Introduction

The term ‘Middle Class’ is much in vogue today than ever before in the past however the same is very complicated in terms of its delimitation and description. In lay terms this term refers to that part or section of the society which may be called ‘well off’ or moderately wealthy. This section of society is considered to be doing well in terms of financial pursuits or material possessions but it is definitely not at par with the skimpy rich section of the society. Thus Middle Class is a class that occupies a socio-economic position that is intermediate between those of the poor and the rich. It plays a significant role in the progress of a country.

The middle class has invited much scholarly attention in the field of social science research due to its central role in the society. This class holds particular importance for the political scientists as it has come to influence the political dynamics of democracies all over the world. The political aspect of the role and influence of Middle Class is clearly highlighted by Aristotle in ‘Politics’.¹

The sheer vastness of the strata called middle classes ensures that this class is heterogeneous and contains within its ambit a number of sections and classes. There is no single criterion according to which we can compartmentalize the middle class. There are a number of different criteria which can be considered while delineating the middle class. However the lack of a single complete description of this class and the presence of different sections within this class compels us to mention it as middle classes. Thus in this study we are supposed to deal with Middle classes and not a single Middle class itself. However for all purposes in this work the term middle class tends to imply middle classes for the convenience associated. In democracies all over the world this class assumes special importance being the largest growing section of society². A country’s

¹ “...it is manifest that the best political community is formed by citizens of the middle class, and that those states are likely to be well administered in which the middle class is large, and stronger if possible than both the other classes...”. Aristotle, Politics, Book IV, chapter 11 (1296). For details see http://mitchell-langbert.blogspot.in/2010/05/aristotle-on-middle-class-and-socialist.html (Accessed on November 12, 2011)

² A report by McKinsey global institute says that with the recent pace of growth in India the average household income will increase three time and India will become fifth largest consumer economy by 2025 from its 12th position at present. See for details McKinsey, Global Institute (2007), The ‘Bird of Gold’: The Rise of India’s Consumer Market, May 2007.
economic growth and expansion of its middle class are two parallel processes because the
growth and development must lead to well being of the subjects. As the economy grows
more and more people become part of this process. This growing number of subjects in
the middle class may be a further boost to the growth. In the Indian context middle class
has gained in importance as a growth engine for the economy. To an extent country’s
economy is driven by the consumerist behaviour of this class. It is also true that a large
number of subjects of middle class come from services sector which occupies a major
chunk of the gross domestic product of the country. The growing social importance and
increased economic and political role of middle class is a dominant trend especially in the
context of liberalisation and economic reforms.

Politics in liberalized India has come to be influenced greatly by the middle
classes especially the urban middle classes. It is because of the recent spur in the
political and associational activity within the middle classes. There is a surge in the
demands of the educated middle classes. The awareness and emerging role of civil
society has come to determine the course of politics in democracy. Thus politics in a
democracy is under compulsion to consider and appreciate the demands of the middle
classes.

3 According to a report in Hindu Business Line total personal consumption expenditure of 1999-2000 stood
at rupees 7,20,932 crores. (According to 55th round of NSSO) Out of which 42% has accounted for by the
middle class population which constituted around 23% of the total population. National Sample Survey

4 Here the term Urban has been used according to the definition of urban area as per census 2011 which is
as follows:
1) all places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified area committee.
2) all other places satisfying the following three criteria:
   i) a minimum population of 5000;
   ii) at least 70% of male working population engaged in non agricultural pursuits;
   iii) a density of population of at least 400/sq. km.
see for details, Census of India 2011 (provisional population totals) paper 2, volume 2 of 2011 rural- urban
distribution Chandigarh (Series 5).

5 Sridharan (2008), ‘The Political Economy of Middle Classes in Liberalising India’.JSAS (Institute of

6 Aijaz Ahmad(1985) talks of important role played by middle classes in political and economic sphere in
developing countries. Ahmad, Aijaz (1985), ‘Class, Nation and State: Intermediate Classes in Peripheral
The study carries forward the above argument with regard to political concerns of the middle class and tries to find out how far the issue of economic reforms is linked to electoral choices of the Middle Class while focusing exclusively on the nature of campaigning and party programmes in a predominantly urban space. This research aims to study the role of urban middle classes in the equation between politics in a democracy and pursuit for economic reforms. It can be represented as

Democratic politics \[\text{Urban Middle Classes} \rightarrow \text{Economic Reforms}\]

In this context, this research aims to find out whether the urban middle class catalyses the process of economic reforms or in other words do urban middle classes influence the extent, direction and pace of economic reforms.

**Historical Account**

The Indian middle class we encounter today has its origins in the British Education Policy. In his minute on Indian Education Macaulay said, “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in its intellect.”7

Such a policy met with great success. This success manifested itself even in the revivalist movements of 19th century which were led by English educated Indians from middle and upper classes.

Further, unlike other colonial powers, British followed a liberal policy of giving English educated Indians access to posts in administration. English was a passport to gain entry into legal profession. The earlier British dominated judiciary now witnessed the emergence of a 2nd tier of Indian lawyers. The educated got employment in Revenue, Police, Justice and other departments. Emergence of Middle Class was facilitated by modern education and consequent work opportunities available in offices set up for commercial, administrative and other purposes by the colonial government.8 Thus the conceptual and political boundaries of Indian Middle Class rested on mediation between

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7 Thomas Macauley was a colonial administrator who served on the supreme council of India from 1835-38. He advocated English only education in india. The quote has been taken from Macauley’s *minute on Indian education* (1835).See H.Sharp, selections from educational records, 1781-1839,p. 116,cited in Misra 1961,11.
8 Misra (1961) has discussed various sections of Middle class which he classifies as Industrial, Commercial, landed and educational
colonial rulers and colonial subjects. The relationship premised on subordination to the colonial power but providing cultural leadership to indigenous people.

At the time of Independence in 1947, this Middle Class was a relatively small and homogenous group which was basically no different from earlier pre-independence middle class. With British leaving out of the administrative set up, many more jobs and services were made available for the educated. With state assuming welfare orientation with socialistic goals, more and more people became benefited from the state policies. With the adoption of Nehruvian-Mahalanobis strategy for development, a plethora of jobs in the public sector were made available for relatively educated and able ones however the real and rapid expansion of Middle Class came with the state adopting the liberalized economic reforms in the 1980’s and then finally in 1991 with the adoption of New Economic Policy (NEP).

**Composition and expansion of Middle Class**

Today the middle class consists of largely the salaried classes viz. the government employees and employees in the public sector companies, IT professionals, doctors, small entrepreneurs, traders etc. The middle class which was almost exclusively constituted at the time of independence by English educated members of upper caste had expanded to include the upwardly mobile dominant casts of rich farmers, during the initial three decades after independence. In other words this period saw the emergence of small rural based middle class (Sheth, D.L., 1999). Among the new entrants are the ‘Bullock Capitalists’ who husbanded their landed resources carefully and benefited both from state subsidies for agriculture and Mandal reservations. It also consists of millions of shopkeepers, small time entrepreneurs, property agents, semi-skilled industrial and service workers and lower level salaries households. In addition to the categories mentioned above, there is a separate category within the middle class which is composed of those to whom benefits of reservation accrued.

