

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS  
OF THE HOME BACKGROUND OF TWO CONTRASTING SOCIAL  
CLASS GROUPS OF INDIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS  
IN THE MEREBANK AREA OF DURBAN, AND  
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

BY

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*To*

*Roan, Dhashen and Sharona*

*"... the very nature of experience cries out for a variety of forms of understanding. Man's activity has both subjective and objective dimension, social knowledge is both fact and value. Two or three forms of social explanation in juxtaposition are always better (more complete, less partial) than one... Parson's, Mead's, Durkheim's, Marx's and Cicourel's children may all go to the same school but they take to it, experience within it, and bring away from it quite different things... real children and the actual adults who teach them, contain all of the elements which differing sociologists blow up and claim to be dominant."*

BRIAN DAVIES (1976)

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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## S U M M A R Y

Though the influence of social class and home background upon school achievement is a well established field of research in Britain and certain other oversea countries, research of this type is almost non-existent in South Africa. The present study was therefore designed as a sociological investigation of differential school performance to establish basic research in this field, with particular reference to home-school relationships in the Indian context.

This study, which is set within the integrated theoretical framework of the *old* and *new* sociology of education, seeks to give some insight into the intricate nature of home background, and to shed some light on the complex relationship between social class and educational performance. In a review of pertinent literature in this field, it also traces the shift in emphasis from the more traditional, *normative* macro-studies of family, class and education to the more recent *interpretative*, micro-studies.

Through the use of an eclectic approach, the empirical design incorporated both the normative and interpretative paradigms which aimed at studying the social and cultural aspects of the home background of two contrasting social class groups of pupils in six primary schools in the Merebank area of Durban. The proportionately stratified random sample consisting of 50 middle class and 100 lower working class pupils was representative of the social class structure of this neighbourhood.

The home environment of each child in the entire sample was assessed during a personal visit to his home. The four main dimensions of the home which were investigated included: the material environment; general cultural and educational experiences; educational motivations and

aspirations of parents; and family size.

The pupils' cumulative school performance was assessed by scaling their composite examination results into standard scores which enabled marks from different schools and from different classes within the same school to be compared. This general educational performance is the criterion with which the various social and cultural factors have been related. The results of this study were analysed mainly through the use of chi-square, z tests of significance, analyses of variance, and correlation analyses.

The main findings indicate that:

- (a) the general educational performance of the middle class pupils is consistently better than that of the lower working class pupils;
- (b) the two most important dimensions of the home which emphasise the greatest social class differences between the two groups, and which account for the most amount of variation in school performance are the general cultural and educational experiences, and the educational motivations and aspirations of parents.

To achieve equality of opportunity for all pupils, this study recommends a broad policy of linking home and school through effective joint educational and social reform. This policy aims at improving the quality of life both at home and at school. In particular, it stresses the importance of increasing the educational awareness of the home, and of developing social consciousness in schools.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The influence of the social and cultural milieu on pupils' school progress has captured the interest not only of educationists, but also of sociologists, psychologists and other academicians who recognise the importance of its link with opportunity, mobility, and status in the wider society where success in school generally opens up many opportunities. Failure in school stifles the chances of mobility. It has been argued that the foundation of this academic success or failure is often laid in the pupils' homes.

Thus, there are close links between the educational functions of the home and the school. Though the learning process may be seen largely as a function of the teacher's guidance in the classroom, the home is a very active force which helps to shape the child's abilities and attitudes. It is not uncommon, for example, for teachers to point to adverse features in the home background of those pupils with high intelligence test scores, who fail at school. Similarly, they may argue that the high achievements of children of moderate ability may be due to favourable, encouraging home environments.

The problem on which the present research is based is related to the socio-cultural differences in the home backgrounds of two contrasting social class groups of primary school pupils. The general assertion of research conducted in this field is that socio-cultural factors can depress or raise the level of educational performance. This is especially evident in the case of children

who come from extreme social class groups within the same society. They are exposed from an early age to separate and distinct patterns of learning which constitute much of their informal education at home (Bernstein, 1964 : 288). These patterns are progressively reinforced as the child develops and they become increasingly more complex to discern. Therefore, there cannot be any absolute certainty as to the processes which the child internalizes and synthesises, and about the various influences to which he has been exposed. Bernstein (1964 : 288) says:

*"It would seem that the social conditions that help to determine differential learning and orientation are so complex and interrelated that to ask what is the most significant variable is like asking which loose end will unravel a ball of knotted string."*

However, those involved in the practice of education want answers which are relevant to their day to day problems of teaching pupils who come from various social class backgrounds. They are anxious to know how a given social structure evident in social class and home background becomes part of an individual's experience. What are the main processes through which cultural identity is shaped, and what are the educational implications? Answers to questions such as these are important to educationists since schools are major agencies of cultural transmission, and are linked with social class and home background in the context of the culture of the wider society. Education in schools may be regarded as a process of cultural assimilation which is founded on attributes previously conditioned by social class and home background.

With this in mind, and working on the assumptions which are set out in the latter part of this chapter, the present study is an investigation into the social and cultural factors of the home background of two contrasting social class groups of Indian primary school pupils. The comparisons between the two groups are seen mainly in terms of their implications for education.

## 1.2 AIMS OF THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

However, it should be remembered that in an analysis of this sort it is easy to slip into sweeping generalisations about the associations between characteristics of the home and those of social class. But social class is too straightforward an explanation of differences in educational development. Though it is essential to look closely at social class, it is also necessary to look beyond it in seeking explanations about the relationships between home and school. In this respect, the following aims of the study have been taken into consideration:

- (a) To explore the literature on social class, home background and education, in order to reveal significant aspects of the environment and how they operate; and to use some of these in the empirical design of the present study in order to establish basic research into social class and education in Indian education.
- (b) To examine the main theoretical approaches to the study of social class, home background and education so that the review of literature and the empirical design can be set within a sound theoretical framework.

- (c) To investigate relevant social and cultural aspects of the home backgrounds of a group of middle class and lower working class primary school pupils, tracing the shift in emphasis from the material to the socio-cultural backgrounds of the children.
- (d) To compare the scholastic performances of the two groups, and to discover by appropriate statistical treatment of the data, the extent to which the relevant factors are related to school progress.

Finally, the comprehensive aim would be:

- (e) To understand the links which exist between home and school so as to get a grasp of the philosophy underlying home-school relationships.

In the wider context of educational research, the present investigation aims to throw some light on certain aspects of primary education which reveal differences between two contrasting social classes in the use made of school opportunities. This may not be the result of conscious educational policy, but of the very nature of our society; and the absence of relevant research leads one to assume that there are built-in inequalities in education which militate against children from the lower working classes.

However, research of this type which deals with the home and the primary school may appear to be insignificant in the context of higher education. But this is a restricted view of education, since a thorough study of the whole educational system must also incorporate an investigation of matters at the base of the educational



pyramid. What happens at the base of the pyramid will have important implications for what is practicable at the apex. For example, decisions taken about expansion of schools, curriculum development, and university education, must include changes in the nature of primary and secondary education. A study of social class and education, the relationship between home and school can make a meaningful contribution to changes in the nature of primary and secondary education.

### 1.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN THIS STUDY

Though this research which is concerned with socio-cultural factors in pupils' home backgrounds is a study in sociology of education, it is nevertheless related in some ways to philosophy of education since it contains certain philosophical implications about the social values of the middle and lower working classes in the Indian community. The present investigation deals with two definable strata within a stratified society, which enables us to distinguish certain social characteristics in these groups. Thus, for example, an axiological analysis of lower working class life would enable us to understand the factors contributing to poverty, inadequate housing, unemployment, limited vocational choice, large families, lower parental aspirations, and so on.

There is also sufficient evidence to show that there exists a system of values or a philosophy of working class life. The evidence can be seen in the attitudes of both the parents and the children, in their perceptions, and aspirations in the context of education. Therefore, we can say that there is a *philosophy* behind the way of life of every individual and of every social class group. This

means that men share values and rules and that some of these become deeply embedded in consciousness, and may be regarded as an identification of life in a particular social stratum.

Though it is clearly outside the scope of the present investigation to analyse such fundamental social values created out of peculiar life experiences, it does however, point to certain patterns of social interaction between parents and children. Indirectly, therefore, this study points to the life ways or cultural experiences which constitute the designs for living in two contrasting social class groups. Axiologically, such life styles may be regarded as being structured socially and can only be understood as part of the social matrix.

In another context, the present investigation is related to philosophy of education in a different direction. It examines the concept of social reality by means of various sociological approaches to the study of social class, home background and education. A close reading of chapter four will reveal that different social theories develop their cases differently, and involve differing basic ideas or assumptions about what is real. It is this debate about the nature of social reality that establishes a link between philosophical and sociological theory.

All of this is aptly illustrated in the present investigation through a review of certain sociological studies which for example establish close connections between conflict theories and social phenomenology. By emphasising attitudinal features and perceptions of education as an integral part of life style, they connect *values* with *constructions of reality*.

The studies of Bernstein and Henderson (1974), Craft (1974), and Bourdieu and St. Martin (1974) are good examples of the links between philosophical and sociological theories. Bernstein's study indicates the importance of differential parental value systems as expressed in the use of language in child socialisation in middle and working class families. Craft reports a values analysis of school leaving in Dublin. Bourdieu and St. Martin discuss the complex nature of social values and perceptions that constitute the educational system and its schools.

The present study can benefit greatly from the above mentioned studies by asking whether the home backgrounds of certain groups of pupils generate particular patterns of values. Can these values be adapted to meet the requirements of certain curriculum strategies? This type of link between sociology of education and philosophy of education can help to make a meaningful contribution to an understanding of the means and ends of education. It can help us in a careful scrutiny of the values which parents and teachers actually transmit to children, and the educational and social objectives which educationists have in mind.

#### 1.4 DELIMITATION OF FIELD OF STUDY

There is a total absence of research into social class and education in the Indian community, and the present study has been undertaken with a view to establishing basic research in this direction in Indian education. It is also hoped that this will provide some new insights into social, cultural and educational problems confronting pupils and teachers.

Details of the empirical design of this research are outlined in chapter six. However, at this stage, it would suffice to give a brief description of the present investigation, indicating its main delimitation.

For practical purposes, it was decided to conduct the research in a single suburb of the city of Durban. The geographical area selected is Merebank, one of the southern suburbs of the city, and was considered a suitable area because it affords an ample opportunity for studying a wide range of pupils from both the middle and working classes. This procedure is also well substantiated by the fact that the six primary schools in the area draw their pupils from a variety of home backgrounds - economic and sub-economic municipal homes, privately owned cottages, flats, and a municipal barracks. The social class composition of the area may be regarded as typical of the social class composition of Indians in the Republic, as reflected in the 1970 population census as outlined in chapter two. It contains a large working class group, and a fair representation of the middle class.

The research population was limited to the standard four pupils in the six primary schools in the area. It was decided to target this section of the school population because this is the last stage of the senior primary school phase, and therefore offers the last opportunity to study children before they pass on to the differential courses in the secondary school. It also provides the opportunity to study the impact of social class and home background factors at a stage when pupils have had sufficient time to get adjusted to life at school. At this stage they will have been in school for seven years and most of them are between eleven and twelve years old. Most British researches into social class, home background

and education were conducted with pupils who were eleven plus, corresponding roughly to the standard four stage of our primary school. It is also assumed that children of all levels of ability and attainment are present at this stage of the primary school. Differences between high and low achievers also begin to increase rapidly.

The research population was divided into the middle and lower working class groups, and these were considered to be sufficiently contrasted to enable the investigation to be carried out. A stratified random sample of 150 pupils was proportionately selected from the two groups.

#### 1.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

Though a fair amount of research has been done on Indian life in Natal by the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of Natal, and more recently by the Institute of Social Research of the University of Durban-Westville, none of these is directly related to social class, home background and education. One of the recent studies conducted by the University of Durban-Westville is that of Greyling and Davies (1970), dealing more specifically with Indian agricultural holdings on the Natal north coast.

In addition to the efforts of these research institutes, a number of small-scale studies have also been conducted, mainly in the form of unpublished dissertations and theses. Though they focus on some important facets of Indian life, not one of them is directly related to the theme of social class, home background

and education. However, the work of Rambiritch (1959) which deals with the philosophy of Hindu education has been examined closely in the context of culture and the curriculum (see chapter three).

Generally, there is a lack of research in this field in South Africa. At the moment, the only research is that done by Van der Ross (1977) in eight primary schools for Coloureds in the Cape. Though this research refers vaguely to social class, it does not explore the question of home background. Its main concern is with the failure and drop-out rates among the middle and the working classes, besides which the study is also limited in its design and scope.

By contrast, several studies have been done in this field in the U.S.A. and in Britain. A notable study in England, for example, is that of the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council For Education (England), 1967) which attempted to differentiate the effects of home circumstances and schooling. A parallel study in the U.S.A. is that of Coleman (1966) which examines school and equality of educational opportunity. Other important studies, on a smaller scale, are those of Fraser (1959), Douglas (1964), Goodacre (1968), Cullen (1969), and Miller (1971). These will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

#### 1.6 RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

The framework of the present study was unavoidably influenced by certain theoretical and practical considerations. The theoretical limitations are due to the fact that there is hardly any existing research in South Africa concerning social class, home background and education. Therefore, there is an absence of theory on which

to base the present study in the South African context.

On the other hand, research in this area in England and the U.S.A. is made up of an increasing number of perspectives. Of these, positivism may be regarded as the earliest of the research directions. By the late fifties and sixties in the U.S.A., and in the seventies in England, several *new* or revived sociological perspectives became apparent. They include symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and the sociology of knowledge all of which are reviewed in chapter four. Thus, overseas studies of social class and education are at a fairly advanced stage of development in terms of their theoretical framework. They can therefore make use of combinations of several theoretical approaches in the study of home background. The present investigation, however, has been influenced by positivism in the framing of the closed-type questions, and by symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology in the framing of open-ended questions in its empirical design. Nevertheless, the researcher has been careful not to overlook the implications of an integrated theoretical approach in the general discussion of this study.

