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Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy, Faculty of Education, Monash University

April 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Conducting a research study of this level and extent has been my ‘dream’ and I have lived every moment of it with great passion. Every phase in this journey towards fulfilment of my ‘dream’ has contributed significantly towards enriching my experiences as a learner. It has honed my analytical and writing skills as an academic researcher and also taught me to perceive things from different angles.

I have indeed been privileged to have **Senior Lecturer Dr Wee Tiong SEAH** as my ‘Guru’ in guiding me in fulfilment of my ‘dream’. I cannot thank him enough for having such great faith and confidence in me. Under his guidance, I have developed tremendously as an academic researcher by realizing the importance of seeing the bigger picture on one hand and paying close attention to the smallest yet important details on the other. I was able to move forward steadily, systematically and step by step solely due to his expert mentoring. I have no words to describe his incredible patience and constant encouragement which have taught to me to believe in myself.

My husband **Vijay** has been my strength and inspiration throughout this experience through his tremendous moral support in spite of his highly busy work schedule. He has been as passionate as me about my ‘dream’. During my crucial periods, he never failed to understand my urge of sharing my ideas with him which greatly contributed in clarifying my own thoughts. I am truly blessed to have **Amey** and **Sonam** as my two lovely children who have always shown understanding towards my commitments in fulfilling my ‘dream’ as there have been many occasions when I was busy and they needed me as their mother, especially during their crucial academic years.

My parents, **Mr Mahadeo Phatak** and **Mrs Madhuri Phatak** have lived this ‘dream’ together with me by making it their ‘dream’ too. It is their bringing up and the values they inculcated in me and my sister **Vaishali** that kept the desire to fulfil this ‘dream’ alive in me. It is my parents who taught me perseverance and hard work which contributed greatly in this endeavour. I would also like to record my appreciation towards my in-laws **Mr Shankar Kusurkar** and **Mrs Vimal Kusurkar** who took pride in my ‘dream’.

My fellow research students have been a wonderful group to be a part of as they have been highly supportive towards each other by sharing their experiences which has proved to be beneficial and motivational for all of us. I would also like to thank all the

enthusiastic participants in this study from the bottom of my heart as without their contribution the conclusion of this research study would never have been possible.

Last but not the least, a big ‘Thanks’ to all my friends and all those who have contributed in fulfilling my ‘dream’ in one way or another.

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ABSTRACT

Singapore is a country dependent on professional and skilled immigrants to sustain its growing economy. To add to its economic challenges, Singapore's population is ageing and birth rate declining. Though Singapore is able to attract professional immigrants, it becomes important to ensure that they are retained too, especially in their next generation. In light of this scenario, this study investigates the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level. It also examines the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of their acculturation process in shaping these aspirations.

The study is mainly qualitative in nature and employs the case study approach. Each case comprises of the first generation Indian immigrant parents' pair whose children are studying at the pre-university level in Singapore. A postal questionnaire was administered to gather the background information of the parents and the children in order to recruit suitable participants for the subsequent qualitative phase. Twelve parents' pairs were selected as the twelve cases. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with both the parents and group interviews with the children.

The parents had high aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. Their emphasis was on quality education, academic excellence, professional success and financial security. Parents expected their children to match their level of educational and occupational achievements. They also wished to see inter-generation occupation mobility.

Parents' aspirations were influenced by factors at the individual, familial and societal level. At the individual level, it was their desire to enhance their children's educational opportunities, personal values and perception of affordability of educational expenses. At the familial level their parents and children were found to be influential. Their parents' role was seen through the family culture they were brought up into and their childhood experiences. Their children's role was influential through the gender and the self-identity of the child. Also, the role of the birth order of the child stood out as parents' experiences with their older child, expectations with the older child and the level of success the older child had achieved shaped parents' aspirations for their younger child. At the societal level, the living environment of India and Singapore played a significant role in shaping their aspirations. In particular, it was the socio-cultural, physical, legal, economic and

educational environments of both countries. Institutional discrimination too had a role in shaping parents' aspirations as preference was given to Singaporeans in educational and occupational opportunities.

The role of acculturation was evidently seen in shaping parents' aspirations for their children. When parents migrated, they brought along their personal characteristics and experiences with them. In Singapore, parents were exposed to a new environment which was different from that in India, in many ways. Some of their characteristics underwent a change in the new environment while others remained intact depending on their acculturation strategy which was observed to be integration or separation. The influence of this acculturation process was seen on their parents' aspirations for their children.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This research study investigates the aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level, the factors that influence these aspirations and the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. The term 'Indian immigrants' in Singapore' refers to immigrants of Indian origins to the South East Asian island state of Singapore. This introductory chapter will begin with the background of Singapore as an immigrant country followed by presenting the research problem and the rationale and significance of the study. It will then present the background of Indians as immigrants.

1.1 Singapore as an Immigrant Country

Singapore is an immigrant country. In fact, most Singaporeans are the descendants of immigrants from China, India, Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia (Fong & Lim, 1982). Hence it is no surprise that "the Singapore economy is historically founded on foreign labour" (Fong & Lim, 1982, p. 548). The contribution of immigrant workers and professionals in building Singapore economy is an integral part of Singapore history. Singapore has been dependent on the inflow of immigrants to support the growth of its economy from the early years of its development (Hui & Hashmi, 2007). Singapore has been a popular destination for immigrants since the British rule in Singapore, due to expanding employment opportunities. The independent Singapore had ambitious plans for its economic development which resulted in rapid growth of Singapore, which inevitably caused domestic shortage of labour and increased dependence on foreign talent (Fong & Lim, 1982).

Singapore Government policy on the importation of foreign labour reflects primarily the need to fill the growing gap between labour demand and indigenous labour supply (Fong & Lim, 1982). As the supply of local skilled professionals in Singapore is limited, this is going to cause increase in dependence on foreign personnel and professionals (Hui, 1997). The current projected resident labour force in Singapore will not be able to keep pace with the increased labour demand and the share of foreigners in the foreign labour force will increase significantly. It is expected that the proportion of foreign labour will range from 51% to 71% of the total workforce in Singapore in future (Hui & Hashmi, 2007).

Singapore welcomes unskilled as well as skilled workers. As Singapore expects that the need for unskilled workers will only be temporary, unskilled workers are recruited as long as they do not bring their families or marry locals. On the other hand, it is anticipated that the demand for skilled workers will increasingly grow. Hence, professionals in the technical, engineering and management field, doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs are actively recruited and encouraged to settle in Singapore. This is to ensure that the level of skills increases in the rapidly expanding economy; skills are imparted to the local population and continue to be reproduced in the future generations which in turn will enhance the quality of Singapore population. It is assumed that the skilled and professional immigrants will stimulate only the desirable social values and work habits. There is a significant benefit in hiring foreign talent. It reduces the wage costs for the employers and also the human capital investment costs of their education and training for Singapore. Overall, the net benefit from inviting foreign talent in Singapore is positive (Fong & Lim, 1982).

1.2 The Problem

Singapore's economy is a growing economy. However, the question that arises is, 'is this growth sustainable?' Singapore's policy is to grow as fast as possible in order to sustain the growth. Singapore's clear vision indicates that it would not be wise to choose not to grow when there is a choice to do so. This fast paced economic growth however comes with a price which is the unavoidable reliance on foreign talent. Importing foreign labour and talent is a far more economic and effective way of solving this problem than hiring the local expensive labour (Kwang et al., 2011).

Ageing population is a pressing issue in developing nations and Singapore is no exception to this. If this issue is not well tackled, the elderly population will soon become a burden on the shoulders of the young working population. It is expected that 20% of Singapore's population will be residents of age sixty five years and above by 2030 as compared to the 10% currently (Agence France-Presse, 2012). Singapore's local labour force participation rate is 92.1% which is one of the highest participation rates in the world. But as Singapore's population is an ageing population, its workforce is shrinking rapidly. The local workforce in Singapore is predicted to start to drop in 2020 unless foreign workers continue to be allowed in. The obvious reason for this situation is that the

number of working-age Singaporeans exiting the workforce will exceed those entering it by then (Heng & Toh, 2012).

To add to Singapore's economic challenges, Singapore is constantly facing the problem of declining birth rate. Singapore's birth rate has dropped from 1.60 in 2000 to 1.15 in 2010 (Ministry of Trade & Industry of Republic of Singapore, 2011). Singapore is thus constantly in need of people as its own population of talented professionals is insufficient to fulfill the demands of the growing economy. In this situation, Singapore is relying mainly on immigrants to become new citizens and permanent residents to sustain its economic growth rate as without immigrants, Singapore's economy can collapse (Kwang et al., 2011).

Singapore is constantly making efforts to attract and retain skilled professionals (see Section 1.1) However, it is important that Singapore's efforts to attract and retain professional immigrants are sustainable. It has been experienced that the foreign professionals hired in Singapore during recession leave the country to take up opportunities elsewhere when the economy starts to pick up (Hussain, 2010) thus using Singapore as a springboard. Most of Singapore's immigrant population is a floating population. In this situation, Singapore not only needs to attract good foreign talent but also make every effort possible to retain it. This is to ensure that the future generations of these talented and professional immigrants continue to stay in Singapore and add to the quality of Singapore population. For this to happen, effective forward immigrant planning and workable strategies are required. It would hence be necessary and beneficial to understand the future plans of the current immigrant population in Singapore.

The above discussion clearly indicates that Singapore's population is ageing, birthrate declining and economy growing; making Singapore's dependence on immigrants inevitable. It is required that Singapore makes continuous efforts so that the future generations of skilled and professional immigrants continue to contribute to Singapore in order to sustain its growing economy. It is for this reason that this research study is conducted to understand the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children. Indians are one of the foundational ethnic communities in Singapore and their contribution in the development of Singapore has been crucial (Sandhu, 2006). Thus, understanding what the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore aspire for their children's education and

occupation will contribute towards Singapore's forward immigrant planning. It will throw light on the stance of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore and their future plans for their children. It will contribute towards deciding immigrant policies so that the next generations of the immigrants will also continue to contribute towards Singapore economy. After all, it has been evidently seen that adolescents' aspirations can be predicted by their parents' aspirations for them (Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen, & Colvin, 2011) and parents have a positive influence on their children's aspirations (Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001). Career advisers and the children themselves too agree that parents are a key influence on children's aspirations (Alloway, Dalley, Patterson, Walker, & Lenoy, 2004). Also, parental expectations and attitudes have been found to be highly influential on children's ambitions (Buchmann & Dalton, 2002).

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Though research has been conducted on the parental aspirations and expectations of immigrants as well as their acculturation experiences, these mainly include Asians, Africans and Mexicans with some studies involving other races and nationalities who have migrated to countries mostly in the European and American continents (Arbonara & Novy, 1991; Cunningham, Erisman, & Looney, 2007; Duran & Weffer, 1992; Goldenberg, Gallimore, Reese, & Garnier, 2001; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Gupta, 1977; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Li, 2001; Ma & Yeh, 2010; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Moreno & Lopez, 1999; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera, Wentzel, & Matto, 2009; Strand, 2007). Little has been spoken about Asians who have migrated to a country within Asia. In this manner, this study aims to contribute towards our knowledge of Indian immigrants' educational and occupational aspirations within the Asian context.

Many factors influencing aspirations have been researched however little evidence is available on how acculturation process shapes parental aspirations of immigrants. The likeliness of acculturation bringing changes to the aspirations of immigrants has been brought to attention by researchers (Flores, Ojeda, Huang, Gee, & Lee, 2006; Gans, 2007; Leung, Ivey, & Suzuki, 1994; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). Though acculturation has been linked with other variables by researchers, there is a lack of solid research and evidence regarding the association between acculturation process and aspirations, especially in the area of parental aspirations of immigrants (Miller & Kerlow-Myers,

2009). It is for these reasons that this research study is conducted to investigate the role of acculturation process in shaping aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children.

Singapore has been mainly emphasizing on skilled professionals as immigrants (see Sections 1.1 and 1.2) however, it is important that these efforts are sustainable. It is desirable that the next generation of these immigrants also continues to contribute to the economy of Singapore. This makes it important to understand what the first generation immigrant parents' aspirations are for their children. This will contribute towards understanding the plans, stance and wishes of these immigrants for their children. Immigration strategies and policies can then be planned to ensure that their next generation considers Singapore as an option to work and settle down in future and continue to contribute towards Singapore economy. After all, it is evidently seen that professional Indian immigrant parents do value education, career goals and financial security for their children (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007). Besides, the educational and occupational plans of majority of the Asian Indian immigrant youth are in accordance with their parents' educational and occupational plans for them (Gupta, 1977).

Thus, conducting this research study presents two levels of rationale and significance; firstly the familial and individual levels, and secondly the national level. At the familial and individual levels, an understanding of parental aspirations from a unique viewpoint of immigrants provides another window into these immigrants' sense of well-being (Stutzer, 2004). At the national level, this study serves to fill a gap that is relevant to Singapore as an Asian nation that has now become a popular destination for various Asian nationalities including Indians. After all, Singapore does have a reputation of attracting professionals. Singapore was reported as the third-most-popular place to relocate worldwide with education as one of the key factors in this matter (Poh, 2011).

This study will be guided by a theoretical framework which is made up of two components namely the aspirations model and the acculturation model. The aspirations model is an elaboration of Ray's (2003) notion of aspirations window. It is framed by relating the various determinants of parental aspirations reviewed in the relevant literature to the three components of one's aspirations window namely experiences, people (significant others) and socio-economic status. The acculturation model is adopted from

Berry (1997) which applies to immigrants. Studying the variables in this model is extremely crucial in comprehending individuals who are experiencing acculturation. This model discusses the moderating variables prior to and during acculturation in two categories; firstly, the group level phenomena which are the situational variables, and secondly the individual level variables which are predominantly the person variables (Berry, 1997).

This research study will be interpretive in nature and the qualitative case study approach will be employed. Multiple cases will be selected with a case defined as a child's pair of parents. A postal questionnaire will be administered to gather basic background information of the parents and the children to enable recruitment and selection of suitable participants. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with both parents, reflective journal entries by both parents and group interviews with children. Data will be analysed by employing the process of three stage coding namely open, axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by looking at the patterns, themes, subthemes, categories and subcategories that emerge from each case as well as across cases. The linear-analytic design will be employed to report this case study research (Gray, 2009; Yin, 2003) in the sense that the qualitative data will be presented by describing each case followed by discussion of themes that arise from cross-case analysis (Gray, 2009).

Pre-university level in this study refers to the course after the completion of ten years of schooling and before entering a university. The educational and occupational decisions taken for students at this level are crucial as they can affect both their own future as well as the supply of educated and trained labour in the economy (White, 2007). The decisions taken at this stage have a significant influence on one's higher studies and career paths (Akos, Lambie, Milsom, & Gilbert, 2007). Hence, the focus of this research study will remain the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore whose children are studying at the pre-university level. The scope of this study is limited to the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore who satisfy both the criteria mentioned here. Firstly, the place of their birth is not Singapore; and secondly they are the first generation in their family to migrate to Singapore to work and reside.

Aspirations refer to the ideal level while expectations refer to the realistic level. However, the two constructs are related to and dependent of each other (Goldenberg et

al., 2001). Basically, both aspirations as well as expectations refer to educational and occupational choices though aspirations refers to the education and occupation desired while expectations refers to education and occupation most likely to pursue (Marini & Greenberger, 1978). Hence, in the context of this study, both aspirations and expectations are subject of interest, and will be investigated. There may be constructs other than expectations which are closely related to the notion of aspirations which are however beyond the scope of this research study.

The following are the research questions that will guide this research study. They have been developed in light of the literature review which will be presented in Chapter 2.

1a. What are the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

1b. What are the factors influencing the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

2. How has the acculturation process shaped the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

1.4 History of Migration

The human has always been a migrant since his existence. In fact, "time never was when man was not a migrant" (Naval & Hussain, 2008, p. 3). Humans have been wanderers since their appearance on the earth and they have been migrating across continents of the globe. The history of human migration goes all the way back to one to two million years ago when the first Homo erectus migrated out of Africa. Next migration occurred when the Homo sapiens migrated across Eurasia 100,000 years ago. Around 30,000 years ago, Asian immigrants crossed over to the Western hemispheres and spread all over North and South American continents. These Asian immigrants were later called the 'Red Indians'. Humans mainly migrated in the hunt for food. This process of migration slowed down around 10,000 years ago but did not halt when sedentary agriculture replaced slash and burn farming making man a settler (Naval & Hussain, 2008).

Even today, man migrates across nations in quest of better quality life, security and survival. International migration involves relocation from one country to another to settle as a resident semi-permanently or permanently (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Migration is generally associated with educational, economic, social or political reasons (Bhugra, 2004). When people migrate internationally, it benefits both immigrants as well as the members of the host country. Migration not only provides immigrants with the opportunities they cannot find in their home country, but can also provide host countries with professional workers they lack in their country. Immigrants bring along with them expertise, knowledge and culture that enrich the host country (Naval & Hussain, 2008).

1.5 The Indian Diaspora

'Diaspora' originally referred to the Jewish immigrants but soon became a broader term referring to other immigrant groups too as explained by Kadekar, Sahoo and Bhattacharya (2009),

> The folk term 'diaspora' which was till recently used to connote the plight of Jewish people dispersed in various nations, became fashionable and acquired a wide usage during the recent years. Since the 1970s, the term 'diaspora' is increasingly used to denote almost every group living far away from its ancestral or former homeland. (p. 1)

Indians began their migration in the 19th and the early part of the 20th centuries as labourers, traders, professionals and employees to the British Government. They mainly migrated to the British, French, Dutch and Portuguese colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. A large number of professional Indians however began migrating to the developed countries namely United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA), Australia and New Zealand during the post-World War II period. The oil boom in 1970s and 1980s attracted millions of Indians to the Gulf and West Asian countries followed by Information Technology (IT) and other professionals' migration to the developed countries (Kadekar et al., 2009).

Today, Indians represent a significant proportion of immigrants all over the world (Pandey, Aggarwal, Devane, & Kuznetsov, 2006). With more than 20 million Indians overseas, the Indian Diaspora is the third largest diaspora next only to the British and the Chinese (Kadekar et al., 2009). It constitutes an important and unique force in the world economy. Indian immigrants have had a significant impact on the economy of India and their countries of migration. Indian immigrants are diverse in their ethnic backgrounds

and geographical sources contributing in various high skill professional fields and major businesses. Immigrants from the state of Gujarat dominated the key old economy sectors in East Africa such as diamonds. Indians were a prominent labour provider in rebuilding the war torn Europe especially, Netherlands and the United Kingdom. By year 2000, non-resident Indians had spread their businesses overseas including the sugar, electronic, steel, iron, manufacturing, engineering and hotel industries. In recent years, skilled and unskilled Indians have been the main force involved in transforming the physical landscape of Gulf. Indians have also been successful in most knowledge-intensive professions such as medical, IT, accounting, finance and business administration in developed countries especially, USA and Canada. Their active participation on the political fronts has also been noticed in countries including the UK (Pandey et al., 2006).

The constantly increasing size of Indian diaspora has contributed significantly to India's economic as well as social development. Though Indians have migrated permanently or temporarily, they have always found their roots in the Indian soil and culture. Even after migration, Indians are found to have a close emotional and cultural attachment with the Indian soil, being their Motherland. The remittances and financial investments made in India by overseas Indians have brought capital flows into the country. The Indian community overseas is perceived as an invaluable asset in strengthening India's relationship with the countries they have migrated to, with the overseas Indians as the global actors in this process (Walton-Roberts, 2009).

1.6 Indians in Singapore

The settlement of Indians in Singapore is not new. Indians have been present in Singapore from the very first day of its foundation in 1819 and this community has been growing consistently in Singapore since then (Sandhu, 2006). The latest estimated worldwide Indian population is more than 20 million with 2.8% of these in Singapore (The Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, 2009). The proportion of ethnic Indians in Singapore has grown from 7.9% in 2000 to 9.2% in 2011 (Ministry of Trade & Industry of Republic of Singapore, 2011).

In the early days, the British had brought in Indian labour from the British administered territories in the Indian Subcontinent (Fong & Lim, 1982). In addition to lascars, sepoys, assistants, garrisons, camp followers and domestic workers; the British entourage also included an Indian trader. With liberal policies of the British government

in Singapore and also due to the expanding employment opportunities, the number of Indian population in Singapore started growing rapidly. There was also a large group of Indian convicts who arrived from Sumatra and India. After serving their term, there were many who decided to settle in Singapore. These convicts were treated liberally in Singapore and managed effectively. During their term, they were taught useful skills such as nursing, agriculture, hunting, and construction work (Sandhu, 2006).

Over the years, the Indians have played a prominent role in the development of the Singapore economy. Though they have been involved in all sectors of businesses, the vast majority of Indians in Singapore have been labourers from at least the second half of the nineteenth century. The contribution of Indians in economic growth of Singapore is prominently seen in almost every phase and every sector be it government or private. Indian unions and organizations have also been active in the political arena in Singapore. Traditionally they have been involved in wholesaling, retail trading, money-lending and small-scale enterprises. However, in the post war period, the proportion of labourers considerably declined and continued to decline. With increasing sophistication, the newer generations of Indians in Singapore preferred professional and profitable occupations (Sandhu, 2006).

In today's times, the Indians in Singapore increasingly perceive their socio-economic status in terms of their educational achievements which gives them the upward career mobility. Indians in Singapore today believe in maximizing their children's future earning power by effectively investing their family resources into their children's education. It enables their children to marry a spouse of higher socio-economic status, so that their future generations can look forward to increased socio-economic status too (Siddique & Puru Shotam, 2006).

This research study will be laid out in the following order. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 will review the relevant literature on the notions of aspirations and acculturation with special attention to the determinants of parental aspirations and acculturation experiences of immigrants. Gaps in the current research knowledge will be identified too in order to explain the position of this research study. The research questions presented in this chapter have been developed in light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Next in Chapter 3, the theoretical framework that will guide this study will

be presented. Chapter 4 will present the methodological aspects and design of this research study. Chapter 5 will present the quantitative results from postal questionnaires with details of how this data enabled the recruitment and selection of suitable participants. Chapter 6 will present the qualitative data collected from participants by describing each case in detail. Chapter 7 will discuss the themes that emerge from analysis of the data collected. Chapter 8 will be the concluding chapter which will address the problem identified and the research questions presented in this introductory chapter. The contributions of this research study to knowledge, limitations as well as further implications will be highlighted too.

Last but not least, just as the participating parents in the current study, I am a first generation Indian immigrant parent in Singapore with children pursuing studies in Singapore. This is considered a plus for this study, since my own personal experience and perspective as an immigrant parent of secondary school aged children in Singapore should enable me to be especially sensitive and understanding to what the participants were trying to share with me. At the same time, I was also mindful that my personal biases might influence what I chose to pay attention to during each stage of the study. In this light, I ensured that I kept careful notes of all my thoughts, revelations, exchanges with peers, analyses, and readings, so that I could go over these notes regularly to ensure that interpretations were done fairly and consistently. I also engaged in academic sharings of my ongoing thesis research with peers in the same doctoral research program, so that I could hear myself speak, and so that peers' feedback could signal to me aspects where I might be allowing my own identity and experience interfered with a fair analysis of the data, extending my capacity to empathise and to make sense of the collected data.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research study investigates the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level, the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. The previous chapter was an introductory chapter which introduced Singapore as an immigrant country, identified the problem, and presented the rationale and significance of this study. The background of Indians as immigrants to Singapore was discussed too. To begin with, this chapter will review the literature on aspirations of humans as a general concept followed by a discussion of the determinants of parental aspirations for their children's education and occupation. The literature on the acculturation experiences of immigrants will then be reviewed. The third sources of literature to be reviewed will be related to the cultural values of Indians. The research questions for this study will be formulated at the end of the chapter, in light of the literature review.

2.1 Aspirations

2.1.1 Understanding Aspirations and their Importance

'Aspirations' is a multidimensional notion. A person's aspirations can be dreams about one or more of the many important aspects of life. They may not necessarily be only about material standard of living but may also be about dignity, good health, recognition, political power or the urge to dominate others on religious or ethnic grounds. These may complement or mutually substitute one another (Ray, 2003). People can have aspirations at various stages of their life and for various people in their life who are important to them. They may have aspirations for themselves, their family or children. The way aspirations are viewed may depend on the role individuals are in, for example as a parent, the head of the family or as an employee. As this research study is about the aspirations of immigrants for their children, aspirations will be viewed as the educational and vocational dreams for future work lives as conceptualized by Sirin, Diemer, Jackson, Gonsalves, and Howell (2004), which include their intentions, wishes and plans (Gupta, 1977). This section presents aspirations as a general concept of an individual however; it can also be applied to aspirations of parents for their children.

The importance of understanding people's aspirations has been emphasized by researchers. Aspirations are an important component of people's life. Aspirations play a crucial role in determining one's overall life satisfaction. The level of life satisfaction is decided by the extent to which aspirations are fulfilled. Aspirations and their achievement affect the level of overall life satisfaction of humans. The gap between aspirations and their fulfilment is negatively correlated with the level of overall life satisfaction, that is, the level of life satisfaction increases as the gap between aspirations and their achievement narrows and vice versa (Mason & Faulkenberry, 1978). Hence, it is highly important to understand people's aspirations, in general, as it contributes to better understanding of individual's well-being (Stutzer, 2004). Though aspirations are formed at various developmental phases in one's life, it can be said that it is especially important to understand aspirations at the adolescent phase, as adolescence is the time when individuals are more concerned about their future than any other developmental phase (Sirin et al., 2004). Furthermore, key decisions for children's future are often taken by parents and children at this stage (Cunningham et al., 2007), which can affect both the children's respective futures as well as the supply of educated and trained labour in the economy (White, 2007).

2.1.2 The Aspirations Window

How do the aspirations or dreams come about? This question is addressed effectively by Ray (2003). As Ray (2003) put it, individual aspirations are not born in a vacuum, in fact, they are born in a social context. Aspirations have a window. "The window is formed from an individual's cognitive world, her zone of "similar", "attainable" individuals" (Ray, 2003, p. 1). Aspirations can be a reflection of what an individual has experienced in life or even the people who have influenced or have had an impact on them. These influential individuals and experiences form the crucial components of one's aspirations window. An individual draws his or her aspirations from the lives, achievements, or ideals of those who exist in the aspirations window (Ray, 2003).

How do the influential people in this window and people's experiences shape one's aspirations? "Individual desires and standards of behaviours are often defined by experience and observation" (Ray, 2003, p. 1). According to Ray (2003), aspirations are not absolute, that is, just based on people's own expectations of the future. Instead, they are formed due to constant drawing from comparisons from their environment or from

their past. It is the human tendency to make comparisons with their peers and non-peers that exist in their window. Ray (2003) explains two main processes that are involved here. Firstly, people make social comparisons. They do not look at just what they want; instead, they make comparisons with what others have. Rather than looking absolutely at what they have, it is a matter of relativity to them. They may look up to and aspire to become like those better than them. Secondly, people compare what they have at the moment with what they previously had (Ray, 2003; Stutzer, 2004). Indeed, aspirations are affected by one's social environment (Genicot & Ray, 2009).

Furthermore, it is not only the experiences or people but also one's socio-economic status that contributes towards forming the aspirations window. According to Ray (2003), one's financial state influences one's aspirations window and therefore one's aspirations. An increase in one's own income level as well as the income level of those in their community directly cause an increase in their level of aspirations (Stutzer, 2004).

At the same time, people's aspirations are also positively related to their level of educational attainment. With better education, people have a better access to awareness of opportunities available to them. When people perceive better opportunities, they raise the level of their aspirations. Thus, level of educational attainment and perceptions of opportunities available too are an important aspect of the aspirations window being related to their socio-economic status (Ferrante, 2009). One's socio-economic status can impact his or her aspirations positively or negatively. While favourable conditions can contribute towards fulfilling aspirations, adverse conditions can stifle aspirations or the process of attaining them (Ray, 2003). In this way, one's socio-economic status through education, financial condition, access to and awareness of opportunities also significantly affects his or her aspirations.

The extent to which the aspirations window is opened can affect the chance of success of particular aspirations. If the 'aspirations window' is opened too wide or too narrow, it forms a gap. This gap is the distance between what an individual aspires for and the conditions he or she actually finds himself or herself in (Ray, 2003). Hence, it is important to have realistic goals in life or attain a congruence between aspirations and reality, as it can affect the level of happiness and overall well-being of a person (Ray, 2003; Stutzer, 2004). It has been evidently seen that people often tend to achieve congruence between their aspirations and their actual achievement by changing their

aspirations to match the reality and vice versa (Gottfredson, Holland, & Gottfredson, 1975). However, at times, the level of aspirations people set can be unrealistic, with the subsequent failure to affecting life satisfaction in turn (Ferrante, 2009).

It is clear from the above discussion that understanding people's aspirations as well as the components of one's aspirations window are important, as these understandings contribute to people's overall life satisfaction and general well-being. This research study investigates aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children. Hence, understanding parents' aspirations is of significance as it is expected to contribute to greater understanding of both the parents' and their children's sense of well-being (Stutzer, 2004).

2.1.3 Determinants of Parental Aspirations for their Children

Through the literature reviewed on the notion of aspirations and the importance of understanding aspirations of individuals, two points were specifically brought to attention. Firstly, the concept of 'aspirations window' which is formed from the people and experiences in one's life in addition to their socio-economic status (Ray, 2003). Secondly, adolescence is a period when key decisions for one's future are made by adolescent children and their parents (Cunningham et al., 2007). It is also a time when the adolescent children are more concerned about their future than at any other developmental phase (Sirin et al., 2004). In this light, it can be argued that it is highly significant to understand the aspirations of parents for their children and what shapes these aspirations, that is, what are the components of their aspirations window. In particular this section will closely look at the determinants of parents' aspirations for their children. This is expected to deepen the understanding of what constitute the components of the aspirations window of parents for their children.

2.1.3.1 Parents' Education, Income and Awareness

The first component that determines parental aspirations is parents' education, income and awareness. Parents' level of educational attainment significantly affects the level and nature of aspirations they hold for their children. More educated parents have higher aspirations for their children, as compared to those with a lower educational level (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera et al., 2009). Parents with a higher level of educational attainment are more likely to expect their child to get higher education whereas parents

without a high school qualification would not really emphasize on a college degree for their children (Cunningham et al., 2007). Specifically in case of mothers it is seen that highly educated mothers show a greater involvement in their children's education, provide more educational support and hold higher expectations in terms of educational attainment from their children. On the other hand, mothers with a lower educational attainment expect lower educational attainment from their children (Abbas, 2003; Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004; Zhan, 2006).

Parents' level of income significantly affects their aspirations for their children too. Zhan (2006) reported a positive relationship between parents' income and parental expectations, specifically mothers' expectations. At about the same time, Davis-Kean (2005) reported that parental income influenced parental expectations. It needs to be said, however, that the purpose of its investigation was exploring the effect of parental income on children's achievements, and parental expectations was merely found to be a mediator between the two. Little has been researched recently on the relationship between parental income and parental expectations or aspirations. Among the studies conducted earlier, Cooper et al. (1994) mentioned that parents from lower income class are often reported to have lower aspirations for their children than parents with comparatively higher income (Cooper et al., 1994). It is interesting to see the variation in the nature of aspirations of parents from different income classes, and their reasons for acquiring basic high school education. While parents of all income classes view high school education as an entry qualification for university education and a respectable job, the lower class parents in addition view high school education as an avenue for their children to meet people, make friends, keep busy, stay out of trouble, learn to behave and have fun too (Wendling & Elliott, 1968). This means that parents from lower class actually see more value to high school education as to them high school education is an avenue of acquiring the necessary life skills in addition. Besides, though lower income parents aspire for higher education for their children, they do not see education as the top priority for their children and rather want their children to be happy and healthy first and then educated (Cooper et al., 1994). Specifically in case of mothers, those in employment are more likely to impart values onto their daughters that encourage them to attain higher education and subsequent professional employment. A reason for this aspiration is the culturally inculcated notion that higher education and family income leads to higher standard of living and respect in the society (Abbas, 2003).

Parents' educational aspirations for their children are also in accordance with their perception of affordability of educational expenses. Parents with higher expectations for their children have greater perceived affordability of children's educational expenses whereas parents who fear unaffordability of college fees usually tend to limit their aspirations for their children. Parents often express their concern about high cost of college fees as a reason for making college attendance unaffordable (Kirk et al., 2011). Parents' financial assets are found to be strongly associated with their expectations from their children. Parents' expectations about their children's success are indicative of their ability to invest in their children's future (Zhan, 2006).

No matter how high parents' aspirations for their children are, parental awareness of opportunities can be crucial in determining these aspirations. The aspirations parents hold for their children are influenced by how well-informed they are about the educational and occupational opportunities available. If parents are aware of the educational and occupational choices available to their children, they can make the appropriate choices for their children. Lack of awareness of educational choices available can result in placing their children into courses that are academically less rigorous than their children's capability, which in turn can limit the future career opportunities for their children (Akos et al., 2007). It is important that parents are aware of the opportunities and options available as children primarily depend on their parents to take the initiative to find the necessary information about higher education from a variety of sources, do the required planning and prepare them for further education thus making parents' role vital in guiding their children (Cunningham et al., 2007). Unfortunately, not all parents have the necessary information to make the important educational choices to make their aspirations or dream a reality. If parental access to this information is difficult, it leaves the children inadequately prepared for higher education (Cunningham et al., 2007).

Not only the awareness of opportunities available, but also the information about entrance requirement to college can influence parents' aspirations of their children (Kirk et al., 2011). Parents play an important role in guiding their children to complete the necessary prerequisites before college. If parents are unaware of the options available and the admission requirements, it limits their aspirations for their children as these parents are then not convinced that higher education is an attainable goal for their children (Cunningham et al., 2007).

Parents' awareness of educational expenses and financial aids is crucial too. Parents often make economic sacrifices to save up and raise funds so that their children can attain higher education (Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Heather, 2007). If parents are aware of the costs of higher education, but unaware of how much saving is enough it again limits their aspirations when the time comes to enrol their children into college (Cunningham et al., 2007). For the parents who fear unaffordability of educational expenses, it makes it further less possible to make college attendance for their children a reality as they are unaware of avenues that can make the college attendance for their child possible such as scholarships or other financial aids available. Thus, lack of familiarity with the available financial aids influences parents' expectations from their children negatively (Kirk et al., 2011). It was also reported by Kirk et al. (2011) that many parents feel unequipped to help their children make appropriate choices about education or financial aid in order to fulfil their aspirations.

Unfortunately, it is especially observed amongst lower income parents that they lack the information and knowledge of resources to successfully pass through the searching and choice making phases when it comes to college enrolment process (Perna, 2004). Parents with lower income level too have high aspirations for their children but they may not specifically ask their children to choose a certain career due to their unawareness in the area of application and financial aid procedure or the entrance requirements (Cooper et al., 1994). If low income parents have the necessary pre-requisite information to send their child for further education, but lack the information on financial aids available they are unable to send their children to university, as they need time to prepare themselves financially which affects their aspirations. It can thus be said that those who are in need of financial aid the most are usually the ones highly affected due to their being unaware of its availability.

The factors that shape parents' aspirations for their children discussed so far are related to each other. There is a strong connection between parents' educational level and socio-economic status (Goldenberg et al., 2001). Level of educational attainment can be positively related to income levels through the nature of their careers. Also, their educational level can be indicative of the access to information sources of future educational and career opportunities available. Parents with higher educational status are more knowledgeable and familiar with school systems which gives them higher power, awareness and more resources for effective involvement in their children's education

(Moreno & Lopez, 1999). Also, as highly educated parents have direct personal experience with higher education, it obviously improves their chances of being aware of the entrance requirements and financial aids available which is likely to affect parents' college plans for their children (Perna, 2004). After all, the reason parents value formal education for their children is because it contributes to their children's social and economic mobility (Goldenberg et al., 2001).

2.1.3.2 Children's Academic Performance, Interest and Gender

The next component of determinants of parental aspirations is the child-related factors namely their children's academic performance, interest in studies and gender. Much has been talked about the relationship between parents' aspirations for their children and children's academic performance. It was evidently seen that parents who have higher expectations from their children are those whose children have higher academic performance (Kirk et al., 2011). Positive correlation between maternal expectations and children's academic performance has also been reported (Zhan, 2006). An association was seen between students' achievement and parental expectations as a result of the longitudinal study conducted by Goldenberg et al. (2001). This association emerged during early school years of the children, continued in the next few subsequent years however fluctuated eventually. All parents had high aspirations for their children in the initial schooling years and they were convinced about their aspirations and no uncertainty was reported at this stage. However, over the time, parental expectations fluctuated considerably and they were highly predicted by their children's academic performances. Goldenberg et al. (2001) assessed academic performance using five estimates namely parents' perception of their children's interest in school, children's reading ability, children's Mathematics test scores, their teachers' rating of their children's academic progress and school performance. The reason for this change in parents' aspirations is because as children get older, parents become more realistically aware of their children's academic capabilities and tend to have aspirations that match their children's capabilities by setting more realistic goals for them. Hence, parents of adolescents are often reported to have lower aspirations for their children and higher uncertainty of their future as compared to the parents of children in elementary school (Cooper et al., 1994). The feedback received from school about their children's performance gives parents an opportunity to reassess their aspirations for their children that they held during their children's initial schooling years. Parents form their judgments about their children's

capability and formulate their aspirations for their children based on this feedback (Finlayson, 1971). It is likely that upon seeing their children's report card, parents' obvious response is a change in their expectations from their children (Spera et al., 2009). Parents' aspirations for their children are thus significantly derived from their level of confidence in their children's academic ability through their children's academic performance (Wentzel, 1998). Parents' perception of children's interest in studies too was evidently seen to affect parental expectations as parents assessed their children's performance with the help of their children's interest in studies and not merely based on their grades or scores (Goldenberg et al., 2001).

Gender of the child has been found to be a significant predictor of parents' expectations from their children in terms of their children's educational attainment (Wentzel, 1998). There is however a variation in the findings which are specific to the studies. Also, the effect of gender on parents' aspirations for their children seems to have changed over the time. Some of the studies have reported that parents have lower aspirations for their daughters than their sons (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Wentzel, 1998). Zhan (2006) specifically reported mothers of female children to have higher expectations in terms of their daughters' education whereas Kreider et al. (2007) reported that mothers have higher aspirations for their daughters while fathers for their sons. It is interesting to note that when investigated, Strand (2007) reported that parents generally have higher educational aspirations for their daughters than their sons. Among the South Asian immigrant parents, in particular, Indian immigrant parents were reported to have higher educational aspirations for daughters than sons whereas Pakistani and Bangladeshi parents were reported to have higher aspirations for boys than girls (Strand, 2007). Thus, differences in parental aspirations for sons and daughters may be cultural in nature, resulting in a lack of consistency amongst the findings of relevant studies. Nevertheless, the studies still establish that a child's gender can be influential in shaping his/her parents' aspirations for him/her.

The aspirations single-child parents hold for their children is also interesting to note. This is specifically seen among Chinese parents. Chinese parents who have a son or a daughter as the only child hold a general belief, that boys have a higher IQ than girls. Some also believe that boys are naturally talented and their talent unfolds as they grow up, whereas deliberate efforts are required to cultivate skills into girls. Their reason for believing in boys having a higher IQ than girls is because they have only seen boys enter

a university. However, the Chinese parents having a daughter as the only child aspire that their daughter will attain university education and break this record of only boys being able to enter a university (Liu, 2006).

All South Asian parents are supportive in actively encouraging their daughters in acquiring education, irrespective of their religion whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh (Abbas, 2003). Muslim parents have high educational aspirations for their sons as well as daughters however; their reasons that influence these aspirations vary. These parents aspire for good education for their daughters so that they can become confident, and develop as a person but not necessarily for the reason of making them financially independent. They want their daughters to become independent in terms of social interaction and ability which is required in the day-to-day activity. While Muslim immigrant parents do not hesitate to send their sons to mixed schools, they may prefer religious or girls' schools for their daughters (Ijaz & Abbas, 2010).

Parental perception of the school related factors was found to have an influence on parents' aspirations for their children. Spera et al. (2009) tested the effect of factors related to the school climate on parental aspirations which included academic instruction, school informing and empowering parents, health education, safety, discipline and guidance. However, this amounted to a small variance and it is likely that these aspirations are more of parents' reflection rather than school related.

2.1.3.3 Role of Culture and Family

The third component of determinants of parental aspirations is culture and family. Culture plays an important role in shaping parents' aspirations for their children. For example, Chinese immigrant parents have high educational expectations for their children and emphasize that their children must get a university degree as a part of their cultural expectation. To them, education is the top priority in their life as people with high education are believed to receive higher respect in the society, as "a cultural phenomenon and the essence of Confucian philosophy" (Li, 2001, p. 489). Also, it is prominently seen in the Chinese culture that achievement and excellence are viewed as a family honour, and success as a source of happiness (Li, 2001).

Although parents generally hold high aspirations for their children regardless of their own attainments and achievements (Kirk et al., 2011) or ethnic background (Spera et al.,

2009), minority or immigrant parents are specifically seen to have higher educational and occupational aspirations for their children for certain specific reasons. Upon migration, due to their experiences in a new environment, parents' expectations from their children are significantly shaped by their cultural experiences as an immigrant. They desire high education and a good career for their children so that their children can have a secure life, especially because of their immigrant status in the host country (Li, 2001). Parents who strongly believe that society shows discriminatory attitudes towards the less educated, often inculcate cultural and moral values in their children so that they can successfully complete their education in order to fulfil aspirations (Cooper et al., 1994). In fact, immigrant parents hold aspirations for specific education and careers for their children so that it can become their weapon against racism (Li, 2001) and a means of upward mobility (Li, 2001; Spera et al., 2009).

Immigrant parents' expectations are also guided by their acculturative attitudes, which understandably vary from person to person. For example, the Chinese immigrants in Canada showed different acculturative attitudes depending on their perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese and the Canadian culture. They accepted the cultural aspects they preferred and believed for example, strong academic inclination in Chinese culture versus nurturing multiple intelligences in Canadian culture. The effect of their acculturative attitudes on their expectations for their children was clearly seen as they attempted to live in two clashing cultures which were different in many ways. The tendency of these immigrant parents was to align their aspirations for their children with the demand of the job market and avoid competition with the mainstream especially in fields such as politics, law or arts due to perceived discrimination (Li, 2001). Hence, they preferred those careers for their children that could increase their children's chances of future success and employability. Parents encouraged their children to excel in Science related subjects so that they could take up professions in Engineering or other technical fields that have better employability (Li, 2001, 2004). Studies too have shown that generally in schools, the pulling power of Mathematics and Science departments is stronger as compared to other subject departments. There is evidence that pupils having studied mathematics and Science in schools enjoy a greater quality of life and higher expectation for salary as compared to those who have a similar ability but studied subjects other than Mathematics and Science (Fitz-Gibbon, 1999). Also, it is worth noting that students studying Mathematics and Science have a higher chance of getting entry into

university and completing higher education successfully as these subjects are a crucial part of university entrance requirement (Cunningham et al., 2007).

The religio-cultural norms too affect immigrant parents' aspirations for their children (Abbas, 2003). However, interestingly, the extent of its impact varies, especially among the Asian immigrants. The South Asian immigrant parents do support education for their daughters so that they can develop an increasing level of confidence in them, become sure of the directions they want to take in education and life. However, this is evident only to a limited extent as "it is tempered by the operationalization of domestic religio-cultural norms and values inhibiting educational progression beyond a certain point" (Abbas, 2003, p. 413). Thus, due to the religio-cultural constraints, immigrants tend to limit the educational and occupational opportunities for their children, especially daughters, as they wish to see cultural continuity in them and do not want an influence of the culture of the country of their migration on their daughters (Abbas, 2003). Thus, there are some immigrant parents who hold on to their traditional values which influence their aspirations for their children. On the other hand, some of the Chinese immigrant parents have been found to hold a different outlook as they believe that their original and dominant cultures have positive as well as negative sides, and ideally, the confluence of both cultures can produce the best possible education for all (Li, 2001).

Parents' family members and family culture play a crucial role too as parents' expectations from their children are largely derived from their own life experiences (Genicot & Ray, 2009; Li, 2001) which include their past encounters and childhood experiences with their own parents (Li, 2001). They continue the same culture or tradition they were brought up with by their parents in terms of parenting style. This in turn influences their own aspirations for their children. Parents tend to follow their own parents' footsteps when it comes to parenting style. Those who had experienced high expectations from their parents in their childhood and also enjoyed its benefits in life continue to do so with their children too as it can ultimately produce positive outcomes for their children. On the other hand, those who think their success has little or nothing to do with their parents, do not show inclination towards planning their children's future (Li, 2001) .

Three components of aspirations window were discussed in Section 2.1.2. These were the people and experiences that have had impact on individuals in addition to their socio-economic status. Various factors influencing parental aspirations for their children have been discussed so far. The determinants of parental aspirations for their children were presented in three different categories in Section 2.1.3 namely parents' education, income and awareness; children's academic performance, interest and gender; role of culture and family. There is clearly a link between the components of 'aspirations window' and the factors that influence parental aspirations, as discussed below.

Of the factors that influence parents' aspirations; parental level of education and income, their perception of affordability of educational expenses and awareness of opportunities available were found to be related to each other as discussed in Section 2.1.3.1. These can be categorized under the 'socio-economic status' component of the aspirations window. The second component 'people' who influence parents' aspirations for their children are parents' own parents and their children. Parents' own parents influence their aspirations through the way they were brought up with certain parenting style. The children themselves are influential as parents' aspirations for their children vary according to the gender of the child, children's academic performance and interest in education. This research study focuses on the aspirations of first generation immigrant parents in Singapore for their children. In the context of immigrants, it can be argued that the third component of the aspirations window, 'experiences' is their acculturation experiences. These include their cultural expectations and experiences in their home and host countries, and their adjustments in this matter. After all, as described by Li (2001) regarding Chinese immigrants' experiences in Canada,

> Their expectations reflected their deeply ingrained cultural values, their desire for better life, their striving for excellence, and their struggle to adjust to their visible minority status. As new immigrants, they had to live daily amid the clash of two cultures, which presented new challenges to what they had cherished. (p. 488-489)

2.1.4 Aspirations and Acculturation

It was seen in Section 2.1.3, that many factors have been researched regarding what influences parental aspirations for their children. These factors include the role of cultural values as an important determinant of parental aspirations. What parents want for their children is profoundly affected by the society in which they live, the social environment

around them and their experiences (Genicot & Ray, 2009). Besides, as it was pointed out in Section 2.1.2, people's aspirations can be formed due to constant drawing from comparisons from their environment as people tend to make social comparisons. They do not look at just what they want; instead, they also make comparisons with what others around them or their peers have (see Section 2.1.2). When people migrate, two cultures come into contact which can be different in multiple ways. Upon migration, the environment as well as the people in the society in which they live change (Li, 2001). In this way, based on the literature reviewed in Section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, there is a strong reason to believe in acculturation playing an important role in shaping aspirations of immigrants for their children. For the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore too, acculturation can be an integral part of their cultural adjustments upon migration due to their immigrant status. Though social environment, experiences and culture are seen to play an important role in determining parental aspirations for their children, little is researched on the specific role of acculturation process in shaping aspirations of immigrants for their children and there is a lack of sufficient research solely devoted to this area.

There is research available in the area of acculturation and aspirations of immigrants, however most of this research explores immigrants' aspirations for themselves as children or adolescents (Arbonara & Novy, 1991; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001; Buchmann & Dalton, 2002; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Gupta, 1977; Jodl et al., 2001; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Kirk et al., 2011; Ma & Yeh, 2010; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Sirin et al., 2004; Strand, 2007) and not many focus on the immigrants' aspirations as parents for their children. In the process of acculturation, immigrants become like non-immigrants socially and culturally. It is usually observed that, immigrants who have resided in the host country for ten years or more develop aspirations which are similar to the aspirations of the dominant group (Gans, 2007; Leung et al., 1994). Also, more acculturated immigrants are found to set higher educational goals than their less acculturated counterparts. Immigrants with a strong connection with the dominant culture are more likely to set higher educational goals. On the other hand, low association with the dominant culture can have detrimental effects on career development (Flores et al., 2006). Thus, it is likely that acculturation is crucial in shaping aspirations of immigrants as parents for their children. This clearly indicates the need to specifically research and

understand immigrants' aspirations for their children and exactly how their acculturation influences their aspirations for their children.

The level of immigrant parents' acculturation has been found to be related to their level of expectations from their children (Moreno & Lopez, 1999). Besides, parental aspirations can be different in different acculturation contexts as the culture of immigrants' home and host country vary (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001). Many researchers have pointed out a possible link between acculturation and aspirations of immigrants through their research (Flores et al., 2006; Gans, 2007; Leung et al., 1994; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003) however, the main focus of these studies is not exploring the role of acculturation in shaping parental aspirations and hence these studies lack the depth in this matter. Though acculturation has been linked with other variables by researchers, there is a lack of solid research and evidence to confirm the nature of association between acculturation process and aspirations (Miller & Kerlow-Myers, 2009). It has been suggested by researchers that the effect of acculturation variables needs to be studied in depth in order to investigate the relationship between acculturation and aspirations of immigrants (Leung et al., 1994). Besides, amongst the research conducted in this area, insufficient number of acculturation variables have been studied for investigating the influence of acculturation on parental aspirations hence providing insufficient evidence (Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). This happens as many times the main purpose of the research is not investigating the relationship between the acculturation and aspirations of immigrants. This indicates that in depth research is lacking which is necessary to understand how acculturation shapes the aspirations of immigrants for their children.

The history of Indian immigrants in Singapore goes back all the way to 1819 when the British brought them to Singapore as labourers, domestic workers, convicts, lascars, garrisons and camp-followers. Initially, these immigrants were mainly from the South of India with some Punjabis and Sindhis from the North of India (Sandhu, 2006). However, their ethnic mix has changed over time. Today Singapore population constitutes of Indians representing diverse ethno-linguistic communities. Their geographical sources then and now are different. Besides, it is possible that Singapore is not their first country of migration hence influencing their experiences. Also, it was discussed in Section 1.6, that with increasing sophistication, the preferences for jobs of Indians in Singapore have been changing towards more professional and profit making choices. Indians in Singapore today believe in investing in their children's education so that their future generations can

look forward to higher socio-economic status (see Section 1.6). Though there can be many factors affecting their aspirations, it is thus likely that acculturation is the reason that has brought changes to these aspirations. Most of the research conducted in the area of immigrants' experiences and aspirations involves Asians, Africans and Mexicans with some studies involving other races and nationalities who have migrated to countries mostly in the European and American continents (Arbonara & Novy, 1991; Cunningham et al., 2007; Duran & Weffer, 1992; Goldenberg et al., 2001; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Gupta, 1977; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Li, 2001; Ma & Yeh, 2010; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Moreno & Lopez, 1999; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera et al., 2009; Strand, 2007) and little is spoken about Asians who have migrated within Asia, for example Singapore which is a popular destination for immigrants and itself is an immigrant country (see Sections 1.1 and 1.3).

The above discussion clearly indicates that the role of acculturation process in shaping immigrants' aspirations for their children is highly possible but little evidence is available through in depth research in this field. The reason for this lack of evidence is because there isn't sufficient attention given to this area by solely devoting a study which can investigate the role of acculturation process in shaping aspirations of immigrants for their children. Also, most of the researchers who indicate a possible connection between acculturation and aspirations of immigrants do not specifically focus their study on the role of acculturation in shaping parental aspect of aspirations of immigrants for their children.

It is thus believed here, that there is a solid reason, for conducting this research study to investigate specifically the role of acculturation in shaping parental aspirations of immigrants for their children. This research study will hence mainly look into how acculturation influences parental aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level. Though several determinants of parental aspirations were discussed in the previous section, as acculturation experiences constitute such a distinctive aspect of the immigrants' lives that the next section will be devoted to its discussion.

2.2 Acculturation

Every person in a culturally plural society is undergoing acculturation in some way or the other. Members of a society can fall into six categories. They are the indigenous

peoples who have always been there, immigrants, ethno-cultural groups who are the descendants of immigrants, sojourners, refugees and asylum-seekers. Though they are living in the same society, their reasons for being a part of the same society are different which can be voluntariness, migration or permanence (Berry, Poortinga, Breugelmans, Chasiotis, & Sam, 2011).

Acculturation has been researched for years. It is an ancient phenomenon and occurs universally (Rudmin, 2003). It is a process of cultural change (Moreno & Lopez, 1999). Acculturation occurs when people from different societies come into contact with each other due to migration (Lee, Sobal, & Frongillo, 2003). Though acculturation can be defined in many ways, the most widely used definition of acculturation is the one put forward by Redfield, Linton, and Herskowits (1936),

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups [sic]. (p. 149)

The acculturation process involves two groups of people namely the immigrants as well as the dominant group, however it is the immigrants who are most affected by the changes occurring through acculturation (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Besides, the focus of this research study is on immigrants. Hence, for the purpose of this research study, acculturation will be viewed from immigrants' perspective. In the context of this study, acculturation will be viewed as a process of immigrants' adaptation to the dominant culture causing a change in their beliefs, values and/or behaviours (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Kumar & Nevid, 2010) in response to the environmental demands of the host country (Berry, 1997).

2.2.1 Acculturation Experiences

When people migrate, they are exposed to a new society with culture which may be different in many ways. These changes may be regarding the religion, colour, spoken language, physical appearance, food, or even the dressing style. Due to migration, immigrants are often faced with new circumstances, beliefs, and values which cause cultural symbols and behavioural patterns to undergo a change (Foner, 1997). In search for better opportunities, immigrants leave behind their cultures, ways of thought and behaviour (Naval & Hussain, 2008). This may require them to understand, accept and adjust to the dominant culture and immigrants often face challenges in doing so.

Acculturation can cause immigrants to change in physical, biological, economic, social or cultural ways (Berry, 1997).

Though all immigrants face challenges in adjusting to the new culture upon migration to some extent; the nature of the challenges faced by them, their emotions, feelings, experiences and perceptions in this process may be different (Lieber, Chin, Nihira, & Mink, 2001). The range of acculturation options available to them depends on their perception of the extent and the way multiculturalism is welcome in their host country. Immigrants' perception of social support received from the dominant group plays a crucial role in their psychological adjustments in the host country and thus contributes significantly in deciding their acculturation strategy (Kovacev & Shute, 2004).

The nature of acculturation experiences of immigrants depends on their perception of how the dominant group views the idea of multiculturalism. Breugelmans and Van de Vijver (2004) have described that multiculturalism deals with cultural diversity, entails the equality and positive evaluation of different cultural groups within a single society. The success of acculturation lies in how the immigrants perceive the views of the dominant group on accepting cultural diversity, providing equal opportunities to the minorities, racism and social inclusion or exclusion, and to what extent the dominant group requires them to adopt the dominant culture or retain their original culture. After all, though acculturation is a two way process between the dominant group and the immigrants, the societal support is seen to vary within the society. It is expected that the main effort of adjustment should come from the immigrants (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004).

"As intelligent and adaptive cultural beings, all humans have some likelihood of adopting or otherwise reacting to aspects of alien cultures that they encounter" (Rudmin, 2003, p. 3). The acculturation of immigrants and the success of it depend on how they tackle two issues; firstly, the extent to which they value maintenance of their original culture and secondly, the extent to which they wish to maintain contacts with the dominant group. This gives rise to four acculturation strategies of immigrants namely the separation (or segregation), marginalization, integration and the assimilation strategy (Berry, 1997); which are summarized in Figure 2.1 below.

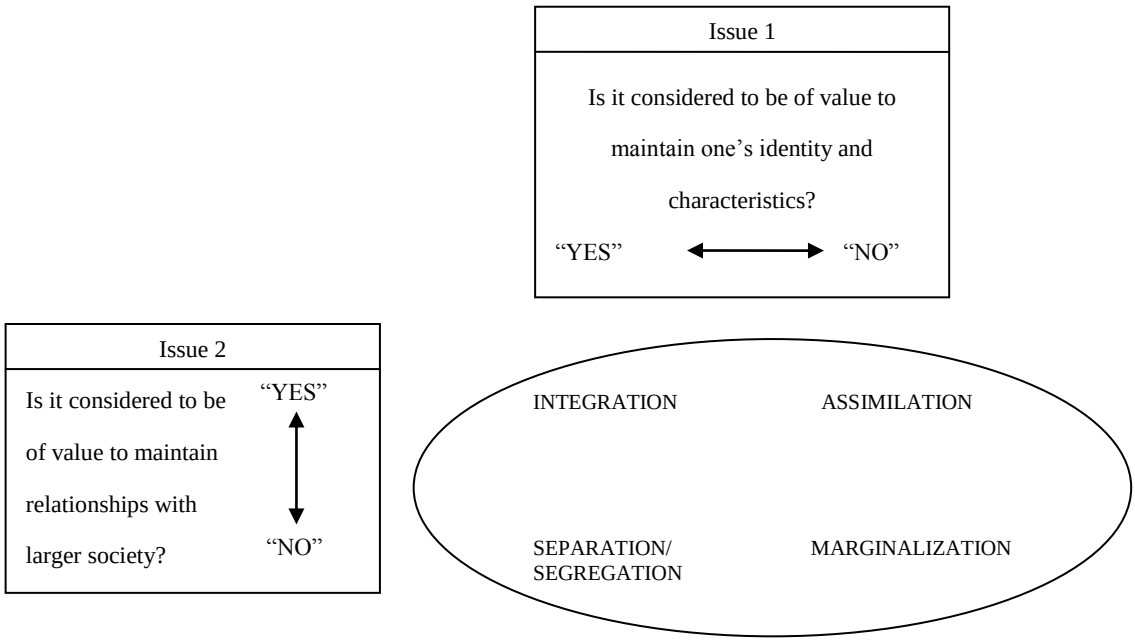

Figure 2.1. Acculturation strategies (Adopted from Berry, 1997, p. 10).

These strategies and the different types of experiences immigrants go through are discussed in the sections to follow.

2.2.1.1 Separation

Upon migration, immigrants come into contact with a new culture which may be different from their original culture. It has been found that immigrants generally favour the maintenance of their original culture (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). Sometimes, in order to maintain their original culture, it is possible that immigrants totally may not prefer to socialize with the dominant group. When immigrants may wish to hold on to their original culture and completely avoid interaction with the others in the dominant group, this strategy is referred to as separation or segregation. It is possible for an immigrant to adapt this strategy only when the other members of their ethno-cultural group also wish to maintain their original culture (Berry, 1997). Another possible reason for immigrants preferring to adopt the separation strategy is if a government policy requires the immigrants to give up their original culture completely. This may then lead to favouring separation as a result (Sam, 1995).

In case of immigrants who endorse the separation strategy, it is found that they have a high proportion of immigrant friends. They usually have a close relationship with the immigrants of their own community or country and mainly socialize with them showing

no interest whatsoever in the dominant culture. They also have a strong inclination towards maintaining their original identity. That is to say that the social context of this group of immigrants is completely mono-cultural, comprising mainly of immigrants belonging to their own ethnic race (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003).

To the immigrants preferring the separation strategy, cultural changes upon migration are an expected phenomenon and they are mentally prepared for them. For this reason, they find these changes manageable too. However, they often display confusion, unfamiliarity and difficulty in understanding the dominant culture. That is why they usually tend to lean towards their traditional conservative culture (Lieber et al., 2001).

2.2.1.2 Marginalization

Due to migration, immigrants can encounter loss of cultural norms, religious customs, social support systems and even their personal identity (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). When this cultural loss is enforced onto immigrants or they experience social exclusion or discrimination, it highly affects them. It is possible then, that they have little or no interest in maintaining their original culture or even relations with others in the society for that matter. This strategy is referred to as marginalization (Berry, 1997).

In such situation, immigrants' identity is a marginal identity as they show no inclination towards maintaining contacts with anyone be it members their own ethnic community or the dominant group (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003). Marginalized immigrants are the ones who have the greatest immigration difficulties of all. The impact of migration on them is the highest psychologically. They often feel a sense of negative emotions about immigration such as confusion, futility, anger, disgust, and alienation. They find it difficult to blend with the dominant group due to differences in culture, values and background which form a barrier. Unlike others, they are unable to manage these differences. This leads to lower quality of life for them in the host country (Lieber et al., 2001).

2.2.1.3 Integration

Naval and Hussain (2008) have beautifully described two clearly distinguishable traits that are developed within the immigrant mind namely the 'seed' and 'feed' values. The seed values are those which the immigrants bring along with them from their original culture. The feed values are those which immigrants imbibe from the dominant culture.

These two traits can be described as ‘zebra stripes’ which remain parallel and are non-convergent in the initial stages of migration. The acculturation process may interact with these two traits to modify them. As a result, during the acculturation process, some immigrants readily accept certain features of the dominant culture while steering away from certain other features (Naval & Hussain, 2008). This leads to the integration strategy of the immigrants which refers to the immigrants adopting only the basic values of the dominant culture (Berry, 1997). Integration, which can also be referred to as biculturalism, is related to the positive adjustment of immigrants and their children (Lu, 2001).

Integration requires a mutual accommodation by both groups, namely the immigrants as well as the dominant group. It is possible for the immigrants to adopt the integration strategy only when the dominant group too is prepared to adapt in the best interest of both the groups (Berry, 1997). Integration is thus a two way process where the dominant group accepts and values the immigrants maintaining their original culture of and also accept that immigrants adopt important features of the dominant culture (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997). Integrated immigrants often maintain their separate identities and cultures in the host country. This paradigm is described as a ‘salad bowl’ which contains ingredients of different hues and shapes. These ingredients are displayed side by side, and do not mix together. In fact, they add a new flavour to the dominant culture to enhance it but without losing its own identity (Naval & Hussain, 2008). Integration is a more preferred way of acculturation by the dominant group as members of different ethno-cultural groups enrich their culture (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001).

Integration is a preferred acculturation strategy among immigrants, especially those who are minorities. This acculturation strategy increases their chances of acculturation success as an immigrant (Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001). Integrated immigrants prefer this strategy in the public domains of life in hope for equal opportunities in society while preferring maintenance of their original culture in private domains of life (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Immigrants’ increased contact with the dominant group and attachment to both the original as well as dominant culture develop a well-balanced perspective and improves their quality of life in the host country (Lieber et al., 2001).

Integrated immigrants are the most satisfied of all in terms of their post-migration experiences (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987).The integrated immigrants generally find cultural changes upon migration to be tolerable. They accept the changes regardless of whether they are able to adjust to these changes or not. They are selective in the sense that they adopt the desirable features of the dominant culture and are willing to learn those aspects of the dominant culture which are helpful for their personal development (Lieber et al., 2001). They are interested in keeping contacts with both groups namely their ethnic community as well as the dominant group (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003). Thus, integrated immigrant families are generally willing to accept cultural changes that seem to be more practical but show a strong resistance towards alterations in their core values (Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981).

Institutional completeness plays an important role in determining the extent to which immigrants integrate with the dominant group. When the differentiating features are negatively evaluated by the receiving society, the tendency of the immigrants is highly towards confining themselves within their own ethnic community. It is interesting to see that the level of resources within the ethnic community then influences the extent to which immigrants feel the need to integrate with the dominant group. If a large number of members of an ethnic group have a few resources of their own, it actually encourages entrepreneurship among the immigrants rather than using this opportunity to ingrate into the host society (Breton, 1964). The immigrants promote institutionalized means for maintaining their culture including organizing cultural activities for their children or forming leagues. They thus have a strong social support in the host country including mental health services, employment counselling, small business loans, training in the language of the dominant cultural group and cultural centres. They often display a moral obligation for their kinsmen (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987).

Though immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds show different levels of cultural adaptation, integration is the most satisfactory form of acculturation. However, it is worth noting that Southeast Asians are found to be more in favour of their original culture rather than the dominant culture. Their reasons for this are the challenges they face such as language barriers and discomfort with the social norms of the the host country and attachment with their homeland. Yet, they do not attempt to withdraw from the dominant culture and instead make the efforts to adapt to the new environment through institutionalized means (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987). The Indian immigrants

too are usually more inclined towards integration and have a close emotional and cultural attachment with the Indian soil being their Motherland (Walton-Roberts, 2009). While they accept certain features of the dominant culture (Inman et al., 2007), they also highly value their original culture and make every effort to retain its key features in the next generation. Often, majority of the children adapt quickly to the new culture while parents try to remain anchored to their original culture (Baptiste, 2005) (see Section 2.2.4 for a detailed discussion). The adolescents, in particular from the third world countries, prefer integration as the as the most desired mode of acculturation, as their primary interest. They do not endorse the idea whereby they are required to give up their original culture completely. Interestingly, though they may not wish to be identified as a foreigner, at the same time, they do not desire to be a part of the dominant group to the extent that they become indistinguishable from them (Sam, 1995).

2.2.1.4 Assimilation

In due course of time, in the process of acculturation, some immigrants become indistinguishable from the dominant group. This paradigm has been described as the 'melting pot' (Naval & Hussain, 2008). The melting pot culture often gives rise to the assimilation strategy of immigrants. Assimilation corresponds to the traditional concepts of absorption, whereby the dominant group expects immigrants to relinquish their cultural identity for the sake of adopting the dominant culture (Bourhis et al., 1997).

The assimilation mode of acculturation is more appropriate when immigrants are from countries with a similar religious and cultural background and share similar value system and beliefs (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993). In addition to the cultural similarity, permanent residency status is also seen to enhance assimilation mode of acculturation (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987).