Expansion of hitherto tiny Middle Class in post-colonial India has been considered as the outcome of two factors. Adoption of affirmative action and policy of protective discrimination through reservations in government jobs and admission to educational institutions of the state paved the way for the emergence of a professional

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class that was the product of vernacular mode of education and also originally belonged to semi-urban and village India. In sociological terms also unlike the traditional upper-caste ‘old’ middle class, the expanded middle class belonged to middle as well as backward peasant castes. The other significant factor that has been held as accountable for the emergence of what has been dubbed as ‘new’ middle class (Fernandes, 2006) is the political economy of neo-liberal reforms. The fiscal and monetary reforms implemented since 1991 have been attributed to for the increased growth in almost every sector of the economy especially in the service and information technology sectors. Rapid industrialization, outsourcing of jobs of various western companies to India has also led to the creation of new jobs. The resultant acceleration in diversification of occupations in society has further broken the link between caste and occupation and has allowed the broadening of the sociological base of the middle class, the argument goes.

The New Economic Policy and consequent liberalized economic reforms led to high growth rates which benefited middle class the most. Job opportunities (with the end of licence Raj) for middle class increased. Middle Class was now been able to step into hitherto unexplored ventures. Also the IT boom at the turn of the millennium was a blessing for thousands of technically qualified people. The trained graduates thus were quickly absorbed by the corporate sector which gained in growth with economic reforms. The Multinational companies established businesses in India. The indigenous private sector also flourished thus providing innumerable opportunities for the technically and managerially trained. This technical and ‘Engineering’ work force was produced by expanding network of higher educational institutions which came into being in response to Middle Class needs.

In the decade of 1980’s the economy started moving towards a liberal regime. In sync with the trend world over, there was a demand for roll back of the state and a demand for larger role of the market. This process became more pronounced in 1991 with the adoption of New Economic Policy. This led to decontrolling and de-licensing where markets domination opened new vistas for the Middle Class. The context now was more enterprising and this led to further inflation of this class. As the controls were lessened and license raj was demolished, this led the private sector to venture into new areas. Also it gave opportunity to MNCs to enter the largest consumer market.
The new industrial policy, fiscal and monetary reforms led to increased growth in almost every sector of the economy. Rapid industrialization, outsourcing of jobs of various western companies to India thus led to creation of new jobs. Putting aside the limitations, development was a natural consequence of the process of globalisation which led to new opportunities for people. Thus Middle Class expanded further.

Enumerating the Middle Class

There are different estimates regarding the size of the Middle Class. “The Middle Class could well be upwards of 400 million: below the two percent of the very rich and above the 300 million consisting of those below the poverty line plus the 200 million or so who may not be destitute but are still very poor” (Varma, 1998). The estimates vary due to the subjective and objective criterion for identification of Middle Classes. While the objective criterion to identify the middle classes has been in terms of possession of physical capital, higher education or consumption, the subjective criterion can be the self-identification as belonging to middle class. CSDS in its National Election Studies (NES) has used subjective and objective criterion for the purpose of enumeration.

Based on the objective criterion, Asian Development Bank (2010) identifies Middle Class category as “those with consumption expenditures of $2-$20 per person per day in 2005 PPP in dollar terms”. Based on NCAER data, E. Sridharan (2004) has identified three categories of the middle classes in India on the basis of income: elite middle class, expanded middle class, broadest middle class. NCAER defines Middle Class households as ones earning Rs.2.5-12.5 lakh per annum at 2004-05 prices.

Rama Bijapurkar (2007) (leading market researcher) is of the view that middle class is the middle majority of market which contributes 36 percent of the national income. She advocates that there are many layers of people of uneven size and there are also various levels of affluence among these layers. She also uses consumption based

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10 Sridharan (2004) divides 300000 households into five income ladder: high (above Rs 140000), upper middle (Rs105001-Rs140000), middle (Rs 70001-105000), lower middle (35001-70000), and lower (up to Rs 35000). Based on this classification, he differentiates between three different ways of conceiving of the Middle Class: “elite” Middle Class- this corresponds to the “high” income group, above “expanded” Middle Class- this corresponds to the “high” and “upper” middle income groups, above “broadest” Middle Class-this corresponds to the “high”, “upper middle” and “middle” income groups. Rudra has made a distinction between the elite and mass fractions of the middle classes in India underlining an ‘intelligentsia vs. lower-and middle-middle class split’(Rudra 1989)
definition of NCAER as ‘consuming class’ the cost benefit optimizers who purchase branded consumer goods in bulk (375 million or 75 million households). Sridharan (2008) uses income levels along with non-manual occupation for defining middle classes. According to Betteille (2001), occupation and income are two most significant criterions for defining middle classes, although education and income are also widely used.

Theoretical Framework

The study of Middle Class in India assumes great importance in the context of rapid expansion of the same in India. As far as this study is concerned, the work by Sridharan (2008) deserves special mention. In his article ‘The Political Economy of the Middle Classes in Liberalising India’, Sridharan tries to explore the relationship between the emerging Middle Classes, the state and economic liberalisation. He tries to make an analysis of the ‘orientation of Middle Classes towards the economic liberalisation’ while hypothesising “that the orientation of Middle Classes towards the economic liberalisation, especially towards continued or ‘second generation’ economic reforms involving privatisation of public enterprise, reduction of the scope of government and de-subsidisation of a range of activities/ interest groups, depends on two factors: (1) how large the public sector component, and publically subsidized component, of the middle class is; and (2) how it is being affected by these reforms”. He concludes that “among the Rich (Globals) and the internationally recognizable Middle Class ... there is constituency for liberalisation and globalisation”. He argues that “while the growth of the Middle Class is a development that does not explain liberalisation itself, what it does help explain is ...‘strong consensus on weak reforms’ that has taken root in the political class across party lines”\(^\text{11}\).

The study considers the question of economic reforms viz. a viz. the urban Middle Classes wherein it tries to explore the opinion of Middle Class towards economic reforms as to whether it is an unqualified support and also as to what extent it determines the political response of urban Middle Classes towards parties in electoral contention.

The role and influence of Middle Class in political process as a field of enquiry had earlier been identified by Varshney. Varshney (1999) makes a distinction between ‘Mass

Politics’ and ‘Elite Politics’. According to him ‘Mass Politics’ takes place primarily on the streets and is aroused by passions. ‘Elite Politics’ comprises of English speaking upper caste and urban citizens, Elite English newspapers, TV and Internet. It is away from the heat and dust of ‘Mass Politics’ and takes the form of consultation between business and government. The reform measures that hardly arouse much passion continue to be implemented quietly so that they do not become mass level political issues.