This theoretical limitation has in its turn given rise to other limitations concerning the practical feasibility of the scope and scale of what is being studied. If the empirical design is based on well-founded theory, then it is safe to widen its scope. British studies of home-school relations, for example, can extend their scope to the study of the organisational contexts of school, values and ideologies, opportunity in the wider social context, and so on. However, the present study, because of its theoretical limitations cannot afford to be so ambitious.

Thus, the objectives of the present research have been limited to the following areas of the home background of pupils: material aspects, family size, cultural experiences, educational motivation offered by parents, parents' attitudes to education, and parents' ambitions for their children. The scholastic performances of the sample were also considered.

Accurate information was to be sought on the above mentioned categories. Because of the heavy working class composition of the sample, the most effective way of obtaining this was by interviewing parents or guardians. Therefore, the research method had to be limited to home interviews. Postal questionnaires, or tape recordings could not be used because of the risk of non-responses.

Another practical consideration which placed limitations on this research was the question of the availability of time and resources. The research period was of limited duration. The most suitable time for home visits was during the mid-year school vacation. School visits also had to be carefully timed so as not to upset unduly the school routine. All visits were made by the researcher himself. Thus, because of all these factors, it was decided to limit the geographical area of the study to a single suburb of the city, and to concentrate on a manageable sample. The scale of this research could have been extended had it been undertaken by a research team. This would have ensured interviewer selection and training, field supervision, and the extension of geographical and demographic boundaries.

The researcher is also mindful of the fact that errors entering the survey process at various stages could limit the accuracy of the findings. Besides sampling errors, inaccuracies may have crept



in through interviewing, coding, and analysing the results. However, every effort was made to anticipate the likely sources of error and to take the necessary precautions to minimise these. For example, responses were immediately scrutinised for errors and omissions before they were coded and tabulated. Despite this, the accuracy of the findings is still likely to be affected by the nature of the responses, the timing of the home visits, the recording of responses and so on. Though an editing scheme was devised in the early stages of the survey it was not always possible to decide in advance on the tabulations and analysis until the final results were in.

#### 1.7 GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

This study begins by explaining the crux of the investigation in question. Immediately following this, the basic concepts of social class, home background and educational attainment are clarified. These concepts are also examined within the broad framework of the main sociological theories and models which are relevant to contemporary research in the field of sociology of education. To widen the focus of attention, these are related in turn to overseas research studies in this field.

The present study also demonstrates the relevance of the basic concepts to the social structure of the Indian community. In this respect, the structure of primary education for Indians is examined specifically from the various points of view of home-

school relations and social class. There is a deliberate attempt to avoid a general description of the structure of Indian education which appears to be the general practice in most researches that have been done on Indian education. In particular, this investigation is concerned with middle class and lower working class pupils who are in standard four. The research design is narrowed in this way so as to reduce it to manageable proportions.

The parents of the pupils in the two social classes were interviewed in their homes on the relevant socio-cultural factors which were investigated. An analysis of the main findings pertaining to home background has been presented. The analysis also includes details concerning the scholastic performances which were obtained from the schools which participated in the survey.

Finally, this study presents some conclusions and educational implications which have become evident in the course of the investigation.

#### 1.8 SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Closely connected with this study are some considerations which should be clarified at the outset. In particular, it is necessary to mention that the relationship between home, school and academic performance is a very complex one, and any generalisation concerning this relationship must therefore be treated with caution. For example, Elizabeth Fraser (1959 : 1), an eminent writer on home-school studies illustrates the need for this when she says:

*"... for every child coming from an adverse home background who fails to succeed, there are others, in environments apparently just as unfavourable who seem to rise above them."*

It must also be remembered that many of the characteristics which children develop cannot be attributed entirely to the influence of the home or other aspects of the social environment. Due account must also be taken of the child's own genetic potentials. Nevertheless, the importance of the home and the school as vital educational agencies cannot be ignored. Neither can operate in a vacuum, and both have far reaching influences on the lives of children. The family shares with the school many aspects of socialisation. Even after formal schooling has begun, the school cannot hope to take over completely from the family, the latter playing a significant role in influencing children's attitudes towards school. The children's motivations and interests are shaped chiefly through their relationships with their parents, other adults and siblings in the home. Parents' attitudes to school and education in general are likely to be reflected in children's aspirations and their motivation to learn.

Therefore, there is a need for careful understanding of the complexities of the social process which influences school achievement. This is especially important in a competitive society where school achievement determines the opportunities which are available to the individual in the wider society. Expressed negatively, it may be said that poor school achievement results in inequality of opportunity. It has been said that social class and home background reveal unequal life chances which may be regarded as the cause and effect of unequal educational opportunities. However, social factors affect the educational process in more subtle ways than are implied in this statement.

The subtleties are concerned with social class differences in school achievement, and the search for an explanation of those differences. A number of researches and government reports in many countries have been concerned with the complexities of this problem. Referring to this, Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 1) say:

*"Despite this, we are still almost as far from reaching an understanding of the actual process of school achievement as we were ten years ago."*

More recently, Waller and Marjoribanks, in a review of analytic models used to study family environment expressed a similar point of view (Walberg and Marjoribanks, 1976 : 527). They said:

*"Although educators would agree that the family environment influences the development of children's cognitive abilities, psychologists and sociologists are only now beginning to understand the specific characteristics that affect the acquisition of ability. Obstacles to research include invalid measurements of family characteristics and abilities, the multiplicity of confounded factors in the home, school, community, and peer groups ... Moreover, correlational or causal relationships established for one group may not hold for other times, social classes, ethnic groups, or countries."*

However, this does not mean that research on social class, home background and education has been altogether inconclusive. Several

studies have shown that school achievement and social factors are associated in several ways. Factors such as parents' socio-economic status, family size, parental and children's aspirations and motivations have been explored.

Despite the variety of perspectives which have been explored, one of the main criticisms of research into social class and home background is that it has failed to look in any degree of depth at the actual process of school failure or success. The focus is mainly on statistical relationships, without any serious attempt to understand the causal sequences among the factors involved. This, of course does not imply that there are no studies which deal with the home and school achievement as ongoing processes.

Reference will be made to some of these studies in the present study, even though they are relevant mainly to the British and American social scenes. The main concern of the present study is the Indian South African family. Because of the lack of social and educational research of this type in South Africa, the similarities and contrasts with British and American experience have been found useful. The researcher is mindful of the fact that this has to be done cautiously because it is dangerous to assume that British and American conditions are guides to our own. But, at the same time, it would be naive to imagine that other social explorations of human relationships tell us nothing about ourselves.

After all, the family is a universal organisation, having basically similar educational functions. Systematic research in home-school studies has already been abundantly undertaken in Britain and the United States, and there is little doubt that South Africa

can learn a great deal from these researches. But the social context being different, certain factors may tend to have less or more significance here than elsewhere.

## CHAPTER TWO

## 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, AND THE RELEVANCE OF THIS TO THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Before embarking upon the empirical investigation, it is necessary to clarify the conceptual basis on which the present study rests. The interrelationship between social class, home background and educational attainment must first be seen in general terms. Then it is necessary to see the relevance of this to the social structure of Indian South Africans.

2.1 SOCIAL CLASS

Most societies can generally be divided into social layers or ranks. Sociologists refer to this division as the stratification of society. It has been suggested that there are three ideal types of stratification: caste, estate, and social class (Lawton, 1975 : 30).

Of these, caste is the most rigid form of stratification since individuals are born into a position in the caste hierarchy, and movement from one level to another is extremely difficult. Caste and social class exist side by side in some western societies which are stratified according to race. However, in these societies, the social class structure is superimposed by race (Berger, 1975 : 98). Though the term caste is more commonly applied to India, it has been used quite specifically to describe racial stratification in various other countries.

The estate system of stratification is associated with land tenure, and the medieval feudal system is a good example of this system of social ranking. Today there are only vestigial remains of feudalism evident in the social class structure of Europe.

However, the basic form of stratification, of most western industrialised societies is that of social class. Industrialised societies consist of social classes which may be regarded as systems of socially ranked groups with varying degrees of movement among them. It should also be noted that such movement is not determined by law. Social class is not a legal distinction, and in theory all members of society, irrespective of social class, are equal before the law. It is a social category designed by the social scientist and by society, and refers to groups of people who interact with one another regularly over long periods of time. Members of particular social classes may live in environments that are materially similar and share similar values and patterns of behaviour.

Though one social class may be distinguished from another according to these patterns, it must be remembered that social classes are not always clearly distinct from each other. The boundaries between them are sometimes vague (Lawton, 1975 : 30). Social class has therefore been defined in different ways, but for the purpose of the present investigation it is sufficient to understand that social class is a social category which indicates one's general position in society. This is determined by educational and economic or occupational criteria (Berger, 1975 : 95). The major social classes in western societies are: the middle and the working classes. In such societies, the rank one ultimately achieves is more important than the one into which one was born.



However, in race stratified societies, the movement from one rank to another cannot be explained by social class alone. For example, both in the U.S.A. and in South Africa, there are wide social differences within the black and the brown communities, and these differences are to some extent influenced by the superimposed system of race stratification. The social class divisions in these communities reveal varying life styles, some of which are rather similar to the differences which exist between social classes in the white community. There are other patterns, of course, which are distinctive to the culture of the black and brown groups (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 152).

## 2.2 SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION IN GENERAL

The socio-cultural aspects of the home background are useful indicators of social class affiliation. The home is regarded as an intermediate variable of social class, and is considered to be the single most important influence on the intellectual and emotional development of children, especially in the early years of childhood (Bloom, Davis, and Hess, 1965 : 69). The central aspects around which home background may be investigated are those concerned with parent-child interaction which may explain the development of skills which are crucial for success in school.

The family can therefore be regarded as an important agency of both education, and social class. In the process of socialisation, it exerts a profound influence on the child's attitude to school, and to education in general. Home background studies can therefore go a long way towards explaining the differential educational performances of children from different social classes.

The significance of the home environment is also illustrated by the fact that though the school is the focal socialising agency during the years of the child's full-time education, it depends to a very great extent on the home for support. The child comes under the constant influence of the behaviour and attitudes of his parents, other elders, siblings, and other members of his family. These influences are evident when the educational performances of working class and middle class children are compared. There is a consistent tendency for working class children to perform less well, and to leave school earlier.

In explaining the underachievement of this group, many studies have related aspects of home environment to those of social class. Some of the more notable studies are those of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956); Fraser (1959); Jackson and Marsden (1962); Douglas (1964); Wiseman (1964); Craft (1967); Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968); Young and McGeeney (1968) (1970); Goodacre (1968) (1970); Cullen (1969); Chazan et.al. (1971); Miller (1971); Jencks (1972); and Halsey (1972). In general, these studies suggest many different aspects of home background as causal factors of educational attainment. However, they reveal that it is extremely difficult to explain exactly how these different factors interrelate to depress or accelerate academic performance.

This is because the concept of home background is extremely complex and difficult to define in precise operational terms. This is especially evident when factors such as child-rearing practices, speech and thought patterns and fundamental values are taken into account. These factors do not operate in isolation: they are closely related to each other and their effects may be cumulative.

Home background variables related to school attainment have been identified with the higher performances of middle class children, and with the lower performances of working class children. Despite the difficulty of isolating each variable, most studies have established certain broad indicators of the deeper assumptions and behaviour patterns in the middle and working classes.

The main indicators are those related to the material, economic, cultural, motivational and emotional aspects of the home. Each of these categories reveals a cluster of variables which are interrelated and are mutually reinforcing (Banks, 1976 : 68-69). There is a considerable amount of overlapping, but most large-scale statistical surveys of home environment and educational achievement have focussed attention on the following aspects of home environment:

- (a) the material environment;
- (b) educational and cultural characteristics;
- (c) parents' attitudes to education;
- (d) family size.

### 2.3 HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Since the home is regarded as the intermediate variable of social class, clear differences are noticeable when we compare the adjustments which working class and middle class children make in their responses to schooling. Generally, when the child enters school for the first time, he finds that this new environment is in many respects discontinuous with that of his home. This discontinuity, however, is not so great for the middle class child who is likely to have

experienced at home many forms of cultural and educational experiences which are similar to those of the school (Deutsch, 1967 : 65). These experiences imprint in him the belief that the school is central to, and continuous with, the totality of his life experiences.

On the other hand, the lower working class child is unlikely to have the same continuity. The experiences of his home and of his subculture rarely provide him with the mechanisms for internalising success or surviving failure in school. Support from the family is difficult to obtain, especially if he is continually failing in school. For most lower working class children, the school may be regarded as middle class orientated. They come to school unprepared in the basic skills on which the curriculum is founded. When there are wide discrepancies between the home and school environments successive failures lead to decreased motivation and poorer academic performances.

There is, in fact, a great deal of evidence that social class and home environment have a considerable effect on academic achievement. For example, a United States national follow-up study of about a thousand high school senior students showed that there were great differences in educational attainment between upper middle class students of high ability and those of working class students of similar ability (Banks, 1976 : 69). This study also showed that those of high ability and high economic status were more likely to graduate from college. Similar findings are reported by Sewell from a follow-up study of high school students. Graduates of high academic ability, but who are from the lower social classes are less likely to attend a college (Banks, 1976 : 70).

Evidence of this sort can also be cited in the United Kingdom.

Data collected by both the *Crowther Report* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 15 to 18, 1959 : 19), and the *Robbins Report* (Report of the Committee on Higher Education, 1963 : Appendix 1 : 42) show a similar pattern of relationships between social class, home background and educational achievement. In a survey of national service recruits, the *Crowther Committee* found wide social class differences in the age of leaving school, even amongst those of very high ability (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 15 to 18, 1959 : 9). A survey of the *Robbins Committee* showed that children from lower working class families were less likely to go on to higher education. Another survey of national importance is that of Kellmer Pringle, Butler and Davis (1966) which showed that many *good* readers came from the upper social classes. Jackson (1964) found that, of a sample of 660 schools in England and Wales, the majority of the children of professional and managerial workers were in the upper streams.

