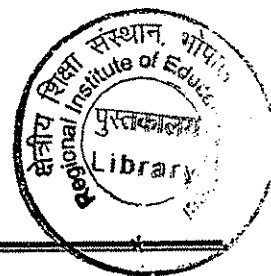


Chapter I

Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for their children that they forget that they themselves are really the experts.

-Marian Wright Edelman

Parental involvement in the form of 'at-home good parenting has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation.

-Charles Desforges, 2003 in DfES Research Report 433

“When parents become involved, children do better in school, and they go to better schools.”

—Anne T. Henderson

Author of The Evidence Continues to Grow (2002)

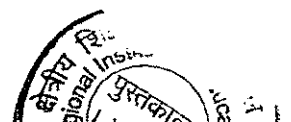
Today's children are fundamental to society because they are our future; they hold the key to change, and in turn a successful future, in their hands. Therefore, it is society's duty to provide them with a complete education that teaches them how to work together successfully, how to question what is in front of them, and how to be catalysts of change. This education starts with what children learn from their parents and from what they learn in the first few years of their lives. This initial education impacts the rest of their lives, and inherently society's future. In his research, William Teale concludes that “Home background plays a significant role in a young child's orientation to literacy and to education. But home background is a complex of economic, social, cultural, and even personal factors.” (Teale 1993) According to most research done on the parental involvement in their children's education, the most influential of these four interconnected elements described by Teale are the personal backgrounds and the economic backgrounds of parents. These two components also largely contribute to the home environment that they provide for their children.

Parental education and occupational status are highly correlated with children's educational choices and attainment. Dustmann (2004) finds that parental background is strongly related to the choice of secondary school track of the child, and that this association translates into

substantial differences in earnings later in life. This is surprising given that, on the surface, the German school system appears fairly egalitarian, and that returns to education are at conventional levels. However, it has been suggested that the importance of parental background for a child's education is due to more specific characteristics of the school system, such as stratification and early tracking of students according to ability (OECD, 2008).

Traditionally, family status variables such as socio-economic status and parents' level of education have been regarded as predictors of children's academic achievement. Increasingly, research has suggested that, rather than having a direct association with children's academic achievement, socio-economic status and parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes (Joan, 2009). Attendant on higher levels of education may be access to resources, such as income, time, energy, and community contacts, that allow for greater parental involvement in a child's education. Thus, the influence of socio-economic status and parents level of education on student outcomes might best be represented as a relationship mediated by interactions among status and process variables (Joan, 2009). The literature also suggests that level of education influences parents knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals about childrearing, so that a variety of parental behaviours are indirectly related to children's school performance. For example, higher socio economic status and high levels of education may enhance parents' facility at becoming involved in their children's education, and also enable parents to acquire and model social skills and problem-solving strategies conducive to children's school success. Thus, students whose parents have higher socio-economic status and higher levels of education may have an enhanced regard for learning, more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation, and they may use more effective learning strategies than children of parents with lower socio-economic status and lower levels of education (Joan, 2009).

Onocha (1985) concludes that a child from a well-educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. He or she is likely to be sent to good schools where well-seasoned teachers will handle his or her subjects. Children's academic achievement was found to be affected by varying family processes. Campbell and Wu (1994) said that the home environment and family processes provide a network of physical, social and



intellectual forces and factors, which affect the student's learning. According to them, the family's level of encouragement, expectations, and education activities in the home are related to socio-economic status, while Song and Hattie (2004) agreed that families from different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the child's academic achievement. There is no doubt that parent's attitudes help to condition their children's attitudes. A parent who shows complete regard for education might have some effect upon his or her children's education progress. Many studies have examined the relationships among those constructs and student's achievement. Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) affirm the fact that there is a consistent finding of motivation being related to achievement behaviours. In a nutshell the influence of socio-economic and educational background of the parents on their children education cannot be undermined.

According to Grissmer (2003), parent's level of education is the most important factor affecting student's academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parent's educational background influence the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is because the parents would be in a good position to be second teachers to the child; and even guide and counsel the child on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by the child. This was supported by Musgrave (2000) who said that a child that comes from an educated home would like to follow the steps of his or her family and by this, work actively in his or her studies. He said further that parents who have more than a minimum level of education are expected to have a favoured attitude to the child's education and to encourage and help him or her with schoolwork. They provide library facilities to encourage the child to show examples in activities of intellectual type such as reading of newspapers, magazines and journals. They are likely to have wider vocabulary by which the children can benefit and develop language fluency.

1.2 The Influence of Parents Personal Backgrounds

Parents have an enormous influence on their children's education for several reasons, but most importantly because they are their children's first teachers. As Joseph Sclafani writes, "The influence of teachers is actually reciprocal and to some extent dependent on what your child brings to the classroom. These same teachers also form impressions based upon other information such as your child's previous year's grades and test scores, and his or her family background and the family's level of involvement" (Sclafani 1984).