This concept of ‘Elite Politics’ is well applicable to the question in focus where political parties are vying for support from Middle Classes. The manner in which political parties try to woo the Middle Class through their manifestoes, English media /face book/twitter campaign and promises of policy initiatives is what can be paralleled to the concept of ‘Elite Politics’. Ironically the same parties conscious of the narrow support base for reforms among the marginal groups underplay the agenda of market reforms when it comes to electioneering as then identity politics takes over. \[12\]

**About the research**

The research in question tries to find out:

1. How far the Urban Middle Classes support the economic reforms?
   a) Is there any variation of views among different sections within middle classes in Chandigarh city (on the basis of income and sectors of employment public, private and self-employed) with regard to economic reforms.
   b) Do the support of economic reforms by the political parties affect the electoral choices of middle classes in the city? (How far the electoral choices of the middle class are affected by the pro reform or otherwise stance of political parties)

2) To what extent the middle classes’ support for economic reforms is crucial for the political parties in order to pursue economic reforms?
   a) Do the manifestoes of the political parties reflect the concerns of middle classes regarding liberalisation?
   b) How significant is the middle class in the city for political parties during elections?
   c) How the political leaders in Chandigarh are addressing the concerns of middle classes?

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The objectives of the study are; to identify the Middle Classes in urban Indian politico-economic scenario with special reference to Chandigarh city, to know the orientation of middle classes towards economic reforms, to find out presence of Middle class concerns regarding economic reforms in the political agenda of parties.

Middle Classes support neo-liberal market economy model is the first hypothesis in the study. Second, there is a presence of middle class concerns regarding economic reforms in the manifestoes of the parties. Third hypothesis is that the middle class support for economic reforms can be held responsible for furtherance of economic reforms.

**Rationale and scope of the study**

Study of Middle Classes and its role in influencing the making of public policies especially in the economic domain assumes importance given the narrow social support base existing for the reforms in India. Indian Middle Class having one of the largest numbers of subjects in the world and also among the fastest growing segment of rapidly urbanising India’s population provides an appropriate rationale for its study. The significance of the study of Middle Class can be gauged from the fact that the Indian political scene has observed a phenomenal assertion on the part of citizenry. Also the consumption patterns of Middle Class owning disposable income which have got influenced by the process of economic reforms further ensure that Middle Class is a strong engine for generating demand under the shadow of market economy. This is how Middle Class has come to assume such an importance in the context of economic reforms period.

This work includes in its ambit the study of urban Middle Classes, the criteria to define them, their changing political and economic choices especially in the context of the present liberalisation era, the change in the agenda of political parties considering their demands, how these demands are affecting policy making. Moreover, is there any assertion of Middle Classes in Indian political scene? What are the political changes in post-liberalisation era and how Middle Classes are expanding and contributing to India as a growing economy?

**Field of Research**

Considering the vastness of Middle Classes and the limits of PhD work, Chandigarh City has been taken as field of research. As Chandigarh has been chosen as
the universe of study it is important to mention here the various aspects which make it the favourable choice for the proposed study. The city passes as a good case study material with its sizable educated and professional Middle Classes. The findings of the study could be made applicable to the Urban Middle Class in any part of India.

Being the Capital of two states and itself having a UT status, Chandigarh houses a large number of government establishments and offices. As the Census figures reveal, it is also home to a large number of educated populations. In the recent years, the growth of IT sector and other service sectors in and around Chandigarh has attracted many professionally qualified subjects to this area. It is a preferred destination for migrating families from neighbouring states who are ambitious regarding the education and career of their children because of the professional and higher education facilities available in the city. In the last decade many a small nuclear families have made Chandigarh their dwelling. The city population here comprises of mostly the educated service professionals and business class. Also the growth of small towns as industrial hubs around Chandigarh has contributed to the Middle Class basket of Chandigarh. A befitting example in this regard is development of Baddi as an industrial town near Chandigarh. This also ensures that people of various hues and background share the residential space in this city thus making our population sample more representative.

Chandigarh has had been the most sought after field for studies related to architectural questions. The study of Middle Class in Chandigarh is a stream of enquiry which hitherto has not been undertaken. Finally, my ‘situated’ knowledge about Chandigarh, may be helpful in my pursuit of field work. As per the emphasis on economic reforms in the research question the post-reform period has been taken as time period for the study.

**Methodology and sampling**

For the purpose of this study, mixed methodology has been adopted. The sources in the study comprise of data collected by CSDS (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies), NCAER (National Council for Applied Economic Research), Duestch Bank Research, ADB (Asian Development Bank) and Mckinsey Quarterly and other relevant sources. Apart from the above; books, journals and newspapers have been followed as secondary sources.
The primary data has been collected by the methods of interview and questionnaire along with focus group interviews. The questionnaire which is structured in nature comprises of the questions related to the following: Political concerns and affiliations of Middle Class; economic choices and demands of Middle Class; Middle Classes’ views with respect to economic reforms and the policies regarding the same.

Interviews of the leaders belonging to major political parties have been conducted in order to examine their views on their agendas with special reference to middle Class concerns regarding liberalisation. These interviews have been conducted face to face and are semi-structured in nature. Manifestoes of two national political parties Congress and BJP have been taken into consideration. The main focus is on the election manifestoes released by the parties during the Lok sabha elections in 1996, 1999, 2004 and 2009 and 2014.

For the collection of primary data purposive sampling technique was followed, as the Middle Class population is not homogeneous in terms of economic, occupational and sociological grounds. In most of the relevant literature, Middle Class status has been determined on the economic basis. In the study, we followed the income criterion determined by NCAER i.e. household earning 2.5 to 12.5lac per annum\textsuperscript{13}, along with education and occupation as determinants of Middle Class. The minimum level of education was taken as ten years of schooling. As far as occupation was concerned only the subjects satisfying the other two criteria i.e. education and income were considered. For this purpose samples were collected from various occupations within public and non-public sector (Doctors, Engineers, IT professionals, teaching professionals, banking professionals, Lawyers, public sector employees and BPO executives among others) and also from the self employed so as to make the sample representative of varied categories of the urban Middle Class in Chandigarh city. For the said purpose various institutions, private offices and government offices were visited. These institutions were selected randomly. Nevertheless while considering the schools, colleges, hospitals and banks; geographical location of these institutions was kept into mind such that the sample became representative of the middle classes of the whole city.

\textsuperscript{13} NCAER defines Middle Class households as ones earning Rs.2.5-12.5 lakh per annum at 2004-05 prices.
Hundred subjects were interviewed from the category of non-public sector employees. On the other hand hundred subjects employed with the public sector were also interviewed. As the study aimed to understand the political and economic concerns of middle class in urban sphere, the various occupations within this class were considered for field research.