Assimilated immigrants usually accept the challenge of immigration process more easily. Though they do find it inconvenient to start all over again in the host country by learning new cultural practices, at the same time they are aware that such challenges are expected and they have no negative emotions attached to it. Their attitude towards the cultural change displays a forward thinking acceptance (Lieber et al., 2001). The immigrants preferring assimilation as their acculturation strategy do not perceive language differences as a barrier and are interested in mastering the language of the dominant group. They prefer to speak their mother tongue only when necessary. It is

interesting and contrasting to note that though assimilated, some immigrants manage to retain their original identity (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003).

Initially the immigrants, especially the Asian immigrants in the US, had the image of 'unassimilable immoral heathens'. However, over time this image of Asian immigrants dramatically changed. They were eventually perceived as 'successful model minorities'. Interestingly, the reasons for this change in image were found to be situational and not because of any changes in their behavioural characteristics. Hence, their changed image does not necessarily indicate that immigrants are more assimilating now with the dominant group (Hurh & Kim, 1989).

2.2.2 Immigrants' Self-Identity

Ethnic identity is a part of one's personal identity. This identity can change with migration and acculturation (Bhugra, 2004, 2005). Understanding the self-identity of immigrants is important as it has implications on their overall adjustment upon migration. Indeed, the issue of self-identity can be a challenge for immigrants, as described by Zimmermann, Gataullina, Constant, and Zimmermann (2006),

> The issue of ethnic self-identification, that is the question of how to label oneself as a member of a certain ethnic community, is especially difficult for international migrants who have to decide whether and how strongly to identify with their country of origin and their host country. (p. 1)

The process of ethnic identity development has three stages. First stage is the initial stage of diffusion or foreclosure. It is characterized by little or no exploration of ethnicity with no apparent understanding of the issue and positive or negative feelings about ethnicity. The second stage namely moratorium is characterized by evidence of exploration of identity but accompanied by some confusion about the ethnicity. The third stage shows that ethnic identity is completely achieved. It is characterized by clear, secure understanding of ethnicity and commitment to the ethnic identity (Phinney, 1989).

The theory of self-identity of immigrants is well explained by Rumbaut (1994). Upon migration, immigrants identify themselves in one of the four ways. It is either as a national of the home country, as a national of the host country, the hyphenated identity associating with both the countries, or by their racial identity. Immigrants' way of identifying themselves upon migration plays an important role in their acculturation experiences as the degree of their acculturation is closely linked to their self-identity.

Though there is a major difference in the patterns of self-identity both between and within groups from diverse national origins, majority of the immigrants usually ethnically identify themselves with their immigrant origins (Rumbaut, 1994). During the process of acculturation, immigrants who become more like the dominant group culturally and socially (Gans, 2007) may undergo a change in their self-identity. While those highly acculturated are more likely to take up the identity as a national of the host country whereas those less acculturated are more likely maintain the identity as a national of the home country or the hyphenated identity (Rumbaut, 1994). It can thus be said that the assimilation strategy is related to immigrants identifying themselves as a national of the host country while integration being related to the hyphenated identity. The separation strategy is related to identity as a national of the home country, or racial identity.

The formation of identity of a person can take place at any time of his or her life however, it is generally seen that teenage or adolescence is the period of human life which is critical in identity formation. The experiences individuals undergo during this phase of life have a huge impact on their identity formation. During adulthood, self-identity and values become comparatively more rock-hard and difficult to abandon or change (Naval & Hussain, 2008). Majority of the immigrant children ethnically identify themselves with their parents' immigrant origins. Parents' role is highly influential in determining children's ethnic identity. Parents' ethnic socialization, social status and parent-child relationship strongly determine the way children ethnically identify themselves (Rumbaut, 1994). Greater family cohesion was found to be positively associated with stronger ethnic identity of adolescent children in case of Korean families in the US (Park, 2007). The influence of adolescents' peers, schools and the locations of their school too have a significant influence on their self-identity (Rumbaut, 1994).

Rumbaut (1994) has effectively depicted how immigrant children perceive their parents, is a reflection of how the immigrant children identify themselves. Children's family context plays a role in shaping their ethnic identity. As described by Rumbaut (1994),

> The likelihood of identificational assimilation is moderated by parental ethnic socialization, social status, and parent-child relationships. The children's ethnic self-identities strongly tend to mirror the perceptions of their parents' (and especially their mother's) own ethnic self-identities, as if they were reflections in an ethnic looking-glass. Children who feel embarrassed by their parents are significantly more likely to identify assimilatively as

> unhyphenated Americans, whereas higher-status professional parents are more likely to influence their children to identify by their national origin. Parent-child conflict emerged as the strongest determinant of poorer self-esteem and depressive affect. (p. 790)

It is argued by Zhou (1997) that self-identity of immigrant children and their acculturation strategy are strongly related to each other,

> For immigrant children and children of immigrants, growing up American can be a matter of smooth acceptance or of traumatic confrontation. Immigrant children are generally eager to embrace American culture and to acquire an American identity by becoming indistinguishable from their American peers. In some cases, however, they may be perceived as "unassimilated" even when they try hard to abandon their own ethnic identities. In other cases, they may be accepted as well-adjusted precisely because they retain strong ethnic identities. (p. 90)

Self-identity of immigrants is a gendered process (Rumbaut, 1994) and there is a strong connection between one's gender and ethnic identity. Girls are much more likely to choose additive or hyphenated identities than boys who are more likely to identify themselves as nationals. Gender differences are also seen in the stage of identity development of immigrants (Rumbaut, 1994). In a study conducted on identity development stages in Florida, USA, the female immigrants scored higher on achievement scales and males scored higher on diffusion scales (Schwartz & Montgomery, 2002).

Gender differences are also found in the effect of the pre and post migration characteristics that influence the self-identity of immigrants. Pre and post migration characteristics are indicators of how closely connected immigrants feel to their home or host country. While male immigrants' self-identity process is affected by only the pre-migration characteristics, female immigrants are affected by both pre and post migration characteristics. However, surprisingly, the post migration characteristics do not reach the importance of pre migration characteristics for both male and female immigrants (Zimmermann et al., 2006). "In particular, human capital acquired at home lead to lower identification with the host country for males and females, while males only have a higher affiliation with the original ethnicity" (Zimmermann et al., 2006, p. 5). While the country where education is attained determines the self-identity of immigrants (Zimmermann et

al., 2006), the level of education is not a predictor of the same (Itzigsohn, Giorguli, & Vazquez, 2005). Differences in the effect of level of education on the self-identity choices of immigrants vary according to their occupational status (Itzigsohn et al., 2005).

Another factor that affects the way immigrants define their ethnic identity is their perception of discrimination and the opportunities available to them in the country of migration (Rumbaut, 1994; Waters, 1994). Those who experience discrimination or perceive that people will discriminate against them regardless of their level of educational attainment are more likely to remain loyal to their national-origin identity (Rumbaut, 1994). In general, immigrants who refuse to change their original identity are found to take a more critical view of the dominant group. They perceive a larger social distance between the immigrants and the dominant group (Itzigsohn et al., 2005). The West Indian immigrant adolescents in US who identified themselves by their original identity however were not found to distance themselves from the dominant group despite the existence of discrimination and racism. Instead they had a neutral or positive attitude towards the dominant group though they saw themselves as different from them. They had a strong influence of their parents on them who believed that hard work and perseverance is a weapon against discrimination (Waters, 1994).

2.2.3 The Immigrant Families

"Immigrants live out much of their lives in the context of families" (Foner, 1997, p. 961). Upon migration, immigrants are faced with many challenges due to the new environment, and family to them is a haven in this new environment while they try to adjust to the new circumstances. When they migrate, they bring along their own beliefs, values and indeed, their own culture. Whilst some of these characteristics may undergo change, others remain intact. In adjusting to the new society, their family and kinship patterns undergo change too. However, the immigrant families utilize their kinship and extended ethno cultural social networks effectively in order to maintain their family relations. Intergenerational conflicts do occur in immigrant families, especially when the children demand autonomy while parents emphasize on embeddedness required for the family cohesion. However, they set aside their family disagreements and are more motivated in these circumstances to generate positive outcomes (Kwak, 2003).

Karekar (2004) has well depicted the relationships amongst the members of an immigrant family. The immigrant families share a close family bonding. They have

regular discussions on various issues including those related to education and future college plans. The immigrant children respond positively about these issues, or any points of discussion related to family members, in general. The overall control and decision making authority however is in the hands of the parents (Kao, 2004). In general, it is observed that as compared to non-immigrant families, immigrant families display stronger family cohesion to generate positive outcomes. While parents make sacrifices, children too play their part by making contributions to their family (Kwak, 2003).

The value for education is evidently seen among the immigrant families, in particular the Asian immigrant families. Their strong drive for educational qualifications is also effectively passed down to their next generation (Modood, 2004). The sociological framework presented by Modood (2004) explains the following causal sequence which is self-explanatory.

> - parents, other significant relatives and community members share some general, but durable, ambitions to achieve upward mobility for themselves and especially for their children and believe that (higher) education is important in achieving those ambitions, and so prioritize the acquisition of (higher) education;
> - they are successfully able to convey this view to the children who to a large degree internalize it and even where they may not fully share it they develop ambitions and priorities that are consistent with those of their parents;
> - the parents have enough authority and power over their children, suitably reinforced by significant relatives and other community members, to ensure that the ambition is not ephemeral or fantastic but the children do whatever is necessary at a particular stage for its progressive realization. (p. 95)

The family plays a crucial role in the acculturation process of immigrants. At times, the cultural differences between their country of origin and migration can become a threat to their family cohesion and harmony. However, their culture, family values and social network within their own immigrant community serve as a strong support which contributes in sustaining their healthy intergenerational relationship (Kwak, 2003).

2.2.4 Acculturation Experiences of Indian Immigrants

The Indian community is truly diverse in its ethno-cultural aspects and "Indians are blessed with a culture of tolerance to diversity" (Sharma, 2011, p. 95). Though Indians have a respect for all communities, even in India they are usually found to interact more among their own kind in terms of ethnic background or regional roots (Karekar, 2012). It is however noteworthy that their adaptability and acceptance to all cultures and communities is high due to their experience and exposure to the ethno-cultural diversity

in India. Originating from a country with people from various ethnic backgrounds, religions and regional roots; Indian immigrants continue to display their ability to adjust easily to different cultures even upon migration and the Indian immigrants usually score high on open-mindedness and cultural empathy (Sharma, 2011).

In particular in Singapore, the Indian culture is prominently seen as Indians are one of the foundational ethnic communities in Singapore (see Sections 1.1, 1.6). However, there is a noticeable gap between the acculturation level of Indian immigrants newly arrived, and that of those having resided in Singapore for a comparatively longer period of time. Though the Indian immigrants in Singapore are found to mingle with the local Singaporeans in places of worship and at cultural events, integration of Indian immigrants with the local community requires time. This integration happens at its own pace and cannot be a forced affair (Karekar, 2012).

Abbas (2003) has well described the point of view of Indian immigrants towards their culture before and after migration. It is interesting to see how it is a common sight that people take their culture for granted or even compromise some of their cultural values when they are in their home country, but begin to value and treasure the same more upon migration. A possible reason could be that when they are exposed to a new culture upon migration, they begin to fear that their culture will lose its existence in future. It is especially observed that Indian immigrant parents often hold on to their old traditional values which are no longer important in the new context while those residing in India are seen to modernize their ways (Abbas, 2003).

When people migrate, they are exposed to a new society which may be different culturally. It may then become inevitable to have cultural issues between the parents and the children. The Indian immigrants are no exception to this. Often, majority of the children adapt quickly to the new culture while parents try to remain anchored to their original culture (Baptiste, 2005). The main issues that arise are pressure from parents about education, success, dating, marriage and maintenance of cultural values. A reason for the same is that Indian immigrant parents have a clear view that a parent's worth is measured by education, success and children's adherence to Indian values. They expect their children to find a life partner that fits into their culture, cares for the aging parents and lives with them. The need for children to excel academically is felt constantly by children to be a pressure. Within the family, there is a sense of selflessness and

intertwining that can be both positive and conflicting (Dugsin, 2001). Commonly, Indian immigrant parents in the US express their concerns as,

> (a) fear of losing children to the US culture, (b) loss of parental authority over children (c) loss of authority to discipline children according to their native customs, (d) loss of authority to select children's mate and, (e) loss of face within the East Indian community because of children's out of culture behaviours. (Baptiste, 2005, p. 351)

Though there are conflicting issues between Indian immigrant parents and their children, their family bonding is amazingly strong. Dugsin (2001) has described the bonding in an Indian extended family effectively as,

> Indian families have a deep sense of obligation to take care of one another; an individual is viewed as a part of a larger family and community, and members of the extended family will go to great lengths to support any individual in the family. (p. 237)

Inman et al. (2007) bring to attention the ethnic identity retention matters among Indian immigrant families. The effort of ethnic identity retention among Indian immigrant families is evident through firstly the engagement in cultural, religious and festive activities; secondly, respecting the wishes of parents and family; and thirdly strong family ties with people back at home in India. Though these parents face challenges in parenting their bicultural children, they are clear in maintaining priorities in transmitting specific values to their children. These values include cultural continuity, education, educational success as well as financial security. Cultural continuity is reflected in being involved with Indian friends and associations, maintaining vegetarianism, knowing the native language, and marrying an Indian (Inman et al., 2007).

There is a difference between the parenting style of Indian mothers residing in India and that of the Indian immigrant mothers. The Indian immigrant mothers have a more authoritative parenting attitude, whereas those living in India are more authoritarian. Immigrant Indian mothers have more realistic expectations of their children and are less in favour of corporal punishment as compared to their counterparts in India. This change in their parenting style could be a result of their intention of achieving a balance between their original and the dominant culture (Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002).

Indian immigrant parents attempt to strike a balance between retaining their original culture and maintaining contacts with the dominant group (Berry, 1997). Though they do value certain aspects of the dominant culture and adapt to it too (Inman et al., 2007), the

level of their acculturation is "tempered by the operationalization of domestic religio-cultural norms" (Abbas, 2003, p. 413) regardless of their level of acculturation (Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). Indian immigrant parents highly value their original culture and make every effort to retain and pass on its key features to the next generation as they fear loss of their original culture in the process of acculturation. For this reason, they demand that their children keep minimal contacts with members of the dominant group as their children tend to assimilate easily (Baptiste, 2005).

2.3 Cultural Values of Indians

It was brought to attention in Section 2.1.3.3 that culture plays an important role in shaping parental aspirations. Besides, it emerged in Section 2.2.4 that Indian immigrants highly value their original culture. Hence, this section will present the key features of the cultural values of Indians.

Edgerton (1942) defined culture as "a total way of human life viewed as a norm, and as such approved or at least tolerated, by a people as a whole, or its articulate representatives" (p. 151). Originally, the culture that was accepted by the Indian inhabitants roughly around 400 or 500 B. C. was mainly the values related to the Hindu religion (Edgerton, 1942). Although more than 80% of the Indian population today is Hindu, India has a well-founded reputation of religious tolerance (Kolanad, 2008). India is truly diverse in its ethno-cultural (Sharma, 2011) and religions aspects, yet the Indian community possesses an eternal common outlook on life as pluralistic universalism is a marked characteristic of the Indian culture (Choudhuri, 2009).

In spite of the diversity in the Indian society, it is surprising and interesting to see that there still exists a term 'Indian culture' even after Indians migrating and spreading all over the world. In fact, as described by Ghosh (1989),

> The modern Indian diaspora - the huge migration from the subcontinent that began in the mid-nineteenth century - is not merely one of the most important demographic dislocations of modem times; it now represents an important force in world culture. (p. 73)

Hindu culture is known for being practical and spiritual at the same time (Wolpert, 1991). 'Karma' (action and the result of action), 'Dharma' (propriety), 'Artha' (profit and success) and 'Kama' (love) form the base of Hindu philosophy (Edgerton, 1942; Wolpert, 1991).

Family is the most important institution to Indians (Wolpert, 1991). The life of an Indian is shaped primarily by multitudinous family by tying the individual into the bondage of mutual obligation which acts as a safety net through thick and thin. While joint family is more common in rural India, nuclear family consisting of parents and children only is a norm in urban India. However, joint family is the emotional reality in either case. It works as a support and exerts pressure at the same time (Kolanad, 2008). Families celebrate all occasions as a unit. In fact, couples in nuclear families are seen to be spending as much time as possible at their parental home while some even move back with them out of loneliness (Wolpert, 1991).

The father or the grandfather being the head of the family is treated almost like a god and is empowered to make decisions for the family which must be obeyed at the risk of family ostracism. The best family heads however use this power wisely and only when it is necessary. They usually consult their wives and adult sons before making important decisions especially those involving money matters although the ultimate power is vested in them and may be used autocratically. After marriage, a bride is considered given to the family and not just to the husband. Being a patriarchal system, women have less power in Indian families and their main responsibility is to look after the family. However, mothers retain a personal power over their sons. Sons are expected to earn money while daughters are considered a liability. Dowry needs to be paid when a daughter is married off. Most of the parents wish for a son as a heir to continue the lineage, provide support in parents' old age and do the last rites at the funeral (Kolanad, 2008; Wolpert, 1991).

There exists the deep-rooted social hierarchy in the Indian culture which is the caste system. This caste system is a socio-cultural category that originally decided the structure of the society in terms of occupations, power, prestige and access to resources. There are four castes namely 'Brahmin' (priests and educators), 'Kshatriya' (kings and warriors), 'Vaishya' (merchants and landowners) and 'Shudra' (labourer) which are decided by birth (Wolpert, 1991). Under this caste system it is expected that one will not marry someone from a lower caste. For example, since the literacy and Mathematical capabilities of the Brahmins are higher than the other castes, the Brahmins want their children to marry Brahmin's daughters and sons because they are sure that the genes will be good (Kwang et al., 2011; Wolpert, 1991). This is to ensure that the next generation will possess the capabilities of the present generation. Women have an important role to

play in this matter. They are responsible for keeping up the traditions and rituals that maintain the caste purity (Kolanad, 2008).

The philosophy of Indian culture based on the constructs of 'karma', 'dharma' and 'kama' is linked with the caste system. The laws of 'karma' were first articulated about 2,500 years ago. However, they are still accepted by modern intellectuals. It is believed that rebirth is a form of an extreme punishment for souls whose bad deeds could not sufficiently be punished in a single lifetime. As a reward of good deeds, a person can possibly be born in a higher caste whereas as a punishment of bad deeds, a person is likely to take rebirth in a lower caste (Kolanad, 2008; Wolpert, 1991).

"Dharma is the law of one's inner being; a moral code, righteousness and duties and responsibilities according to one's nature" (Kolanad, 2008, p. 28). It means doing what one is supposed to do according to the position into which one was born and according to the stage of one's life. It refers to the socially approved conduct in relation to one's fellow men and animals. The 'dharma' varies according to individual's caste, age and situation (Edgerton, 1942; Kolanad, 2008).

'Kama' means love and relationship. Arranged marriage is a norm in Indian culture which is carefully planned based on matching horoscopes and caste (Kolanad, 2008; Wolpert, 1991). Indian culture endorses a marriage to be between two families and not just between the husband and the wife (Kolanad, 2008). "Love is important, but it is believed to happen naturally during the course of life lived together and to grow stronger over the years. It is not necessary to be 'in love' before marrying" (Kolanad, 2008, p. 65).

2.4 Research Questions

So far, this chapter reviewed the relevant literature on aspirations and acculturation. The chapter began with reviewing the notion of aspirations in general and then focused on aspirations of parents for their children. The factors that determine parental aspirations were discussed in detail. It then moved on to the notion of acculturation. The acculturation experiences of immigrants were discussed in general at first followed by the specific experiences of Indian immigrant families. Key features of the cultural values of Indians were highlighted too.

It was highlighted in Section 2.1 that understanding aspirations contributes to better understanding of individual's well-being (Stutzer, 2004). Though aspirations are formed

at various developmental phases in one's life, it is especially important to understand aspirations at the adolescent phase as key decisions for children's future are taken by parents and children at this stage (Cunningham et al., 2007). Though there is research conducted on the aspirations of immigrants, most of it explores their aspirations for themselves as children or adolescents and little is spoken about the aspirations immigrants have for their children. Besides, most of the research conducted in the area of aspirations and/or acculturation experiences immigrants involves those who have migrated to countries in the European and American continents and little is spoken about Asians who have migrated to a country within Asia (see Section 2.1.4 for specific details). In fact, little attention has been paid to countries like Singapore which itself is an immigrant country and has been reported as the third-most-popular place to relocate worldwide with education as one of the key factors in this matter (see Sections 1.1 and 1.3). In light of this, the first research question is formulated as follows:

1a. What are the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

1b. What are the factors influencing the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

Though various factors have been identified by researchers that have an influence on parents' aspirations for their children, little evidence is available on the role acculturation process in shaping these aspirations (see Section 2.1.4 for specific details). Hence, the second research question is as follows:

2. How has the acculturation process shaped the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

Amongst the literature reviewed, the immigrants' culture, gender, experiences of discrimination, education, occupation and socioeconomic status were mentioned frequently by researchers in association with the aspirations they have for their children. The next chapter will closely examine these and other relevant constructs related to the

acculturation of immigrants, namely their pre-migration experiences and expectations as well as length of their stay in host country, in order to present the theoretical framework that will guide the conduct of this research study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research study investigates the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level, the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of the acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. It was brought to notice through the literature reviewed in the previous chapter that though several determinants of parents' aspirations have been researched, it is likely that acculturation plays a crucial role in shaping aspirations of immigrant parents for their children (Flores et al., 2006; Gans, 2007; Leung et al., 1994; Plunkett & Bámaca-Gómez, 2003). It is apparent that amongst the literature reviewed for the conduct of this research study, the immigrants' culture, gender, discrimination, education, occupation and socioeconomic status had been referred to by many of the researchers. In this chapter, these will be looked at closely in the context of the theoretical framework consisting of two components, namely, the aspirations model and the acculturation model. Indeed, this research study is anchored by these two components of the theoretical framework. The 'aspirations model' consists of the factors that influence parents' aspirations for their children. The 'acculturation model' is adopted from Berry (1997) and consists of the factors that remain influential in immigrants' acculturation process. This research study investigates these as the factors influencing aspirations for data collection.

3.1 Aspirations Model

Ray's (2003) concept of the aspirations window was discussed in Section 2.1.2. Three components were seen to influence one's aspirations window. It is one's experiences in life, people that have had impact on the person and one's socio-economic status. The various factors that determine aspirations of parents for their children were reviewed in Section 2.1.3. In particular, the literature review exercise in Section 2.1.3 identified the factors that influence parental aspirations for their children. These were discussed under three main categories and are summarized as follows.

1. Parents' education, income and awareness
    a. Parents' educational level
    b. Parents' perception of affordability

c. Parents' awareness of educational and occupational opportunities and financial aid available

2. Children's academic performance, interest and gender

    a. Children's academic performance

    b. Children's interest in education

    c. Children's gender

3. Role of culture and family

    a. Parents' cultural expectations

    b. Parents' acculturation experiences

    c. Parents' childhood experiences with parents

It is interesting to note that the components that constitute one's aspirations window and the factors that influence aspirations of parents for their children appear to connect to each other in creative ways. These are synthesized here as a means of forming the aspirations model of the theoretical framework for this research study.

In relation to Ray's (2003) aspirations window, the factors parents' educational level, parents' awareness of options, opportunities and financial aids available, and parents' perception of affordability of educational expenses reflect the component of the socio-economic status in the aspirations window model.

In the context of this study, the component people or significant others in the aspirations window model would refer to the people who have had impact on the parents' life and who had changed their outlook in life in one way or another. The people that shape parents' aspirations for their children can be considered in two categories. Firstly, parents' own parents or family who have influenced their aspirations through the way they were brought up with certain parenting style and secondly, the children themselves, in the form of their children's academic performance, interest in education and their gender. This does not deny however the possible influence of cultural values playing a

role, for example the ways in which parents construct different expectations and hopes between sons and daughters.

The remaining component influencing the aspirations window model (Ray, 2003) relates to an individual's life experiences and social environment. This component refers to culture, parents' childhood experiences and acculturation experiences. It was discussed in Section 2.1.2 that aspirations are influenced by one's social environment (Genicot & Ray, 2009) and in Section 2.1.3.3 that parents' expectations from their children are derived from their own life experiences (Genicot & Ray, 2009; Li, 2001), their childhood experiences and cultural values (Li, 2001). After all, parents' childhood experiences and culture do constitute as important aspects of their social environment.

In the context of immigrants, settling down in a foreign country and beginning a new life in a new social environment constitute a major event in their respective life experiences. Decisions regarding their children's education are undoubtedly crucial. Many times, immigrant parents insist that their children go on with higher education in order to be successful in the host country upon migration (see Section 2.1.3.3). Upon migration, some parents may want their children to pursue education and career that is valued in their original culture while some parents may be more concerned about what is valued in the dominant culture. There may also be parents who would want to strike a balance between both. It can thus be said that in case of immigrant parents, their aspirations for their children are shaped by their original cultural values and/or their experiences as an immigrant depending on to what extent they wish to maintain their original culture and/or adapt to the dominant culture. Thus, the acculturation experiences are expected to play an important role in shaping the Indian immigrant parents' aspirations for their children (see Section 2.1.4), amongst other experiences in their respective lives. Hence, 'acculturation experiences' of parents is an important factor that relates to the component personal life experiences of parents and social environment. After all, acculturation is a manifestation of cultural influences where two or more cultures come into contact in a new environment (see Section 2.2).

In this research study, the aspirations model will be perceived as an elaboration of Ray's (2003) aspirations window. In essence, each of the three components influencing the aspirations window has an expression in terms of specific factors. Thus, the elaborated aspirations window model with which Indian immigrant parents' aspirations

will be investigated in this study is made up of the following components and is presented in Figure 3.1 based on the relevant literature reviewed.

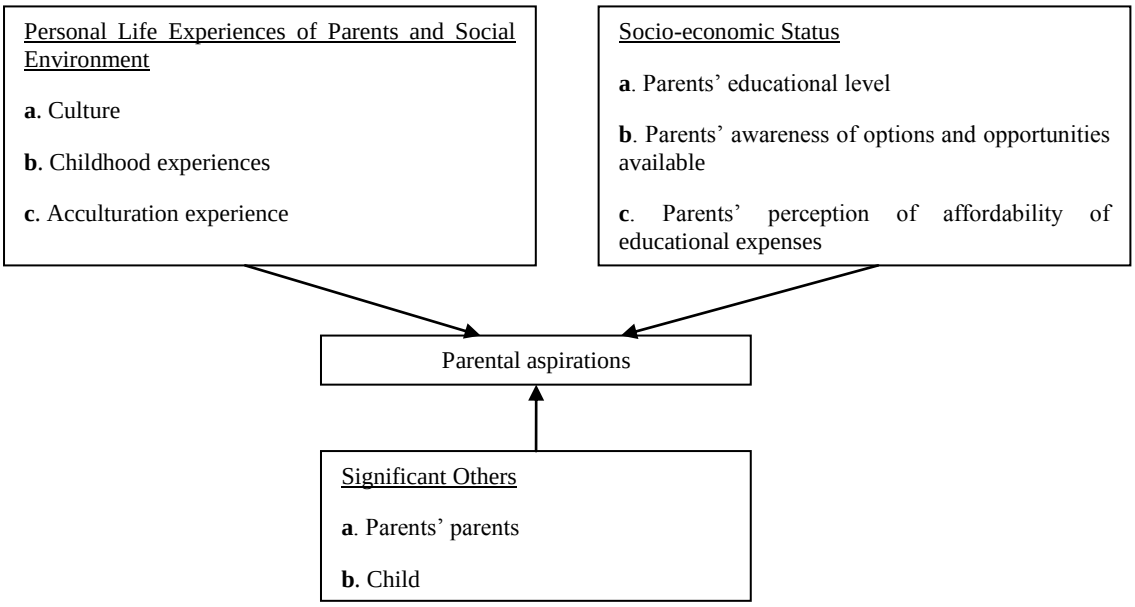

Figure 3.1. Aspirations model.

3.2 Acculturation Model

The relevant literature on the acculturation experiences of immigrants was reviewed in Section 2.2. It is interesting to see how acculturation experiences vary for different people. Upon migration, individuals may continue to behave without changing in the new setting and environment or they may change and adjust to the new environment. However in most cases, the acculturation process of immigrants is not simply based on either continuity or change, and instead seen to undergo a complex pattern of continuity and change (Berry, 1997).

Figure 3.2 is a structural model that provides the key variables that should be taken into account while considering the acculturation of immigrants. Berry (1997) has proposed that studying these variables is extremely crucial in comprehending individuals who are experiencing acculturation. The acculturation process of immigrants begins with their experiences at the group as well as individual level and is highly variable due to the moderating factors prior to and during acculturation. The group level phenomena are the situational variables whereas the individual level variables are predominantly the person variables (Berry, 1997). The effect of both types of factors namely those prior to and

during acculturation on the acculturation experiences of immigrants is discussed in the sections to follow.

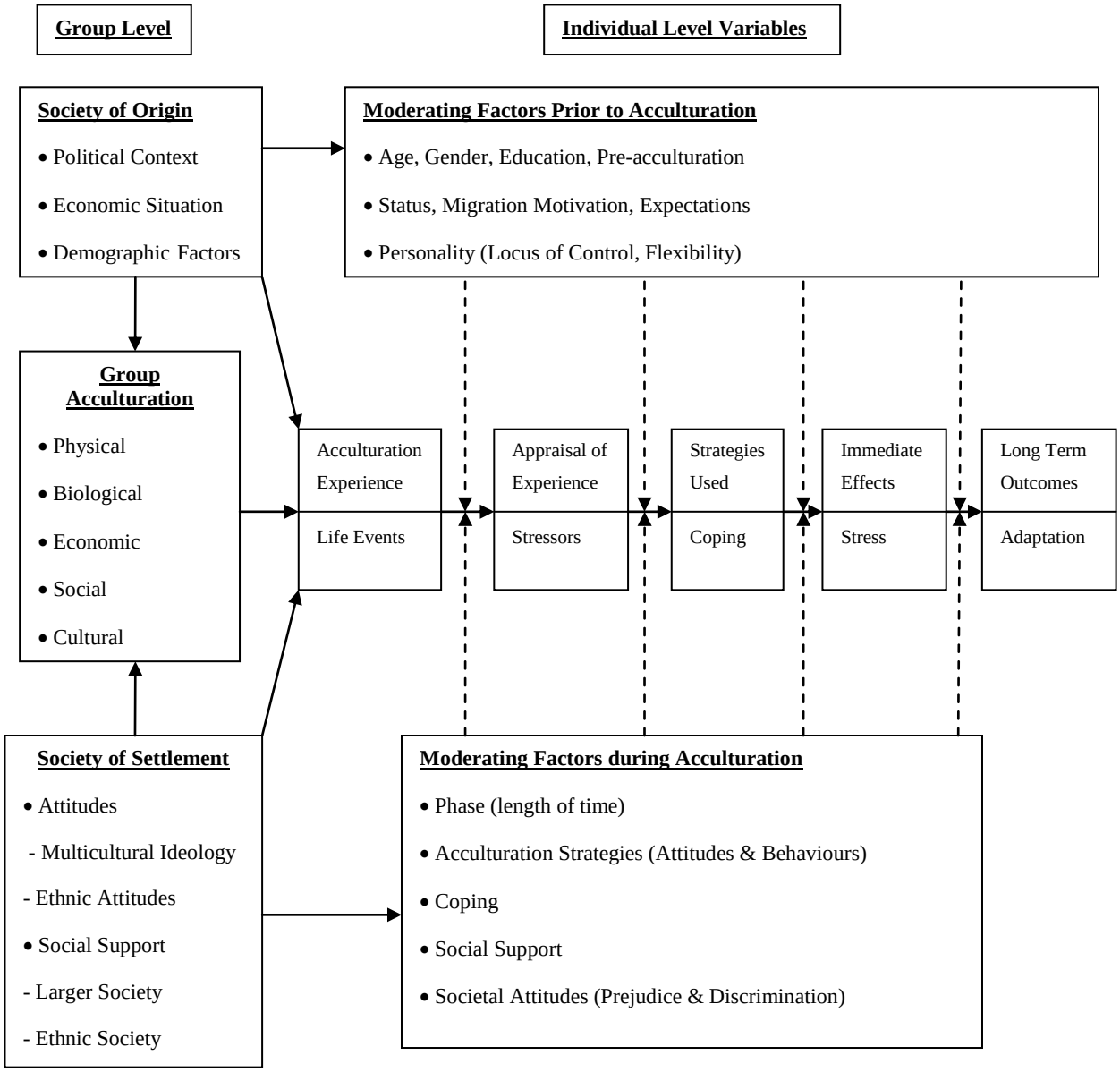

Figure 3.2. Acculturation model (Adopted from Berry, 1997, p. 15).

3.2.1 Moderating Factors Prior to Acculturation

3.2.1.1 Pre-migration Experiences and Expectations

Acculturation actually begins at the pre-migration stage. The potential migrants start developing their acculturation strategies even before migration. Prior to migration, they have certain notions or perceptions of the dominant group and culture in their mind and the level of their acculturation success depends on how well they are aware of these and

accept these (Yijälä & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2010). When people are not aware of what to expect upon migration, their poorly planned migration can be a risk and can add to acculturative stress (Chou, 2009).

Though people have their own various reasons for migration, they mostly migrate because of their high hopes of a better future in the country of migration; be it for themselves or their family and children. It is believed that migration may naturally enhance the aspirations of immigrants (Gupta, 1977). Sometimes people migrate for the only important reason, which is to seek educational and career opportunities for their children (Dion & Dion, 2001). In fact, some immigrants actually have a better life in their home country but they sacrifice it and migrate to stay in a new country so that their children can receive good education and learn English (Cooper et al., 1994). They view migration as a new opportunity to succeed in life (Lieber et al., 2001).

Prior to migration, immigrants may have certain perceptions and expectations of their future experiences. They migrate for better future at the cost of giving up the familiarity of their original culture in exchange for a better future on the basis of their preconceived ideas (Negy, Schwartz, & Reig-Ferrer, 2009). After migration they tend to compare these perceptions and expectations with their actual experiences. Their motivation for their migration may also play a role in shaping these experiences. Success of acculturation process depends on the immigrants' perception of their life in the host country prior to and upon actual migration. Immigrants who perceive their lives in the host country to be less satisfying than they expected face more acculturative stress as compared to those who perceive their lives to be more satisfying than they had expected (Negy et al., 2009).

Prior to migration, people may also have a certain image or perception of the dominant group. They may even have certain prejudice against the dominant group or other ethnic communities living there. This prejudice against other communities living in the host country may also play a role in the acculturation process of immigrants and its success. A minority immigrant with a positive perception and attitude towards the dominant group is more likely to acculturate successfully as compared to an immigrant with a negative perception and attitude of the same (Zick et al., 2001).

3.2.1.2 Culture and Religion

"The norms and values of religion and culture are powerful forces in the lives of people, families and communities all over the world" (Abbas, 2003, p. 411) and immigrants are no exception to this. However, the amount of importance actually given to religion in life may vary from religion to religion. This is especially observed among South Asian immigrants. As expressed by Abbas (2003, p. 423), "such differences are manifest based on the ways in which religion is expressed and articulated in various ways". Specifically, the influence of religion was found to vary among Muslim and non-Muslim immigrants in UK. The Muslims were found to value religion more than the Hindus and Sikhs. Non-Muslims were found to take less active interest and were less involved in their respective religions and had a greater freedom. Among the non-Muslims, lower religiosity indicated higher acculturation level. The respective religio-cultural norms and culture of Muslims and non-Muslim South Asian immigrants were found to have a different impact on their acculturation level (Abbas, 2003).

Though values can and do change, and they do continue to reflect a society's cultural heritage; religious beliefs have been seen to persist (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, and Zenou (2008) studied differences in the acculturation patterns between Muslims and non-Muslim immigrants in UK. It was evidently seen that Muslims integrate less and slowly than non-Muslims. They retained a very strong religious identity even after migration to western countries. In terms of the strength of religious identity, it is interesting to see that a Muslim born in UK and having lived there for thirty years is comparable with a non-Muslim just arrived in the country (Bisin et al., 2008). Muslim immigrants appear to be more willing to retain their original culture than to accept the new culture (Alkhazraji, Gardner III, Martin, & Paolillo, 1997) and this scenario has not changed much over the years and across generations (Ijaz & Abbas, 2010).

The Chinese immigrants in Canada were found to favour cultural integration as they attempted to live in two clashing cultures. They accepted the pragmatic aspects of the Canadian culture that they believed in but without compromising their core cultural values which in their eyes were the hallmarks of their original culture. They continued to cherish those aspects of their Chinese culture that were considered to be one's pride and honour (Li, 2001). Thus, influence of religion and culture is seen on immigrants' acculturation, though its extent varies.

3.2.1.3 Gender, Age, Education and Occupation

Acculturation of immigrants is a gendered process. Generally, female immigrants are found to adjust better than their male counterparts psychologically (Chen, Benet-Martínez, & Bond, 2008) whereas immigrant men socialize better outside their ethnic enclave than women (Chaichian, 1997). It is a common sight that women are more eager than men to embrace the new culture especially when it endorses values that enhance their position in the society (Foner, 1997). Female immigrants are more likely to report a lower self-esteem, higher depression, and a greater level of parent-child conflict than male immigrants (Rumbaut, 1994).

The acculturation experiences of male and female immigrants vary as a function of the parent and child gender (Patel et al., 1996). In some immigrant families, daughters are scrutinized with higher socialization demands as compared to sons. These immigrant parents tend to seek a greater control over their daughters' behaviour than sons. Daughters may be encouraged to seek educational and career opportunities however; they are also expected to adhere to the cultural norms which are valued in their home country. Parental socialization pressure is seen to be greater on daughters than sons (Dion & Dion, 2001). In general, Asian immigrant parents are more protective about their daughters than their sons (Chung, 2001) and among Indians, this tendency is more among fathers than mothers (Patel et al., 1996). Specifically, among the Indian immigrants, mothers emphasise on all their values and beliefs on both boys and girls and not specifically certain values for boys and certain values for girls (Patel et al., 1996). Parents and children show highly similar attitudes towards women however, women believe more strongly in gender equality than men. Mothers' attitude influences children's attitude quite significantly as compared to fathers. In spite of intergenerational differences, in the Indian immigrant families there is harmony, shared values and cultural continuity in the second generation (Dasgupta, 1998) because "lively negotiations and reconciliations mark the community's process of acculturation" (Dasgupta, 1998, p. 968). Gender differences were observed among the Southeast Asian immigrants in US where girls reported more intergenerational conflicts than boys as parents were usually more restrictive towards daughters than sons. However, their level of intergenerational conflicts reduced with greater acculturation. The Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians; who were relatively new in US, were found to show the highest intergenerational conflicts over cultural

expectations from their children as compared to the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and Korean who have a longer immigration history in the US (Chung, 2001).

There are certain reasons why Indian immigrant fathers have a more protective and stricter parenting attitude towards their daughters. Traditionally, Indian fathers consider being protective about their daughters as a part of their responsibility. Strongly believing in the traditional values and beliefs, they expect their daughters to be deferent to authority, well-mannered and polite as they associate these characteristics with appropriate feminine behaviour. They are highly concerned about bringing up their daughters in a new cultural environment which is different from their own. This is seen even among fathers who are highly acculturated to the dominant culture which indicates their selectiveness in acculturation strategies as this tendency is regardless of whether their values and beliefs are traditional or modern (Patel et al., 1996).

The spouse preferences of immigrants also show gender differences. Specifically among the Chinese immigrants in the US, women are generally more concerned with their partner's status than men whereas men are more interested in the physical appearance than women. Both children and parents prefer high status spouse for their daughters while parents share their sons' emphasis on physical appearance of the spouse. Parents show a greater preference for traditional mate characteristics than their children. Parents' preferences are related to parents' own Asian values and children's traditional mate preferences are predicted by their parents' preferences (Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006).

Age plays an important role too in affecting the acculturation process of immigrants. Acculturation process is generally smoother at younger age and more problematic at adolescence possibly because personal flexibility and adaptability is maximal during early years of age (Berry, 1997). During adolescence on the other hand, "conflicts between demands of parents and peers are maximal at this period, or that the problems of life transitions between childhood and adulthood are compounded by cultural transitions" (Berry, 1997, p. 21). Though the age at which migration takes place is related to the acculturation process of both immigrant parents and children, it was found to be a relatively more important acculturation variable for children than parents in case of Soviet Jewish immigrants in US. The explanation for this discrepancy was that the age of arrival was correlated to more acculturation dimensions for children than parents (Birman &

Trickett, 2001). Those who migrate at a younger age, obviously have had a longer stay in the host country as compared to those fairly recently arrived and hence their exposure to the dominant culture is more and at a younger age (Lee et al., 2003). Immigrant mothers become more conservative, especially for their daughters, as their children get older and their egalitarianism mitigates with children's age (Dasgupta, 1998).

Education is an important determinant of the level and success of acculturation. For many immigrants, it is their education that contributes in attuning them to the features of the society into which they settle upon migration. Education is thus a kind of pre-acculturation to the language, history, values, and norms of the new culture (Berry, 1997). The country where immigrants are educated also plays a role in their acculturation process. Immigrants educated in their home country are found to be more likely to resist adopting identity as a national of the host country and become less acculturated. On the contrary, education in the host country significantly increases their acculturation level (Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002).

Educational and occupational success has been used to measure the acculturation success of immigrants. Asian immigrants in US are perceived as the model minorities being extraordinarily well adjusted, due to their achievements in occupational, educational, and economic spheres (Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995). Acculturation level can vary among immigrants based on their occupational status. Specifically in case of Korean immigrants in the US, among those least acculturated majority were found be housewives, retirees, and unemployed with very little proficiency in English while the level of educational attainment and fluency in English were found to be higher among those more acculturated (Lee et al., 2003). It can thus be said that perhaps those not exposed sufficiently to the dominant group and culture in terms of work and employment remain least acculturated and vice versa.

3.2.2 Moderating Factors during Acculturation

3.2.2.1 Length of Stay

The length of stay of immigrants in the host country is evidently seen to influence their acculturation; in particular, immigrants' length of residence in the host country impacts their behavioural acculturation. As the length of stay in the host country increases, immigrants' behaviour becomes more like that of the dominant group. It was

seen in the case of Russians in America that they showed increased Americanised behaviour and decreased Russian behaviour with longer stay in the host country. The findings suggested that behavioural acculturation is a linear and gradual process for both immigrant parents and children (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

It should be noted that the extent to which there is an increase or decrease in certain behaviour (related to original or dominant culture) over the time during the stay in the host country may vary from person to person. The length of stay in the host country also influences the extent to which immigrants value their original or dominant culture. Among the Indian immigrant parents in North America, it was seen that regardless of their own values and beliefs, the longer mothers were exposed to the North American culture, the more they valued the North American characteristics in their children (Patel et al., 1996).

Longer residency in the country of migration directly affects immigrants' identity-based acculturation (Oh et al., 2002). However, the length of the stay of immigrants in the host country can make them more isolated and lonelier despite their educational and professional success as they fail to integrate with the dominant group due to their ethnic pride and discrimination (Chaichian, 1997). More educated immigrants having stayed longer in the host country are more accepting towards the new culture, they become more open minded about the new culture and are more capable of reconciling discrepancies between the two cultures. Thus, there is a direct relationship between the length of stay of the immigrants with their level of acculturation to the dominant culture (Alkhazraji et al., 1997). In fact, immigrants who have resided in the host country for more than five years become indistinguishable from those born in the host country (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987).

3.2.2.2 Societal Attitudes

When people migrate, they come into contact with people, society and culture which may be different from their own in many ways. It is then possible that they may face discrimination during the process of acculturation. This can affect them in many ways. Successful adaptation and adjustment of immigrants depends on how they are treated in the host country. Racism and discrimination can negatively impact immigrants' overall well-being (Chung, Bemak, Ortiz, & Sandoval-Perez, 2008). Perceived discrimination

can be detrimental on immigrants' adjustment upon migration (Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Solheim, 2004).

Perceptions of discrimination may also affect the way immigrants define their ethnic identities and thus in turn the degree to which they can acculturate (Rumbaut, 1994). Immigrants who prefer to identify themselves with their ethnic origin may have perceived more events to represent discrimination, or are more likely to notice such events when they occur. A likely explanation for such discrimination can be that those perceived by the dominant group as overly ethnic are singled out as they are perceived by the dominant group as being unwilling to fit or troublemakers (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

Discrimination is faced by many immigrants due to the difference in their physical appearances. Females often show their concern that the standards of beauty of the dominant group in terms of hair and skin colour do not apply to them, whereas males are more concerned about job discrimination due the difference in their looks (Phinney, 1989).

Views on acculturation and multiculturalism differ substantially among the immigrants or dominant groups. This aspect was particularly revealed as an outcome of a study conducted in the Netherlands. On the one hand, the immigrants seemed to be positive and in favour of cultural diversity, while on the other, many members of the dominant group were found to be mostly neutral about it. Some members of the dominant group even expressed their concerns that cultural diversity is disadvantageous as it weakens the unity in the society (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2003). Some Chinese immigrants in Canada expressed the view that multiculturalism exists only on paper in the government policies. In reality, they experience racism and discrimination every day and everywhere. Due to racism and discrimination, they feel discouraged to pursue certain careers such as law or politics. For the same reason, they tend to encourage their children to excel in Science related subjects so that they can pursue careers in engineering or other technical fields. High education and hard work is their weapon against racism and discrimination in the country of migration (Li, 2001). In Singapore context too, policies are in place to ensure racial harmony. Generally people of all races do get along well. However, everyday racism does exist in Singapore which unfortunately is not discussed openly in public arenas (Velayutham, 2006) and such experiences "continue to simmer

beneath the warm and fuzzy image of harmonious and tolerant image of multiracial Singapore" (Velayutham, 2006, p. 6).

Racism can also be at the institutional level which results in immigrants being deprived of certain opportunities due to certain laws and policies. As described by Chung et al. (2008),

> Not only do immigrants routinely experience acts of individual racism and micro aggressions, they are also subjected to various forms of institutional racism. Institutional racism is the systemic, organizational, and governmental policies and practices that discriminate against and invalidate people in racial/ethnic/cultural groups through unequal allocation of resources and lack of opportunity and access. Race-based discrimination in housing, health care, mortgage lending practices, and education; systematic profiling of persons of colour by security and law enforcement workers; and barriers to employment or professional advancement on the basis of an individual's racial/ethnic/cultural background are all forms of institutional racism. (p. 313)

3.2.2.3 Acculturation Strategies

The different experiences immigrants go through and the acculturation strategies they adopt mainly depend on two major issues as highlighted by Berry (1997),

> these issues are: cultural maintenance (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and contact and participation (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves). (p. 9)

Various acculturation strategies of immigrants were discussed at length in Section 2.2.1. These were separation, marginalization, integration and assimilation. Immigrants adopting assimilation strategy mainly interact with the dominant group and do not display interest in maintaining their original culture. Immigrants adopting separation are seen to value their original culture avoiding interaction with the dominant group. Integration refers to maintenance of original culture as well as acceptance of key features of dominant culture by interacting with the dominant group. Marginalization refers to no interest in either culture (Berry, 1997).

This chapter presented the theoretical framework for this research study, consisting of two components, namely the aspirations model and the acculturation model. Together,

these will identify the key factors and variables that shape aspirations of Indian immigrants for their children, and also highlight the presumed relationship between them (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The aspirations model elaborates Ray's (2003) concept of aspirations window, proposing three interrelated components which are personal life experiences, significant others and the socio-economic status. On the other hand, the acculturation model mainly focuses on group and individual level acculturation variables with moderating factors prior to and during migration (Berry, 1997). Role of culture was seen to impact immigrant parents' aspirations for their children significantly. As reported by Li (2001), immigrant parents' expectations from their children are significantly shaped by their cultural values, experiences as an immigrant and their acculturative attitudes. Also, for immigrants, their acculturation experiences constitute an integral part of their life experiences in the host country. Thus in the context of immigrants, it can be argued that their acculturation experiences are an important part of their aspirations window constituting an integral component of the acculturation as well as the aspirations model.

Several commonalities are seen among the factors influencing parents' aspirations for their children and the factors influencing acculturation experiences of immigrants. In the aspirations model, socio-economic status of parents was discussed in terms of parents' level of education, parents' perception of affordability of children's educational expenses and parental awareness of opportunities available (see Section 3.1). Immigrants' educational and occupational status was also seen as the moderating factor prior to their migration relating to their acculturation experiences (see Section 3.2.1.3). Thus, socio-economic status influences both aspirations of parents for their children as well as the acculturation process of immigrants.

Self-identification of immigrants is a gendered process (Rumbaut, 1994). Acculturation experiences of immigrants vary for different genders in terms of how they adjust to the new environment (Chaichian, 1997; Chen et al., 2008; Patel et al., 1996) and so do the aspirations of parents for their sons and daughters (Ijaz & Abbas, 2010; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Strand, 2007). Sons and daughters are brought up with specific expectations from their families in terms of academic as well as socialization demands (Dion & Dion, 2001; Ijaz & Abbas, 2010). This has a continued impact on parents'

expectations and aspirations for their children; and their acculturation experiences as immigrants are exposed to a new culture upon migration.

The length of stay of immigrants in the host country has a significant impact on their acculturation (Alkhazraji et al., 1997; Oh et al., 2002; Patel et al., 1996). The longer the immigrants have stayed in the host country, the higher the chances that they become like the dominant group socially and culturally (Gans, 2007). In fact, Leung et al. (1994) have found no significant difference in the aspirations between immigrants who migrated more than ten years ago and the dominant group.

These common factors (parental socio-economic status, children's gender, and length of stay in the host country) are thus especially significant in the sense that they shape parental aspirations directly and indirectly through their effects on the immigrants' acculturation experiences. Thus, in this research study, potential Indian immigrant parent participants will be selected in such a way that there is a representation across each of these factors. This and other aspects of the research methodology such as data collection methods and analysis will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study investigates the aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level. It explores what education and occupation they aspire for their children, the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. Chapter 2 reviewed the relevant literature on aspirations and acculturation while Chapter 3 presented the theoretical framework that guided this research study. This chapter will present the research methodology that was employed in this research study. Its formulation is guided by the current knowledge in research design and informed by the literature review and theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 respectively. In particular, this chapter will describe the research strategy, sampling procedure, and data collection methods followed by the data analysis process in detail. Ethical considerations will be brought to attention too.

4.1 Research Strategy

This research study was interpretive in nature. As the aim of this study is to investigate the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children and the role of acculturation in shaping these aspirations, clearly, it does not seek to confirm any hypothesis. In addition to investigating and understanding parents' aspirations for their children, it explores parents' acculturation experiences and their views or perceptions of these experiences. This is an inductive process where the researcher needs to gather data to build concepts or theories rather than deductively testing a hypothesis (Merriam, 2009). As in the inductive process, the data would need to be analysed to see if any patterns emerge which can throw light on the relationship between variables (Gray, 2009). Indeed, this is precisely what this research study aims to achieve while exploring how the acculturation process shapes parental aspirations. The reality to be studied consists of people's experiences and perceptions of the external world which are subjective rather than accurate description of the laws and the mechanisms that operate in social life. These are typically the characteristics of the interpretive approach, which aims to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that lie

behind an action (Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Hence this research study was interpretive in nature.

The data that was collected for this research study was mainly qualitative. Interpretive studies are often associated with qualitative approaches requiring gathering of data which involves engagement and contact of the researcher with people (Gray, 2009). Qualitative research is about "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). Qualitative research also requires the researcher to interpret meanings of people's experiences with an intent of developing a pattern in their context or setting (Creswell, 2003), which is precisely what this research study intends to accomplish in understanding immigrants' experiences prior to and upon migration and its role in shaping their parental aspirations. Thus, this research study demands understanding of the complex interrelationships rather than investigating control of variables (Stake, 1995). These are the typical characteristics of a qualitative study and thus this research study was mainly qualitative in nature (see Blanche & Durrheim, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2009; Mason, 2002; Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995).

Among the more recent research conducted to understand parents' aspirations for their children, most of the researchers have employed the quantitative approach (Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund et al., 2004; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera et al., 2009; Strand, 2007; Wentzel, 1998; Zhan, 2006) by studying parental aspirations for their children with a predetermined notion, scale and determinants of parental aspirations and expectations. To assess how much importance parents give to each goal, they were asked to rank the goals (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001). Though some studies examined parental expectations from their children with the help of open ended questions, the responses were quantified and then analysed quantitatively (see Davis-Kean, 2005; Englund et al., 2004; Wentzel, 1998; Zhan, 2006). A limitation of the quantitative study is that while exploring the effect of certain predetermined variables on parental expectations from their children; effect of a wide range of other personal, family and community characteristics is not explained (Zhan, 2006). Besides, quantitative studies do not capture detailed perspectives of the determinants of parental aspirations for their children (Wentzel, 1998). The current study requires investigation of immigrant parents' insights into the process which influences their aspirations for their children (Spera et al., 2009) namely their acculturation process. In order to reveal parents' insights into the process by which perceptions influence

parents' behaviours, multiple methods need to be employed to understand antecedents of parental aspirations for their children (Spera et al., 2009). Studying parental aspirations demands investigating determinants beyond those hypothesized by the researcher (Wendling & Elliott, 1968). Hence, to overcome these challenges, the qualitative approach was found to be suitable for this research study which employed more than one method of data collection which was required in understanding parents' perception of their aspirations for their children as well as the determinants of these aspirations.

This study is about immigrants. It demands bringing in rich and contextualized information from them while understanding their aspirations for their children. It requires uncovering of multiple realities constructed by the parents in their given social, cultural and personal circumstances where the participants act as collaborators and facilitate in uncovering their perception of the world view. The qualitative approach has these capabilities (Li, 2001). Besides, the qualitative approach can explore more complex and subtle aspects of parental views (Goldenberg et al., 2001). For these reasons, the qualitative approach was found to be more suitable in this study for an in-depth understanding of parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore.

Understanding the acculturation process and experiences of immigrants requires comprehending how people think of certain phase of their lives, how they adjust to it and the process involved in it, which can be better captured using the qualitative approach (Merriam, 2009). Though a number of studies have been conducted to understand the acculturation experiences and strategies of immigrants, most of these have employed quantitative methods (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003; Bisin et al., 2008; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Negy et al., 2009; Oh et al., 2002; Sam, 1995; Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987). Factors that influence the identity of immigrants or their acculturation strategies and experiences have been hypothesized by researchers and then tested (Gray, 2009). Considering the nature of these studies, quantitative methods were perhaps suitable to address their objectives; which were determining the extent or measurement of acculturation, using the available measurement tools or testing their validity, comparing level of acculturation or aspirations across different groups or testing hypothesis. These studies sought to confirm or test claims through generalization which requires large amount of data which can be collected quickly through questionnaires or readily available secondary data sources and survey questionnaires. However, the tools employed in these studies may not have been sensitive

and comprehensive enough to cover all and any new aspects of acculturation (Negy et al., 2009) which is the demand of the current research study.

The quantitative approach explores only certain pre-determined factors and it is highly likely that a different pattern can be discovered if several other factors are considered (Bisin et al., 2008). Characteristics of the participants including their perception of social norms and psychological antecedents need to be studied in depth to better understand immigrants' experiences (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004). Though perceptions of acculturation experiences have been studied by researchers, they have been studied with the help of a set of pre-determined questionnaires and analysed quantitatively. It is possible that some predictions could not be captured as some questions were not asked simply because questions were pre-determined due to the nature of the approach (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001; Negy et al., 2009; Sam, 1995). Hence, the qualitative approach was found to be suitable for this study to understand acculturation experiences.

As pointed out by Gray (2009), a typical criticism of the quantitative research is that it can involve little or no contact with people, which is actually required in this research study. Besides, quantitative study which tests only a pre-determined fixed set of variables may not throw light on the role of acculturation process as perceived by the Indian immigrants that shape their certain aspirations. It is possible that immigrant parents' subjective experiences of acculturation and aspirations may not be completely captured in a quantitative study. Though the theoretical framework has identified the moderating factors that impact the acculturation process of immigrants (see Section 3.2), this research study requires a thorough understanding of how these factors or the aspects of the acculturation experiences shape parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore. Hence, this study was mainly qualitative in nature.

The case study approach was found to be suitable to carry out this research study. The case study approach is strongly associated with qualitative study (Gray, 2009). The case study approach is more ideal when a 'how' question is asked and when the study is mainly exploratory (Gray, 2009). Indeed, the second research question which is crucial for this study is a 'how' question (see Section 2.4) as this research study intends to investigate how the acculturation process shapes parental aspirations. Also, the study is exploratory in nature given that little research appears to have been conducted to

investigate how acculturation shapes immigrant parents' aspirations. The case study approach can explore many themes and subjects from a much focused range of people which is required in understanding parental aspirations and the role of acculturation in shaping them (Gray, 2009). Besides, the study is emergent in nature rather than tightly prefigured (Creswell, 2003; Gray, 2009) as understanding of aspects of acculturation process and their role in shaping parental aspirations is expected to emerge and unfold beginning with initial codes and then developing into broad themes (Creswell, 2003).

Though 'case' is a broadly defined term, typical examples of the subject of a case analysis are social communities, persons or organizations (Flick, 2009); people or programmes (Stake, 1995). Indeed, this research study too investigates the acculturation experiences and parental aspirations of a certain social community which is the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore. In this research study, each case is defined as each of the selected first generation Indian immigrant parents' pair in Singapore. In case of single parent families, the only parent is defined as the case. The case study approach was found to be suitable for this research study also because of its ability to capture the process under study in a very detailed and exact way which is, how acculturation shapes parental aspirations (Flick, 2009). Besides, the case study approach has the ability to bring out both uniqueness and commonalities in people's experiences. Case study is mainly about particularization and not generalization (Stake, 1995). This method requires use of multiple sources of evidence. To address the transferability issue, data collection was done using multiple sources namely postal questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with both parents, reflective journals maintained by both parents and group interviews with the children. Selection of multiple cases tackled the trustworthiness issue of this research study (Flick, 2009). The linear-analytic design was employed to report this case study research (Gray, 2009; Yin, 2003) in the sense that the qualitative data was presented by describing each case followed by discussion of themes that arose from cross-case analysis (Gray, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, case study is mainly about particularization and not generalization (Stake, 1995). Hence, the results or findings that emerged from within and cross case analysis of the data were by no means treated as a generalization of the results presented. The results presented and discussed were based on the experiences specific to the families though there were some commonalities found. While this can be a strength of the qualitative approach, it is also a limitation. On the one hand, we can understand the

issues around parental aspirations of immigrants more deeply, but on the other hand, we do not have the power to generalise this understanding to other groups of Indian immigrants.

More specifically, the case study approach is highly beneficial for conducting a research study which requires understanding of a phenomenon in relation to the context in which it is occurring. An example of such a study is one which investigates the factors that caused a certain outcome (Gray, 2009). Hence, the case study approach was specifically found to be advantageous in this research study in understanding the factors that influenced the parental aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore, and the role of acculturation in it. While this feature of the case study approach was beneficial in bringing out the uniqueness as well as commonalities in the selected cases, it was also a limitation and it should be noted here that the findings were specific to the Indian immigrants under study.

Given the nature of the case study approach, ensuring transferability and trustworthiness can be a challenge. However, as mentioned earlier in this section (Section 4.1), these issues were easily managed by collecting data through multiple sources (namely parent interviews, children interviews and reflective journal). Besides, the findings of the study were not drawn from merely studying a single case; instead, multiple cases (twelve parents' pairs and their children) were selected and studied. Data collected through multiple sources contributed to the portrayal of a more comprehensive picture of the cases as opposed to data collected through a single source. For example, interviews with children had been useful in confirming the extent to which parents' aspirations were communicated to the children, and vice versa. This was particularly useful because in many parents' opinion, their aspirations were in line with their children's interest and/or ability.

4.2 Overview of Methodology

In order to recruit participants, a flyer explaining the nature of this research study (see Appendix 3) was published in the newsletters of seven associations of different ethnic Indian communities in Singapore. These flyers were also intended to be distributed in the local independent and government schools and international schools offering pre-university courses in Singapore. Approval to do so was sought from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC). Application to distribute the

flyer in various schools was also sent to the Singapore's Ministry of Education. Through flyers, responses were sought via email, telephone or reply slip to indicate respondents' interest in being involved in this research study. Interested respondents were sent a postal questionnaire namely the Parent-Child Data Form (see Appendix 4) along with the explanatory statement for parents (see Appendix 5), explanatory statement for children (see Appendix 6), consent forms for parents (see Appendix 7, 8) as well as children (see Appendix 9) and parental consent form for children under the age of eighteen years at the time of recruitment (see Appendix 10, 11) in a reply-paid envelope. The aim of the postal questionnaire was mainly to gather the background information of respondents such as their length of stay in Singapore, educational and occupational background, school and curriculum the child is enrolled into as well as the gender of the child in order to recruit suitable participants for this research study.

Potential participants were informed of the expected scope of activities involved through the Explanatory Statements. Those selected for participation beyond the questionnaire were informed that three semi-structured interviews will be conducted with both parents over a six-month period, that reflexive journal will need to be maintained by them and that their children will participate in one group interview. The duration and the number of parent interviews was thoughtfully selected in order to contribute towards building a rapport with the participants (Creswell, 2003) as well as in terms of clarifying any points that may arise from the journals maintained by the parents or the previous interview. Group interview method was selected as it was expected to be beneficial as a supplementary data collection method to the parent interview and reflective journal (see Krueger & Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1997). The group interviews with children were also selected in order to throw light on children's own acculturation experiences and aspirations along with their perception of their parents' of aspirations and experiences, thus adding to the richness of the data collected from the parents. The interviews with parents and their children were audio taped. Field notes were taken during the interviews with parents and children in order to note down any key words from participants that could be followed up during the coding process and also to pose follow-up questions.

In order to analyse the quantitative data collected though postal questionnaires; the number of responses received in each category namely; length of stay in Singapore, parents' educational background, gender and school type of the child were presented in a table to facilitate purposive selection of suitable participants. Upon selection, a case ID

and pseudonym was created for each selected case. The summary of background information of all the selected cases was presented in another table to give a more comprehensive picture of the cases (Gray, 2009).

To analyse the qualitative data, a six step model was employed incorporating transcription, getting a general sense of the data, coding, generating description of all cases, qualitative narrative and finally interpretation (Creswell, 2003). To begin with, all the qualitative data collected from parents and children was transcribed. The transcribed data was then analysed using the three stage coding process namely open, axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) by looking at the patterns, themes, subthemes, categories and subcategories that emerged from each case as well as across cases.

The coded data was then used to generate a description of each case. In line with the linear-analytic design of case study (Gray, 2009; Yin, 2003), the qualitative data was presented by describing each case followed by discussion of themes that arose from cross-case analysis (Gray, 2009), followed by an overall interpretation.

4.3 Sampling Procedure

In line with the research objectives, data was collected from the selected first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore whose children were studying in Singapore at the pre-university level and from the children themselves. Length of stay in the host country has been found to influence both aspirations (Leung et al., 1994) and acculturation of immigrants (see Section 3.2.2.1). "Acculturation process unfolds at different times for different age groups along different dimensions" (Birman & Trickett, 2001, p. 471). Specifically, immigrants who have resided in the host country for more than five years were regarded as highly acculturated and thus indistinguishable from those born in the host country (Wong-Rieger & Quintana, 1987). Immigrants who have resided in the host country for more than 10 years have been found to have similar aspirations as their local counterparts (Leung et al., 1994). Comparing groups of immigrants from different cohorts of arrival was productive as some aspects of acculturation process take many years to unfold (Birman & Trickett, 2001). For this reason, multiple cases were selected based on their different lengths of stay in Singapore.

Selecting parents from various educational backgrounds was expected to be beneficial to the study in order to have a fuller picture of immigrant experiences (Li, 2001). More

educated mothers often see involvement in their children's education as a part of their responsibility (Moreno & Lopez, 1999). Parents' educational background, school related factors, gender of the child have also been seen as factors influencing parents' aspirations for their children (see Sections 2.1.3 and 3.1). Gender differences have been reported in acculturation experiences and self-identity of immigrants too (see Sections 3.2.1.3 and 2.2.2).

Hence, the participant selection criteria was based on parents' length of stay in Singapore, their educational background, school type of the child and the gender of the child. Participants were selected based on their length of stay in Singapore in three subcategories namely less than five years, five to ten years and more than ten years were expected to be beneficial. There were three sub-categories of parents' educational background namely; both parents holding a university degree, one of the parents holding a university degree, and neither holding a university degree which were also expected to be beneficial for the study. Also, parents of children studying in local independent, government as well as international schools were selected in addition to considering parents of children of both genders. Ideally, 3 (length of stay) × 3 (parental educational level) × 3 (school type) × 2 (student gender) = 54 participants should have been selected. However, conducting a qualitative case study with 54 parents (and their children) would imply a scope that is beyond the expected scope of a doctoral research program. Thus, in the interest of achieving in-depth understanding, 12 participants were selected with a fair representation across different school types and across both student genders. Table 4.1 below represents the intended spread of the parent participants across the criteria identified.

