

Gendered Agencies within families



WARWICK
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Deciding to access Higher Education in Haryana, India

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Structure of Presentation

- Research Questions
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology
- Participants from the Sampled colleges
- Analysis
- Gendered Agency in the Family
- Reflective thinking
- Reflexive Actions

Research Questions

An exploration of the role of families in gendered educational trajectories of young people accessing higher education in Haryana

- What is the role of families in the students' transition from school to higher education?
- **How do parents/guardians/ children/ family members each negotiate their agency in family decision to access Higher Education?**
- How are the plans and narratives of enrolling in college influenced by gender, caste and other intersecting factors?

Theoretical Framework

- Social reproduction by mobilising capitals to access HE and life
- Gender Regimes – family and agency
 - Intense gendered relationships spread across time and space
 - Roles, obligations, compulsions and expectations
 - Reflexive thinking and action (Discursive Positioning, silences and verbalisations)

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

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

Methodology

- Families are recognised as relevant factors but not involved in research
- Family members as participants – **presenting alternative and intersecting perspectives** – co-existing reflexive thinking and actions within the family-group
- Nuanced understanding of agencies
 - within gendered access to HE
 - within families and communities

Participants from The Sampled Colleges



Mahendargarh (MDC)

- 3 Women
- 1 OBC , 2 General (2HI)
- 5 Men
- 3OBC, 2 General (1HI)



Sirsa (SiDC)

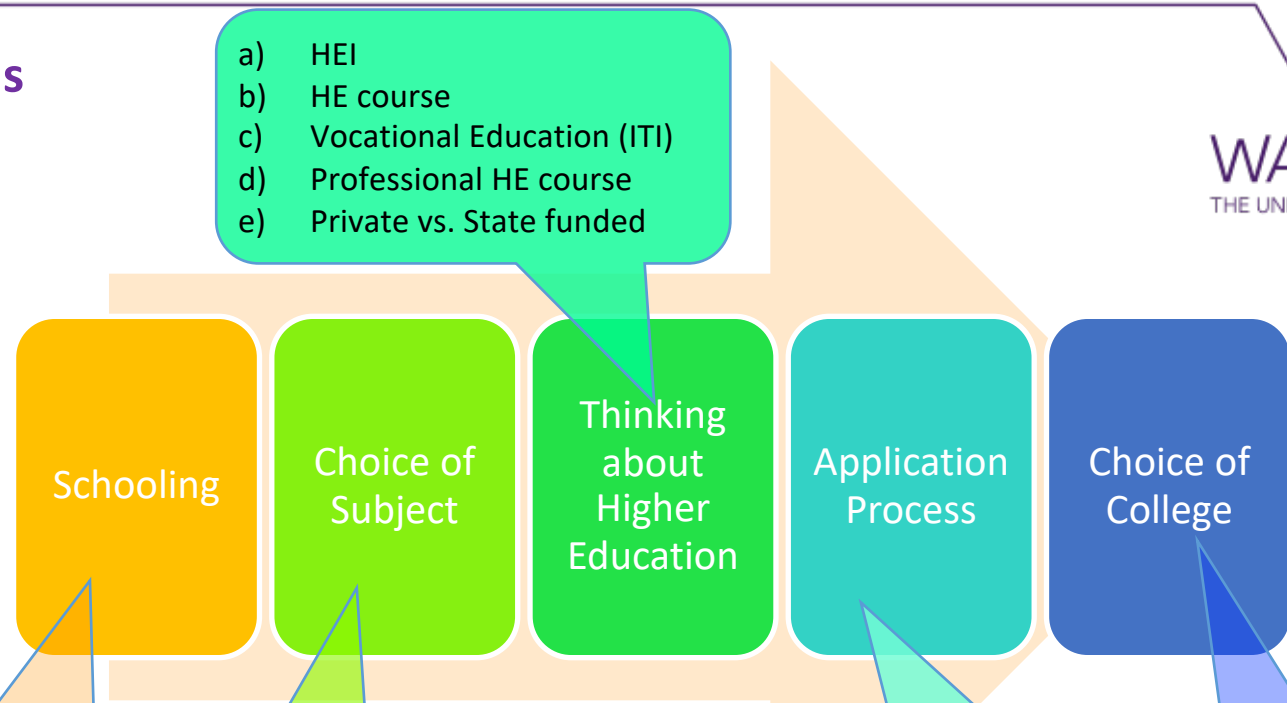
- 4 Women
- 3OBC (2HI), 1 General (1HI)
- 4 Men
- 4 SC (2HI)



Sonipat (SDC)

- 4 women
- 1 OBC (1 HI), 3 General
- 6 Men
- 1 SC (1HI), 5 General (1HI)

Analysis



- a) HEI
- b) HE course
- c) Vocational Education (ITI)
- d) Professional HE course
- e) Private vs. State funded

Schooling

Choice of Subject

Thinking about Higher Education

Application Process

Choice of College

- a) Kinds of schooling,
- b) medium of instruction,
- c) private tutoring and
- d) coaching

- a) Arts and Humanities
- b) Commerce
- c) Sciences

- a) Where to apply?
- b) How to apply?
- c) Who fills application forms?
- d) How application forms are filled

- a) Where to enrol?
- b) Who does the enrolment formalities?