Table I: Sample from the different occupation in the Public sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr no.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Name of the organisation</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Government Model Senior secondary School, sector-8</td>
<td>15/11/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Government Model Senior secondary School, Sector-40</td>
<td>18/11/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Post Graduate Government College for Men, Sector-11</td>
<td>25/11/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Punjab Engineering College, Sector-12 Chandigarh.</td>
<td>20/11/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>PGI Govt. Medical College and Hospital Sector-16</td>
<td>04/12/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>09/12/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>State Bank of Patiala sector-8 Punjab National Bank -16</td>
<td>2/12/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18/12/2013</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>IT</td>
<td>IT department Chandigarh administration sector-9</td>
<td>12/11/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh</td>
<td>06/11/2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey (2013)
Table II: Sample of different occupations from private sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr no.</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Name of the organisation</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      | School      | Mount Carmel school sector-47  
          |              | Sacred Heart school, sector-26 | 04/11/2013  
          |              |                            | 07/11/2013 |
|        | College     | MCM DAV college sector-36  
          |              | GGDSD college sector-32 | 24/09/2013  
          |              |                            | 11/10/2013 |
| 2      | Hospitals   | Mukat Hospital sector 34-A  
          |              | CMC Hospital sector-17 | 15/10/2013  
          |              |                            | 27/11/2013 |
| 3      | Banks       | HDFC sector-40  
          |              | Axis Bank sector-34-A | 05/09/2013  
          |              |                            | 29/11/2013 |
| 4      | IT          | Infosys, Rajiv Gandhi IT park Chandigarh | 03/09/2013 |
| 5      | Lawyers     | Punjab and Haryana High court, Chandigarh | 06/11/2013 |

Source: Field Survey (2013)

Apart from the above-mentioned sample the market places in the city were also visited in order to interview the traders and shopkeepers falling under the criteria mentioned for identification of middle classes. For this purpose, the big market places located in the sector 22, sector 15 and sector 17 were visited as these are the typical middle class shopping destinations in the city catering to the needs of the customers who are looking for branded goods.
Nine leaders from the Congress, BJP (Bhartiya Janata Party) and AAP (Aam Aadmi party) based in the city have also been interviewed so as to examine their views on their party agendas to woo Middle Classes and what is their take on the power and influence of the urban middle classes over India’s polity and economy. For this purpose three former members of Parliament as well as four councillors have been interviewed along with two spokespersons from the Aam Aadmi Party the emergence of which has startled many a political pundits in the country. These interviews were semi-structured in nature. The interviews of Congress and BJP leaders have been given importance because only these two parties have been dominating Indian politics in post reform period as coalition making parties. A total of 209 interviews i.e. 200 from Urban Middle Class respondents and nine interviews from the political representatives from the city have been conducted.

**Middle Classes in India: an overview of Literature**

This section aims to review the study on the Middle Class, the various aspects pertaining to the taste and preferences of Middle Class, its role in the political and economic process. It also tries to explore the gaps and voids i.e. the hitherto under-studied and latent aspects related to Middle Class influences on various political and economic processes. Also it tries to find out any prospective new areas of study regarding Middle Classes. Different researchers and authors have tried to describe the following broad aspects related to the middle class.

**Defining the middle class**

To begin with, a class has been defined by Andre Beteille(2001) as a segment of society that is defined primarily by property, wealth, occupation, income and education. Andre Beteille in his article; ‘Classes and Communities’ argues that classes and communities are analytically distinct social categories. Classes are differentiated from each other by the economic attributes of the individuals and households that are their members. A community derives its identity from the fact that its members, irrespective of their economic standing, share a common language, a common religion or the sense of a common ancestry. Two communities cannot be treated as distinct classes simply because there are disparities of average economic standing among their members, no matter how wide those disparities are.
Further, Betteille says that class is the first and foremost about differences in objective material conditions, but it is not only about those conditions. Differences in objective conditions are accompanied by a growing consciousness of those differences. A class exists only in embryonic form where there is no consciousness of class. The consciousness of class exists initially only in a diffused form. It is a political process that gives it a focus by defining its interests and its identity in opposition to some other class. The political process cannot make a class out of just any social category but only out of one that has particular objective characteristics defined in a certain way.

Talking about the importance of Middle Class he says that those who articulate the interests of community do not come from all social classes but predominantly from the Middle Class. The Middle Class plays the leading part in all liberal democracies which, presumably, is the reason why they are called ‘bourgeois’ democracies, but its role becomes particularly conspicuous where it makes up only a very small component of the community whose cause it espouses.

Chakrabarthy (2009) in his study has defined Indian Middle Class according to NCAER data according to which the term Middle Class applies to those earning between $4000 and $21000 per year ($20000-$120000) in purchasing power parity terms. But this definition suits only about 60 million (under 6 % of the population based on 2001 census). Nevertheless there seems to be an underlying intuition about the “Middle Classness” of those moving up from $5 a day to $10. By CNN-IBN and Hindustan Times which suggested a simple consumer based criterion for membership of Middle Class; ownership of a telephone, a two or four wheel motorized vehicle and a colour TV. Under this definition, the Middle Class makes up nearly 20 per cent of the population-200 million people.

Ghanshyam Shah’s (1987) definition of middle class is inspired by Marxian terminology. He defines middle class as a class between capital and labour. Neither they directly own means of production, nor do they own labour. This class consists of petty bourgeoisie and white collar workers. They are either self employed or engaged in non manual work. He has given a list of occupations within middle class such as shopkeepers, salesman, brokers, government and non-government office workers, writers, teachers, engineers,
pleaders, doctors and the like. "Most of these occupations require some degree of formal education and that formal education contributes to the development of this class".  

Gurcharan Singh (1985) in his work, the ‘The New Middle Classes in India: A Sociological Analysis’ has differentiated between old and new middle class. He has used the terms ‘white collar worker’ and ‘new middle class’ synonymously. Unlike any other work Singh has traced the roots of middle class since ancient times. He has differentiated old middle class from the new one. He uses the term ‘new middle class’ for white collar workers who got employment in British period and benefitted out of the policies in newly independent India. Singh has located the new middle class in the class structure of India by excluding upper as well as lower strata from within the class structure. He has included various categories like clerks, assistants, civil servants, executives, managers and professionals such as doctors, engineers, lawyers working as salaried employees in organisations, supervisors, teachers and other educationists, employees working in various departments of government, banks and commercial firms and salaried employees other than manual workers in tertiary industry viz. Hotels, cinemas, restaurants, advertising firms, travelling agencies and insurance companies etc. They all constitute the new middle class. All these are the salaried sections having job security, old age benefits and medical facilities. They work in big or small organisations and are engaged in non-manual work. The author asserts that this new middle class owns property just for securing their upward mobility and next generation and not to produce surplus value. Such property is used to maintain their standard of living. Thus they are distinct from the upper class and the working class. The author argues that the middle class in Indian class structure is not consistent in political activity. Their struggles are confined to small pay increases or bonus benefits. They are organised in the form of trade unions only. Although the white collar workers participated in national movement, but in those times they were having property owning background and had strong social and economic base. This situation has now taken a turn. The author does not hope of any consistent political activity by this class of white collar workers.

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Singh has segregated the old middle class from the new one. According to him both are co-existing and are growing simultaneously. The old middle class is independent in its working whereas the new middle class accepts the interference of state and organisations in economic sphere of life. Old middle class supports conservative and reactionary politics whereas new middle class looks up to the party in power. Both refrain from radical political activities. The separation of old and new middle class in a clear way helps us to understand the concept of new middle class where he talks of only white collar professionals. The work proves conducive for our study to understand the importance of education and administrative policies in creation of this class. The position of new middle class in Indian class structure is precisely defined which gives a good account of growth of middle class in pre reform period. The work is based on secondary literature. The location of Indian middle class has been compared with their counterparts in the west. The middle class has been blamed for their politically self centred attitude. The work helps us understand the behaviour of middle class in post reform period. Thus the book is also theoretically significant.