Table 4.1

Participant Selection Criteria

		Length of Stay l (years)		
		$l \leq 5$	$5 < l \leq 10$	$l > 10$
Number of Parents Holding a University Degree	Both	1	1	1
	Any One	1	1	1
	None	1	1	1
		3 more participants (in addition to those in the grid above) from one or more categories above, resulting in representation of all the 12 participants across different school types (local vs. international) and across the child's gender		

4.4 Data Collection Process

A flyer explaining the nature of this research study was published in the newsletters of the associations of different ethnic Indian communities in Singapore and was also planned to be distributed to the local independent, government and international schools offering pre-university courses in Singapore. Only the first generation (see Section 1.3 for further details on the scope of the study) Indian immigrants whose children are studying at the pre-university level in Singapore were invited to respond via email, telephone or reply slip to indicate their interest in being involved in the study. A postal questionnaire along with explanatory statement and consent forms for parents and children with return envelope was sent to these parents as a follow-up response to seek some personal background information. Suitable participants were then selected and contacted.

Given the need for detailed information from the participants, the methods of semi-structured interviews with both parents, reflective journal entries by both the parents and a group interview with the children were selected. It was intended that the ability of the journal to capture records of feelings and thoughts from participants in their own words at their own convenient time would counteract the relatively 'artificial' nature of interviews. At the same time, the parent interviews allowed for clarifications and elaborations of any question that may arise from the initial analysis of journal entries. The children

participants were divided into groups for group interviews. One group interview was conducted with each of these groups. Data for this research study was thus planned to be derived from the postal questionnaires, parent interviews, and group interviews with children as well as the entries in the reflective journals recorded by the parents.

The designing of the interview questions and of the reflective journal items (see Appendices 12, 13 and 14) served to help us answer the Research Questions, which were the following:

1a. What are the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

1b. What are the factors influencing the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

2. How has the acculturation process shaped the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

Research question 1a was aimed at understanding what educational and occupational aspirations parents had for their children. Hence, parent interview questions #4 and #5 in Part A were framed to provide information to help us understand these aspirations.

It was brought to attention in Section 2.1.3 that parents' perception of their children's academic performance, parents' awareness of the opportunities available and school related factors can have an influence on parents' aspirations for their children. Hence, to address research question 1b, parent interview questions #2, #3 and #6 in Part A were crafted to investigate the influence of these factors on parental aspirations.

The purpose of research question 2 was to understand the role of acculturation process in shaping parental aspirations. Hence, parent interview questions #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 and #7 in Part B were designed to understand the acculturation experiences of parents. The importance of self-identity of immigrants in their acculturation process was highlighted in Section 2.2.2. Hence, parent interview question #6 in part B was introduced in order to understand the same in addition to addressing research question 2.

Usually immigrant parents tend to stay anchored to their heritage culture whereas the children quickly tend to accept the new culture. However, parents' efforts in transmitting certain values to the children are evidently seen in the bicultural environment (Baptiste, 2005). Hence, interviewing the children was chosen as a supplementary method of data collection (Morgan, 1997) to add to the richness of the data collected from parents. Children's interview questions #2 and #3 in Part A were hence crafted in line with research question 1a to understand the educational and occupational aspirations of children and their perception of their parents' aspirations for them.

On the other hand, children interview questions #1, #4 in Part A were designed to address research question 1b to understand the factors that influenced these aspirations.

Children's interview questions #1, #2, #3, #4 and #5 in Part B were designed to understand the acculturation strategies of children to address research question 2.

The main purpose of selecting the reflective journal method for the parent participants represented an attempt to capture the spontaneity of their interactions with their children. Besides, as mentioned earlier, parents' efforts in transmitting certain values to the children are evidently seen in the bicultural environment (Baptiste, 2005). Hence, the three questions in the reflective journal were designed to help us understand how parental aspirations were being communicated to their children. These three questions were expected to address research questions 1a, 1b and 2 that is, understanding parental aspirations, factors influencing these aspirations, and the role of acculturation respectively.

Table 4.2 summarises this information, providing a visual representation of how the questions in the interview protocol and in the reflective journal relate to the Research Questions.

Table 4.2

Linkage of Research Questions to Interview and Reflective Journal Questions

Research Question	Parent interview question #	Children interview question #	Reflective journal question #
1a	A-4, 5	A-2, 3	1, 2, 3
1b	A-2, 3, 6	A-1, 4	1, 2, 3
2	B-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	B-1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 3

4.4.1 Postal Questionnaire

Though the research was mainly qualitative in nature, questionnaires namely parent-child data form (see Appendix 4) were used to obtain basic background information of parents and students. This was mainly to serve the purpose of finding out the suitability of respondents to participate in the subsequent stages of this research study. The questionnaire mainly required closed or short responses. These questionnaires were mailed to the parents who had responded to the flyers indicating their interest in being involved in the study. "It is usual for a questionnaire to be accompanied by a letter" (Gray, 2009, p. 364), hence explanatory letters explaining the purpose of the study and consent forms (see Appendices 5-11) were attached together with the questionnaire which allowed the respondents to make informed decisions about their involvement in this research study. Reply-paid envelopes were enclosed too. Suitable participants were then selected and contacted based on the selection criteria discussed in Section 4.3.

There are certain useful features and advantages of adopting the popularly used method of administering postal questionnaire to gather data. Through postal questionnaires, all the participants can be asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. It is low in cost, inflow of data is quick and from many people, respondents can complete the questionnaire at a time and place of their convenience (Gray, 2009). Though there is a disadvantage that response rate can be low, to encourage higher response, a prepaid return envelope was enclosed along with each questionnaire. Besides, only those who had indicated interest in being involved in the study by

responding to the flyer were asked to complete the postal questionnaire. The questionnaire not being the main tool for collecting data was kept short in length asking for only the necessary information mainly required for selecting suitable participants.

4.4.2 Reflective Journals

Upon being identified as a participant pair in this research study, first meeting was held with each parent pair. During this meeting, the parent participants were briefed about maintaining a reflective journal each for a period for six months and copy of the structure of the reflective journal (see Appendix 12) was given to them. They were asked to record their own reflections about the activities done together as a family along with the conversations taken place in which parental aspirations and expectations were communicated to the child. Parents were given the choice of hard copy or electronic submission of the journal at the end of each month for six months. This method was expected to be useful due to its ability to capture records of feelings and thoughts from parents in their language and words whenever their aspirations and expectations are conveyed to their children. Parents can record these incidents at their own convenient time in this method.

4.4.3 Interviews with Parents

Three semi-structured interviews were designed to be conducted with both parents from each of the twelve parent-pair participants over a period of six months. The number and duration of the interviews were thoughtfully selected to contribute towards clarifying any points that may arise from the journals maintained by the parents or from the previous interview and also to enable building a rapport with the parent participants. The design of the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 13) was in line with the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3, mainly focusing on gathering data on the educational and occupational aspirations of parents for their children as well as their acculturation experiences to understand how the acculturation process has shaped their aspirations for their children.

A typical characteristic of the qualitative study is that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis (Merriam, 2009). The semi-structured interview was considered to be a suitable data collection method in this research study due to its non-standardized nature. This method allows for the order of questions to be

changed depending on what direction the interview takes (Gray, 2009), which was required in this study. People's acculturation experiences, cultural values, and parental aspirations can be understood better with the aid of additional questions including those not anticipated at the start of the interview if new issues arise (Gray, 2009). This method of data collection was especially found to be useful in this research study as any particular points noted in journals or previous interviews with the same participants could also be clarified further during the next interviews. The nature of semi-structured face to face interviews allows additional probing of questions to be asked which is required in this study as it requires the respondents to expand on their answers to express their views and opinions (Gray, 2009). The nature of semi-structured interviews allows posing the questions in such a way that participants feel comfortable in answering and questioning style can be adopted or modified according to the participant thus allowing flexibility in questioning technique. As suggested by Flick (2009), this method is especially useful when "the interviewees have a complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study" (p. 156). Indeed, this was important in this research study considering the need to understand why people have certain aspirations or how their acculturation experiences have been. After all, interviews should employ openness to adapting enquiry as understanding deepens and or situations change (Patton, 2002).

In a qualitative study, it is important to build a rapport and credibility with the individuals in the study (Creswell, 2003). Thus, the site of the interview was selected after carefully taking into consideration participant's level of comfort so that the participants could open up in the suitable and conducive environment (Patton, 2002) enhancing the quality of the data collected.

The conversations during the parent interviews were audio taped along with note taking. Note taking was especially useful in order to note down key words from participants which can be followed up during the coding process in addition to contributing in formulating new questions. Note taking provides a means for locating important quotations during analysis and also helps in controlling the pace of the interview. These notes complemented the audio taping of interviews as note taking during interview can be slow and it is advised to be used in conjunction with audio taping (Gray, 2009). Though the emotions or the way any words were spoken during interviews are well captured in the audio recordings, there is a fear that these may be lost during transcription. This is where field notes can enhance the understanding of emotions and

feelings with which views and opinions were expressed by the interviewees (Gibbs, 2010). Special attention was paid during the process of note taking with focus on breaks, pauses, facial expression to better understand the way words were spoken by the respondents thus adding to the quality of the data collected (Flick, 2009).

4.4.4 Group Interviews with Children

In order to conduct group interviews with the children of the first generation Indian immigrants, a plan was drawn out to divide the children participants into two groups of six each, based on the availability and convenience of the participants. One interview session was conducted with each group formed and this was audio-taped. Group interviews conducted with this group size can be easily audio-taped as compared to those with a larger number of participants in a group (Gray, 2009). This number of participants in each group for group interview is also beneficial for data collection as it can be managed more easily by controlling to whom the question is directed.

Group interviews are basically interviews where participants are interviewed in a group instead of one on one (Creswell, 2003). The main advantage of this method is the richness of the data collected as the responses extend beyond the responses received from interviewing a single participant through stimulation of the respondents (Flick, 2009). After all, the purpose of interviewing the children was mainly to add to the richness of the data collected from parents (see Section 4.1). The group interviews in this research study were semi-structured in nature (see Appendix 14 for the interview protocol). Questions were designed to draw out children's responses pertaining to their own aspirations, their perception of their parents' aspirations for them, activities done together as a family, conversations taken place and any events where parental advice was given to the children as well as children's own acculturation experiences.

The group dynamics in a group interview can significantly contribute to the richness of the data collected as "corrections by the group concerning views that are not correct, not socially shared, or extreme are available as means for validating statements and views" (Flick, 2009, p. 197). The group can thus become a tool for reconstructing individual opinions more appropriately (Flick, 2009). This feature of the group interview was certainly beneficial to this research study as the data collected through this method provided an insight of the personal opinion of the children participants as well as their

general group opinion on their perception of the acculturation experiences and aspirations.

Interviewing the children was chosen as a supplementary method of data collection (Morgan, 1997) to add to the richness of the data collected from parents. It was discussed in Section 2.2 that the immigrant families generally share a close family bonding. They have regular discussions on various issues including those related to education and future college plans of their children. The immigrant children respond positively about these issues, or any points of discussion related to family members, in general. The overall control and decision making authority however is in the hands of the parents (Kao, 2004), especially when it comes to their children's education (Modood, 2004). Besides, usually immigrant parents tend to stay anchored to their heritage culture whereas the children quickly tend to accept the new culture. However, parents' efforts in transmitting certain values to the children are evidently seen in the bicultural environment (Baptiste, 2005). Hence, group interviews with children contributed towards understanding whether parents' aspirations and cultural values were transmitted to the children. Conducting group interviews with children was beneficial as it could throw light on children's perspective of their parents' aspirations for them, culture and cultural values that were transmitted to them in addition to children's own aspirations and acculturation experience.

4.4.5 Cultural Considerations

A common theme in the Western literature reviewed was a silence on the host countries' emphases (or not) on school outcomes. Regardless of where the immigrants might have come from, parental aspirations did not appear to have been influenced by how the societies (they are in respectively) value education. For example, Li (2001) found that the Chinese immigrants in Canada stuck to the cultural aspects they preferred and believed, so that there was exhibited the Chinese cultural emphasis on strong academic inclination which was in contrast to the nurturing of multiple intelligences in the Canadian culture (see Section 2.1.1.3.). In general, Asian immigrant parents were seen to value education highly (see Section 2.1.3.2). In particular, Indian immigrant parents were reported to value educational and occupational success highly and make every effort to retain these values in the next generation (see for examples, Baptiste, 2005; Dugsin, 2001).

In this study, where (Indian) immigrants from Asia were settling down in another part of Asia (i.e. Singapore), it is probable that parental aspirations regarding children's educational and occupational success might be aligned with the Singaporean culture. As such, this external factor of contextual alignment of aspirations would apply in non-western settings, and it was kept in mind when collecting and interpreting data. Thus, we can see, for example, in parent interview questions A-4,5 and B-3 that questions were crafted to understand whether and how parents' aspirations were affected by their perception of what is valued in Singapore (see Appendix 13), as a means of probing for the existence of the alignment between what the host culture and the parents valued.

4.5 Analysis of Data

4.5.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

As discussed earlier in Section 4.4.1, postal questionnaires were administered in order to gather background information of parents and children. The data gathered through postal questionnaires served the purpose of selecting suitable participants based on the criteria described in Table 4.1. This quantitative data was analysed to facilitate participant selection, as follows.

The responses received through the postal questionnaires were planned to be tabulated as shown in Table 4.3 below which is in line with the participant selection criteria discussed in Section 4.1. This tabulation enabled selection of the twelve suitable participants as the twelve cases, allowing a fair representation of participants across the categories which were the length of stay and educational level of parents; gender of the child and type of school the child is enrolled into.

Table 4.3

Tabulation of Number of Questionnaire Responses

		Length of stay in Singapore in years, *l*											
		l≤5				*5<l≤10*				*l≥10*			
	School Type	Local		International		Local		International		Local		International	
	Gender of the child	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No. of parents holding a University degree	Both												
	Only one												
	None												

4.5.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

Following Creswell (2003), the following six-step model was employed to guide the analysis of qualitative data collected through parent interviews, journal entries of parents and group interviews of children.

Step 1 – Transcription

Step 2 – Getting a general sense of the data

Step 3 – Coding of transcribed data

Step 4 – Generate description

Step 5 – Qualitative narrative

Step 6 – Interpretation

These 6 steps are discussed in depth in the sections to follow.

4.5.2.1 Transcription

The qualitative data collected through interviews with parents, group interviews with children and journal entries by parents (if hand written) was organized and prepared for data analysis using transcription. Transcription is "the process of transferring audio or video recordings of speech or handwritten notes into a typed or word-processed form" (Gibbs, 2010, p. 246). It is a necessary step for interpreting data and needs to be done

before any interpretation of data begins (Flick, 2009). The audio recordings of the interviews conducted with parents and the group interviews conducted with children was transcribed into text in this initial phase of data analysis. Care was taken so that the focus was on attaining maximum exactness in presenting statements and the way words were spoken so as not to compromise on the quality of the data (Flick, 2009).

As described by Gray (2009), transcription is a time consuming process. To overcome this challenge, only those data which directly contributed towards fulfilling the objectives of this research study were transcribed, and any introductory or general conversation which did not contribute towards this research study or not heard clearly, uttered hesitantly were excluded from the transcribing process. Instead of waiting for all the data to be collected, the process of transcription began immediately after the completion of each interview (Gray, 2009) in order to make efficient use of time.

4.5.2.2 Getting a General Sense

All the transcribed data (collected through interviews with parents and children, and reflective journals maintained by parents) was read through thoroughly to get a global, general sense of the information that was being conveyed. Reflecting on the data collected as a whole contributed significantly towards understanding its overall meaning, the general impression, tone and overall depth that was being conveyed from what the participants were saying. Basically, this step involves looking at the general ideas that emerge from what the participants are saying. This contributed towards credibility of the data and also in understanding how the data can be used in addressing the research objectives. While reading through the data at this phase, short notes were written in the margins to record the general thoughts about the data (Creswell, 2003).

4.5.2.3 Coding of Text Data

The transcribed data was then analysed in detail with the help of a coding process. Coding was done on the electronic copy of the transcript for the convenience of tracking of information in it. Tabular form was used to note down the codes, categories, and memos or remarks. The organization of a table in rows and columns enabled easy referencing of coded data by tracking row numbers. Transcribed interviews were presented in dialogue form with one cell assigned for each subsequent response in the conversation. One column each was assigned for text, codes, categories and memos or

remarks (see Appendix 16 for an excerpt of coded data). Reflective journal entries too were coded in a similar manner.

Coding is an essential procedure which remains one of the central activities throughout any qualitative research. Coding began almost as soon as the first interview had taken place and transcribed, and continued until the stage of report writing (Gibbs, 2010). The sentences, segments or paragraphs in the data transcript were assigned codes in the form of a word or short phrase that are summative, salient and essence-capturing attributes of that portion of the data (Saldaña, 2009). Coding mainly involved three stages namely the open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) which is a structured way of analysing data (Gray, 2009).

Open coding is "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 101). As described by (Gray, 2009),

> Open coding works through a process of making constant comparisons. Each time an instance of a category is found, it is compared with previous instances. If the new instance does not fit the original definition, then either the definition must be modified, or a new category created. (p. 504)

Different participants may have their own different reasons or acculturation experiences that have shaped their aspirations as parents for their children. Hence, open coding was found to be appropriate as it was anticipated that there may not be a fixed way of coding or categorizing the data collected from participants. However, an initial plan was drawn, before beginning coding in order to start basic open coding of the data keeping in mind that it is likely that more codes may arise.

As Flick (2009) has suggested, the following basic questions were addressed while performing open coding to initiate the coding process. In fact, these questions were useful at every stage of coding be it open, axial or selective.

1. What is the issue or phenomenon mentioned?
2. Who are the persons involved? What roles do they play? How do they interact?
3. What aspects of the phenomena are mentioned or not mentioned?
4. When, how long and where – to understand time and location

5. How much and how strong – to understand the aspects of intensity
6. Why – to understand the reasons
7. What for – to understand the intention
8. By which – to understand the means, strategies and tactics

While performing open coding, the notion of properties and dimensions was useful. Properties are referred to as the general or specific characteristics of a category whereas dimensions represent the location of the property along a continuum or range (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For example, while analysing participant's perception of societal attitudes, key words such as 'often' or 'sometimes' that are used by the participant can be further looked into to analyse the extent to which the participant has experienced a certain societal attitude. During this stage of data analysis, data was broken down into discrete parts and closely examined (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) for the purpose of initial coding. The data split into smaller codable moments facilitated a careful scrutiny and an in depth analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Memos were used in order to note down why data was coded or categorized in a certain way and also to facilitate initial interpretation of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Memos served as "the researcher's record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 110). Thus, memos were highly useful while performing analysis at any stage.

Usually, coding or categorization of chunks of data is done by labelling them with a term preferably based on the actual language of the participants (Creswell, 2003). However, with the research objectives in mind and by referring to the theoretical framework (see Chapter 3) the following basic strategy was employed to initiate the coding process. In this way, the theoretical framework comprising of the aspirations and acculturation model (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2) served as an analytical framework too as codes and categories were developed mainly by referring to the theoretical framework.

As this research study aims to understand the role of acculturation process in shaping parental aspirations, the categories and codes were divided broadly into two main big concepts namely Aspirations (AS) and Acculturation (AC) (see Appendix 15 for detailed finalized codes). Codes were categorized into the basic categories namely educational aspirations (EAS) and occupational aspirations (OAS) under the concept of aspirations whereas two basic categories namely prior to acculturation (PAC) and during

acculturation (DAC) under the concept of acculturation. The educational aspirations (EAS) had codes under two main sub-categories namely current and future education. The educational and occupational aspirations had codes incorporating attributes such as the place and type of education or occupation. The experiences prior to acculturation (PAC) incorporated codes related to participants' culture, values, and pre-migration expectations. The experiences during acculturation (DAC) incorporated codes related to participants' self-identity, societal attitudes and cultural environment in the country of migration.

There were two other categories namely parents' socio-economic status (SES) and people (or significant others) both placed under the concept of aspirations following the aspirations model of the theoretical framework (see Section 3.1). In this research study, the SES of each participant was described qualitatively in terms of participants' educational and occupational background; awareness of educational and occupational opportunities, financial aid available; and their perception of affordability of children's educational expenses which were also essentially the components of the theoretical framework presented in Section 3.1. As parents' characteristics prior to acculturation, their educational and occupational background had codes under the category of PAC in the sub-category of SES too (see Section 3.2).

These codes and categories were used to begin the initial coding of the qualitative data collected from participants. Once again, it was kept in mind that more categories are likely to emerge upon actual data collection or changes to coding strategy may be required based on the data collected. As coding is a cyclical process, the initial codes may need to be refined by revisiting the initially coded text in order to filter, highlight and focus mainly on the salient features of the qualitative data so that the main constructs can be better understood to facilitate theory building (Saldaña, 2009). During the process of coding and recoding, some of the initial codes were be subsumed, relabelled or dropped altogether (Saldaña, 2009). The list of final codes and categories can be found in Appendix 15.

As Flick (2009) has described,

> the result of open coding should be a list of codes and categories attached to the text. This should be complemented by the code notes that were produced for explaining and defining the content of

> codes and categories, and a multitude of memos, which contain striking observations on the material and thoughts that are relevant to the development of the theory. (p. 310)

Upon completion of open coding, the data appeared to be text that was attached with a list of codes, categories and memos (Flick, 2009) (see Appendix 16 for an excerpt of coded data).

Axial coding was then employed to take these codes and categories formed during the process of open coding to make connections between them. Axial coding is "the process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed "axial" because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). At this stage of coding, it was useful to study the conditions that gave rise to these codes and categories, the context in which they arose, the actions and interactions that stemmed from them and their consequences. Linkage was formed within categories and subcategories as well as between categories and subcategories (Gray, 2009). Those codes and categories were selected which were most relevant to the research questions and objectives. Performing axial coding proved to be beneficial as it enabled refining and differentiating of the categories resulting from open coding (Flick, 2009).

Lastly, selective coding was employed which is a process of selecting core categories from the data. It mainly contributed towards finding a story line to formulate around the core categories, relating sub-categories to the core categories, validating these relationships against the data and filling in categories that need further refinement (Gray, 2009). As mentioned by Flick (2009), "the aim of this formulation is to give a short descriptive overview of the story" (p. 312). This stage of coding was especially useful for describing each of the twelve cases while presenting the results from the qualitative data collected.

4.5.2.4 Generate a Description

The coded qualitative data was then used to generate a description of the setting and people involving detailed information which is their background, aspirations and acculturation experiences of each case. This type of descriptive analysis is especially useful for case studies (Creswell, 2003). At this stage, the background information of the participants captured in the postal questionnaires was also useful in describing each case

to make it more meaningful and give a more comprehensive picture of each of the twelve cases.

4.5.2.5 Qualitative Narrative or Discussion

The description of each of the twelve cases was revisited in order to facilitate a cross-case analysis to develop themes for discussion purpose. Themes were developed by analysing each individual case to bring out its uniqueness and across different cases to bring out their commonalities (Creswell, 2003). The finalized themes can be found in Appendix 17.

This research study attempts to investigate parental aspirations, the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. Hence, a logic diagram (see Appendix 18) was developed to depict each case to facilitate discussion of themes across cases. The logic diagram displayed the factors influencing the aspirations and the acculturation process as the main phenomenon, and parental aspirations as the outcome or the consequences. The logic diagram was especially useful in understanding what influences parental aspirations and how acculturation process shapes these aspirations. These diagrams proved to be a highly useful tool in making connections between cases as a part of the cross-case analysis. In particular, it threw light on the interplay among the various components that made up the whole process of formation of parental aspirations and acculturation. The logic diagrams enabled analysis of relevant data from the same data source as well as different data sources. They served as a visual representation of the summary of description of each case. The logic diagram for each case can be found in Appendix 18.

The themes that arose from the individual and cross-case analysis of coded data were then conveyed with the help of a qualitative narrative. This was achieved through a detailed discussion of the themes, sub-themes, and interconnecting themes. The main features of the qualitative narrative are specific experiences and multiple perspectives of participants (Creswell, 2003). In addition, the findings of the study were also compared with theories in the existing literature to check whether the findings of this research study confirm past information or diverge from it (Creswell, 2003), highlighting any new themes found.

4.5.2.6 Interpretation

The final step of data analysis involved interpretation of the data by making a meaning of it which is basically what was learnt through this research. Interpretation of data can take many forms. It can be adapted to suit the design of the study and is flexible (Creswell, 2003). It is usually "couched in the individual understanding that the inquirer brings to the study from her or his own culture, history, and experiences" (Creswell, 2003, p. 194-195). In this light, it must be noted here, that the meaning or interpretation of the data is to be treated as from the researcher's perspective. It is possible that researcher's personal, ethnic and cultural background or even personal views and experiences for that matter may be influential while interpreting the data in a certain way, which is perhaps why this research study will prove to be unique as different people from different background or culture can have a different way of interpreting.

Thus, in this final step of data analysis namely interpretation, researcher's own understanding and personal interpretations of the data was reflected, which were mainly aimed at addressing the research questions and objectives in addition to discussing further implications of the findings.

4.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were taken seriously as they are principles concerned with avoiding harm to the participants, ensuring informed consent of participants, respecting privacy of participants and avoiding use of deception (Gray, 2009). Official approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) was sought for (see Appendix 1) before conducting any sampling and data collection. Parental consent was required for students who were below the age of 18 years at the time of recruitment before they could participate in this study. The ethics of the research is about the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour, be it to the participants or anyone affected by it (Gray, 2009). Ethical issues need to be dealt with at various stages of the research including planning, implementation and reporting. It concerns conducting research in a responsible and morally defensible way (Gray, 2009). It is important for a researcher to anticipate ethical issues that are likely to arise and need to be dealt with during the course of their research (Creswell, 2003) which are discussed in the sections to follow.

4.6.1 Getting Approval from Research Sites

As indicated by Gray (2009), researching in organizations needs prior approval from the organizations. Though this study does not directly investigate any organizations, it does involve recruiting participants who are the students, and parents of students of certain schools who were planned to be reached through the flyers distributed in schools. Hence, a written application for approval from the Ministry of Education of Singapore was sent (see Appendix 2) before contacting the principals of the selected schools in Singapore to seek permission to distribute flyers in their schools to invite participants for this research study.

4.6.2 Interacting with the Participants

For data collection from parents and the students, specific information about the nature of the study was conveyed to them through the Explanatory Statement (see Appendices 5 and 6) so that they could make an informed decision. These included the aim of the research, details of the person who will be undertaking it, the description of participants who are being invited to participate, what kind of information is being sought from participants, how much of the participant's time is required, the fact that participation in the study and responding to all questions is voluntary, who will have the access to the data once collected, how anonymity of the respondents will be preserved and who the postal questionnaire should be returned to (Gray, 2009).

It is important to preserve the anonymity of the participants to avoid any kind of emotional harm to them (Gray, 2009). Care was taken during reporting so that the participants remain unidentified. Pseudonyms were hence used to label each participant. Participants' names or identities were not disclosed under any circumstances in any publication.

It was clearly indicated on the postal questionnaire that the fact that this questionnaire is returned, is taken as an indication of consent (Creswell, 2003). Participants of the study were informed in writing about the mutual ethical understanding between the participant and the researcher and their signatures were taken on the consent form. As the data collection process involves audio taping of the interviews with the participants, they were reassured about the confidentiality and allowed to turn off the recording device at any time (Gray, 2009).

In each of the twelve cases, researcher had the opportunities to interact with the parents and their children separately. While listening to their respective stories and immersing in these, it was needed to be alert to the fact that no comments should be made which make the researcher look like siding with either the parents or their child. Otherwise, there would be the risk that the parents or their child would draw upon researcher's 'support' when they are communicating with each other.

Data once analysed, will be stored in a secure place and destroyed after 5 years upon conclusion of the study, as specified in the guidelines given by MUHREC. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time. It was entirely the participants' choice to decide to what extent and in what methods of data collection they wish to be involved in the study.

4.6.3 Writing and Disseminating Research

It is particularly important to be careful while reporting any findings of the research by being sensitive to those concerned. Hence, language or words were used in such a way that they are not against persons because of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, age or any other reasons (Creswell, 2003). As this research study involves a certain community, which is the Indian immigrant community in Singapore, care was taken while writing and disseminating research where any such remarks were be avoided which are likely to hurt the feelings of participants or any members of the community. That I am ethnically Indian helped in this regard due to my awareness of the norms of the Indian culture, especially the sensitive aspects of it in terms of understanding the feelings and emotions of the participants.

This chapter has presented the methodology that guided this research study. The research strategy was described in detail highlighting the sampling procedure, data collection methods and data analysis process. Ethical considerations were brought to attention too. The next chapter will present the quantitative data collected through postal questionnaires. Details of how this quantitative data enabled recruitment and selection of suitable participants for this study will be presented too.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA

This research study investigates the parental aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level. It explores what education and occupation parents aspire for their children, the factors influencing these aspirations and the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. The previous chapter had presented the research methodology that guides this study. The research strategy was described in detail highlighting the sampling procedure, data collection methods and data analysis process. The quantitative data collected through postal questionnaires will be presented in this chapter. Details of how this quantitative data enabled recruitment and selection of suitable participants in order to collect data will be presented too.

5.1 Participant Recruitment

As mentioned in the methodology chapter (Chapter 4), a flyer (see Appendix 3) explaining the nature of the research study was emailed to seven different associations of ethnic Indian communities in Singapore to be published in their newsletters to invite participants for this research study. It was intended that these flyers will also be distributed in the local government, independent and international schools offering pre-university courses in Singapore. However, eventually, flyers were not distributed in any of the schools as permission was not obtained from Singapore's Ministry of Education to do so (see Appendix 2).

Only the first generation Indian immigrants whose children are studying at the pre-university level in Singapore were asked to respond via email, telephone or reply slip to indicate their interest in being involved in the study. 29 respondents indicated their interest in participating in the study. Each of them was sent the postal questionnaire, namely the Parent-Child Data Form (see Appendix 4), explanatory statements for parents (see Appendix 5) and for children (see Appendix 6), consent forms for parents and children (see Appendices 7-9), parental consent form for children under the age of 18 years at the time of recruitment (see Appendix 10, 11) along with a reply paid return envelope.

Of the 29 questionnaires distributed, 17 responses were received, indicating their interest in being involved in the subsequent stages of the study. When telephonic follow

up reminders were made with the other 12 contacts who had not returned the questionnaire, only one positive response was received where the parents indicated that one parent and the child will be participating in the study. However, incomplete forms were received as parental consent for this child who was under the age of 18 years and consent form from the child was not received. For this reason, this respondent was found to be unsuitable.

14 of the 17 responses received were found to be suitable and were shortlisted. Among the 3 families not shortlisted, one respondent was not shortlisted as their plans were to migrate from Singapore in two months after recruitment and data collection as well as follow up would have been difficult. One respondent was not shortlisted as no consent was received for audio taping of interviews, which was crucial in the data collection process. One respondent did not fit into the selection criteria as the child was not studying at pre-university level. For these reasons, these 3 respondents were found to be unsuitable for the study and 14 respondents were finally shortlisted. Of these 14 respondents, 9 had indicated at least one parent and the child being interested in participating in the study whereas 5 had indicated only the parent(s)' interest in participating in the study. There were no single parents among the respondents.

The primary purpose of administering postal questionnaire was to enable recruitment and selection of suitable participants. It was mentioned in the methodology chapter, (Chapter 4) that participants will be selected based on the number of parents holding a university degree and their length of stay in Singapore. However, it turned out that the minimum level of education of all the parent respondents was a university degree. As discussed in Chapter 1, a possible reason for this could be that Singapore invites and encourages professional immigrants to work and settle in Singapore, while the unskilled are not allowed to bring their family to settle in Singapore (Fong & Lim, 1982). Besides, the overall quality of immigrants entering Singapore has improved recently as most of the new immigrants are well-educated with a majority holding a university degree (National Population and Talent Division, 2012). It also turned out that none of these respondents had stayed in Singapore for 5 years or less. In fact, there was only one respondent who had stayed in Singapore for less than 10 years. A possible reason for this could be that recently Singapore has tightened its immigration framework thus slowing down the pace of immigration (National Population and Talent Division, 2012). Hence, respondents were categorized mainly based on their length of stay in Singapore as 5 to 10 years, 10 to

15 years and more than 15 years instead of the initially intended participant selection criterion of 5 years or less, 5 to 10 years and more than 10 years.

Due to the above mentioned reasons, the responses were tabulated as in Table 5.1 below instead of the original plan in Section 4.5.1. Table 5.1 below shows the tabulation of the 14 shortlisted respondents based on their length of stay in Singapore, gender of the child, type of school and curriculum the child is enrolled into. The school type is local or Indian. The 'local' schools refer to the Ministry of Education schools, and these may be government or independent schools in Singapore. On the other hand, the 'Indian' schools refer to any Indian international school in Singapore.

Table 5.1

Tabulation of Responses

	Length of stay in Singapore in years, *l*																	
	5 < l ≤ 10						*10 < l ≤ 15*						*l > 15*					
School	Local		Local		Indian		Local		Local		Indian		Local		Local		Indian	
Curriculum	IB		'A' level		IB		IB		'A' level		IB		IB		'A' level		IB	
Gender of the child	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No. of selected participants	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	4	1	2	1	0	1

For the one respondent who had stayed in Singapore for 5 to 10 years, the child was female and was studying the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in an Indian international school. Of the 4 respondents who had stayed in Singapore for 10 to 15 years, 1 had a male child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 1 had a male child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school and 2 had a female child studying the IB curriculum in an Indian international school. Among the 9 respondents who had stayed in Singapore for more than 15 years, 4 had a male child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 1 had a female child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 2 had a male child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school, 1 had a female child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school and 1 had a female child studying the IB curriculum in an Indian international school. Of the 14 shortlisted respondents, 9 had a male child and the remaining 5 had a female child. 10 were studying in local schools of

which 6 took the IB curriculum and 4 the ‘A’ level curriculum whereas 4 were studying the IB curriculum in Indian international schools.

Though flyers could not be distributed to any of the schools in Singapore to recruit participants as originally planned, it did not affect or skew the characteristics of the sample pool. After all, the data sources remained the same, that is, parent participants whose children were studying across government, independent and international schools. In other words, what was different from the original plan was only the recruitment approach, which did not affect the reach of the recruitment phases of the study. Instead of directly approaching the various kinds of schools to invite for participation, the participants of my study were sourced through flyers that were distributed in seven associations of different ethnic Indian communities across Singapore.

5.2 Participant Selection and Data Collection

12 parent-pairs were selected from the 14 shortlisted, making up the 12 cases for this research study. 9 of these 12 cases were quite easily selected, as they had their children indicating their interest in being involved in the study along with at least one parent, as opposed to the remaining 5 with only the parent(s) indicating interest. These 9 were selected for this reason, to add to the richness of the data collected from them. From the remaining 5 shortlisted, 3 more were selected whose participation resulted in representation of different school types, curricula and gender of the child. The child in one of these three families indicated his interest in being involved in the study only after selection of participants was completed. Hence eventually there were 10 families with at least one parent and the child participating in the study. The religion of eleven families was Hinduism, while one being Sikhism.

Table 5.2 below shows the tabulation of the 12 selected participating families based on their length of stay in Singapore, gender of the child, type of school and curriculum the child is enrolled into.

Table 5.2

Tabulation of Selected Participants

	Length of stay in Singapore in years, *l*																	
	5 < l ≤ 10						*10 < l ≤ 15*						*l > 15*					
School	Local		Local		Indian		Local		Local		Indian		Local		Local		Indian	
Curriculum	IB		'A' level		IB		IB		'A' level		IB		IB		'A' level		IB	
Gender of the child	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No. of participants	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	1	1	1	0	1

Of the parent-participants who had stayed in Singapore for 5 to 10 years, 1 had a female child studying the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in an Indian international school. Of the parent-participants who had stayed in Singapore for 10 to 15 years, 1 had a male child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 1 had a male child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school and 1 had a female child studying the IB curriculum in an Indian international school. Of the parent-participants who had stayed in Singapore for more than 15 years, 4 had a male child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 1 had a female child studying the IB curriculum in a local school, 1 had a male child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school, 1 had a female child studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local school and 1 female child studying the IB curriculum in an Indian international school. Of the 12 selected parent-participants, 1 parents' pair had stayed in Singapore for 5 to 10 years, 3 for 10 to 15 years and 8 for more than 15 years. 7 participants had a male child and 5 had a female child. 9 children were studying in local schools of which 6 took the IB curriculum and 3 the 'A' level curriculum whereas 3 were studying the IB curriculum in Indian international schools.

The following case IDs and pseudonyms were created for the 12 cases selected and their child.

Case ID	Family Name of Parents	Child's Name	Case ID	Family Name of Parents	Child's Name
1	Sandhu	Naman	7	Moghe	Abhay
2	Chaudhary	Anita	8	Korde	Nitin
3	Dutt	Udit	9	Kale	Kajal
4	Garg	Shweta	10	Ahuja	Sumit
5	Nathan	Pranav	11	Katkar	Neeti
6	Gautam	Geeta	12	Kannan	Parag

The pseudonym for each case was created in such a way that the leading letter of their family name coincided with the leading letter of their actual family name to facilitate relating the pseudonyms to the actual participants. In addition, care was also taken that the ethnicity of each pseudonym matched the ethnic Indian home culture of the participant it referred to. For example, pseudonym Kannan was created for the participant whose family name started with letter K and also indicated that the participant is from the southern region of India which is the home culture of the participant. The pseudonyms of children were also created similarly in such a way that the leading letter of each child's name coincided with the leading letter of his or her actual name.

Table 5.3 summarises the distribution of the characteristics across the selected participants which are their length of stay in Singapore, school and curriculum the child in enrolled into, and the gender of the child. The local schools refer to the Ministry of Education schools, and these may be government or independent schools in Singapore whereas Indian schools refers to any Indian international school in Singapore.

Table 5.3

Distribution of Characteristics across the Selected Participants

Case ID	Length of stay *l* in years			Type of School		Curriculum		Gender of the child	
	5< l ≤10	*10<l≤15*	*l>15*	Local	Indian	'A' level	IB	M	F
1.Sandhu		√		√			√	√	
2.Chaudhary			√	√			√		√
3.Dutt			√	√		√		√	
4.Garg	√				√		√		√
5.Nathan		√		√		√		√	
6.Gautam		√			√		√		√
7.Moghe			√	√			√	√	
8.Korde			√	√			√	√	
9.Kale			√	√	√		√		√
10.Ahuja			√	√			√	√	
11.Katkar			√	√		√			√
12.Kannan			√	√			√	√	

Table 5.4 below shows the distribution of the participating family members in each case.

Table 5.4

Summary of Participation of Family Members

Case ID	Father	Mother	Child
1.Sandhu		√	√
2.Chaudhary	√	√	
3.Dutt	√	√	√
4.Garg		√	√
5.Nathan		√	√
6.Gautam	√	√	√
7.Moghe	√	√	√
8.Korde	√	√	√
9.Kale	√	√	√
10.Ahuja		√	√
11.Katkar	√	√	
12.Kannan		√	√

Of the 12 cases selected for the study, 7 had both parents indicating their interest in being involved in the study, while the remaining 5 had only the mother indicating interest in the study. Of the 12 children, there were 10 who participated in this study.

It was unfortunate and unforeseen that fathers' views were under-represented, given that only 7 of the 19 parent participants were fathers. The most commonly noted reason why some of the fathers did not participate in the study was their busy schedule. In fact, while responding to the call for participants, some of the mothers specifically mentioned that their husbands were extremely busy or had to travel extensively for work and hence

would not be able to participate in the study. However, given the central role that fathers play in typical Indian families (see Section 2.3), it is likely that their aspirations and expectations would have been expressed by their wives who took part in my study. In other words, the study's objective of achieving an understanding of parental aspirations should not have been compromised as a result of non-participation by some of the fathers.

This was evident through the general agreement between fathers' and mothers' aspirations for those participants where both parents had taken part in the study. For example, Mr and Mrs Gautam (see Section 6.6.2.2) were of the opinion that their daughter should pursue her own interest be it in educational or occupational choices. At the same time, they also agreed that she should pursue her tertiary education in Singapore due to financial constraints. Another example is Mr and Mrs Kale where both parents were against placing any pressure on their child to perform academically well, and both of them were equally concerned that pressure could have an adverse impact on the child's psychology (see Section 6.9.2.1). Mr and Mrs Katkar too (see Section 6.11.2.2) with their daughter's well-being in mind showed an agreement that their daughter should pursue tertiary education in Singapore so that they could offer her the required family support, considering that she had a medical condition.

Upon selection of the twelve cases to be studied, a meeting was arranged with each of the twelve parent participants for the first interview. Both parents were interviewed together where both parents had indicated their interest in the study. Interviews were semi-structured in nature with questions divided into two parts, namely A:Aspirations and B:Acculturation (see Appendix 13). It was intended that the first interview will cover questions on part A:Aspirations whereas the second and third interview will cover questions on part B:Acculturation. However, it turned out that the concepts of aspirations and acculturation experiences interacted so much with each other that in the momentum of describing their aspirations for their children, participants answered questions related to their acculturation experiences and vice versa. For example, one of the parents described the nature of the socio-cultural environment in India and Singapore while discussing her reason for her aspiration for her daughter to take up a professional course and pursue a professional career. Or, another parent while describing their reason for taking up Singaporean citizenship explained that the main factor causing this change in nationality was the preference given to Singaporeans when it came to university

admissions and scholarships. Hence there was a saturation of data at the end of the second interview and two interviews were found to be sufficient.

Of the selected participants, 3 fathers and 7 mothers had indicated their interest in maintaining a reflective journal. A copy of the structure of the reflective journal (see Appendix 12) was given to these parents during the first meeting. However, in spite of reminders and encouragement, it turned out that no participant had maintained a reflective journal. Some of the participants who had not indicated their interest in maintaining a reflective journal had made their reason for the same clear beforehand that they lacked the time, skill or passion required for this activity. The situation was hence anticipated due to this experience and the low response in participants' interest in maintaining a reflective journal. Indeed, some of the participants who initially had indicated their interest in maintaining a journal explained their reason as busy schedule for not being able to do so. Instead, they preferred to talk about the recent incidents where parental aspirations and expectations were conveyed to the children. Hence, questions designed for the reflective journal were covered during each interview with the parents. In this way, the richness of the data collected was absolutely not compromised in any way. The semi-structured nature of interviews was found to be beneficial here.

Undoubtedly, the reflective journal was not found to be a useful instrument for data collection. It is possible that the spontaneity or the immediacy of detailing 'just happened' interactions with the family was lost as a result of the reflective journal method not functioning as intended. However, we have also found out that the reason for many parents not being able to maintain a journal was mainly 'lack of the required time necessary for this activity'. Hence, it is possible that this spontaneity and immediacy might not have been captured 'in time' by the parents in the journal entries anyway even if they were maintaining a journal, for they could have postponed making the relevant entries, doing so at a later and more convenient time. As a result, in order to reduce this loss of data richness anyway, the relevant questions were posed during each and every interview session, rather than at the end of the interview visits.

Upon conducting the first interview with the parent participants, it emerged that children's role through child related factors such as the ability and interest of the child was significant in shaping parents' aspirations for their children. For this reason, children's interviews were expected to be highly insightful as they could reveal what

children's aspirations are and what shapes them. Hence, though it was initially proposed in the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 4) that group interviews will be conducted with children by dividing them into two groups of six each, they were eventually divided into smaller groups to facilitate in depth interviews, especially considering the fact that they were going to be interviewed only once.

As mentioned earlier in Section 5.2, initially only nine of the twelve children had indicated their interest in being involved in group interviews. These nine children were divided into three groups of three each. The groups were formed in such a way that there was at least one male and at least one female child in each group to add to the richness of data collected through enhanced group dynamics especially as aspirations and acculturation have been evidently seen to vary by gender (discussed in depth in Chapter 2 and 3). Care was also taken that each group contained at least one child studying in a local school and at least one child studying in international school to enhance the richness of the data collected through group dynamics.

Geeta, the female child participant scheduled for Group Interview 1 (FGI1) was not able to join the group interview on the actual day and for this reason she had to be interviewed separately and alone in FGI 3. Udit, the male child of the Dutt couple (Case ID 3) indicated his interest in being involved in the study only after all the group interviews were conducted. Hence he was interviewed separately and alone in FGI5.

The grouping of the children for group interviews is shown in Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5

Grouping of Children for Group Interviews

GI	Family name	Child's name	Gender	Family name	Child's name	Gender	Family name	Child's name	Gender
GI1	Korde	Nitin	M	Ahuja	Sumit	M			
GI2	Nathan	Pranav	M	Kale	Kajal	F	Moghe	Abhay	M
GI3	Gautam	Geeta	F						
GI4	Kannan	Parag	M	Sandhu	Naman	M	Garg	Shweta	F
GI5	Dutt	Udit	M						

While discussing the aspirations and acculturation experiences of participants in the rest of this thesis report, references will be made to the relevant data sources. There are two parts in each reference code. The first three letters indicate the first three letters of the family pseudonyms of the parents. The second part can be one of the following.

Q<item number>	for questionnaire (parent child data form)
P<interview session number: row number>	for parent interview
G< group interview number: row number>	for group interview

For example, KAN/P1:24 would identify data source as row 24 of the transcript of the first interview conducted with the parents in the Kannan family. Similarly AHU/G1:10 would identify the corresponding data source as row 10 of the transcript of the group interview 1 where the child of the Ahuja family was interviewed. The first three letters of the pseudonym are used instead of just the first letter or the first two letters of it for better clarity of data source as the first two letters of some the pseudonyms match. Also, for easier reference, row number in the interview transcript is used as opposed to a line or page number as transcripts were presented in tabular form for coding purpose (see Section 4.5.2.3).

This chapter presented the quantitative data collected through postal questionnaires. Details of how this quantitative data enabled recruitment and selection of suitable participants in order to collect data were presented too. The next chapter will present the qualitative data collected from the parents and children by describing each of the twelve cases.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS FROM INDIVIDUAL CASES

The previous chapter presented quantitative data collected through postal questionnaires. This chapter will present the qualitative data collected through the interviews conducted with parents and group interviews conducted with children by describing each of the twelve cases in detail.

Description of each case will begin by introducing the parents, explaining their background in terms of their country or origin, motivation behind migration, as well as their educational and occupational background. In line with the research questions, parental aspirations will then be described which include their educational and occupational aspirations for their children. This arrangement of case description is expected to facilitate within case as well as cross-case analyses of the data in order to develop themes for discussion purpose.

6.1 Mr and Mrs Sandhu

6.1.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Sandhu

6.1.1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Sandhu migrated with two young sons to Singapore from India in 1999 due to Mr Sandhu's job posting (SAN/P1:2). When in India, they always had plans of sending their children to the US for higher education. Their main motivation behind migration to Singapore was building up sufficient funds for their children's future education in the US which would not have been possible in India (SAN/P2:96). They wished to migrate back to India after a couple of years, or to the U.S. for their children's higher education (SAN/P1:24). However, over the years during their stay in Singapore, their plans changed and they decided to consider Singapore as a destination for their older son Naman's higher education. Originally of Indian nationality, solely for the purpose of Naman's higher education, recently the couple and their older son Naman took up Singaporean citizenship (SAN/Q:A4, SAN/P1:12).

Obviously, Naman is well aware of the preference given to Singaporeans in university admissions and employment. He believes that taking up Singaporean citizenship will prove to be beneficial to him in this matter (SAN/G4:24). Initially, the Sandhu family was unsure of accepting the Singaporean citizenship due to the loss of two crucial years of

education to serving in the National Service, mandatory for boys by law. However, to Mrs Sandhu, it is Naman's happiness that matters the most. Hence respecting Naman's interest in doing the National Service and considering Singapore as his future place to settle, Mr and Mrs Sandhu eventually decided to call Singapore their home (SAN/P1:18).

The Sandhu family culture gives equal opportunity to everyone in being involved in decision making be it a small or a big issue. Pros and cons are carefully weighed before making any final decision. And this is exactly how the decision of accepting Singaporean nationality was taken in the Sandhu family. The family collectively compared the positive side of it, which is the educational and occupational opportunities it will open up for Naman against the negative side of the two additional years spent before completing university degree (SAN/P1:120-122).

6.1.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Sandhu has a master's degree from an Australian University (SAN/Q:A10). Mrs Sandhu was holding a master's degree from India when she came to Singapore. Upon migration to Singapore, Mrs Sandhu searched for employment opportunities but was unsuccessful. This experience made her realize immediately that it was an international qualification that was valued in Singapore and not her master's degree from India (SAN/P2:192). She shared:

> When I came to Singapore, I had a master's degree. I went around looking for a job, they said you don't have work experience and you don't have international degree. We thought we were masters, so that's the time I did my masters from Australia, and so did my husband. (SAN/P2:192)

For this reason, she decided to pursue another master's degree this time from an Australian University by correspondence in Singapore (SAN/P1:28).

Though highly educated and ambitious, it is obvious that to Mrs Sandhu, her family and family's well-being is more important than her personal achievements. For this reason, she decided to study by correspondence instead of full time due to her commitment towards looking after her young children (SAN/P1:30). Also, though she had her own well settled business in India, she gave it up to accompany her husband when he got posted to another city in India (SAN/P1:32). Upon completing her master's degree in Singapore by correspondence, she decided once again not to work as their children were still young and chose to look after them instead (SAN/P1:30). Once her

children became a little more independent, she became an entrepreneur which she enjoys doing and was convenient offering flexible working hours (SAN/P1:32). Though her passion is fashion designing, which she was pursuing in India, she decided to get into the education business this time to join her sister mainly because she could do it from home (SAN/P1:34). Together with her sister in India, she now runs an institute offering a pathway to International degree courses in Australia (SAN/P1:36). Mrs Sandhu expressed that she would have loved to go back to fashion designing in Singapore but she couldn't, as there were no such opportunities available at that time and found it tough to pursue (SAN/P1:40).

6.1.2 Educational and Occupational Aspirations

6.1.2.1 Current Education

Mrs Sandhu's older son Naman is currently studying the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum in a local independent school in Singapore (SAN/Q:B4,6). Mrs Sandhu believes in providing quality education to Naman. In her eyes, it is the recognition of the school and not necessarily the curriculum that determines the quality of education. For this reason she shortlisted two of the best schools in Singapore for Naman. However, her final choice between the two schools was influenced by her high regards for the religious background of the school providing regimentation. Her childhood experiences played a crucial role here. As Mrs Sandhu herself was educated in a school with a Catholic background, she desired the same kind of values and regimentation to be inculcated in her son that she had experienced as a child (SAN/P1:56). As expected, the school provided Naman the right opportunities making him a more confident person (SAN/P1:60). Obviously, it is the overall development of Naman that is important to Mrs Sandhu. While discussing Naman's blooming personality in the favourable school culture and environment she mentioned:

> He got selected as a prefect. And that leadership role changed him so much. He became more confident, outspoken, he could converse. Earlier he was so shy, he would never talk. But this kind of role helped him to bloom. Then he got selected as a prefect, councillor, I never thought he would be able to do because I thought he was very shy and introvert. But being a prefect, councillor you need to speak out, and the best part is, he balanced the two roles very well. When you are a prefect you are booking on your friends, your friends get very upset with you. But still they were his friends as he was being honest and he told them, " I am doing my duty, don't take it personally". So that kind of balance he was able to make

> with his own friends. He has really bloomed as a person I would say and the culture has really helped him. He is very confident now as a young man. I really like the school that's why I am very positive about it. (SAN/P1:60)

Academic excellence is important to Mrs Sandhu. She monitors Naman's academic progress regularly. She believes in parent-teacher communication in working towards Naman's academic goals and providing him the required support in every possible way (SAN/P1:74). She emphasizes on learning and not merely the grades. It is the journey of education and hard work that goes into it that she values and not merely the outcome (SAN/P1:52). She explained,

> Amazing result, he has done wonderfully well because he worked hard, whatever the result is, I am absolutely happy. I told him, even in his IB he doesn't get 40 or 42, I don't care. I mean, he gets a 38 also I will be very proud of him, because he has worked very hard, so results don't matter, in the end, it is the journey he has taken and I am very proud of him for that. (SAN/P1:52)

Naman has performed well in the recent examinations. Though academic excellence is important to Mrs Sandhu, it is his well-being that takes priority as she does not want it to cause unnecessary stress to her son. Mrs Sandhu tries her best to keep her son's stress level low and confidence level high by encouraging him through regular discussions with him over coffee (SAN/P1:96). She expressed:

> I am not stressed on his marks at all. When I see him stressed, I get stressed. Because I don't want him to take so much stress unnecessarily. In the end, the results are, yeah, they are important, but they are not more important than your mental stability and your own happiness. So I don't give them that kind of importance. He gives it a lot more than [sic] importance than I do. So I have to chill him down. (SAN/P1:50)

Mrs Sandhu's experience with her own parents definitely plays a crucial role here as her parenting style is highly influenced by her experience as a child with her parents. She appreciates her parents who were always encouraging and never put any kind of stress on her in terms of academic performance (SAN/P1/102).

6.1.2.2 Future Education

The Sandhu family's migration to Singapore has definitely opened up a whole new world of opportunities for Naman. Mrs Sandhu is now convinced that her experiences in Singapore have added to her awareness of the various options available (SAN/P1:138).

Mrs Sandhu believes in her son pursuing a professional degree (SAN/P1:170). Initially she believed that Naman should be pursuing an engineering course. However, she soon discovered that Naman's passion was medicine. She discouraged him from choosing Biology as a subject at the pre-university level hoping that he will keep his options open as she was aware that Biology is not a prerequisite for pursuing medicine in university (SAN/P1:80).

Mrs Sandhu explained:

> In UK or local universities Bio is not mandatory for medicine. So I said even if you want to continue medicine, you can still take, you don't have to take biology. So he was keen on medicine, but I was as a mother trying to dissuade him from doing medicine, but I could not do it. In 6 months he came back to square one, saying I will do medicine only. (SAN/P1:80)

She encouraged him to consider engineering by giving him exposure towards the variety of engineering courses available that would suit his interest (SAN/P1:78). She mentioned,

> I have taken him for [sic] university fairs. I have noticed that even in the engineering programmes he looks for some bio in it; kind of human research. Then it got very clear that he is wanting to do medicine. (SAN/P1: 78)

She even tried discussing with him other options available related to his interest by explaining to him, "If you want anything to do with biology, there are many other branches, biotechnology, and biochemistry. Do something on pharmaceutical. I gave him the options" (SAN/P1:80).

Despite her efforts, Mrs Sandhu was unable to dissuade Naman from considering medicine due to his strong passion and personal interest in it. During a parent-teacher meeting, when she expressed Naman's inclination towards medicine to his Chemistry teacher, to her surprise, his teacher was also supportive of Naman's choice as he felt that it suited his personality perfectly (SAN/P1:78). Mrs Sandhu was impressed with how well Naman's teacher knew him and gave an account of Naman's teacher's opinion as,

> He said why Mrs Sandhu? He is more like medicine. His personality is like medicine. People who are in medicine are very compassionate and he suits it perfectly. So I think you should seriously look into medicine for him. (SAN/P1:78)

Mrs Sandhu was disappointed in Naman's interest in pursuing medicine mainly for two reasons. Firstly, it was her unfamiliarity with the course as she did not have any

family members, friends, or colleagues to give her any advice as none she knew had taken up this course (SAN/P1:118). Secondly, the lengthy duration of the course as compared to engineering and the lifelong learning involved in it due to constant need to upgrade oneself (SAN/P1:78) and commitment which would disturb one's work-life balance (SAN/P1:142).

Mrs Sandhu expressed:

> I was not really very keen on medicine because I don't know anybody who has done it and I think it is a long-long process. It is life long as you have to keep upgrading yourself. (SAN/P1:78)

To Mrs Sandhu, it is Naman's happiness that matters. Hence, though she was personally against Naman pursuing medicine, with Naman's interest at heart and following his teacher's advice, she finally decided to explore the opportunities available to him in medicine (SAN/P1:80). Both Naman and Mrs Sandhu have high regards and respect for teachers. In fact, Naman expressed that his teacher's advice was the main factor in influencing him to consider medicine (SAN/G4:128).

Naman's well-being is highly important to his mother. For this reason, Mrs Sandhu has reservations against Naman going to a Singapore university as in her experience the local education system is stressful and for this reason, she is clear that she does not want Naman out of one stressful school and into another (SAN/P1:94). Her concern is that the Singapore education system is highly performance driven and unforgiving (SAN/P1:82-84).

As mentioned earlier, Mrs Sandhu has always wished to send Naman overseas for university education. However, considering the high cost of medical courses overseas due to the lengthy duration, she has now decided to consider a Singapore university for Naman as her first choice (SAN/P1:94). To Mrs Sandhu, finally it is the quality of education that is important which in her opinion is determined by the recognition of the school. She now favours a Singapore university because though stressful, its recognition is good (SAN/P1:94).

Obviously, Mrs Sandhu and Naman are well aware of the preference given to Singaporeans in terms of university admissions. In fact, their one major reason for taking up Singaporean citizenship was to increase Naman's chances of getting into a Singapore

university (SAN/P1:26) as barely any places are offered to non-Singaporeans in the medical school. However, because of the demanding entrance requirements to the medical colleges in Singapore, Mrs Sandhu now sees overseas universities as a fall back plan in case Naman does not qualify for the local medical college due to his academic performance at the IB examinations (SAN/P1:88).

Though both Mrs and Mr Sandhu have their roots in India, Mrs Sandhu is clear that she would not be sending Naman to India for higher education. Her initial experience in Singapore has influenced her aspirations for Naman in this matter. As mentioned earlier, she was unable to find a job as her Indian degree was not recognized in Singapore. Besides, Mrs Sandhu feels that there is a vast difference between the socio-cultural environment of India and Singapore. She feels that Naman having lived in Singapore for many years, would not fit into the Indian culture anymore (SAN/P1:122). Her concerns is,

> He feels very intimidated in India. I also don't think he can fit into the culture, medical schools. Even the international schools, are quite different from what he is used to here. So the atmosphere is not the same. It will be a torture for him frankly speaking. (SAN/P1:122)

However, Mrs Sandhu is less concerned about Naman adapting to the western culture than the Indian culture as she thinks:

> It will take him time, but it will not be that difficult, he knows the western culture, he has travelled to various countries, in India things are not that simple. Even the schools are different. We can still survive in India because we have grown up in India. These kids have not seen Indian kids, Indian kids are much more clever, smarter. (SAN/P1:124)

Indeed, her perception of Indian children was,

> Street smart. These kids are absolutely zero. They (the children who have lived in Singapore) would be chewed up. They can't survive in the Indian atmosphere. That's why I am scared. (SAN/P1:126)

Mrs Sandhu also sees difference in the educational environment of India and Singapore. She feels that Singapore education is more application oriented and holistic as compared to the Indian education system which mainly emphasizes on rote learning (SAN/P1:82). She expressed:

> I think there are a lot of positive things about Singapore education system. The local system is really good, if we take out the stress from it. Everything is based on your performance. Children don't get a breather. If we take that factor out, I think it is fantastic. If you take the

> CBSE or ICSE in India, the system here is more holistic I would say. You get into the subject and you apply it rather than you mug it. Indian system is mugging. This system is application oriented. If the child is brainy, I think he will do fantastic in the local system. It is that stress part that you have to prove yourself every time to get into the higher level or higher school. (SAN/P1:82)

Naman also agrees that he may not be able to adapt in India due to the difference in the education system and living environment between the two countries (SAN/G4:388).

Though Mrs Sandhu finds medical education expensive, she is against considering financial aids from the government, university or private corporations, due to the bond associated with it (SAN/P1:132-134). She expressed her concerns about high costs and scholarships for medical education as:

> The local universities will give you a scholarship, but they will also ask you to sign a bond of 5 years to serve in the hospital. I don't want the bond. But in NUS, the cost is high. If you don't take the scholarship, the cost is more expensive than UK. So here you don't have a choice. You get, you will have the bond, and you have to take the scholarship. There's no choice. That's one thing I don't like about the scholarship is bond. (SAN/P1:134)

Mrs Sandhu is against gender bias. She is disappointed that her parents sent her brother abroad for higher studies but restricted the choice of school for her to the one they were comfortable with being protective parents of a daughter even though she had the grades required for admission into a better school. For this reason, she is clear that if she had a daughter, she would provide equal opportunities to her (SAN/P1:104).

6.1.2.3 Occupation

Mrs Sandhu highly emphasises on having financial security in life. With Naman's happiness in mind, though Mrs Sandhu leaves the choice of occupation to Naman, she has clear views that he should have a professional career which is within her acceptance range by choosing an occupation that will make him financially stable (SAN/P1:164). She expressed:

> He can take whatever profession he wants, as long as he is independent and not dependent on me. If he wants to take up guitar, I will say, who is going to feed you? That passion is one thing. I will say you keep your passion with you as a hobby, but you should at least have a living of your own, and be independent. (SAN/P1:164)

Mrs Sandhu is an entrepreneur herself. Though she leaves the choice to Naman, she wishes that following her footsteps, Naman should work for himself as it gives more flexibility which she was experiencing (SAN/P1:170). As a mother who highly values her family, Mrs Sandhu feels that Naman should work and settle in Singapore so that the family can be together. However, being a practical mother she feels that Naman should get a chance to explore the world by working overseas (SAN/P1:174).

Mrs Sandhu highly values compassion. In her eyes, being a doctor is a noble profession and she wishes that Naman will give back to the society by doing community service in India where it is truly required (SAN/P1:140). She mentioned,

> If he becomes a doctor, I have taken a promise from him that you have to serve some kind of small place in India, to give back to the society. That is one thing he has to do. India needs it. It is such a noble profession. If you just keep doing this for money, then it is sad. I would not at all be happy with it. I am not looking at medicine as a moneymaking machine. People say, oh medicine! that will give him a lot of money. That's not the thing I am actually looking into, because it is disgusting. So I say, go to the villages, whenever even when you take a holiday, some part of your life you have to go and look after the poor where they have no money. (SAN/P1:140)

As mentioned earlier, Mrs Sandhu is against gender bias. She was deprived of many opportunities as her parents felt that it is important for boys to have a career while girls can do without a career. As a result, she received no career guidance from them. For this reason, Mrs Sandhu feels that if she had a daughter she would encourage her to take up a professional course and become financially independent (SAN/P1:108-110).

6.2 Mr and Mrs Chaudhary

6.2.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Chaudhary

6.2.1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Chaudhary migrated to Singapore in 1994 from India (CHA/P1:2) in search of a better living environment. Having travelled overseas quite frequently, Mr Chaudhary was well aware of the living environment overseas (CHA/P2:2). He expressed his frustration about the living environment in India as,

> too much bureaucracy, too much corruption! To do anything there is too much hierarchy, legal, political and so on. I have worked for quite a few years in India. So I wanted a change, I wanted to go out. So when we decided to go out it was not short term we spend a

> few years and then come back. If we go there we will go for quite a long time. Whether we come back or not at that time the thinking was open. It was never do a saving and come back. We will go for a long period of time. I had been overseas quite a bit as a kid so I knew what it was like. (CHA/P2:2)

Mr Chaudhary looked for job opportunities in five to six countries of which two responded positively. He chose Singapore over Hong Kong due to its better political stability at that point in time (CHA/P2:13). To the Chaudhary couple, the self-identity of their daughters is important. Hence, upon migration, the Chaudhary couple decided to take up the Singaporean citizenship for the whole family with their two daughters' future in mind as the girls associated themselves more with Singapore than India, having been brought up in Singapore (CHA/P1:22).

Mr Chaudhary explained:

> It was mainly about the children. They are born and brought up here, at least one of them is born here, they identify themselves as Singaporeans more than anything else. They haven't seen India. They have seen more of Singapore. So their future lies here. (CHA/P1:22)

6.2.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Chaudhary holds a bachelor's degree in engineering and a master's degree in management from India (CHA/P1:30). After working in the corporate world for a long time, Mr Chaudhary decided to have a change in career as he disliked its working culture at the senior level. Hence he took up a teaching job in a Singapore university which gave him the flexibility he desired (CHA/P1:32-38).

Mrs Chaudhary holds a master's degree in science and a professional teaching qualification, both from India. She was working as a teacher in India before migrating to Singapore. Upon migration, Mrs Chaudhary searched for teaching opportunities in Singapore however she faced discriminatory treatment and her experience was not very pleasant in this matter. She was rejected by the vice-principal of a government school immediately for the reason of her strong Indian accent despite her qualifications and experience being suitable for the job. Mrs Chaudhary was however glad that she was eventually offered that job as the school could not find anyone more suitable than her. After working in that school for a year and half, when the first Indian international school opened up in Singapore, Mrs Chaudhary decided to teach there instead of a local school (CHA/P1:40, CHA/P2:123).

To Mrs Chaudhary, family and its well-being are obviously more important than her own career. That is why she took a long leave from her teaching job in Singapore for two reasons. Firstly, to look after her sick mother in India requiring frequent and long visits; and secondly, due to her own health problems. In fact, she started painting and teaching art as the state of her health did not permit her to remain standing for long hours, which was required in her teaching job. This came as a blessing in disguise for her as she was always interested in pursuing art but never had the time and opportunity to do so (CHA/P1:40-44).

6.2.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.2.2.1 Current education

Mr and Mrs Chaudhary's younger daughter Anita is currently studying the IB curriculum in a local independent school (CHA/Q:B4,6). It is clearly evident that happiness is of high importance to both Mr and Mrs Chaudhary as both of them eventually took up a profession that gave them happiness. Mrs Chaudhary's childhood experience with her parents is not very pleasant when it comes to pursuing one's interest. She was forced by her parents to take up science in spite of her interest in art (CHA/P1:210).