#### 2.4 SOCIAL CLASSES IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

If the concept of social class is to be related to the Indian race group in South Africa, then this must first be done within the demographic context. This will make it clear that primarily the Indians belong to a race-stratified society, and the existence of social classes within the Indian group must be seen as a second-order stratification in the context of the wider society.

The Indian group is described in official population statistics as belonging to the *Asiatic* group. In South Africa, this term

refers to Indians and Chinese. Approximately 98 per cent of the Asiatics is made up of the Indian population, and a little over 80 per cent of Indian South Africans live in Natal. The heaviest concentration of Indians is found in the city of Durban and its suburbs. The distribution of Indians in relation to other race groups is shown in Table 2.1. The table also shows the numerical strength of Indians in the Republic of South Africa, in the province of Natal, and in the magisterial district of Durban and Pinetown.

TABLE 2.1

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF SOUTH AFRICA, NATAL AND  
DURBAN

	SOUTH AFRICA	NATAL	DURBAN AND PINETOWN
Bantu	15 036 360	1 109 040	103 189
Coloureds	2 021 430	66 140	42 270
Asians	618 140	512 060	167 942
Whites	3 726 540	434 410	192 560
TOTAL	21 402 470	2 121 650	505 961

SOURCES: (A) 1974, *South African Statistics*, Compiled by Dept. of Statistics, Pretoria: 1.5

(B) *Population Census, 1970*: Republic of S.A., Report No. 02-05-01. Table 1.

To be meaningful, this discussion on social class should be preceded by a brief history of Indians in this country. When Indians arrived in 1860 to work as indentured labourers on the sugar plantations of Natal, they brought with them the social aspects of traditional

Indian life such as caste and village organisation. They were identified as a distinct race group which became a permanent part of the racial stratification of South Africa.

Since the majority of the indentured labourers were at the base of the economic structure, and since they had very little or no western education, they were basically lower working class. Gradually, after their contracts expired they were free to take on new jobs. This gave rise to economic and social class differences (as distinct from caste differences). The cheap labour of the Indians was soon extended to the railways, dockyards, coal mines, municipal service and domestic employment (Kuper, 1960 : 8).

Economic and social class differences became even more pronounced with the arrival of a second group of Indians called *passengers*. They arrived at their own expense and under the ordinary immigration laws. The majority of this group entered commerce, mainly as traders.

In the course of time, the descendents of both the *indentured* and the *passenger* groups became increasingly conscious of the fact that entry to the more prestigious jobs and opportunities in the wider society depended on better educational qualifications. To accelerate the process of education, they built their own schools and motivated their children to attend them (Behr and Macmillan, 1971 : 421).

Subsequently, as a result of educational mobility, Indian South Africans became increasingly westernised. Though many traces of traditional Indian culture still characterise this race group, generally it is true to say that urbanisation and western education,

as well as occupational mobility have led to social class differences within the group. This became evident as Indians soon adapted themselves to the macro-structure of the South African society, its class structure and its competitive individual economy.

Social class differences in the contemporary Indian society are evident from official statistics in census data. For example, table 2.2 sets out the occupational categories to which economically active Indians belong. It is clear that the categories reflect the presence of the upper and lower middle classes, and the upper and lower working classes.

TABLE 2.2

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE ASIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA - 1970

CATEGORY	NUMBER
Professional, technical and related worker	9 690
Administrative and managerial worker	1 840
Clerical and related worker	26 100
Sales worker	31 350
Service worker	16 980
Farm and forestry worker, fisherman and hunter	6 880
Production and transport worker and labourer	73 800
TOTAL	166 640

SOURCE: 1974, *South African Statistics*, Compiled by Dept. of Statistics, Pretoria : 1.27.



The occupational trends also reveal that the better educated persons have more prestigious jobs and higher incomes. This means that the upper middle classes earn more than those who belong to the lower middle, and working classes. This characteristic of social class can be seen in the case of Indian South Africans in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3

ANNUAL INCOME BY OCCUPATION OF ASIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1970

	Nil	Below R200	R200- 399	R400- 599	R600- 799	R800- 999	R1 000 2 000	R2 000+
Professional, technical and related worker	130	160	340	650	630	910	4 570	2 300
Administrative and managerial worker	0	10	10	110	40	90	300	1 280
Clerical and related worker	390	1 060	1 590	3 790	4 440	3 790	9 170	1 940
Sales worker	720	1 490	2 820	3 930	3 750	2 650	9 520	6 470
Service worker	290	2 750	3 370	4 310	2 830	1 160	1 800	380
Farm and forestry worker, fish- erman and hunter	170	1 430	2 140	1 480	750	280	370	250
Production and transport worker and labourer	960	4 120	12700	17780	13480	8 520	13010	3 230

SOURCE: *Republic of South Africa, Population Census, 1970,*  
Department of Statistics, Report No. 02-01-06 : 69

The table reveals that professional, administrative and managerial workers who belong to the upper middle class have higher earning capacities than labourers who belong to the lower working class. However, the table does not make a clear distinction between skilled and unskilled workers in the category of production and transport worker.

The definition of social class also emphasises the fact that the upper social classes have higher levels of education. Unfortunately, the 1970 census data as reflected in the 1974 Statistical Year Book does not provide statistics directly related to occupational status and educational qualifications. However, it does provide this information indirectly by relating income to educational level. Table 2.4 sets out the relevant data.

TABLE 2.4

SCHOOL STANDARD BY INCOME OF ASIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA - 1970

INCOME	SCHOOL STANDARD					
	Nil	Class 1 & 2	Std. 1 - 3	Std. 4 - 6	Std. 7 - 9	Std. 10 and over
Below R200	9 020	320	3 360	6 800	1 890	610
R200-R399	4 870	340	4 520	8 950	1 810	330
R400-R599	3 420	290	5 050	1 792	5 690	700
R600-R999	1 900	170	4 790	24 610	10 240	2 320
R1000-R1999	1 030	90	3 010	13 140	11 380	7 050
R2000 and over	540	50	1 180	6 020	4 050	4 310

SOURCE: *Republic of South Africa, Population Census, 1970*

Dept. of Statistics, Report No. 02-01-03 : 156.

Table 2.4 shows quite clearly that those earning 2 000 rands per annum and over have higher educational qualifications than those earning below 400 rands per annum. In many cases, those in the former category have reached standard 10 or beyond. Those in the latter category generally have primary education, and in many cases they have few years of schooling.

Thus far, the discussion on social classes in the Indian group has been concerned mainly with occupational, economic and educational characteristics. This is a somewhat restricted definition of social class because such simple categorisations tend to overlook the fundamental issues of life styles and cultural values which are crucial to any discussion on social class. This restriction is unavoidable because research into social class is virtually non-existent in South Africa, and more particularly so with Indians.

However, despite this, whatever information is available to us does suggest that the majority of Indian South Africans belong to the working class, and there is a fair percentage who belong to the middle class. Evidence also suggests that there is a trend in upward social mobility in terms of education and occupation. This, then, is sufficient justification for conducting research into social class and education amongst Indians.

#### 2.4.1 Home Background of Indian South Africans

The impact of social class influences can be seen through an examination of the material, cultural and motivational aspects of the home background. In the case of the Indian home, these factors operate in a variety of ways, and such an examination

does not always indicate the exact nature of the social class composition. Nor does it enable us to assess the degree to which Indian South Africans have assimilated the dominant mainstream western culture in South Africa. The problem becomes even more complicated when an attempt is made to assess the impact of this dominant culture on Indian children from the middle and working classes.

However, there is sufficient evidence to support the view that Indians have:

*"selectively adopted many customs and values of the west. The traditional caste structure has virtually disappeared, and for it has been substituted class distinctions determined by wealth, education and occupation."* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1956 : 53)

Though certain traditional features of Indian life, such as religion and language have been entrenched, the extent to which this is so depends on the degree to which Indians have become multi-cultural in the wider South African society.

One of the traditional, distinguishing characteristics of the home background of Indians is the many religious and vernacular language groups. We find Hindus, Moslems, Christians, Buddhists and Zoroastrians. According to the 1970 population census 68,35 per cent of Asians in the Republic are Hindus; 20,17 per cent are Moslems, and the majority of the remaining 11,48 per cent are Christians (Republic of South

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Demographic statistics, expressed as percentages are based on figures extracted from the Republic of South Africa's 1970 Population Census Government Reports.

Africa, Statistics Year Book, 1974 : Table 1.37). Each of the religious groups has its own vernacular linguistic origin. For example, the Hindus are divided into four language groups : Tamil, Hindustani, Telegu and Gujerati. The Moslems are divided into the Urdu, Gujerati and Kutchi language groups. However, despite the heterogeneity of Indians by religion and vernacular languages, western social class influences can be seen in many aspects of family life.

One such influence is the material prosperity of the home, which can be judged according to the income of family members. A useful index, the Poverty Datum Line (P.D.L.), has been devised to estimate the theoretical minimum cost of living in urban areas in South Africa (Watts, 1967 : ii). The P.D.L. is based on the assumption that the theoretical minimum cost is the same for all race groups. In 1969 the P.D.L. for Durban was found to be R103,90. Therefore, at a very conservative estimate, R1 200 per annum may be used as the P.D.L. for annual income per household or family.

According to the 1970 census, 72 per cent of the Asian population of the Republic of South Africa earned below R1 200 per annum. Two per cent of this group were also unemployed (Republic of South Africa, Statistics Year Book, 1974 : Table 1.30). In Natal 69 per cent of Asian families earned below this amount (Republic of South Africa, Population Census, Families 1970 : Table C2, 206). In the Durban and Pinetown District 65 per cent of families were living below the P.D.L. (Republic of South Africa, Population Census, Families, 1970 : Table C4, 270).

These findings are similar to those of the University of Natal's

Indian Domestic Budget Survey of 1969 (Pillay and Ellison, 1969 : 20-23). This survey showed that 50 to 60 per cent of Indian households in Durban have incomes below the minimum cost of living, and approximately 30 to 40 per cent of households have incomes above the minimum.

In recent years, the heavy working class nature of Indian families has been accentuated by the increasing number of working mothers. This is especially the case in the poorer sections of the population. According to the Durban Indian Domestic Budget Survey, 13,6 per cent of the economically active population are females (Pillay and Ellison, 1969 : 28). The 1970 population census indicates that 18,27 per cent of the economically active Asian population of South Africa are females (Republic of South Africa, Statistics Year Book, 1974 : Table 1.30). Many of these are mothers who supplement the income of their families.

Another factor, closely associated with the economic status of the home, and a good indication of social class, is the educational level of the parents. The 1970 population census indicates that 19 per cent of Asian adults between the ages of 25 and 55 years have had no formal education. Eighteen per cent of this group received less than five years of primary schooling, or have not proceeded beyond standard three (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 02-01-03, 1971 : 139-140). For the Province of Natal, the census revealed that 26 per cent of persons between the ages of 25 and 55 years received no formal education, and 23 per cent have had less than five years of primary schooling (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 02-01-03, 1971 : 142)

Large numbers of poorly educated parents were also revealed in

surveys conducted by Ramphal (1961) in Durban, and by Maasdorp (1968) in Tongaat and Verulam. Ramphal (1961 : 194) found that nearly half the mothers in his study had not been to an English school. Maasdorp (1968 : 46) found that 18,6 per cent of fathers and 59,8 per cent of mothers in his survey had been given no formal education. He also revealed that 69,8 per cent of fathers and 38,2 per cent of mothers had between two to eight years of primary education. About 10,2 per cent had received high school education, and 1,7 per cent university and other forms of further education.

Poverty, and the low educational level of parents must also be seen in relation to size of family. Working class family life is generally characterised by large numbers. This is a clear feature of the Indian joint or extended family system, though in recent years this has gradually yielded to the nuclear family system.

Evidence of large families can be cited from the 1970 population census which reveals that 51,18 per cent of Asian families in the Republic have five or more children; 18,6 per cent have four children; and 28 per cent have two to three children (Republic of South Africa, Statistics Year Book, 1974 : Table 1.41.). In Natal, 53,94 per cent have five or more children; 18,32 per cent have four children; and 27,73 per cent have two to three children. In the Durban and Pinetown district, 49,73 per cent of Asian families have five or more children; 19,44 per cent have four children; and 30,81 per cent have two to three children. The average number of children per family is 4,8 (Republic of South Africa, Population Census, Families, 1970 : 228).

Seen in totality, one can infer from the evidence of poverty, the

low educational level of parents, the increase in the number of working mothers, and the presence of large families that in the Indian community the proportion belonging to the working class out-weighs that belonging to the middle class. About 60 to 70 per cent of the population are working class.

#### 2.4.2 Social Class, Home Background and Educational Achievement of Indians

Though there is a lack of research concerning the social class composition of Indian schools, it is safe to conclude that in most schools we find children from both social classes. Research on the nature of home environment is also virtually non-existent. However, the lack of this kind of research is not peculiar to Indian Education in South Africa. There is almost a total lack of large and small scale studies which attempt to analyse social class differences in education.

However, there are certain studies undertaken amongst Indians in Natal. These have investigated environmental variables which have certain indirect implications for social class and education. They are not directly concerned with social class or home-school relations, but were conducted mainly as independent studies for university research institutes or as unpublished dissertations for advanced degrees. Among them are the studies of Gopaulsingh (1960), Ramphal (1961), Bughwan (1970), Maasdorp (1968), and those of the University of Natal, Department of Economics. All of these point in a very general way to a variety of factors related to home background. This includes poverty, educational level of parents, family structure, overcrowding, the use of English and vernacular languages, and parental aspirations for children.



Generally these studies point to the poor socio-economic status of Indians in Natal, and with particular reference to Durban. Closely associated with this matter of status is lack of education, lack of training, lowly skilled jobs, and low incomes.

These circumstances are prevalent among the lower working class, and children from this group are likely to underachieve in school. Underachievement in these circumstances may be attributed to several causes, and of these the influences of poor socio-economic conditions, and the complex interplay of certain negative influences in the home are especially significant. Such underachieving children have been variously described as *culturally deprived*, *culturally disadvantaged*, or simply as deprived or disadvantaged. In Indian schools, undoubtedly there are many such children who come from the lower working class.