A Theoretical analysis

There is abundance of literature on classes and class structure. There is also no dearth of literature on middle classes in western countries but Indian middle classes are relatively underexplored especially after post reform period. But the literature on classes may be relevant to the Indian context. Thus in this part of literature review major theories of middle classes have been discussed.

In Marxist view the two significant classes in capitalist society are the capitalist and the worker. The ownership of means of production determines their relationship with each other. The Marxists also talk about petty bourgeoisie i.e. intermediate stratum between haves and have not’s. This class comprise of small shopkeepers, artisans, producers. With the growth of economies world over, this intermediate stratum has become large in numbers and also assumed significant position. As the growth of capitalist society lies on science and technology in modern times, the intermediate strata in white collar occupations and professions both salaried and self employed have also increased by increasing degree of education. Their incomes lie between the capitalists and the workers. The role of intermediate classes has become politically and
economically more important in developing economies where there is a shift towards services sector, both in terms of GDP and employment shares (Sridharan, 2008).

The middle class is considered to have a contradictory location within the classes by Eric Olin Wright (1985). He gives a detailed analysis of horizontal and vertical layers of middle class. He termed the professionals, white collar workers as ‘new middle class’ who differ from ‘old middle class’ or petty bourgeoisie which consist of small independent shopkeepers and producers however according to him they are also exploited as sellers of mental labour but also share the surplus produced by working class which accrue to the capitalist class. Wright beautifully explains the fractions and layers within middle class and also gives analysis of its contradictory relationship to capitalism, even when they are allied to capitalist class to a large extent.

Aijaz Ahmad (1985) talks of relative autonomy of middle class especially in developing countries. He talks of important role played by middle classes in political and economic sphere in developing countries.\textsuperscript{15}

Bardhan (1993) argues that middle classes, white collar workers as well as professionals are one of the ‘dominant proprietary’ classes as they possess human capital in the form of education and skills. Satish Deshpande (2003) argues about the significance of middle class in Indian context. He has highlighted the differentiated character of middle class (including linguistic, English/ non English speaking differentiation). He asserts that middle class plays an important role in building hegemony. The elite fraction of middle classes specialise in production of ideologies while the mass fraction of it engages in consumption of ideology and thus providing social legitimacy to them. Sridharan (2008) correlates these ideas with growing legitimacy of economic liberalisation, Hindutava ideology and BJP as party in Indian context.\textsuperscript{16}

Pranab Bardhan (1993) classifies three dominant proprietary classes; the Industrial capitalists, rich farmers and the Professionals (both civil and military) including white collar workers who dominate the state power. His third dominant

proprietary class of professionals is based on possession of human capital in form of skills, education and technical expertise. His classification is based on coalition of these three classes which includes professionals and white collars. The class of professionals especially the state professionals use the state empire for rent extraction. According to him, public enterprises are used for contracts, jobs, raising political finance and are subjected to rent extraction by professionals which consequently lead to fiscal deficits and slow and inefficient growth in mid nineteen sixties. He argues that in the beginning of 1991 reform period, the conflict between dominant coalitions of proprietary classes has decreased because of increasing social and economic penetration between rich farmers and professionals. The proprietary class possess education and public capital assets and their interest lies in getting maximum rents from discretionary controls which constrain against capitalist and land owning interests. In his work Atul Kohli(1989) says that middle classes support economic reforms because they get benefits out of the same in the form of direct tax reduction and more consumer goods. He identified a link between middle classes and big business as business needs raising of capital from public. Business has mass social base whereas middle classes have stake in market profitability.17

Various scholars argue about the shift from state driven to market driven reforms. E Sridharan (2008) opines that all initiatives regarding liberalisation have emerged from political leadership and not from the business community. They supported them as long as they did not threaten their interests with foreign competition. Dige Pederson (1990) in his writing said that the reforms were led by society especially the business community or new entrepreneurs who had interest in reforms.18 Arun Shourie (Minister for Disinvestment, Communication and Information, NDA Government) expressed his views on this issue that the reforms are dictated by the compulsions of our polity and economy and propelled by opportunities which have opened up. According to him one reform creates pressure for putting through another reform. Leading market researcher, Rama Bijapurkar (2007) says that middle class is the middle majority of market which contributes significantly to the national income. She

argues that there are various layers and levels of affluence within this class. She has also
used consumption based definition of middle class as ‘consuming class’ given by
NCAER which is around 375 million or 75 million households.19
Sridharan (2008) uses income levels along with non manual occupation for
defining this section of Indian society. According to Betteille (2001) occupation and
income are two most significant criterions for defining middle classes. Although
education and income are also widely used.
Expansion and Composition of Middle Class

The expansion of middle class is an ongoing process whereby the class in
question inflated itself to include in its fold different people and sections of the society.
The Independence of the country and subsequent undertaking of developmental role by
the state can be considered as a phase which marked the expansion of middle class.
Similarly the new economic policy and the onset of liberalisation era can be said to have
given a boost to the process of expansion of middle class. Various scholars have analysed
this process of expansion and also the composition of middle class from different
perspectives.

Pavan Varma (1999) says that the defining characteristics of Middle Class have
changed. There is a new Middle Class different in outlook than the old Middle Class
which believed in Gandhian austerity and Nehruvian socialism. This new Middle Class
emerged with the adoption of New Economic Policy in 1991, which provided opportunity
for and legimitaey to consumerism. Varma observes that among the new entrants in
Middle Class are the ‘Bullock Capitalists’ belonging to middle/backward peasant castes
who have in the recent decades have benefited from their landed resources following
huge state subsidies for agriculture as well as caste based reservations. It also consists of
millions of shopkeepers, small time entrepreneurs, property agents, semi-skilled
industrial and service workers and lower level salaries households.

In his article Sheth (1999) has presented a sociological picture of expanding
Middle Class. The author has given the colonial discourse from 1901 when British started
caste wise enumeration of census and the movements of lower castes for upward social

19 Bijapurkar (2007), We Are Like That Only: Understanding the Logic of Consumer India, New
Delhi: Penguin.
mobility. He calls it secularization of caste which means detachment of caste from ritual status hierarchy which imparted it a character of power group functioning in competitive, democratic politics. He has also talked of politicization of caste where special role was played by major political parties at national and regional level. It was followed by the politics of reservation. Further he says that the emergence of new Middle Class derived from official classification devised by state in course of implementing the policy of affirmative action by state. New formation began to be identified as forward or upper caste, OBCs, SCs and STs. The lot is called New because its emergence can be traced to disintegration of caste system more diversified than old Middle Class of pre independence. Membership of Middle Class is associated with new lifestyles, ownership of certain economic assets and self-consciousness of belonging to Middle Class, its membership is open to the members of different castes having education, increased incomes and political power.20

Members of different castes compete for entry into Middle Classes as a result members of lower castes have entered in Middle Class in sizeable number. The New Middle Class constitutes about one fifth of Indian population and is becoming even if slowly, politically and culturally more unified but highly diversified in terms of social origins of its members