Mrs Chaudhary obviously did not let her daughter face the same experience as her. Mr and Mrs Chaudhary noticed Anita's interest and ability in art and decided that the School of The Arts (SOTA) would be the right choice for her so that she can be groomed right from the beginning to become an artist in future (CHA/P1:96). Mrs Chaudhary expressed her excitement as:

> We observed that she is very talented in the arts. We thought she could have a career in arts. If she is groomed right from the beginning, it is much better for her, so that's why SOTA. She was the 1st batch of SOTA. They have a talent academy, they test them out. She passed. Before that also she had a lot of interest in arts. She had a lot of work to show them like ceramics. A lot of drawing and paintings she used to do those days. She used to win prizes in the small-small competitions. (CHA/P1:96)

Both Mr and Mrs Chaudhary highly emphasise on academic excellence and share the same concern that Anita's current academic performance is inconsistent. Both however believe that she will do well in the upcoming IB examinations if she puts in the effort as she is intelligent and she realizes that good academic results are required to get into the

university of her choice (CHA/P1:63-68, 173). Mr and Mrs Chaudhary value Anita's well-being and hence are advocates of encouraging or motivating her to do well rather than pushing her, which can cause stress (CHA/P1:73-74).

6.2.2.2 Future education

Both Mr and Mrs Chaudhry highly value Anita's happiness and for this reason, they want Anita to pursue her own interest in the university. Their childhood experiences have definitely shaped their aspirations for Anita. Learning from her childhood experience with her parents, Mrs Chaudhary is against forcing her wishes onto Anita as it does not prove to be beneficial in the long run. She is instead an advocate of guiding Anita in making the right choice (CHA/P1:89). On the other hand, Mr Chaudhary having studied in a residential school since the age of eight, is in favour of making decisions independently (CHA/P2:88).

Anita is a talented artist however, having studied art for six years, she now wishes to do something different (CHA/P1:232). Mrs Chaudhary is concerned that Anita is still confused about what course to pursue in university (CHA/P1:179). For this reason, she suggested the option to pursue liberal arts to Anita which would give her the flexibility as,

> I was suggesting to her you can take liberal arts course 4 years. They have a wide variety of courses. Then you can decide what you want to do. At the moment very confused. Sometimes she wants to do economics, sometimes she wants to do literature. She is good in both actually. (CHA/P1:184)

Mr Chaudhary is very clear that Anita has to decide what she wants to do in future. He has learnt from his experience with his older daughter. He shared their experience with their older daughter that as they didn't know her plans for higher studies, they were not very well prepared in this matter. They wish to plan more smartly for their younger daughter, that is, Anita (CHA/P1:183). He expressed:

> With elder daughter it was very clear. She wanted to do medicine. So we were ok with that. She had decided that when she was 9 years old, but we did not know it at that time. We were not very well prepared for the medicine application and stuff. With younger daughter, she doesn't know what she wants to do. But I think we will be smarter in terms of planning for her because we are more tuned into the education system. We will think of career possibilities, but she has to decide what she wants to do. We are not going to tell her what to do. (CHA/P1:183)

Certain aspects of difference in the socio-cultural environment of India and Singapore have influenced Chaudhary family's aspirations for Anita.

Though Anita completely identifies herself as a Singaporean rather than an Indian (CHA/P2:163, 164), she dislikes the socio-cultural and legal environment in Singapore. She shares the same concern as her local friends that being in Singapore is very stressful due to many restricting rules. She finds Singaporeans self-centred and materialistic. She prefers the 'westerners' instead. Anita's experience in Singapore has contributed to her preference for 'westerners'. She once saw a girl being followed by a man. In spite of requesting, the girl received no help from Singaporeans whereas a westerner came forward immediately to her rescue. For this reason, Anita does not want to stay in Singapore anymore and wishes to go overseas for higher studies, something which her peers aim to do too (CHA/P2:165-169).

When compared with her local friends' parents, Anita's experience has been that a typical cultural trait of Indian parents is that they are overly protective of their daughters and her parents are no exception to this (CHA/P2:132). Mrs Chaudhary has her own reasons for being protective about Anita. She appreciates the safe living environment of Singapore where Anita is brought up and used to and hence wants Anita to study in Singapore as,

> I just get worried about her. She has been born and brought up here, in a protected environment. If she goes somewhere else, knowing her she is such an extrovert person, she is very innocent that way, I think people will take her for a big ride also if she goes somewhere else. If she is around here, at least we can look after her. (CHA/P1:206)

As Anita is interested in studying overseas, while Mrs Chaudhary's first preference is a Singapore university for her, Mrs Chaudhary thinks that a perfect solution to this would be NUS-Yale which offers a dual degree with opportunity to study overseas for a part of the course (CHA/P1:74). However, she may explore opportunities for Anita in California, US as Anita's maternal uncle who lives there can offer the family support to Anita (CHA/P1:225). This again is in line with Mrs Chaudhary's childhood experiences with her parents. While Mrs Chaudhary wanted to pursue her studies in Delhi, her parents chose Mumbai for her where her maternal grandparents were living who could provide her the family support (CHA/P1:210).

Mr Chaudhary too is aware of differences between the physical environment of India and Singapore. Concerned about Anita's safety, he believes that India would not be a destination for Anita's tertiary studies, as she has been brought up in a safe and protected living environment in Singapore, and India is comparatively unsafe (CHA/P1:234).

Another reason for Mrs Chaudhary not considering India as a destination for Anita's tertiary studies is Anita's self-identity as a Singaporean and feels that Anita may be a misfit there as she does not associate with India at all (CHA/P1:235).

Mrs Chaudhary explained:

> She totally associates to Singapore. I don't think she comes from India or is an Indian in that sense. She calls herself Singaporean right from her childhood. She does not associate with India at all. If you take here there also, she is going to be a misfit. (CHA/P1:235)

6.2.2.3 Occupation

Mr and Mrs Chaudhary want Anita to achieve her fullest potential. Hence they wish that Anita will consider a career as an artist or a computer professional as she is good in these fields (CHA/P1:258). As Mrs Chaudhary herself is an artist, she would be very happy if Anita too follows in her footsteps (CHA/P1:258). Though Anita is unsure of what career to pursue, she has indicated her interest in taking up something that allows her to work with nature, animals, travel or do social work (CHA/P1:249-250).

Being aware of the cultural differences between India and Singapore, Mrs Chaudhary had been emphasizing to Anita the importance of becoming financially independent. This can start with choosing a professional career (CHA/P1:286). She has serious reservations against certain careers such as those in the social service which Anita has shown interest in (CHA/P1:280). To Mrs Chaudhary, the stability of marriages in the Singapore culture is an issue, as opposed to the Indian culture where one could depend financially on one's husband (CHA/P1:288, 292). After all, it is seen in the Indian culture that the head of the family is responsible for providing for the family (see Section 2.3). Mrs Chaudhary explained:

> Now things are changed. Living in a country where everybody works, you see how many divorce rates are going on these days you know. So one thing is there, if something like that happens, you should be able to stand on your own feet; you should have a job. That will be safer. (CHA/P1:288)

Mr Chaudhary on the other hand is well aware of the environmental differences between India and Singapore in terms of the economy. Hence he is not particular about Anita having a professional career as he feels that, in Singapore it is not difficult to make ends meet (CHA/P1:277). He does not support Mrs Chaudhary's idea of Anita pursuing a professional career which binds a person like a chain (CHA/P1:289). However, he too like Mrs Chaudhary is against Anita pursuing certain careers she is interested in because to him, Anita's happiness is more important. He is convinced that these careers are a fad and not something that can keep Anita happy in the long run (CHA/P1:275).

Mr Chaudhary gave an example thus:

> We don't want her to end up in a zoo. That is something like a fad she can try and do something. She likes nature for example, but I don't think that will keep her happy. We want her to be happy. Working in a zoo, if she is doing administration, if she is happy, we don't have a problem at all. The question of her happiness and her career and passion being there is what I see. She can be an artist, do a BBA, run a shop if she wants to, but in a zoo I don't think she will be happy. (CHA/P1:275)

His concern about Anita's fad is well justified. As mentioned earlier, initially Anita was highly excited to join art school however she lost interest in art after pursuing it for six years.

6.3 Mr and Mrs Dutt

6.3.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Dutt

6.3.1.1 Background

Originally from India, Mr and Mrs Dutt migrated to Singapore due to Mr Dutt's job assignment in 1992 (DUT/P1:2, 14). Upon completing the assignment, they went back to India however, returned soon after in 1994, as Mr Dutt accepted a permanent job in Singapore (DUT/P1:18, 20).

Mr Dutt realizes the environmental differences between India and Singapore and definitely prefers Singapore in this matter. For this reason, he has taken up Singaporean citizenship as he feels that being in Singapore for 20 years it may be difficult to settle back in India (DUT/P1:34). Mrs Dutt on the other hand still associates more to her Indian identity and has not found any compelling reasons for taking up Singaporean nationality (DUT/P1:36). Udit, the only son of the Dutt couple too has taken up Singaporean

nationality for two reasons. Firstly, it is because the public service scholarship he wishes to apply for is offered to Singaporeans only and preference is given to Singaporeans in university admissions. Secondly it is because of his self-identity. Being brought up in Singapore, he totally associates himself to Singapore rather than India (DUT/G5:6).

Udit explained:

> There were a couple of practical reasons; in terms of scholarships application, admissions, ease of travel. I think it makes things easier. For instance, if you are looking at the Public Service Commission scholarship, nearly all of them have the condition, they are willing to consider you if you are an Indian, but you have to take up the citizenship if they want to give it to you. So it seems like a logical thing to do. You might as well show that you are committed in advance if you take up citizenship. But those are the practical considerations. All of that being said at the same time, I have grown up here and I feel more Singaporean than Indian. So it doesn't seem like a foreign thing for me to do. It is natural. (DUT/G5:6)

6.3.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Dutt completed his five initial years of schooling in Mauritius when his father was posted there. The rest of his education up to master's level took place in India (DUT/P1:52-54, DUT/Q:A9,10). He is an Information Technology (IT) professional working in the banking sector (DUT/P1:66).

Mrs Dutt too holds a master's degree from India (DUT/P1:53-60, 68). She was working as an IT professional in India before migrating to Singapore. She was in the US alone for eight months working on a project after her marriage, before migrating to Singapore (DUTP1:6). Though highly educated and career oriented, Mrs Dutt values her family above all. For this reason, when Mr Dutt was posted to Singapore on an assignment, she quit her job in India as she did not want to maintain a long distance relationship any more (DUT/P1:14). She found a suitable job in Singapore after their migration (DUT/P2:20) in her own field, which is the software industry (DUT/P1:68). Currently, she is playing a management role in the same field (DUT/P1:73).

6.3.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.3.2.1 Current education

Udit is currently studying the GCE 'A' level curriculum in a local independent school (DUT/Q:B4, 6). To the Dutt family, quality of education is important which in their

perception is determined by the rank and recognition of the school. Based on his primary school results, Udit qualified for the top high schools in Singapore. The decision was a tough choice between two of the best schools, one offering 'A' levels while the other IB, as the tertiary entrance examinations. Eventually, the Dutt family chose the more academically focused school which happened to offer the 'A' level curriculum and was Udit's choice too. Their choice was obviously influenced by their high regards for academics and not by the type of curriculum the school offered (DUT/P1:77, 84; DUT/G5:10).

When it comes to making crucial decisions, the Dutt family gets together to discuss the issue, weighs the pros and cons and then the decisions are taken with the person being affected having the biggest say but with a lot of input from other family members. The only exception is that major financial decisions are taken by the head of the family. This is exactly how both Mr and Mrs Dutt were brought up too by their parents (DUT/P2:50-60) which is a typical trait of the Indian family culture (see Section 2.3).

In line with their family culture, when it came to choosing subjects, Mr Dutt felt that Udit should have the biggest say. In turn, Udit had 2 reasons for choosing subjects relating to the humanities over the sciences. These were firstly, his ability and interest, and secondly, the perceived quality of teachers in his school (DUT/G5:16). He explained:

> I had to choose between triple science and humanities. I was much better at humanities and I enjoyed it much more. Also, the humanities programme in my school has quite a good name. They have British expatriate teachers who have come in. they have been teaching for 20-25 years. They are legends. They really well respected. I went for the open house. They are funny, charming and they really love what they are doing. So it felt like a great choice. (DUT/G5:16)

Having brought up and studied in India, Mr and Mrs Dutt were initially in favour of Udit pursuing engineering or medicine which are the educational tracks highly valued in the Indian culture. Coming from a typical Indian background with their peers mostly studying engineering or medicine, Mr and Mrs Dutt assumed that Udit would be pursuing the sciences following his parents' footsteps. Hence, they were initially apprehensive about Udit's choice of pursuing the humanities instead of the sciences (DUT/P1:77, 221).

Herself being career oriented, Mrs Dutt places high importance on career in life. This was her other reason for being against Udit pursuing the Humanities, for she had been thinking that the notion of a career was doubtful in the Humanities track. She expressed her concern as:

> Right now the subjects seem very like literature, history, coming especially from engineering background, we don't understand and appreciate how the career will shape up with those subjects. (DUT/P1:96)

And,

> Both of us are science students so we automatically assumed that he will also take up science, at least till A levels. Now there are so many more options than we had. But in his case even for 'A' levels he said that he will opt for humanities. It was a bit tough, shock for me. My husband was more open to it than me. My opinion was he is blocking out certain career options very early without even exploring them. (DUT/P1:181)

Udit and his parents have high regards and respect for teachers. Upon realizing Udit's inclination towards the humanities, Mrs Dutt consulted his humanities teachers who convinced her to have more confidence in Udit's choice (DUT/P1:181). Udit expressed:

> My mother wasn't keen and she wanted me to take sciences so that I don't close my option of becoming an engineer or a doctor. But she also met the teachers, she saw them, she saw what they were doing and she was won over. (DUT/G5:16)

Both Mr and Mrs Dutt emphasise academic excellence. They are hence highly concerned about Udit's current academic performance not being up to their expectation. Academic grades are crucial at this stage, given that they represent one's fulfilment of the entry requirements to a good university. Though they know that Udit is capable, they also feel that his effort is lacking (DUT/P1:141-146, 250). They closely monitor Udit's progress and are in favour of spending more time on academics rather than his non-academic activities (DUT/P1:160, 161). Udit however is satisfied about his grades as he feels he is already performing better than his peers (DUT/P1:169).

Being brought up in totally different educational environments of Singapore and India respectively, clearly there was disagreement between Udit and his parents when it came to measuring academic success. Udit claimed that his parents were more accustomed to the Indian grading system where numbers matter and it is possible to get 95% marks, as

opposed to the Singapore system where the cut off for a high grade is 70%, making it difficult to achieve a higher percentage (DUT/G5:32).

Believing in teachers' assessment of Udit, the positive feedback from Udit's teachers however, has given his parents much assurance. Mr and Mrs Dutt have become hopeful about Udit's academic performance in the upcoming 'A' level examinations (DUT/P1:250). This once again shows that the Dutt family has high regards and respect for teachers.

6.3.2.2 Future education

As mentioned earlier, like most Indian parents, Mr Dutt's initial choice for Udit was engineering or medicine (DUT/P1:77). However, Udit's inclination is towards law or liberal arts (DUT/G5:34). Udit has undoubtedly given his higher education a lot of thought. He aspires for quality education and hence places high emphasis on the ways the training shapes one's thinking. For this reason, his first choice is to read law (DUT/FG5:56). He elaborated:

> Studying law is its own reward. It is interesting and the kind of training they give, the legal mind they try and help to create is in itself a benefit. They are shaping the way you think, you question. All of those are important just for how you view the world. (DUT/G5:56)

Udit's second choice of studying liberal arts is due to its flexible nature. He appreciates the wide variety of subjects it allows one to choose from, thus not forcing one to devote one's entire attention to one area (DUT/G5:34). Though Mr Dutt's first choice for Udit is engineering or medicine (DUT/P1:77), he is supportive of Udit's choice of studying law or liberal arts (DUT/P1:236). Mrs Dutt however, is a strong advocate of pursuing a professional degree and hence strongly opposes Udit's choice of studying liberal arts as she feels that it does not lead to a profession (DUT/P1:241-243).

The Dutt family aspires for quality education for Udit which to them can only be received in a good university. Mr Dutt insists that Udit studies in any good university be it in US, UK or Singapore (DUT/P1:248). Udit and his parents disagree, however, on what makes a good university. Udit's view is that his parents are focussing more on the quantitative academic standings rather than student satisfaction which he thinks is more important (DUT/G5:48).

Mrs Dutt is aware of the legal implications of Udit becoming a Singaporean citizen, which is the mandatory National Service for boys for two years during the crucial years of education. Mrs Dutt's first preference is clearly a university in the UK for this reason. To make up for the time lost doing National Service, she is in favour of Udit pursuing his degree in the UK which can be completed in 3 years as opposed to the US which requires 4 years to complete (DUT/P1:259).

Mrs Dutt expressed her concern as:

> There is a significant concern in my mind about the 2 years spent in NS. That does make it more important to enforce that. If you have already spent 2 years in NS, now you cannot really spend too much time exploring what I can do, which is unfortunate. If this wasn't there, then I would have given him more time to explore. Give 2 years in NS; I am more keen for him to go to UK and get a 3 year degree versus a US 4 year degree. He also knows this time element. How long is he finally going to study? (DUT/P1:259)

Mr Dutt being aware of the cultural differences between India and Singapore is clear that he will not explore tertiary education opportunities in India as India is too competitive and being brought up in Singapore, Udit may not survive the competitive environment in India (DUT/P2:2). He explained:

> The way of thinking, the way things are done, the way the whole system works, it is quite different there to get anything approved, to get anything resolved. When people say something, they may not exactly mean that. I think they need to understand some of those things. They are not exposed to that. We can understand some of those things but for him it may be a little bit different. (DUT/P2:4)

Udit too has reservations against pursuing his tertiary studies in India as he has the opportunity to enrol in universities better than those in India (DUT/G5:40).

Mr Dutt is also aware of the difference in education systems in different countries. He clearly is an advocate of quality education which in his eyes cannot be obtained in India. Mr Dutt instead prefers Udit pursuing his tertiary education in the UK, US or Singapore due to the nature of training in these countries which is more practical, teaching one to think and apply the knowledge as opposed to the rote learning in India (DUT/P2:4-8).

Gender of the child is obviously significant influencing Dutt couple's aspirations. The physical environment of a country is responsible for this difference in their aspirations.

Though they do not have a daughter, they are clear that if they had a daughter they would have preferred her to study in the safe living environment of Singapore (DUT/P2:10-12).

6.3.2.3 Occupation

Migration has definitely caused a change in the views of the Dutt couple and hence in their aspirations for their son. In line with what is valued in the Indian culture, though the Dutt couple's initial choice for Udit was engineering or medicine, their views changed upon migration when they observed that it is one's professional success that is valued in the Singapore culture and not a specific profession as such. They now understand the importance of being professionally successful regardless of the profession (DUT/P1:77, DUT/P2:98-99). Mr Dutt elaborated:

> Now we have also come to that conclusion that whatever you do whether law, medicine or engineering, as long as you are at the top of it, everything is valued. You need to be professional. All these have opportunities but you have to be good at what you do. (DUT/P2:98)

Realizing that one can do well in any sphere and with Udit's happiness in mind, Mr Dutt feels that Udit should choose a profession of his liking. Believing in destiny, he also feels that one does not know where one's life will be heading in future (DUT/P1:272). However, the couple emphasises on financial stability, and hence they insist that Udit should choose a profession that sustains him economically making him financially independent (DUT/P1:276-278).

Though Udit is highly passionate about theatre studies and acting, he too shares the same concern as his parents that this profession may not offer him financial stability (DUT/G5:46). He gave an account of his observation as:

> I was with the Singapore Theatre for the Young for one year. That is when it felt that it is possible to start doing this professionally. But you don't see many actors here acting and making money supporting themselves. It is the same all over the world. In the performing business anything that requires performance, there are a few select people that make it to the top. Most of them are working on 2 jobs and that is not easy. (DUT/G5:46)

Udit believes in having a successful career. For this reason, though his parents can financially support his tertiary education, he is considering taking up a scholarship that offers him a guaranteed career trajectory (DUT/G5:58).

Though Mrs Dutt values Udit's happiness and believes that he should a choose a profession that makes him happy, she insists that he should be successful to at least the extent to which both of them are successful hence emphasising on matching up with their achievement (DUT/P1:293).

Mr and Mrs Dutt personally value family and family bonding. Mr and Mrs Dutt commented that all parents want their child to stay close to them. However, being practical and recognising that the world we live in now is globalised (DUT/P1: 280-284), they do not have such expectations of Udit. Both of them have reservations against Udit working and settling in India though, due to the cultural differences between the country and Singapore. That said, Mrs Dutt has no objection to Udit working in India as a foreigner (DUT/P1:281, DUT/P2:2).

6.4 Mr and Mrs Garg

6.4.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Garg

6.4.1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Garg migrated to Singapore from India (GAR/P1:2) in 2006 (GAR/P1:8) with their two daughters. The Garg family became permanent residents of Singapore (GAR/P1:24). They however did not consider taking up Singapore citizenship due to their strong emotional attachment to their Indian nationality (GAR/P1:26) as they found it difficult to break ties with their home country (GAR/P1:28).

Unity and cohesiveness are evident in the Garg family culture, as a decision is always taken collectively in the family by respecting each other's opinion. Hence, taking up the Singaporean citizenship will also be a family decision and if they decide to, it would be for the whole family (GAR/P1:30). Mrs Garg is fully aware of her younger daughter Shweta's interest in taking up Singaporean citizenship. However, Shweta being only 16 years old, Mrs Garg feels she is not matured enough to make such important life decisions on her own. Besides, even if she allows Shweta to do so, there are legal issues, making it impossible for Shweta alone to take up the Singaporean citizenship due to the citizenship policies (GAR/P1:32). She expressed:

> There have been a lot of times my daughters, I mean, the younger one has of course voiced her wish to become a citizen, but then it's just so busy and everything, so we haven't really thought about it, we thought she's too young to actually make a decision like that on

> herself. And anyway, you can't apply for a child. She's just 16, so she won't be able to apply unless we apply. (GAR/P1:32)

While Mrs Garg gives priority to her emotional attachment to her Indian nationality, Shweta is caught between emotions and practicality. On the one hand she is aware of the preference given to Singaporeans in terms of university admissions and feels that being a Singaporean would give her an advantage in this matter (GAR/P1:36). On the other hand, her Indian nationality is her self-identity and keeping it means being loyal to her home country too (GAR/G4:18). She however also acknowledges the contribution of Singapore towards forming her current identity. This was mainly in terms of her outlook and perspective towards life which changed in the more favourable living environment of Singapore. Shweta spoke about her self-identity as:

> Mostly Indian but a part of me is a Singaporean. I also associate myself with Singapore because of what Singapore has given me. (GAR/G4:668)

And she explained further as:

> In India I just studied in school and went back home. Here it has really helped me developed my character as an individual. Coming here has opened my perspective, the way I look at stuff now. So I think Singapore has really helped me that way. Also, I have higher standards and expectations now. Whereas in India you just go with the flow. There's corruption or whatever, even in day to day life you have corruption. You just accept that. After some time you just become immune. In Singapore you start to believe that there is a higher standard of living. There is certain expectation that the society can have from its government. That way it has made me into more liberal and a better minded person. My outlook towards life has changed. (GAR/G4:670)

6.4.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Garg holds a bachelor's degree in engineering (GAR/Q:A9) from India (GAR/Q:A10) and is working as a marine engineer in Singapore (GAR/Q:A11). Mrs Garg holds a master's degree as well as a professional teaching qualification from India (GAR/P1:48). After completing her degree and while awaiting her results, Mrs Garg worked for a magazine for a short duration before continuing with her education to pursue a master's degree (GAR/P1:50).

Family and especially her children are valued by Mrs Garg more than her personal achievements and career. She truly cares about family bonding. Initially after marriage

she decided not to work only so that the family could be together, especially as Mr Garg was a sailor then (GAR/P1:50). She explained:

> My husband had a sailing job. What that meant was I would not be able to take long leave and sail with him and that would deprive my children of the sailing experience and they would be away from their dad, so I didn't work till the point in time when sailing became difficult for children as they were growing up. Work pressure in school was increasing so I stopped sailing. (GAR/P1:50)

Obviously, another reason for Mrs Garg's decision of not working then was because she wanted her daughters to get the experience of sailing. It is evident thus, that the overall development of the child is important to Mrs Garg through enriching life experiences.

Mrs Garg's first thoughts of starting to work crossed her mind only when her children's school insisted that she joins the school as a teacher (GAR/P1:50). She believes in the whole family being loyal to the same school. For this reason, upon migration to Singapore, though there were other opportunities available, Mrs Garg chose to teach in the same school as her children as she did not want any conflict of loyalty. It is once again evident that loyalty is highly valued by the Garg family, be it to the country or the school (GAR/P1:54).

Another reason Mrs Garg had for teaching in the same school as her children was her emphasis on children's academics and their overall development. Being in the same school kept her informed of their progress in school (GAR/P1:54). Mrs Garg had never imagined that teaching profession could be such a fulfilling experience (GAR/P1:56) and expressed how glad she was that she chose this profession. As she said,

> I really enjoy the classroom dynamics. I love teaching the students. There is actually a whole lot of things we give to our students. At the end when results come out the students feel really happy. That's a huge kick, I think. Satisfaction! (GAR/P1:58)

6.4.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.4.2.1 Current Education

Shweta is currently studying in an Indian International School in Singapore pursuing the IB curriculum (GAR/Q:B4,6). Mrs Garg's initial choice for her daughter was a local school. However, when she approached local schools, she realized that according to the

age criteria, Shweta was too young to get admitted into the same grade she was studying in when she was in India. Obviously Mrs Garg did not want her to repeat a grade as she had always been a good student and had a good portfolio (GAR/P1:78). For this reason, she started to explore international schools (GAR/P1:76). Considering the long term benefits, Mrs Garg chose the current school for Shweta with her university education in mind. Mrs Garg wanted Shweta to pursue tertiary education overseas, and hence she chose IB for her (GAR/P1:76). She explored the schools that offered this curriculum. Once again, importance of family bonding is evident through Mrs Garg's choice of school for her daughters. She wanted her two daughters to study in the same school as they were used to studying in the same school in India. Hence Mrs Garg decided to send both her daughters to an Indian International School as it was relatively more affordable as compared other international schools, and also offered the IB curriculum that she wanted for them (GAR/P1:76). In the initial years Shweta pursued the Indian curriculum in India as well as in Singapore. However, at the first available opportunity she switched to an international curriculum. In her perception IB was more flexible in subject choices and higher quality as compared to the Indian curriculum which was more rigid and towards rote learning (GAR/G4:46).

To Mrs Garg it is a typical trait of the Indian culture, or rather the Asian culture, to give high importance to academic achievement. This was another reason why she chose an Indian international school for her daughter (GAR/P1:84) upon realizing that a local school was not possible for Shweta. She mentioned:

> A lot of individual attention is given in our school. The cohort size of course allows that. There is also emotional side to it. As Indians we really do a lot. As for most Asians, academics are really important. We really try to bring up the results of our children. (GAR/P1:84)

Mrs Garg compared the educational environment in Shweta's school in India and Singapore as:

> The school we went to, too much of banding etc. section A the best one, then section B, children were graded and put into sections. When we came into the international thing, it is more open. The pressure or the fear that works in a way that adversely affects their psychology of the child that was lifted. My daughter always said, be the 1st among the first 3, she used to be given a badge to wear, as in first in class, second, third. When the final exam used to take place, it was the loss of badge that was important. What if I don't get to wear it on my tie, I did not like it. That also works to motivate the kid maybe, but I felt that

> there was too much pressure for her. It's the wrong motivation for her. That was lifted out here. That doesn't make her a bad student. She is still doing well. She still wants to do well. But that excessive breathing down the neck, that's one thing about India. The rat race is too much. Here, especially in the international school it is not there. Very mixed group of students! Mixed abilities! You treat students equally, because you are not in one selected section. It is inevitable in children to become self-conscious, condescension to the next section. It boils down to someone in section D; they didn't even know each other. They were so distant. That I don't think is nice. That was definitely taken away. They are so much more accepting to the average kid. That was a very good thing. (GAR/P1:110)

It is evident from this account that though academic excellence is important to Mrs Garg, she does not want grades to be more emphasized than the learning. In her experience, schools in India were overly academically inclined and promoted excellence for its recognition. It is evident once again that to Mrs Garg the all-round development of the child is important. She appreciates how the international school culture encourages mixed ability students to study together learning to respect all, as opposed to the culture in India where children were banded. The Indian culture in her experience resulted in her daughter not even being aware of what children of different abilities were like and hence lacked the life skills of how to respect and interact with all. The international school culture has taught Shweta the necessary life skills without compromising her learning. For these reasons, Mrs Garg is extremely satisfied about the international school culture where Shweta is currently studying as opposed to the school culture in India.

Mrs Garg is clearly highly concerned about Shweta's well-being and hence is against putting any undue academic pressure on her. Mrs Garg has complete faith in Shweta's ability however is practical in setting goals for her IB examination grades. Though she wishes that Shweta will get a perfect score, she purposely sets her target a little lower as she does not want Shweta to get disappointed (GAR/P1:114). Though Mrs Garg does not monitor Shweta's school assignments due to time constraint, she offers support to Shweta in every possible way when required. She gave an account of two recent such incidents as,

> I really don't have the time to follow, for example if she was cutting down on word count in TOK essay. She had presentation yesterday, so yes I helped. I helped look at it. I timed her. She was much beyond 10 minutes. Then I told her you have to cut it down. When she was giving her SAT, studying late at night, I would sit with her English reasoning things, do things together, but I am not actively involved in her daily homework assignments. (GAR/P1:68)

6.4.2.2 Future education

Mr and Mrs Garg differ when it comes to Shweta's university education. Mr Garg desires the best possible education for Shweta in the shortest possible time. He is aware of Shweta's interest in pursuing medicine. He himself is an engineer and feels that medicine is a lengthy course. Instead of spending years in pursuing one medicine degree, Shweta can complete a bachelor's degree in engineering as well as a master's degree in management in a shorter duration comparatively (GAR/P1:150).

In the Garg family culture, Decisions are usually taken collectively considering everyone's opinion as mentioned earlier (GAR/G4:568). However, in Shweta's opinion, it is usually her mother who has a more active role in making the decisions (GAR/G4:574). This is evident as Mrs Garg is obviously playing a more influential role in this matter by allowing Shweta to pursue her interest in medicine. To Mrs Garg it is Shweta's happiness that is more important than anything else in this matter though she also shares the same concern as Mr Garg about the lengthy duration of the medical education. She believes that Shweta should pursue her passion and do something that suits her personality to bring out her capability (GAR/P1:152). Hence, Mrs Garg is supportive of Shweta's choice as she thinks that Shweta has the right personality for it (GAR/P1:150). She mentioned:

> But she was very keen. And she became keener and keener in the last 2 years. I thought she had that empathy to become a doctor so it is a good choice. So I definitely supported her and said don't get dissuaded by your dad. (GAR/P1:150)

Migration has clearly caused a change in Mrs Garg's aspirations for Shweta. On the one hand it has opened up a whole new world of opportunities for Shweta while on the other hand, it has restricted some of the choices. Now in addition to India, she is exploring opportunities in Singapore, UK and US for Shweta's medical education which she wouldn't have thought of while in India. Though Shweta is keen on pursuing medicine in Singapore, Mrs Garg and Shweta are aware of the preference given to Singaporeans as barely any enrolment places are available to them making it next to impossible (GAR/P1:134). For this reason, they are forced to rule out Singapore as a destination for Shweta's tertiary education. Mrs Garg mentioned that if they were living in India, their first choice for Shweta would have been a medical college in India (GAR/P1:148). But now due to the difference in education system in India and Singapore, she is forced to rule out India too as pre-university examinations in India are conducted

before the IB examinations are conducted. This will cause a delay of one year in Shweta's application to government medical colleges (GAR/P1:136). As India and Singapore seem to be impossible venues, Shweta is now forced to shortlist UK and US only (GAR/P1:136).

Mrs Garg is definitely concerned about the quality of education for Shweta. This is another reason for eliminating India as a destination for Shweta's higher education. Mrs Garg doubts the quality of private medical colleges in India. For this reason, as Shweta is unlikely to qualify for the government medical colleges in India, Mrs Garg is against exploring the private medical colleges in India (GAR/P1:134). She explained the reason for eliminating India as a possible destination as,

> India of course she can always go back as an international student but since she won't be able to take the admission test for medical, because the timing is such, there it happens right after their board exams, in about April. Here she is having IB starting from May, those colleges; the government colleges are out. That leaves the private institution and I am not keen, that would probably the last resort. So don't think we look at it. (GAR/P1:134)

As Mrs Garg values Shweta's happiness, she respects her interest. Hence she fully supports Shweta's choice of pursuing medicine. However, considering the lengthy duration of the course as compared to other courses, she gives her preference to UK education which can be completed in a comparatively shorter duration. She is also concerned about the quality of education at the same time which she does not want to compromise and makes it very clear that the ranking of the university will take precedence over duration of the course (GAR/P1:160). She explained:

> The choice between UK and US is difficult but I suppose the first choice is UK. Because there is direct 5 years medicine. When you go into 4 years of pre-med, and do all kinds of sciences, it can kick you off the route. But when we decide, we will probably look at the college. When it is between lower rank college in UK versus John Hopkins in Us, then it's obviously John Hopkins in US. We are not very rigid people. Even now, both the options are now fully open. (GAR/P1:160)

Migration has definitely influenced Shweta's current as well as future education plans. Shweta has explored various opportunities available to her to pursue medicine in India, Singapore, US and UK. However, she sees problems in applying to most of them due to age, nationality or admission criteria (GAR/G4:340-342). Though initially Mrs Garg chose an international school over a local school for Shweta so that she would not

have to repeat a year (GAR/P1:78), Shweta feels that the age criteria is still an issue for university applications as she is underage to apply to a medical college (GAR/G4:340) which is limiting her choices for higher education.

Mrs Garg finds university education extremely expensive (GAR/P1:144). She has explored scholarships available however is dissatisfied about the preference given to Singaporeans. These scholarships are mainly available to Singaporean citizens and required the students to sign a bond which she finds a hindrance to one's growth at this crucial stage of a student's life. For this reason, she prefers to take up a loan as at least it can be paid off without any further binding (GAR/P1:146). Her views in this matter are also influenced by the difference in the education system in Singapore and India. She expressed her strong views as:

> They are obviously looking at people who will take scholarship, sign the bond and come back. I find all of those a little restrictive to take a loan but you can pay off. She will probably come back to Singapore after studying but to put a restriction, psychologically I can't accept. I think it's the way we have been brought up. In India, like IIT, it is so highly subsidized. There is nothing that binds you to the country. That kind of democracy, we are used to that system. All education is subsidized in India. If you are really looking at the topmost colleges, even they don't bind you. So I think that freedom for the child to explore his or her potential. That should be there. (GAR/P1:146)

6.4.2.3 Occupation

Mrs Garg's childhood experiences and the family culture she was brought up into definitely have an influence on her aspirations for Shweta. Mrs Garg comes from a family with a liberal background where one's personal freedom is respected even when it comes to choosing an education or occupation. Moreover, she feels that being brought up in the modern culture of a metropolitan city in India has made her an open minded person too. For this reason, she believes in giving freedom to the child to choose his or her career (GAR/P1:174). Though Mrs Garg's parents never specifically told her what occupation to choose (GAR/P1:164), they emphasised on achieving fullest potential (GAR/P1:174). She shared:

> Doing well in life and doing what you are capable of was more important than someone telling you that you need to become a doctor, or engineer or something. That was not spelt. (GAR/P1:174)

Following her parents' footsteps, Mrs Garg wants Shweta to become a doctor as she feels that Shweta has the right personality for it that will bring out her capability (GAR/P1:160) even though Mr Garg wishes that Shweta follows his footsteps and becomes an engineer (GAR/G4:394). Mrs Garg feels that for Shweta who is academically so competent, something like fashion designing may not be suitable as her capability would then be wasted (GAR/P1:140).

Mrs Garg expressed:

> Even if she wanted to become a nuclear scientist, it's completely her choice. But if she chose something wrong, there is nothing right or wrong, but chose something that does not bring out her capability, like if she is very good at art or fashion designing I wouldn't mind. But what she is like, if she wanted to become something else, then I would have given it a thought. I would have said you are wasting yourself. Now children look at the television and stuff, fashion, and say I would love to become a fashion designer, then I would be like "really?" So that may be yes. You are capable of something else. You are probably better off doing service to mankind. (GAR/P1:152)

Shweta has given her future occupation a lot of thought and has explored a lot of career options before making a decision (GAR/P1:140). She has visited many hospitals in Singapore to interact with the doctors there and find out more about the profession to get an insight of the life of a doctor and see if it would suit her (GAR/G4:336). Though Mr Garg is supportive of Shweta's choice of occupation, he is not in favour of this profession as he is concerned about Shweta's work-life balance being disturbed due to the demanding nature and commitments required in the profession (GAR/G4:394).

Mrs Garg is aware of the differences between the socio-cultural and physical environment of India and Singapore. She hence has reservations against Shweta working and settling in India as it may be difficult for her to adapt in India having lived in Singapore for so long. However, Shweta does not see any such issues as she still feels connected to her home country India having spent ten years there before migration (GAR/G4:479).

To Mrs Garg it is the opportunities in the US that is more attractive than Shweta's emotional connection to India. Mrs Garg's experiences with her older daughter play a significant role in this matter. As Mrs Garg's older daughter pursued her higher education in Canada, Mrs Garg is aware of the living environment in the western countries and hence wishes that Shweta would settle in US (GAR/G4:479-483). Shweta spoke about her

mother's perception of the western world being better in terms of the economic and legal environment as:

> There are more job prospects and it is better. Liberal and it's a nice place to stay I think. My sister went there for college like she went to Canada and she liked the place also so I think they want us settled that side. (GAR/G4:483)

Mrs Garg clearly aspires that Shweta works and settles in a country with a more liberal legal environment which offers better occupational opportunities.

6.5 Mr and Mrs Nathan

6.5.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Nathan

6.5.1.1 Background

Originally from India, the Nathan family migrated to Singapore in 2001 (NAT/Q:A8, NAT/G2:10) after their 15 years stay in US (NAT/P1:2). Their younger son Pranav was born in US and holds a dual citizenship of India and US (NAT/P1:24). He is however planning to keep his US nationality in future (NAT/G2:20) while Mr and Mrs Nathan are still Indian citizens (NAT/Q:A3). Though Mr and Mrs Nathan have become permanent residents of Singapore, they did not consider it for their younger son Pranav as they had clear plans that Pranav will go back to US after completing his pre-university education (NAT/P2:38). To Mrs Nathan it is being with her family that is important which is evident through her future migration plans which are either to be with her family in India or be with her children who are going to be in the US (NAT/P1:30). She mentioned:

> My children are not going to be here. Both of our families are back in India. So either I should be going with my kids to US, or go back to my family in India. There's practically nobody in Singapore. (NAT/P1:30)

Mrs Nathan believes in knowing one's original culture and is absolutely clear that being an Indian, Pranav should know his roots. However, Pranav was born in the US and brought up there for first six years. Though he acknowledges his roots being in India, he identifies himself more as an American. Due to the huge difference between the socio-cultural and physical environment of US and India, Mrs Nathan was sure that Pranav would never be able to adapt in India. At the same time, she was well aware of the prominent Indian culture as well as the advanced infrastructure in Singapore. For this reason, Mr and Mrs Nathan chose to migrate to Singapore which is a city that offers

Indian culture within a western infrastructure (NAT/P1:54, NAT/P2:32, NAT/G2:753). She explained:

> Basically he was born in US, and then he came to Singapore so he doesn't have much idea. Our main reason to come to Singapore from US is that, children cannot absolutely survive in India. If it is Singapore, it is a multiracial country. Our Indian culture is very prominent here. So, they will get to know our culture, so that's the main reason. (NAT/P1:54)

6.5.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mrs Nathan holds a bachelor's degree from India (NAT/Q:A9, 10). Her priority has always been her family, especially her children and more importantly their education. For this reason, after migrating to Singapore she decided not to work so that she could give her full attention to her younger son Pranav's education. In fact, she noticed the huge difference between the educational environment of US and Singapore immediately, realizing how demanding the Singapore curriculum was. Her only aim of life thus became Pranav's education and she devoted her time fully to teaching him sacrificing all her personal interests (NAT/P1:40). She expressed her shock as:

> When we moved to Singapore, my son started his primary 1 here. The system in US is totally different. Basically, he didn't know anything. When I moved here, it was like such a big shock. They were so advanced in the school system, he was so behind, I had to do something, so that he can go with the stream children here are in, so within 3 months I pushed him so much, I brought him to the level. I said I am not going to work or anything, my full concentration is on him. I have to bring him up and he has to do well in the system. (NAT/P1:40)

Mrs Nathan's childhood experiences and family culture are clearly influential in shaping her values which are children and education.

She mentioned:

> In our family, we were always a joint family with grandparents. So children were always given a priority. May be that's why I am into children too. (NAT/P1:212)

Also, though everyone in her family, including her father was in business, she herself always valued education more than money and business. For this reason, she intended to marry a highly educated person (NAT/P1:214). Indeed, Mr Nathan holds a Ph. D. degree and is working as a research scientist in Singapore. Coming from the US, a land of

opportunities, Mr Nathan found it a little difficult to find a suitable job in Singapore as being a small country the job opportunities in their perception were limited (NAT/P2:30).

6.5.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.5.2.1 Current education

Upon migrating to Singapore, Mrs Nathan enrolled her older son into an international school as he was already used to the American education system. However, considering the high cost of international schooling, she chose a local school for Pranav (NAT/P1:40). Pranav is currently studying the 'A' level curriculum in a local government school (NAT/Q:B4,6). Mrs Nathan is well aware of the entrance requirement to a university in the US and that the choice of Pranav's current school or curriculum is not significant (NAT/P1:68). She mentioned:

> He has already planned to go to US. For them it is the SAT score which is very important. Whatever grades they get here, is secondary. So we didn't care about whether he is in IB programme or whatever programme they are offering. A regular JC is good enough. (NAT/P1:68)

For the same reason, though Pranav's academic performance is not crucial for his university admissions, Mrs Nathan's emphasis on academic excellence is evident through her efforts to support Pranav in every way and her personal sacrifices (NAT/P1:40).

Mr and Mrs Nathan differ in their opinion when it comes to academic excellence. Mrs Nathan is against setting any expectations unlike Mr Nathan,

> My husband is the one who says you have to score this much, but for me I know he will do his best and whatever he gets, I am very happy about that. I have the confidence in him. My husband sets expectations like he has to get good scores. (NAT/P1:110)

The tension between Pranav and Mr Nathan is evident in this matter. Pranav obviously feels that his well-being is less important to his father who expects Pranav to study constantly not allowing him to relax sufficiently (NAT/P1:114). Mrs Nathan described a typical conversation between the father and the son as:

> He says, I have to relax you know, I can't be constantly sitting in front of the book. If I don't relax, even if the book is in front of me, nothing goes into me. There's no point in sitting there, he always explains to him, but he says you have to, he is always after him. But I know that even if he is opening the book and says I am reading, and nothing goes inside, there's no point. He is neither relaxing nor reading. So there's no point. (NAT/P1:114)

Mrs Nathan on the other hand is more concerned about Pranav's well-being emphasising on sufficient rest and good health and gave an account of her advice to Pranav as:

> I always say to him, take your time off when you are sick. There's no way I will push him when he is sick or something. So when you are ok, put more effort, finish it off. So when you are sick or something happens, you can relax, you don't have to worry. This is the point I always tell him. So he is ok with that. (NAT/P1:114)

Another reason why Mrs Nathan is not concerned about Pranav's academic performance is that Pranav is self-motivated. Actually, Pranav's older brother's role is influential in this matter. Pranav's older brother has been doing academically very well and has set high standards for Pranav who now has the ambition of matching or exceeding his brother's level (NAT/P1:62).

6.5.2.2 Future education

For Pranav's tertiary education, Mrs Nathan has explored opportunities mainly in US as he is a US citizen. Before migrating to Singapore they had decided that he will be studying in the US (NAT/P1:142). However, Pranav is thinking of considering Singapore universities too if his A level grades are high enough to qualify him to apply (NAT/G2:326). Though the family still has strong ties with India, Mrs Nathan sees it as unlikely that Pranav will study in India due to the difference in the physical environment of India and Singapore or US (NAT/P1:146). She explained:

> India, they are not into it because of the infrastructure and all. Ever since they were born, they go to India for holidays only for a month or so, that's it. They, even with their own friends and family, they are into them. They say Hi, Bye and that's it. Their own grandparents, they love them and everything, but they like the grandparents coming over here rather than they going there. So it is highly unlikely for them to go and study there in India. (NAT/P1:146)

Mrs Nathan feels that preference is given to Singaporeans when it comes to university admissions, fees and scholarships. For this reason, though high educational expenses is a concern, she feels that it is highly unlikely that he will be eligible for any scholarships in Singapore which he can easily qualify for in US, thus making the choice between US and Singapore obvious (NAT/P1:166).

Pranav's older brother's role is highly significant in influencing Nathan family's choice of US for Pranav's higher education. Pranav wishes to follow his brother's footsteps in this matter (NAT/P1:148). Mrs Nathan feels that Pranav should study in the same university as his older brother. She expects Pranav's older brother to take his responsibility as she is aware of the difference in the socio-cultural environment in Singapore and the US. As Pranav has not been exposed to the US culture much, it will be beneficial for him to be with his older brother who can help him in adapting to the culture (NAT/P2:92).

As mentioned earlier, Mrs Nathan is highly concerned about Pranav's well-being. To her, his health is an issue as he suffers from asthma. For this reason too she expects Pranav to study in the US in the same university as his brother where he can receive family support (NAT/P2:92).

The tension between Pranav's older brother and his family is evident as he is clearly against the idea of having Pranav in the same university as him. Pranav's older brother clearly suggested that Pranav should learn to be independent and face the difficulties on his own (NAT/P2:92).

Mrs Nathan truly values Pranav's happiness. For this reason, as Pranav's main interest is Biology, she feels that he should pursue medicine or biomedical engineering (NAT/P1:138). She however insists on Pranav matching his father's level in education and expressed clearly that he should pursue his education up to the level of Ph. D. (NAT/P1:188).

6.5.2.3 Occupation

Mrs Nathan shared the same aspiration as her son of going into a field related to Biology. However, she highly emphasised on financial security for Pranav. In her experience, Mr Nathan's profession as a research scientist always faces difficulties due to lack of funding. For this reason, she expects Pranav to take up a profession which will always be in demand offering him the desired financial stability. (NAT/P1:176). She described their experience as:

> My husband is a research scientist, I feel that funding and everything is always a problem. So I am not very happy for him going into research. Something to do with biomedical engineering or medicine which has the demand all the time because medical field is always going to be there, or teaching. If he himself is very much interested, he wants to go into

> research, I wouldn't say anything. It is up to his choice. But this is what I want. My husband as a research scientist has worked in those universities. Getting a fund for research is really tough these days. They are not giving enough funding, so we are always in the trouble of getting the funds and survive. So I really feel he has to go into the kinds of profession where the demand is always there. (NAT/P1:176)

She further commented:

> Either pharmacy or biomedical engineering, teaching these are the things that will never come down, whatever happens. So I really prefer that. If he goes into teaching, I would say teaching plus research is not a big deal. You can do it together. But research alone, no. (NAT/P1:178)

Pranav's reason for choice of profession too is in line with his mother's criterion of financial security. In fact, he is expecting high monetary rewards from his occupation and not mere financial security. Pranav's main passion is to become a doctor not just due to his keen interest in it but also because it is a highly rewarding profession in terms of money though stressful. His second choice is going into commerce field as it is less stressful with higher monetary rewards and stability (NAT/G2:416, 418).

Once again emphasizing on financial security, Mrs Nathan expressed her satisfaction that Pranav is not interested in any unconventional profession as:

> We don't want him to go into odd stuff, and he is pretty much not interested too. So we don't have to worry. If he is into this dancing and music and everything, maybe we would have freaked out. But both of us are on the same level. So we don't have any problem. (NAT/P1:208)

Pranav's perception too is that his parents wouldn't want him to take up an unconventional profession as it does not guarantee success and stability (NAT/G2:438).

Though Pranav is aware of his roots in India and spent more time in Singapore than in US, he associates himself more to the US culture and identifies himself as an American being a US citizen (NAT/G2:751). For this reason and also due to the economic environment in the US, Pranav indicated his interest in working and settling in the US due to the opportunities there (NAT/G2:475-478). Besides, though Pranav feels there are plenty of career opportunities in Singapore, he sees that preference is given to Singaporeans when it comes to jobs. For this reason, he sees it unlikely to work and settle in Singapore in future (NAT/G2:386). He obviously sees US as a land of opportunities and wishes to work and settle there (NAT/G2:388).

6.6 Mr and Mrs Gautam

6.6.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Gautam

6.6.1.1 Background

Originally from India, the Gautam family lived (and worked) in Thailand for four years before deciding to further migrate to Singapore in 1999 (GAU/P1:4). Though Mr Gautam had job opportunities offered in many countries including US, Japan and Singapore, they chose Singapore upon Mrs Gautam's suggestion. It is obvious that Mrs Gautam highly values education. Her main motivation behind migrating to Singapore was her children's education in addition to her professional development as a teacher. She was well aware of the educational opportunities in Singapore which she wanted to explore (GAU/P2:7). While talking about what she had heard about Singapore, she mentioned,

> Its education system is quite good here. Since I was a teacher from the very beginning, I wanted to come and explore the education field here. For teaching also … that time my daughter was only 2 years old actually. Not just basically about daughter only, but also myself I wanted to explore. (GAU/P2:7)

Mrs Gautam highly values her Indian culture as well as her family in India. For this reason too, she preferred Singapore over US and Japan knowing the prominent Indian culture in Singapore which would have made it easier to adapt (GAU/P2:5).

Upon migration to Singapore, Mr and Mrs Gautam were so impressed with the living environment in Singapore that they decided to call it their home and for this reason, they are soon planning to take up the Singaporean citizenship (GAU/P1:22-31). Geeta, their oldest daughter feels that preference is given to Singaporeans in terms of university matters. For this reason, she is highly interested in taking up the Singaporean citizenship so that she can pursue her tertiary education in a Singapore university as there are a lot of benefits given to Singaporeans, benefits which non-citizens are not entitled to (GAU/G3:12, 76-78).

6.6.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Gautam holds two master's degrees. One of his master's degrees is from India and the other one from a foreign university which he pursued in Singapore. He is working in Singapore in the field of Information Technology (GAU/P1:47). Mrs Gautam holds a professional degree in education. She was working as a teacher in India. However, as a

devoted mother, family and their well-being are of high priority to Mrs Gautam. For this reason, upon migration she decided not to work so that she could give her full attention to her three young children. After a ten years' break she went back to teaching once she thought her children were independent (GAU/P1:37-45). She is currently teaching in an Indian international school (GAU/P1:100).

6.6.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.6.2.1 Current education

To Mrs Gautam, it is important to integrate into the Singapore society and learn their culture. For this reason, she purposely chose a local kindergarten in Singapore for her oldest daughter Geeta so that Geeta could get a good exposure of the local culture (GAU/P2:20). She explained:

> When I was trying for my daughter's kindergarten, I made it a point I didn't want any Indians in her class because I want her to learn new things. Indian families, whatever they teach her, even I can teach her that. So in her kindergarten, I made it a point that I don't want her to be surrounded only by Indian friends. (GAU/P2:20)

Upon completion of her kindergarten education, Geeta continued her education in a local primary school. At that time, Mrs Gautam decided it was time to go back to teaching. She got a job in an Indian international school. To the Gautam couple, it is their children's well-being and their education that is of utmost importance. Hence they decided to transfer Geeta into the same school as her mother so that Mrs Gautam could be closer to her daughter, look after her better, and it would be convenient to monitor her academic progress too (GAU/P1:100).

Though Mrs Gautam initially enrolled Geeta into a local kindergarten so that Geeta could learn the local culture, eventually she did not want Geeta to be over-influenced by the local culture. This is evident through Geeta's perception that she was enrolled into an Indian school as her mother disliked the local accent and did not want Geeta to pick it up through sustained contact with the local students (GAU/G3:182). She shared:

> I think the main reason why my mom shifted me from a local school to international school is because she didn't want me to pick up the accent. When you become a professional the accent is going to stay with you. If you are talking to someone in Australia or America, why would you want to talk like that with all the 'la's' [sic]? I don't get it! (GAU/G3:182)

Currently Geeta is studying the IB curriculum in an Indian international school in Singapore (GAU/Q:B4,6). Mr Gautam values education and emphasises on academic excellence. This is evident through his active involvement in Geeta's studies by checking her homework regularly (GAU/P1:146), coaching her in subjects like Hindi (GAU/P1: 184), and his concern over Geeta's academic performance not being up to the mark. Geeta is unable to cope with the tough international education in spite of her effort (GAU/P1:154). To Mrs Gautam however, although education and academics are important, it is Geeta's well-being that is of priority and she does want the education to cause any stress to her. In Mrs Gautam's perception, Singapore education is less stressful as compared to the tough international curriculum. For this reason, Mrs Gautam feels Geeta should to go back to the local school curriculum (GAU/P1:156). Mrs Gautam mentioned:

> I gave the option to my daughter; we are with you, if you want to shift to a local school. So I have given her the option, if you are unable to cope up, its ok. We don't want you to stress yourself in proving yourself like I can do it. Enjoy your life also. She will be having her semester exams, so I have told her, don't take too much of stress, but study, work hard. But if you think you are unable to cope up, we can shift you easily to a local system. We don't have anything against local system. So she is preparing for that also. May be in future! She wants to do IB, I can see that. But if she can't, it is up to her level also. (GAU/P1:156)

However, Geeta is determined to work hard and continue pursuing the international curriculum as she feels it will be beneficial for her in the long run (GAU/G3:24). She realizes the importance of good academic performance. Though Geeta's parents are supportive and encouraging, the tension between Geeta and her parents was obvious regarding this issue as she finds it stressful to talk to her parents about her academic performance especially because she is unable to match their expectations. She mentioned:

> Every teenager feels it is a problem talking to your parents about marks because that's what at the end of the day matters. The world is very competitive. They only ask about your marks. They don't spend a day with you and say oh, you are very nice to hang out with or you are very confident and stuff like that. They just look at your marks at the end of the day. I think it is a good thing if you can talk to your parents about marks. (GAU/G5:64)

To Geeta it is the international recognition of a curriculum that determines the quality of the education. That is why, despite studying in an Indian international school, she prefers the IB curriculum over the Indian curriculum due to the international recognition associated with it. Another reason for choosing the IB over the Indian curriculum is

because she is planning her further studies in Singapore and not in India. Thus, in her perception, the IB qualification is locally more recognized and valued than the Indian qualification (GAU/G3:24). She mentioned:

> I have no plans to go back to India to study. So I want to go for something that is more known by the Singapore schools and even schools outside. They might think that CBSE and IB, which student should we prefer? Most people will go for IB. (GAU/G3:24)

6.6.2.2 Future education

Geeta's dream school for tertiary education is London School of Economic (LSE). She has a keen interest in studying Economics or Business in LSE as she is highly impressed by their quality of the teaching and curriculum (GAU/G3:86). She expressed:

> LSE is my dream school. I want to go there in the end. Even if it is not for the entire 2 years, for 1 year or even a short term course, I don't mind. I see all the courses, all the lectures they have on the internet, I am amazed. It is like Wow! That is really amazing. I just want to have that experience. Later on I will be like, yes, I was once there too, I also was taught by some of the teachers there. (GAU/G3:86)

However, as mentioned earlier, currently Geeta's academic performance is not very good. Being practical, upon comparing her current grades with the entrance requirement of LSE, she thinks it would be more realistic to pursue tertiary studies in Singapore Management University (SMU) which offers an LSE degree (GAU/G3:54). She explained:

> Actually there are these 2 schools I would love to get into but mainly I want to get into SMU. Because they have a branch of London school of economics in the school itself, at first my goal was London school of economics but then I got my reality check so I decided SMU is where I wanted to be. That's my goal so in the final exams I want to get at least 38 to 42. I know I won't be able to get more than that. It is my bracket. (GAU/G3:56)

Mr and Mrs Gautam obviously have Geeta's happiness as their top priority. They hence respect Geeta's interest in studying Economics or Business (GAU/P1:221). However, they find the cost of overseas education beyond their financial capacity. For this reason, they are also in favour of a local university (GAU/P1:220).

The choice of destination of tertiary education is clearly influenced by the gender of the child in Mrs Gautam's case. Mrs Gautam is well aware of the differences in the physical and socio-cultural environment of India and Singapore. She hence has

reservations against Geeta pursuing her tertiary education in India. Both she and Geeta think that India is not safe enough for a girl especially since they have the option of studying in a country as safe as Singapore (GAU/P2:50, 131). Mrs Gautam is also highly concerned as a mother whether Geeta would be able adapt to the culture in India as there are certain aspects of the Indian culture which Geeta strongly dislikes (GAU/P2:76, 131).

Mrs Gautam explained:

> She was very amazed to find out that, I will not say against, but she has mentioned about dowry that mama how can they do this? I don't think she is 100% capable of handling Indian environment. I don't think so. About the rape cases also that were happening in north India that girls are coming home late and getting raped and all. She says mama, what's wrong? So safety issues; then I tell her, it is not safe to travel in India. (GAU/P2:131)

Geeta too has no interest in considering India as a destination for her tertiary studies. In addition to the cultural and safety issues, she is well aware that her parents' main migration motivation was better educational opportunities in Singapore. Hence appreciating the educational environment in Singapore, she finds Singapore her obvious choice (GAU/G3:74). She explained:

> I don't plan on going to any school in India. They are really good but there is a stereotype in my head about India and I don't think I can … I know things have changed. I know the new generation is doing this and that but I don't think India is safe. I don't think my parents would want me to go somewhere there. I am from India. But I think my parents will be more comfortable with me studying in Singapore because they migrated from India for better education opportunities for us children. And in the end I don't see a point in going back to India. (GAU/G3:74)

6.6.2.3 Occupation

Geeta's parents are aware of her ambition of becoming an entrepreneur (GAU/P1:257). Both Mr and Mrs Gautam definitely care about Geeta's well-being. Though Mr Gautam is in the profession of Information Technology, he has reservations about Geeta entering the IT profession as he thinks Geeta may not fit into its working culture and instead fully supports Geeta's idea of going into a business (GAU/P1:266). Though Mrs Gautam is a teacher, she too has reservations against Geeta becoming a teacher due to the extreme hard work and dedication required in it and she would rather have Geeta work smart than work hard (GAU/P1:274).

To Geeta being financially secure is important as money is the basic necessity (GAU/G3:166-170). She is highly interested in starting up a business as she would like to put all the ideas she has in the field of advertising and mass communication into action (GAU/F3:88-90). Besides, she would like to follow the footsteps of her mother, who has recently started a business (GAU/G3:92). Both Mr and Mrs Gautam are supportive of Geeta's choice of entering a business as to them it is Geeta's happiness that takes priority (GAU/G3:94).

6.7 Mr and Mrs Moghe

6.7.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Moghe

6.7.1.1 Background

Originally from India, Mr Moghe took up the opportunity to pursue his Ph. D. in the US after completing his master's degree in India. Upon completion of his Ph. D., he worked in the US for a year before accepting a job offer and migrating to Singapore in 1991 (MOG/P1:4). His main motivation behind migration from US to Singapore was culture and his concern for his parents. He highly values the Indian culture as well as his family. He became aware of the difference between the socio-cultural environment of US and India and also came to know about the prominent Indian culture in Singapore. Hence, though he had the opportunity to work and settle in the US, in order to provide a cultural environment to his parents within their comfort zone, he decided to migrate to Singapore (MOG/P2:8). He explained:

> From cultural perspective, more from a family perspective, I have no problem with the American culture, I lived there for 7 years, integrated into the American culture, but from parents' perspective, this made sense. (MOG/P2:8)

Mr Moghe feels that Singapore offers the best of both the western and eastern worlds (MOG/P2:13) in terms of socio-cultural and physical environment. This he attributed to its prominent Indian culture and advanced infrastructure (MOG/P1:57-59). For this reason, he is completely satisfied about his decision of settling in Singapore and accepting the Singaporean citizenship for him and his two sons. The mandatory National Service for two years for his two sons was never a concern for him (MOG/P1:24). However, Mrs Moghe is still holding on to her Indian nationality (MOG/Q:A3) for practical reasons as

she feels she needs to be an Indian national in order to manage their property in India (MOG/P1:26-28).

6.7.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Moghe holds a master's degree from India and a Ph. D. from US. It is evident that to Mr Moghe, it is important that one should pursue his or her interest when it comes to work and also being able to contribute to the society by making use of his or her education and training in life. Mr Moghe was holding a corporate job during his initial years of employment in US and Singapore. However, he decided to listen to his heart and join the academia in 2001 so that he could pursue an exciting career and impart his knowledge at the same time (MOG/P1: 6).

Also holding a Ph. D. qualification from India, Mrs Moghe joined her husband in Singapore in 1992 immediately after their arranged marriage (MOG/P1:2). Though highly educated, Mrs Moghe was clear that her priority is her family, especially her two young sons and their well-being. For this reason, she did not work until her children were independent. In fact, she describes the 12 years spent at home with her two children as the most glorious years of her life (MOG/P1:12). This decision of hers is highly influenced by her childhood experiences and family culture. She described how happy her own childhood was as her mother was a housewife as,

> I have come from a family where my mother is a housewife. So for me that security was there, I used to come home from school my mother would be at home. That has always been there for me. I may not even talk to her. I may just quickly go to do my homework. But somewhere there my mom was around me. I grew up that way. I thought I need to do that for my kids. I knew that I may not be able to go back to my original work because things change so much. After such a long gap it is very difficult to get back to a project. But I was prepared for that in case I don't go back to my original research area. (MOG/P1:12)

6.7.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.7.2.1 Current education

Currently, the older son Abhay of the Moghe couple is studying the IB curriculum in a local independent school (MOG/Q:B4,6). The Moghe couple decided to settle in Singapore almost immediately upon their migration (MOG/P1:24). To Mr and Mrs Moghe, integrating into the Singapore society is extremely important. For this reason, they chose a local school for Abhay right from the beginning instead of an international

school though they were aware of the level of stress in the Singapore education system (MOG/P2:70). Mrs Moghe explained:

> We were quite sure that we are going to settle down in Singapore. So we didn't even think of sending them to international schools. We said, if we are going to be here, let them mix with the local crowd, be one of them rather than going to international school. We had not even thought, unless they could not cope with the local system. Because we had heard that it is very stressful, we had heard all that. (MOG/P2:70)

Himself being highly educated, Mr Moghe believes that good education is important in life. To the Moghe couple, it is the ranking of the school that determines the quality of education offered in the school. This is why, based on Abhay's primary school results, they chose one of the top schools in Singapore for him for its ranking rather the curriculum offered in it (MOG/P1:82-88).

Abhay wishes to pursue medical education in future and his parents support his aspiration. For this reason, they have high expectations from Abhay in his IB examinations due to the demanding entrance requirements of the course (MOG/P1:146,156). They are highly disappointed as Abhay's current academic performance is not up to the mark (MOG/P1:64, 71).

6.7.2.2 Future education

Both Mr and Mrs Moghe are satisfied about Abhay's choice of pursuing medicine which is also Mrs Moghe's field (MOG/P1:213-215). As Mr Moghe is an educator by profession, he is highly aware of the educational opportunities available for Abhay in various countries. Mr Moghe's aspirations for Abhay's higher education are influenced by the quality of education which in his opinion is determined by the ranking of the university and his plans influenced by the cost of the education. For this reason, he is clear that Abhay should pursue his bachelor's degree in any highly recognized university in Singapore as he finds overseas education expensive. To him, overseas education is worthwhile only if it is in a highly ranked university and Abhay qualifies for a scholarship at the same time (MOG/P1:140). He explained:

> I would actually encourage my children to do their bachelor's in Singapore primarily because of the cost issues, but spend may be a year overseas as part of the exchange programme. But higher degrees; if they get a scholarship I would encourage them to go overseas. But it has to be a top university. There's no point going to a 2nd grade university in any part of the world. I think both NTU and NUS are within top 50. (MOG/P1:140)

Abhay shared the same view of as his father about the importance of studying in a highly ranked university. At the same time, he expressed his interest in studying in a country which he has not yet visited as,

> Most of the accredited universities are either in the UK or the US. It's not generally in India and if would go to overseas, I would go to a country where I am not very familiar as it's part of the reasons I would be going overseas. I would choose somewhere like I don't know like maybe Germany or France. (MOG/G2:316)

Mrs Moghe too like her husband has a Singapore university in mind as her first choice for Abhay, but for different reasons. To Mrs Moghe, as seen earlier, her family and family bonding is highly important. For this reason, she prefers a Singapore university for Abhay so that the family can be together (MOGP1:261). Additionally she also appreciates the physical environment in Singapore and calls it her first choice for Abhay being a safe place (MOG/P1:264).

Both Mr and Mrs Moghe hope that Abhay will match up their level of education by pursuing a Ph. D. (MOG/P1:233, 236).

6.7.2.3 Occupation

Both Mr and Mrs Moghe are satisfied about Abhay's interest in becoming a doctor, although their individual reasons are different. Mrs Moghe is glad that her son chose the same field as her (MOG/P1:214). Her aspirations are also shaped by the happiness she wishes for her son. Abhay has been an active member of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and a certified first aider for five years. Mrs Moghe has experienced how much joy this co-curricular activity has given to Abhay (MOG/P1:216-217) and hence encourages him to consider the medical profession as she believes that it will make him happy (MOG/P1:221).