With particular reference to the Indian community, Behr (1974) analysed some of the causes of underachievement in primary and secondary schools. Amongst the causes which he considers, he mentions the cultural milieu of the home. As supportive evidence he cites van der Walt's (1972) survey of the incidence of failure in Indian schools between 1966-1970. Though more pupils are staying on in primary schools for longer periods, the number that stays on till the end of secondary school is comparatively small.

This problem of extensive failure and early school leaving is a notable characteristic of the lower working class. Though no references are made to the social class background of the pupils, van der Walt's survey contains ample evidence of the large drop-out rate amongst Indian pupils. For example, he found that in primary schools, pupils failed at an average annual rate of 10,3 per cent per standard. In

the high schools during the same period 20 out of every 100 standard six pupils reached standard ten in a minimum period of five years.

These findings are supported by a 1971 Government Report which indicates that between 1962-1971, 27,7 per cent of Asian pupils in South Africa reached standard ten. In Natal, 27,3 per cent of pupils reached standard ten during the same period (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 21-03-05, 1971 : 38-39).

The 1970 population census also indicates the large drop-out rate in Asian schools. Since the present study is mainly concerned with pupils in standard four, it would be useful to consider the drop-out which occurs between standard four and standard ten, or between the ages of 12 to 18 years old. In South Africa, 21,8 per cent of pupils between the ages of 10 to 14 are in standard four. Four comma eight nine (4,89) per cent of students in the 18 year old age group are in standard ten. (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 02-01-03, 1971 : 139). In Natal, 22,04 per cent of pupils in the 10 to 14 year old group are in standard four. Three comma seven nine (3,79) per cent of students in the 18 year old age group are in standard ten (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 02-01-03, 1971 : 142). This problem of early leaving, and the large drop-out rate is summed up by van der Walt (1972 : 18-21) when he says:

*"... these drop outs and underachievers represent a tragic waste of human resources, considering that we need the fullest productivity."*

Malherbe expressed a similar concern about the waste of talent in the Indian, African and Coloured communities. Basing his argument

on the 1960 population census, he showed that there were vast untapped sources of manpower in the South African society (Horrell, 1969 : 86-87).

However, in the context of the present research the available statistics on underachievement and drop out rates are of limited value. They are insufficient to enable a global interpretation of the causes of underachievement, or of home-school relations within the larger context of equality of educational opportunity. They hardly touch upon the influences of social class.

## CHAPTER THREE

## 3. PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to make a brief survey of the pattern of primary education for Indians in South Africa, with specific reference to Natal. This is necessary since the present investigation is relevant to primary education.

It is also necessary to examine the pattern and development of primary education in the sociological context. The aim, in this case, is to show that in the development and provision of education there is a pursuit of certain values and beliefs. Through the dissemination of these values and beliefs, education attempts to make people similar as well as different. Thus, a society's key values or ideologies are transmitted through its educational system. Education is deeply involved in this process.

Education may therefore be regarded as a historically complex social institution. If we are to gain insight into the values implicit in parental involvement, in curriculum development, and into the history of Indian education, there is a need to examine Indian education in this light. This will also help us to realise that much of what goes on in schools also goes on in the rest of society.

Education is not mere socialisation, but the beliefs and values transmitted by schools are also related to the broad aspects of social structural relationships of the family, peer groups, religious and leisure organisations. Pupils also learn to relate themselves to

the political, economic and stratificational systems. The educational system should therefore be seen as a complex, historically evolved position in relation to other aspects of the social structure and process. It is in this context that the examination of Indian primary education should be undertaken.

### 3.2 BRIEF HISTORY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR INDIANS

Since their arrival in Natal, the Indian immigrants attached great importance to the education of their children. The pioneering efforts in providing this education were made by Christian missionaries and later by the Government of Natal. The community itself made great sacrifices and contributed large sums of money towards the cost of building schools.

The first efforts were humble. According to the Indian Commission Report of 1872 there were four schools for Indian children in Natal (Naidoo, 1976 : 1). The Commission urged the Natal Government to take measures to educate the children and even to consider making education compulsory for them.

By 1875 the position had improved, and Indian children were allowed to attend white schools in Durban. This provision existed for twenty years. About the year 1875 an Indian Immigrant School Board was established, and it was responsible for the promotion of the education of children of the Indian Immigration population in Natal. It was empowered to establish primary schools only, and capitation

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Historical information on primary education for Indians is available from several sources. The information presented in this study was obtained from Behr and Macmillan (1971), Behr (1978), Naidoo (1976), and Lazarus (1966).

grants were made in respect of attendance and results.

When Responsible Government was established in Natal in 1893 the Board was abolished and Indian education became the responsibility of the Provincial Education Department. Progress was slow and until 1900 standard four was the highest standard of the primary school. However, not many pupils reached this stage. Most of the children were in the sub-standards and they usually left school after two to three years of schooling.

By 1910 more schools were established, most of them being state-aided. Primary education also gained momentum by the passing of the Provincial Subsidies Act in 1925. Grants were made to each province on the basis of the average attendance of the pupils in the previous year. Despite this, only a third of children of school-going age were at school, and the Government of India negotiated for better educational facilities for Indians in South Africa. As a result, the Cape Town Agreement was drawn up in January 1927. In terms of this Agreement, the province of Natal was to appoint a Commission of Enquiry into Indian education. Kichlu, who represented the Indian government, headed this commission which found that existing educational facilities were very poor (Lazarus : 1966 : 20). The Cape Town Agreement also recommended that the system of grants-in-aid should be changed. The recommendation was that the total subsidy earned by Indian pupils should be allocated to Indian education.

As a result of the Cape Town Agreement some improvement was made, and much of this can be attributed to the sacrifices made by the Indian community itself (Naidoo, 1976 : 3). It was not uncommon



for schools to be built without state grants. This is evidenced by the fact that between 1928 to 1931 community efforts lead to an increase from 52 to 78 primary schools.

Despite the recommendations of the Cape Town Agreement and the efforts of the Indian community the Broome Commission of 1937 reported that the vast majority of Indian children did not acquire the rudiments of primary education. It recommended the introduction of a modified system of free and compulsory education.

However, immediate introduction of compulsory education was not possible because there were several problems still to be overcome. Some of these were the lack of school accommodation, lack of qualified teachers, and early school leaving among pupils. To overcome the problem of school accommodation, the Indian community of Natal erected many school buildings on its own initiative. The province encouraged this practice by making a grant towards the cost of school buildings. This amounted to one third of the building costs, but by 1943 the building grant for new schools was raised to 50 per cent of the cost of erection (Behr and Macmillan, 1971 : 424).

After 1945 there were increasing demands for primary and secondary education. More boys were staying on at school, and for the first time many girls were also staying on at school. Thus, the school building programme could not keep pace with the increased demand for schooling. A system of *platoon* or double shift classes for primary education was introduced. Despite this, by 1952 about 37 000 pupils were not accommodated. By 1963 there were still about 30 000 who were out of school (Behr and Macmillan, 1971 : 424).

The part played by the Indian community in providing its own school accommodation can be gauged by its financial contributions to the cost of building government-aided schools. In 1965 there were 219 such schools, and it is estimated that the contribution of the Indian community towards these buildings during the period 1927 to 1965 was about R2 000 000 (Lazarus, 1966 : 22).

In 1966 Indian education was taken over by the state Department of Indian Affairs. Since then the Division of Education of this Department has embarked on a school building programme aimed at accommodating every child of school-going age. This has resulted in an increase in the number of primary schools, and a corresponding increase in the number of secondary schools. By 1970 education became free up to standard ten. Further improvements were seen in 1973 when a modified scheme of compulsory education was introduced.

### 3.3 PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Parental and community involvement in education depends very much on the contributions which parents can make to their children's education. In the case of the Indian settlers of the 1860s, the majority had not received western education. These shortcomings, together with the political and social discrimination suffered by the community, limited their participation in education. Although the majority of the immigrants were illiterate, they were not uneducated in their eastern customs. Some were versed in the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Purannas*. Many were also acquainted with religious poems and sacred songs. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between those who were illiterate in English but literate in their vernacular.



The early immigrants and the succeeding generations were nevertheless, keenly interested in their children's western education. However, in the beginning they depended on the decisions of the missionaries, and later on the Government of Natal. In the decades that followed the involvement of Indian parents was limited mainly to providing school buildings when there was a shortage of accommodation. This was particularly so during the period when education in Natal was controlled by the province, and because education was not compulsory the province was not legally obliged to provide schools for all children of school-going age. The community took the initiative to build its own schools, rather than allow its children to grow up illiterate. Thus, education became largely a responsibility of the community which had to provide the land and a part of the building costs.

The efforts of the community resulted in the erection of state-aided schools. School committees, which were formed in various areas of Natal, raised funds and purchased land on which to build schools. The committees were formed voluntarily since there was no legal compulsion to do so. They were known as *school proprietors* and they functioned very actively till 1930. From 1931 state-aided schools were built on a pound for pound basis. In the 1950s the community was assisted in its efforts by the Natal Indian Teachers' Society School Building Trust Fund. The Trust owns two schools (Naidoo, 1976 : 3).

Though such community efforts were praiseworthy, and parental interest in establishing school buildings was keen, parents were not encouraged to make recommendations or suggestions about the kind of education that their children should receive. One of the papers delivered at the 1976 Annual Conference of the South African

Indian Teachers' Association made reference to this lack of parental involvement in the following terms:

*"Our education has been planned for us and for historical reasons our only yardstick has been, 'what is good for the white child is good enough for our child...!'"* (Naidoo, 1976 : 7)

However, one of the first recommendations made by Indian parents was in the sphere of religious education. The Wilks Report of 1946 pointed to the particular circumstances of Indian education, and recommended the introduction of religious instruction. In 1955, acting on this recommendation, the South African Hindu Maha Sabha applied to the Natal Provincial Administration for the introduction of religious education in schools. The administration agreed to include this type of instruction in state-aided schools but only at the discretion of the school grantees of such schools. Thus, it was only in this restricted field that the community had some say in offering suggestions about the content of the child's education. Hitherto, no statutory provision had existed for parental or community participation in education.

However, when the state took over Indian education in 1966 it did make statutory provision for parental involvement through the establishment of education committees. The relevant regulations concerning the establishment and functions of such committees are contained in the Indians Education Act, 1965, further amended by regulations contained in Government Notice No. 1994 of November 1970.

According to these regulations, an education committee at each

school acts as a liaison between home and school, and community and the Division of Education. Its functions are to inspect buildings, equipment and to make recommendations to the Director of Education; to collect money for the benefit of the school fund and to make representations to the Director concerning part-time classes (Behr, 1978 : 249). This principle of home, school and community liaison is further reinforced by the National Education Policy Act, 1967 (Behr, 1978 : 269-275). This act, which is relevant to white education in South Africa, also has certain implications for Indian education.

The education committees function as individual units. Statutory provision does not exist to enable them to function collectively as a single body. Despite this, the Indian community of Natal has voluntarily formed the Natal Association of School Education Committees. Recently, this association held a conference on *The Role of the Community in Education*. One of the addresses which dealt with the role of education committees in Indian schools contained the following criticism:

*"The functions of education committees are so limited that it has left a vacuum in our people. We are forced to accept what is prescribed for us. These are nothing but fund raising committees." (Pillay, 1977).*

One of the recommendations of this conference was that the functions of education committees should be extended so that parents can be critically involved in their children's education. Specific mention

was made of the influence that parents can exert on the choice of content of the school curriculum.

However, the question of critical involvement by parents is one that is not easy to resolve. Critical involvement implies that parents should possess the necessary skills and expertise in education. Parents need to have a standard of education that will enable them to understand the approaches to present day education so that they will be able to choose wisely for their children and provide the necessary motivation at home. This is a worldwide problem, and is by no means confined to Indian education in South Africa.

#### 3.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A discussion of parental and community involvement in education can hardly be separated from an examination of the curriculum designed for the children of that community. This is important because curriculum in the broadest sense refers to the totality of learning experiences that confront pupils in the classroom. It must therefore be vitally related to community life, interpreting for the child salient and significant features of community life. The subject matter and experiences of the curriculum should of necessity reflect community and societal values.

In this sense, if we examine the historical development of the curriculum in the context of traditional Indian life, it will be observed that there is hardly any social or spiritual basis for the curriculum. From the very beginning, the curriculum in Indian education did not fulfil any set objective. There was no recognised

philosophy on which it was based. The only guiding principle in these early years was that literacy in English was to be the sole aim of education.

For example, between 1869 to 1877 when Brooks was superintendent of Education in Natal, one of the prime objectives was to equip the Indian pupil with a working knowledge of English. A few spelling books and some Irish reading books were used to achieve this objective (Maharaj 1956 : 11-12). Gradually the curriculum was extended to include more subjects. Indian education was more systematically organised between 1878 to 1904, during the superintendentships of Russell and Barnett. Subjects like history, geography, hygiene, art, physical training, scripture lessons, crafts, and main language were introduced into the curriculum (Maharaj, 1956 : 11).

From the foregoing account, it will be clear that the curriculum for Indians was based on western values. However, the first indications of a clearly stated policy of western education for Indians was evident in the recommendations of the Dyson Commission of 1927 (Rambiritch, 1959 : 219). This commission was set up as a result of the Cape Town Agreement between the governments of India and South Africa. It was agreed that Indian South Africans should receive a western education, similar to that of the whites, and that the South African government was to take all possible steps to uplift the Indian community.

Indian education changed very slowly, but one significant change which took place in 1929 was that for the first time Indian pupils were allowed to write the Natal Primary School Certificate Examination (Maharaj, 1956 : 51). The subjects that could be taken were: English A or Dutch A, mathematics, history, geography,

English B or Dutch B, science, woodwork, domestic science, hygiene, and drawing. Though the range of subjects appears to be wide, in reality there was a limited choice since some of these subjects were not taught in Indian schools. For example, Afrikaans was introduced in only a few selected schools in 1937.