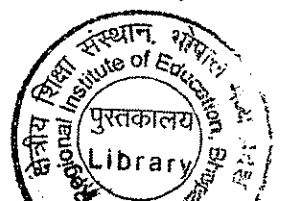
Children's brains are like sponges the first couple of years of their lives and they absorb in everything surrounding them. Therefore, what they learn from their parents in the first

couple years of their lives will impact children for the rest of their lives. It is important that children learn how to be excited about learning from an early age. The parents with a personal, educated background have a much easier time preparing their children for school compared to parents lacking this background. The education that children receive is very much dependent on the education that their parents received when they were children. Research shows that the literacy of their parents strongly affects the education of their children.

Teale found in his studies that “children experience literacy primarily as a social process during their preschool years.” (Teale 1992) Parents strongly affect this social learning process because they are the biggest influence at this early stage in their children’s lives. One of the reasons why it strongly affects their children’s education is because “parents who have gone beyond a high school education are found to be more involved with their infants and children than those who did not finish high school...many less educated parents simply have more unmanaged stress in their lives, and this stress interferes with ability and opportunity to interact with their child” (Sclafani 1988). Typically, parents who have finished high school and gone on to receive additional schooling understand the pressures and stresses of school and are more equipped to handle them with their children when they go through school.

Parents who have obtained further educational opportunities also have less stress in their lives because they most likely making more money while spending less time making that money than those who, unfortunately, have not been able to finish high school for one reason or another. It is unfortunate that less educated parents are less likely to be involved in their children’s education process because “research repeatedly demonstrates that schools and school districts do better when parents are engaged as equal partners in the decision making that affects their children and their schools. Only through this richer level of engagement will parents and the public at large better understand their vital connection to quality public education” (Glickman 229). Parents with less education do not participate as often in their children’s education to some effect because they do not realize the importance of their interaction with schools and they are probably intimidated, just like they were in high school.

Even though parents of low-income families participate less in their children’s education, according to Neuman, “most parents – even low-income and culturally and linguistically



diverse parents – possess the attitudes and at least the sufficient early literacy skills and knowledge to help their children get on the road to literacy” (Neuman 2002).

1.3 Influence of Parental Education

There are several reasons why the education level of parents may be related to the amount of involvement they have in their child’s academics. Families of lower socioeconomic status generally have parents with lower education levels. As a result, these families may have fewer resources to help their child academically. These parents may not have the same opportunities to offer their child, such as tutors or computers (Sandefur et al., 2005). However, there are several ways that parents may become involved in their child’s academics so that even parents with fewer resources can participate (Bakker et al., 2007). In addition, a student whose home is of lower SES may not provide the same opportunities as the home of a student whose parents have higher income. Furthermore, parents with a higher education level typically have more of an opportunity to become more involved in academic success (Bogensneider, 1997). Parents with lower levels of education may not feel capable of assisting their child or playing a role in his academic life as they may not understand the material or feel comfortable with their abilities (Hill et al., 2002). In contrast, studies show that some parents with lower levels of education do become involved because of a desire for their child to have upward mobility in the world and so their child achieves things they themselves could not (Hill et al., 2002). The parents being a role model for what the individual should strive to achieve (Hill et al., 2002). In addition, parents with a higher education level pass on certain expectations about the importance of education to their child. The way a child is raised differs based on the parents’ education level as well because of the values the parents stress and the activities the parents create for the child. Parents with higher education are more academically involved and place greater emphasis on academia (Tavani & Losh, 2003). Regardless of parental educational level, more involved parents build stronger relationships with their child and demonstrate that they care about the individual’s academic success (Sandefur et al., 2005; Sui-Chu & Willms, 1996).

1.4 Parents’ educational status and achievement

Dave and Dave (1971) found that higher percentages of rank holder belong to homes with higher parental education and higher percentage of failed students belong those who have lower parental education. Rumberger (1995) found that students’ “family background is widely recognized as the most significant important contributor to success in schools” (p 587). Rumberger’s research supported the findings of earlier researchers who argued that the home has a major influence on student school success (Swick & Duff, 1978) and that it is

the quality of relationships within students' home environments that has an important effect on school performance (Neisser, 1986; Selden, 1990; Caldas, 1993).

Many factors in the family background have some associations with students' success throughout school and in young adults' eventual educational and occupational attainment. Such variables include family structure (socioeconomic status and intact/single-parent families), parental education level, parental involvement and parenting style (Jacob and Harvey, 2005). Previous studies have showed that students who come from low-income and single parent homes have significantly less school success than students from high socio-economic and intact families (Martini, 1995; Walker *et al.*, 1998). Some potential explanations were - parents in such settings reported lower educational expectations, less monitoring of children's schoolwork and less overall supervision of social activities compared to students from high socio-economic and intact families (Jacob and Harvey, 2005). More educated parents are assumed to create environments that facilitate learning (Williams, 1980; Teachman, 1987) and involve themselves in their children's school experiences and school environments (Steinberg *et al.*, 1992; Useem, 1992). However, there are students who come from low-income and single parent homes who are high achievers and many students from high socio-economic and intact families who are low achievers. Students may also come from homes where the parents are highly educated and involved in their children's education, yet achieve poorly at school (Jacob and Harvey, 2005).