On the other hand, Mr Moghe has his own set of reasons for being satisfied about Abhay's choice of becoming a doctor. He highly values financial security in life. Also, he expects Abhay to match his achievements in terms of the standard of living he is currently enjoying. For this reason, he is glad about Abhay's choice, as doctor is a highly rewarding profession that can give Abhay the desired financial stability in life (MOG/P1:222, 227).

For the same reason of financial security, Mr Moghe does not want Abhay to become a musician, which Abhay is highly interested in (MOG/P1:228-230). Abhay however has

a different perception of his parents' reasons in this matter. He feels that his parents would not mind him becoming a musician as long as he pursues a professional qualification in it by studying it as a subject in the university. He has however decided that he will eventually make his own decision when it comes to choosing his profession (MOG/G2:406-415). The family culture in the Moghe family is highly responsible for this perception of Abhay. Though decisions are jointly taken in their family, when it comes to their career, the Moghe couple is clear that the children will have the biggest say (MOG/P2:135).

6.8 Mr and Mrs Korde

6.8.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Korde

6.8.1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Korde are originally from India. Mr Korde worked in two countries other than India before migrating to Singapore. He was in the US alone for work purpose for about 4-5 months. Then Mr and Mrs Korde got the opportunity to stay in Australia with their older son for 18 months due to Mr Korde's job posting. The three of them then migrated to Singapore in 1993 once again due to Mr Korde's job posting (KOR/P1:4-7). Their younger son Nitin was born during their stay in Singapore (KOR/P1:9).

All the members of the Korde family are of Indian nationality (KOR/P1:17). They did not consider taking up the Singaporean nationality as they did not see any compelling reason for it (KOR/P1:21).

6.8.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Korde holds bachelor's degree in engineering from India and a master's degree from Singapore (KOR/P1:31). He is working in the Information Technology profession (KOR/P1:39). He has worked in India, US and Australia in the same field (KOR/P1:4-7). Mrs Korde holds a bachelor's degree in science from India (KORP1:37). To Mrs Korde, her family and especially her children are of utmost importance. Though she was working in India, she decided to devote her time fully to look after her children after the birth of their older son with their well-being in mind (KOR/P1:41, 42).

6.8.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.8.2.1 Current education

Currently the younger son Nitin of the Korde couple is studying the IB curriculum in a local independent school (KOR/Q:B4,6). To Mr Korde, it is the nature of the curriculum and its recognition that determine the quality of education rather than the school. Hence, desiring quality education, Mr Korde chose the best available school for Nitin that offered the IB curriculum based on his primary school results. Though there were international schools that offered the IB curriculum, he did not consider any of those due their exorbitant fees and long waiting list (KOR/P1:54,60, 99). Mrs Korde appreciated the application based approach in the curriculum as opposed to rote learning in the Indian curriculum (KOR/P1:101).

Nitin too justified his choice of IB curriculum as:

> I think IB has a great advantage over the 'A' levels, its substitute programme because it basically prepares you for work life instead of pure academics, it gives you the experience of presenting, the experience of working in groups, teamwork. So I think these qualities are present in the IB and I think it really helps afterwards in life where you learn these skills beforehand while studying at the same time. So I think that's a very good thing, the main reason why I chose the IB over A levels. (KOR/G1:46)

The role of the older son of the Korde couple is highly significant in their choice of school and curriculum for Nitin as his older brother has clearly facilitated this choice (KOR/G1:32).The Korde couple was already familiar with the school and the IB curriculum offered in the school, as their older son had studied the same curriculum in the same school. Hence knowing the quality of the school and the comprehensive well rounded application based nature of the IB curriculum as compared to the 'A' level, Mr Korde's choice for Nitin was obvious (KOR/P1:50,56). Mr Korde explained:

> In Singapore, basically the method for secondary school selection … because he was going to a local primary school and the schools here a ranked by their PSLE scores. [sic] So one of the criteria was, this was among the top, based on his results. And second was that, it had a different curriculum, IB, instead of A levels. So we thought at least, IB is at least much more comprehensive, and we knew about it anyway, because our elder son went to the same school, and same programme. So we liked the programme, and we also enrolled him in the same programme. (KOR/P1:50)

The role of his older brother is also evident in influencing Nitin's subject selection. He chose the same subjects as his older brother being already accustomed to these disciplines from his older brother's experience (KOR/P1:69).

Nitin's brother has set high standards of academic performance for Nitin. Regarding Nitin's performance in IB examinations, Mr Korde has thus high expectations from him and hopes that he will match his brother's achievements (KOR/P1:113). Mr and Mrs Korde monitor Nitin's academic performance closely and consult his teachers regularly to find out about his progress and how he can improve further (KOR/P1:85-88).

6.8.2.2 Future education

For Nitin's tertiary education, Mr Korde has mainly explored opportunities in the US and Australia (KOR/P1:144). Mr Korde is well aware of the difference in the educational environment in India and Singapore. He feels that having studied completely in Singapore, Nitin may find it difficult to adapt to the education system in India. For this reason, he has not considered India as a destination for Nitin's tertiary education (KOR/P2:2). He explained:

> basically, the education system … because he has been studying all the time here. India, the studies are different. A lot of it is theory based or related to specific text and the questions are not problem oriented. So that must have been my concern that when he goes back, he may all the other students thinking very differently than what he is doing. (KOR/P2:2)

Mr Korde acknowledges the difference in the educational environment of US and Singapore too, but he is not highly concerned about it and is still exploring tertiary education opportunities in the US for Nitin. He feels that Nitin will have no problem adapting to the education system in US as it is closer in nature to the Singapore system than the Indian system (KOR/P2:6). Once again, Nitin's older brother's role is significant in choosing US as a destination for tertiary studies for Nitin. As Nitin's older brother is pursuing his higher studies in the US, Nitin is aware of the environment in the US. Hence, Mr Korde feels confident that Nitin would have no difficulty adjusting there as,

> He has had some exposure from school or whatever and his brother has been there so last 2-3 years he has a good idea how the education would be. Then last time in May we went to his elder brother's college. So he saw all those universities. He met some of the professors, some of the other students, my elder son's classmates. But it will be new to him certainly. (KOR/P2:6)

Being brought up in Singapore, Nitin too is highly concerned about being able to adapt in India. He finds the difference in the socio-cultural and educational environment of India and Singapore a barrier. For this reason, he has serious reservations against considering India as a destination for his tertiary studies (KOR/G1:270).

Mr Korde explained with an example:

> Well, simple language barriers such as how in India people would speak more in Hindi or more in Marathi whereas here because of the international social life, we would probably speak, our primary language would be English. So because of these small social barriers there will be some social problems. But I wouldn't say that I will be totally ostracised or outcast in the universities but definitely it will take some time for me to accommodate their way of life. So these small cultural differences would make fitting in the social life a bit difficult but I think at the end of it, given some time, it is possible. (KOR/G1:278)

Mrs Korde too has her concerns that the educational environment in India is too competitive and Nitin may not get into the top university in India due to the high competition there (KOR/P1:147). It is obvious that Mr Korde desires quality education for Nitin which is provided in top ranked universities. In his opinion, the educational environment in Singapore and US is less competitive and it is easier to get into the top Singapore or US, whereas it can be extremely difficult to get into the top university in India (KOR/P1:155). He elaborated:

> It is just that some of the top institutes in India which are recognized, may be difficult for him to get in. but Singapore, he might get into top institutes. US also, he can get into reasonably good universities. (KOR/P1:155)

Mrs Korde highly values Nitin's happiness. For this reason, she believes in respecting Nitin's interest when it comes to choosing the discipline for his higher studies. She is completely against forcing her wishes onto him and instead believes in providing guidance to him in terms of the pros and cons associated with it (KOR/P1:176). Initially, Nitin was highly interested in pursuing medicine. Mrs Korde advised him to reconsider his decision due to the lengthy duration of the course (KOR/P1:178).

Mr Korde has Nitin's well-being at heart. Hence he desires the best possible education for Nitin in the shortest possible time causing less stress to him. For this reason, upon realizing Nitin's interest in pursuing medicine, his advice to Nitin was to pursue medicine in UK rather than US as it would be easier and shorter (KOR/P1:181).

Nitin has however changed his mind and is now interested in pursuing engineering instead (KOR/P1:150). It was at the advice of Nitin's teacher that caused this drastic change (KOR/G1:108).

He explained:

> My maths teacher has said that I would probably go in something maths related or science related. So in that huge field, other teachers have also recommended me certain courses such as engineering, computer science. So this has allowed me to delve into different courses and choose one so that I can pick the best course for me and for my future. (KOR/G1:108)

As mentioned earlier, to Mr Korde it is the ranking of the university that determines the quality of the education. Both Mr Korde and Nitin are in favour of pursuing engineering in the US. Nitin's older brother's role is crucial again in this matter as both of them are now aware of the quality of education in the US because of Nitin's older brother who is pursuing computer engineering in the US (KOR/P1:193, KOR/G1:198). Mr Korde expressed:

> It is basically the level of education what we have seen with our elder son, it is much more recognized, it is little ahead of what we see in India and Singapore, has significant freedom for students really to choose to explore within the same curriculum. And of course they are branded which will be good for him to look for job anywhere, they are internationally recognized. Singapore is also recognized to some area, but not as widely as US. (KOR/P1:193)

Mr Korde highly values career in life and hence in addition to their ranking, the US universities are highly regarded by both Nitin and Mr Korde as the US education provides better job prospects offering a good start in one's career (KOR/P1:195, KOR/G1:198). In Mr Korde's opinion,

> Basically it should be easy for him to build a career and give him a boost. These are the top institutes where companies go and look for employees. The way they teach gets reflected in the number of students get hired by these companies. Basically it is the ability to get a good job and growth in career. (KOR/P1:195)

Mrs Korde on the other hand highly values her family and family bonding. She expressed that she would prefer Nitin to study in Singapore so that the family can be together. She is however willing to send Nitin to the US as they have allowed their older son to study overseas (KOR/P1:197).

6.8.2.3 Occupation

To Mr Korde it is highly important to take up a profession that is locally valued and in demand in the economy of the country of residence. In his perception, lawyers and doctors are highly regarded in Singapore. He clearly expressed that if they were Singaporeans or if Nitin had plans to continue to stay in Singapore; he would have wanted Nitin to become a lawyer instead of an engineer (KOR/P2:98).

To Nitin, it is the social and economic environment of a country that is important. He is clearly well-informed and impressed with the job opportunities, standard of living and social life in the US of which job opportunities would be the crucial factor when it comes to deciding where to work and settle in future. For this reason, he is clearly looking forward to working in the US (KOR/G1:230).

To Mr Korde, financial security, growth and success are of high value in life. Though Mr Korde respects Nitin's interest in choosing an occupation, he advises Nitin to choose an occupation where there is growth, success and financial security (KOR/P1:214). He explained:

> My advice to him has been to look at how he can rise, what is the general average income levels, what is the growth, and how much is the chance as there are always a few superlative players in each industry doing very well. On average or above average, how many people succeed in that trade? (KOR/P1:214)

For the same reason, both Mr and Mrs Korde feel relieved that Nitin has so far not indicated any interest in pursuing any unconventional career that may not offer him the desired financial stability, growth and success (KOR/P1:214, 219).

6.9 Mr and Mrs Kale

6.9.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Kale

6.9.1.1 Background

Originally from India, Mr Kale worked in Africa for six months and UK for a year (KAL/P1:2) before migrating to Singapore in 1992 to take up a job offer (KAL/P1:4). Upon migration to Singapore, he was highly satisfied about its economic and social environment. The employment opportunities Singapore had to offer and the country's prominent Indian community had helped him to decide to settle down in Singapore.

Besides, Singapore was nearer to India as compared to Africa and UK (KAL/P2:7). He explained:

> The idea always was go abroad, do the project and come back. This is my third trip, third country when I came. So after that I thought of settling down. Because it is very near from India also. There are a lot Indians here. And we saw a lot of job opportunities here. Tanzania is in east Africa so I never wanted to stay there. UK, there were a couple of offers, but it was very far. I didn't choose Singapore while in India. I came to Singapore, saw the place, after that I took that decision. (KAL/P2:7)

After their arranged marriage, Mrs Kale joined Mr Kale in Singapore in 1993 (KAL/P1:6). The Kale couple and their two children are Indian nationals and permanent residents of Singapore (KAL/P1:23-24). The thoughts of taking up Singaporean citizenship did cross their mind many times, although they had yet to actualise it. They have decided to keep the options open as on one hand Mr Kale recognizes the benefits of being a Singaporean while on the other hand has a strong emotional attachment to their Indian nationality (KAL/P1:28-30).

6.9.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Kale holds a bachelor's degree in commerce and a master's degree in computer science, both from India (KAL/P1:48). He is working in Singapore in the field of information technology (KAL/P1:269, 270). Mrs Kale holds a bachelor's degree in Physics and a professional qualification in computer science from India (KAL/P1:52). Initially, she did not get a chance to pursue a career in IT in Singapore as she found it difficult to get a job due to her dependent pass status. Upon becoming a permanent resident of Singapore, she had the opportunity to work however, to Mrs Kale her family, especially her children and their well-being is of utmost importance. Hence she preferred not to work dedicating her crucial career years to raise her children (KAL/P1:54).

6.9.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.9.2.1 Current education

The older child of the Kale family, Kajal, is currently enrolled in the IB curriculum in an Indian international school (KAL/Q:B4, 6). Though Mr and Mrs Kale desire quality education for her, having a cultural foundation in life is undoubtedly more important to

them. Hence they were extremely clear about their choice of an Indian international school for Kajal (KAL/P1:97). Kajal too shared her perception,

> Because at that time my parents wanted me to have this Indian background along with my education, so it would be easier for me to adapt to the culture in India. Just so that I know my roots basically, (KAL/G2:52-54)

Though the Kale couple chose Singapore to settle down due to its prominent Indian culture, it is obvious that they find the cultural environment of India and Singapore different. It is evident through their specific choice of Indian school for Kajal to give her the desired cultural foundation.

Mr and Mrs Kale are now convinced that the Indian international school has given Kajal the strong Indian cultural foundation they desired for her. Their next step is to ensure quality education for Kajal at this crucial stage of pre-university level. For this reason, though Kajal has already begun her first year of IB curriculum in current school, Mr Kale now intends to change her school by enrolling her into the top local school soon for completing her IB curriculum (KAL/P1:101-105). Kajal too recognizes the importance of graduating from a good and reputed school with flying colours at this crucial stage of pre-university level due to its long term implication on her higher education. She expressed her wish as:

> I want to do the IB right, and that school is pretty reputed for IB and I wanted to try out in that because like in university applications and all, the school also matters along with your scores, that's why. (KAL/G2:62)

Though cultural foundation is highly valued by the Kale family, it is one's well-being that takes priority. It is worth noting that the couple insisted on an Indian school for Kajal, however, they enrolled their younger son into a local school. Mrs Kale felt the need of sending her son to a school that was in their neighbourhood as he often tends to hurt himself being mischievous which requires her to be able to visit his school frequently (KAL/P1:143).

Kale couple is truly an example where high expectations are set for the older child from the cultural perspective as well as fulfilling the duties of the older child. Mrs Kale is not highly concerned about the cultural foundation for her son and she feels that it can be inculcated in him by observing his sister (KAL/P1:145). In fact, Mr Kale is extremely happy that Kajal was playing a second mother to him in this matter (KAL/P1:147).

Academically, Kajal is currently performing extremely well. In fact, she topped her school in the recent IGCSE examinations. It is obvious that academic excellence is appreciated by Mr Kale as he presented Kajal with a camera as reward for her excellent academic performance in the recent examinations (KAL/P1:76).

Once again, it is evident that child's well-being is highly valued by the Kale family. Though academic performance is important for Mr and Mrs Kale, they are against setting any expectations as they feel that pressure can have an adverse impact on the child. Their emphasis is more on the learning than academic results (KAL/P1:154-163). Though they had anticipated Kajal's excellent results in the IGCSE examinations, they did not want her to be pressurized to perform well. Besides, they did not want Kajal to be disappointed in case her performance did not turn out to be not up to the mark especially considering the fact that her teachers and peers had expressed their high expectations from her. Mrs Kale gave an account of her conversation with Kajal as:

> Don't take any pressure. Sometimes it happens, even teachers or people around, they expect and unnecessary burden the child might take. So in advance it happens, you are not 1st, not in 1st five or you don't get the good marks that you are expecting, it's ok. Only thing is you have to keep trying. And rest is not in your hands. Sometime the luck here and there it can go. (KAL/P1:86)

6.9.2.2 Future education

To Mr and Mrs Kale, it is Kajal's happiness that matters. For his reason, they are fully supportive of Kajal's interest and ambition of pursuing medicine (KAL/P1:219). However, upon realizing Kajal's interest, Mrs Kale advised Kajal to reconsider this decision carefully as a long term commitment is required to pursue medicine due to its lengthy duration (KAL/P1:280). Mr Kale consulted her teacher to do a check whether Kajal it is merely Kajal's interest or is she really capable of pursuing medicine (KAL/P1:132). Mr Kale saw the importance of knowing this from her teacher's perspective being the best judge in this matter (KAL/P1:134). Mr Kale explained:

> What we ask her is basically to judge her where her interests are because many times as a student you may not realize it but as a teacher or an observer you may see those points. We asked them more than a year back. We wanted to see where her interests are and where are the strengths. Many times you are interested in one topic or subject, but you may have weaknesses there. So, we wanted her to observe her and give her opinion on what should be her future career. (KAL/P1:132)

Furthermore, Mr and Mrs Kale sought expert opinion by getting an endorsement from a career counsellor based on their assessment of Kajal's interests and ability to pursue medicine (KAL/P1:137).

Mr and Mrs Kale are currently exploring options for Kajal's medical education in India, US, UK, Australia and Singapore (KAL/P1:202). They are well aware of the difference in the Indian and the IB education system. For this reason, there is high concern about Kajal being able to pursue medicine in India. As per the structure of the IB programme, Kajal has taken only 2 sciences whereas it is mandatory to have studied three sciences to qualify to apply to a medical college in India (KAL/P1:211, KAL/G2:336). The Kale couple finds medical education highly expensive and feels the need to explore financial aids for Kajal's education. However, they have not yet explored options in this area in detail (KAL/P1:219, KAL/G2:378).

Mr Kale highly values his family and family bonding. He thus prefers Kajal to pursue her tertiary studies in Singapore so that that the family can be together. At the same time, he is fully aware of the preference given to Singaporeans in university admissions. Hence he doubts Kajal's chances of getting into the local medical college especially because there is only one university offering medical education at the moment. He however is hopeful that the second local medical college launching soon will open up more opportunities for non-Singaporeans (KAL/P1:235). He expressed his thoughts as:

> Our preference would be in Singapore because we are here. Until now we knew that NUS was offering medicine, but there is only one seat for PR. But now we know NTU is coming up big way. Since NTU is coming in competition, NUS will also expand in the next couple of years, we are hoping that there will more opportunities in Singapore also. (KAL/P1:235)

Migration has definitely affected Kale family's aspirations for Kajal. They are forced to eliminate India as a destination as she may not qualify to any Indian medical colleges due to the entrance requirement. She is also highly unlikely to get into a medical college in Singapore due to the limited enrolment seats offered to non-Singaporeans. Hence, they have no choice but to eliminate the options of India and Singapore which are comparatively within their financial capacity, leaving them with the expensive choices of US, UK or Australia (KAL/P1:241).

6.9.2.3 Occupation

Mr Kale values Kajal's happiness and thus leaves the choice of when and whether to work after completing education completely to Kajal (KAL/P1:233). He expressed:

> In fact, these types of topics never come in our discussions at all. That you have to do minimum this much or after this you have to start working. We have not even thought about her working. If and when she wants to start working, it is going to be her wish. (KAL/P1:233)

Mrs Kale on the other hand is extremely clear that she values education and family more than career. As she herself had chosen to devote her time to her children rather than pursuing her own career, she is clear that she would give a similar advice to Kajal. She wants Kajal to focus only on her education at the moment (KAL/P1:280). She explained:

> Family values are important. From time to time when there is a need, definitely I will advise her. For the moment, studies are more important than these things. And she also knows, because she knows my background that I don't do a job for kids. All that she knows! It is not that I keep telling her. But in future if it is required, then yeah, but at the moment there is no need to talk about this topic. (KAL/P1:280)

Influence of Indian culture as well as gender of the child is clearly seen here as in Indian culture men are expected to earn money while the main responsibility of a woman is her family (see Section 2.3).

Mr Kale highly values work-life balance. Though Mr Kale himself is an IT professional, he is sure that he does not want Kajal to enter the IT profession, as his own experience is that it disturbs one's work-life balance (KAL/P1:272). It is once again evident that Mr Kale values one's happiness as he further added that, be it IT or any other profession, there is stress in every career these days hence it is important to pursue one's own interest (KAL/P1:276).

Believing in destiny, Kajal does not have any specific plans for where she would want to work and settle in future and leaves it to wherever her life takes her (KAL/G2:480).

6.10 Mr and Mrs Ahuja

6.10.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Ahuja

6.10.1.1 Background

The Ahuja family is originally from India. Due to the nature of Mr Ahuja's job, they migrated to the UK from India, and then to Singapore in 1996 (AHU/P1:2-4). To the Ahuja couple their children's education is their highest priority. For this reason, they decided to settle down once their two sons started schooling so that their education would not be disturbed (AHU/P2:8). Their main motivation behind choosing Singapore to settle down was indeed their aspiration to provide the best education and living environment to their children. Hence, when Mr Ahuja was offered a permanent job in Singapore, the Ahuja family chose Singapore to settle down (AHU/P2:22).

Though permanent residents of Singapore, the Ahuja family did not consider taking up Singaporean citizenship (AHU/P1:28) due to their strong emotional attachment to the Indian nationality (AHU/P1:14).

6.10.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mrs Ahuja holds a master's degree from an Indian university (AHU/P1:32). She was working as a primary school teacher in India (AHU/P1:36). To Mrs Ahuja, her family and her children's well-being are definitely more important than her own career. Hence she gave up her job to accompany her husband on his job posting in various countries (AHU/P1:38) and then to fulfil her commitment towards bringing up her two sons. She decided to go back to work only after her children finished their primary school education (AHU/P2:42,44).

Though Mrs Ahuja was teaching in a primary school in India, her main passion was to teach young children which she decided to pursue in Singapore. Once her two sons finished primary school, she took up a professional qualification in early childhood to pursue her passion to become a preschool teacher (AHU/P1:48-54).

6.10.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.10.2.1 Current education

Sumit, the younger son of the Ahuja couple is currently enrolled into the IB curriculum in a local independent school (AHU/Q:B4,6). Mrs Ahuja truly desires quality education for Sumit which in her opinion is offered only in top ranking schools. Hence, she chose the current school for Sumit as it was one of the top schools in Singapore (AHU/P1:82). It has been mentioned earlier that to Mrs Ahuja her children's well-being is highly important, which is once again evident through her choice of the less strenuous curriculum offered by the IB programme. She mentioned,

> Now we are quite happy because A level was very strenuous, so in this I feel the focus is at least divided and not only academics. They have project work, they have presentations, so it is overall thing. A level was more academic and going very deep into the subjects. (AHUP1:90)

Academic excellence is highly important to Mrs Ahuja. She was excited about Sumit's excellent results in the recent examinations (AHU/P1:72). She has high expectations of him in terms of academic performance, as she believes that he is capable of it (AHU/P1:130). She closely monitors his progress and offers her support and guidance to him in every possible way including planning his examination preparation strategies so that he can fulfil her expectations (AHU/P1:78). On the one hand she has high expectations from Sumit in terms of academic performance, while on the other hand she is highly concerned about his well-being too and her support is not only to fulfil the academic expectations but also to ensure that his stress level is within control. She explained:

> He gets very nervous and very tensed, I will always encourage him that (you have done your best, so probably we can think of some other strategy next time, on how to prepare, may be your way of preparation was not right, or maybe we didn't tackle it. Because he will ask during his preparation time also, he will always come to me and ask how to do and what to do. So for all his preparatory holidays I will spread all his syllabus, so I will help him you do this-this-this. He will always ask for my guidance. (AHU/P1:78)

6.10.2.2 Future education

To Mrs Ahuja, her family and family bonding are highly important. For this reason, she thinks it would be better for Sumit to study in Singapore so that the family can be

together (AHU/P1:172). However, it is evident that to Mrs Ahuja one's happiness is of higher priority. As mentioned earlier, she herself had a change of career to pursue her own interest and did not hesitate to take up the challenge of pursuing a professional educational qualification after a long gap in her education and career (AHU/P1:162). Hence with Sumit's happiness at heart, she leaves these decisions completely to Sumit and is willing to send Sumit overseas for tertiary studies according to his wish (AHU/P1:178). She clarified:

> UK and US are actually their own choice, not from our side. Like my elder son wanted to go to US, he made that choice. We didn't choose for him. So my younger son, if he wants to study in Singapore, UK or US, it will be his own preference, his own choice. (AHUP1:178)

Mrs Ahuja was initially concerned that Sumit was unsure about his higher education plans. It is clear that the role of the older son of the Ahuja family is crucial in this matter. Although he is currently studying in the US, Mrs Ahuja expects her elder son to guide Sumit in making decisions about his higher studies (AHU/P1:158). She explained:

> My elder son is the main person now. I always tell him you can guide your younger brother now. You are in the university, now you know much better than us that what are the fields, what his strengths are he can really do well. So we are more relying on our elder son. (AHU/P1:158)

Sumit is mainly considering US as the destination for his tertiary studies as he finds Singapore education more stressful that US education. His keen interest in studying in the US and his awareness of the US education system are mainly influenced by his older brother's experience who feels that Singapore education is more stressful (AHU/F1:182). He shared:

> I know quite a lot because my brother went through this whole process. So he's currently in the US now so he considered staying in Singapore the whole time but he decided to go to the US because he feels that the stress level in the US is much lower. Because he feels that even in the college here the stress level is much higher as compared to overseas universities. So yeah he tells me about it. It's like his third year now so he tells me a lot about how the education system is. Mostly what I know is from him. So now I'm also considering that I should. But I haven't made a decision yet. I'm considering if I should stay here and do national service or go to the US after IB. I'm still deciding so I have not really decided yet. (AHU/G1:182)

Another reason for Sumit to consider US universities is his thinking that quality of education is determined by the ranking of the university and the job prospects it offers. In his opinion, the US universities possess both these qualities as compared to the Singapore universities. Again, following his older brother's footsteps, Sumit now wishes to pursue computer engineering in the US (AHU/G1:214). Just as Mrs Ahuja had wanted, Sumit's older brother has fulfilled his duties of guiding Sumit.

Having studied in Singapore, Sumit is obviously not accustomed to the educational environment in India though he is well aware of it. He has reservations against considering India as a destination for his tertiary studies as he dislikes the Indian education system (AHU/G1:186).

Another reason why the Ahuja family is not considering Singapore as a destination for Sumit's higher studies is the preference given to Singaporeans when it comes to educational matters (AHU/P2:378).

Mrs Ahuja expressed:

> I felt that that is not fair that why they are giving first preference to citizens, we also contribute equally to this economy so, why this discrimination? We are PRs (Permanent Residents) because we don't want to give up our own country's citizenship because we are attached to that country. But it doesn't mean that we are not contributing, we are making a same contribution as their citizens are making so there should be no discrimination. (AHU/P2:380)

Mrs Ahuja is also doubtful about Sumit's chances of getting into the top universities in India as Sumit is a non-resident of India. For this reason too, she is sceptical about considering India as a destination for Sumit's tertiary studies (AHU/P1:168).

It is evident that migration has affected Mrs Ahuja's aspirations for Sumit as he is now a foreigner in India as well as Singapore. Hence, it is unavoidable that he may not be given a preference in both these countries in terms of university admissions. For this reason, they are forced to consider overseas universities for Sumit's tertiary studies.

To Mrs Ahuja, mastery of knowledge is necessary for building up a career. It has always been her aspiration that her children should be very well educated (AHU/P2:26). Hence, she expects Sumit to complete his education up to a minimum of master's level before starting work.

In Mrs Ahuja's opinion,

> I feel masters they must, not just graduation, working wise I always feel one should start working only after graduation and a post-graduation. Work should come, job should come later. (AHU/P1:200)

She further elaborated:

> I feel that knowledge is always good whenever you start your career. If you are having good degree in your hand, definitely you have more knowledge and you have more awareness of the field. (AHU/P1:202)

6.10.2.3 Occupation

What matters to Mrs Ahuja, is the economic environment of a country in terms of the job opportunities it offers. She feels that there are good career opportunities in Singapore and the scenario in India is also getting better (AHU/P1:194). She expressed:

> Universities are good here, job opportunities are good, I think there shouldn't be a problem. India I am not sure because 15 years back we moved here, but of course our families are there, they are all getting good jobs, and all multinational (companies) are coming, so people are giving us a good feedback that now possibility of getting good jobs in India is much more than earlier it was. You never know, our kids will be working in India after their education. (AHU/P1:194)

The living environment of a country is important to Sumit too as he is clear in his thoughts that he would prefer to work and settle in either US or Singapore due to the job prospects, career opportunities and the overall quality of life (AHU/G1:226). He thinks that his parents would be fine with anywhere in the world as long as he has a good job, a successful career and above all is happy (AHU/G1:260). However, he was open to the idea of working and settling in India as well. Though he thinks there may be some social barriers, he is not really concerned about it as the job opportunities are good in India (AHU/G1:278). He expressed that:

> I think that at the start, there will definitely be some barriers to go because, yeah, you come from outside so you are looked at differently also by everyone there. But, yeah, more or less we are Indians so eventually we will get accustomed to that. So in that way, education won't be there but for job prospects, I don't think there will be a problem. You can go to India also, that will be a good option as well. (AHU/G1:278)

Sumit too values family. For this reason, he thinks that working and settling in India would be a good idea as it would provide him an opportunity to be near his relatives (AHU/G1:332).

6.11 Mr and Mrs Katkar

6.11.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Katkar

6.11.1.1 Background

Mr and Mrs Katkar migrated to Singapore in 1991 from India with their three year old daughter. Their main motivation behind this migration was to improve their financial saving status which looked difficult in India (KAT/P1:2-4, 287). Mr Katkar had explored opportunities in the US and Middle East in addition to Singapore. However he did not find any scope for his profession there and accepted the first job that he was offered in Singapore (KAT/P2:6).

The Katkar couple and their two daughters are permanent residents of Singapore. Though the thoughts of taking up Singaporean citizenship crossed their minds many times, they did not take any initiative in this matter. However, Mrs Katkar has regrets about it as her daughters were deprived of the benefits Singaporean citizens get (KAT/P1:15-26).

Mr Katkar's decision to migrate to Singapore was not supported by his own father initially as he didn't see the need for it. Besides, the family culture in Mr Katkar's family then was such that all the decisions were made by the head of the family and obviously for this reason, Mr Katkar's father strongly opposed the idea of migration as it was against his wishes (KAT/P2:11).

Mrs Katkar too did not welcome the idea of migration as it was going to cause a drastic change in her life. She was anxious as she had hardly travelled to places outside her hometown and even traveling by air was like an adventure for her. However, giving priority to family, she decided to support her husband. Besides, she had no other option (KAT/P2:17-22).

It is obvious from this experience that though Mr Katkar was unhappy with his father's dominating nature; he himself followed the same tradition of making decision of migration though his wife was not really supportive of it. This is a typical trait of the

Indian culture where the head of the family is responsible for making the major decisions for the family and the family respects it (see Section 2.3).

6.11.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mr Katkar holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from India (KAT/P1:34). Mrs Katkar has a Bachelor of Commerce from an Indian university (KAT/P1:40). She was working in the field of accountancy in India however, upon migration to Singapore she became a housewife by choice for ten years to look after her two daughters due to lack of family support. Currently she is working in the field of real estate in Singapore (KAT/P1:46-50).

6.11.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.11.2.1 Current education

The younger daughter Neeti of the Katkar couple is currently pursuing the 'A' level curriculum in a local government school (KAT/Q:B4,6). Mr and Mrs Katkar have always given more priority to Neeti's health and well-being than her education as she has health problems. For this reason, they particularly chose this school for her, being near to their house with her traveling convenience in mind (KAT/P1:93-103).

In addition to her well-being, as parents Mr and Mrs Katkar also value their daughter's happiness. For this reason, they are against putting any unnecessary pressure on her for excelling academically though in Mr Katkar's opinion she is capable of it but lacks the interest in studies (KAT/P1:87). Mrs Katkar is satisfied that Neeti is doing well in her co-curricular activities and has won an award at the national level. However she is also concerned about how stressful it is to pursue co-curricular activities and also excel in it while maintaining a proper balance with academic work. She truly cares for Neeti's well-being. Mr Katkar however is more practical being of the opinion that one should learn to manage stress in life (KAT/P1:120-126). He expressed:

> We feel that she should learn to manage the stress also. There are going to be occasions in life where you have got a lot of things to do in life, so those kinds of things she should learn to manage on her own. (KAT/P1:126)

To Mr and Mrs Katkar the teacher-disciple relationship is important. While Katkar couple's emphasis was not on Neeti's academic performance due to her health and lack of

interest in studies, they expressed their satisfaction that Neeti had a good relationship with her teachers and her teachers too had a good opinion of her. (KAT/P1:114-115).

6.11.2.2 Future education

When it comes to what kind of higher education Neeti should pursue, Mr Katkar's views are clearly influenced by his experiences with his older daughter. Though Mr Katkar offered guidance to his older daughter, she clearly refused to listen to any advice and pursued her own interest instead. With this experience as well as Neeti's happiness in mind, Mr Katkar feels that Neeti should choose a course of her choice (KAT/P1:165). He gave an account of his experience as:

> At the end of the day it is the children who choose the path they want. My elder daughter was clear what she wanted. She pursued that path straightaway. So there is no point in talking to anybody. When I talk to her there is accountancy, there is financial software, she says don't talk to me about all this, I don't want to do all this. She is very clear, so I think the second one is also very clear what she wants. So there is no point in talking to anybody about it if she is clear. (KAT/P1:165)

Mrs Katkar truly wishes that Neeti would take up the sciences and pursue a medical degree which was her own aspiration when Mrs Katkar was young. However, she does not insist that Neeti should fulfil this wish. Her aspirations are clearly influenced by the culture in her family and her childhood experiences. Mrs Katkar's unhappiness was evident when she mentioned that her parents imposed their wishes onto her to pursue a commerce degree. Mr Katkar's experience is similar. However, learning from his childhood experiences, he too is against imposing his wishes onto Neeti (KAT/P1:296-306). He said very clearly:

> Our parents pushed us to do what we did not want to do but they wanted us to do. So now we feel the other way round. We want them to do what they want to do. So that later on they don't say our parents pushed us to do what we didn't want to do. So that's why we came to a conclusion that let them do what they want to do. (KAT/P1:306)

As mentioned above, Mr Katkar's childhood experiences were not exactly pleasant. He is convinced that there is a huge difference between the environment in which he was brought up and the environment in which his daughters are being brought up currently. He however is unhappy with the fact that Neeti fails to appreciate the kind of life and freedom she is provided with. Mr Katkar wishes happiness for everyone in the family including him. Hence he prefers to avoid situations that will cause conflicts in the family.

For this reason he avoids discussing anything related to education which can be unpleasant. He however ensures that Neeti's well-being is not compromised by trying his best to understand her needs and also by monitoring her behaviour (KAT/P1:200). He explained:

> We always think about the way we did things. Sometimes those things may not matter to them anymore. The hardships we had, we try to relate to them. She says too bad for you. They kind of find it hard to relate to their situation today. They are pretty clear about it. This generation is very different. So we need to understand the requirement of the generation and do accordingly. Otherwise we are going to have conflicts every day. And nobody wants conflicts every day, right? So it is best to understand what they want, what their needs are, and just make sure they don't do something wrong, that's all. (KAT/P1:200)

It is once again evident that both Mr and Mrs Katkar truly care for Neeti's well-being. They feel that Neeti should pursue her bachelor's degree in Singapore as they can provide her the necessary family support, especially considering her health. She may then pursue her further studies overseas as by then she would be matured enough to look after herself in a foreign country (KAT/P1:229-230).

Mr Katkar is totally against the idea of sending Neeti to India to study. He feels that there is a huge difference in the educational as well as the socio-cultural environment between the two countries. He is convinced that Neeti cannot handle living in India, having been completely brought up in Singapore. As mentioned earlier, the Katkar couple respects teachers and Neeti's relationship with her teacher is highly important to them. Their perception is that the children in India lack this value and also they are too street smart which Neeti is not used to (KAT/P1:243-249). Mr Katkar gave an account of his friends' experiences:

> Because the experience they have had, some of our friends' daughters who went to India, somehow or the other they returned halfway. They couldn't take the pressure. Pressure in terms of the students' behaviour, other students, and the way they deal with the teachers … some of them came back. They couldn't take it. (KAT/P1:245)

Mrs Katkar too shared the same concern as:

> The kids there are street smart. They know how to change. But here it is very focus based. Kids born and brought up in Singapore are not that street smart, to accommodate into the environment in India. (KAT/P1:249)

6.11.2.3 Occupation

Mr and Mrs Katkar strongly believe in destiny. Mr Katkar commented that he never thought he would come to Singapore while Mrs Katkar commented that life surprised her as she never imagined she would have such a drastic change in career from accountancy to real estate. For this reason, both of them do not want to plan too much ahead of time for Neeti in terms of where she should settle in future and what profession she should take up (KAT/P1:326-327). Mr Katkar mentioned:

> We didn't know where we are going to go, we came all the way different. So what's there to plan for? What's there to foresee? Nothing to foresee, things will happen, let them happen. (KAT/P1:371)

Mrs Katkar is highly aware of and concerned about the huge difference in the physical environment of India and Singapore. Gender influence was evident when Mrs Katkar insisted that she preferred the safe living environment of Singapore for Neeti being a girl so that she wouldn't have to face the problems she herself had faced in the comparatively unsafe living environment of India (KAT/P2:29).

Both Mr and Mrs Katkar's dilemma was evident when they talked about Neeti's holiday job at the tourist spot of Singapore's Sentosa Island. On the one hand they were concerned about Neeti's well-being and health and worried that she may not be able to cope with the demands of the job. On the other hand they were in a dilemma as they felt it unfair to refuse Neeti as they had allowed their older daughter to perform this same job earlier (KAT/P1:106). Mr Katkar gave an account of his experience as:

> She wanted to do a job in Sentosa. Initially we all talked to her. We tried to make sense to her. It is going to be too difficult for you, it is going to be far away, the working hours are going to be very taxing, you have health problem sometime, so you are going to find it difficult. She said, I am going to do it. So I said ok, try it out. We could have mandated and said sorry, no, you are not going anywhere … But now she has realized. She says I am going to resign, even if I resign, for one week I still need to go. It is painful now. Now we tell her, see, we had told you this earlier you didn't listen to us. Now you are finding it painful. So now if you want to find something, find properly. You take our advice. Sometimes it is a matter of letting them figure it out by experiencing it. So they know the difference. But although we both felt it was not the right thing for her, my elder daughter used to do it, she also went to Sentosa. (KAT/P2:106)

6.12 Mr and Mrs Kannan

6.12.1 Introducing Mr and Mrs Kannan

6.12.1.1 Background

Interested in exploring opportunities in a country different from India, Mr Kannan was initially looking for a job opportunity in Canada. When his job search in Canada was unsuccessful, his friend who was settled in Singapore, suggested him to consider Singapore (KAN/P2:18). Upon finding a suitable opportunity, the Kannan family migrated to Singapore in 1996 (KAN/P1:6) (KAN/P1:4).

Mrs Kannan highly values her family and wishes to be as close to her parents as possible. For this reason, initially she was unhappy about migrating to another country since that would mean that she would be away from her parents in India (KAN/P2:32). However, she soon found the proximity of Singapore from India a comforting factor, when she compared Singapore to Canada (KAN/P2:50).

Mrs Kannan mentioned:

> The plus point is that in only four hours we could fly to visit our family. So anything within four hours we can already see them. Just okay we decided okay settle here. Of course Singapore is very good country to live like a family. And then the culture we find not much difference when we come back to India because there are more Indians we can see here. Everywhere we go we can see our lineage is there. We see more Indian faces. (KAN/P2:50)

Mrs Kannan values Indian culture. Hence, upon migration to Singapore, Mrs Kannan was highly satisfied with their decision as she found it easy to adjust in the socio-cultural environment of Singapore due to its prominent Indian culture. She was pleasantly surprised that her mother tongue Tamil was not only a commonly spoken language but one of the national languages in Singapore (KAN/P2:52).

Originally of Indian nationality, Mr Kannan and his older daughter have taken up Singaporean citizenship while Mrs Kannan and her younger son Parag are still holding on to their Indian nationality (KAN/P1:12-20). Mrs Kannan's decision regarding change of nationality depends on Parag's decision and she would like to keep the same nationality as Parag to support him so that he doesn't feel left out (KAN/P1:24, 28). Parag finds the mandatory National Service for boys as the main barrier in taking up Singaporean

citizenship especially because it needs to be done during the crucial years of education immediately after the pre-university. For this reason, he remains undecided (KAN/P1:22, KAN/G4:28).

6.12.1.2 Educational and Occupational Status

Mrs Kannan holds two bachelor's degrees from India, one in science and another in education (KAN/P1:40). As mentioned earlier, to Mrs Kannan her family is of high importance. Hence she did not work in India in order to devote her time fully to her children (KAN/P1:44). When finally she decided to work in Singapore in 2006, she realized that her teaching qualification from India was not recognized in Singapore when her attempt to find a teaching job in Singapore was unsuccessful. She had no choice but to take up an administrative job which she easily found (KAN/P1:54).

6.12.2 Educational and occupational aspirations

6.12.2.1 Current education

Parag, the younger son in the Kannan family is currently enrolled in the IB curriculum in a local independent school (KAN/Q:B4,6). Mrs Kannan believes in quality education which she is convinced is offered in top schools. For this reason, she has always sent Parag to the best schools in Singapore. In her eyes, the quality of a school is reflected through its academic results. She has always chosen his schools based on the best available choice to him looking at the school's results (KAN/P1:82-88).

It is obvious that Mrs Kannan values academic excellence. She places high emphasis on Parag's academic results and measures his success by comparing his results with his cohort. To Mrs Kannan, academically Parag is an above average student. She expects him to do well in the upcoming IB examinations as he is a hardworking and self-motivated student (KAN/P1:126). The Kannan couple monitors his progress and constantly compares his performance with his peers to find out exactly how well he is doing (KAN/P1:76).

Though Mrs Kannan expects Parag to excel academics, his well-being is more important to her. For this reason, she is against putting any stress on him. Being aware of the amount of effort he puts into his studies, both she and Mr Kannan do not like to discuss his grades generally (KAN/P1:76). For the same reason, Mrs Kannan dislikes the

educational environment in Singapore due to the high level of stress in Singapore education system as compared to that in India. She is particularly unhappy that the hard work required from the students in Singapore affects their work-life balance and yet fails to produce satisfactory academic results (KAN/P1:124).

> Here in Singapore I see children have no time to play. They don't have any time for any fun or any activities. Only they concentrate studies, studies, and studies every day. And in the end though they are so hard working, the results are not satisfactory comparatively. In India we study hard, we can definitely say we can get good marks. But here it is different. (KAN/P1:124)

It is evident from this account, that Mrs Kannan highly values work-life balance.

6.12.2.2 Future education

Both Mr and Mrs Kannan highly value happiness. For this reason, they are against forcing their wishes onto their children, especially when it comes to their education (KAN/P1:148). They feel that Parag should pursue his interest. As mentioned earlier, Mrs Kannan truly values Indian culture. It is a key feature of the Indian culture that the head of the family is responsible for making the major decisions for the family and the rest of the family members respect it (see Section 2.3). Mrs Kannan too believes that as the head of the family and the bread winner, Mr Kannan should make the decision about the destination of Parag's higher education as this is a financial decision (KAN/P2:154). Mrs Kannan expressed her views clearly as:

> Where they want to study, we have to agree with the father because he is the one who is taking care of their expenses and all. Obviously we need to follow him. but in terms of subjects and all we have to listen to the children because they are only going to study. (KAN/P2:154)

Mr and Mrs Kannan are currently exploring opportunities for Parag's tertiary studies in India, Singapore as well as US and UK (KAN/P1:154). Mrs Kannan has high emotional attachment to India and is disappointed that Parag is not interested in pursuing his tertiary education in India. She feels that unfortunately Parag is unaware of the educational opportunities in India (KAN/P1:154-158). Parag on the other hand gives more importance to the physical environment of a country. He is interested in pursuing his tertiary studies anywhere but India, due to the unfavourable living conditions in India (KAN/G4:416-424).

Parag explained:

> Like generally the place is like—when I go there every year so from what I've seen it's like a bit. Like the area itself is not too like this kind of place. Like the roads it's not like clean and stuff like that. (KAN/G4:416)

And,

> Usually when I go to India I don't usually travel in the public transport and yeah I usually find most public places quite dirty. Like even the clinics and hospitals it's like—I don't know who would go there. (KAN/G4:424)

On the one hand Parag dislikes the physical environment in India, while on the other hand he is highly concerned about the legal policies in Singapore and sees the mandatory National Service as the main barrier in pursuing his higher studies in Singapore.

Parag is undecided about his choice between medicine and business management for his higher education as he has keen interest in both (KAN/P1:188, KAN/G4:404). However, Mrs Kannan is a strong advocate of pursuing a professional degree. She is thus in favour of medicine or engineering and strongly against Parag pursuing business management. She feels that a degree in business management does not lead to a definite career. She knows from her husband's example who is an engineer by training and a businessman by profession; that one does not need to study business management to become a successful businessman (KAN/P1:196). She expressed her views as:

> Any random degree I won't agree. It must be a professional degree, any professional degree. Medicine is still ok. It is a professional degree. But business management to me is not a professional course. What career can you have after studying business management? You don't need that degree to do a business. Become an engineer first then you do business. Business management does not give you a fixed career. My husband is also an engineer and doing a business. People with no degree can also do a business. So get a professional degree. (KAN/P1:196)

It is once again evident that Mrs Kannan highly values her family. Personally, her first choice for Parag is a university in Singapore so that the family can remain together (KAN/P1:190).

Migration has undoubtedly affected Kannan couple's aspirations for Parag. There were two considerations for this. Firstly, there is the mandatory National Service in Singapore. On the one hand, Parag wishes to pursue his tertiary studies in Singapore but

sees the National service as an obstacle. Secondly, there is also the difference between the living environment in India and Singapore. Though the option of Indian universities is open to him, he is not keen on it as he dislikes the living environment of India.

6.12.2.3 Occupation

As mentioned earlier, Mrs Kannan has made it very clear that Parag should pursue a professional degree so that he can have a certain definite career (KAN/P1:196). Mr and Mrs Kannan will definitely be happy if their son pursues the same occupation as either of them (KAN/P1:230-234). In fact, Mr Kannan has indicated his wish a few times to Parag that Parag should go into business too, following his footsteps (KAN/G4:426). Parag on the other hand is caught between his two keenest interests and is in a dilemma whether to become a doctor or a businessman. He is aware that these two interests are quite different in nature and is unsure at the moment how to find a solution to this problem so that he doesn't need to compromise on any of his two interests (KAN/G4:404-412).

To Parag, the economic environment of a country is important when it comes to deciding where to work and settle. He indicated that he is considering two countries for working and settling in future, namely Singapore and US, as he sees promising opportunities in these two countries. Though he is considering Singapore due to the opportunities available, well-being and work-life balance are important deciding factors too. He is concerned about the stress level in Singapore as his visits to the local hospitals were not very encouraging when he was trying to find out more about their professional life. This made him realize that working as a doctor in Singapore isn't really easy. Parag agreed with Shweta's opinion and observation that doctors are expected to work like slaves in Singapore (KAN/G4:505-509).

It is once again evident that Mrs Kannan highly values her family. As Mr and Mrs Kannan are planning their retirement in India, Mrs Kannan hopes that Parag would work and settle in India so that the family can live together (KAN/P1:222).

The Kannan couple truly values one's happiness. There was a common agreement between the parents and the son about respecting one's freedom while choosing future occupation. Mrs Kannan does not want Parag to choose a profession which is beyond her acceptance range such as acting, in which case she would definitely dissuade him from taking it on. She is however of the opinion that though it will be hard to digest for her,

Parag should have the freedom to choose as it is his life after all (KAN/P1:216). Parag too has the same perception about his parents and is convinced that though his parents would try their best to dissuade him, they will respect his interest eventually in this matter (KAN/G4:528-537).

6.13 Summary of Results

Undoubtedly, parents had high educational and occupational aspirations for their children. Their emphasis was clearly on quality education and academic excellence in order for their children to have educational achievements. They also expected their children to match their level of educational achievements.

Parents aspired for their children to receive quality education which in their opinion could be obtained in highly ranked and reputed schools. Parents judged the quality of education based on school's academic results, its academic focus over co-curricular activities and the quality of teachers too. Parents also expected that their children develop their overall personality through quality education which offered training of life skills. One of the life skills that they looked for was exposure to culture be it Singapore or Indian culture. To the parents whose children had health issues, location and Proximity to the school was important rather than quality of the education offered by the school.

Migration opened up more opportunities for their children's pre-university and tertiary education which was international curriculum at the pre-university level and Singapore and overseas universities at the tertiary level. Parents desired that their children pursue a curriculum that provides well-rounded and application oriented education which would prepare their children for their future in Singapore or overseas. Parents were hence in favour of the international or Singapore curriculum at the pre-university level which in their perception possessed these qualities. In addition to these qualities, at the tertiary level parents were also concerned about whether the education offered employability. The duration of the course at tertiary level was important to parents as they desired the best possible education for their children in shortest possible time. This concern was also because of the two crucial years spent in doing the National Service mandatory by Singapore law for boys.

Parents emphasised on academic excellence expecting their children to perform academically well for the obvious reason of entrance to the university of their choice.

Their emphasis was on learning and acquiring knowledge which led to excellence rather than merely getting good grades. Most parents aligned their way of measuring academic excellence with the standards in Singapore. They now also compared their children's academic performance with that of their peers instead of merely looking at their marks or percentage which was a norm in India. One child highly valued academic excellence mainly because it was a measure of one's success in Singapore in her observation.

Occupational achievements were highly regarded by parents. They aspired for their children to be professionally successful and financially secure. Most preferred mathematics and science related courses and careers as per the norms in India. Some parents however had a change of perception due to their observation in Singapore that one could be professionally successful in any sphere. Another parent emphasised on internationally recognized degree as in her experience it was essential for occupational achievements in Singapore. Children too expressed their desire to take up certain scholarships that guaranteed a career trajectory. Whether parents of female children emphasised on their daughters being financially independent mainly depended on whether their values were in line with the Indian or Singapore culture. Parents expected their children to match their level of achievements in terms of educational as well as professional success. Parents had their respective reasons for emphasising on their children taking up the same profession as them based on their positive and negative occupational experiences.

Many parents' motivation behind migration was enhancing their children's educational opportunities. They highly valued their children's well-being and work-life balance. 'Well-being' was of high concern to parents and one of the main reasons for it was the high level of stress experienced by them in the education system and legal environment of Singapore. Compassion and regimentation were also important to one parent. These personal values had a strong influence on parents' aspirations for their children. Their perception of affordability of educational expenses also played a role in shaping their aspirations, especially as the fees structure and the criterion for financial aid was different for immigrants.

Parents' family culture and their childhood experiences with their parents played a significant role in shaping their aspirations for their children. In many families, their family culture underwent a change upon migration. The children themselves were also

crucial in influencing parents' aspirations through their gender and self-identity. Children who identified themselves more with the Singapore culture or saw more value to holding the Singaporean nationality accepted the Singaporean nationality or indicated their interest in doing so. Parents' aspirations for their younger child were highly influenced by their older child in many ways. This influence was especially seen through their experiences with the older child, expectations from the older child and the level of success the older child had achieved.

Parental aspirations were in line with many of their core cultural values. Parents highly regarded their families and believed in 'destiny and karma'. Parents had high respect for teachers. They wished happiness for all and also displayed their global consciousness. These values were reflected in their aspirations for their children.

The living environment of a country had a high influence on parents' aspirations for their children. Their concern was mainly the demands of the socio-cultural, physical, legal, educational and economic environment of Singapore and India and their children's adaptation to these due to the differences in the environments. Parents' aspirations were also affected by the preference given to Singaporeans in terms of educational and opportunities.

Considering the fact that all the parents in this study were highly educated and had high occupational achievements (especially the fathers), it comes as no surprise that their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements were high too. It also cannot be ignored that their aspirations would be high regardless of their country of residence, for the same reason. However, there are many detailed aspects of their aspirations which have been influenced by their acculturation. This influence was mainly witnessed in two ways. Firstly, how they responded to the different environmental demands of Singapore and India and secondly, whether they saw more value in maintaining Indian culture or adopting the Singapore culture. The influence of their acculturation was seen on their aspirations or their reasons for having certain aspirations for their children. The influence of acculturation is thus evident on parental aspirations in the current study through whether there was a change in their views, values and/or behaviour. The specific details of parental aspirations, factors influencing these aspirations and the role of acculturation in it will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

This chapter has presented the results from the qualitative data collected through parent interviews as well as focus group interviews conducted with children by describing each of these twelve cases in detail. The findings presented in this chapter will be re-examined across the twelve cases in order to develop themes for discussion purposes to address the research questions, which will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Let us begin this chapter by revisiting the research questions which were presented in Section 2.4. Two research questions were formulated to guide this research study, which are as follows.

1a. What are the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

1b. What are the factors influencing the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

2. How has the acculturation process shaped the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

In light of these research questions, four sections will be presented in this chapter. Section 7.1 will present the details of how themes were developed in order to address these research questions. Section 7.2 will address research question 1a by discussing the educational and occupational aspirations. Section 7.3 will address research question 1b by discussing the factors that influenced these aspirations. The nature of research question 2 is such that it explores the role of acculturation process in shaping these aspirations. Hence, this question will be addressed through the discussion of the themes presented in Sections 7.2 and 7.3 to bring out and highlight the role of acculturation in shaping these aspirations. The main focus while highlighting the role of acculturation in shaping aspirations will be on deeper understanding of how parents and children have responded to the new environment in Singapore; and its implications for their aspirations. Based on the discussion in Sections 7.2 and 7.3, 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' will then be developed to depict the acculturation process that shaped parental aspirations. This model will be presented in Section 7.4 which is expected to aid in addressing research question 2.

7.1 Developing Themes for Discussion

The previous chapter (Chapter 6) had described each of the 12 cases individually to present the results from the qualitative data that was collected through interviews conducted with parents and group interviews conducted with the children. In order to develop themes for discussion (see Appendix 17), the results presented in Chapter 6 were re-examined in conjunction with the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3. The theoretical framework comprising of aspirations and acculturation models (see Sections 3.1 and 3.2) served as an analytical framework too and many of the themes for discussion were developed by referring to these two models. A logic diagram (see Appendix 18) was developed to depict each case in terms of their aspirations and the factors influencing these aspirations, in line with these themes. These logic diagrams were studied carefully in order to facilitate a cross-case analysis.

There were however surprise findings which emerged from the data. For example, the role of the older child in the family was evidently seen in shaping parents' aspirations for their younger child. Hence the birth order of the child emerged as an important factor influencing parental aspirations, especially if the child was of birth order two, which led to the theme 'birth order of the child'.

In the recent years, the field of research methodology has evolved and methods are being adapted in creative ways to answer research questions more powerfully. Methods are no longer restricted by barriers such as the epistemology (Halaweh, 2012; Siggelkow, 2007). After all, one of the main uses of the case study approach is inspiration for new ideas which go beyond and help in sharpening the existing theory (Siggelkow, 2007). The details of the themes and how they were developed are described below, highlighting whether the theme emerged from the data or was developed by referring to the theoretical framework.

Themes were developed, labelled and categorized with the aim of addressing the research questions. It was highlighted in Section 4.5.2.3 that while analysing data, the codes and categories will be placed under two big concepts namely 'aspirations' and 'acculturation', of which 'aspirations' was further categorized into 'educational aspirations' and 'occupational aspirations'. Hence, in order to address research question 1a, themes were developed under two main categories of 'educational aspirations' and 'occupational aspirations'. Under the category of 'educational aspirations', three themes

were noted down that emerged from the data namely ‘quality education’, ‘academic excellence’ and ‘expectation to match parents’ achievements’. Similarly, four themes emerged from the data under the category of ‘occupational aspirations’ namely ‘inter-generation occupation mobility’, ‘professional success’, ‘financial security’ and ‘expectation to match parents’ achievements’ (see Appendix 17 for details).

In order to address research question 1b, to discuss the factors influencing aspirations, themes were developed by referring to the theoretical framework, which was presented in Chapter 3 consisting of two components namely the ‘aspirations model’ and the ‘acculturation model’. In the ‘acculturation model’, the acculturation variables were categorized into two levels namely the ‘individual’ and the ‘group’ level (see Section 3.2). However, role of family members of parents was also found be a determinant of parental aspirations. Hence, upon referring to the ‘significant others’ category in the aspirations model (see Section 3.1) and based on the findings of this study, instead of two levels, themes were categorized into three specific levels namely the ‘individual’, ‘familial’ and ‘societal’ levels.

The focus of this research study is in investigating aspirations from parents’ perspective. Each case is defined as a parents’ pair (see Chapter 4). Hence the ‘individual’ level refers to the factors related to parents, whereas the ‘familial’ level refers to the factors involving the parents’ family members (which includes the parents’ parents and the children themselves). Three themes were formed under the ‘individual’ level, which were closely related to parents’ personal desires, values, and perceptions. These themes were ‘desire to enhance children’s educational opportunities’, ‘personal values’ and ‘perception of affordability of educational expenses’ (see Appendix 17). Of these, the factor ‘perception of affordability of educational expenses’ was in line with the ‘aspirations model’ of the theoretical framework whereas the other two factors namely ‘desire to enhance children’s educational opportunities’ and ‘personal values’ emerged from the data.

The ‘familial’ level was created to address the role of the family members of the parents in line with the ‘aspirations model’ of the theoretical framework. The factors involving the role of parents’ family members were placed under the category of ‘familial’ level, which were the ‘family culture and parents’ childhood experiences’, ‘birth order of the child’, ‘self-identity of the child’, and the ‘gender of the child’ (see

Appendix 17). Of these, the themes ‘family culture and parents’ childhood experiences’ and ‘self-identity of the child’ were in line with the ‘aspirations model’ and ‘acculturation model’ of the theoretical framework respectively, whereas the theme ‘gender of the child’ was in line with both aspirations as well as the acculturation model. ‘Birth order of the child’ however was a surprise element that had emerged from the data, as mentioned earlier.

In Section 2.2, it was mentioned that for the purpose of this study, acculturation will be viewed as a process of immigrants’ adaptation to the dominant culture causing a change in their beliefs, values and/or behaviours (Berry et al., 2006; Kumar & Nevid, 2010) in response to the environmental demands of the host country (Berry, 1997). In this light, the environmental factors namely the ‘socio-cultural’, ‘physical’, ‘legal’, ‘economic’ and ‘educational’ environment were placed under the category of ‘societal’ level (see Appendix 17). Of these; the themes ‘socio-cultural’, ‘physical’, and ‘economic’ environment were formed by referring to the ‘group’ level acculturation variables in the ‘acculturation model’ of the theoretical framework whereas the themes ‘legal’ and ‘educational’ environment emerged from the data as additional factors. The legal environment includes the factors related to the legal system, laws and policies whereas the physical environment includes the factors related to the infrastructure and safety. The educational environment refers to the factors related to the education system and educational opportunities while the economic environment includes the factors related to the employment opportunities. The various acculturation strategies of immigrants were discussed at length in Section 2.2.1, which were also an integral component of the ‘acculturation model’ of the theoretical framework (see Section 3.2.2.3). It was discussed that the degree of the immigrants’ success in acculturation depended on how they tackle two issues; firstly, the extent to which they value maintenance of their original culture and secondly, the extent to which they wish to maintain contacts with the dominant group (Berry, 1997). In this light, the theme ‘perennial values of the Indian culture’ was developed being the original culture of Indian immigrants. The theme ‘institutional discrimination’ was developed by referring to the moderating factor ‘societal attitude (prejudice and discrimination)’ in the acculturation model.

7.2 Educational and Occupational Aspirations

A person can have aspirations about many aspects of life. However, as this research study focuses on children studying at the pre-university level, for the purpose of this research study, we will restrict the discussion here only to educational and occupational aspirations. That is, the educational and vocational dreams for future work lives (Sirin et al., 2004), including their plans, intentions and wishes (Gupta, 1977).

Parents in the current study held high aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. The educational aspirations parents had for their children and the occupational aspirations they had for their children were linked. Parents expected the groundwork for their children's occupational achievements to be done early at the pre-university and university levels. Their advice to their children was to make their educational choices wisely in such a way that it would lead to occupational achievements.

7.2.1 Educational Aspirations

Education is highly valued by Indians in general, and is one of the top priorities of Indian immigrant families (Inman et al., 2007). To the Indian parents, education is the key to their success and they hold high expectations of their children in terms of their educational achievements (Baptiste, 2005). Indeed, all parents in the current study too had high regards for education. Their aspirations for their children's educational achievements were high. These aspirations were evident through their emphasis on quality education and academic excellence. Parents also expected their children to match their level of educational achievements.

7.2.1.1 Quality Education

Quality education is the foundation of one's educational and occupational achievements. The pre-university level is a crucial phase in a student's academic life. The education received at this level decides one's future in terms of the quality of education received at the university level which leads to one's occupational achievements (Akos et al., 2007). Indeed, this emphasis on quality education was evident through parents' educational aspirations for their children.

There were many aspects of what quality of education meant to the parents and they had their own ways of assessing the quality of education offered in the school. However,

as the foundation of the future educational and occupational achievements was laid at the pre-university level, most of the parents believed in obtaining quality education in highly ranked or reputed schools which would open up future avenues. Hence they aspired for the top schools for their children. Parents evaluated the quality of the education in the school on the basis of the academic results of the school. Previously conducted studies too have shown that academic performance of the school is of high concern to parents (Burgess, Greaves, Vignoles, & Wilson, 2009; Hastings, Kane, & Staiger, 2005). One of the criteria parents used to assess the quality of education offered by schools was the academic focus of the school over co-curricular activities such as the sports or the arts. Parents were of the opinion that the time spent on co-curricular activities should be limited so that their children could have sufficient time and energy for their studies.

In case (#11 KAT) however, parents did not express any concerns about quality education for their daughter in terms of the academic performance, ranking or reputation of the school. These parents were instead concerned about the school's location and proximity due to the child's medical condition for the convenience of commuting. Parents are often seen to value proximity to school while making educational choices (Burgess et al., 2009; Hastings et al., 2005). However, this tendency is more among parents from lower income group or parents of children with lower academic performance. Parents' of comparatively higher income level or parents of children of higher academic ability usually choose schools based on school's academic performance (Hastings et al., 2005). In contrast, in the current study, parents who valued proximity to school were parents of the child with a medical condition. The previous studies that reported proximity to school to be important to parents, investigated parents' choices in the UK (Burgess et al., 2009) and US (Hastings et al., 2005). It is possible that most parents in the current study were not concerned with proximity to school living in a relatively smaller country where traveling time across the nation is relatively shorter.

For some parents, quality education was concerned with the overall development of the child that could take place in the school. Parents expected training of life skills to be an integral part of the quality education that a school could provide. They expected their children to be trained to become confident to face the world by learning social skills through education. The types of life skills parents expected their children to learn in school were leadership qualities, to be able to interact with and accept children of all abilities. It is thus obvious that in addition to a pathway to their educational and

occupational achievements, parents perceived education as a means of their children's moral and personal development (Cooper et al., 1994). In the current study, an important social knowledge parents expected their children to learn in school soon after migration was the culture, be it the Singapore or Indian culture. Hence, parents also assessed the quality of education based on whether it gave their children exposure to culture. Learning the Singapore culture became important to parents in the process of their acculturation. The life skill of knowing and understanding culture enhanced their children's overall personality development. Besides, parents thought that this was a social knowledge necessary for their children to integrate into the Singapore society. Exposure to the Singapore culture was an aspect they felt could not be taught to their children better anywhere than in a local school where their children could interact with Singaporeans. There was one case (#9 KAL) however where parents saw more value in maintaining their original Indian culture. To them, exposure to Indian culture was an important aspect of quality education offered in an Indian international school in order for their child to have a strong Indian cultural foundation.

The nature and the international recognition of the curriculum offered at the pre-university level were important qualities of education to parents and children. Parents expected that the education received at the pre-university level should lay a foundation for their children's future. Hence, parental emphasis was on education that is well-rounded and application oriented at the pre-university level which could be beneficial for life. For this reason, they were strongly against rote learning, which in their perception was a drawback of the Indian curriculum. Most preferred international curriculum, in particular the IB over other curricula, which possessed these qualities in their perception.

The pre-university education was obviously an important avenue to entrance to a university of their choice for parents and children. This was another reason why parents and children placed high importance on the choice of pre-university curriculum. The international recognition associated with the IB was obviously perceived as prestigious as compared to other curricula opening up avenues to reputed universities worldwide. For the same reason of entrance requirement to university of choice, in one case (#5 NAT) however parents were not concerned about the nature or the recognition of the curriculum as their son's pre-university curriculum who was a US citizen. Pre-university education was merely a formality in their perception in the US for a US citizen.