Sanjay Joshi (2001) through his work ‘Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India’, has traced the history of middle Class. In his book he has selected essays of late 19th century and early 20th century which help us understand the emergence of middle Class and how it entered in public discourse. Further how gender, caste and religion have been central to the middle class formation in colonial India and how these things are important to the historiography of middle class. In the last section of his book he has included those essays which explore the new fields of study that still need more research. This work is of immense importance in order to trace the roots of the Indian middle class

20 Sheth (1999) has explained the process of Middle Class formation with the help of findings of All India Sample Survey by CSDS; It has subjective variables pertaining to respondents on identification as Middle Class and objective variables related to possessing two of the four characteristics i.e. ten or more years of schooling; ownership of three assets out of four such as TV, motor vehicle, non agriculture land and electric pumping set; residence in pucca house; white collar job.
Fernandes (2006) in her study argues that the expansion of services sector of the economy and of professional white collar private sector employment has been fundamentally linked with the rise of the new Middle Class. At structural level, the new Middle Class is not comprised of new entrants to Middle Class status. Rather it is defined by a change in the status of jobs, which now signify the upper tier of Middle Class employment. The socio-economic boundaries of the new Middle Class are shaped by this shift in the direction of new Middle Class employment aspirations, in symbolic terms, the cultural and economic standard for the old Middle Class would have been represented by a job in state bank or the Indian civil services. Members of the new Middle Class aspire for jobs in multinational corporations and foreign banks.

The Middle Classes became active participants in the political process in last decades of 20th century. To quote Leela Fernandes, “In the late 20th century in India, Middle Class protests increased”. These protests were defined by the politicization of identities of caste and religion and were aimed at curtailing a perceived expansion in the political participation of backward castes and Muslim communities.” Beteille (2006) observes that the educated and salaried Middle Class was a very small fraction of the Indian population when the country became independent 60 years ago. Nevertheless, it had a very great influence in creating and sustaining the open and secular institutions which carried forward the modernization of India. The Middle Class was not only small in size, it was also socially exclusive. Hindus belonging to a handful of upper castes predominated in it and the backward castes and religious minorities were disproportionately few in number, particularly in superior professional, managerial and administrative positions. The educated Middle Class has grown substantially in size, first through the steady expansion of the public sector in the early decades of independence and, more recently, through the expansion of the private sector. It is now no longer a tiny section of the population but numbers in the tens or even hundreds of millions, depending on how we define it. It has not only grown in size but has also become socially more diverse. Its expansion and diversification has been the outcome of various economic, social and political forces. The recent strife over numerical quotas in institutions of higher education has brought out the leading role of the Middle Class in articulating the interests of caste and community in the name of social justice. The proponents as well as
the opponents of quotas, though divided by caste and community, both belong to the Middle Class, and in the case of the IITs and the IIMs, aspire for membership of the upper Middle Class. No force can halt the expansion of the Middle Class in India. As it expands, its social composition will change. It was socially too exclusive at the time of independence and, although changes are taking place in its composition, it still remains more exclusive than its counterparts in most other societies and certainly in all societies with its resources and its capacity for growth.

B.M. Bhatia (1994) in his work titled ‘Indian Middle Classes: Role in nation Building’ asserts that in 20th century, middle classes have transformed themselves into ruling classes. According to him, this class differs from other classes by the virtue of their knowledge or education on one hand and their leadership traits on the other. Ideology and Philosophy of the middle classes which include democracy, human rights, justice, and welfare state have acquired universal appeal which has helped this class to gain commanding position as compared to the rest of society.

He considers middle classes as knowledge group comprising of bureaucrats, politicians, business executives, company directors, scientists, engineers, technocrats, bankers, journalists, intellectuals, lawyers, doctors and many others belonging to the liberal professions and the services sector. He goes to the extent to name this class as the ruling class and one of its sections as the ruling elite. Bhatia says that the middle class constitutes the elites which could further be segregated into governing and non governing elites. The governing elites exercise their power over production as well as income and distribution of wealth on behalf of the state but they are not totally independent as they are moderated by the challenges posed to them by the system. He is of the view that struggle is always intra-class and not interclass. According to him masses do not compete for power with the elite. The struggle is always within different sections of the elite in the name of ideology, national interest and welfare of masses. Profession about the promotion of these interests always has a degree of genuineness which differs from one society to another depending upon the level of consciousness. The more the level of consciousness among masses, the more difficult it will be for the elite to mislead them with catch phrases and empty slogans. In the advanced societies, the societal interest will coalesce with the interest of the elite. In such cases, the circulation of elites and
competition between them becomes instrument of development of society which gives democratic society an edge over dictatorship and monarchy. Bhatia considers democratic government as specifically middle class institution. He gives the reference of Europe where the rise and growth of democracy and growth of middle class were closely connected.

Evolution of Indian middle class has been highlighted by Bhatia in which he has traced the growth of middle classes since the revolt of 1857. Within the British rule, he credits English education and British policies for the growth of middle class. The role of middle class in the rise of Indian nationalism has also been discussed. He has well analysed the role of middle class in nation building. According to him, even after independence, the growth of public sector as well as services sector has benefitted in the growth of middle classes in India. The middle class according to him have led the nation during and after independence. He ends with a positive note that it is testing time for middle class to play its role when there is political and economic crisis in 1991. The book is a good account of the role played by the middle class. The author has well presented its role in nation building and leadership provided by them in various spheres. It is first work on middle class after economic reforms which presents a clear and analytical picture of growth as well as significance of Indian middle classes in post reform period. The role played by this class during different phases in India has been discussed clearly. The book has also focused on various national policies and their contribution in the emergence and expansion of middle classes. The author has agreed upon the view that the middle class has become ruling class in India, the argument forwarded by Ashok Rudra (1989). Moreover, Bhatia (1994) has given a satisfactory definition of middle classes who are heterogeneous in nature and difficult to define. The book is a good source on the subject of middle class and Indian economy. The data provided in the book has been found to be immensely helpful in the present study as it focuses on the economic and political concerns of middle class and also tries to trace the rise growth and expansion of middle class in India. The theoretical explanation of the concept of governing and non-governing elites and its relationship with middle classes has been presented in an impressive manner.
Values and Identity

Middle class values are believed to be a set of similar beliefs which are supposed to be possessed by this class although in varying degrees. This set of beliefs or values help in delineating the identity of the members of the middle class. For example Saavala (2010) in her book tells us about how Middle Classes are creating their meaningful social existence. The work attempts a comparative study of Indian Middle Class by exploring similarities and differences with Middle Classes in Asian societies from socio-anthropological perspective. The research question taken up for critical analysis by the author is as to how the Middle Class in India struggles to strengthen its cultural distinctiveness in the process of identity formation, a process which is replicated globally. Trying to create a moral value in their everyday realities, the author refers to the ways in which the Middle Class people arrange their kin relations, create mass mediated consumer culture, develop religious practices and protect young women’s propriety in the context of consumer oriented lifestyle and also how do they understand themselves as moral actors, how do the new Indian Middle Classes and Asian Middle Classes juxtapose themselves to the idea of the west.

Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld (2003) in their edited work titled ‘Middle Class Values in India and Western Europe’ have provided comparative analysis of middle class in India and Western Europe. Only Germany and France have been examined from within European countries. The book has been divided into three sections. In the first section, the papers regarding the historical evolution of middle class in India and Germany have been included. In the second section the various aspects of values such as consumption patterns, social values and access to education facilities have been discussed whereas the third section deals with the papers related to the themes like political orientation of Indian middle class, the formation of middle class among socially deprived groups, attitude of middle classes towards women and poor have been highlighted.

The author traces the roots of Indian middle class to the colonial period. He has credited British education system and economic policies of the British administration in this regard. The author has differentiated the Indian middle class from their European counterparts on the ground that they have never been homogeneous in nature. The middle class in India includes civil servants, middle level bureaucrats and petty clerks, school
teachers in the moffusil, professionals and corporate executives. The first section of the book titled ‘the rise of the old middle classes in Europe and India’ has been written with comparative perspective. In this part of the book questions have been raised regarding the importance of religious uprising in India in the article by Margrit Pernau titled, ‘Middle Class and Secularisation: The Muslims of Delhi in 19th Century’. In another article, ‘Merchant, Entrepreneurs and Middle Classes in India in the 20th century’ by Claude Markovists has tried to explain the rise of old middle class in India. The author has raised the question that how far the character of old middle class has changed after independence. The second section of the book highlights the topic of class formations in twentieth century with special focus on educational aspects. The section begins with the paper titled, ‘The Social Character of Indian Middle Class’ by Andre Beteille. In this article, importance of English speaking schools and entry to universities for middle class has been discussed

**Consumerist middle class: an economic perspective**

The middle class is considered as a giant consuming force the world over. This is particular as regards Indian middle class and this has been highlighted by Christiane Brosius (2010) who tries to explain the shift in economic, social, political, and cultural identity of India’s Middle Class in her book. She has underlined the aspirations of millions who want to ‘belong to’ this class. The book explores the changes introduced or induced by the process of globalisation and economic liberalisation in the lifestyles of urban Middle Class in India. It explicitly analyses the modes of consumption of the Middle Class in contemporary urban India. The book tries to explore the changing trends in urban process of growth, the demographic patterns, economic development and its implications; the unplanned urban growth and the gap between haves and have-nots in the urban space. It presents a new form of social reality taking place in the context of urban India by explaining the compulsion and concerns of the Middle Class.

The author takes various empirical case studies of urban India, makes use of interview and participatory observation, she also goes through various advertisements and lifestyle magazines, photographs, posters, websites and other literature. The book offers analysis of new social formation and class aspirations of Middle Class. It tells us about the modes of consumption and ways of being in contemporary urban India. The
book also gives an insight about studying urban India in a cross-cultural context. The author has studied various professions, new spaces, urban slums, residential colonies, shopping malls and leisure sights such as theme parks. According to her such things had not hitherto got any serious scholarly attention.

In the context of consumerist nature of middle class, Chakrabarty (2009) also makes his remarks. According to him Consumerism is the shifting of expenditure from needs to wants. It is what distinguishes the Indian Middle Class most sharply from the middling social groups of the past. The Middle Class uses education to improve the earnings of next generation and then if successful to pursue more elusive goals of self fulfilment.

**Political and cultural apathy**

The middle class has often been blamed and criticised for its apathetic behaviour and self centred nature. This ‘alleged’ attribute of middle class has been analysed by many a scholars. Pavan Varma(1998) asks, “ How can a middle class and its elite role models long immune to anything but their own interests, develop this much needed virtue of social concern? Apart from the transparency of class interests and the absence of a leadership that could credibly convey the importance of the community over self, an identifiable trend, directly contributing to the entrenchment of social insensitivities, is the growing ‘physical’ distance between the poor and the privileged in India. The poverty and deprivation in the country is so great that those who have moved up the income ladder seek to ‘barricade’ themselves from its pervasive presence..... The concerned citizen has completely given way to the self obsessed aspirant”.

Patel (2011) has pointed out in his article that the ‘New Middle Class’ is different from the Middle Class of twenty years ago. A Middle Class man used to have a white collar job not involving manual labour, in the bureaucracy of either government. or of a corporation, or would be a small businessman or a professional. However, a new Middle Class member is now a consumer of Middle Class goods and services as understood in the west. The increased level of middle class consumption and its expansion both are noted and admired world over. Patel explains the rise in Middle Class numbers by referring to the entry of more communities in the category of Middle Class. This is actually where the big change is being registered, because it is happening through
the inclusion of the peasant castes, the largest social grouping in India, into the urban
Middle Class

Apathy to activism: the increasing political role of middle class

Shah (1985) has given an analysis of anti-reservation agitations held there in 1981 and 1985. He says that the Middle Class has grown in size disproportionately with economic growth in Gujarat while their aspirations have risen; they are unable to satisfy their needs and maintain the traditional status, and therefore experience a strong sense of deprivation. This is especially true of the upper and middle caste members who are jealous of the new entrants from the traditionally low castes. The two anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat were essentially struggles within the Middle Class; between the upper and middle caste members on the one hand and new low caste entrants on the other. In these agitations they have had the backing of the capitalist class with which they had strong ideological and social links.

Shah defines Middle Class as a class that is situated between labour and capital. He says that the Middle Class has grown in size disproportionate to the economic growth of the region. This has resulted in a steep rise in educated unemployment and consequent expansion of the lumpen crowd in urban areas.

Exploring another aspect of this class, Rudra (1989) in his article says that intelligentsia has become a ruling class in India being a constituent of the ruling coalition comprising of the other two classes namely the industrialists and rich farmers. Middle class in India qualifies as a ruling class because of the policies pursued by the state in the long-term serve to further the interests of that class at the cost of interests of other non-ruling classes. He has included following in the category of intelligentsia: salaried class, earning class, white collar workers, all administrative services (office workers), teachers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, engineers, architects, writers, journalists, artists and workers engaged in entertainment industry and advertisement business. A very important section of this consists of professional politicians. He has pointed out three common denominators of this class economic, social/ cultural and ideology. Rudra (1989) argues that if there is ever any kind of revolution in this country that would be led, in thought and in action, by the intelligentsia. It is also in the interest of the erstwhile ruling classes
to have the intelligentsia as an ally rather than an adversary. It has therefore been their strategy to buy up the intelligentsia.

Leela Fernandes (2006) also talks about the relatively recent middle class activism. According to her, the middle classes became active participants in the political process in last decades of 20th century. To quote Leela Fernandes, “In the late 20th century in India, Middle Class protests increased. These protests were defined by the politicization of identities of caste and religion and were aimed at curtailing a perceived expansion in the political participation of backward castes and Muslim communities.”

Rajagopal (2011) in his research article ‘The emergency as prehistory of the New Indian Middle Class’ argues that the Middle Class was designed to function as a governing intermediary viz. a viz. majority, it went on to become nationalist. The author points to the historical interlude of the emergency, which separates the two different phases of the Indian Middle Class, the former being under the hegemony of the state, and the latter, increasingly assertive, but disenfranchised with erstwhile forms of politics, defining itself through cultural and consumerist forms of identity.