Though the curriculum was essentially the same as that for white schools, the one aspect in which it differed was in the area of religious education. In white schools, the Christian religion was taught, whereas in Indian schools this was taught in mission schools only. In state schools provision was made for moral education. This was to cater for children of all religious faiths, and was considered to be an adequate substitute for Christian religious education since the Indian community was made up of Christians, Moslems and Hindus. From its very inception religious education presented difficulty in Indian schools. For example, in the 1880s Indian parents were given the option of either having their children attend lessons on the Bible or asking for their exclusion from such lessons (Maharaj, 1956 : 174). The majority of Hindu and Moslem parents chose the latter since they were concerned to guard and preserve their religious traditions.

Generally, the primary school curriculum in the 1900s was narrow, formal and inflexible. However, with the availability of better qualified teachers and general improvement in educational facilities, the range of subjects became gradually wider in the years that followed. But in spite of this, by the beginning of 1964 very few primary schools were offering the following subjects: physical education, housecraft, handicraft, music, Afrikaans, mathematics and a third language.

However, when differentiated education was introduced in the early 1970s, the primary school curriculum was extended. Though differentiated education is generally associated with the secondary school curriculum, it is the primary school curriculum which launches this programme. At present the curriculum in the Indian primary school is not finely differentiated, and differentiation is based on the method of presentation, not on the content of the syllabus. The curriculum consists of six compulsory examination subjects, namely, English, Afrikaans, general mathematics, history, geography and elementary science. The compulsory non-examination subjects are: right living, physical education, health education, art, music, handicraft, and school guidance (Pillay and Naguran, 1976 : 20).

Although the educational programme in the primary school is aimed at providing a general education, it is nevertheless linked with the educational programme of the secondary school in the subjects that are offered. In the broader context, it may therefore be asserted that contemporary primary education aims at equipping pupils with the necessary academic and vocational skills for participation in a western capitalistic society.

### 3.5 CULTURAL VALUES AND THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum of the Indian primary school which is aimed at preparing the child for participation in the macro-South African society is a realistic one. Although the Indians are a small minority of the total South African population they are significantly affected by the structure of the wider society, and more particularly its western influences. This is so despite the fact that they are probably more diversified in religion, language, and place of origin than any other section of the country's multi-racial population.

They are exposed to the macrocosmic culture patterns of mainstream institutions such as schools, places of employment, recreational establishments and so on. Therefore, it is essential that they be effectively educated to participate in these institutions.

The problem of determining a relevant pattern of cultural values which should shape the curriculum is not easy to resolve. This is because of the diversity of linguistic and religious groups, and because of the impact of the western social class structure within the Indian community. The question of fundamental values of contemporary Indian life is even further complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult to assess accurately the extent to which Indians have assimilated aspects of the dominant mainstream western culture, or have retained their traditional eastern culture.

Perhaps, studies of subcultural differences, of the type carried out in Britain by Bernstein (1964), and Craft (1974) would be useful in explaining the complexity of value patterns underlying Indian life in South Africa. Such studies would enable us to examine the collective multi-cultural behaviour of this group. If each Indian subcultural segment, that is, religious, linguistic or social class group is considered, then we notice that they draw simultaneously on a distinctive pattern of standardised Indian group behaviour and the mainstream dominant western culture. Most Indian children are socialised in this way from an early age and this continues throughout life. Therefore, it is very difficult to draw a fine distinction between fundamental and peripheral values, or between contemporary and traditional values.

A further difficulty in this regard is the fact that there is a



general absence of studies which examine the social and cultural values of contemporary Indian life; that is, studies which take into consideration both the changing patterns of family life, and community and societal values. However, the only study which deals with these aspects within a restricted framework is that of Rambiritch (1959). It is important to note that this study was confined to the Hindu sector of the Indian population and deals mainly with fundamental values of Hindu philosophy.

Rambiritch examined the prevailing system of education for Indians, and in the context of Hindu thought, he says that the system divorces the child from his physical and social surroundings and that the curriculum is almost entirely unrelated to Indian life (Rambiritch, 1959 : 394). However, there is a need to be cautious of a generalisation such as this because this study does not consider the values of Islam, Christianity and Buddhism which have also contributed to Indian life in South Africa. Nor has Rambiritch seriously considered the impact of western influences in the acculturation process.

Nevertheless, the value of this study lies in the fact that it deals with a major section of the Indian population, and considers in some depth their traditional values in relation to education. For example, Rambiritch says the higher the Hindu proceeds in western education "*... the further he is removed from his philosophy ... he is weaned away from his traditional culture.*" (Rambiritch, 1959 : 382).

The significance of this statement can be seen only if one has read carefully the gist of Hindu philosophy as contained in the *Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, and the Ramayana*. The purpose of education in Hindu philosophy is to help the

individual in the liberation of the soul. Control of the senses, detachment, and suppression of desire are the necessary prerequisites. Rambiritch says that the curriculum of the Indian school hardly prepares the child for such freedom (Rambiritch, 1959 : 365).

He also says that while religious education is not taught in Indian schools, yet Christian beliefs influence much of English literature and history.

*"While there are many points where Hinduism and Christianity seem to converge, there are also several situations where the teachings of the Bible conflict with that of Vedanta. From his study of English literature he learns that the soul either goes to heaven or to hell and remains there in eternity. In his own philosophy, he is told of the inevitability of rebirths."* (Rambiritch, 1959 : 382)

This study is thus a useful indication of the extent to which western influence on Indian education in South Africa is in conflict with traditional Hindu thinking. While recognising this, we must also be careful not to overlook the fact that increasingly many Hindus have become alienated from a rigid adherence to traditional beliefs. However, while retaining their identity as Hindus, they have become socialised into many western habits. Therefore, it may be safe to conclude that the majority of the present generation accept the fact that participation in the macro-South African society is in effect participation in a

competitive materialistic world.

Hence they see the western orientated curriculum, the differentiated system of education, and the acquisition of vocational education as realistic education. Nevertheless, if these could be integrated with traditional values such as those mentioned by Rambiritch, the curriculum could become a more balanced one. Such an integrated curriculum would reflect the vital values of the community, and those of the wider society.

### 3.6 PRESENT PATTERN OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The present pattern of primary education is based on the system of differentiated education announced by the Minister of National Education in 1971 (Krog, 1972 : 18). This system which incorporates both primary and secondary education was introduced in 1973 in accordance with the requirements of the National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967 which is the blueprint for White education in South Africa, but its influences are also evident in Indian education.

The philosophy underlying the new differentiated system of education is that it provides for education according to the needs of the individual, and for equality of educational opportunity. The premise on which it is based is that children get an education that suits their skills, interests, abilities and aptitudes. In keeping with this philosophy the primary school curriculum is designed as a foundation and support for the curriculum of the secondary school. (In turn, the high school curriculum has been extended to ensure a better balance between academic and vocational subjects, and a greater use of school guidance.)

It is therefore necessary to look briefly at differentiated education, with particular reference to the primary school phases. Within the framework of differentiated education primary and secondary education is of twelve years duration. This is divided into four school phases of four years each, namely:

- (a) The Junior Primary Phase
- (b) The Senior Primary Phase
- (c) The Junior Secondary Phase
- (d) The Senior Secondary Phase

In each of these phases, the educational programme caters for the different needs, aptitudes and interests of pupils. The objective in each phase is to prepare the child for the next phase. It is hoped that eventually this will enable pupils to choose courses which are best suited to their needs and interests.

The functions of each phase are outlined in Circular 28 of 1972 of the Division of Indian Education. According to this circular, the function of the junior primary phase is *"to adapt children to school life and to teach them basic skills, particularly reading and number concepts."* The senior primary phase is geared to develop the skills and *"necessary background to undertake secondary education profitably."*

Class teaching, rather than subject teaching, is the basis of the educational programme in these two phases. In the junior primary phase the class teacher is responsible for the presentation of all subject matter. All children within the class learn the same material. At this stage, school guidance is offered as an auxiliary service.

In the senior primary phase, there is no differentiation in the content of the curriculum. Instead, it is based on the method of presentation of the subject matter. A class teacher teaches most of the subjects, except for such subjects as music, art or handwork. These are taught by specialist teachers. There are six compulsory, exam. subjects: English, Afrikaans, general mathematics, history, geography and elementary science. Compulsory non-examination subjects are right living, physical education, health education, art, music, and handicraft. School guidance is offered as an auxiliary service.

Though the present study is not directly concerned with assessing the quality of primary education, it is useful to keep in mind that when assessing the effectiveness of the present pattern of primary education, there is a need to examine it in the context of the system of differentiated education as a whole, and in terms of the objectives which this system sets out to achieve. This means that the nature of the macro-society, and the cultural influences of the home background of pupils must also be taken into account. This will enable us to question the extent to which primary education caters for individualisation, equality of opportunity, and for effective participation in the wider society.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## 4. SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES AND MODELS RELATED TO RESEARCH ON SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The reason for including this discussion of the various sociological theories is to explain why the present study is based on an integrated theoretical framework. It will also be useful in explaining the main theoretical approaches to home-school studies, and as a means of understanding the reasons for the shifting emphasis in the research studies discussed in chapter five of this study.

The integrated theoretical framework of the present study can be seen in the *closed*-type enquiry on the structure of family life, and in the *open*-type investigation of parent-child interaction. This approach is founded on the theories of positivism, symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology; and on the *structural functional*, *conflict*, and *interactionist* models - all of which are discussed in the present chapter.

It must also be pointed out that the interpretation of the results of this study is based on its theoretical framework. This in turn is related to the micro-sociology of the family, and the macro-sociology of the wider society.

It is also necessary to point out that though the chapter begins with a consideration of the various sociological theories and then goes on to discuss research models, the theories could never be fully understood without some discussion of the research models

with which they are linked. Positivism, for example, contributes substantially to the macro-sociological model of *structural functionalism*. Symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology contribute to the micro-sociological *conflict* and *interactionist* models. Therefore, the models must not be considered as distinct from the theories.

#### 4.2 SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH IN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

The study of sociology of education is made up of an increasing number of perspectives, ranging from traditional positivism to the more recent symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology (Eggleston, 1974 : 1-12). It is possible for sociologists of education to select from a range of approaches, and even to apply combinations of them to their research studies. Studies on social class and home background have benefitted greatly in utilising the many theories.

Positivism is the earliest of the research directions which characterised sociology as a whole, and sociology of education in particular. As a reaction to positivism, in the late fifties and the sixties in the U.S.A., and in the seventies in England, several *new* or revived sociological perspectives became apparent. These include symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and the sociology of knowledge. For the purpose of this study only symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology will be considered in some detail. It is necessary to review these theories to see how they explain the concepts of social class and education, and to resolve some of the conflicts apparent in the

controversy between scientific positivism and the reactions to it. The main reactions stem from social phenomenology and ethnomethodology. For example, if social class and family were researched through positivist techniques, the findings would be structural, normative and conservative. On the other hand, social phenomenology and ethnomethodology would focus attention on interpretative, qualitatively changing aspects of family life and the class structure.

It is clear, then, that there may be two, three or even four sociological theories applicable to studies on social class and education, depending on the research techniques used and the ideological assumptions underlying their legitimation. Therefore, to explore the essence of social class, home background and education, the researcher should widen his vision on the essence of his problem. He should be less committed to an allegiance to any particular theory, and more dedicated to his investigation. The present study therefore attempts to incorporate relevant aspects of both the old and new approaches to the study of social class, home background and education. *"Two or three forms of social explanation are always better (more complete, less partial) than one!"* (Davies, 1976 : 7).

What follows in the present study, then, is a description of the main sociological theories used in the interpretation of social class, home background and education. The discussion of these theories also attempts to trace the shift in emphasis from scientific positivism to the so-called *new* sociology of education. It should be noted that there is little to be gained in a study of home,



school, and social class without grasping the concept of *social reality*. This certainly cannot be explained or exhausted by any single sociological theory. Hence, there is need for an eclectic approach.

#### 4.2.1 Positivism

Positivism is basically a conservative sociological theory. The positivist tradition in social research can be traced back to the birth of the study of sociology in the nineteenth century in France. It also arose independently in Germany and America during the same period (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 32). It was through the efforts of Auguste Comte (1798-1857), the founder of the positivist school of philosophy, that the study of sociology gained much ground. Comte's conservatism led to the development of a tradition in sociology aimed at discovering the laws of the social order and the means to maintain such order. The *structural functional* model discussed in the latter part of this chapter stems largely from this school of thought.

Comte's positivist sociology was backed up by his aim in science which was "*to know in order to predict in order to control*" (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 33). Since positivist sociology aims at investigating social phenomena through scientific observations and recording of facts, social phenomena are reduced to given observables and to measurable and controllable units. Thus, when researching social institutions like the family and the school, the major technique of enquiry of positivism is the social survey by means of the closed questionnaire. This is evident in several studies of the 1950s in England which dealt with: the organisational

structure of schools, the social origins of measured intelligence, and home background (Eggleston, 1976 : 1-12). These studies are reviewed in the next chapter.

It must also be pointed out that positivism used the scientific method which was appropriate to most early psychological research studies. However, sociological unlike psychological research is more pertinent to exploring sociological as opposed to scientific perspectives. Thus, the main criticism of the application of scientific positivism to social science is that it entails a passive model of man. A study of family life, for example, focusses attention primarily on superficial observable forms of behaviour, and overlooks the need to research subjective experiences and fundamental values. The social phenomenologist's criticism of this approach is that it investigates social experiences as if they were exclusively concrete and tangible.

It is also argued that the methods and the theory of the natural sciences which positivism adopts are inappropriate when applied to the study of man. For example, Bernstein says that "*man reflecting upon man is qualitatively a different relationship from man reflecting upon objects. How can man then reflect upon man in such a way that he is not transformed into an object through the means of his reflection?*" (Bernstein, 1973b : 13).

The argument is that this kind of normative approach is inappropriate because, unlike scientifically controlled phenomena, human beings are neither consistently logical nor reliably predictable in their behaviour. Since sociological research is more directly concerned with explorations of whole life situations of large populations

in their everyday context, this scientific approach appears to be at variance with the layman's conceptions of the everyday world.

