Chapter I
Foundations of the study

Introduction

Urban middle-class parents usually wish to realize their dreams in their children. This feeling has come down through the ages in Indian society. The Vamashram culture has come today to reinforce this idea that children will realize the dreams of their parents and this is why parents in urban families go beyond their means to assure that their children study hard and achieve a lot. This is to the exclusion of other activities and aspects of life of the growing child. The child is bereft of adequate playtime and time to interact with others thus lowering his social growth and so the child is supposed to develop a one-track mind devoid of the joys of childhood. Hence, there is a danger of the child not gaining a balanced personality. Psycho-social developments may not happen as much as can be desired.

Let us imagine a scene on the street where children are throwing stones at a hapless dog or another common setting so often noticed where ordinary people are lynching a man they have caught for stealing. Not all of them are illiterate! Many of them have crossed the portals of school.....So what does this tell us of our education? What about the Satyam scandal? So educated in the degree sense and yet a big cheat! What about the moral aspect which develops with education?

Professor Tapan Raychauduri, in his convocation speech at Calcutta University (2009) says, "In the first flush of independence, every ambitious parent wanted their children, initially the sons and later the daughters as well, to become bureaucrats in the central cadres. The young Bengali added one more exam to the four or five "passes", beginning with matriculation, which was his usual fate. It affected the quality of life; habitual helplessness and depression lifted to some extent. Those who failed to make it to the central and provincial cadres had modest hopes of employment in the fast increasing number of colleges and
universities. Before long, the world of jobs included employment abroad and the private sector was no monopoly of sahibs any longer. In recent decades these tendencies have become more powerful through globalization, outsourcing and the buoyancy of Indian enterprise. Interestingly, Bengali academic efforts have closely followed the curves defined by the expectations of employers or what the Bengali parents understood these to be.....Since highly paid employment is the ultimate object of existence, the intelligent young have discovered that academic achievement is not the only highroad to a good life. One needs other qualities, like smartness, especially as evident in the ability to speak in correct English at high speed. Hence the desperate anxiety to get one's children into English medium schools which may end up costing one the bulk of one's monthly income....."

This over-emphasis on academic achievement reaches a crescendo as the child grows through adolescence. This is because of the low opportunities for white and blue collared jobs which are the indicators of being middle-class. So every opportunity is constrained by success at the examination.

The media reports that India is one of the most corrupt countries and it is very difficult to do business in India because of corruption. There is rampant bribery in public life, lack of sincerity among politicians, lack of empathy within fellow human beings, dowry issues in families, ill-treatment of women- all happening among people who are more than literate. This implies that the education that is taking place is not being able to reach the minds and hearts of people.

The world of children usually centres round their parents. They want to satisfy their parents and they do not realize whether this is a distinct possibility or not. Not only are they socially stunted because they are denied social interactions as it detracts study time but their moral development is also stunted as we see cases of mass cheating in examination halls. Adolescents are cruel on each other which are seen through ragging in colleges. Adolescents quite often feel it is their right to cheat (monetarily as well) if your back is turned on them. They show rampant apathy about cleanliness of the environment and about the animal and human distress on the street as they pass.
Therefore, all of the above implies that parental pressure has a major role to play in the moral and social development and achievement motivation of urban, middle-class adolescents. To find out whether this is so, the investigator intends to measure moral judgement, social maturity and achievement motivation of urban secondary school students and relate this to their parents' beliefs about aims of education and thus parental pressure. In the analysis, the influence of parental pressure on certain isolated aspects of psycho-social development has been adjudged.
THE PROBLEM

Entry and establishment in the urban middle-class is through academic success. Yet opportunities for jobs which determine social status and financial security, is low in India. This has created greater stress on parents whose role is increasingly coming into focus. Parental pressure is on the rise, especially, during middle-school, since this is an important phase when critical choices having major implications for the individual's future life are made. The media, too, reports grave tragedies which ensue from this often disproportionate expectation of parents. Therefore, there is a need to find out what the expectations of parents from school education are, and what sort of academic pressure on the child ensues from these beliefs.

It is also seen that youngsters who are unable to cope with such pressure, end up as highly tensed, depressed and shattered individuals. Newspaper headlines send a chill down our spine when reporting cases of morbid suicides, cheating and failures.

Unbalanced parental pressure can result in faulty psycho-social development. This implies that the demands that parents make of their child and the way they respond to his/her accomplishments can influence the child's will to achieve as well as affect other aspects of his psycho-social development. Therefore, there is also a need to find out how the extent of academic pressure is shaping the children's psycho-social development. This is more pertinent for the young adolescent, whose character is in a very formative state.