A relook at the literature studied and the gaps in existing literature

It has been seen that barring few scholars like Beteille and Sheth, most of the scholars have described Middle Class on economic grounds. Caste as a factor responsible for its expansion has been included by Beteille and Sheth. Shah(1987) has pointed towards the different side of the coin while presenting the case of Gujarat. He says that the existing Middle Class in the state opposed new entrants from the lower caste to come into its fold that is why the anti-reservation agitations took place in Gujarat in 1981 and 1985. Further, the role of educated elite which is also called intelligentsia has been highlighted by Rudra(1989) who argues that this class has become a partner in ruling coalition which comprises of two other classes namely the industrialists and rich farmers. Beteille(2001) is of the view that the Middle Class plays a leadership role in articulating the interests of various classes of the society. On the other hand Chakravarthy(1989) says that although Indian Middle Class is growing at a very fast pace in numbers but they have remained indifferent towards politics. In other words they are apathetic towards the political questions. Unless and until they take active part in politics true modernity is hard to achieve. Aakar Patel(2011) has viewed socio cultural aspect of the Middle Class. This
class is growing very fast since the last two decades. They imitate western culture. They are neither very proficient in spoken English nor are they good in writing their mother tongue. They are losing their interest in Indian culture as well. The politics of ‘reform policies’ has been explained by Suri (2004) as he argues that party or leaders who support and implement reforms while in power turn into opponents of reforms once they sit in opposition. It is also difficult to establish a causal relation between the impact of reforms and voting behaviour or arrive at conclusions on how people feel about economic reforms and their party preferences. His exploration of the CSDS-NES’2004 survey data provides us with some insights into the political economy issues, tensions and dilemmas in Indian democracy. It shows that there is no consensus on economic reforms, even among the middle and upper classes. Opinions are divided across classes, castes, occupations, and locations. Similarly Kumar (2008) talks of the political paradox where political parties profess economic reforms on the one hand and resort to identity issues during campaigning on the other. Both say that economic reforms do not have a direct bearing on the electoral process as the poor and the marginal sections are not even aware of the reforms and the middle class has a larger share in the determination of electoral trends in the country.

From the above cited views of different scholars it can be inferred that the scholars have worked on expansion of Middle Class, its composition, and criterion to define it, its social and cultural attributes, political preferences or apathies. However, the role and impact of the Middle Class in policy making especially with respect to economic reforms is one such area which has received relatively lesser attention and thus can be further explored in detail. The rise and growth of Indian middle classes has been discussed by many scholars but the influence of their political and economic concerns on continuation of economic reforms is an area which is still underexplored. Moreover, maximum studies on middle class are library based. Very few authors have tested their hypothesis on the field. Available field based studies have been conducted from sociological and ethnographical perspective. There is an insufficiency of field based studies on middle classes in the discipline of Political Science. Also there is a dearth of literature on middle class of Chandigarh. Thus our primary interest lies in finding out the real political and economic concerns of middle classes on the field through this study.
may add to the existing knowledge on middle classes in Chandigarh from political point of view.

Contents of the Study

In the first chapter titled “Growth of Urban Middle Classes in India with Focus on Chandigarh” which is based on secondary literature, the researcher has attempted to trace the roots of urban middle classes in India since ancient times. It states that during the medieval period of Indian history the classes like Zamindars, Jagirdars, hereditary officials, traders, and merchants were known to be the constituents of Middle class who worked under nobility and rulers in urban areas. Notably, the development of money economy in medieval India paved the way for growth of middle classes as this system facilitated the trade and proved conducive for trading class. The actual growth of middle class began under the colonial period. The chapter has also focused on social, economic and administrative policy of the British administration which led to the growth of middle classes in India. It has been found that the middle classes in independent India have their roots in economic, educational and political policies of British administration. The chapter has also highlighted the role of middle classes in leading the struggle for independence. Further the chapter also emphasises the growth of middle classes after independence. The policies of newly born state regarding development and growth have been credited for the expansion of middle classes after independence. Various policies of the government like education, reservation, infrastructural development in different sectors proved conducive for the growth of middle class in India. The new economic policy and its relation with the rise and growth of middle classes have also been discussed. This rise and growth has been associated with the rise in services sector, private sector in post- liberalisation period. The chapter further sheds light on the nature of growth of Middle Classes, consequent to rapid urbanisation in post-reform era in Chandigarh city. The focus of the chapter is on specific areas which have directly or indirectly influenced the Middle Class and also contributed to the growth of middle classes through employment generation and provision of opportunities. The researcher has focused on historical background and geographical and demographic structure of the city, further an attempt has been made to trace the growth of middle classes in the city. It has located that the factors like education, industrial growth, growth of markets, services,
IT sector among other factors have played significant role in rise of middle classes in the city. The facts regarding the rise of population, educational facilities and employment opportunities have been compiled on the basis of primary and secondary sources so as to locate the growth of middle classes in the city.

It has been established that there is constant increase in the rise of population in the city. This population includes the migrants from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and other areas. This population primarily includes the population from middle classes, who have migrated to the city for availing educational and employment opportunities in various sectors. The research has also highlighted the fact that there is increase in growth of markets, IT sector, service sector and higher education facilities especially in post reform period which has helped in the expansion of middle classes in Chandigarh. The chapter has further opened the way to locate the middle classes in the city as well as to identify the political and economic choices of middle classes of city in the context of liberalisation.

In the second chapter titled “Democratic Politics, Economic Reforms and Urban middle classes” the researcher has tried to explain in brief the background to the process of Economic reforms. Various reform measures which constituted the new economic policy have been stated with their brief explanations. The relationship between Democratic Politics and the Economic Reforms, the relationship between Democratic Politics and the Urban Middle Classes and the relationship between Urban Middle Classes and the Economic Reforms have been explored to understand the equation between these components of the present study. The emphasis has been to explain the latter relationship with a perspective which takes into account the role played by the economic reforms in the determination of democratic process and vice versa. This tripartite equation has been discussed in the context of increasing assertiveness and role of Urban Middle classes in today’s liberalised Political Environment.

The third chapter titled “Urban middle Classes: Political and Economic Choices” intends to emphasise on political and economic preferences of Middle Classes for example their choices and opinions regarding political and economic issues that affect their day to day life as well as the city they inhabit. Particular emphasis would be on understanding their views on new economic policies, pace of reforms, privatisation, and
subsidies. This chapter is based on the results of the survey done in this regard. The chapter is a collection of the observations and field study based results to know the political and economic choices of the urban middle classes and tries to answer the respective questions in this research.

The last chapter titled “Exploring the Middle Class Concerns in Electoral Arena: Reading the Manifestoes and Listening to the Political Elites” has explored the weightage being given to the middle class concerns in the election strategies and policy programmes of the political parties. It has been tried to make an analysis of the manifestoes and electoral campaigns of two major political parties i.e. Congress and the BJP with special focus latest on the campaign issues raised during the last three Lok Sabha elections held in the Chandigarh constituency. Interviews of political elites as well as political analysts based in the city have also been conducted.