It is especially interesting to note that even the students pursuing pre-university education in an Indian international school chose the IB over the Indian curriculum as they felt that the IB curriculum was beneficial in the long run. Initially these students were pursuing the Indian curriculum while in India or in an Indian international school in Singapore. However at the first available opportunity they switched to an international curriculum while remaining in the same school. The obvious reason for this change in curriculum was a change in their views and perception in response to the demand of the environment in Singapore, thus indicating the role of acculturation. Migration opened up a whole new world of opportunities to them which was Singapore and other overseas universities, which would not have been their obvious option for their children while residing in India. Upon being exposed to these new opportunities, parents and children realised the importance of pursuing an international curriculum for two reasons. Firstly, it was in order to qualify for the course in a university in Singapore or overseas of their choice. Secondly it was in order to prepare their children better for future in Singapore or overseas through well-rounded and application oriented international education as opposed to the rote learning in the Indian curriculum, which in their perception was more suitable for the requirements in India.

In the perception of most of the parents, only science and mathematics related courses offered quality education. Hence they were in favour of mathematics and science related courses. A plausible reason is that students who pursue mathematics and science related courses at the pre-university level have better life chances in terms of quality of life and employability (Fitz-Gibbon, 1999). In case (#3 DUT) however, the pulling power of the subject department (Fitz-Gibbon, 1999) caused a change in parents' views though positive influence of the school subject teachers. The pulling power of a department refers to the effectiveness of a department in enrolling students (Fitz-Gibbon, 1999). It is interesting to note that initially, these parents were strong advocates of mathematics and science curriculum for their child whereas the child was in favour of the humanities being heavily impressed by the quality of the teachers in the humanity department. Upon meeting the humanity department teachers, the parents were won over and eventually chose the humanities for their son. This clearly shows that quality of subject department in the school was crucial in determining the quality of education, in this case (#3 DUT). Another reason for this change was an evident change in parents' views upon migration, thus indicating the influence of their acculturation experiences. It is a norm in India, that

science and mathematics related courses and careers are perceived as a requirement for becoming successful later in life. On the other hand, the immigrants could see that one could be successful in any sphere when living in Singapore. And this change in their perception influenced their aspirations.

For university education in particular, parental parameters for determining quality of education changed. In addition to the educational achievements, parents were also concerned about their children's occupational achievements at this level. Thus, in addition to the student satisfaction, quantitative academic standings, ranking and reputation of the university; in parents' eyes the quality of education offered in the university was also determined by whether this education guaranteed future employability and occupational achievements. For this reason, many parents and children highly regarded the US universities as they possessed these qualities in their perception. It is obvious that achievements are highly important in life to these parents and children and they are willing to migrate further for this reason, thus regarding migration as a means of ensuring the success of their children.

Parents and children were aware that the duration of the tertiary education varied depending on the university and course. The duration of the course was thus undoubtedly important to parents as a determinant of the quality of education as parents aspired for the best possible education in the shortest possible time for their children. The duration of tertiary studies especially became crucial to parents upon migration Singapore. This was prominently seen in two scenarios. Firstly, it was in the case (#1 SAN, #3 DUT and #7 MOG) of male children who had taken up the Singaporean citizenship and were liable to do the two years' National Service (NS) mandatory for boys by Singapore law. Upon migrating to Singapore, parents saw NS as a great obstacle and disruption in their sons' education. They were highly concerned about the two crucial years spent in doing NS immediately after their children's pre-university education delaying their university education. Secondly, it was particularly in the cases (#1 SAN, #4GAR, #8 KOR, and #9 KAL) of those parents whose children aspired to become medical doctors. These parents were highly concerned about the lengthy duration of the medical course and preferred their children to pursue a course shorter in duration instead. For this reason, they preferred countries with universities offering degree in a comparatively shorter duration, for example UK. It is evident, that parents' aspirations for their children were highly influenced by the environmental demands in Singapore in terms of legal requirements.

NS was an aspect specific to Singapore in their experience, which would not have been an obstacle in India, thus affecting their aspirations.

As parents aspired that their children receive quality education, their preference was a Singapore university in collaboration with a foreign university in order to benefit from both. This was seen in two cases (#2 CHA and #6 GAU) where the children wished to pursue tertiary education overseas and parents wished that the children would remain in Singapore. Their reasons were however specific to their respective perspectives. While parents' reasons were due to their limited financial capacity or concern for the child's safety, their children's reasons were either their awareness of their own limited academic capacity or their general dislike for life in Singapore.

All the Indian immigrant parents in the current study placed high emphasis on educational achievements of their children. For this reason, they aspired for quality education for their children that they could provide to them in their best capacity. Most of the previous studies conducted in this area mainly report high educational achievements as an expectation of immigrant parents from their children or compare their aspirations with those of their local counterparts (Baptiste, 2005; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Gupta, 1977; Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera et al., 2009). The current study investigates in depth what educational aspirations Indian immigrants in Singapore hold for their children in terms of quality education. In particular, this study identifies the quality of education as an important aspect of educational achievements, by highlighting what quality of education means to different parents and why. Amongst the Indian immigrant parents, this study provides evidence that their perceptions and views on quality education have been shaped as a response to the change in their environment upon migration.

7.2.1.2 Academic Excellence

Academic excellence was another important aspect of educational achievements which parents aspired for their children. Parents' emphasis on academic excellence was evident through their encouragement and support for their children, and their active involvement in their children's studies to guide them in every possible way so that their children could excel. Their emphasis was on learning and gaining knowledge which in their perception led to excellence and they did not merely emphasise on scoring high grades. Children too had high aspirations to excel.

Indeed, academic excellence was emphasised by almost all parents through their expectation of high academic performance from their children. Studies have shown a positive relationship between children's academic performance and parental aspirations in general, that is, higher the academic performance of the children, higher the parental aspirations (Cooper et al., 1994; Goldenberg et al., 2001; Gutman & Akerman, 2008; Kirk et al., 2011). In contrast to these findings, high academic performance was emphasised by almost all families in the current study regardless of their children's current academic performance and they showed a strong faith in their children's academic ability. Indeed, it is obvious that to an Indian immigrant parent, academic excellence is considered a matter of honour (Baptiste, 2005). Goyette and Xie (1999) have reported that though there was a positive relationship between children's academic ability and parental expectations among certain ethnic immigrants, no such relationship was confirmed in case of immigrants from the Indian subcontinents. It should however be noted that in the quantitative study conducted by Goyette and Xie (1999), children's ability was investigated as their tested academic ability based on grades as opposed to the current study which looks at parents' perception of child's ability regardless of their current academic performance. Another study has reported a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and aspirations where efficacy of the children was their perceived efficacy rather than the actual academic performance. However, in this study conducted by Bandura et al. (2001), both self-efficacy and aspirations were investigated from the children's perspective. In the current study however both the factors are investigated primarily from parental perspective. In this way, the current study highlights a new angle by investigating parental aspirations for their children's academic excellence in relation to parents' perception of their children's ability.

There was a difference between how academic excellence was perceived and defined in India and Singapore. How parents adapted to the new system in Singapore was clearly influenced by their acculturation that is, whether they valued the norms in the Indian culture or adapted to the Singapore culture. Most parents quickly adapted their way of perceiving academic excellence upon migration by aligning their standards with the norms in Singapore. In cases where their children's academic performance was not according to the standards of the Indian culture, parents evaluated their children's academic performance by comparing their children's academic performance with that of their peers to gauge where their children stood in their cohort. In one case (#3 DUT)

however the parents continued to perceive academic excellence by measuring it by the standards in India. They expected a high percentage from their son in examinations which is an Indian parent's pride and a norm in India. This obviously caused a tension between parents and the child as the child believed that his academic performance was good by the Singapore's standards.

Academic excellence was highly regarded by children too. In fact, in one case (#6 GAU), it was the child's experiences in Singapore that caused her to hold the belief that academic excellence was held more highly than one's personal qualities! Her perception of the Singapore culture was that, success is purely measured by one's academic performance and not by how good a person is. This was her reason for striving for academic excellence by putting in all the possible effort in spite of her limited academic ability and her current academic performance not being up to the mark in her and her parents' perception. This indicates role of acculturation in this case in influencing the reasons for aspiring for academic excellence.

Undoubtedly almost all parents placed high emphasis on academic excellence for their children. A significant reason why high grades were crucial to most parents and children was obviously the mandatory criterion to entrance to a university of their choice. After all, academic grades are an important part of students' credentials which influence their chances of participation in tertiary studies as well as employment (Lamb & Ball, 1999).This aspiration was evident across the parents of children who were either Indian or Singaporean nationals. An exception of course was the child who held the US nationality (case #5 NAT) and wished to return to the States for tertiary studies. It is interesting to see that this parent highly valued education and was a dedicated mother whose focus of life was her son and his education. Yet, she was not concerned at all about his academic performance as she was convinced that he will qualify for a good university in US and scholarship. It should be noted that US was the first country where this family had migrated before migrating to Singapore. The impact of the dominant culture of the country where immigrants first migrated to (in this case, the United States) was greater than their subsequent host countries. Another possible reason for this parental aspiration for not emphasising on academic performance could be their perception of abundant availability of opportunities for US nationals in the US. Could this mean that the rest who were Indian or Singaporean nationals and emphasised on high academic performance perceived insufficient educational opportunities in Singapore? After all, many

Singaporean students "have no choice but to travel overseas to study by virtue of not obtaining a place in a home institution" (Sanderson, 2002, p. 92) due to insufficient tertiary places.

In prior studies, parental involvement in children's education has been found to play a significant role in the academic achievements of immigrant children (Fuligni, 1997; Kao, 2004; Ma & Yeh, 2010). Specifically, the Indian immigrants have been reported to place pressure on their children in order to be academically successful (Baptiste, 2005; Dugsin, 2001). The findings of the current study only partially concur with these findings. The current study indicates that though all parents had high expectations from their children and were highly supportive as well as encouraging, they were against placing any academic pressure (see Section 7.3.1.2 for a more detailed discussion). It was because in most parents' opinion or experience, pressure could have an adverse impact on the children. Parents were in favour of motivating their children instead. Though all parents praised the academic performance of their child, their encouragement was mainly verbal and only one parent rewarded his daughter's academic performance by presenting a gift.

While almost all families had high aspirations for their children in terms of their academic performance, there were two reasons for parents not emphasising on it. These were child's health and parents' perception of child's interest in studies. Coincidentally, both were seen in the same case (#11 KAT) where parents did not emphasise on academic excellence for their daughter. These parents were obviously more concerned about their daughter's health condition rather than her academic performance. The academic performance of this child was not in accordance with parents' expectations. It is noteworthy that specifically because of child's health condition and lack of interest in studies, parents did not emphasise on academic excellence in spite of their faith in their daughter's ability. They left it to the child to explore her own future path rather than emphasising on certain courses and careers (for example, mathematics and science related) unlike the rest of the parents. This was evident through the parent's account:

> No pressure about what kind of results she gets … Ultimately, she will figure out what her strengths are and she will go in that direction. We don't really have to go in the academic direction and do really well and all that. She doesn't do badly and I don't think she doesn't have brains. She has the brains but the liking for academic is not there. Maths she doesn't like. (KAT/ P1:88)

Studies too have shown that to parents, children's health can be of higher priority than education (Cooper et al., 1994) and parents' perception of child's lack of interest in studies is an important mediator in the relationship between parental expectations and child's academic performance (Goldenberg et al., 2001).

7.2.1.3 Expectation to Match Parents' Achievements

All the parents in the current study held at least a bachelor degree and assumed that their child will minimally complete one too. In fact, there was no doubt or concern about this matter in parents' or children's mind. While most parents left the decision of whether to pursue a master's degree in future to their children, it is worth noting that two families aspired for their children to go up to a certain level in their education which was a doctorate. It is interesting to see that this aspiration was expressed by those parents where at least one parent in the family held a doctorate degree. and their reason for this aspiration was because they held a doctorate degree too. The rest of the parents on the other hand who had either a bachelor's or master's degree did not emphasise on the highest level of education their child was expected to attain. It is thus obvious that parents' aspirations for their children's educational achievements are significantly derived from their own level of educational achievements. They clearly expected their children to match their level of educational achievements. Amongst the parent participants in this study, in addition to the joy of having their own children matching their level of education, the parents also felt that holding a Ph. D. was a demand of today's times for becoming successful, or rather not falling behind in the race. This was evident through Mr Moghe's observation and perception:

> I would encourage him to do a Ph. D., the reason is because I believe in 50 years at least one third of the population will have Ph. D.s just like 50 years ago one third had high school education. It will be the same in another 50 years. (MOG/P1:236)

Prior studies (see Section 2.1.3.1) had reported that parents' educational level plays a role in determining their aspirations for their children, in that the higher the level of parents' education, the higher their aspirations for their children (Phalet & Schönpflug, 2001; Spera et al., 2009). Parents believe that university education is mandatory for better future and expect their child to go to college upon completing high school though these expectations vary according to parents' background in terms of parents' level of education (Cunningham et al., 2007). The current study however throws light on a new

perspective of the relationship between parents' level of education and their aspirations for their children's education that parents actually expect their children to match their level of educational achievements which is not revealed in prior studies.

7.2.2 Occupational Aspirations

Indian immigrant parents strongly feel that their children need to excel professionally (Dugsin, 2001). Indeed, parents' aspirations were significantly marked by their expectations of occupational achievements for their children in the current study. To parents, occupational achievements meant being professionally successful and financially secure. Additionally, some of the parents also expected their children to match their level of occupational achievements in terms of level of professional as well as financial success.

7.2.2.1 Professional Success and Financial Security

Parents' educational and occupational aspirations were linked. Parents strongly believed that if their children pursued a professional degree at the tertiary level, it would lay the foundation of their future professional success. In parents' perception, only a professional course would lead to a specific career. For this reason, these parents were strong advocates of science and mathematics related courses and were against their children choosing other courses such as the humanities, liberal arts or even business and management for that matter, which in their eyes were not professional courses. One parent was specifically of the opinion that even to become a businessman, the basic tertiary education should be a professional degree and in her experience a course in business and management was not required to gain success in business. Parents' perception in the current study about studying mathematics and science related curricula at tertiary level for occupational achievements supports the findings in prior studies. It has often been found that 'arts and humanities' graduates who did not study mathematics and science often face difficulties when seeking for employment (see, for example, Lamb & Ball, 1999). However, Lamb and Ball (1999) also reported that humanities when taken in conjunction with business studies actually led to positive experiences in the labour market, a point which the parent participants in the current study did not appear to have mentioned.

On the other hand, there is evidence in the study conducted by Li (2001) that Asian immigrants have high regards for science and mathematics related careers, which are engineering and other technical fields. They usually discourage their children from pursuing subjects not related to science and mathematics. Their reason is obtaining upward mobility due to their minority status and also to avoid competition with the mainstream by aligning their aspirations with the demands of the labour market of their host country (Li, 2001). The findings of the current study are only partially consistent with this finding. The parents in the current study too were advocates of mathematics and science related courses however their reason was not for upward mobility due to their minority status or to avoid competition with the mainstream. In fact, they were not concerned about competition due to their strong faith in their children's ability. It was purely because in their perception these courses led to careers with higher guarantee of professional growth and success as opposed to other fields. After all, students enrolled into the science and mathematics related curricula do experience better quality professional life (Fitz-Gibbon, 1999).

Parents' aspirations for their children's professional success were highly influenced by their perception of the culture in India and Singapore. It is discussed above that most parents remained advocates of science and mathematics related courses which are highly regarded in India. In two cases (#3 DUT and #1 SAN) however, the effect of the Singapore culture was seen evidently on parents' aspirations, thus indicating the role acculturation in shaping their aspirations. In one case (#3 DUT), initially the norms of the Indian culture had a strong impact on parents' mind and they valued science and mathematics related courses above other curricula. However, upon migrating to Singapore, by the time they had to select subjects for their son's high school curriculum, their views had changed upon seeing that in Singapore it is the professional success that is valued and one can be successful in any sphere. For this reason, they now emphasised on achieving professional success more than the field in which the success is obtained. They hence allowed their son to pursue his interest in arenas not related to mathematics or sciences at the pre-university level. This finding is consistent with previous research which showed Indian immigrant parents' emphasis on professional success for their children and their expectations in terms of choice of occupation to be beyond cultural expectation in their home country (Inman et al., 2007). In another case (#1 SAN), parent's personal experiences in Singapore played a role in shaping their aspirations for their

children by causing a change in her views. The perception of this parent that professional success is possible in Singapore only if one has acquired an international degree was formed through her own experiences in Singapore of initial unsuccessful attempt of employment search. For this reason, not only she herself pursued an international degree in Singapore, but she also insisted that her son pursues one, to become professionally successful and therefore was completely against her son pursuing higher studies in India.

In one case (#11 KAT), the mother's aspirations for her daughter to become professionally successful by pursuing a certain profession was a reflection of her own unfulfilled dreams which she could not pursue due to unfavourable circumstances. She however did not emphasise on it due to her daughter's lack of interest in studies and health condition.

Children too highly regarded professional success. In fact, some of the children went to the extent of changing their nationality from Indian to Singaporean as they saw more value to holding Singaporean nationality in order to be professionally successful. This change in nationality was obviously their reaction in response to the environmental demands in Singapore when they saw that preference was given to Singaporeans in educational and occupational opportunities, for example, in order to accept scholarships offered by public service organizations that offered guaranteed career trajectory.

Financial security is seen to be the primary concern of Indian immigrant parents for their children and a top priority too (Baptiste, 2005; Inman et al., 2007). However, in the current study, in half of the cases only (#1 SAN, #2 CHA, #3 DUT, #5 NAT, #7 MOG, #8 KOR), parents strongly emphasised on financial security for their children. In one case (#4 GAR), parents were more concerned about appropriate financial returns rather than mere financial security. The parents in the remaining five cases (were not highly concerned about it and left it for their children to decide. Among the five cases where parents who did not emphasise on financial security, there were three (#10 AHU, #12 KAN, #6GAU) however, where the children emphasised on the importance of financial security in life.

In one case (#2 CHA), the role of acculturation was evident through parents' change in values and beliefs due to their perception of the environment in Singapore. The mother in this case emphasised on her daughter's financial security while the father didn't for their own reasons based on their respective experiences, which were differences in the

socio-cultural and economic environment in India and Singapore. While in India, this mother would not have insisted on her daughter becoming financially independent as the Indian culture endorses the husband being responsible for providing for the family. However migration caused a change in the values of this parent when she saw that in Singapore working women was a norm. The father in this family on the other hand did not emphasise on his daughter becoming financially independent. He did not see it as a demand of the Singapore economic environment due to easily available employment opportunities in Singapore making it easier to make ends meet, as compared to India.

In another case (#9 KAL) however parents highly valued Indian culture and did not emphasise on their daughter seeking employment in order to become financially secure upon completion of university education. There was a strong impact of the Indian cultural values inculcated in these parents, which endorse a woman's priority being her family, especially her children and their well-being rather than personal occupational achievements. It is noteworthy that this mother is a homemaker. This finding is in line with the findings reported by Abbas (2003) that working mothers are more likely to encourage their daughters to engage themselves in professional employment. Among the rest of the parents, in one case (#11 KAT), parents had a strong reason for not emphasising on their daughter's financial security which was their daughter's health condition, as mentioned earlier.

It is commonly believed that Asian immigrants aim to focus on doing well in their education since their immigrant status poses restrictions and limitations for them to participate and succeed in non-educational arenas such as the sports and entertainment (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). In the current study, while parents highly emphasised on their children's participation in the educational arenas as it guaranteed professional success and financial security, their reason was not because it was difficult to get opportunities to succeed in non-educational arenas in Singapore. In fact, Singapore encourages and invites foreign talent to contribute to non-educational arenas such as the arts and sports (Bhasin & Cheng, 2002). Parents in the current study strongly believed that occupations related to non-educational arenas did not guarantee financial security. Their notion was that other interests should be pursued as a hobby and not as a professional career. Children too were aware of their parents' reasons for emphasising on educational careers. Only one child however had strong reasons for agreeing with his parents in this matter. It was his experience and perception of the economic environment of Singapore that full-time

employment in non-educational arenas did not lead to a financially secure life. In response to this environmental demand, though his dream profession was to pursue theatre studies and acting, he decided to pursue it as a hobby instead of a profession.

7.2.2.2 Inter-generation Occupation Mobility

Inter-generation occupation mobility is the comparison of parents' occupations with their occupational aspirations or plans for their children (Gupta, 1977). Parental aspiration for inter-generation occupation mobility was evidently seen in the current study positively in six cases (#1 SAN, #2 CHA, #4 GAR, #6 GAU, #7 MOG, #12 KAN) whereas negatively in three cases (#GAU, #9 KAL, #5 NAT). Most of these parents had their own specific reasons for emphasising on their children pursuing or not pursuing the same profession as them, however the general opinion of parents was that their children could learn from their positive and negative life experiences and also enjoy the benefits they themselves enjoyed.

The study conducted by Gupta (1977) investigated the inter-generation occupation mobility of south Asian immigrants in the UK and reported that the level of jobs preferred by children was significantly higher than the level of their parents' current jobs. Gupta's (1977) study was however quantitative in nature and focused on the level of jobs by quantifying the type of jobs into categories of unemployed, unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, medium and high level professionals. It did not compare the actual exact professions as investigated in the current qualitative study. Also, it cannot be ignored that all the parents (especially the fathers) in the current study were professionals as opposed to the study conducted by Gupta (1977). The current study reveals a different aspect of inter-generation occupation mobility by comparing parents' current occupation and their occupational aspirations for their children in terms of exact occupations and the reasons behind this aspiration. In six cases, similarity was seen in parents' current occupation and the occupation they aspired for their child. In addition to the joy of their children entering the same occupation as them; parents felt this was the right profession for their children where they could achieve their fullest potential as they had the ability and interest to pursue it. Parents in three cases did not wish that their children should pursue the same occupation as them due to the difficulties they themselves had experienced such as high level of stress or lack of work-life balance.

In the ancient Indian culture, the society was divided into various occupations based on their skills, which is called the caste system (see Section 2.3). Under the caste system, an occupational function was allocated to each caste which resulted in the children in the future generations taking up the same occupation as their fathers (Chopra, Puri, & Das, 2009). It is interesting to note that the caste system is no longer responsible for determining one's occupation in the Indian culture in today's times (Wolpert, 1991), yet positive inter-generation occupation mobility was evidently seen in half the cases in the current study. Though the context is different, there is a commonality to some extent between the reasons for this positive inter-generation occupation mobility in these six cases and the reasons for the same in olden times. In the Indian society, the caste system originally came into existence as a planned division of labour with a strong economic purpose of ensuring employment and financial security for everyone in the society (Chopra et al., 2009). The parents in the current study too aspired for inter-generation occupation mobility for the benefit of their children's occupational achievements in terms of professional success and financial security by advising them on occupational choices based on parents' own experiences and also by ensuring that their children achieve their fullest potential.

Long and Ferrie (2007) brought to attention changes in the inter-generation occupation mobility patterns over time in the Britain and US due to increase in two factors namely educational availability and geographic mobility. In addition to those discussed earlier in this section, these two could also be the plausible explanations for inter-generation occupation mobility in the current study. After all, the families in the current study are characterized by migration which opened up a whole new world of educational and occupational opportunities to their children. It is however surprising that none of the parents in the current study attributed inter-generation occupation mobility to the fact that migration enhanced and widened the occupational choices available to their children. Instead, they attributed this aspiration to their positive and negative life experiences, specifically occupational experiences. It is however noteworthy that it is migration that enriched their occupational experiences through their exposure to working culture and environment in different countries. For example, Mr Gautam's experiences:

> We are doing the same work, but in India it is a more relaxing environment and Thailand also. Singapore we are doing the same work with a more tensed environment. … No balance between work and play. There's no play time. All the time you are in a tension. So that's a serious problem.

> That's the reason the government is promoting family time which means there is something wrong with it. In India I never I heard it. I had a team there. After 6 o'clock they will not pick up the call. Europeans you cannot even reach them after office hours. He will say sorry, I am off, that's it, whatever the problem. During holidays you can't call them. But here (in Singapore) it is totally different. (GAU/P2:36)

These experiences before and after migration in turn shaped their parental aspiration of not desiring their child to pursue the same profession as them due to the level of stress or lack of work-life balance in it.

7.2.2.3 Expectation to Match Parent's Achievements

In addition to matching parents' level of education (see Section 7.2.1.3), parents also expected their children to match their level of occupational success in different ways, for different reasons. This aspiration was however seen in two cases only and their reasons were unique to them. In one case (#7 MOG), parents hoped that their child would be able to match their level of financial success. This aspiration was due to their concern that their child was used to a certain standard of living and they wanted him to earn sufficiently in future in order to maintain a similar standard of living or social status which he was used to. In another case (#3 DUT), both parents valued career and professional success which they themselves had achieved. For this reason, they aspired for their son to achieve success in life to at least the extent to which they were successful.

Parents' level of educational achievement plays an important role in determining the level of education they expect their children to achieve (Cunningham et al., 2007) (see Section 2.1.3.1). Also, as discussed earlier in Section 7.2.1.3, parents actually expect their children to match their level educational achievements. However, there is little evidence available on in what way parents expect their children to match their level of occupational achievements and why. The current study explains what aspirations parents have for their children's occupational achievements in terms of matching their level of professional and financial success and their reasons behind these aspirations as discussed above.

7.3 Factors influencing Educational and Occupational Aspirations

In this section, the specific factors influencing parental educational and occupational aspirations for their children will be discussed in depth. These factors will be presented at three levels namely the individual, familial and the societal levels.

7.3.1 Factors at Individual Level

7.3.1.1 Desire to Enhance Children's Educational Opportunities

Migration motivation has been discussed in depth as an integral moderating factor in the acculturation process of immigrants (see Section 3.2.1.1). Indian immigrant families highly value education (Inman et al., 2007) and believe that education is the key to their success (Baptiste, 2005). Hence it is no surprise that all parents placed high emphasis on their children's educational achievements and, the main motivation behind the migration of some of them was their desire to enhance their children's educational achievements.

This desire was evidently seen in three cases (#1 SAN, #6 GAU, #10 AHU) through parents' intention to migrate or their choice of Singapore over other countries in particular. Parents' motivation behind migration in one case (#1 SAN) was raising the required funds for their children's higher education. In two cases (#6 GAU, #10 AHU), parents had resided in at least one other country before migrating to Singapore and were well aware of what Singapore and other countries had to offer to them. Besides, they had other options available to them for further migration. Yet, in particular they chose Singapore over other countries because of the quality of the education system in Singapore with their children's future in mind. After all, children's education is one key factor parents wish to optimize through their migration (Cooper et al., 1994; Dion & Dion, 2001). Global consciousness has been the foundation of Indian culture which views the entire world as one's own (Mukhopadhyaya, 2009). Indian culture endorses migration for quality of life for all in the world, which can only be achieved by using the wisdom and achievements of all the people in all the countries by working together (Paul, 2009) (see Section 7.3.3.1 for more details). In today's times, the immigrants from the Indian subcontinents migrate to countries that offer better life mainly because of the unfavourable social and economic conditions in their home countries (Baptiste, 2005). Besides, migration to them is an opportunity to optimize the educational and occupational opportunities for their children (Inman et al., 2007). It is noteworthy that the children in the current study too were willing to migrate further for better educational and occupational opportunities, especially to western countries which in their perception offered better prospects. After all, coming from a British colony, Indians have always had this impression that western countries, such as the UK are a land of knowledge and opportunity (Gupta, 1977).

7.3.1.2 Personal Values

Parents' aspirations of educational and occupational achievements for their children were significantly influenced by their personal values. 'Values' represents what is important to one's life. Each person has his or her own values which can be more than one and may be different from others' (Lokeswarananda, 2009). The parents in the current study too had their own values that shaped their aspirations for their children. Some of these values were common while others being specific to the person. These will be discussed below.

Well-being was an aspect which was undoubtedly valued by almost all of the parents. This value was evident through two concerns parents had for their children firstly, their priority for their children's mental and physical health, and secondly, their emphasis on reducing stress for their children. Though both mothers and fathers valued their children's well-being, mothers' high regards for their children's well-being were clearly reflected in their behaviour. Despite being highly educated, most of the mothers sacrificed their personal professional achievements and devoted their time to their children by becoming homemakers when their children were young and dependent on them. Some of these mothers were in fact working while in India, but did not continue to work immediately upon migration in order to take care of their children. A possible reason for this decision of mothers is lack of family support in Singapore which was readily available in India. Lack of family support was heavily felt by parents as their children's responsibility was now completely on their shoulders. This feature was also evident through many parents' decision of giving birth to their child in India instead of Singapore, mainly for the reason of available family support, for example, Mr Dutt's explanation for the same as:

> Family support and all that, you know … so, mostly…Delhi, her parents are there…and my parents…so we decided it's a better option. (DUT/P1:22)

Another reason for parents to value well-being highly upon migrating to Singapore was the high level of stress in Singapore, especially in the education (see Chapter 6 for more details, for example Mrs Sandhu's experience and perception in Section 6.1.2.2) and legal systems (see Section 7.3.3.4 for detailed discussion) which they had experienced. Parents' perception of the education system in Singapore was highly demanding, performance driven and unforgiving which obviously raised their concerns for their children's well-being. They thought that their children were already stressed out and the

parents did not want to add to it any further. Their emphasis was on reducing stress instead. This shows a change in parents' behaviour and values due to circumstantial and environmental differences between India and Singapore. Hence there is a reason to believe that parents' concerns for their children's 'well-being' became higher upon migrating to Singapore as a response to the environmental demands. Thus, the role of acculturation is evident in shaping parents personal values, in particular well-being, which in turn influenced their aspirations as discussed below.

Though academic excellence was emphasised by most parents, they had a clear view that it should not be at the cost of their children's well-being. When children's academic performance was not up to the mark, parents counselled and encouraged them rather than pressurizing them to perform better. Some parents were against streaming in schools which puts pressure on the children to perform academically well. Though parents had high expectations from their children in terms of their academic performance, they set realistic goals and most did not express any specific expectations in terms of grades to the child so as not to cause any stress to the child. Where one parent in the family was pressurizing, the other parent tried to balance it out by being more understanding towards the child. Parents appreciated low stress curriculum, even suggesting to the child to change school or curriculum to a less stressful one in case (#6 GAU) the child was unable to cope up. For the same reason, to some parents, Singapore was not a preferred destination for their children's tertiary studies due to their perception of its stressful education system. Also, medical education was not parents' first choice due to its strenuous lengthy course and they preferred engineering instead, which they thought was shorter and comparatively easier to pursue.

Parents' concern for their child's well-being was obviously higher if the child had health issues. This concern was seen in two cases (#5 NAT, #11 KAT). In one case (#11 KAT), parents did not emphasise on their child's academic performance. Their school choice was influenced by the convenient location of the school so that the child could commute to school without much physical strain. Their choice of destination for their child's tertiary studies was also influenced by their concern for their child's health. They aspired that their daughter pursued tertiary studies in Singapore so that family support could be offered to her. In another case (#5 NAT), the choice for their son's tertiary education was the same university in the US as his older brother, for the same reason of

family support. Other studies too have shown that to parents, concern for their children's health is above that for their education (e. g. Cooper et al., 1994).

Specifically, the Indian immigrants have been reported to place pressure on their children to be academically successful, and this is felt by the children too (Baptiste, 2005; Dugsin, 2001). However, the parents in the current study were against exerting any academic pressure and instead emphasised strongly on 'well-being above academic excellence'. They were hardly worried about their children's academic performance. Thus, these findings are specific to the Indian immigrants in Singapore in the current study. Following are the possible reasons for this emphasis. Firstly, most of the children in the current study themselves had aspirations of high educational achievements and were self-motivated too. All parents had complete faith in their children's ability. They believed that their children will have high educational achievements regardless of their current academic performance. Secondly, parents had selected top schools for their children. They were aware of the high academic standards of their children's school making it difficult to achieve high grades. This however did not call for parents' concern as they were aware of the school's outstanding academic results giving them that confidence. Thirdly, parents had personally experienced that educational achievements were possible without any academic pressure which could actually impact adversely on children's psychology and hence on their academic performance. In fact, one parent had experienced that being in a mixed ability class rather than streamed according to academic ability, did not negatively affect her child's academic performance and instead it promoted development of life skills. Fourthly, parents had experienced the fierce competition or rather the rat race for top university placements in India which they thought did not exist in Singapore. They were confident that their children were capable enough to easily qualify for the top university in Singapore or a good university overseas being away from the high competition in India where it was less likely for their children to get into the top universities. Fifthly, it was parents' and children's perception and experience of the high stress level in the educational and legal environment in Singapore. Their personal value of 'well-being above academic excellence' for their children was clearly influenced by the environment in Singapore and as a response to these environmental demands. This affected their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements in terms of the destination preferring their children to

study, work and settle in a country where the education was less stressful and legal system more liberal.

Many of the parents highly valued work-life balance. This value was reflected in parents' strong dislike for education or occupation where one had to work extremely hard and continuously, having insufficient time to enjoy personal life or relax. Parents showed their dissatisfaction about their children's choice of pursuing a profession which demanded a long term commitment, dedication and lifelong learning. For this reason, they discouraged their children from becoming a medical doctor. Though they did not oppose it, they offered counselling to their children explaining the high commitment required in this highly demanding profession which could affect their work-life balance.

Parents' concern for their children's work-life balance also indicates their concern for their children's well-being. They were concerned about the lifelong impact of the educational and occupational choices made at this stage for their children. Parents desired that their children live their life to the fullest, enjoying occupational achievements as well as personal life which would actually lead to their well-being. Also, perhaps they did not want their children to be disappointed in the event that they focused only on studies or work and yet be unsuccessful simply because of the nature of the education or occupation.

Only one parent highly valued regimentation and compassion (see Sections 6.1.2.1 and 6.1.2.3). Her choice of school for her son at the pre-university level was influenced by her high regards for regimentation and compassion. Her aspirations for her son's occupational achievements were influenced by her high regards for compassion. This parent specifically chose a Christian school for her son's pre-university education so that these values could be inculcated in him. She wished that her son, upon becoming a medical doctor gave back to the society by serving the less privileged in India being in this noble profession.

This study has not only identified some of the personal values which shaped parental aspirations, the data analysed have also revealed the role of acculturation in shaping these values in the first place.

7.3.1.3 Perception of Affordability of Educational Expenses

Parental aspirations for their children's educational achievements were also influenced by their perception of affordability of educational expenses. This influence was mainly in terms of their choice of school at the pre-university level and the destination for tertiary education. At the pre-university level parents chose a local or an Indian international school over the international schools due to the higher cost of education in the latter.

Parents' perception was that medical education in Singapore was more affordable as compared to that overseas. For parents and children still holding the Indian nationality (US in one case #5 NAT), their immigrant status became a barrier in their children pursuing medical education in institutions in Singapore due to the higher fees structure for immigrants. Besides, preference was given to the Singaporean nationals in financial aid. For this reason, some of the parents and children obviously saw more value to becoming a Singaporean national. They accepted Singaporean nationality in response to these environmental demands. Their reason for this change in nationality was also because they associated more to the Singapore culture. Parents and children who associated more with the Indian culture or did not see any value to holding the Singaporean nationality, of course explored educational opportunities overseas as they had to eliminate Singapore as a destination for their medical education. Though they too were affected by their financial constraints, they were forced to explore overseas universities offering courses of shorter duration to save cost. The only case (#5 NAT) where the child held US citizenship, parents were completely in favour of US universities instead of Singapore universities because of the affordability issues. Their perception was that the child could easily qualify for scholarships in the US being a citizen while the fees would be higher for him in Singapore being an international student.

Financial constraints are evidently seen to significantly limit one's access to opportunities. It is obvious then that parents' financial capacity being a barrier has an impact on their aspirations (Gutman & Akerman, 2008). Parents' awareness of the financial aids available too has been reported to have a significant impact on their aspirations (Cunningham et al., 2007; Kirk et al., 2011; Kreider et al., 2007; Zhan, 2006). In the current study, all the parents showed great awareness of the educational expenses and financial aids available. Also, parents thought they were capable of paying for all the

expenses for any type of tertiary education their child wished to purse in Singapore. Hence their aspirations were influenced by their perception of affordability only in terms of the destination of their child's higher studies and not at all in terms of whether the child should pursue tertiary education. The current study in this way explains how perception of affordability affects parental aspirations of immigrants due to their immigrant status in their host country.

7.3.2 Factors at Familial Level

7.3.2.1 Family Culture and Parents' Childhood Experiences

The influence of 'family culture and the childhood experiences' of parents was evident on their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. In particular, whether parents were given the freedom to make their own educational and occupational choices when they were young, had a significant positive and negative impact on their parental aspirations. For some of the parents, the family culture during their childhood was such that all the major decisions were taken by their parents including what education the child should pursue or what occupation he or she should take up. In case (#1 SAN) of one mother, her family culture was such that her parents were of the opinion that after marriage only her in-laws would decide whether their daughter-in-law should work. Parents were highly dissatisfied with this culture and wished to give their own children the freedom that they themselves did not get. On the other hand, there were parents who did not have such restrictive culture in their family. They were given the freedom to make their own choices, but with a lot of input from other family members. These parents followed their parents' footsteps and continued the same tradition in their family. In this way, their current family culture was influenced by their own childhood experiences and the culture in their family. These experiences and culture in turn shaped their aspirations for their children.

The culture in most families was currently such that decisions were taken collectively. Parents were of the opinion that the person involved should have the biggest say in making decisions. In line with this family culture, parents respected their children's wish in choosing their future paths. Parents' aspirations were hence in line with their children's interest and ability. Children on the other hand were aware of the decision making process in their family culture and felt that they will eventually make their own educational and occupational choices. Parents however were clear that their children

should not make any choices beyond parents' acceptance range. There was an agreement among all parents that if their children were to choose any unconventional profession (for example occupations related to non-educational arena such as entertainment) they would find it difficult to accept and would try their best to dissuade their children from pursuing it. In fact, most parents were relieved that so far their children had not expressed any such wish. There was one parent who was not given the freedom to make her own educational and occupational choices when young, yet a significant resemblance was seen between the childhood experiences of this parent and her own parenting style. This however was seen in only one case (#2 CHA).

People often draw their aspirations for themselves or for their children through their individual life experiences in the past (Genicot & Ray, 2009; Ray, 2003). Their past encounters, in particular their childhood experiences with their own parents significantly influence their expectations from their children. Different childhood experiences lead to different parenting philosophies however its impact is evidently seen (Li, 2001). This is consistent with the findings of the current study. It has been found that allowing decision making freedom is an important aspect of parenting adolescents, as adolescence is a phase which is characterized by increasing independence of children. In general, parents vary in the distribution of decision making authority for their children in different areas. Immigrant parents however have been found to allow a discussion in the family before making decisions. They share decision making powers with their children while maintaining their status as the authority at the same time (Kao, 2004). This finding too is consistent with the findings of the current study.

As opposed to the parents in India who exercise an authoritarian parenting style, Indian immigrant parents have been reported to have the authoritative attitude in parenting. They show high respect for their children and treat them as independent individuals who are able to make their own decisions. However, at the same time, they have high expectations of their children and exercise a firm control (Jambunathan & Counselman, 2002). Indeed, change in family culture upon migration was evident in the current study too through their parenting style and decision making process. In addition to the role of parents' childhood experiences, the change in parents' family culture upon migration could also due to acculturation which in turn influenced their aspirations. This change was due to the difference in the socio-cultural environment in India and Singapore. The social and family pressure which was experienced by parents while in

India no longer existed upon migration. They now had the freedom which was not possible in India. This was evident through Mrs Sandhu's account:

> It is because of the environmental difference. In India we have our friends … and too many relatives. So you are maintaining a relationship whether you like the person or you don't like the other person. So that is the pressure you don't have in Singapore. (SAN/P2:158)

And through Mrs Korde's account:

> Of course there (in India) you take one extra opinion from your elders. It is always like that even if it is about the kids or any other decision. But here definitely you can take the decision on your own. (KOR/P2:57)

This clearly shows the role of acculturation in causing a change in the family culture in terms of decision making process and parenting style. Parents did not have to abide by the pressurizing cultural norms in their family or society in India as they were not answerable to the family or society in India or Singapore for their actions. This caused a change in their family culture as they could have their own rules and norms. This change was due to the differences in culture and environment in India and Singapore which influenced their parental aspirations, hence indicating the role of acculturation.

7.3.2.2 Birth Order of the Child

Though much has been researched in the area of birth order in terms of its social, psychological or behavioural aspects (Healey & Ellis, 2007; Kammeyer, 1967; Palmer, 1966; Rothbart, 1971; Sulloway, 1999, 2001), little has been spoken about its specific role in shaping aspirations of parents or the children themselves. Indeed, the finding of the highly influential role birth order of the child in shaping aspirations has been unexpected.

Birth order refers to the sequence in which a child is born to parents. The oldest and the youngest child are two of the most important birth order positions in a family (Sulloway, 1999). In the current study too, the cases in which the role of the older child was seen in shaping parents' aspirations for their younger child were parents with exactly two children. The role of the older child in shaping parental aspirations was significant in all those cases where the participating child was of birth order two. There were different aspects of the older child's role in influencing parental aspirations. These were parents' experiences with the older child, parents' expectations from the older child in terms of

responsibility, older child's level of success and older child's influence on the younger child, as discussed below.

Parents' experiences with their older child played a crucial role in shaping their aspirations for their younger child's educational and occupational achievements. At the pre-university level, parents' choice of the school or curriculum for their younger child was influenced by their experiences with the older child. Their experiences with their older child significantly added to their awareness of the school or the curriculum. For tertiary education, their preferred destination for their younger child was the same as their older child for the same reason. This was seen especially where the older child was pursuing tertiary studies overseas. Parents desired to send their younger child overseas too in these cases as they became more aware of the nature of the curriculum, recognition of the school and the career opportunities it had to offer. Also, their knowledge about the living environment of the country where their older child pursued (or was pursuing) tertiary studies considerably increased through their older child. Its influence was seen on their aspirations for their younger child. Specifically, influence of environmental differences was seen on those parents who disliked the stressful educational and legal environment in Singapore. Due to their older child, they were now able to compare the different environmental aspects in different countries. They acquired knowledge of new educational and occupational opportunities in a more favourable living environment as compared to Singapore. This new knowledge influenced their aspirations for their younger child in terms of destination which offered less stressful education in a more liberal legal environment.

The parenting style of parents for their younger child was highly influenced by their parenting experiences with the older child. This influence shaped their aspirations for their younger child's educational and occupational achievements. A possible reason for this could be because birth order differences are usually due to the difference in the way the children are brought up (Sulloway, 1999). This influence was seen in two cases (#2 CHA and #11 KAT). In one case (#2 CHA), due to their experience with their older daughter, the parents realized the importance of finding out what their younger daughter's ambitions are so that they could advise her and plan her future. They were unaware of what their older daughter's ambitions were. Hence they were unable to explore sufficiently the opportunities available in her area of interest and plan for her admissions. For this reason, they decided to plan early for their younger daughter. Another couple

(#11 KAT) regretted being immature and pressurizing parents for their older daughter and realized its adverse effect on the child. Their experience with their older daughter was that as a consequence of this pressure, she made her own educational and occupational choices without paying any heed to her parents' advice or guidance. Now being more matured, they were in favour of placing less pressure on their younger daughter allowing her more freedom to make her own choices. Parents of later born were older and hence more experienced and matured (Kammeyer, 1967). Parents learnt from their mistakes and improved their parenting style with their younger children. At the same time parents also thought that they should be fair to both their children by treating them equally. There was a common agreement among parents that it would be unfair not to let their younger child make his or her own choices when their older child was given the freedom in this matter.

In general, parents had high expectations from their older child in terms of responsibility. In parents' eyes, their older child was as good as the second parent to their younger child. They expected the older child to offer advice and guidance to the younger siblings in making the right educational and occupational choices. In addition, where parents' aspirations were to send the younger child to the same destination for higher studies as the older child, parents expected their older child to offer family support to the younger sibling. This expectation from the older child was mainly because parents could not be present there to offer family support to the child who would be away from home. Parents also expected the older child to offer help to the younger child in adapting to the new cultural environment while overseas, or inculcate cultural values in the younger sibling like a parent. Indeed, the older child in the family is exposed to greater pressure and parental expectations as well as responsibilities (Palmer, 1966; Rothbart, 1971).

Parental aspirations for their younger child were influenced by the high standards their older child had set and they expected their younger children to match their older child's level of educational achievements. This expectation was in terms of their academic performance as well as the ranking of the university that the older child had qualified for. As far as this study is concerned, in families with two sons, the younger of the two looked up to his older brother as his role model and aspired to either match his level of success or exceed it.

There is no evidence in the current study to support the claim that second born children are rebellious and open to new experiences (Healey & Ellis, 2007). The younger

siblings in the current study had their educational and occupational aspirations highly influenced by their older siblings. Most desired to pursue tertiary education in the same country or university as their older sibling with some even keen on pursuing the same course, or work and settle in the same country. They showed no inclination towards exploring any new opportunities. It is not clear why the second born children's behaviours are more positive in this study; perhaps the Asian or Indian culture was a contributing factor.

As mentioned earlier in this section, much has been researched in the area of birth order in terms of its social, psychological or behavioural aspects (Healey & Ellis, 2007; Kammeyer, 1967; Palmer, 1966; Rothbart, 1971; Sulloway, 1999, 2001). Little evidence is however available on its specific role in shaping aspirations of parents or children as birth order has not been explored much as a separate research variable. The current study adds significantly to the existing knowledge by explaining the role of the birth order of the child in shaping parental aspiration and its implications for an immigrant parent, as a surprise element.

7.3.2.3 Self-identity of the Child

There are four ways in which an immigrant child can identify himself or herself, namely the identity as a national of the home country, the hyphenated identity associating with both countries, identity as a national of the host country and the racial identity. Children born in the host country, specifically in US, have a higher inclination towards identifying themselves as a national of the host country. This happens because these children automatically entitle for the US citizenship. Conversely, children born in the home country are more likely to adopt the identity as a national of the home country. The strength and significance of the acculturation process is influential in determining the hyphenated identity (Rumbaut, 1994). In the current study, this theory of self-identity is found to be relevant in those cases where parents' aspirations were influenced by their children's self-identity.

In four cases (#2 CHA, #3 DUT, #4 GAR, #5 NAT), a direct influence of the self-identity of the children was seen on parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. In particular, this influence was reflected in their choice of destination for higher studies or future place for working and settling. The self-identity of the children was evident through whether the child associated himself or herself with

the Indian or Singaporean culture (American in one case) and the emotional attachment or loyalty the child had towards his or her current nationality.

The role of acculturation process was evident in the formation of children's self-identity. The US born child who automatically became a US citizen identified himself as an American though he was brought up in Singapore since the age of six. From the day this family migrated to Singapore to date, their aspirations were clear that their son will pursue his tertiary studies, work and settle in the US. In this case (#5 NAT), the country where the family first migrated had a greater impact on the self-identity of the child than their subsequent host countries. There were two children who totally associated themselves with Singapore, and saw no connection with India. One of these children was born and brought up in Singapore while the other completely brought up in Singapore after birth, though born in India. The aspirations of parents of these two children indicated no intention of sending their children to India for pursuing tertiary studies or for working or settling in future. It should be noted that they were not Singaporean citizens by birth unlike those in US. Their association with the Singapore culture was their sole reason for their change in nationality. On the other hand, there was this child who was born and brought up in India for more than ten years before migrating to Singapore. While she identified her roots in India being her home country, she also acknowledged the contribution of Singapore as her host country, towards forming her current identity. Her identity was the hyphenated identity (see Rumbaut, 1994) associating with both India and Singapore. The preferred destinations in this case (#4 GAR) for pursuing tertiary studies, working or settling in future were Singapore or India, with the former being the first choice. They decided to explore other options only after realizing that Singapore and India were next to impossible as study destinations due to admission policies. It should be noted that the daughter in this case had indicated her interest in becoming a Singaporean citizen to her parents, which however was not possible due to legal restrictions.

In the quantitative study conducted by Carranza, You, Chhuon and Hudley (2009), Mexican American adolescents' educational aspirations were found to be influenced by their acculturation level. However, adolescents' and their parents' self-identity was one of the many variables that were used to determine the acculturation level of adolescents. Another study revealed no significant impact of the self-identity of Mexican immigrant children on their educational aspirations (St-Hilaire, 2002). It should be noted that, the focus of both these studies was children's aspirations as opposed to the current study

which explores parental aspirations. Besides, the current qualitative study explains in detail the nature of the relationship between immigrants' parental aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements, and their children's self-identity.

7.3.2.4 Gender of the Child

The relationship between the gender of the child and parental aspirations for their children has been researched in depth and gender differences have been reported in terms of how high or low parental aspirations are for their sons as compared to their daughters. However, no consistency is seen among their findings as there is a variation in the results (Kreider et al., 2007; Strand, 2007; Zhan, 2006). In the current study too, no specific gender differences were found in terms of whether parents had higher aspirations for sons or daughters regarding their educational or occupational achievements. In fact, parents were against gender bias and were in favour of equal educational and occupational opportunities for sons and daughters. According to Buchmann and Dalton (2002) Buchmann and Dalton (2002), female children are generally found to have higher aspirations than male children. This finding too does not concur with the findings of the current study as there was no noticeable difference between aspirations of male and female children in terms of their educational or occupational achievements. However, gender differences were evidently seen in parental aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. These differences were specifically reflected in their concerns about financial security for their children; and destination for tertiary studies, working and settling in a country with a safe living environment.

All the parents with a male child placed a strong emphasis on their sons being financially secured in future. They insisted on a choice of occupation that would guarantee financial security. In fact, they were strongly against occupations in the non-educational arenas such as entertainment for this reason. Among the parents of female children, the role of acculturation was evident in two cases (#2 CHAU and #9 KAL). Mothers in these cases noticed a difference in the socio-cultural environment of India and Singapore. In Indian culture, women did not need to be financially independent and women's priority was taking care of family whereas in Singapore the scenario was opposite as working women was a norm. In the first case (#2 CHAU) the mother adapted to the demands of the new environment. She emphasised on financial independence for her daughter. She obviously saw the need to change her perspective and aspirations

according to the circumstances in Singapore. The father in the same family had a different reason for not emphasising on his daughter becoming financially independent. This was due to his perceived difference in the economic environments in India and Singapore. He felt that survival in Singapore was not as a serious issue as in India due to his perception of the employment opportunities available. In the second case (#9 KAL)however the mother did not show any inclination towards changing her Indian cultural values which she highly regarded and wished to maintain. She did not emphasise on her daughter becoming financially secure.

While Patel et al. (1996) had shown that exposure to a new culture in the host country causes Indian immigrant mothers to value the characteristics of their host country more in their children. The findings of the current study paint a different picture. In the current study, variation is seen in parental aspirations depending on their acculturation strategy, that is, whether they wish to maintain their Indian culture or adapt to the Singapore culture in response to the demand of the new environment. Socialization of immigrants is usually reported to be a gendered process. Generally, daughters are more likely to be scrutinized than sons in terms of the cultural expectations from them (Dion & Dion, 2001). These findings are however consistent with the current study as those affected were mainly parents of female children. For example, parental aspirations for their daughters' financial security were influenced by the demands of Indian or Singapore culture as described above in the two cases.

Parental aspirations were highly influenced by their safety concerns for their daughters. Mothers did not want their daughters to experience the fear of living in an unsafe environment that they themselves had experienced in India. They were highly concerned about the increasing women related crime in India. Acculturation influence was seen here as there was a noticeable difference between the socio-cultural and physical environment in India and Singapore. In parents' experience, in Singapore, people could be taken by their face value and trusted, as opposed to the culture in India. For this reason, parents were convinced that it would be difficult for their daughters to fit into the Indian culture where one needed to be very careful and could be cheated easily. Hence parents preferred their daughters to study and work in Singapore in future. They were completely against India as a possible destination for the same. This issue of cultural difference and women's safety was also raised by parents who did not even have a female child which clearly shows the intensity of it. There was an agreement among all, that

Singapore was the safest place in their experience especially as compared to India. Appreciating the safe living environment of Singapore, parents were clearly of the opinion that for a male child, they had no objection to his studying and working in any country however, if they had a daughter instead, they would have definitely insisted on Singapore as the future destination.

Patel et al. (1996) have shown that Indian immigrant parents tend to be protective about their daughters however this tendency was reported to be seen more among fathers. In contrast to this finding, in the current study, both mothers and fathers were found to be protective about their daughters and highly emphasised on their safety. The reason for this behaviour among mothers in the current study was their own experiences and observation in India and Singapore. On the other hand, in the study conducted by Patel et al. (1996), fathers played a greater role than mothers in being protective about their daughters as traditionally, in Indian culture, it is men's responsibility to protect women.

The current study thus highlights the gender differences in immigrant parents' acculturation experiences and their parental aspirations.

7.3.3 Factors at Societal Level

7.3.3.1 Perennial Values of Indian Culture

When people migrate, their acculturation strategy depends on two issues; firstly, the extent to which they value maintenance of their original culture and secondly, the extent to which they wish to maintain contacts with the dominant group (Berry, 1997). Specifically in case of Indian immigrants, it has been seen that though they do value certain aspects of the dominant culture and adapt to it (Inman et al., 2007), the level of their acculturation is "tempered by the operationalization of domestic religio-cultural norms" (Abbas, 2003, p. 413). Indeed, in the current study too this feature was reflected in the acculturation strategy of most parents. They adopted certain features of the dominant culture, but without altering their core values.

Culture gives meaning to one's lifestyle by regulating it and its importance in life is high for an Indian. Indians undoubtedly have a long cultural background with a common outlook on life. This common outlook of Indians is eternal and ever present in their life. Culture is considered one's 'dharma' meaning duty or virtue of lifestyle (Choudhuri, 2009). Indeed, among the values that had an impact on Indian immigrant parents'

aspirations for their children, the perennial values of Indian culture were prominently seen. Parents had their own sets of beliefs, and their own reasons for certain specific aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. However, there were some commonalities in their beliefs which coincided with the perennial values of the Indian culture. These values were global consciousness, happiness, respect for guru (teacher), destiny and karma, and family. The impact of these values on parental aspirations is discussed below.

The Indian cultural tradition is community oriented which sees an individual as a part of the universe (Paul, 2009). Global consciousness has been the foundation of Indian culture which views the entire world as one's own (Mukhopadhyaya, 2009). Treating the whole world as one family by establishing brotherhood with all in the world is a perennial value of the Indian culture evidently seen in Indian scriptures (Panda, 2009). Indian culture emphasised in Indian scriptures, believes in quality of life for all in the world which can only be achieved by using the wisdom and achievements of all the people in all the countries by working together (Paul, 2009). Parents in the current study too believed in globalization and their own initiative to migrate, or their children's plans of further migration for education or occupation is its evidence. In particular in one case (#3 DUT), parents' aspirations for occupational achievements for their son were shaped by this perennial value of the Indian culture as they left the options for future destination for working and settling for their son open believing in the notion of living in the globalized world.

Another perennial value of the Indian culture evidently found in scriptures is the emphasis on happiness. It is worth noting that the Indian cultural tradition is never in favour of happiness just for himself, herself or any one person. Indian culture believes in happiness for all (Menon, 2009). Indeed, all the parents in the current study highly valued happiness, which they did not want to compromise upon migration. Happiness was an aspect that was lacking among Singaporeans in parents' perception and the stress level in Singapore was responsible for it. For example, Mrs Sandhu's observation:

> They don't give that much value or importance to happiness. And that's a compromise ... Singaporeans don't smile. I don't see them as happy. And the reason they don't smile is because they are so worked up all the time, they have made their life like a calendar. Here one task after another. So generally … the body language is very stressed out. When I go to other countries,

> people are laid back, happy, picnicking, weekends also you can see people out with their dogs and cats, they are relaxing. I don't see that over here. (SAN/P2:208)

All parents wished happiness for their children and their respect for their children's interest while making certain educational or occupational choices was its evidence. They were against imposing their own wishes onto their children. Their emphasis was on their children's long term happiness. For this reason, though parents allowed their children the freedom to make their own choices for their future, they ensured that they guided their children by explaining the pros and cons of making these choices. This was especially seen when parents counselled their children to dissuade them from pursuing certain professions which they thought were a short term fad which could not assure long term happiness for them. They advised their children to pursue other interests as a hobby and not as a career so as not to compromise their happiness and also assure long terms happiness through occupational achievements at the same time. This was something they had learnt through their own experiences. The fact that some of the parents themselves had had a change of career in order to pursue their own passion eventually makes it obvious that for long term happiness parents believed in the importance of identifying one's true passion and pursuing it. In line with the value 'happiness for all', one parent wished happiness for his whole family including himself. He avoided the regular unpleasant discussions with his daughter about her educational and occupational achievements so as to avoid conflicts in the family. This was to ensure peace and happiness in the family.

Respect of 'Guru', meaning teacher, represents a foundational characteristic of the Indian philosophy and another perennial value of the Indian culture. It is one of the characteristics that defines goodness of a human being with a state of mind which keeps the mind steady, calm and peaceful (Subbarayudu, Rambai, & Rama Krishna, 2012). The guru is perceived as one's progenitor as under the influence and training of the guru, a disciple is considered born for the second time (Mukhopadhyaya, 2009). Indian cultural perspective is that in the course of gaining knowledge, guru holds a special place in a disciple's life. Other than imparting knowledge, a teacher's role is also crucial in helping his disciple in making the right decisions in life. Though the teacher-disciple relationship has changed over the years, its traditional nature has still retained its resilience in the modern times; which is based on respect, affection and understanding (Raina, 2002). In line with this perennial value of the Indian culture, parents showed high respect for their

children's teachers and their teacher's role was found to be influential in shaping parents' aspirations for their children. In three cases (#1 SAN, #3 DUT, #8 KOR), parents' and children's initial aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements changed upon consultation with their teachers. Teachers made the parents realize their children's true potential and inclination towards a different course and career than the one in parents' mind. In one case (#9 KAL), the parents felt the need to verify with their daughter's teacher whether their daughter truly had the potential to pursue her interest. To another couple (#11 KAT), their daughter's relationship with her teachers and her teacher's opinion about her were of high importance.

Destiny and 'karma' are unique features of the Indian culture (see Section 2.3). It is a law of nature which works automatically to control one's destiny. Destiny is determined by the net balance of one's own good and bad deeds in the past, or in the previous births (Edgerton, 1942). Even in today's times, Indians still believe in 'karma' and are afraid of its consequences (Wolpert, 1991). Since destiny is not within one's control, it becomes important to perform one's duty and not be concerned about the fruits of it. It is also believed that at the end of each birth, humans lose the memories of their activities but the Lord is the knower of the past, present and the future. All individuals are under the Lord's control who being the Supersoul controls all activities (Prabhupada, 2009). In line with this foundational philosophical value of the Indian culture, some of the parents and children believed in destiny. Its direct influence on their aspirations was evident through their opinion of not planning too much ahead of time in terms of destination of future work and settling which they left to the destiny. These parents strongly believed in destiny because it was something they themselves had experienced in life as they did not know or expect their life would take such a turn beyond their imagination causing them to migrate to another country or take up a profession they had never imagined of. Although some of the parents and children believed in destiny, surprisingly, none of them specifically spoke about 'karma' that is their deeds in the past or previous birth.

Family is the most important institution in the Indian culture (see Section 2.3). The family is the centre of focus, the matrix or the model of Indian culture and the lives of Indians revolve around their families (Wolpert, 1991). Indeed, the aspirations of all parents in the current study were influenced by their high regards for their family. Family and especially its well-being were of higher priority than their personal achievements to parents, in particular to mothers in the current study. Staying together as a family and the

bonding of the family were the aspects respected by all. This value was reflected clearly in mothers' behaviour as they did not hesitate to migrate with their husbands without thinking about how it would affect their own professional achievements for the only reason of family togetherness. For the same reason, parents wished that their children would pursue their tertiary studies in Singapore so that they could all be together. Also, some of the parents wished that their children would work and settle in the same country as their retirement destination, be it Singapore or India. One parent enrolled her two daughters in the same school at the pre-university level in Singapore and another aspired that her two sons could study in the same university in the US mainly so that their two children could be together. Studies have shown that Asian immigrant families share a strong family bonding and Asian immigrant youths are most likely to live near their parents as adults as compared to other ethnic groups (Kao, 2004). The findings of the current study are not fully consistent with this. Though parents wished that their children would stay with them in future, children indicated no such intention.

In eleven of the twelve cases, the participating families were Hindu by religion with only one being Sikh (#1 SAN) (see Section 5.2). Yet, no significant difference was found in their cultural values, which were mainly in line with the Hindu culture. A plausible reason for this could be that Hinduism being the oldest and the most prominent religion in India has a significant influence on the Indian society regardless of people's religion (see Section 2.3). Besides, the founder of Sikhism himself was Hindu by birth, who had absorbed many of the teachings of Indian saints of his time before his illumination that gave birth to Sikhism (Wolpert, 1991). Indeed, in spite of being diverse in its ethno-cultural (Sharma, 2011) and religions aspects, Indians have a common outlook on life which is eternal and ever present in their life. After all, pluralistic universalism is a marked characteristic of the Indian culture (Choudhuri, 2009).

As mentioned earlier in this section, Indian immigrants continue to cherish the core cultural values of Indian culture even upon migration. The current study unfolds the details of what aspects of the Indian culture the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore continued to treasure even upon migrating to Singapore. This study also highlights how these cultural values had a strong influence on their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements.

7.3.3.2 Socio-cultural Environment

The effect of the socio-cultural environment in India and Singapore was evident on parental aspirations. Specifically, the difference in the culture in India and Singapore caused the parents to have certain aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. These aspirations were influenced by their acculturation strategy depending on whether they adapted to the Singapore culture or preferred maintenance of the Indian culture.

The institution of marriage is highly regarded in the Indian culture. In the Indian society, stability of marriages is high and divorce rates low (Wolpert, 1991) (in fact one of the lowest in the world (Wolpert, 1991)). Besides, the roles of a man and a woman are pre-determined in a marriage in the Indian culture. The head of the family is responsible for providing for the family and hence entitled to the authority to make the major decisions for the family which the rest in the family respect. Daughters are considered a liability and dowry needs to be paid when a daughter is married off (see Section 2.3). The role of a mother is mainly ensuring the well-being of the family and children (Wolpert, 1991). Parents' perception of the Singapore culture was however exactly opposite of the Indian culture; in Singapore, working women was a norm, there was a tendency of women not marrying, and divorce rates are higher. Mrs Kannan mentioned that

> They give importance to work I think, even women and men. Men of course they have to. But women also here I feel that they are more concentrated on doing work I think. They give importance to the family secondary. That is why many women not marry [sic]. They don't think about marriage, I feel so. (KAN/P2:194)

This difference in the socio-cultural environment in India and Singapore caused a change in the perspective of a parent, which influenced her aspirations. In response to the environmental differences, this parent emphasised on her daughter pursuing a professional degree and becoming financially independent which was the demand of the Singapore culture as opposed to the Indian culture. This aspect of cultural change was intensely felt and emphasised by another parent who didn't even have a daughter. In one case (#9 KAL) however parents remained strong advocates of the Indian cultural values and did not emphasise on financial independence for their daughter. In fact, they specifically chose an Indian international school for their daughter so that the Indian

cultural values could be inculcated in her. A possible reason for this behaviour could be their low exposure to Singapore culture due to minimal interaction with Singaporeans.

Certain aspects of the socio-cultural environment in India and Singapore affected parents' aspirations for their children's educational achievements in terms of the destination for their tertiary studies, thus indicating the role acculturation. There were some parents who valued certain aspects of the Indian culture. However, there were some parents and children who were welcoming towards the modern Singapore culture. This change was because they doubted the practicality and significance of some of the aspects of the Indian culture, specifically those aspects related to women's role in the family and society. In line with the Indian culture, being the head of the family, the father in one family kept the rights of making major financial decisions. Hence only he had the power to decide the destination for his son's higher studies. Another parent and her daughter on the other hand, preferred Singapore over India as the destination for tertiary studies due to their dislike for certain aspects of the Indian culture. The experiences and perception of high self-centredness and materialism in the Singapore culture as opposed to the western societies caused a child to consider pursuing tertiary studies in a western country. Protectiveness about daughters was a typical cultural trait of the Indian parents as opposed to the Singaporean parents. In line with this trait, parents' obvious choice for their daughter's tertiary education was Singapore being highly safe. The competitiveness in the socio-cultural environment due to the huge difference between the behavioural norms affected parents' aspirations thus eliminating India as a destination for their children's higher studies or for working and settling in future.

Parental aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements were also influenced by parents' perception of the kind of education or occupation that was highly valued in the society. Most parents were in favour of science and mathematics related courses and occupations, specifically engineering and medicine which were highly regarded in the Indian culture. However, upon migration some of the parents had a change in their views due to their experiences and observation in Singapore. They now came to value the education and occupation that was valued in the Singapore culture. Also, they now gave more importance to professional success rather than the field in which success was obtained.

Cultural adaptation was an aspect of the acculturation process that highly influenced parental aspirations. When there are differences in the socio-cultural environment of home and host country, it is only inevitable that immigrants' cultural adaptation becomes an issue. Adaptation refers to the changes that occur in a person due to the demands of the environment he or she is part of. These changes are relatively stable. Socio-cultural adaptation refers to how well one is able to manage his daily life in the new socio-cultural environment (Berry, 1997). There were many differences in the socio-cultural environment of India and Singapore such as street-smartness in India versus straightforwardness in Singapore or linguistic and behavioural norms. Hence, parents and children thought that cultural adaptation in India, their home country, to be a great issue as the children were brought up mostly in Singapore. These barriers highly affected their aspirations for educational and occupational achievements. As a result, they strongly rejected India as a destination for their tertiary education or for working and settling in future.