This pure science psychological model has been recently challenged by what is now called the *new* sociology of education (Hurn, 1976 : 105). British and American sociologists have been attracted by the *interpretative* theories of symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology and ethnomethodology (Williamson, 1974 : 3-12). However, it should be noted that this *new* sociology is not really a theory, but is made up of a variety of theories. Compared with the restrictions of positivism, the new sociology is more liberal in the range and type of questions that can be asked about family life, social class and education.

Although there are distinct characteristics in each of the new approaches, nevertheless they share certain common features. These include the belief that each man interprets his social environment in the way in which he perceives it, and therefore there is need to examine carefully any taken for granted assumptions about the construction of the social order. They are concerned not only with explanations, but also with descriptions of social reality. Each of these will now be examined, especially in the contexts in which they interpret social class, home background and education.

#### 4.2.2 Symbolic Interactionism

This theory focusses attention on the more intricate processes underlying social life, such as roles and patterns of interaction.

It therefore presents a more comprehensive picture of social reality than positivism.

Symbolic Interactionism is linked with the name of George Mead (1863-1931) of the Chicago school. Though he was a professor of philosophy, his influence has been greater on American sociology than on philosophy (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 48). His major work, *Mind, Self and Society* (1934) Chicago: University of Chicago Press, describes the principles on which social interactionism rests. Mead analysed the intricacies of how the human self is created by social processes. His thesis is that it is impossible to understand man except as he can be understood in his social context. In this respect, he made considerable use of the *role theory*.

This theory explains that the social world is essentially a symbolic world and that collective action is shaped by the meanings that individuals attach to their own behaviour and to the behaviour of others. For example, symbolic interactionist accounts of family life, focus attention on the process by which members acquire their respective roles and how they come to define the roles of other members of the family. Socialisation of this kind is viewed as problematic and uncertain, and can be illustrated in situations where middle class teachers' and working class children's definitions of roles can differ. Symbolic interactionism is therefore concerned with exploring the ways in which human beings present themselves to others, and the sociologist of education who uses this approach intends to explore patterns of negotiations or interactions.

When social reality is studied in this way, the researcher needs to use personalised techniques of research. Symbolic interactionism, therefore, favours case studies of ongoing activities as opposed to the closed questionnaire which is favoured by positivism. Participant observation, the use of tape recorders and video machines enable symbolic interactionist studies to take a closer look at the culture or life style in the home (Bernstein, 1973b : 10).

This social theory focusses attention on the social *process*, *interaction*, and *negotiation* in which parents and their children participate. The researcher can carry out a variety of investigations into the interpersonal exchange underlying particular kinds of life style in the home. Studies conducted in this way claim to provide a more comprehensive account of home background than the supposedly passive model on which positivism rests.

The argument advanced to support this claim is that the researcher is compelled to examine the culture of the home from various points of view before he can attempt to define *normality*. For example, Davies points out that teachers who are insensitive to the culture of their pupils may erroneously label them as *dull*, *underachieving*, and so on (Davies, 1973 : 21-28). This leads to the creation of pupil identities and taken for granted assumptions about their potential. Once pupils are labelled, they tend to be constantly re-labelled in the same way. Each new piece of information that becomes available causes the label to become more firmly fixed.

In this labelling process, the school plays a vital role. Swift (1969 : 44), for example, says that schools screen, assess and grade pupils, and this has far-reaching influences on their life chances. Symbolic interactionism is therefore concerned with

the process by which children are selected, graded and labelled. This is a very important function of the school since it accommodates children from various home backgrounds, cultures and subcultures. Before it transmits, perpetuates and develops attitudes and ideologies, it must consider carefully the social class differences and home backgrounds of its pupils (Meighan, 1973 : 166-167).

#### 4.2.3 Social Phenomenology

Social phenomenology is linked with symbolic interactionism and is concerned with the way in which the individual perceives reality in social situations. Like symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology rejects the application of pure scientific principles in the interpretation of man's social and cultural experiences. It argues that when man is considered to be just an object which can be measured and calculated, his true social and cultural identity becomes obliterated. Therefore, social phenomenology deviates from the purely scientific approach by using techniques which reveal the true nature of man's social and cultural existence (Dale, 1974 : 53-64). In this sense, social phenomenology and existential phenomenology may be said to be similar. However, unlike existential phenomenology, social phenomenology is not concerned with explaining the complete nature of human existence, but more specifically with what constitutes social reality for those living in particular cultural situations. It seeks to discover and explain the nature of the social world associated with particular cultures and subcultures. Thus, social phenomenology explains man's cultural world in terms of the many meanings which

he attaches to the social phenomena in his world. These meanings arise from his encounter and interactions with others in his environment.

The sociologist who uses this approach considers the study of the individual's social construction of reality as being of prime importance to the understanding of social life. Thus, the social phenomenological approach concentrates on a wide range of strategies for examining social life. These enable the researcher to see man not as a passive recipient of his world but as an active interpreter and constructor of it. In this respect, social phenomenology differs from conventional positivism. It emphasises the fact that individuals see situations differently, and therefore each individual constructs his social reality through on-going negotiations with others (Dale, 1974 : 53).

This phenomenological sociology stemmed from the work of Alfred Schutz (1899-1959), the Austrian philosopher and sociologist. He applied the phenomenological approach of the philosopher, Edmund Husserl to the study of sociology (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 22). Schutz explained that human beings have the capacity of living in quite different worlds of meaning. He stressed that through interactions individuals pass from one world of meaning to another. Therefore, if the sociologist wishes to understand how individuals construct reality, he has to study the assumptions and rules underlying the reality of everyday life.

The social phenomenologist, therefore, begins by examining things only as they appear as social phenomena to man. This stresses

the importance of understanding the individual's social world, and especially the roles which he plays in it. Thus, the sociologist must examine the role of the individual in two perspectives - firstly, through the actor's own interpretation of his act, and secondly through the observer's interpretation of it. The sociologist can then examine the process by which different individuals constitute and interpret their social worlds. Every perspective of reality is important because *"... the world must be recognised as it is directly experienced by actors and not as it is mediated through imposed sociological concepts which set out to explain why the world is as it is without recourse to the way the world appears to the people."* (Dale, 1974 : 55).

This implies that nothing should be taken for granted about the social world of the individual. This approach to the study of social class and home background may be useful if middle class educators were to examine the meanings which working class children give to the many experiences which schools provide for them. For example, Becker says that teachers observing children in school may speak of them as *learning* or *playing* (quoted by Dale, 1974 : 55). Yet, the children themselves may not see these activities in the same light. He suggests that instead of imposing preconceived meanings, the researcher should begin by asking how pupils of a particular subculture come to see an experience as *learning* or *playing*. Such an examination may involve looking at how the home backgrounds of these pupils influence their perceptions of reality in school.



The social phenomenological approach to the study of home-school relations suggests that the researcher must be aware of the dangers of taken for granted assumptions about the nature of schooling. He must explore and clarify certain commonly held assumptions and beliefs about children from different social classes. For example, the researcher should study how educators come to categorise and label the behaviour of their pupils. It is also necessary to study the processes by which teachers come to typify their pupils as *bright*, *dull*, *backward*, *underachieving*, and so on. To do this, the sociologist has to observe the relationship which exists between the child's experiences in his home and neighbourhood and the nature of knowledge which is transmitted in school. This would enable him to see the differences in the kinds of everyday knowledge which children from different social classes bring to school (Young, 1971 : 19-41).

#### 4.2.4 Ethnomethodology

One of the extreme formulations of the social phenomenological approach is that of ethnomethodology. By comparison with other theories it appears to be ultra-radical. It draws heavily on social phenomenological inspiration and is also greatly influenced by the thoughts of Schutz. However, some of its leading spokesmen (H. Garfinkel, J.B. Douglas, A.W. Cicourel, A.F. Blum, and P. Mc Hugh) argue that one of the shortcomings of social phenomenology is that it does not explore the essential aspects of Schutz's depiction of the social world (Lassman, 1974 : 130). The ethnomethodological approach

originated around Garfinkel at the University of California in the 1960s. Both Garfinkel and Cicourel conducted research in the areas of organisational process, and deviance labelling.

The influence of ethnomethodology has been widely felt in America and Europe, and is particularly appealing to many younger radical sociologists who are opposed to the sociological *establishment* (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 23). They are impressed by its emphasis on non-quantitative methods of research and its rejection of statistical and other quantitative methods. In this respect, ethnomethodology has much in common with an earlier approach in American sociology known as *participant observation* which was popularised at the University of Chicago in the 1920s (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 24). *Participant observation* is also typical of social phenomenology.

In examining the aims of ethnomethodology it may be useful to begin with some of Garfinkel's reformulation of basic sociological knowledge. Though his views on social reality stem mainly from Schutz and Parsons, his main concern is "*the study of how situations of practical, everyday life are socially organised and, as such, are perceived, known, and treated by persons as uniform sequences of actual and potential events which the person assumes that other members of the group know in the same way that he does, and that others, as does he, take for granted*" (quoted by Lassman, 1974 : 131). His concern is to explore the authenticity of everyday, practical knowledge. Ethnomethodology is therefore sometimes referred to as the sociology of everyday life (Bauman, 1973 : 22). In this respect it is similar to social phenomenology.

However, its method of investigation is different. According to this theory, the features of everyday life can be discovered by the sociologist by exposing the rules, conventions and procedures in terms of which social life operates. For example, Garfinkel argues that long before any scholarly research on reality starts, social reality has already its own pre-established structure (Bauman, 1973 : 13). Therefore, it is the task of the researcher to enquire about the origin of such structures. According to Garfinkel, this can be done by assuming the existence of such rules or structures and then demonstrating their existence by deliberately disrupting them. This leads to the breakdown of *normal* patterns of response and interaction in a group.

This method is used to grasp the ingredients of social reality, the intent and meaning of the individual or actor. In this way, the researcher can describe and explain the essence of social reality, can specify what are the elements of its descriptions and what are the knowns and unknowns and how they are related to each other (Lassman, 1974 : 136-137). These formal aspects are concerned with how members of society see, describe and explain the order of the world in which they live. The main concern of ethnomethodology is to explain how social reality is produced, and not to offer literal or causal explanations of observable, patterned, repetitive actions.

How can this approach help us to understand social class, home background and education? Though the directions of ethnomethodology are still not clear, it can nevertheless help us to understand the structures of reality which children from the different social classes have. For example, the

child's concept of the social world should not be studied by imposing unclarified adult conceptions of social structures. There is a need to look very closely at the network of social experiences in which the child is enmeshed. This has important implications for the study of children who are from the lower working class and who find it difficult to adapt to the culture of the school. The sociologist who uses this approach works on the assumption that man acquires his social structure as a child. Home-school studies can benefit from this approach by looking closely at the social structures of children from different classes, and then relating these to their adaptability to school.

#### 4.2.5 A Combination of Approaches

The range of theories which have been reviewed reveal the use of a variety of research techniques. For example, positivism values the use of survey techniques, questionnaires, and statistics. Symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology and ethnomethodology emphasise documentary and comparative studies, case studies and participant observation. Several eminent researchers, including Shipman (Eggleston, 1974 : 10) have noted that all have major advantages as well as disadvantages. But in an area of social interaction so complex as education, it is necessary to use the full range of techniques. Being confined to any single strategy can lead to unnecessary restriction.

For example, positivism on its own will focus narrowly on the quantitative aspects of social life. On the other hand, though symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology are quite

valuable in explaining the quality or the essence of social life, they cannot do so adequately without making use of information which survey techniques can reveal. Documentary and comparative studies, case studies and participant observation are not the most practical ways of studying social life.

Even though positivism has been criticised for its pure science approach, basic research into social class and education can hardly afford to abandon the use of survey techniques and statistics. If used cautiously, these could be integrated with the approaches of symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology. Statistics on their own, for example, do not tell us much about the essence of home background and social class. But if they attempt to analyse patterns of interactions and attitudes, statistics could be useful indicators of social roles and networks underlying the quality of social and cultural experiences in the home. Therefore, a combination of approaches is useful.

#### 4.3 CURRENT MODELS USED IN RESEARCH IN SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

##### 4.3.1 Micro- and Macro-Sociological Dimensions on which Research Models are based

Though the theories and philosophies reviewed in the preceding section are based on very different assumptions, they can be brought together in the *structural functional* and the *conflict and interactionist* models currently used in much of the research in sociology of education. A study of home background, for example, can be usefully conducted through the *structural functional* model and the philosophy of positivism. The structural

features of family life, such as size, space, organisation, and parents' level of education may be related to interactional aspects such as parent-child relationships, motivations, aspirations, and so on. The interactional aspects are derived mainly from the philosophies of symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology (Banks, 1976 : 8-11).

When these philosophies are related to the models used in social research, the researcher is really attempting to find ways of relating the *micro*-and *macro*-dimensions of social life. In the exploration of social phenomena such as the family, social class and education, the emphasis is on both these dimensions. Therefore, an understanding of micro-and macro-sociology is crucial to an understanding of the *structural functional* and the *conflict* and *interactional* approaches to the study of home background, social class and education.

Our experience of society is that of two worlds, namely, the micro-world of our immediate face to face experiences with others, and our remote experiences of the larger structures of the macro-world (Berger and Berger, 1976 : 18). The macro-world concerns our abstract, anonymous and remote relations with others. By contrast, micro-sociology deals with the analysis of behaviour in the small group or interpersonal level. When the focus is on the general societal or cultural level, the analysis is concerned with the larger or macro-issues of society.

The macro-analysis of the family, for example, involves interpersonal interaction between members. Family members are involved in face to face interaction. In this respect, the philosophy of symbolic interactionism can be directly related to the life of a small social

unit. It is concerned with a microscopic analysis of the framework of family life (Kemeny, 1976 : 734).

By contrast, the macro-level is the more abstract level of social analysis. The various macro-structures of society are indirect in that they are linked by social values which bring together individuals who are no longer in face to face interaction. For example, those responsible for economic or educational strategy on the wider plane will influence the lives of family members on the micro-level. In this way the macro-social arrangements of education, politics, economics and so on become institutionalized in schools, political parties, business administration, etc. Though these macro-structures are independent of particular individuals, they have a life of their own (Kemeny, 1976 : 740). Macro-sociology is therefore concerned with institutions and with the whole of society.