Therefore, the investigator intends to find out the beliefs about the aims of education of parents of urban middle-school children and examine the ensuing pressure patterns regarding studies on the latter. Furthermore, she intends to find out the effect of this parental pressure on these young adolescents with reference to some determining factors of psycho-social development i.e. moral judgement, social maturity and achievement motivation.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Prior to the statement of objectives, it may be desirable to describe certain terms for the explicit purpose of investigation:

A) MORAL JUDGEMENT
Moral judgement is defined as “...a psychological construct that characterises the process by which the people determine that one course of action in a particular situation is morally right and another course of action is wrong. Moral judgement involves defining what the moral issues are, how conflicts among parties are to be settled, and the rationale for deciding on a course of action.” [102]

B) SOCIAL MATURITY
Social maturity is defined as “The organism’s ability to interact effectively with the environment or to generate and utilize a set of problem-solving strategies.” [50]

C) ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION
Achievement motivation is defined as “Learned motive to compete and strive for success whenever one’s behaviour can be evaluated against a standard of excellence.” [81] Need achievers have learned to take pride in their ability to meet or exceed high standards and it is this sense of self-fulfillment that motivates them to work hard, to be successful and to try to out-perform others when faced with new challenges.

The following are the objectives of the proposed study:

1. To investigate whether there is any association between parental beliefs about aims of education and academic pressure that parents exert on their children in the secondary school.
2. To investigate whether there is any association between the extents of academic pressure exerted by parents on children in the secondary school and the latter’s moral judgement.
3. To investigate whether there is any association between the extents of academic pressure exerted by parents on children in the secondary school and the latter's social maturity.

4. To investigate whether there is any association between the extents of academic pressure exerted by parents on children in the secondary school and the latter's achievement motivation.
THE VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

1. Parental Belief about aims of education: This variable takes four categories – money, status, knowledge, all-round development (mental development).

2. Parental Pressure: This consists of four sub-variables:
   - Parents’ perception of pressure exerted on a daily basis (PPPD)
   - Parents’ perception of pressure exerted at examination time (PPPE)
   - Child’s perception of parental pressure exerted on a daily basis (CPPD)
   - Child’s perception of parental pressure exerted at examination time (CPPE)

3. Moral Judgement: This consists of one score.

4. Social Maturity: This consists of three sub-variables:
   - Personal Adequacy
   - Inter-Personal Adequacy
   - Social Adequacy

5. Achievement Motivation: This consists of one score.

For Objective I:
Independent Variable – Parental Belief
Dependent Variable – Parental Pressure

For Objective 2:
Independent Variable – Parental Pressure
Dependent Variable – Moral Judgement

For Objective 3:
Independent Variable – Parental Pressure
Dependent Variable – Social Maturity

For Objective 4:
Independent Variable – Parental Pressure
Dependent Variable – Achievement Motivation
HYPOTHESES

Objective I:

$H_{01}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure that parents exert on their children in secondary schools.

$H_{01.1}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by parents themselves.

$H_{01.2}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by children.

$H_{01.1.1}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by parents themselves on a daily basis.

$H_{01.1.2}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by parents during examination time.

$H_{01.2.1}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by children on a daily basis.

$H_{01.2.2}$: There is no association between parental belief about aims of education and academic pressure as perceived by children during examination time.
Objective II:

HO₂: There is no association between academic pressure exerted by parents on children and the latter's moral judgement.

HO₂₁: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure, as perceived by parents, and the children's moral judgement.

HO₂₂: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure exerted by parents as perceived by children and the children's moral judgement.

HO₂₁₁: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents on a daily basis and children's moral judgement.

HO₂₁₂: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents during examination time and children's moral judgement.

HO₂₂₁: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children on a daily basis and children's moral judgement.

HO₂₂₂: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children during examination time and children's moral judgement.
Objective III:

**HO3**: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure exerted by parents on children and the latter's social maturity.

**HO3.1**: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure, as perceived by parents, and the children's social maturity.

**HO3.2**: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure, as perceived by children, and the latter's social maturity.

**HO3.1.1**: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents, on a daily basis and children's social maturity.

**HO3.1.2**: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents, during examination time and children's social maturity.

**HO3.2.1**: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children, on a daily basis and children's social maturity.

**HO3.2.2**: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children, during examination time and children's social maturity.
Objective IV:

HO$_4$: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure exerted by parents on children and the latter's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.1: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure, as perceived by parents, and the children's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.2: There is no association between the extent of academic pressure as perceived by children and the children's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.1.1: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents on a daily basis and children's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.1.2: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by parents, during examination time and children's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.2.1: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children, on a daily basis and children's achievement motivation.

HO$_4$.2.2: There is no association between academic pressure as perceived by children, during examination time and children's achievement motivation.