1.5 Parental involvement

Most children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends an early years setting or starts school and they remain a major influence on their children's learning throughout school and beyond. The school and parents both have crucial roles to play. There is no universal agreement on what parental involvement is, it can take many forms, from involvement at the school (as a governor, helping in the classroom or during lunch breaks) through to reading to the child at home, teaching songs or nursery rhymes and assisting with homework.

One of the eight goals included in the 1994 Goals 2000 legislation was dedicated to this critical area: "Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (U. S. Department of Education, 1994). The importance of parent/family involvement was reaffirmed in 1997 when the National PTA, in cooperation with education and parent involvement professionals, developed six National Standards for Parent/Family

Involvement Programs (White, 1998). Although family involvement has reached a "new level of acceptance" today as one of many factors that can help improve the quality of schools, "acceptance does not always translate into implementation, commitment, or creativity" (Drake, 2000, p. 34). Much remains to be done. "Our society has simply become too complex for support entities to continue to function individually" (Buttery & Anderson, 1999). Schools, communities, and parents/families must cooperate and work collaboratively to improve the learning experience of all children.

1.6 Parental involvement in homework and reading

Nearly three-quarters of parents surveyed in 2007 said that they felt that it was extremely important to help with their child's homework. Nearly 60% of parents said that they frequently helped their child with their homework (i.e. they did so 'every time' or 'most times'); approximately one third did so occasionally. How often a parent helps with homework is strongly tied to the school year of the child; parents of younger children helped more frequently than those in later school years. Research shows that pupils tend to hold positive views about homework, seeing it as important in helping them to do well at school. Studies suggest that particularly for secondary school pupils there is a positive relationship between time spent on homework and achievement. Evidence for primary schools is inconclusive. This does not necessarily mean however that the more time on homework the higher the achievement; as some international studies suggest that pupils doing a great deal of homework and also those who did very little tended to perform less well at school.

1.7 Why is parental involvement important?

Improvements in cognitive and social development – early years education.

Parental involvement with children from an early age has been found to equate with better outcomes (particularly in terms of cognitive development). What parents do is more important than who they are for children's early development – i.e. home learning activities undertaken by parents is more important for children's intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income.

1.8 Need and justification of study

The purpose of this study is to describe and investigate the influence of parents educational and occupational status on their wards' educational status. The rationale for the study is to determine if parents' educational and occupational status contributes to their wards' educational status. The results of this study will attempt to provide evidence for the value of parents' educational and occupational status as a predictor to their wards' educational status.

1.9 Significance of the problem

Parents should be involved in their children education for achieving higher education. Both the government and schools should focus on parent awareness programs in education that would lead to better student education (Darling, 2008). Parents' educational and occupational status has been identified as an important factor affecting student educational status (Miller, 1980 and Dryfoos, 1990)

1.10 Statement of the problem

Influence of parents' educational and occupational status on their wards' educational status- A study.

1.11 Operational definition of variables

- **Parents' Educational status**

The level of education and skill obtained within a discipline or profession, usually referred to as a generalist or specialist in a discipline. In the present research, the parents' educational status is categorized into four (10th pass, 12th pass, graduate, postgraduate and Ph D).

- **Parents' Occupational status**

Occupational status is a fundamental measure of social standing that reflects the distribution of power, privilege, and prestige associated with positions in the occupational hierarchy, and is a key measure of socioeconomic status (SES). Occupational status is a popular measure of SES because it can be measured reliably in surveys, is more stable over time than economic measures of SES such as individual income, and better reflects social position over the life course than educational attainment, which typically is achieved in early adulthood (Hauser and Warren 1997). In the present research, the occupational status is categorized into four classes (Class-I, Class-II, Class-III and Class-IV).

- **Wards' Educational status**

The meaning of wards' educational status here is the types of school in which they are studying or studied. Another aspect is parents' involvement in their wards' education and their views about it.

1.12 Objectives of the study

1. To study the parents' educational and occupational status.
2. To study the wards' educational status.
3. To study the influence of the parents' educational and occupational status on their wards' educational status.

1.13 Limitations and delimitations of the study

1. The study is restricted to R.I.E, Bhopal.
2. The study is delimited to employees of RIE and DMS and their wards whose age is 5 or more than 5 years.

1.14 Summary

In the present chapter, we have discussed about the introductory part of the proposed study, which include introduction, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, operational definition of the key terms, objectives and delimitation of the study.

In the next chapter i.e. review of the related literature, we are going to deal with different reviews of related literature concerning to the present research study.