Whichever model is used to study home background, social class and education, both the macro-and micro-levels are relevant. However, it is generally useful to move from the microscopic, interpersonal level to the macroscopic, societal level (Kinlock, 1972 : 24). A study of home background, for example, will begin by emphasising family structure, and will then move to the more dynamic aspects of interaction and conflict involved in social processes.

Though micro-sociology and macro-sociology are closely related, it should be remembered that they also involve qualitatively different phenomena. While both dimensions represent equally valid and important fields of sociological investigation, each requires its own concepts and means of analysis. *Structural*

*functionalism* which depends greatly upon macro-sociology involves an examination of different sets of social processes from that of the *conflict* and *interactionist* models which depend on micro-sociology. Each level, for example, will have its own means of analysing home background, social class and education. It is therefore necessary to explain the orientation of each of these models to the concepts which are crucial to the present investigation.

#### 4.3.2 The Structural Functional Model

*Structural functionalism* is a traditional approach to the study of sociology of education, and stems mainly from the writings of the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim. According to Durkheim, there are certain vital functions which certain social institutions perform. For example, the family, education, economy, politics and so on have separate functions, all of which are vital to the promotion and maintenance of social cohesion and social unity. This model is strongly influenced by the theory of positivism. Like positivism, it may also be regarded as a conservative approach to the study of social institutions.

According to this model each social institution contributes to the overall orderly set of arrangements in society. If the family or education, is examined in *structural functional* terms, it becomes clear that each of these institutions consists of distinct roles and role networks. Education could be seen to consist of a number of educational roles - such as teacher, pupil, administrator, and inspector. If the overall structure



of education is to be maintained then each role must be performed with orderly uniformity. Similarly the structure of the family can be explored in terms of the specific roles allotted to each of its members. In this way family life can be seen as related to the structure of particular social classes.

The social structure of a social institution can thus be seen as a normative phenomenon. The family performs its functions in such a way as to maintain the norms of family life. Similarly education functions to maintain its own normative structure and that of society. It was in this context that Durkheim spoke of education as:

*"... the methodical socialisation of the young generation."* (Banks : 1976 : 4, quoting Durkheim, 1956 : 71)

By this he meant the development in the child of certain values and certain intellectual and physical skills which are demanded of him by society.

Within this conceptual framework, the family may also be seen as a social system with characteristic roles and expectations of behaviour which ensure the participating, effective socialisation of its members in education, economics and other institutions of society. It is therefore related to the school as a social system which in turn is related to the community and the wider society. *Structural functionalism* emphasises that the goal behaviours of one social institution are a preparation for the goal behaviours of other social institutions (Sharp and Green, 1975 : 5). For

example, the parents' role behaviours prepare the child for the performance of role behaviours expected of him by teachers, social workers, and employers.

Home background and family life can therefore be analysed in *structural functional* terms to establish their relationships with social class and education. Social dysfunctions might occur if parents did not teach their children in socially conforming ways. The children might grow up unable and unwilling to perform their various roles in school and in society. Effective role-playing depends on effective socialisation by the family into a shared culture. For the *structural functionalist*, socialisation and social control are the key features in maintaining the social order (Watson, 1976 : 44-45).

If there is ineffective socialisation and poor methods of control, this would have an adverse effect on the functions of other related social institutions. For example, the family may emphasise aspects of the common culture which are different from that of the school. In extreme cases, the family may even inculcate a deviant or pathological set of values. Such families may belong to a minority culture, or to subcultures. The children are socialised into cultural values which contradict the conventional values endorsed by the school and by society at large.

From this it is evident that one of the major strengths of the *structural functional* model is the firm placing of social institutions in their relationship with the wider social structure (Banks, 1976 : 5). However, Floud and Halsey have pointed out certain weaknesses in this model (Banks, 1976 : 5-7).

They maintain that *structural functionalism* over-emphasises social integration, and is too preoccupied with education as a means of ensuring that individuals behave in ways which will maintain the equilibrium of society.

This concern with social stability overlooks the changing needs of developed, industrialised societies of today. There is little or no provision in the *structural functional* model for analysing the actual or contained conflict in social changes in a complex society. For example, industrialisation and urbanisation have brought about many changes in the life styles of modern families. This model has certain shortcomings when attempting to understand the essence of such social and cultural changes.

Therefore, if used uncritically, this model encourages an acceptance of a somewhat mechanical relationship between social class, home background, education, economics and the wider society. It can overlook the deeper, underlying significance of the importance of home background in relationship to education.

#### 4.3.3 The Conflict Model

This model derives much of its support from symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology. Supporters of the *conflict* model argue that it provides a firmer basis for a general theory in sociology of education than *structural functionalism*. This is because it rejects the premise that society is essentially a harmonious, stable and well integrated social system based on a common set of cultural values. Rather, it sees society as divided along certain structured lines of conflict. For example, the different social classes, or races, or religious groups may have conflicting vested

interests. Thus, families belonging to the different groups reflect conflicting values and life styles. There is a diversity of lines of allegiance and conflict (Watson, 1976 : 46). This model analyses the nature of such conflicts so that there is a deep understanding of the essential features of family life.

The social values or the culture of the different conflict groups express certain vested interests. These values may be reflected through the social institutions which the dominant groups control. This is evident in the middle class social values which dominate much of school life. Since the interests of these groups clash, so will their cultures and ideologies. Thus the *conflict* model stresses the fact that, because the different social classes occupy different locations in society, they will reflect different sets of values and outlooks on the world.

This does not mean that the *conflict* model denies the existence of widespread beliefs and values underlying the unity of society. However, unlike *structural functionalism* it does not regard such beliefs and values as really shared (Worsley, 1970 : 379). The values of the dominant group are expressed on behalf of that group by its representatives in all the major institutions of society. Thus, it is often argued that schools are generally staffed by middle class teachers who reflect middle class values in their attitudes to children, in their teaching styles, and methods of evaluation. They fail to adapt their teaching techniques to the values which many working-class children bring with them to school. This leads to conflict in social class values in many areas of school life.

Society is therefore seen as a constant state of competitive struggle which may lead to social change, and the *conflict* model sees society as being in a constant state of change, rather than something which is stable, static, and existing on shared values. Therefore, it may be described as a radical rather than a conservative approach to the study of social life.

More recently, this approach has captured the attention of many sociologists of education who emphasise conflict rather than order and interdependence (Banks, 1976 : 8). Several studies of family life, and home-school relations have reflected the struggles of competing groups rather than the needs of society. However, Banks warns that though the *conflict* model "... provides a useful antidote to a mechanistic use of structural functional theory ... it too can fall into its own over-simplistic use of concepts, and a rather tendentious dogmatism." (Banks, 1976 : 8)

Despite this danger, the supporters of this model argue that its greatest advantage is its ability to analyse and to account for social change. An important assumption of this model is that social structures such as family, education and economics are unstable and will tend to change.

Such change, however, must not be seen as disruptive. It may be viewed in the light of the contribution which it makes to the continuity, unity and solidarity of society. Conflict may bring into the open discontents and disagreements over fundamental values basic to the very existence of a society. It may lead to the dissolution of relationships which have been a source of

tension and lead to the formation of new relationships. When home-school relations are viewed in this way, there are many areas of conflict between parents and teachers, between values of the family and values of the school that become apparent. These, in turn, may suggest new patterns of relationships which could ease the tensions.

#### 4.3.4 The Interactionist Model

The *interactionist* model which is related to the *conflict* model is also derived mainly from micro-sociology, and from the philosophies of symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology. There are many varieties of this model, and all of them see society as a complex set of social interactions between people (Watson, 1976 : 48).

These interactions are based on certain common features, and it is said that they are actively constructed by participants in social situations. In this way orderly interaction is constantly being achieved. In any social situation, every participant has the skill to achieve an awareness of order in such interaction. Consequently, each participant can communicate his interpretations or definitions of the interaction which he is engaged in.

When applying this model to an analysis of home background and education, it is possible to study the beliefs and values underlying the cultural outlooks of the different social classes. For example, parent-child interaction in typical working class family life may contrast strongly with those of the middle and upper classes. It may therefore be said that working class parents view child-rearing and education differently from the other social

classes. The social situations of working class life produce interactions of such a nature that they cause its participants to define social reality somewhat differently from the middle class.

In this process, language is a very significant factor which enables the social scientist to analyse the varying interpretations of participants. When speaking of other persons, when expressing views, the participant uses linguistic labels or categories to display his feelings, attitudes and reactions. For example, a teacher participating in classroom activities with her pupils may label her pupils as *underachievers*, *maladjusted*, *brilliant*, or *normal*. These labels indicate the teacher's estimation of her pupils' abilities. In labelling her pupils as *underachievers* or as *normal*, she is selecting social identities for them (Watson, 1976 : 49). This in turn causes the teacher to interact with those pupils in a manner consistent with the expectations attached to those identities. It has been suggested, for example, that many middle class teachers have certain stereotyped views of working class pupils and their capabilities.

Stable definitions lead to the construction of stable interaction. The working class child who is seen as an underachiever may take on the mould that has been cast for him. He may also be taught and treated as an underachiever. Therefore, a very important function of the *interactionist* perspective is to examine the procedures whereby participants arrive at, display and communicate definitions of persons and situations which are then used in the construction of social interaction (Watson, 1976 : 48-49).

Using this approach, classroom interaction may be analysed in terms of the ways in which teachers define pupils, or the ways in which pupils define each other or define the teacher. The consequent interaction is also examined. Family life or home background can also be analysed in this way. Such interactionist analyses enable a closer microscopic type of study of social life.

#### 4.3.5 An Integrated Approach

Since research into social class, home background and education is virtually non-existent in South Africa, the present study can hardly be based on an empirically validated theory resulting from local studies. Instead, arising from our knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the several theories and models reviewed in this chapter, the present study can be said to be based on an integrated approach. The theories of positivism, symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, and the *structural functional* and *interactionist* models have been used collectively in designing this survey and in analysing the findings.

In basic or exploratory research such as the present study, where empirically validated theory is not yet firmly established, the integrated approach may be used (Mayntz et.al., 1976 : 84-87). Since certain concepts linked with social class and home background and certain statements about the social significance of home circumstances are more hypothetical in character than empirically established, the application of several theories helps to make their meanings clearer. However, in the present study the basic or exploratory nature of the research is revealed



more in its straightforward description of home background factors, rather than through theoretical analysis.

Firstly, it must be pointed out that though the shortcomings of positivism and *structural functionalism* have been highlighted in this chapter, they can be quite useful when structuring basic research. Since the present study is *non-participant observation*, the social conditions in the home had to be observed *from the outside*, and the main categories of observation had to be pre-determined in order to facilitate the standardisation of situations to be observed in the home. Some of the major studies on social class and home background, reviewed in the next chapter make explicit which processes should be observed in the home, and which concepts should be defined and made operational as usable categories of observation. Based on these studies, the following categories have been incorporated into a systematic scheme of observation: material environment of the home; cultural and educational level of the home; educational motivations and aspirations of parents; and size of family.

Thus, it can be said that the observation procedure of this study is structured according to certain precise, pre-determined categories of observation, and uses closed-type questions to formulate variables which can be used as indicators of the main social and cultural factors to be studied (Mayntz et. al., 1976 : 95). To the extent that this study has such a pre-determined structure, and uses *non-participant* observational techniques, its design can be said to be influenced by positivism and *structural functionalism*. However, keeping in mind the

main criticisms which are levelled against positivism, particular care was taken when designing the survey not to reflect upon home background in such a way as to transform the social processes involved into an impersonal ultra-objective, scientific type of enquiry (Bernstein, 1973b : 13).

For this purpose, through the use of open-ended questions the symbolic interactionist and social phenomenological approaches have been used to emphasise that home conditions have subjective as well as objective social meanings. For example, open-ended questions help to give a detailed picture of social interactions in the home as this is crucial to an understanding of the cultural and educational atmosphere of the home. Without such an understanding, a purely scientific, objective type of enquiry into home background will be blind and sociologically irrelevant. By careful observation and analysis of the behaviour which takes place in each of the categories mentioned earlier on, the relationship between the behaviour observed, the situation, and the socio-cultural system of the home can be fully understood.

It is possible to do this through the integration of positivism, symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology. By analysing the relevant socio-cultural factors through this approach, one gets a non-mechanistic explanation of circumstances in the home. This integrated theoretical approach also helps to penetrate the real nature of the cultural climate of the home. Positivism helps to formulate categories of observation and to analyse these statistically. Such scientifically designed criteria can then be studied via the symbolic interactionist and social phenomenological approaches

to give an in-depth account of home background factors.

When data is collected, analysed and interpreted in this way it is possible to get more than just a superficial picture of home background (Mayntz et, al., 1976 : 95). For example, a study of parent-child interactions in middle class and lower working class homes will reveal different characteristics. By taking a close look at such social relationships one can see the effects of home background on the education of the children.

From the discussion so far, it should be evident that the integrated theoretical approach does not include ethnomethodology which was examined in some detail in this chapter. The reason for its exclusion is that ethnomethodology is a comparatively new sociological theory, somewhat abstruse, and appears to be ultra-radical in its approach. Another reason for its exclusion is that it rejects quantitative statistical analysis which was necessary to this study. Therefore, there was little practical value in including ethnomethodology within the integrated framework of the present study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. A REVIEW OF RESEARCH STUDIES ON SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of the more important studies carried out in this field reveals that the focus of attention has been on the opportunities available to children from the lower social classes. This in turn has led to a close examination of the social structure and the experiences which children from the different classes are exposed to. This chapter examines the main approaches to the study of the concepts, social class, and equality of educational opportunity. The relevance of these concepts are then demonstrated in a review of some important studies done on home background, social class and education, and finally there is a discussion of those aspects of home background which have been extracted from the research studies and incorporated in the present investigation.

#### 5.2 SOCIAL CLASS

The writings of Marx and Weber are the foundations on which most contemporary definitions of social class rest. Marx regarded class as an economic category (Marx, 1973 : 245). According to him, classes are defined according to the extent to which their members own the wealth of society, and also the means by which this wealth is produced. Therefore, for historical reasons, different social classes have differential access to these

resources. History is the story of the struggle between the classes for the resources of society.

