?

How do you practice Hinduism? E.g. do you go to the temple frequently? E.g. do you have your own puja regularly?

Do you think your family is religious? Why? Are your parents practicing Hinduism? How? E.g. do you have a deity your family worships to?

Can you think of any Hindu concept that was important for your educational decisions?

Do you believe in Karma? Can you explain what it is in your eyes and why it is important to you?

Do you believe in Dharma? Can you explain why it is important to you?

What kind of benefit to you expect when you follow your Dharma?

Does these concepts have anything to do with your life decisions? Or with your educational decision?

Do you know the concept of an ideal Hindu life, Ashrama? Do you or family members follow the concept?

Are your older family members (parents, grandparents etc.) practicing their belief? Has their way to worship changed over time? Do you feel that it has become stronger in the last e.g. 10 years? Are they more concentrating on spiritual things? Do you observe that elderly family members withdraw gradually from social life?

Were you sent to a guru when you where a young boy? Do you send your own son(s)?

Do you believe people are predestined to opt for certain decisions? E.g. for certain occupations, certain education paths?

Do you think your education and occupational path has been predestined?

Would you like to add anything you consider as important?

## **Short Description of Interviewees**

### **Class I**

#### **Male Interviewees**

##### **Im1 Mr J.**

Mr. J. is a 48 years old engineer from Brahmin background. He is head of department in one of the MNCs. He has been working for the company for 23 years.

##### **Im2 Mr. N.**

Mr. N. is the leading technical engineer in one of the two visited local SME in New Delhi. He is 45 years old and from Brahmin background. Mr. N. is married and has two children. His wife works as an elementary village school teacher in another city.

##### **Im3 Mr. L.**

Mr. L. is a 35 year old Brahmin and works in one of the MNC as a managing engineer. He is married and has two sons. Mr. L graduated from one of the best universities in India, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay.

#### **Female Interviewees**

##### **If1 Neha**

Neha is 30 years old and works in a leading position in the HR department of one of the Bombay MNCs. She graduated at a well known Bombay university and holds two Master degrees. She is from a high class and very educated Brahmin family. She is not married.

**If2 Nalini**

She is of Brahmin origin, 43 years old, and has two almost grown up children. She belongs to class I because of her husband's profession as a civil engineer, the high family income, and because of her education background. She holds a BA from a well known and reputed university in Delhi but has been a housewife since her graduation.

Nalini is my former landlady in an upper middle class neighbourhood in south Delhi. She was interviewed in order to extend the sample to upper class women who are well educated but never worked in a professional position.

**If3 Aruna**

Aruna belongs to the group of working upper class women. She holds the leading position as a managing engineer in one of the Bombay MNCs and supervises around 50 employees. She studied engineering and graduated very successfully at one of the best Indian universities. She is 43 years old and from Kshaytria background (forward caste). She has a son and a daughter. After giving birth she went back to work very soon.

**Class II****Male Interviewees****IIm1 Mr. B.**

Mr. B. is the assistant engineer of the leading engineer Mr. N (Im2) in one of the local MNC in Delhi. He is 42 years old and from Brahmin background. He reached his current position through his community connections. Mr. B.'s family background is from a low income segment. His father is a Hindu priest.

**IIm2 Mr. A**

Mr. A works in one of the Bombay MNCs as secretary. He is 43 years old and from Brahmin background. Due to his education and employment position he is class II. He has two children.

**IIm3 Mr. S.**

Mr. S. works as a manager's assistant in one of the local SME in Delhi. He is 23 years old, a forward caste member and not married.

**IIm4 The Contractor**

This interviewee is the contractor in one of the local SME. He manages the non-permanent workers who are not regular employees of the company. He is 40 years old and from general caste, married and has two children. Because of his position he could provide information on the caste background of all workers under him.

**Female Interviewees****IIf1 Sunita**

Sunita is a non working housewife. She is 32 years old and has two children. She belongs to a general caste background. Her husband works in a local company as engineering assistant and the family's financial background is at an average.

Sunita is my former neighbour and was integrated into the sample because of her case as a medium upper class educated but not working woman.

**IIf2 Laksha**

Laksha is the technical assistant of the dean of a Don Bosco vocational school and training centre. She is Brahmin but from a relatively poor family background. She holds a BA and additionally underwent a course in office management from the training centre. She is excellent in English and able to express herself very well.

**IIf3 Mrs. N**

Mrs. N. works in one of the Bombay MNC as secretary. She is married and in her late 40s. She belongs to forward castes. She seems to be very satisfied with her job and talks about her intrinsic motivation.