Berry (1997) has brought to attention that prior cultural knowledge makes it easier for a person to adapt culturally well. This is inconsistent with the findings of the current study as parents and children were well aware of the culture in India and yet were of the opinion that cultural adaptation in India would be highly difficult. In fact, parents and children eliminated the choice of India as a destination because of their knowledge of its cultural environment.

Studies conducted in the area of cultural adaptation of immigrants highlight the issue of immigrants' cultural adaptation in their host country (Arends-Toth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Berry, 1997). The current study however reveals a different angle which is immigrants' adaptation back in their home country upon migration and its implications for their aspirations for their children.

Peer influence on adolescents' aspirations has been reported in prior studies (Alexander & Campbell, 1964; Antonio, 2004; Buchmann & Dalton, 2002; Pascarella, 1984). This however was not seen as a common trait in the current study. It was observed only in one case (#2 CHA) that the child's intentions to pursue higher studies overseas were in line with her peers' plans who found the living environment in Singapore restrictive and stressful. It is possible that other children in the current study too had a peer influence on them however its impact was not seen on their educational and

occupational choices. Their future plans were instead influenced by their older siblings or in line with their own ability and interest. Interestingly, peer pressure did not surface as a factor of the students' future plans. This could be due to the factors related to school environment or institutional influences (Antonio, 2004). "Whether or not they [peers] are influential depends, in large part, on structural features of the educational systems in which they operate" (Buchmann & Dalton, 2002, p. 113). In a differentiated schooling system such as Singapore's, students' educational and occupational trajectories are more or less determined as compared to undifferentiated schooling hence reducing peer influence.

7.3.3.3 Physical Environment

The difference in the physical environment of India and Singapore highly influenced parents' and children's aspirations for their educational and occupational achievements in terms of the destination for tertiary studies and future place for working and settling. While parents were more concerned about the safety issues, children's concern was mainly the infrastructure. Having been brought up mostly in the advanced infrastructure of Singapore, children's tolerance in this matter was considerably low having acculturated to the new environment. For this reason, they completely eliminated India as their future destination as they found it rather difficult to adapt to the living environment in India. Among the parents who showed their high concerns towards safety issues, most of them were parents of female children, thus creating gender differences (see Section 7.3.2.4) in parental aspirations.

Although prior research had examined the safety issues which parents were concerned for their children (Cooper et al., 1994; Earner, 2007; Spera et al., 2009), these were mainly concerned with children's safety in the school environment or with welfare issues of immigrant children. This study however is unique in its own way as it highlights the differences in the physical environment of two countries in terms of safety and infrastructure. It also shows how the physical environment of a country affects the parental aspirations of immigrants.

7.3.3.4 Legal Environment

The legal environment too played a role in the acculturation experiences of parents and children hence affecting their aspirations for their children's educational and

occupational achievements. Most parents praised the nature of the legal system in Singapore being effective as compared to that in India. For example, Mr Chaudhary's opinion:

> We like the law and order situation that's fantastic. It makes life so much easier. ... We like the PAP (People's Action Party). They are doing a fantastic job. They govern. From a place like India, it is really a strong and a good government. (CHA/P2:80)

At the same time, there were parents who had concerns for the overly strict and stressful legal environment in Singapore which compromised their freedom. For example, Mrs Sandhu who commented,

> Very unforgiving, rigid on their rules and regulations, that's the way they have kept may be the safety issue and people are listening to the government. But in the end it is a country we are staying in and not a school, right? So one has to give them a little more of breathing space. That I feel should be a little bit loosened up. (SAN/P2:82)

This effect was seen among the children as well as the parents. For example through Mr Moghe's account:

> The legal system, political system is too rigid. If you speak to the kids, you will see a lot of unhappiness about the political system in Singapore. It is too patriarchal and almost tyrannical you may say. But on the other hand, from our perspective, we ignore some of these because things are working. No issues with the law system but of course every now and then I feel some of the laws are ridiculous. (MOG/P2:83)

Though all the parents appreciated the effective law and order in Singapore, many parents and children found it stressful. As discussed earlier in Section 7.3.1.2, parents highly valued well-being of their children and desired less stress which influenced their parental aspirations. They preferred the western countries as the destination for their children's tertiary education, working and settling in future. This aspiration was due to their perception of a more liberal environment in the western countries experienced through their older child.

Among the laws and policies, the two years' National Service (NS) mandatory for Singaporean boys by Singapore law highly affected the aspirations of the parents with male children. These were mainly in terms of their preferred destination for tertiary education. Children who had given up their original Indian nationality and taken up the Singaporean citizenship, NS did not concern them as they had thoughtfully made this

decision. This decision was deliberate in some cases with its benefits in mind (for example, preference given in educational and occupational opportunities). In other cases it was their parents' decision made when they were young. Children had no serious objections to it as they associated more to the Singapore culture than Indian culture. To these children, Singapore was their home and they wished to pursue their tertiary studies, work and settle in Singapore. In the event that they decided to pursue their tertiary studies overseas and not in Singapore, they wished to return to their home, Singapore, upon completion of their studies and wished to keep their options of settling in Singapore open. Though these children were not concerned about the two years spent doing the mandatory National Service, it caused high anxiety among parents as it delayed the completion of their children's university education by two years. NS hence highly influenced parental aspirations. In order to make up for the delay and disruption of two years in their children's education, parents preferred UK as the destination for their children's tertiary education due to its shorter duration of course. NS was not a concern for those who did not see any value to accepting Singaporean nationality. Their intentions were to pursue tertiary studies in the US and settle there too. One of the male children however was in a dilemma about accepting Singaporean citizenship, due the NS issues.

The legal policies for applying for Singaporean nationality too affected educational aspirations of children as children alone could not take up Singaporean citizenship if their parents had no such intention. As a result, one child had to give up the option of Singapore as the destination for her medical education as she thought that chances of enrolment for non-Singaporeans were slim.

Changes are inevitable in an immigrant's life upon migration especially after experiencing an environment which is different from that of their home country (Berry, 1997). The current study investigates in depth how immigrants' acculturation is influenced by the legal environment of their host country. This study also explains its implications for immigrant parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements.

7.3.3.5 Economic Environment

The differences in the economic environment of different countries and their demands influenced the aspirations of parents and children. In particular, parents' and children's perception of the employment opportunities available significantly derived their

aspirations in terms of the destination for working and settling in future. Generally, parents and children had a reasonably good impression of the job market in Singapore. However, they were more attracted towards the US as they perceived the US as 'the land of opportunities'. This perception was mainly of those parents who had had an exposure to the US environment either due to their own stay in the US or through their older child pursuing higher studies in the US. These parents saw limited opportunities in Singapore being an extremely small country as compared to the US. Those who had their older child studying or having studied in the US, were obviously impressed with the job placements that were offered to the students graduating from the top ranking universities even before they graduated. For this reason, their aspiration for their children was to pursue tertiary education in the US. After all, people do migrate mainly in search of better opportunities for their future (Gupta, 1977; Lieber et al., 2001). In one case however parent's' views were altered due to her perception of the economic environment in Singapore (#1 SAN). Her personal experience of unsuccessful job hunt had made her realize that it was an international degree that was valued in the Singapore job market and not her qualification from India. In order that her son does not suffer the same fate, she eliminated India as the destination for her son's higher education.

7.3.3.6 Educational Environment

The differences in the educational environment in India and Singapore, and its demands also had a significant impact on parents' educational aspirations for their children's educational achievements. The influence was mainly seen on their choice of curriculum or school, the destination for tertiary education and the academic performance they expected from their children.

There were different aspects of the educational environment that contributed to parental aspirations. Of which, the impact of the nature of the education system was seen on most parents affecting their aspirations for their children. In general, most parents were against rote learning which they had experienced in India. Upon migration they were exposed to the international and Singapore education system. They highly appreciated these education systems due to their application oriented approach providing a more practical and well-rounded education preparing their children for future. This change was welcome by the parents. Parents were more in favour of the Singapore or international education system than the Indian education system, including those studying

in Indian international schools. This change however came with a price, stress. Parents highly valued the well-being of their children and desired the good education at the same time. Stress was an aspect of the education system in Singapore which most parents and students were against. In the opinion of parents and children, stress was the main drawback of the Singapore education system. It was highly performance driven, demanding and unforgiving requiring students to work extremely hard. This system affected their children's well-being and work-life balance and yet failed to produce the kind of results the more relaxing Indian education system or the international school culture achieved. Parents were thus more in favour of the international curriculum at the pre-university level and overseas universities at the tertiary level to keep their children away from the stressful educational environment in Singapore. Indeed, this is the age of international education in which IB curriculum has especially become parents' choice due to its nature (Tarc, 2009).

The way academic excellence was measured in different education systems too affected parents' aspirations for their children's educational achievements. Most parents quickly adapted to the Singapore culture and aligned their expectations from their children in terms of academic performance accordingly. Parents still favouring the Indian way measured academic excellence by percentage marks. They expected high percentage from their children in the examinations as opposed to the grading system in Singapore where a very high percentage is not possible to achieve. This caused conflicts between parents and children in one case (#3 DUT) as parental expectations were not met.

Among the parents whose children were studying in Indian international schools, aspirations varied based on their experiences. These children were currently pursuing an international curriculum in an Indian international school. Parents who had had no experience of Singapore schools preferred the environment in Indian international schools over that in the schools in India. In their perception, Indian international schools were less demanding, promoted overall development of a child and yet were academically focused. On the other hand, a parent who had had an exposure to Singapore, Indian and Indian international schools appreciated the Singapore schools. This parent was in favour of Singapore school for her daughter as her perception of the education system in Singapore schools was the least stressful. This shows that exposure to the Singapore culture and educational environment caused a change in parents' views influencing their aspirations. The children studying in Indian international schools preferred an international

curriculum over the Indian curriculum due to their perception that an international curriculum had a better recognition in Singapore for entering university and course of their choice. Hence, though they were initially pursuing the Indian curriculum in India or in Indian international school in Singapore, they switched to an international curriculum at the first available opportunity.

The level of competition in the educational environment in a country also influenced parental aspirations in terms of the destination for tertiary studies. Parents were of the opinion that the competition in India for university placements was extremely high as compared to that in Singapore or US. This made it almost impossible for their children to get into the top universities in India, whereas comparatively easier in Singapore or US universities. In response to this difference, their preferred destination for tertiary studies was not India as they aspired to send their child to top ranked universities.

The different entrance requirement to universities in different countries too affected parents' aspirations. This effect was seen on specifically those parents whose children were pursuing the IB curriculum and were exploring opportunities to pursue medical education in Indian universities. The subject combination offered in the IB curriculum did not cater for the university entrance requirement in India. For this reason, they had to eliminate any Indian university as an option. This affected mainly children of Indian nationality whose perception was that their chances of getting into a Singapore university were slim due to the admission policies. Entrance requirement to US universities however was a relieving factor to the parents of the child who was a US citizen. Choice of school or curriculum or even his academic grades at the pre-university level were merely a formality for him, in their perception. On the other hand, the mandatory high academic grades as the entrance requirement to an overseas university of her choice highly affected one child. Upon getting a reality check through her current academic performance, she had to lower her aspirations and instead decided to pursue her tertiary studies in a Singapore university.

The current study has highlighted many aspects of the educational environment which are unique to Indian immigrants in Singapore. Besides, this study has also demonstrated how these aspects affect the parental aspirations for these immigrants.

7.3.3.7 Institutional Discrimination

A lot has been talked about the discriminatory treatment faced by immigrants in their host country, highlighting its effect on immigrants' psychology (Corrigan, Markowitz, & Watson, 2004; Estroff, Penn, & Toporek, 2004; Henkel, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2006; Williams, 1999). Discrimination can be of different forms and can be experienced by immigrants at different levels namely individual, cultural and institutional (Henkel et al., 2006). However, most attention that this topic has received is mainly in the area of discrimination at cultural or individual level (Birman & Trickett, 2001; Chung et al., 2008; Li, 2001; Liebkind et al., 2004; Phinney, 1989; Rumbaut, 1994) and little has been spoken about institutional discrimination which too can be a hindrance in immigrants' aspirations and opportunities (Corrigan et al., 2004).

The Indian community in Singapore is least affected by discrimination at the individual or cultural level due to their high socioeconomic status being prosperous and successful, and hence has not received a significant attention (Velayutham, 2006). Indeed, the perception of the Indian immigrants in the current study about the societal attitude too concurs with these findings. Most parents were not concerned about discrimination at individual or cultural level. In fact, most parents appreciated Singapore government policies about immigrants and their constant effort to maintain racial harmony in the country. For example Mr Dutt who expressed,

> I think I am very-very happy about the government policies. This is one unique place where the government has policies to encourage more foreigners. From the government side it is really amazing, the kind of support they generate. So the government and also in terms of racial harmony, they take it very-very seriously. Even the HDB (Housing Development Board) quota or they will prosecute people if somebody blogs. I think that sends a very strong signal. (DUT/P2:155)

Parents were however of the opinion that though cultural acceptance was high in the multicultural Singapore society, their relationship with Singaporeans was superficial. Also, they were not affected by any discriminatory treatment or prejudice in the society. For example through Mrs Garg's account:

> There are a whole lot of different kinds of people. Though we refer to them as whites, there are people from US, UK etc. Even among Indians there are so many ethnic groups. So all that has also probably made the local community wary of whom to trust and whom to mix around with, as there are too many kinds of people out there. [sic] So I suppose it is

> difficult for them also. When you see a lot of different kinds of people coming in, you can't accept everybody. You can accept but you cannot form relationship with everybody. (GAR/P2:106)

And Mr Katkar's experience:

> The interaction with local people does not happen to that level, where we are bothered about their lifestyle. People also see us as from a different culture. So they also take care of it. So here normally, as long as it is accepted you are going to come there, they treat you properly also. They know that you are from a different culture. They try to take care of it. As far as the locals are concerned, they have accepted that foreigners are going to be here. And that's why I think we never had problem with their culture. Of course there are things in their culture they do in their own ways, which if we interact with them, we may find a little difficult to adjust. It doesn't really affect us. (KAT/P2:83)

Institutional discrimination occurs due to rules, policies or procedures by authorities in power that restrict rights and opportunities to certain groups of people (Corrigan et al., 2004). In the current study, there were many discriminatory rules and policies in Singapore that affected the aspirations of parents for their children's educational and occupational achievements. Some of the parents and children gave up their original Indian nationality and accepted the Singaporean nationality. This change in nationality was due to the preference given to Singaporeans in university admissions, scholarship matters and employment opportunities and hence to increase their children's chances in this matter. Also the huge difference in fees structure for Singaporeans and non-Singaporeans affected them due to their perception of unaffordability of cost of tertiary studies. This scenario was mainly among children of Indian nationality who were aspiring to pursue medical education. The child who held US nationality however was not affected as he mainly focused on the US as his future destination for studying and working. While more parents and children were affected by the institutional discrimination in Singapore, one parent raised issues about institutional discrimination in India too. This parent was against considering India as a destination for her son's higher studies because of the uncertainty of her son's educational opportunities being a non-resident Indian.

Though most of the families were affected by the institutional discrimination in educational or occupational matters, they showed their understanding in this matter and did not have any strong views against it. One parent however felt that non-Singaporeans should have equal rights to all opportunities and resources on par with Singaporeans as they too were contributing to Singapore.

7.4 Theoretical Model for Acculturation-mediated Parental Aspirations

The aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children's educational and occupational achievements and the factors influencing these aspirations were discussed in Section 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. Parents had high aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. As mentioned in Section 6.13, considering the fact that these parents themselves were highly educated and occupationally successful (especially the fathers), it cannot be denied that their aspirations would be high regardless of their country of residence. Yet, the role of acculturation process was evidently seen in shaping their aspirations in response to the demands of the environmental differences between India and Singapore. This influence was mainly reflected in their specific aspirations, or reasons for having certain aspirations as a manifestation of their behaviour, values and/or beliefs which changed upon migration. In order to address research question 2, the 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' is presented in Figure 7.1 which is developed based on the discussion in Sections 7.2 and 7.3. It depicts the acculturation process that shaped the parental aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study.

Although research had been conducted in the fields of acculturation of immigrants (see, for example, Berry's, (1997) acculturation model) as well as parental aspirations (see 'aspirations model' in Section 3.1, there appears to be a lack of research which specifically explores the role acculturation process in influencing parental aspirations of immigrants (see Section 2.1.4). The analysed data from the current study, however, have led to the conceptualisation of the 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' see Figure 7.1) which demonstrates how the acculturation process of first-generation Indian immigrants in Singapore shaped their parental aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. It possesses important features which distinguish it from the 'aspirations' and 'acculturation' model in three ways. Firstly, it advances the currently available knowledge represented by these two models a step further by linking the two constructs 'aspirations' and 'acculturation' in the same framework.

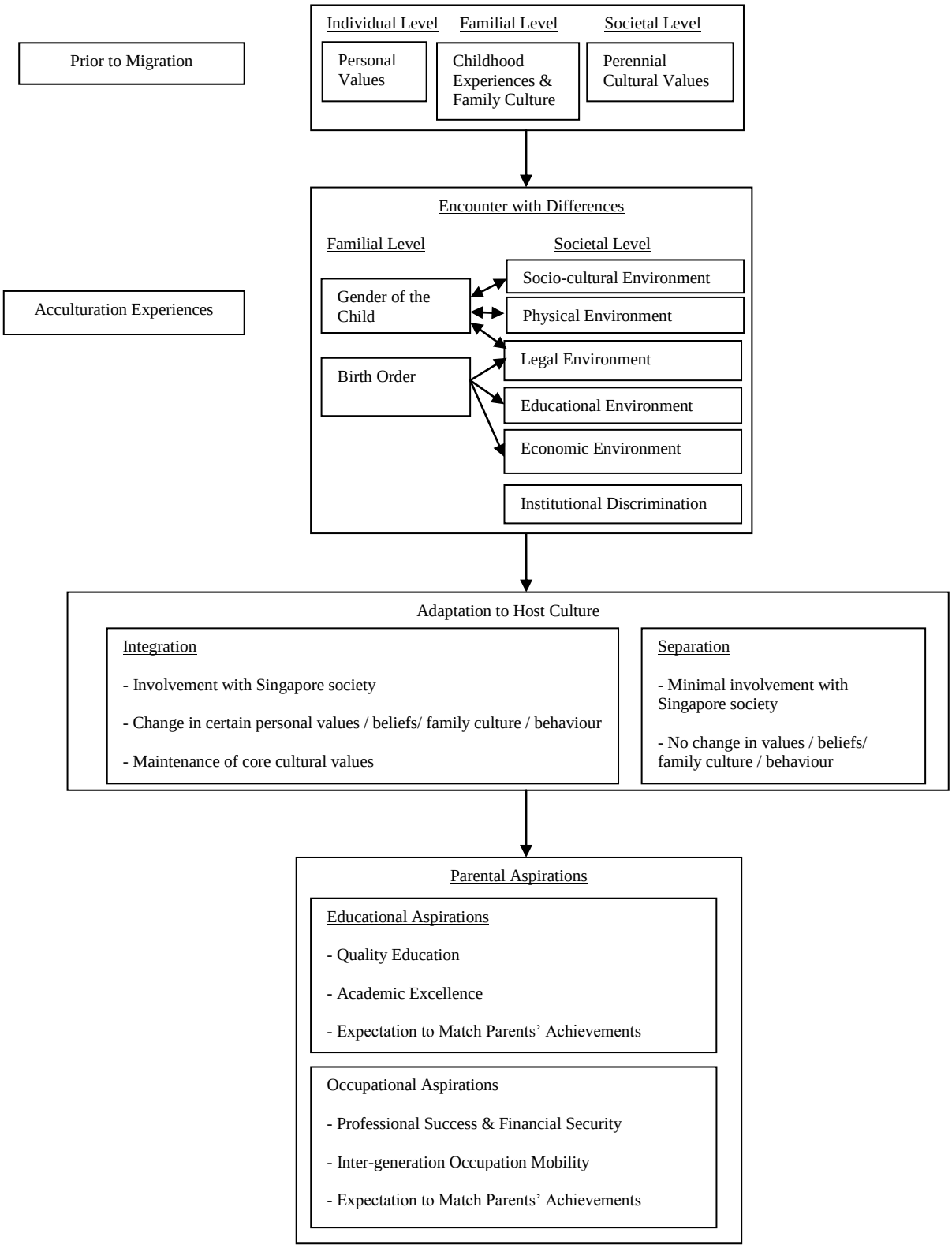

Figure 7.1. Theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations.

Secondly, it highlights the role of the wider aspects of cultures in affecting the life experiences of immigrants, which extend beyond similarities and differences in the ethnic

and religious aspects only, across two different lands. This aspect of the acculturation process was captured in this study mainly because of its context being different, which is Asians migrating within Asia, in particular Singapore which is a multiracial country with a prominent Indian culture. Thirdly, the structure of this model extends beyond the factors of 'prior to' and 'upon migration' that we see in the acculturation model (see Section 3.2), to include levels of another dimension, namely individual, familial and societal.

The acculturation process of immigrants can be considered to have begun prior to their migration with their experiences in India and their personal characteristics which were seen at three levels namely the individual, familial and societal levels. At the individual level, it was parents' personal values that were influential in their acculturation process. At the familial level it was parents' childhood experiences and family culture, for example the decision making process in their family that played a role. At the societal level it was the perennial values of Indian culture that had an impact on parents' mind. When parents migrated, they carried these experiences, culture and characteristics with them, some of which underwent a change upon migration while the rest remained unaltered.

Upon migration to Singapore, the Indian immigrants were exposed to a new environment which was different from that in India in many ways. At the societal level, there were five aspects of the environment namely the socio-cultural, physical, legal, educational and economic environments in addition to the institutional discrimination in Singapore experienced by them. At the familial level, the children themselves remained influential through their birth order and gender.

The birth order of the child was related to the legal, educational and economic environments. Prior to migration, parents had a very good knowledge of these aspects of the environment in India, through their own experiences. But, the main source of information about the environment in Singapore and/or overseas was their older child. They acquired this knowledge through their experiences with their older child, or through their older child who had resided (or was residing) overseas. This information was beneficial for the parents to plan their younger child's future.

There was a two way relationship between the gender of the child and the socio-cultural environment. Parents' cultural expectations from their children varied according to whether the child was a male or a female. Besides, these cultural expectations were

different in India and Singapore, such as in the different ways women's roles and responsibilities were constructed in the Indian and Singapore cultures (see Section 7.3.3.2 for details). This difference in the socio-cultural environments helped to explain the gender differences in parents' cultural expectations of their respective children.

The physical environment and the gender of the child are two factors which were inter-related. For example, parents' concerns for the safety of their female children were higher as compared to that for their male children. It was the nature of the physical environment in India and Singapore that caused gender differences. This was mainly because from their past experiences, the physical environment in India was highly unsafe for women, which automatically kept the parents alert even though they might have moved away from India.

There was a two-way relationship between the legal environment and the gender of the child as some of the laws were gender specific. In particular, the mandatory National Service (NS) for male children only, was an aspect unique to Singapore. These different demands for males and females in the legal environment in Singapore contributed to gender differences in parental aspirations and expectations.

Parents also experienced institutional discrimination as they felt that preference was given to Singaporean nationals in educational and occupational opportunities. Now being a non-resident in India, they were also unsure of their children's chances of enrolment in the top universities in India.

In response to these environmental differences and demands, adaptation to the host culture became an integral part of parents' acculturation process. During the process of their adaptation, parents and children were observed to be using either the integration or the separation strategy. The integration strategy was characterized by their involvement with the Singapore society causing a change in some of their values, beliefs and culture but without altering their core cultural values. On the other hand, the separation strategy was characterized by their minimal involvement with the Singapore society causing no change in their values, beliefs or culture.

Most of the parents and children adopted the integration strategy. They had an involvement with the Singapore society and saw value to adapting to the Singapore culture as they associated themselves more with the Singapore culture. They adopted

certain features of Singapore culture but without altering their core cultural values. In the process of parents' adaptation to the new environment in Singapore, there was a change in their personal values and beliefs as well as their family culture. For example, due to the perceived and experienced high level of stress in Singapore environment, parents began to give well-being utmost priority. Or, the decision making process in their family changed upon migration as the family or social pressure that they experienced in India no longer existed upon migration. Some of the integrated parents and children accepted the Singaporean nationality or planned to do so. This change was either because they associated more with the Singapore culture or due to its benefits, for example preference given to Singaporeans in educational and occupational opportunities. Some of the parents and children though integrated were in a dilemma whether to accept the Singaporean nationality or continue to hold the Indian nationality. They considered taking up the Singaporean nationality as they associated with certain features of the Singapore culture but didn't do so as they didn't see any benefit coming from it. They displayed a strong emotional attachment and a sense of loyalty to their Indian nationality.

The parents and children who associated themselves more with the Indian culture or did not see any value to embracing the Singapore culture adopted the separation strategy. They continued to take pride in their Indian nationality and Indian culture. These parents also believed in cultural continuity in the next generation. Their involvement with the Singapore society was minimal.

The acculturation process (experiences and adaptation) of parents played a significant role in shaping their parental aspirations. Among the educational aspirations that were shaped by parents' acculturation were quality education, academic excellence and expectation to match parents' achievements. The occupational aspirations that were shaped by parents' acculturation were professional success and financial security, inter-generation occupation mobility and expectation to match parents' achievements. As parents had high aspirations and high expectations, they exerted pressure on their children to some extent, but not at the expense of affecting their children's well-being.

Parents aspired for quality education and academic excellence for their children. Upon migration, the way they assessed the quality of education and the way they now measured academic excellence was influenced by their acculturation. Their reasons for emphasising on quality education or academic excellence too were shaped by their acculturation.

Role of acculturation was seen in shaping parents' aspirations for professional success and financial security for their children. For example, as per the norms in India, initially all the parents were advocates of mathematics and science related occupations as they were convinced that these led to professional success and financial security. However, their experiences in Singapore caused a change in the views of some of the parents when they saw that success was possible in other arenas too. Some of the parents now emphasised on occupation that was valued in Singapore society instead. Parents' positive and negative personal life experiences, specifically occupational experiences prior to and upon migration were responsible for their aspiration of inter-generation occupation mobility. Parents wanted their children to benefit from their experiences, enjoy work-life balance and long term happiness.

Parents expected their children to match their level of educational and occupational achievements. Even after migration, parents continued to have a strong impact of the perennial Indian cultural values on them, one of which was 'happiness for all'. In line with this value, parents expected their children to match their level of achievements as it gave them immense joy. Their reason for this aspiration was also because they wished their children would achieve long term happiness by maintaining at least the same level of social status and standard of living that they were used to.

7.5 Distinguishing Features of Families Likely to Continue Living in Singapore in Second Generation

The acculturation process that shaped parental aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study was discussed with the help of the 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' (see Figure 7.1). Their adaptation to Singapore culture remained an integral part of their acculturation process, which of course varied across the twelve families. It is worth noting however that, the extent of their integration did not solely determine their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements or even their future plans for that matter. Also, their integration into the Singapore society did not necessarily indicate the likeliness of their second generation to continue living in Singapore as there were many other factors that influenced their aspirations and future plans. What are the features then that distinguish them from the rest of the families as being more likely to continue living in Singapore? It is important to investigate and understand these features so that

Singapore will be able to retain the second generation of the professional and skilled Indian immigrants in Singapore and avoid the scenario where Singapore is perceived as a springboard to greener pastures (see Section 1.2).

Among the twelve first generation Indian immigrant families investigated in this study, six families have been identified whose second generation, that is their children, are more likely to continue living in Singapore as compared to the rest. These are the Sandhu, Chaudhary, Dutt, Gautam, Moghe and Katkar families. Their detailed case descriptions are in Chapter 6. Three themes have emerged as commonalities which distinguish these six families from the rest (see Appendix 19). These themes are: their migration motivation, nationality of the parents and child, and the birth order of the child.

As mentioned in Section 3.2.1.1, migration motivation is an important aspect of immigrants' acculturation process. In fact, acculturation begins much before the actual migration takes place with immigrants' initial thoughts of migration and the motivation that they have behind this migration (Yijälä & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2010). Indeed, in five of the six families, whose children are more likely to continue living in Singapore, the motivation behind their migration to Singapore or for preferring Singapore to other countries distinguished them from the rest. Those not likely to continue in Singapore mainly migrated to Singapore due to the job posting of the fathers in these families. In contrast, the families likely to continue in Singapore migrated to Singapore for specific reasons. These reasons include their children's education, high regards for Indian culture, search of better living environment or financial reasons.

The current Singaporean nationality of the family is another feature that distinguished them from the rest as more likely to continue living in Singapore. All the six families whose children are more likely to continue living in Singapore were originally of Indian nationality. In three of these families, both parents and the child took up Singaporean nationality. In one family, the father and the son accepted the Singaporean nationality. While one family clearly indicated their plans of taking up Singaporean citizenship, another family expressed their regrets for not yet taking up the Singaporean nationality for their children's benefit. The rest of the families whose children are less likely to continue in Singapore are still holding on to their original Indian (or US in one case) nationality. They did not indicate any intention of taking up Singaporean nationality

either due to their emotional attachment and loyalty to their original nationality or because they did not see any value in taking up the Singaporean nationality.

As discussed in Section 7.3.2.2, birth order of the child is not researched sufficiently as an independent research variable. Indeed, the role of birth order is an unexpected finding of this study and also happens to be one of the distinguishing features in identifying whether the children in these families are likely to continue living in Singapore. This feature is reflected through the role of the older child in the family in influencing parental aspirations for their younger child. Among the families whose children are more likely to continue in Singapore, one participating child was the only child in the family, three of birth order one, and two of birth order two. The future plans of the two children of birth order two were in accordance with that of the older child in the family in terms of the destination for tertiary studies, working and settling in future. In fact, it is worth noting that this is a commonality identified across most the families where the participating child is of birth order two, regardless of whether they are likely to living continue in Singapore. Among the six families whose children are not likely to continue living in Singapore, there were five children of birth order two. Four of these five children had aspirations in line with their older sibling. One child, whose older sister is pursuing tertiary studies in Singapore, was undecided due to the issue of the NS. Hence, future plans of the older child in the family can be extremely useful in understanding the plans of the younger siblings.

This chapter has presented the discussion of the educational and occupational aspirations parents have for their children and the factors influencing these aspirations. Based on this discussion, the ‘theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations’ presenting how parental aspirations were shaped by their acculturation process was presented.

The next chapter will be the concluding chapter. It will address the research questions formulated in Chapter 2 followed by the contribution of this study to knowledge, limitations of the study and possible scope for further research. Practical implications of this research study will also be discussed to conclude the study.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The data collected through interviews conducted with parents and group interviews conducted with the children was presented in Chapter 6 by describing each of the twelve cases in depth. These case descriptions were then re-examined across the twelve cases in order to develop themes for discussion purpose to address the research questions formulated in Chapter 2, and were presented in Chapter 7. This chapter is the concluding chapter where the research questions will be addressed with the aid of the data, its analysis and the discussion presented in Chapter 6 and 7. The problem, rationale and significance of conducting this research study were discussed in Chapter 1. These too will be revisited and addressed in this chapter. The reader should however bear in mind that the responses provided in this chapter in order to address the research objectives is merely a summary of the key findings and it is the best for the reader to refer to Chapter 6 and 7 for details.

To begin with, the research questions which were developed in Chapter 2 will be addressed one by one. This will be followed by presenting the contribution of this study to knowledge. The limitations of this research study will then be discussed followed by proposing the avenues this study has opened up for further research. Keeping in mind the problem identified in Chapter 1 as well as the findings of this research study, implications for practice will then be suggested to conclude this chapter. In this way, this chapter will complement Chapter 1 and 2.

8.1 Conclusions Regarding Research Questions

8.1.1 Research Question 1a: Educational and Occupational Aspirations

Research question 1 was presented in two parts, of which 1a is as follows.

1a. What are the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

Undoubtedly, the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study place a high emphasis on their children's educational achievements. They aspire for quality education and academic excellence for their children. They also expect their children to match their level of educational achievements. Parents assess the quality

of education offered in a school by its ranking and reputation in addition to the employability it offers. In parents' eyes, the international recognition and well-rounded approach of the curriculum is important. Duration of the course at the tertiary level is of concern to many parents as they desire for the best possible education for their children in shortest possible time. In addition to academics, parents perceive education as a means of overall personality development of their children through learning of life skills. They not only emphasise on academic excellence through high academic performance from their children, but also offer their support and encouragement in every possible way so that their children can work towards the desired educational goals. Parents themselves are highly educated and expect their children to match their level of educational achievements too (see Section 7.2.1).

Parents aspire for their children to have high occupational achievements in life. Their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements are linked. They expect the groundwork for occupational success to be done at the school and tertiary levels by making the educational choices wisely. They ensure that their children's fullest potential is achieved while making these choices. Their emphasis is mainly on their children becoming professionally successful and financially secure in future. Most parents are in favour of mathematics and science related courses and careers for their children and strongly against occupations in non-educational arenas such as the entertainment. Parents aspire that their children match their level of occupational success so that their children continue to enjoy the same social status ad standard of living that they are used to. Parents wish to see inter-generation occupation mobility and they have their specific reasons for this aspiration. In addition to the joy of their children taking up the same profession as them, they feel it is the right choice for them based on their children's interest and ability. Parents who have had negative experiences in their own work life however, are against their children taking up the same profession as them (see Section 7.2.2).

8.1.2 Research Question 1b: Factors Influencing Aspirations

Research question 1b is as follows.

1b. What are the factors influencing the educational and occupational aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

There are several factors that influence the parental aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study for their children's educational and occupational achievements. These factors are seen at three levels namely the individual, familial and the societal levels.

At the individual level, parents' personal values, their desire to enhance their children's educational opportunities, and their perception of affordability of educational expenses play a significant role in shaping their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. Among the personal values, well-being of the child is of high priority to parents. They emphasise on reducing the stress or strain for their children, for these can affect their physical or mental health. They desire to make the educational and occupational choices for their children in such a way that it would not compromise their children's well-being or disturb their work-life balance. Parents' perception of the affordability of the educational expenses has a significant impact on the choice of destination for their children's higher studies. For some of the parents, their desire to enhance their children's educational opportunities is seen through their sole motivation behind migration for their children's education (see Section 7.3.1).

At the familial level, parents' parents, and the children themselves play a significant role in shaping their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. Influence of parents' parents is seen through parents' childhood experiences with them. Their family culture then and now is found to be influential in shaping their aspirations for their children. This influence is reflected through their decision making process in the family and the amount of freedom given to the children in making their educational and occupational choices. Birth order of the child plays a significant role too in shaping parents' aspirations. Parents' aspirations for their younger child's educational and occupational achievements are derived from their experiences with their older child, expectations from the older child, level of success achieved by the older child and also the older child's influence on the younger child. On the part of the children, a child's gender and his or her self-identity (see Section 7.3.2) also affects his or her parents' aspirations.

At the societal level, the factors influencing parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements are the perennial values of the Indian culture, the living environment in Singapore and India, and the institutional discrimination

experienced by them. Parents' aspirations are in line with the perennial values of Indian culture, in particular, their belief in destiny and karma, global consciousness, respect for guru or teacher, and most importantly family and happiness. There are five aspects of the environment in India and Singapore namely socio-cultural, physical, legal, economic and educational environments that influence their aspirations. Parents are highly concerned about the differences in the environments and their children's adaptation to it, which causes them to have specific aspirations for their children. Institutional discrimination highly affects their aspirations due to the preference given to Singaporeans in educational and occupational opportunities (see Section 7.3.3).

8.1.3 Research Question 2: Role of Acculturation Process in Parental Aspirations

Research question 2 is posed in the following way:

2. How has the acculturation process shaped the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level?

The role of acculturation process is evidently seen in shaping the aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study for their children's educational and occupational achievements. The 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' depicting parents' acculturation process that influenced their aspirations for their children was presented in Section 7.4. Research question 2 is addressed on the basis of this model, in Figure 7.1.

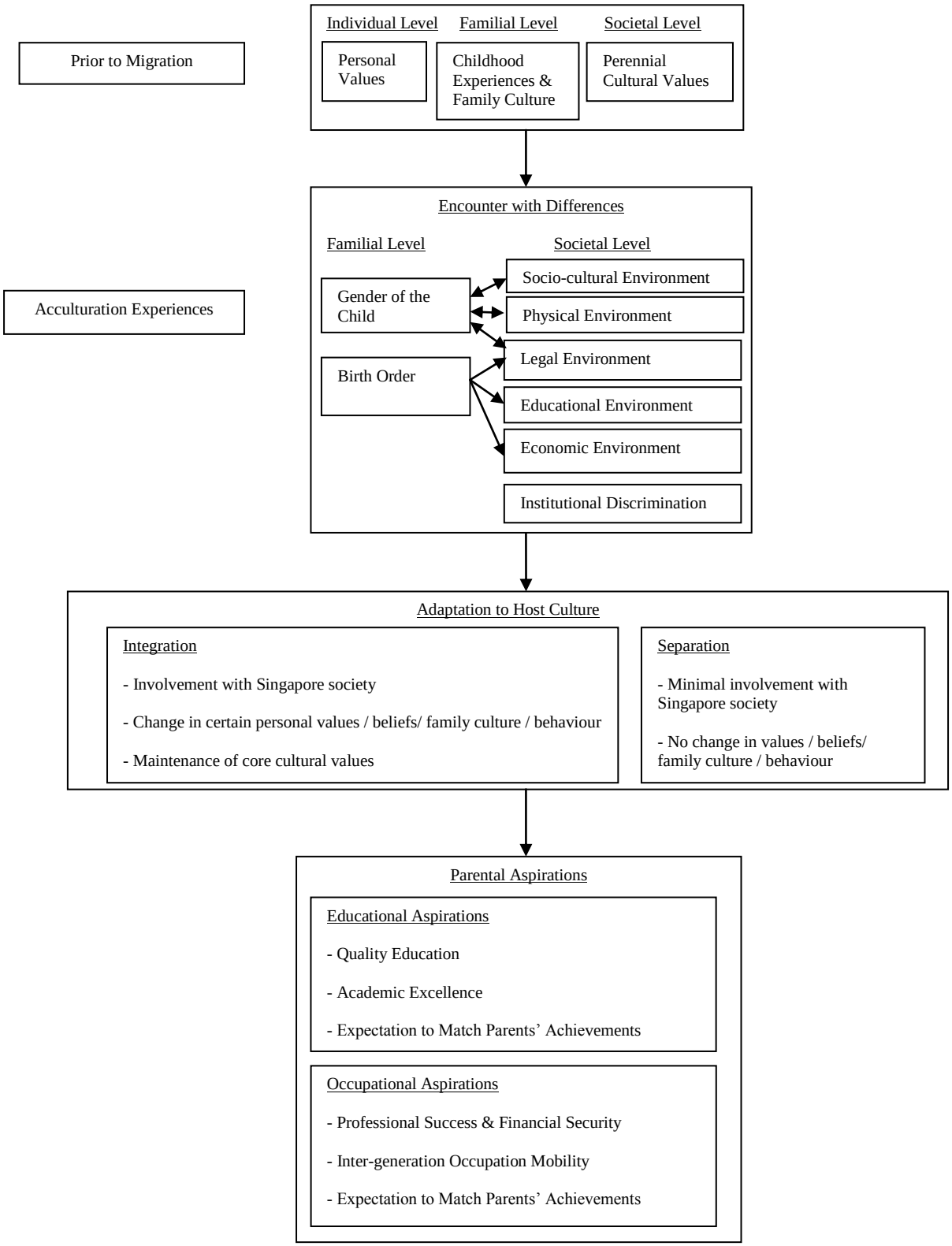

Figure 7.1. Theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations.

Migration enhances the aspirations of Indian immigrants (Gupta, 1977), as it opens up a whole new world of educational and occupational opportunities for their children. However, migration also poses challenges to them as they settle in a new environment. The acculturation process of Indian immigrants in Singapore is evident in shaping their parental aspirations.

Parents' acculturation can be considered to have begun before their migration with their values, culture and experiences in India, which they carry with them when they migrate. Some of these personal characteristics undergo a change upon migration while others continue to have a strong impact on them. Upon migration to Singapore, parents are exposed to a new environment which is different from that in India in many ways. Specifically, the socio-cultural, physical, legal, educational and economic aspects of the environment affect the parents in addition to the institutional discrimination that they experience. The role of birth order is evident here as parents' awareness of the legal, educational and economic environments of Singapore and overseas is mainly through their experiences with their older child, which shapes their aspirations for their younger child. The gender of the child shares a two-way relationship with the socio-cultural, physical and legal environments as the demands of these environments in India and Singapore are gender specific.

When parents respond to the demands of the new environment, their acculturation strategies take the form of either integration or separation. The integration strategy is characterized by the immigrants' involvement with the Singapore society resulting in adopting of certain features of the Singapore culture but without altering their core cultural values. Integration leads to a change in some of their values, behaviour and culture. On the other hand, the separation strategy is characterized by minimal involvement of the immigrants with the Singapore society, and no change in their values, behaviour or culture.

The acculturation process (experiences and adaptation) of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore highly influences their parental aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. The educational aspirations that are shaped by their acculturation are quality education, academic excellence, professional success, financial security, inter-generation occupation mobility and expectation to match their

level of achievements. This influence is reflected in these specific aspirations of parents or their reasons for having these aspirations.

8.2 Contribution of this Research Study to Knowledge

This research study has contributed to the existing theoretical knowledge in many ways, not least through addressing the gaps in prior research which were identified at the beginning of this current study. Much has been talked about the acculturation experiences of immigrants and also their aspirations but on separate grounds. Many factors that influence immigrants' acculturation experiences or aspirations have been researched and reported (see Chapter 2). However, there is lack of solid research which is solely devoted to investigating how the acculturation process of immigrants influences their aspirations, in particular their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. For this reason, the contribution of this study is significant as it concentrates on exploring the role of acculturation process in shaping parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore investigated in this research study for their children's educational and occupational achievements. The current study has unfolded the detailed acculturation process of Indian immigrants in Singapore which shaped their parental aspirations. The findings of this research study were presented in the form 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' (see Figure 7.1). This model can also be extremely useful for future research purposes as it can serve as a theoretical framework for researchers who wish to extend their research or conduct similar studies in a different context in this area (see Section 7.4 for details).

The contribution of this study is also significant due to its context being different from most of the previously conducted studies which have explored the acculturation experiences and/or aspirations of Asian immigrants who have migrated to a western country specifically US, UK or Australia. Little has been researched on Asians who have migrated within Asia, a phenomenon which the current study accomplishes. This is especially an important aspect of the contribution of this study because these Indian immigrants have migrated to Singapore which is a multiracial country, where their own culture, the Indian culture is prominent. Yet, this study has reported the many aspects of the socio-cultural, educational, physical, legal and economic environment of India and Singapore which pose challenges to them and influence their parental aspirations due to the demands and differences in the environments of the two countries. In this way, this

study unfolds immigrants' experiences and aspirations from a different perspective. Most importantly, it has highlighted the role of the wider aspects of cultures in affecting the life experiences of people, which extends beyond similarities in the ethnic and religious aspects only.

Many factors influencing parental aspirations were mainly discovered in this study due to its qualitative nature as opposed to quantitative studies where factors are hypothesised by researchers and then tested. Prior studies have reported factors which influence parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements (see Section 2.1.3). This research study adds to these factors by reporting factors that have not been sufficiently researched in the past. The birth order of the child was an unexpected finding (see Section 7.3.2.2). Personal values of the parents especially 'well-being above academic excellence' was a surprise element (see Section 7.3.1.2). Institutional discrimination faced by immigrants and cultural adaptation of immigrants in their country of origin too have been found to influence immigrant parents' aspirations significantly (see Sections 7.3.3.7 and 7.3.3.2). Besides, this study has provided deeper insights and new angles of the previously known parental aspirations and the factors influencing these aspirations. These are the detailed aspects of quality education and what it means to parents, expectation to match parents' educational and occupational achievements, inter-generation occupation mobility in terms of exact occupations, and specific features of the socio-cultural, economic, physical, legal and educational environment in a country that shape parental aspirations (see Sections 7.2.1.1, 7.2.1.3, 7.2.2.3, 7.2.2.2. and 7.3.3).

Another significant contribution of this study is the distinguishing features of the families whose second generation, that is their children, are more likely to continue living in Singapore. This contribution is highly insightful for Singapore which is a country heavily dependent on immigrants. Based on the twelve first generation Indian immigrant families investigated in this study, three themes have emerged namely their migration motivation, nationality of the parents and child, and the birth order of the child. The specific reasons of these families for migrating to Singapore or for choosing Singapore over other countries are their children's education, high regards for Indian culture, search of better living environment or financial reasons. In these families, at least one parent and the child have taken up Singaporean nationality (or have expressed such an intention). It is also worth noting that the future plans of the younger siblings in this study are

significantly in accordance with the plans of their older siblings, hence, knowing the aspirations as well as actual plans of older siblings are crucial in identifying whether the younger child is likely to continue living in Singapore (see Section 7.5).

8.3 Limitations of the Study

The scope of the research, methodological restrictions and practical realities had led to limitations for this research study. Hence it is best that the findings of this study are interpreted with these limitations in mind.

The research methodology that would best address the objectives of this research study was described in Chapter 4. However, there are several reasons why it was not possible to carry out this research as per the plan. It was proposed that the data will be collected from participants selected based on certain criteria, which were the length of parents' stay in Singapore and their educational background (see Section 4.3). Ideally, participants should have been a fair representation of immigrants who have stayed in Singapore for less than five years, five to ten years and more than ten years. However, none of the respondents had resided in Singapore for five years or less. Hence the results do not incorporate the perspective of those fairly newly migrated to Singapore. Also, the minimum level of education of all the respondents was a university degree. Hence, the current study was unable to explore the acculturation experiences and parental aspirations of immigrants who do not have a university degree and the results are mainly from highly educated parents. Besides, due to the scope of the research, only those participants were selected, whose children were studying at the pre-university level. Hence the findings of this study are specific to this group.

It was intended that both the parents and the child in the twelve families would be interviewed. However there were five families where the fathers were not interviewed and two families where the child was not interviewed as they did not indicate their interest in being involved in participating in the study. Hence, for these families, the perspectives of these respective family members are not reflected in the findings.

That this research study represents a qualitative case study also poses a limitation. Case study is mainly about particularization and not generalization (Stake, 1995). Hence the findings of this study are by no means to be taken as a generalization of the themes presented. The themes presented and discussed are based on the experiences which are

specific to the families though there are some commonalities found. It would be good to investigate these commonalities in future research.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with parents and group interviews conducted with children. In seven of the twelve cases, both parents were interviewed together and except for two, the rest of the children were interviewed in groups. Thus it is possible that parents' and children's responses to the questions may be influenced by the responses of the other interviewee(s) present. Besides, a disadvantage of the method of collecting data through interviews is that not all interviewees are equally articulate and perceptive (Creswell, 2003) which may have affected the responses from the participants, despite the advantages associated with these data collection methods (see Sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4).

A typical characteristic of the qualitative study is that it is highly dependent on the researcher's interpretation of the data. How the researcher constructs the social reality depends on how he or she assigns meaning to the data (Gray, 2009). Hence it is possible that as the researcher, my perspective and interpretation of the data has influenced the results. Lastly, reader should bear in mind that I am also a first generation Indian immigrant parent in Singapore with children pursuing studies in Singapore just as the participating parents in the current study. Hence, it is likely that my personal experiences and views may have influenced the analysis and interpretation of the parent data, although these same experiences and opinions might have also helped me in understanding the same. Hence, the reader should make sense of the findings of the current study with this, and all the other limitations stated above in mind.

Lastly, though it was intended that both parents be interviewed, there were five families where only the mothers indicated their interest in participating in the study. Hence, in these five cases, only the mothers' views were directly represented, although it was also very likely that the fathers' opinions were embedded in the mothers' views.

8.4 Scope for Further Research

Theoretically, there are many ways in which research in this area can be extended further. Undoubtedly, the findings of this research study suggest that there are many acculturation related factors that influence immigrant parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. However, as this study was

conducted under many limitations which were methodological, contextual or practical, it is possible to conduct similar studies in different contexts. Based on this fact and the findings of this study, the following suggestions are made for conducting further research.

All the parent participants in this study were highly educated with a minimum educational qualification of a university degree. Also, there were no participants who had resided in Singapore for five years or less. Hence future studies might be designed to incorporate participants of varied educational backgrounds and length of stay in the country of migration which can throw light on their perspectives.

Due to the scope of this study, the participants were first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore whose children were studying at the pre-university level. It can be highly insightful to conduct future research to explore the aspirations of immigrants of a different generation or ethnic race or for children who are studying at a different school level. The religion of eleven of the twelve families in this study was Hinduism and Sikhism for one. Future researchers should attempt to incorporate a better representation of different religions among their participants. It is also possible to conduct research by comparing the aspirations of parents of different religions. Other than Singapore, there may be many other countries in Asia where Indians or other Asian ethnic races have migrated which can open up avenues for further research. Future research can be exploration of aspirations of a specific race in that country, or comparison between people of the same race in two or more countries, or comparison between two or more races in the same country.

Even though children's perspective was taken into account by interviewing them, the subject of this research was mainly parental aspirations. As it turned out that aspirations of many parents were influenced by their children's interest and ability, future research would be useful by focusing on children's aspirations. As many children and parents highly respected teachers and their aspirations were influenced by teacher's opinions, it would also be useful to take into consideration teachers' perspective in future research.

This study reported some of the factors influencing parental aspirations which emerged as unexpected findings or not sufficiently researched earlier. These were the birth order of the child, personal values of the parents, institutional discrimination faced by immigrants, and cultural adaptation of immigrants in their country of origin. It is

suggested that these should be investigated in depth in any similar research conducted in future.

This study explores educational and occupational aspirations which include participants' wishes, plans or intentions. These aspirations may or may not materialize in reality due to many reasons. Hence a longitudinal study would be highly insightful to explore further whether these aspirations actually materialized, and if not why.

A melting pot refers to assimilative strategy of immigrants where they become indistinguishable from the members of the host society whereas a salad bowl refers to integration strategy of immigrants where they accept certain cultural changes upon migration without losing the core values of their identity (Naval & Hussain, 2008). In this context, it can be said that the Singapore society is more of a salad bowl based on the twelve families investigated in the current study and also from my personal observation and experiences in Singapore. However, this study is qualitative in nature. Besides, the case study approach was employed which is characterized by particularization rather than generalization. The experiences of the participants in this study were unique and specific to them which indicate possibilities for future research. Hence further studies can be conducted in this area to investigate the nature of Singapore as an immigrant country. Also, the distinguishing features of the families whose second generation likely to continue in Singapore, were identified in Section 7.5. It is suggested here that quantitative studies should be conducted in future using a large number of participants, testing what is being suggested here with the help of statistical tools. In so doing, both the results as well as the 'the Theoretical Model for Acculturation-mediated Parental Aspirations' developed in Section 7.4 can be validated and if applicable, extended as well.

8.5 Implications for Practice

It has been highlighted earlier that Singapore is an immigrant country highly dependent on foreign talent. For this reason, this study is highly insightful as an avenue for the immigrants' voice. Through the findings of this study, many implications for practice have emerged which can be useful for the respective policy makers. There were many concerns and issues raised by the participants in this study, which require attention in practice.

The Indian immigrants in Singapore highly appreciate the high standards, well-rounded and application oriented approach of the education system in Singapore however they have certain concerns. They find the education system in Singapore extremely stressful being highly performance driven and demanding which affects their children's well-being and work-life balance. Children are required to work continuously under pressure, leaving them with little or no time to rest and enjoy personal life. In fact, some parents feel that a more relaxed education system can produce better results as pressure can work adversely. Hence, efforts should be made to reduce the stress level in the education system in Singapore. The other concern immigrants have is that there are insufficient educational opportunities in Singapore as compared to western countries, for example US, which in their eyes is the 'land of opportunities'. Specifically, for those aspiring to become doctors, it is difficult for them to pursue medical education in Singapore due to the limited enrolment seats (see Section 7.3.3). Thus, it is important for Singapore to create sufficient educational opportunities in order to be able to retain the future generations of immigrants who are potential assets to Singapore's future.

The Indian immigrants are also appreciative of the effective law and order in Singapore however there are certain aspects of the legal environment in Singapore which are of concern to them as their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements are affected by them (see Section 7.3.3). The main issue is the two years National Service (NS) mandatory for boys by Singapore Law. This affects the immigrants with male children in two ways. Firstly, it disrupts their children's studies immediately after the completion of pre-university education. And secondly, it delays the completion of their university degree further by two years. Policy makers can look into this issue by finding ways of reducing the total number of years spent in completing education which currently includes the time spent in doing NS. A possible way of achieving this is by optimizing the students' time between the pre-university examinations and the start of the academic year of tertiary education using it effectively so that it can contribute to their university education, especially for those who have opted to do the NS. This might even encourage more immigrants to continue living in Singapore. It is encouraging to see that the National University of Singapore (NUS) has recently announced online modules to give NSmen an early start. This scheme gives the NSmen awaiting to start tertiary studies to take eight courses online from January before school starts in August as most would have finished their NS by then. This scheme has

been introduced mainly with the purpose of helping the NSmen adapt to the university life being away from school for more than two years (Ong, 2013).This scheme however gives the students an opportunity to utilize their time only upon completion of NS and does not cater to those who have not completed their NS by January. In fact, the waiting time between January and August may be of concern to all the students regardless of whether they are liable to do NS (for example, female students) and their destination for tertiary studies. This is because the academic years at the pre-university and tertiary levels in Singapore are not aligned as opposed to India or some other countries like the US or UK. Hence, this issue can be looked into further in terms of fully optimizing students' time spent during NS or reducing the waiting time between completion of pre-university and start of university. Other universities in Singapore too can consider coming up with more such encouraging schemes.

It is important to address the NS issue raised above for two reasons. One reason is the fear of losing the second generation of immigrants who are assets to Singapore being capable of contributing significantly to Singapore, if they choose not to continue living in Singapore solely for the reason of NS. The other reason is the possible implication on gender disproportion among the children of new immigrants. As NS is mandatory for boys only, it is possible that more families with sons will not continue living in Singapore as compared to those with daughters causing an imbalance in the proportion of males and females in the future generations.

Indian immigrants highly appreciate the living environment of Singapore. However, stress is a factor that concerns them. This is important to note because these aspects are causing some of the immigrants to migrate away from Singapore, especially in the second generation. Their preferred destination is countries with a more liberal and less stressful environment. Hence, it is important that in practice, efforts should be made to improve the living environment from this point of view.

In conclusion, this study has evidently demonstrated the role of acculturation process in shaping the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level in Singapore. A problem was identified in Chapter 1 which is, making sustainable efforts of attracting and retaining foreign talent in Singapore which is a country highly dependent on immigrants, to cater to its growing

economy. It was envisaged in Chapter 1 that a deeper understanding of the acculturation experiences of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore, their aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements and the role of acculturation in shaping these aspirations would be highly insightful in addressing this problem. Also, upon reviewing the relevant literature in the area of the acculturation experiences of immigrants and parental aspirations in Chapter 2, it was discovered that there is little evidence on how the acculturation process of immigrants shapes the parentals aspirations of immigrants. In light of the problem identified in Chapter 1 and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, research questions were formulated. The theoretical framework was presented in Chapter 3 which comprised of two models namely the aspirations model and the acculturation model (Berry, 1997) to guide this study.

A detailed research design was presented in Chapter 4 for carrying out this research study which was the qualitative case study. Twelve suitable parents' pairs were selected as the twelve cases for this study by administering a postal questionnaire which gathered their basic background information. The participants were first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore with children studying at the pre-university level in Singapore. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and group interviews with children. The results from the postal questionnaires were presented in Chapter 5 whereas the results from individual cases were presented in Chapter 6 by describing each case in detail. The focus of Chapter 7 was on the discussion of the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

In this concluding chapter, the research questions formulated in Chapter 2 were addressed one by one. This chapter also highlighted the contribution of this study to knowledge in two ways. Firstly, it was by highlighting the theoretical aspect of the contribution of this study and by addressing the gaps identified in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, which was essentially the role of acculturation process in shaping parental aspirations. Secondly, it was by contributing towards a deeper understanding of the distinguishing features of the first generation Indian immigrants whose children are more likely to continue living in Singapore in order to address the problem identified in Chapter 1. In light of this, the implications of the findings of this study were discussed by presenting scope for further research as well as implications for practice. In this way, this concluding chapter has complemented Chapter 1 and 2. This research has opened up avenues for further possible research too.

Through this research study with twelve cases of first generation Indian immigrant parents' pairs in Singapore, it was found that these immigrants have high aspirations for their children's educational and occupational achievements. Their emphasis is mainly on quality education, academic excellence, professional success and financial security. They also expect their children to match their educational and occupational achievements, and wish to see inter-generation occupation mobility. Singapore is a multi-racial country with prominent Indian culture. Besides, considering the fact that all the twelve immigrant parents' pairs were well-educated, it is highly possible that their parental aspirations would be high regardless of their country of residence. Yet, the role of acculturation process is evident in shaping their parental aspirations or in influencing their reasons for having certain aspirations for their children. This is because there are many differences in the environment of India and Singapore which influence the acculturation process of Indian immigrants as they attempt to adapt to the new environment upon migration.

Thus, overall, this research study has demonstrated how the educational and occupational aspirations of first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore for their children are shaped by their acculturation experiences. These extend beyond the cultural and religious aspects of their life experiences, to also include the environmental demands and challenges that come about as a result of the immigrants positioning themselves in two different cultures. Yet we have seen how it is important to understand the complex process in which each immigrant parent's aspirations for his/her child are shaped. In this regard, the 'theoretical model for acculturation-mediated parental aspirations' that was developed in this research study would prove to be an invaluable tool.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH, MONASH UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (MUHREC)

MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date:	**20 August 2012**
Project Number:	**CF12/1141 - 2012000562**
Project Title:	**Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore**
Chief Investigator:	**Dr Wee Tiong Seah**
Approved:	**From 20 August 2012 to 20 August 2017**

Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.**
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

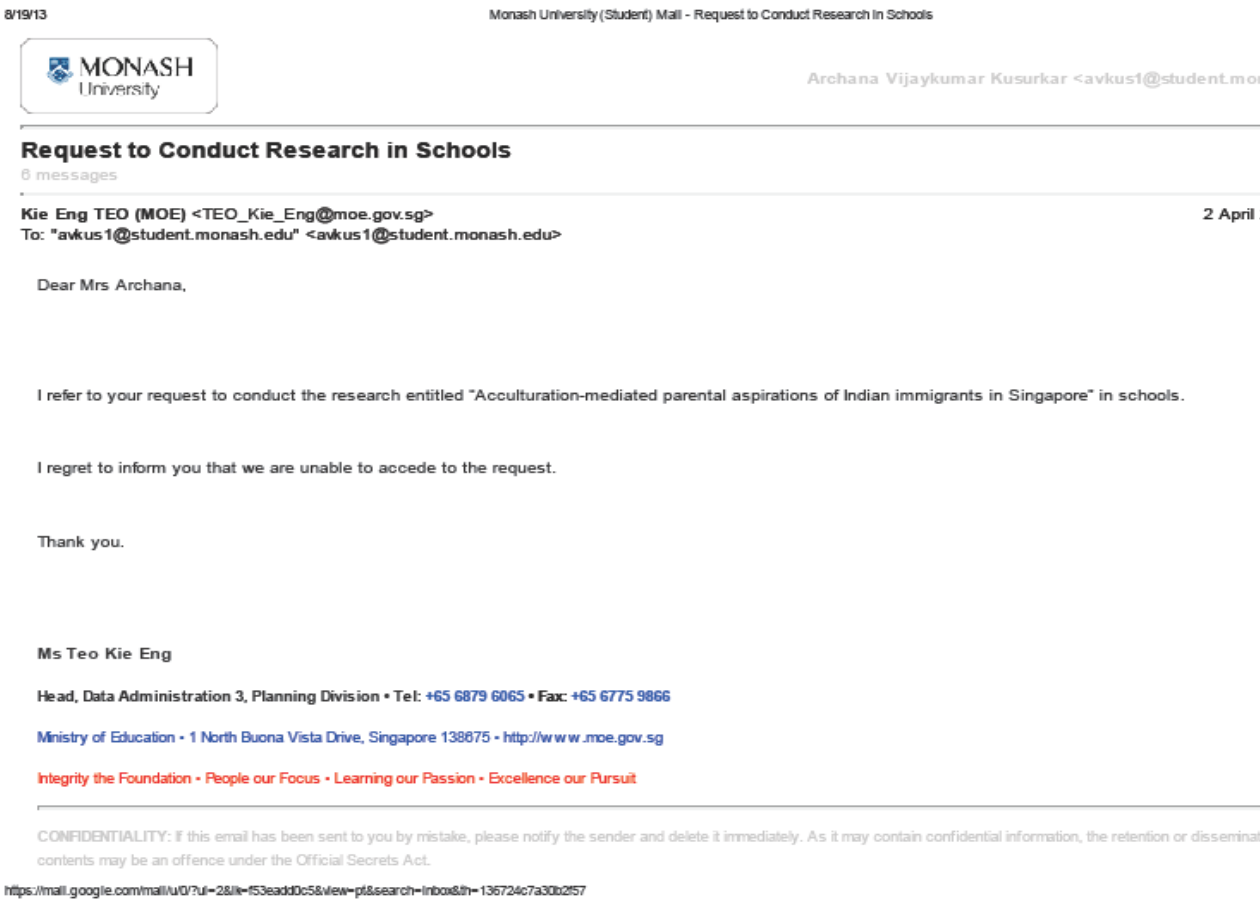
[redacted]

Professor Ben Canny
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Mrs Archana Kusurkar

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

APPENDIX 2: REPLY FROM SINGAPORE'S MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS



8/19/13 Monash University (Student) Mail - Request to Conduct Research in Schools

MONASH University

Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar <avkus1@student.mo

Request to Conduct Research in Schools

6 messages

Kie Eng TEO (MOE) <TEO_Kie_Eng@moe.gov.sg> 2 April
To: "avkus1@student.monash.edu" <avkus1@student.monash.edu>

Dear Mrs Archana,

I refer to your request to conduct the research entitled "Acculturation-mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore" in schools.

I regret to inform you that we are unable to accede to the request.

Thank you.

Ms Teo Kie Eng

Head, Data Administration 3, Planning Division • Tel: +65 6879 6065 • Fax: +65 6775 9866

Ministry of Education • 1 North Buona Vista Drive, Singapore 138675 • http://www.moe.gov.sg

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https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=f53eadd0c5&view=pt&search=inbox&th=136724c7a30b2f57

APPENDIX 3: FLYER TO INVITE PARTICIPANTS FOR THE STUDY

Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

Call for Participants for Research Project

My name is Archana V. Kusurkar, a doctoral research student in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. I am undertaking the above-named project in Singapore under the supervision of Dr. SEAH Wee Tiong, a senior lecturer in the faculty.

The aims of this research project are to understand the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level in Singapore and the role of acculturation in shaping these aspirations. The project findings are expected to contribute towards a deeper understanding of the acculturation experiences of the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore and their educational and occupational aspirations for their children.

The current phase of the project involves administering of a survey to the first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore. If;

- Both you and your spouse are first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore
- have a child studying at the pre-university level in Singapore

this invitation is extended to you to join me in filling out the questionnaire (expected time spent about 10 minutes). Anonymity is assured in the filling out of questionnaire. You also have the option to contribute in the subsequent stages of data collection, i.e., interviews and journal writing.

To receive the questionnaire or to find out more about the project, please feel free to contact me by [redacted] or posting the reply slip below back to me.

Thank you very much!

Mrs. Archana V. Kusurkar

□ I am interested to respond to your questionnaire. Please send me a copy

□ I am interested in finding out more about the project. Please contact me.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Email: _____ Tel: _____

Please return this reply slip to Archana V. Kusurkar, 37 Bunga Rampai Place, Singapore 539728

APPENDIX 4: POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Parent and Child Data Form

Thank you for your interest in my research study, entitled 'Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore'. The purpose of this data form is to enable me to select participants so that there is equitable representation from different walks of life.

By returning this form to me, you are consenting to your provision of information contained below.

Part A: About yourselves (parents)

1. Name:
   Father _____ _____

   Mother _____
2. Age in years:
   Father _____ Mother _____
3. Nationality:
   Father _____ Mother _____
4. Residency status in Singapore (Singapore citizen, permanent resident, etc.):
   Father _____ Mother _____
5. Mother tongue:
   Father _____ Mother _____
6. Language(s) spoken at home:
   Father _____ Mother _____
7. Religion (if any):
   Father _____ Mother _____
8. Length of stay in Singapore:
   Father _____ Mother _____
9. Highest level of education:
   Father _____ Mother _____
10. Country where highest level of education was obtained:
    Father _____ Mother _____
11. Occupation:
    Father _____ Mother _____

Part B: About your child

1. Name: _____
2. Age in years: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Name of School:
   _____

5. Grade: _____

6. Curricular programme enrolled ('A' level, IB etc): _____

7. Residency status (Singapore citizen, permanent resident, etc.): _____

8. Nationality: _____

Part C: Interest in participating in the subsequent stages of research project entitled 'Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore'

Please tick as appropriate.