Chandni (MDC) shared that when her family had to make decisions, the parents discussed between themselves and that she follows their decisions... they did offer her different options from which she could choose what she wanted to do. If they did not permit her to go somewhere, she did not go against their wishes. She is inadvertently indicating that her parents give her the freedom to make choices but not formulate her own choices (Hirschmann 1998).

Om (SDC) shared, "In terms of studies, we take our own decisions. There is no interference in that and we are allowed to do whatever we want."

Y

ly members

s? How are
lered regim
ed Agency

, inspire, inform and

roles being performed?
norms? Has this been

Many children in Kajal's village, are "pressurised" to simply follow the wishes of their parents.

- **Regime in the Family** –
 - Approving and making decisions?
 - family members consulted? – gendered value to information, advice and inspiration

Deepika (SiDC) and Esha (SiDC) shared that people in the village do not have a very positive attitude towards the rural colleges sampled in Sirsa. They shared that the people in the village disapproved of the fact that the young women and men from college were interacting with each other.

Hritik (MDC) reported that his stepfather had insisted that he enrolled in college as increasing number of young women in the community are graduates and will not be interested in marrying someone without a graduate's degree. While in these social contexts where increasing numbers are accessing higher education, there is a shift towards maintaining a gender equality where men have equal or higher education.

Jaya SDC

• Barriers – financial considerations, reputation of colleges

Deepika, Esha (SiDC), Hritik (MDC)

• Choices and support from family



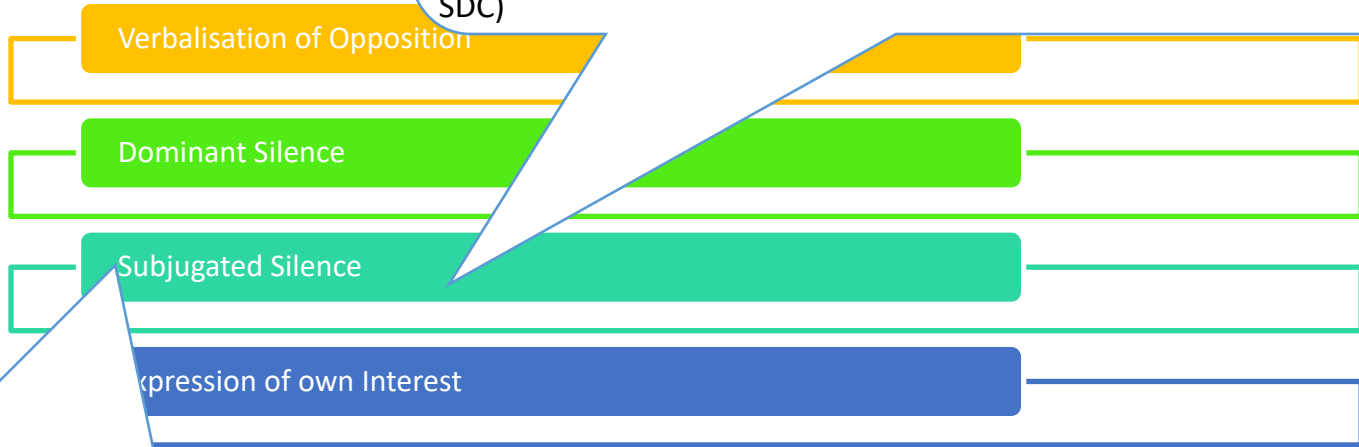
Support (selective colleges and institutions)



Reflexive Actions

- Strategised Action to silences (dominant and

Neelam (SDC) who wanted to pursue a career in the police didn't share this with her parents. She explained that she did not share her interest with her parents because of the following reason, *"one, because what our parents say is right. If I would have opted for the police line, I might have to take coaching classes. Without coaching the police test can't happen. That time I didn't have too much knowledge of how to navigate the outside world, which was also one of the problems."* (Neelam, SDC)



"it is just a bit of shame (on my part), that it is ok (to not object to father). If everyone follows what he says his respect (and honour) increases". (Mohan SiDC)

Conclusion

- Understanding educational decision making as a non-autonomous and a group decision within families
 - changing gender regimes and educational behaviours
 - reproducing and creating new gender regimes, rationalisations and educational pathways
 - leading to retraditionalised gender regimes

Thank You

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