## **Class III**

### **Male Interviewees**

#### **IIIIm1 Mr. M.**

Mr. M. is a welder in one of the local Delhi SME, employed on contract base. He is around 42 years old and from a lower general caste background. He is a diploma holder after he passed a one year training course. The interview could be done in English with the help of a Hindi translator when assistance was needed.

#### **IIIIm2 Sunil**

Sunil works in one of the local SME in Delhi as a simple helper although he has an university degree. He is 25 years old and not married. Sunil is from SC background and is convinced that his low caste membership is the reason for his occupational failure.

#### **IIIIm3 Mr K.**

Mr. K is CNC operator in one of the Delhi SME. Mr. K is 39 years old and from lower general caste background. His family is from Uttar Pradesh (UP). He is the only one among the class III and IV members who is employed on permanent base. The interview was done in English with the help of a Hindi translator.

### **Female Interviewees**

#### **IIIIf1 Don Bosco Trainees**

The following interview was done with a group of three young women from a Don Bosco training unit in Bombay slum area Dharavid who just were about to finish a training course and started applying for jobs. They are all from low class background and low general caste category and live in or around Dharavid. The women are not married yet and between 19 and 23. Although they speak English the interview was done together with a Don Bosco social worker who translated where it was necessary and helped to explain the purpose of the interview.

**III f3 Mrs. P.**

Mrs. P. works in one of the local SMEs as a helper. Her family belongs to the group of OBC and is from Delhi. Mrs. P is 28 years old, married and a school dropout. The interview with Mrs. P. was conducted with the help of a translator.

**Class IV****Male Interviewees****IVm1 Mr. O.**

Mr. O works as a turner in one of the SME in Delhi, employed on contract base. He says that he is 50 years old. The contractor in the company estimates that Mr. O. is from OBC background. He is almost illiterate and grew up in a small village. The interview was done with a translator.

**IVm2 Three construction workers**

The interview with the construction workers was done with the help of the translator. The construction workers' language is Marathi. The three men were met at a construction site near one of the Bombay MNC I visited. The construction workers agreed to talk to me for a small amount of money to cover their loss of earnings during the interview.

The form of the transcript has been slightly adjusted to the situation of three interviewees plus the translator.

**IVm3 Mr. P.**

Mr. P. works as a fitter in one of the Delhi SME. He is 29 years old and probably from OBC background as estimated by the contractor of the company. He is a school drop out and almost illiterate. His family is from a village in Bihar. The interview was done with a translator.

## **Female Interviewees**

### **IVf1 Rhani**

The following interviewee was met two times. At the first time only notes were taken because I felt recording the conversation was not appropriate to the situation. The second part could be recorded after having the agreement of the interviewee.

Rhani is a 14 year old jewellery seller at one of the Bombay beaches a bit outside of Bombay. I met her together with her mother when they tried to sell jewellery and other cheap items to tourists. She was quite open and interested in what I do and willing to talk to me as well to meet me again. Due to her constant contact to tourists she was relatively fluent in English. She is a school drop-out from a very low social background.

### **Lagini IVf2**

Lagini works as a jewellery seller at a Bombay beach. She is 21 years old, married, and has 3 children. She is probably from OBC background which is indicated by her and her family's job history with jobs as cleaners and servants. As her "colleague" Rhani (IVf1) her English is relatively good, and talking to her was not a problem. Her educational background is very low as she never went to school. The interview with Lagini was not recorded but reconstructed through field notes.

### **IVf4 Women Group Discussion**

This interview was done as a group discussion with four women between 29 and 35 of age. They all participated in a Don Bosco training course for self employment in a semi urban surrounding of Delhi called village. The women are all married, have children, and are early school drop outs. The course was provided in their home neighborhood which allowed the women to participate.

The interview was done with the help of a translator who was also the coordinator of the Don Bosco outreach activities (EX2) and well known to the interviewees. That was very helpful in creating a pleasant atmosphere and helped the women to open up during the interview. During the interview the coordinator explained certain aspects to me; her comments are indicated with TR for translator. She also explained the purpose of the interview and my work to the women in advance.

## **Expert Interviews**

### **EX 1**

EX1 is an expert for indigenous psychology at a German university. He is originally from India. The interview was conducted in German.

### **EX2 and EX3**

The following interview was done with two experts. It starts with the coordinator of Don Bosco outreach activities in Delhi. The coordinator is responsible for informal trainings for women in semi urban surroundings. I could join her on her tour through various neighborhoods where the outreach centre initiates training classes for women. There another interview with female clients was conducted (IVf3).

After a while the second interviewee joined the conversation, the director of the Don Bosco outreach centre, Father John.