We are interested in participating in the following subsequent stages of the research project entitled 'Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore'

☐ Interviews with both parents

☐ Maintaining reflective journal by both parents

☐ Focus Group interview with the child

Part D: Contact details

Address – _____

_____

Telephone number – _____

Email address – _____

Date – _____

Signature of the father – _____

Signature of the mother – _____

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

Thank you!

Mrs. Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar
Ph. D. Candidate
Faculty of Education, Monash University
37 Bunga Rampai Place, Singapore 539728
[redacted]

APPENDIX 5: EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PARENTS

(Monash University Letterhead)

Date:

Explanatory Statement – Parents

Dear Parents,

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar and I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. SEAH Wee Tiong a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education towards a Ph. D. at Monash University, Australia. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book. You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

Thank you very much for responding to the flyer which invited first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore, whose children are studying at the pre-university level in Singapore.

The aims of this study are to understand the aspirations of the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore for their children studying at the pre-university level, and the role of acculturation process, that is, your cultural experiences prior to and after migration to Singapore, in shaping these aspirations. The project findings are expected to contribute towards a deeper understanding of the acculturation experiences of the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore and their educational and occupational aspirations for their children.

This study will involve the administering of a parent-child data form to determine which participants will be eligible for later stages of the project. These later stages will involve 3 semi-structured interviews with both parents lasting one and a half hour each conducted at a public place such as café or public library, and one focus group interview with the children studying at the pre-university level in Singapore lasting one and half hour conducted at a public place such as a fast food restaurant or the function room of an apartment complex. Though the project attempts to recruit children for data collection, children's participation is not necessary. Parents will also be required to record in a diary or booklet their responses on any incident and conversation taken place where parental advice was given to the child to convey their aspirations. Recording of entries in a journal will require not more than 30 minutes a week. All the interviews will be audio taped to facilitate analysis. Interview transcriptions will be made available to the participants for verification.

No risk beyond everyday experiences of inconvenience or discomfort is expected as a result of participating in this research study. Also, no financial payment will be made for participating in this research study.

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may withdraw from further participation at any stage, with the collected data returned to you. The data collected in this study will be kept confidential and anonymous. The findings of the study will be reported using pseudonyms. Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash

University regulations, kept on University premises, in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Thank you.

Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar

Ph. D. Candidate

Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia

[redacted]

[redacted]

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research project number CF12/1141-2012000562 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. SEAH Wee Tiong Faculty of Education Monash University (Peninsula campus) PO Box 527, Frankston Victoria 3199, AUSTRALIA [redacted]	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

APPENDIX 6: EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR CHILDREN

(Monash University Letterhead)

Date:

Explanatory Statement – Pre-University Students

Dear Students,

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar. I am conducting a research project under the supervision of Dr. SEAH Wee Tiong, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education, towards a Ph. D. at Monash University, Australia. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book. You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a decision.

I am thankful to your parents for responding to the flyer which invited first generation Indian immigrants in Singapore, whose children are studying at the pre-university level in Singapore.

This study aims to understand what future education and occupation the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore want for their children studying at the pre-university level, their experiences upon migration to Singapore and how these experiences have shaped these future plans. It is hoped that the findings of this research will contribute in better understanding of the migration experiences of the first generation Indian immigrant parents in Singapore and their educational and occupational aspirations for their children.

This study will involve completion of a parent-child data form by the parents to help in determining which participants will be eligible for further stages of the project involving 3 semi-structured interviews with both parents, a journal maintained by both the parents and a group interview with the children of similar age group as their own. Each interview with the parents is expected to last one and a half hours and will be conducted in public places such as a café or public library. Parents are also expected to record in a diary or booklet any activity which they think involves the sharing to their pre-university children of their future plans for the children. The group interview with the children is expected to last for one and a half hours and will be conducted in a public place such as a fast food restaurant or the function room of an apartment complex. Though children are invited to participate in this study, children's participation is not necessary. All the interviews will be audio taped for analysing data. Interviews will be made available to the participants for verification in a hard copy transcript.

In this research, there will be no risk to the participants other than the usual inconvenience or discomfort they experience every day as a result of participating in the research study. Also, participants in this research study will not be paid financially in any way.

It is completely up to you to decide whether you wish to take part in this study. Your choice to participate in this study will be completely your decision regardless of your parents' participation in this study. If your parents decide to take part in this study, it does not automatically indicate that you should also be involved in

this study. Indeed, the study can proceed as long as there is data from parents. However, after indicating your interest to participate in this study if you do not wish to continue to take part in this study, you can withdraw any time and the data collected from you will be returned to you. The data collected in this study will be kept confidential and anonymous. Your names or identity will not be disclosed while reporting the findings of this study in any works. The findings of the study will be reported using pseudonyms. Data collected will be locked in a cabinet and stored as per the Monash University rules for 5 years.

Thank you.

Archana Vijaykumar Kusurkar
Ph. D. Candidate
Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia
[redacted]

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research project number CF12/1141-2012000562 is being conducted, please contact:
Dr. SEAH Wee Tiong Faculty of Education Monash University (Peninsula campus) PO Box 527, Frankston Victoria 3199, AUSTRALIA [redacted]	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 [redacted]

APPENDIX 7: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING FATHERS

Informed Consent Form for Participating Fathers

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to complete a data form, through which my personal information will be used in your selection of participants for the subsequent stages of the study. ☐ Yes ☐ No

If I am selected to participate in the subsequent stages of the study,

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher 3 times over 6 months ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to maintain a journal diary for a period of six months ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I understand that my participation in the project does not necessitate my child's participation in the project.
- I agree not to coerce my child to participate in the project.
- I understand that it will not be communicated by the researcher to me whether my child has agreed to participate in this study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview, questionnaire and reflective journal for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.
- I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for verification before it is included in the write up of the research.
- I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
- I understand that data from the interview, transcript, audio-tape, reflective journal will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Please tick one of the two boxes below, as appropriate:

☐ The information I provide can be used in future similar or related research projects which have ethics approval as long as my name and contact information are removed.

☐ The information I provide cannot be used except for this project.

Name _____

Signature: _____

Date:

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

APPENDIX 8: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING MOTHERS

Informed Consent Form for Participating Mothers

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to complete a data form, through which my personal information will be used in your selection of participants for the subsequent stages of the study. ☐ Yes ☐ No

If I am selected to participate in the subsequent stages of the study,

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher 3 times over 6 months ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to maintain a journal diary for a period of six months ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I understand that my participation in the project does not necessitate my child's participation in the project.
- I agree not to coerce my child to participate in the project.
- I understand that it will not be communicated by the researcher to me whether my child has agreed to participate in this study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.
- I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview, questionnaire and reflective journal for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.
- I understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for verification before it is included in the write up of the research.
- I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
- I understand that data from the interview, transcript, audio-tape, reflective journal will be kept in a secure storage and accessible to the research team. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5 year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Please tick one of the two boxes below, as appropriate:

☐ The information I provide can be used in future similar or related research projects which have ethics approval as long as my name and contact information are removed.

☐ The information I provide cannot be used except for this project.

Name _____

Signature: _____

Date:

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

APPENDIX 9: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING CHILDREN

Informed Consent Form for Participating Children

Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to participate in an interview session with some other people of my age group, organised by the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to allow the group interview to be audio-taped ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required ☐ Yes ☐ No

- I understand that the decision to participate in the research, and the extent to which to participate is my own, and that I can withdraw from it with no further consequences in any way.
- I understand that any information that I give to the researcher, during the interview with other people of my age group, can be used in report or published findings and will not contain names under any circumstances.
- I understand that any information I give during the interview will be given to me in hard copy transcript form for verification before it is published in any works.
- I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.
- I understand that any information I give during the interview, including the transcript and audio tape, will be safely stored, and it will be accessible to the research team. All the information I give will be destroyed after a 5 year period, unless I give them permission to use it in future research

Please tick only one of the two boxes below:

☐ The information I provide can be used in future similar or related research projects which have ethics approval as long as my name and contact information are removed.

☐ The information I provide cannot be used except for this project.

Name _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email Address: _____

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

APPENDIX 10: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR FATHERS

Parental Consent Form – Fathers

(To be completed by fathers if the participating child is under the age of 18 years)

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

NOTE: Signed written consent will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records.

I agree that my son/daughter _____ (full name of your son/daughter) may take part in the above Monash University research project. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to allow my son/daughter _____ (full name of your son/daughter) to:

- Participate in the focus group interview by the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have the focus group interview audio-taped ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Be available for a further interview if required ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your child's name: _____

Your child's age: _____

Father's name: _____

Father's signature: _____

Date: _____

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

APPENDIX 11: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR MOTHERS

Parental Consent Form – Mothers

(To be completed by mothers if the participating child is under the age of 18 years)

Research Project Title: Acculturation – mediated parental aspirations of Indian immigrants in Singapore

NOTE: Signed written consent will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records.

I agree that my son/daughter _____ (full name of your son/daughter) may take part in the above Monash University research project. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to allow my son/daughter _____ (full name of your son/daughter) to:

- Participate in the focus group interview by the researcher ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Have the focus group interview audio-taped ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Be available for a further interview if required ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your child's name: _____

Your child's age: _____

Father's name: _____

Father's signature: _____

Date: _____

(Please return using the reply-paid envelope. Thank you!)

APPENDIX 12: REFLECTIVE JOURNAL – PROTOCOL

Structure of the reflective journal by parents

In a diary or booklet, describe in your own words, the following events where any parental advice was given to the child to communicate parental expectations and values. You are not required to record word to word conversations here.

1. Describe any social activity done together or attended as a family e.g., social gatherings, festivals, prayers, birthday

   Record in your words the parental expectations and values communicated to the child during this activity. You are not required to record word to word conversations here.

2. Describe any event in which a gift was presented by you to your child.

   Record in your words the parental expectations and values communicated to the child during this activity. You are not required to record word to word conversations here.

3. Describe the events where discussions took place with your child e.g., during meal time, family trip, homework monitoring; upon receiving a class-test report, graded homework assignment; after the parent-teacher meeting.

   Record in your words the parental expectations and values communicated to the child during this activity. You are not required to record word to word conversations here.

APPENDIX 13: PARENTS' INTERVIEW – PROTOCOL

Semi-structured Interview with parents –

The following questions will be asked of parents during 3 interviews over a period of 6 months.

Parents' names –

Date and time –

Part A – Educational and Occupational Aspirations for their children

Greet the parents and thank them.

Required – Audio tape, tape recorder, notebook for taking field notes

1. Clarify any points from the reflective journal.
2. Child's academic performance –

   What is your perception of your child's academic performance?
   What is your expectation from you child regarding the pre-U examination performance?
   What is your perception of your child's ability to qualify for the education you have mentioned?
   Do you think your child is interested in education/studying further?
   What is your perception of child's educational aspirations?

3. Parents' awareness –

   What educational opportunities do you think are available for your child in Singapore?
   What educational opportunities do you think are available to your child elsewhere other than Singapore?
   Can you tell me about your understanding of college/university entrance requirements?
   Can you tell me about your understanding of financial aids available for your child's education?
   What is your perception of affordability of the educational expenses?
   What career opportunities do you think are available to your child in Singapore?
   What career opportunities do you think are available to your child outside Singapore?

4. Parents' educational aspirations for their child –

   What would you want your child to do after the completion of pre-university education?
   What kind of education would you want your child to attain?
   What is the highest level of education you want your child to attain?
   Where would you want your child to pursue education? Why?
   Do you think your educational aspirations for your child have changed after migration? If they have changed, why? In what way?
   What kind of education do you think your child is interested in pursuing?

5. Occupational aspirations –

   What kind of occupation would you want your child to take up?
   Would you want your child to take up the same career as you? Why?
   Where would you want your child to work and settle down? Why?
   Can you tell me about your understanding of the qualification required to pursue the particular career you mentioned? Do you think your occupational aspirations for your child have changed after migration? If yes, why? In what way?
   What is your perception of child's occupational aspirations?

6. School factors –

What were your reasons for enrolling your child into this school/curriculum?
Can you tell me about the quality of academic programmes, instruction; choice of curricula, subjects; and career guidance programme in your child's school?
How frequently do you meet with your child's teachers/school counselors?
What kind of conversations/consultations do you have with them?

Thank the parents and make an appointment for the next interview.

Part B – Acculturation experiences

1. Pre-migration expectations –

   What was your motivation for migration?
   What countries did you consider for migration?
   Why did you choose to migrate to Singapore?
   What expectations did you have in mind before migration?
   To what extent do you think your expectations match with your actual experiences? How?

2. Family environment –

   From which country did you migrate to Singapore?
   Tell me about who are the members in your family in (state the country from which the participant has migrated).
   Tell me about who are the members in your family living together here in Singapore.
   Can you tell me about how decisions are made in your family?
   How frequently and on what occasions do you visit your (state the country from which the participant has migrated)?
   Tell me about your lifestyle back in (state the country from which the participant has migrated).
   Tell me about your lifestyle here in Singapore.
   What language do you speak at home with your children mostly?

3. Cultural values –

   What in your opinion is the meaning of 'values'?
   What in your opinion is the meaning of culture?
   What do you value in your culture?
   What do you think is valued in the culture of Singapore?
   What is your perception of the similarity or differences in your original culture and the local culture?
   What features of the local culture do you think you have adopted or would like to adopt? Why?
   What features of the local culture do you think you would not want to adopt? Why?
   What features of the local culture do you think your child has adopted or would adopt?
   Do you think your parenting style has changed upon migration? How? Why?
   What challenges do you experience in parenting your children in Singapore?
   How do you overcome the challenges you face in bringing up your children in Singapore?
   How are these challenges different from the challenges faced in (state the country from which the participant has migrated)?

4. Cultural practices –

   What festivals do you celebrate here? How?
   What are your prayer practices?
   What cultural practices do you think you would want your child to follow?
   What cultural practices do you think you would want to continue in future?
   What cultural practices do you think you would not want to give up?
   What cultural practices do you think you would not want your child to give up?
   What challenges do you experience in retaining certain cultural practices?
   How do you overcome the challenges faced in retaining the culture?

What challenges do you experience in transmitting certain cultural practices to your children?
How do you overcome the challenges faced in transmitting the culture?
How are these challenges different from the challenges faced in (state the country from which the participant has migrated)?

5. Socialization –

   How do you generally spend your weekend and/or public holidays?
   Who do you generally socialize with? How? Why?
   What kind of social gatherings do you generally attend?
   Are you a member of any ethnic association in Singapore? If yes, how frequently do you attend the meetings/functions there? Why?
   Tell me about your child's participation in these gatherings.
   What is your expectation from your child regarding these gatherings? Why?

6. Self-identification –

   How do you identify (e.g., ethnic identity, national identity) yourself? Why?
   How do you think your child identifies himself/herself? Why?
   How would you want your child to self- identify him/her? Why?

7. Societal attitudes –

   What perceptions did you have about societal attitudes in Singapore before migration?
   How would you describe the societal attitude towards you and your family in Singapore?
   In what way do you think the societal attitude affects you and your family?

APPENDIX 14: GROUP INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN - PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol - Children

Group Semi-structured Interview with children studying at pre-university level –

The following topics will be discussed during the group interview with children.

Date and time –

Part A – Educational and Occupational Aspirations

Greet the children and thank them.

Required – Audio tape, tape recorder, notebook for taking field notes

1. Awareness –

    (a) Educational opportunities available in and outside Singapore
    (b) Understanding of college/university entrance requirements
    (c) Understanding of financial aids available for your education
    (d) Career opportunities available in and outside Singapore
    (e) Perception of parents' awareness of these

2. Educational aspirations –

    (a) Plans after the completion of pre-university education
    (b) Kind of education, highest level of education and where
    (c) Perception of what parents want
    (d) Perception of difference in parents' aspirations pre- and post- migration

3. Occupational aspirations –

    (a) Kind of occupation, preferred country to work and settle down
    (b) Comparison with parents' current occupation
    (c) Understanding of the qualification required to pursue this career
    (d) Perception of what parents want
    (e) Perception of difference in parents' aspirations pre- and post- migration

4. School perception –

    (a) Reasons for enrolling into this school/curriculum
    (b) Perception of the school climate

Part B – Acculturation experiences

1. Decision making process in your family
   Visit to home country
   Language(s) spoken at home

2. Festival celebration
   Prayer practices
   Social activity done together or attended as a family e.g., gatherings, festivals, prayers, birthday
   Events where a gift was presented by parents

3. How do you generally spend you weekend and/or public holidays?
   Who do you generally socialize with? How? Why?
   What kind of social gatherings do you generally attend?

4. How do you identify (e.g., ethnic identity, national identity) yourself? Why?
   Perception of what parents want

5. Describe an event which comes to your mind easily, where discussions took place with parents
   e.g., upon receiving a class-test report, graded homework assignment, report card; after the parent-teacher meeting; before a class test, school examination; after attending a career talk, special talks arranged by school

APPENDIX 15: LIST OF CODES AND CATEGORIES

Concept – Aspirations (AS)

Code	Sub category	Category
Father's/mother's education	Parents' Education	Socio-economic Status (SES)
Father's/mother's occupation	Parents' occupation	
Affordability of education	Affordability	
Awareness of Entrance requirements	Awareness	
Awareness of Fees structure		
Awareness of Financial aids		
Awareness of educational and occupational Opportunities		
Awareness of education system		
Child's gender	Child	People (or significant others)
Child's ability		
Child's interest		
Child's academic performance		
Child's place of birth		
Child's nationality		
Child's personality		
Child's values		
Experience with parents	Parents' parents	
Experience with older child	Older Child	
Older child's place of education		
Older child's personality		
Older child's academic performance		
Expectations from older child		
Consultation with older child		
School choice	Current education	Educational aspirations (EAS)
Curriculum choice		
Teacher association		
Academic performance		
Place of future education	Future education	
Type of future education		
Level of future education		

Duration of future education		
Quality of school/course		
Expenses of education		
Entrance requirement		
Excellence		
Tuition		
Parental encouragement		
Spending time with children	Parental support	
Parental guidance		
Conducive environment		
Place of work		
Type of work		
Level in work/career		
Employability		
Financial security	Future occupation	Occupational aspirations (OAS)
Community work		
Work-life balance		
Career		
Success		

Concept – Acculturation (AC)

Code	Sub category	Category
Mother's education	Socio-economic Status (SES)	
Father's education		
Mother's occupation		
Father's occupation		
Cultural expectation	Religion/culture/values	Prior to acculturation (PAC)
Cultural/value transmission		
Cultural practices		
Language spoken at home		
Cultural norm		
Experience as a child	Family culture	
Initial plan of stay	Pre-migration expectations	

Migration motivation		
Pre-migration knowledge		
Nationality before migration	Origin	
Country before migration		
Family	Parental values	
Education		
Respect for other communities		
Work-life balance		
Happiness		
Honesty		
Humanity		
Well-being		
Loyalty		
Length of stay	Phase	During acculturation (DAC)
Change in plans of stay		
Change in nationality		
Future migration plans		
Residency status		
Initial familiarization		
Reason for settling		
Initial experience		
Initial impression		
Cultural expectation	Religion/culture/value	
Cultural/value transmission		
Cultural practices		
Language spoken at home		
Decision making	Family culture	
Identity	Self-identity	
Change in identity		
Cultural difference	Cultural adjustment/change	
Adjustment in career		
Change in views		
Recognition for certain education	Local values/culture	

Cultural acceptance	
Local language	
Straightforward	
Local festivals	
Local cultural practices	
Inflexible	
Hard work	
Cultural diversity	
Ethnic community	
Education	
Infrastructure	Living environment
Safety	
Cost of living	
Standard of living	
Prejudice	Societal attitude
Treatment towards immigrants	
Image of Indians	
Treatment towards immigrants	Government's attitude
Immigrant/PR policy	Law/policy
National service (NS)	
Admission criteria	
Financial aid criteria	
Fees structure	
Child's peers/friends	Socialization
Parents' colleagues/friends/neighbours	
Social gathering	

APPENDIX 16: EXCERPT OF CODED DATA

(Name of participant has been removed for confidentiality purpose)

Row No.	Text	Code	Sub category	Category	Concept	Memos/remarks
18	**(1 -**Yeah. We had not taken the Singapore citizenship for past 12 years actually, because I was not sure what my elder son would want to do. Would he want to continue in national service or would he not. Though we were PRs, but with PRs, we could still kind of get away without doing national service. Then he took the decision that he wants to do national service.) (**2**-And he was very adamant. So then the decision was very clear. If he wants to do national service then why not take the citizenship) (**3**-and try for a local university for him?) (**4**- Especially for medicine if he wants to pursue that). (**5**-So the whole thing started with him saying yes. We both said ok since he wants to be coming back here, then we have to call it our home). (**2**-So me, my husband and my elder son took the citizenship) (**7**-but not the younger one. I would wait for him to grow up and take his own decision. If he wants to do national service, good, otherwise he can just continue.)	1-NS 2-change in nationality 3-place of future education 4-type of future education 5-family 6-child's interest 7-decision making	1-law/policy 2-phase 3- future education 4-future education 5-parental value 6-child 7-family culture	1-DAC 2- DAC 3- EAS 4- EAS 5- PAC 6- people 7-DAC	1- AC 2- AC 3- AS 4- AS 5- AC 6- AS 7- AC	Parents respect child's decision to call Singapore as home and do National Service hence parents change nationality to Singapore and decide to call Singapore as home, Parents respect child's interest - child wants to pursue medicine and parents then decided to choose local university after changing nationality, Family values observed, as intention is that family should stay together

APPENDIX 17: THEMES

Educational Aspirations

Educational Aspirations	Aspirations	Features	Sub-features	Pseudonyms of families
Educational Achievements	Quality education	Ranking/reputation/recognition /quantitative academic standing, student satisfaction		SAN, DUT, GAR, MOG, KOR, KAL, AHU, KAN
		school's academic results, academic focus		DUT, KAN
		Quality of course	Well-rounded education	KOR
			Application based	DUT, KOR
			Offers employability	KOR, AHU
			Quality of training	DUT, GAU
			Recognition of course	SAN, GAU, KOR
		Overall Personality development	Life skills training	SAN, GAR
			Choice of Indian school for cultural foundation, choice of local school for integration purpose	GAU, MOG, KAL
		Duration of course		SAN, DUT, GAR, KOR, KAL
		Pulling power of subject department		DUT
		Location of school		KAT
	Academic excellence		Academic performance	SAN, CHA, GAR, NAT, GAU, AHU, KOR, KAT(no emphasis)
			Entrance requirement for university	CHA, NAT, SAN, GAU, MOG
			rewarding good academic performance	KAL

			success defined by academic performance	GAU
			Success defined by peer comparison	DUT, KAN
			emphasis on learning rather than grades	SAN, KAL
	Expectation to match parents' achievements	Parents' level of education		NAT, MOG

Occupational Aspirations

Occupational Aspirations	**Aspirations**	**Features**	**Sub-features**	**Pseudonyms of families**
Occupational achievements	Inter-generation occupation mobility	Positive	Achieving fullest potential, child's capability,	SAN, CHA, GAR, GAU, MOG, KAN
		Negative	Stress level	GAU, KAL, NAT
	Professional success	Professional degree		CHA, DUT, KAN, KAT (fulfill parent's unsuccessful dream)
		International degree		SAN
		Scholarship acceptance for career path		DUT
		Growth in career		KOR
	Financial security	Emphasis	Cultural factors, emphasis on education related occupations	SAN, CHA, DUT, NAT, MOG, KOR, AHU (child), KAN (child), GAR (financial returns), GAU (child)
		No emphasis	Cultural factors, health, left to the child	KAL, KAT, GAU
	Expectation to match parents' achievements	Parents' level of success		DUTT, MOG

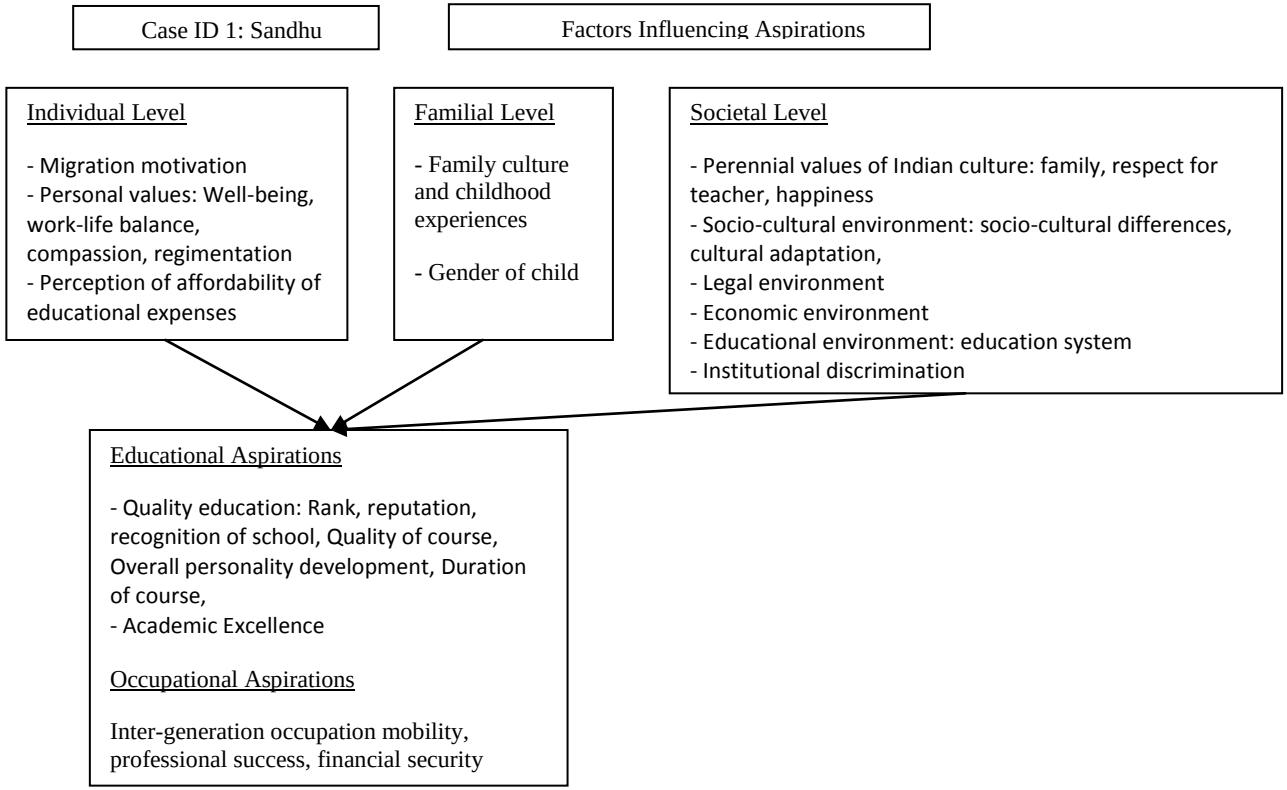
Factors influencing aspirations

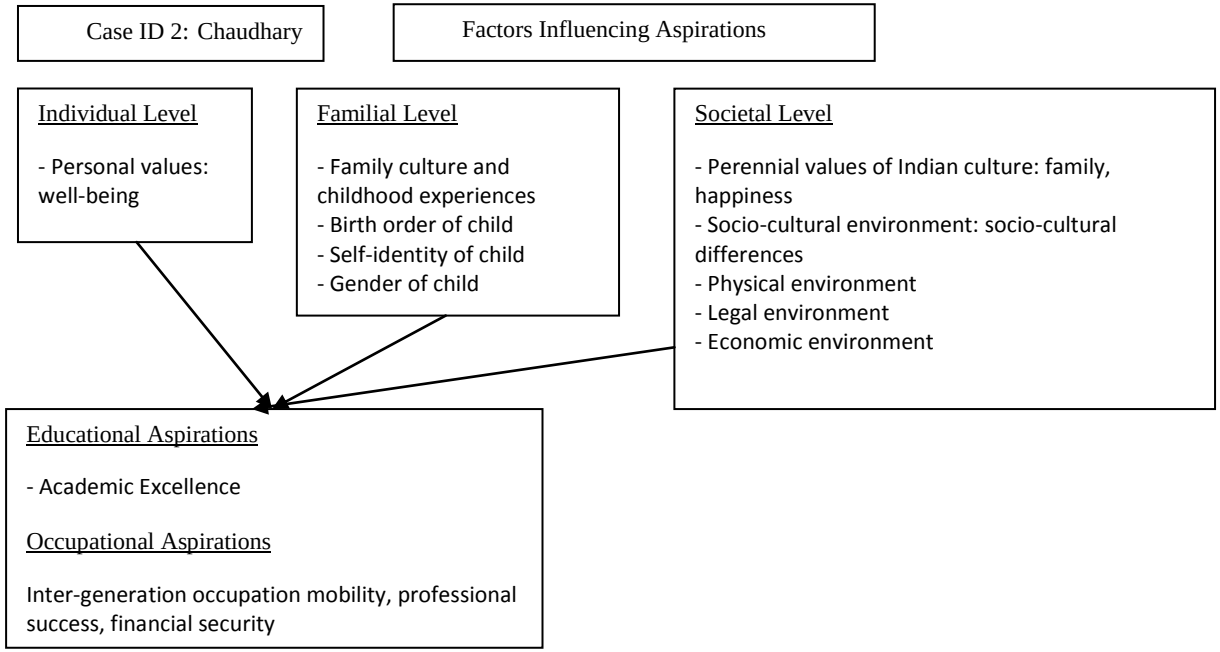
Level	Factors	Sub-factors	Considerations	Pseudonyms of families
Individual Level	Desire to enhance children's educational opportunities		Migration for children's education	SAN, GAU, AHU
	Personal Values	Well-being	Health (physical/mental)	GAR, NAT, GAU, MOG, KAL, KAT
			Emphasis on no stress, less strain	SAN, CHA, GAR, KOR, KAL, AHU, KAT, KAN
		Work-life balance	Choice of education/career	SAN, GAR, KAL, KAN
		Compassion	Giving back to society	SAN
		Regimentation	School choice influenced by desired regimentation	SAN
	Perception of affordability of educational expenses			SAN, GAR, NAT, MOG, KOR, KAL
Familial level	Family culture and parents' childhood experiences		Decision making process, freedom (liberal), Freedom or no freedom to choose career/education	SAN, DUT, GAR, MOG, KAT, CHA
	Birth order of child		Experience with older child	CHA, GAR, KOR, KAT, KAN
			Expectations from older child	NAT, KAL, AHU
			Influence of older child	KOR, AHU
			Older child's level of success	NAT, KOR
	Self-identity of the child		Whether associates to country of origin or country of migration, emotional attachment to a country	CHA, DUT, GAR, NAT
	Gender of the child		Financial security	SAN, CHA, KAL,

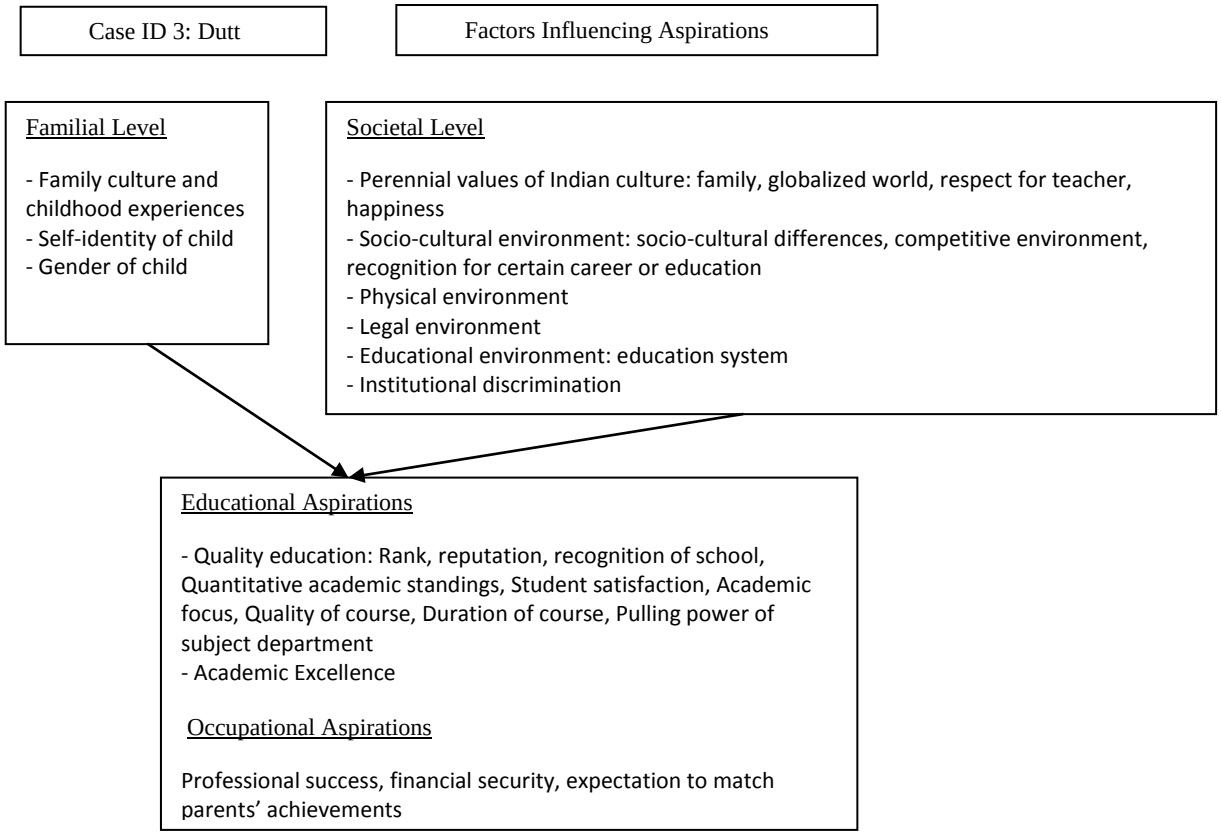
			Safety	CHA, DUT, GAU, KAT
Societal level	Perennial values of Indian culture	Family, the most important institution	Family bonding (choice of SG for future education or work)	SAN, CHA, DUT, GAR, NAT, GAU, MOG, KOR, KAL, AHU, KAN
		Destiny and Karma	Not planning too much ahead of time	KAL, KAT
		Globalized world	Future place of work	DUT, all in general as migrants
		Respect for teacher	Following teacher's opinion/advice, consultation with teacher	SAN, DUT, KOR, KAL, KAT
		Happiness	Respecting child's interest	SAN, CHA, DUT, GAR, NAT, GAU, MOG, KOR, KAL, AHU, KAT, KAN
			Emphasis on long term happiness rather than pursuing hobby or fad	MOG, CHA
			Avoiding conflicts	KAT
	Socio-cultural environment	Socio-cultural differences	Stability of marriages (Financial security), pre-determined roles of head of the family, men and women in Indian culture	SAN, CHA, KAL, KAN
			Dowry system in India	GAU
			Indian culture protective towards daughters	SAN, CHA, DUT
			Self-centred and materialistic people in Singapore	CHA
			Emphasis on academics/education a trait of Indian/Asian culture	GAR
		Cultural adaptation	Difficult to fit in Indians culture, living environment,	SAN, GAR, NAT, KAT, KOR
		Competitive environment	Difference in behavioural norms	DUT
		Recognition for certain education or career	Law, medicine etc. in SG, professional success in Singapore versus engineering in India	DUT, KOR
	Physical environment	Gender differences	Emphasis on safety for female children	CHA, DUT, GAU, KAT
		Safety and infrastructure	Difference	CHA, DUT, GAU, MOG, KAT, GAR,

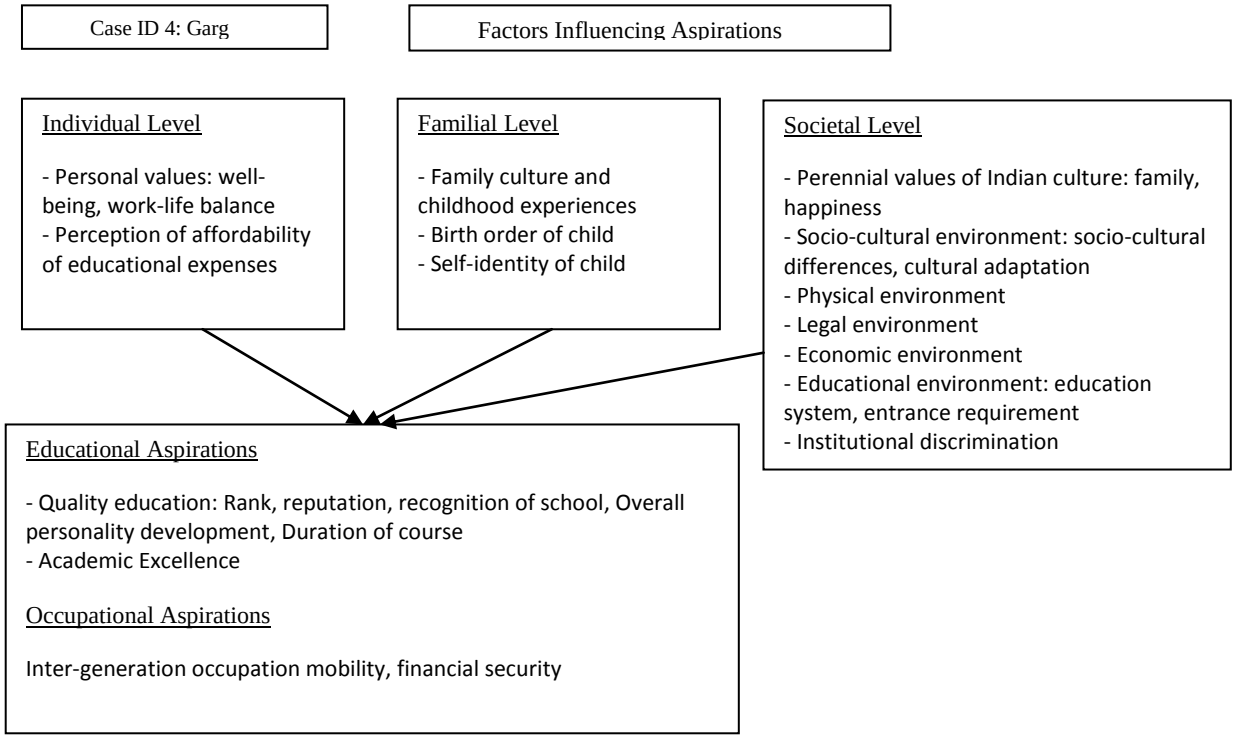
			NAT, KAN
Legal environment		NS	SAN, DUT, MOG, KAN
		Stressful legal system, restrictive laws, liberal environment preferred	CHA, GAR
Economic environment		Perception of opportunities available	CHA, GAR, NAT, KOR, AHU, KAN
		International degree valued in the SG job market	SAN
Educational environment	Education system	Difference in education system, stress level	SAN, DUT, GAR, NAT, KOR, KAL, AHU, KAN
	Competitive environment	Easier to qualify to top universities in SG/US than India	KOR
	University entrance requirement	Age criteria	GAR
		Entrance qualification	NAT, GAU, KAL
Institutional discrimination		Admission criteria	SAN, GAR, NAT, GAU, KAL, AHU
		Financial aid (scholarship) criteria	DUT, GAR, NAT
		Fees structure	NAT
		Employment opportunities	SAN, NAT

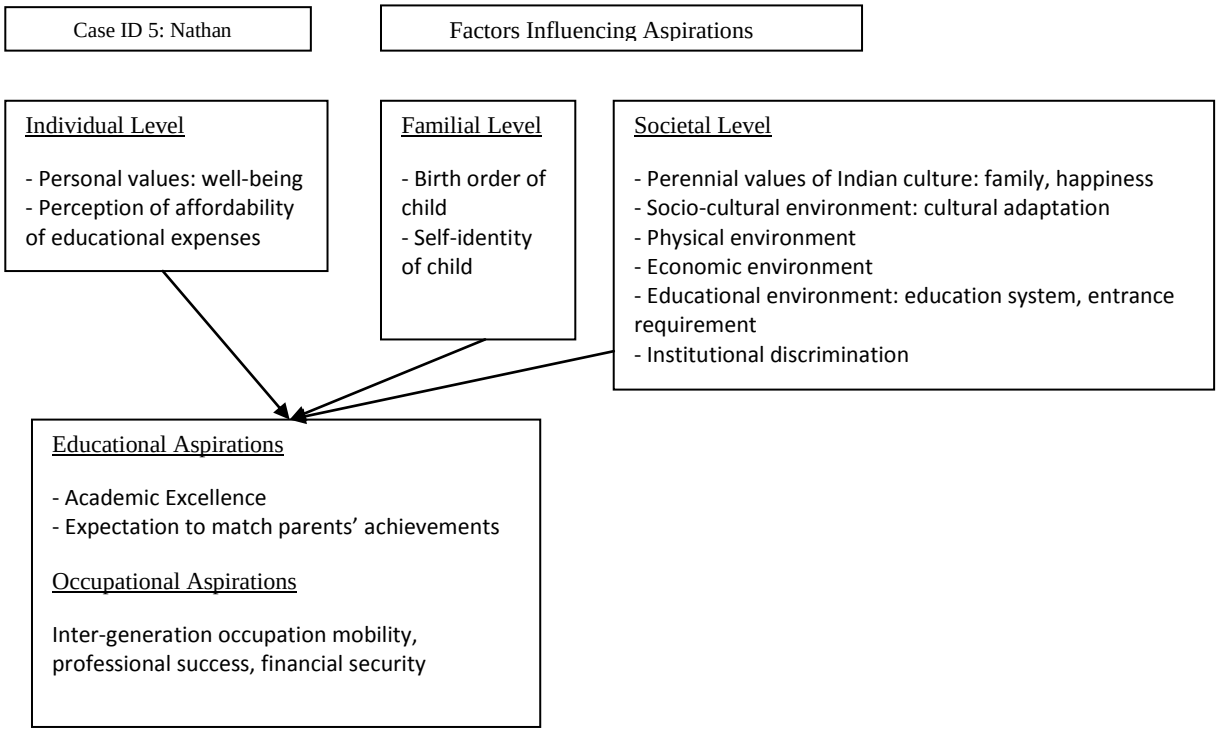
APPENDIX 18: LOGIC DIAGRAMS

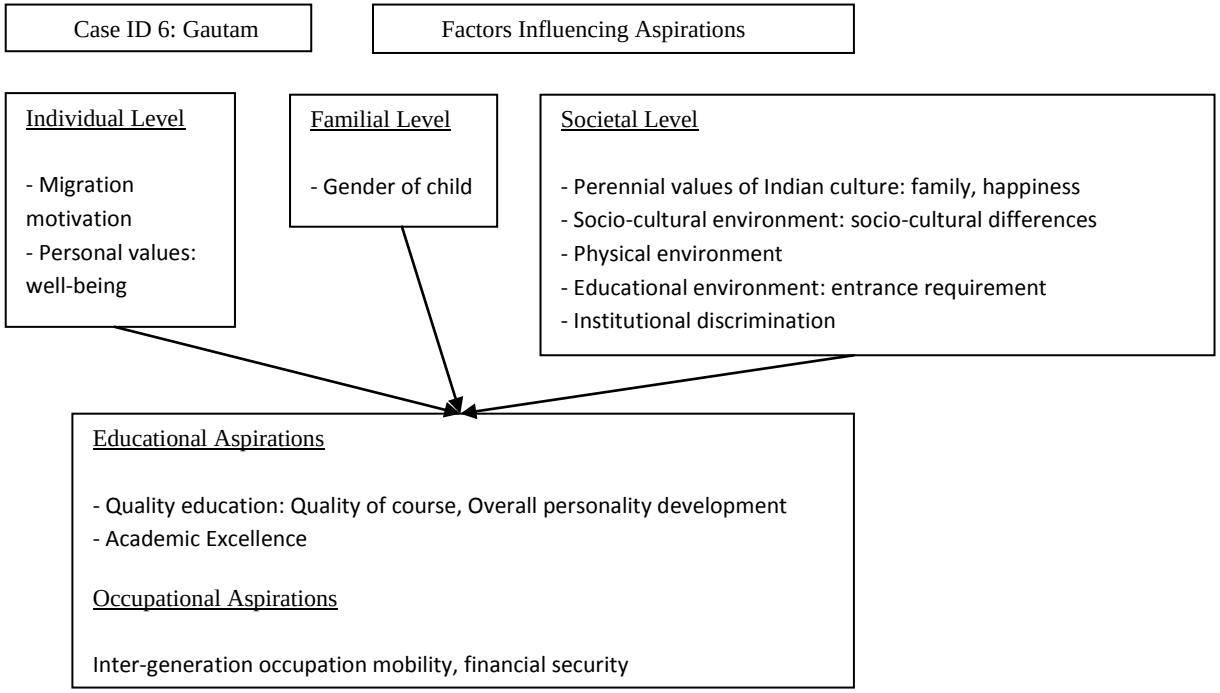


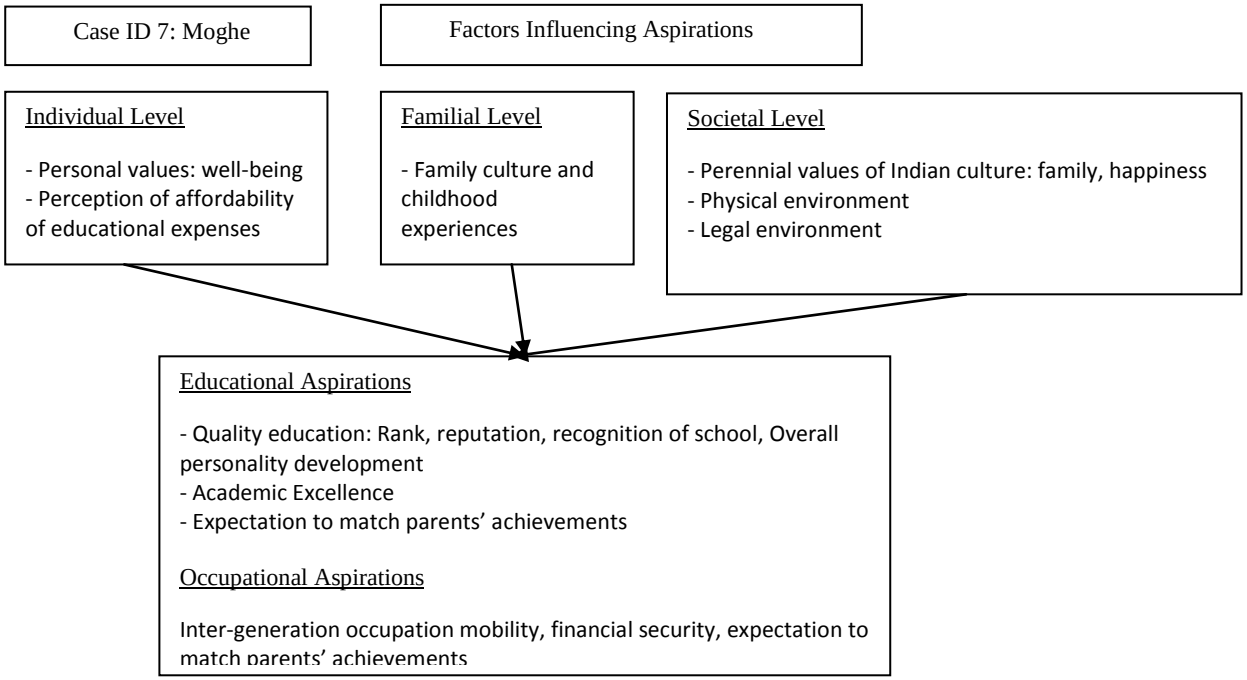

Case ID 2: Chaudhary
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being
Familial Level
- Family culture and childhood experiences
- Birth order of child
- Self-identity of child
- Gender of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences
- Physical environment
- Legal environment
- Economic environment
Educational Aspirations
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, professional success, financial security

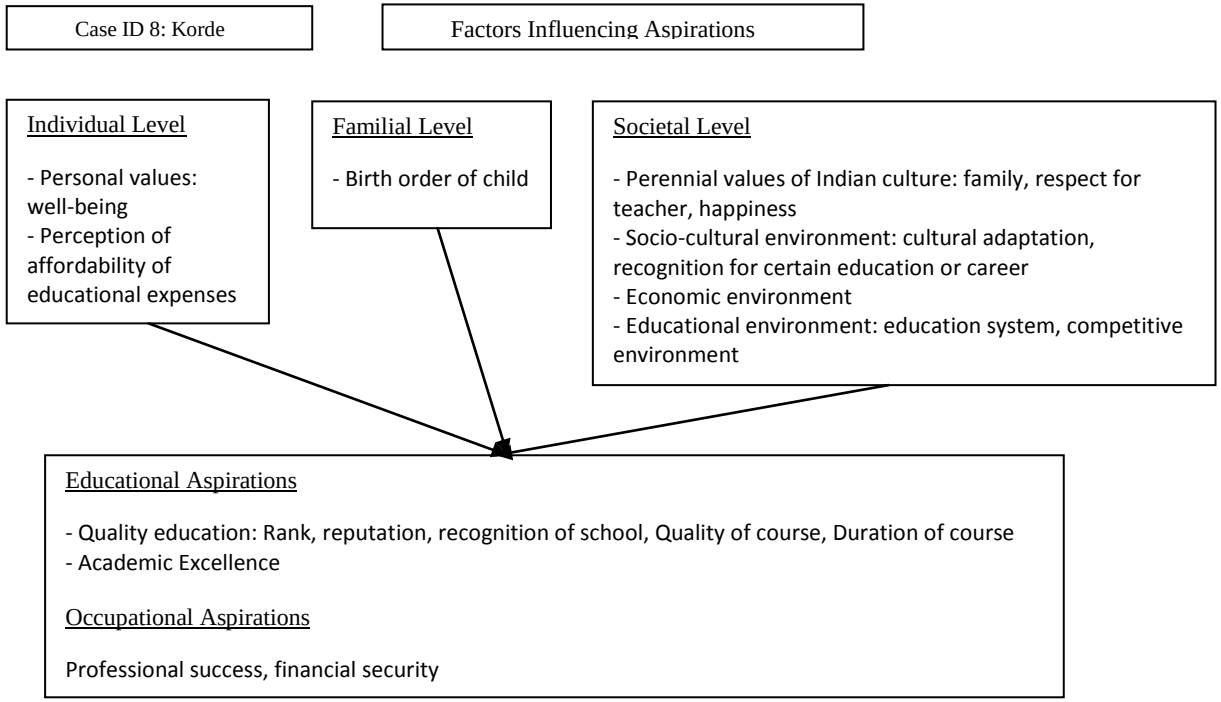

Case ID 3: Dutt
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Familial Level
- Family culture and childhood experiences
- Self-identity of child
- Gender of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, globalized world, respect for teacher, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences, competitive environment, recognition for certain career or education
- Physical environment
- Legal environment
- Educational environment: education system
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Quantitative academic standings, Student satisfaction, Academic focus, Quality of course, Duration of course, Pulling power of subject department
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Professional success, financial security, expectation to match parents' achievements

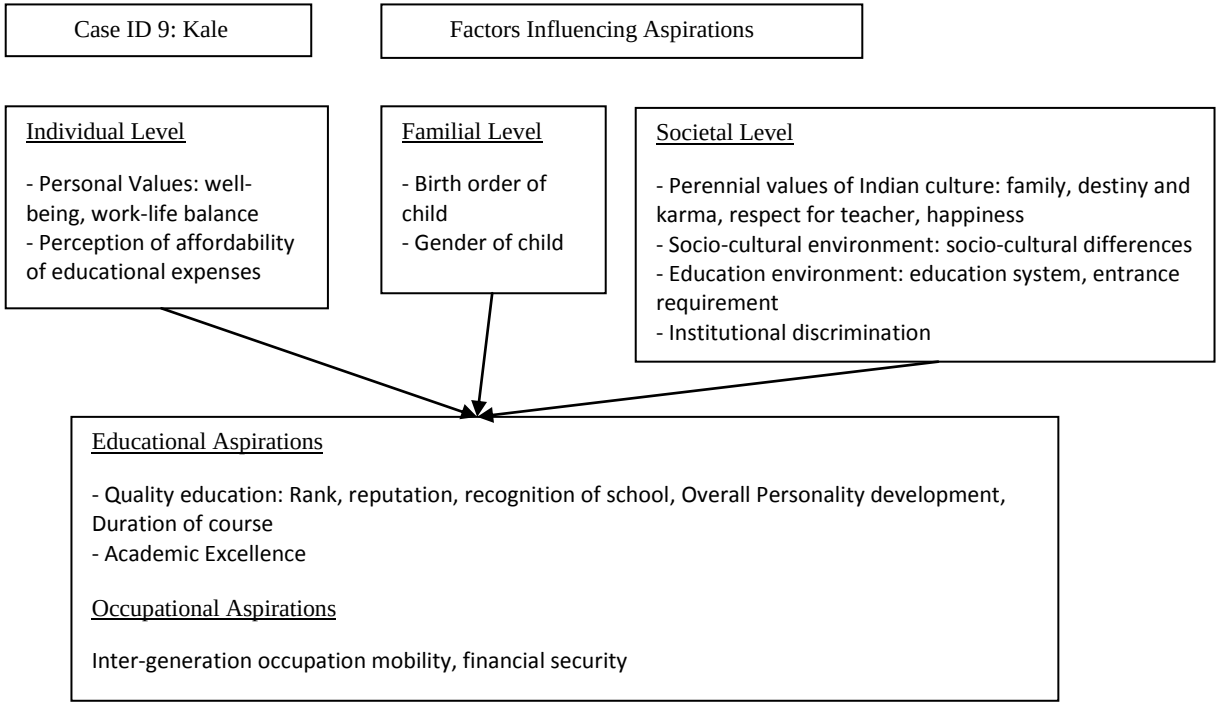

Case ID 4: Garg
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being, work-life balance
- Perception of affordability of educational expenses
Familial Level
- Family culture and childhood experiences
- Birth order of child
- Self-identity of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences, cultural adaptation
- Physical environment
- Legal environment
- Economic environment
- Educational environment: education system, entrance requirement
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Overall personality development, Duration of course
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, financial security

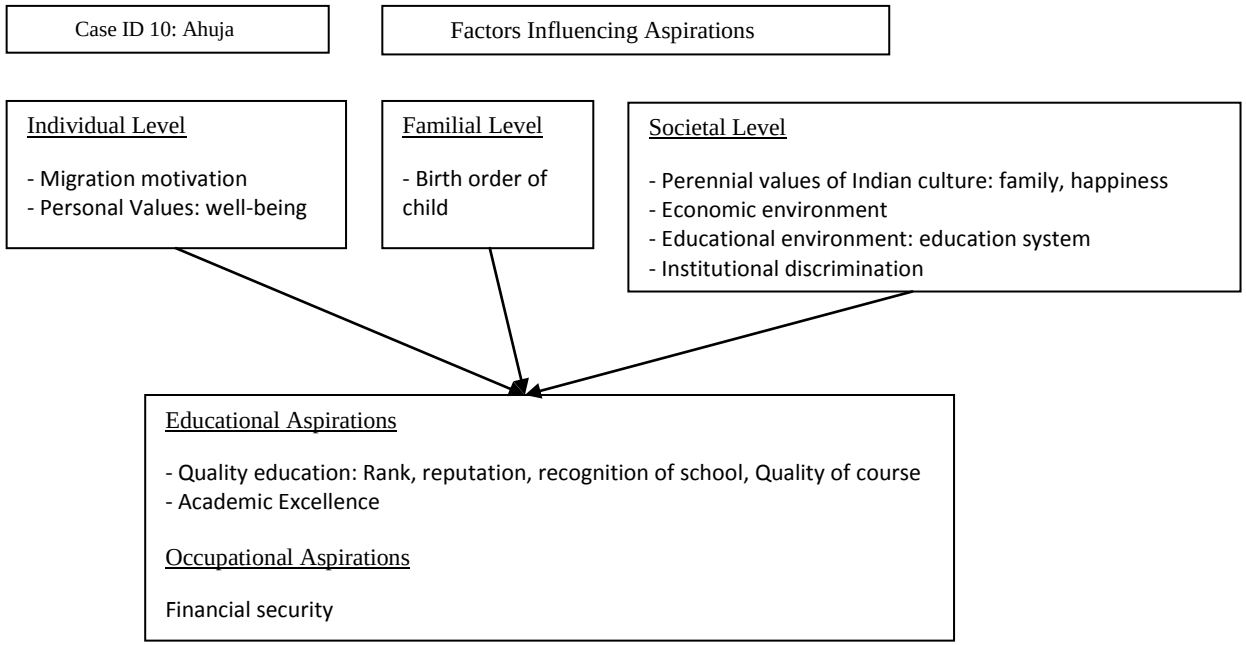

Case ID 5: Nathan
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being
- Perception of affordability of educational expenses
Familial Level
- Birth order of child
- Self-identity of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: cultural adaptation
- Physical environment
- Economic environment
- Educational environment: education system, entrance requirement
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Academic Excellence
- Expectation to match parents' achievements
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, professional success, financial security

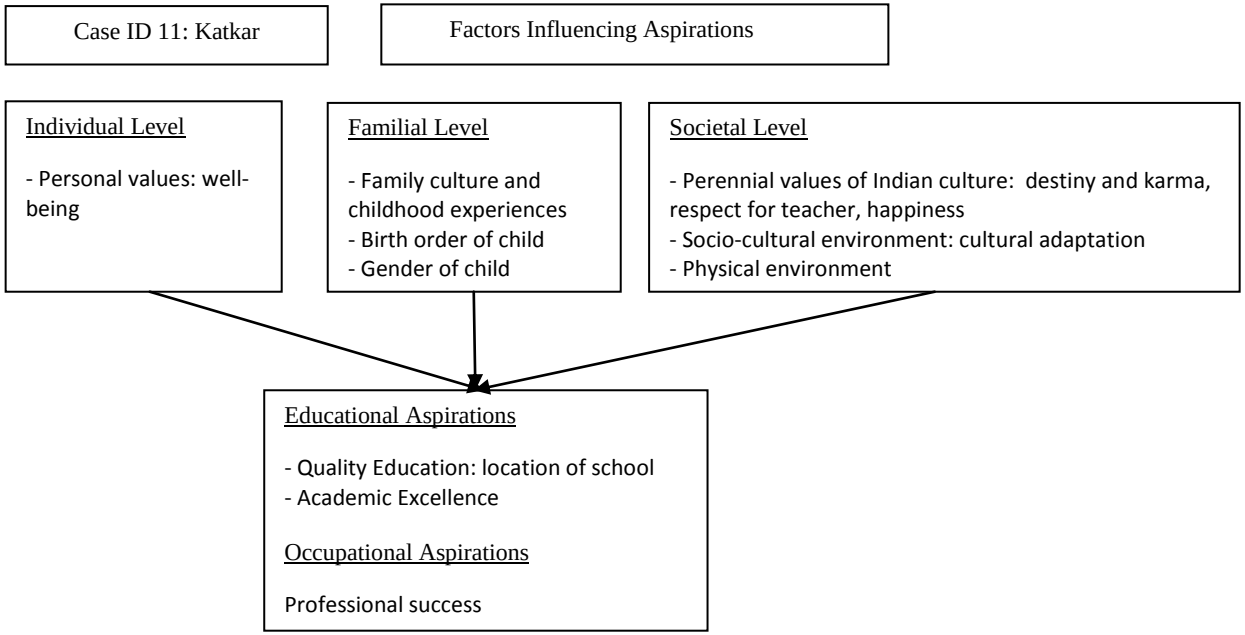

Case ID 6: Gautam
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Migration motivation
- Personal values: well-being
Familial Level
- Gender of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences
- Physical environment
- Educational environment: entrance requirement
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Quality of course, Overall personality development
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, financial security

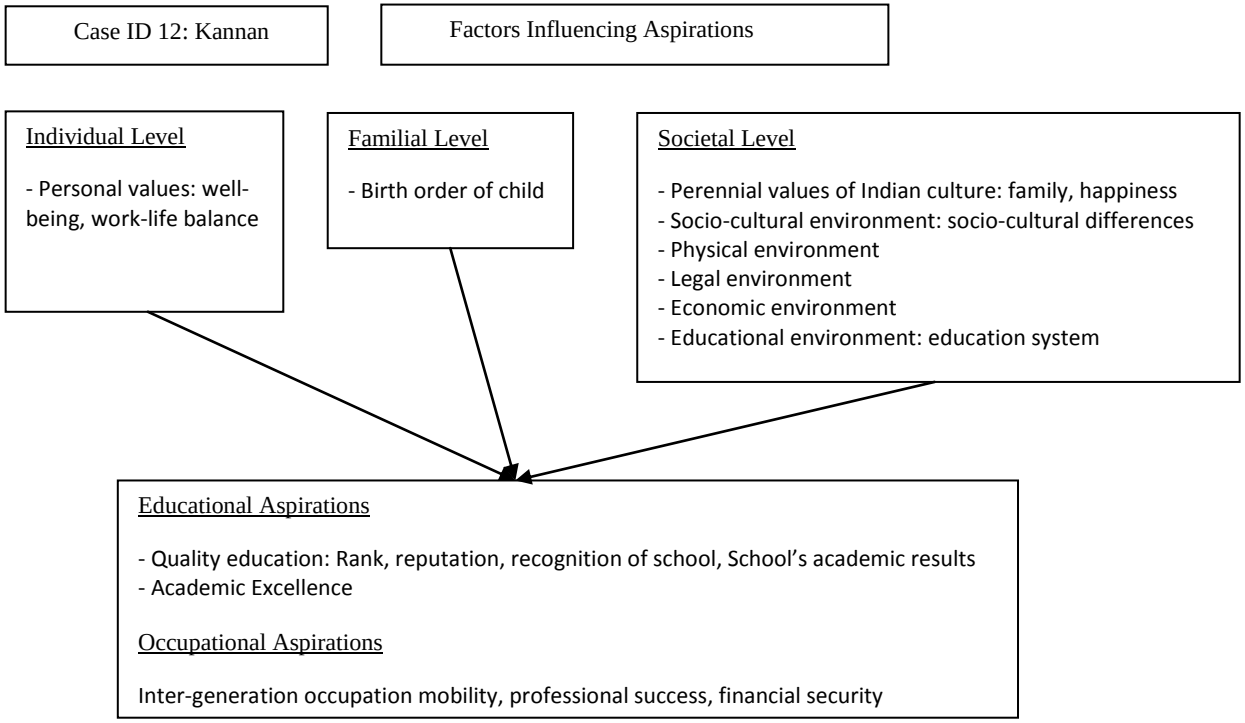

Case ID 7: Moghe
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being
- Perception of affordability of educational expenses
Familial Level
- Family culture and childhood experiences
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Physical environment
- Legal environment
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Overall personality development
- Academic Excellence
- Expectation to match parents' achievements
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, financial security, expectation to match parents' achievements


Case ID 8: Korde
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being
- Perception of affordability of educational expenses
Familial Level
- Birth order of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, respect for teacher, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: cultural adaptation, recognition for certain education or career
- Economic environment
- Educational environment: education system, competitive environment
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Quality of course, Duration of course
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Professional success, financial security


Case ID 9: Kale
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal Values: well-being, work-life balance
- Perception of affordability of educational expenses
Familial Level
- Birth order of child
- Gender of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, destiny and karma, respect for teacher, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences
- Education environment: education system, entrance requirement
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Overall Personality development, Duration of course
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, financial security


Case ID 10: Ahuja
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Migration motivation
- Personal Values: well-being
Familial Level
- Birth order of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Economic environment
- Educational environment: education system
- Institutional discrimination
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, Quality of course
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Financial security


Case ID 11: Katkar
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being
Familial Level
- Family culture and childhood experiences
- Birth order of child
- Gender of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: destiny and karma, respect for teacher, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: cultural adaptation
- Physical environment
Educational Aspirations
- Quality Education: location of school
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Professional success


Case ID 12: Kannan
Factors Influencing Aspirations
Individual Level
- Personal values: well-being, work-life balance
Familial Level
- Birth order of child
Societal Level
- Perennial values of Indian culture: family, happiness
- Socio-cultural environment: socio-cultural differences
- Physical environment
- Legal environment
- Economic environment
- Educational environment: education system
Educational Aspirations
- Quality education: Rank, reputation, recognition of school, School's academic results
- Academic Excellence
Occupational Aspirations
Inter-generation occupation mobility, professional success, financial security

APPENDIX 19: UNIQUE IDENTIFYING FEATURES

Case ID	Family name	Likely to continue living in Singapore?	Migration motivation	Chose specifically Singapore?	Child Singapore citizen?	Parents' nationality Singaporean?	Birth order of child	Older child's destination SG?
1	Sandhu	√	Employment, education, financial	√	√	Both	1	NA
2	Chaudhary	√	Employment, living environment	X	√	Both	2	Yes
3	Dutt	√	Employment	X	√	Father	1-only child	NA
4	Garg	X	Employment	√	X	No	2	No
5	Nathan	X	Employment, culture, living environment	√	X	No	2	No
6	Gautam	√	Employment, education, culture	√	X (intending to become soon)	Intending to become soon	1	NA
7	Moghe	√	Employment, culture	√	√	Both	1	NA
8	Korde	X	Employment	X	X	No	2	No
9	Kale	X	Employment	X	X	No	1	NA
10	Ahuja	X	Employment	√	X	No	2	No
11	Katkar	√	Employment, financial	X	X	No, regrets for not accepting	2	Yes
12	Kannan	X	Employment	X	X	Father	2	NA

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

GI	Group Interview
IB	International Baccalaureate
IT	Information Technology
NS	National Service
SES	Socio-economic Status
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States (of America)
USA	United States of America