Weber, however, felt that Marx's approach was far too simple, and he proposed a threefold conceptual scheme (Weber, 1973 : 254-258). Firstly, there is the economic factor of wealth which determines one's *life chances*, and there is also *status* and *power*. Weber was careful to explain that status or prestige does not automatically depend on wealth. However, life style is important since it is a good indicator of normative behaviour. Weber's approach has been popular in Europe and the U.S.A., and its appeal lies in its reluctance to accept economics as the single underlying determinant of social class. His scheme is a comprehensive one which points to life style, status and power as a system of co-ordinates within which social class can be investigated.

*Life style* refers to the overall culture or way of life of each social class. In western industrial societies, there are significant differences between the life styles of the different classes. These differences often extend beyond Marx's economic explanation. One's class affiliation determines the amount of education one's children are likely to receive. It also determines the standards of medical care enjoyed by members of a particular class, and their life expectancies. Research studies have often pointed to the fact that the higher classes in society are better fed, better educated, and live longer than those of the lower classes (Berger, 1975 : 95).

Thus, the notion of life style makes it even more difficult to define social class objectively. Therefore, most researches have

found *occupation* to be the safest and most reliable index by which to categorise people into social classes (Lawton, 1975 : 31). Such classifications are based on manual and non-manual occupations. Sometimes, education and income are also used.

In general, occupation, education and income have been found to be the three most important criteria for classification, and combinations of these were also found to be correlated with measures of attitudes and behaviour evident in life styles (Herriot and St John, 1966 : 17). However, occupation alone is the most satisfactory indicator of social class (Worsley, 1970 : 292). This criterion is used in most research studies since many other characteristics of social class are closely dependent on occupational status.

When occupation is used as an index of social class intelligent predictions can be made about the group which is being studied. These may include the size and style of their houses, interior furnishing, books and magazines that are read, the kind of television programmes watched, and the radio programmes listened to (Berger, 1975 : 96). Life style or the culture of a social class can also be gauged from symbols such as material objects, styles of demeanour, taste, speech and types of association.

Lawton (1975 : 31), for example refers to Thompson's description of the social class structure of England. He argues that this class structure did not develop by chance, but is the result of cultural experiences passed on through several generations, and is the direct result of the events of history, being embodied

in traditions, value systems, ideas and institutional forms.

The social classes of England are good examples of subcultures which illustrate differences in life styles. The subculture of each social class reveals its distinct values and norms relating to family organisation, child rearing, attitudes to education, and so on. This leads to the development of class consciousness. Despite this, a subculture can still share traits which are common to the mainstream culture.

Ottoway (1962 : 33) lists a number of factors which are useful indicators of social class in western societies:

- (a) miscellaneous factors: income, occupation, education, language habits, types of residence, spending habits.
- (b) living habits: clothes and dress, eating and diet, physical habits and habits of health, attitudes to marriage and sex, bringing up children, patterns of family life.
- (c) leisure pursuits: reading, radio and television programmes preferred, sports and entertainments preferred.
- (d) belief and value systems: moral attitudes and standards, religious beliefs, political views, social ambitions, aims in life.

A selection of these variables are used to classify social classes into *higher* and *lower* categories. The most common distinction made in industrial societies is between the *middle* and *working* classes. The middle class is made up of white-collar workers and professionals, while the working class is made up of manual workers in semi-skilled and skilled occupations. The *lower*

*working class* is made up of unskilled manual workers. Depending on the variables which he selects, the sociologist can draw dividing lines between the middle and the working classes.

However, the categories of middle and working classes are used so broadly as if to imply that each group is homogeneous. However, studies of differences within social classes show them to be both complex and heterogeneous in certain respects (Banks, 1976 : 90). Therefore, it is difficult to speak of *working class* or *middle class* in any absolute sense. But for practical purposes most researches use those criteria which are generally acceptable to classify people into the two social classes.

Such criteria are linked with social class influences on family life. In this sense, the family is regarded as an important unit of social class. It is the central socialising agent for membership of a particular social class. Children are born into the subculture of their family and home environment, and this is the dominant influence, until the child is able to move out of it. This relationship between home background and social class determines the opportunities which become available to the child through education.

### 5.3 EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

The expression, *equality of educational opportunity* has been frequently used to refer to social class differences in educational attainment. This implies that there are specific inequalities in educational opportunity as they apply to different sections of society, especially between the working and the middle classes.



The argument is that some children come from families that give them certain advantages which are in turn linked with the advantages that come from different experiences and stimulation that the school provides (Tyler, 1977 : 11). Children who come from more favourable homes, who can adapt easily to the demands of school will learn faster, stay on longer and will increase their chances of success in the wider society.

In this connection, some general patterns have emerged from many of the studies done on social class and equality of educational opportunity. English studies, particularly, have shown that working class children are less likely to enter the more academic schools and, once there, are more likely to leave early (Banks, 1976 : 55). For example, Little and Westergaard's study (1964) in England and Wales shows clearly the class differential entry to school, and the increase in the differential as a result of early leaving.

In other Western European countries the general pattern is similar. Working class children are less likely than middle class children to enter the more academic types of secondary education and early leaving is frequent. There are also considerable social class differences in gaining access to university education. Halsey's studies, for example, show that in Britain upper middle class children are three times as likely as lower middle class children to enter a university, and the lower working class have less than half the chance of the lower middle class (Banks, 1976 : 56).

Thus, the opportunities for advanced education are greatly restricted for the lower social classes.

In the United States, too, the pattern of class differences is much the same as in Europe. Studies have shown that early school leaving is more characteristic of low status families. Relatively more children from such families are also scholastically retarded (Jencks, 1972 : 76-78). There is also a progressive worsening of opportunities for the student of low socio-economic status at successive stages in the educational process (Banks, 1976 : 59).

Studies of social class and education have attempted to locate the reasons for this inequality of educational opportunity in the home backgrounds of children. Such studies have shown that ability is generally the result of a child's home background and early educational experiences. Children from advantageous homes, will, therefore be more likely to have a happier and more rewarding life in school. This is the class conflict explanation of equality of educational opportunity. The class structure restricts opportunity for children of the lower classes.

It is also claimed that there are important educational advantages that go with the culture of the home, its life style, its types of speech, and the value that it places on educational success (Tyler, 1977 : 16). Those writers who place a strong emphasis on the cultural advantages of the home and on parental encouragement tend to see inequality in terms of life style, housing, consumption patterns and the education of parents. These qualities are sometimes contrasted with the characteristics

that accompany the family's place in the hierarchy of wealth and power. This leads to sharp contrasts between the lives of the rich and the poor. Thus, though the findings of most studies point to the home environment having a great deal to do with educational success, there is little agreement about the essential influences on equality of opportunity in the macro-structures of society.

#### 5.4 THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDIES

There is a long established tradition of research into social class and education in the U.S.A. and Britain, but it was only in the 1960s that new directions were beginning to emerge. British studies of the 1950s - such as those of Glass (1954) and Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956) - used survey techniques to analyse social mobility and the distribution of educational opportunity. Though these studies were limited to *structural functionalism*, nevertheless they gave rise to a range of important works, including the researches of Jackson and Marsden (1962), Douglas (1964); and also those of his colleagues (1968).

The main concern of these studies is with social factors which influence access to and achievement in education. Though their methodology is limited, they helped to develop new insights into the home backgrounds of pupils since they emphasised the significance of the social structure and the individual's relationship to it.

This period in British sociology is often referred to as the *social class and educational opportunity era*. Within the *structural functional* approach, these studies described the underachievement

of working class children as cultural discontinuity between the home and the school. The differences in the educational performances between the middle and working class children were investigated from several points of view. Eggleston (1974 : 22) says that many of these studies are of "... *indifferent quality, that explored every environmental variable from furniture and floor covering to newspaper reading, often with a very incomplete perception of social class as a cultural factor.*"

Thus, they take a somewhat narrow view of the function of education, and often limit it to the part it plays in maintaining the cohesion of the wider social and economic order. For example, Floud, Halsey and Anderson (1961 : 2) say that in modern industrial societies "... *education attains unprecedented economic importance as a source of technological innovation and the educational system is bent increasingly to the service of the labour force, acting as a vast apparatus of occupational recruitment and training*". The studies of the *educational opportunity era* can therefore be regarded as normative and are derived mainly from positivism.

Though the social class and educational opportunity studies are rooted in the *structural functional* or normative paradigm, they form the basis on which interactional studies of the late 1960s and 1970s were able to widen their focus of attention. For example, the studies of Hargreaves (1972) and Lacey (1970) have added not only to our knowledge of social class and educational opportunity, but also to our knowledge of attitudes and values underlying social life. Other important contributions include the works of

the University of London Sociological Research Unit, and notably those of Bernstein (1971, 1973a).

These studies reveal much that was previously unknown of the subtle links between language, values and schooling. These recent studies attempt to interpret the complexity of social values and education through interactionist and phenomenological approaches, and are therefore regarded as *interpretative*. However, it should be noted that *normative* studies have made important contributions to *interpretative* studies, and the relationship between the two should be seen as incremental rather than divisive.

The new approaches have led to more dynamic studies of social class, home background and education. For example, *interpretative* studies based on the *conflict* model have alerted many sociologists of education about the dangers of consensus views implicit in positivism and *structural functionalism*. It is also said that the *conflict* approaches of interactionism and phenomenology have enabled sociologists to understand more fully the manner in which pressure groups act and influence the social order.

A brief review is given of some important studies undertaken by government committees, as well as those of individual researchers and these studies demonstrate the shift in emphasis in recent years from *structural functional* studies to *conflict* studies. The changing perspectives also reveal a shift from macro-analysis to micro-analysis of social class, home background and education.

#### 5.4.1 Studies of Government Committees

Government-sponsored researches in both England and the U.S.A.

have drawn attention to the fact that working class children are under-represented in selective secondary and higher education. They also reveal that working class children are more likely than middle class children to deteriorate in performance and to leave school earlier than the official leaving age. In England, the *Crowther Report* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1959), the *Plowden Report* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967) and in the U.S.A., the *Coleman Report* (1966) have shown that working class children experience limited success in education. The English reports have stressed the fact that a major criterion of educational success is the type of secondary school one gains entry to, and the type of educational qualifications obtained. Social class and home background factors have been found to exert considerable influences on entry into secondary school.

The *Crowther Report* attempted to discover the part played by financial circumstances in early leaving from grammar and technical schools. It investigated the relationship between ability, school, career and family characteristics. However, it does not provide any definite evidence on the extent to which poverty, parental and children's attitudes are decisive factors in influencing early leaving. (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1959 : 11, 19). However, it emphasised that there was much wastage of talent among the working classes due mainly to an elitist type of secondary education. Thus, many of its recommendations were aimed at curriculum reform in schools and colleges. Its main proposals were aimed at helping as many children as possible to benefit from prolonged secondary education. This pointed to

equality of educational opportunity for children from poorer homes.

The *Coleman Report* and the *Plowden Report* showed that for the U.S.A. and Britain respectively, the major source of educational inequality was not to be found in the material resources of schools, staff-student ratios, or the training of teachers, but rather in the home. These two reports indicated that the superior educational attainment of middle class children stemmed from the advantages of their home backgrounds.

The *Coleman Report*, a major survey into the availability of equal educational opportunity in the U.S.A., concluded that school factors were of relatively modest importance in educational achievement when compared with factors related to family background. The sample in this survey was made up of 3 000 metropolitan and rural schools, and three groups of variables were considered: school facilities and curriculum, teacher characteristics, and the background and aspirations of pupils. Apart from the effects of their own home backgrounds, pupils' attainments were found to be most related to the characteristics of fellow pupils. Teacher characteristics were found to be particularly influential for children who came from the lower working class homes. Students from favourable middle class homes were found to be less susceptible to other social influences.

The *Plowden Report* examined the organisation and the content of primary education in England, and more specifically it attempted to differentiate the effect of home circumstances from parental attitudes and the effect of the school. In the context of this

report, home circumstances refer not only to the physical amenities of the home but the number of dependent children, father's occupational group, and parent's education.

The 1964 *National Survey On Parental Attitudes And Circumstances Related To School And Pupil Characteristics*, undertaken for the *Plowden Committee* had three main variables - parental involvement in their children's education, home environment, and the state of the school. The parents of a representative national sample of primary school children were interviewed. Areas of investigation included the parents' level of education, educational support given by parents to their children, reading habits of the children, parental aspirations for their children, physical conditions and amenities of the home, parents' contacts with primary schools, and parents' views on school organisation and teaching methods (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 91-114). One of the main findings is that more of the variation in school achievement was due to variation in parental attitudes than to material circumstances or variation in schools. It was also indicated that the importance of parental attitudes increases as the children grow older.

Like the study of Douglas (1964), that of the *Plowden Committee* found that middle class fathers were more likely than working class fathers to take an interest in their children's education. Middle class parents were more likely to want their children to stay at school longer and more likely to prefer grammar school. Wiseman's study in Manchester, carried out for the *Plowden*



*Committee*, also revealed that parental attitudes and maternal care are more important than material needs (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 368-371). Thus, the report incorporated various recommendations through which traditionally uninvolved parents might be drawn into taking an interest in their children's education. It also proposed the establishment of *educational priority areas* so that lower working class children could benefit through *positive discrimination*.

Though the *Plowden Report* has provided useful insights into the socio-cultural context of pupils' home background, some of its major findings and assumptions have not gone unchallenged. For example, certain other studies have indicated that although there are consistent class differences in levels of ambitions, the aspirations of lower working class parents can be surprisingly high (Banks, 1976 : 78). Studies of the *social class and educational opportunity era* in Britain have emphasised that there is a need to examine the social determinants of educability from as many perspectives as possible. Some of these studies examine social class and home background in relationship to: ability at age of entry to school, attainment in school subjects, selection for secondary school courses, age of leaving school, and values related to achievement motivation.

#### 5.4.2 Studies of the Social Class and Educational Opportunity Era in Britain

These studies of the 1950s and 1960s reveal that the trend in research has been away from quantitative assessment of social class differentials in educational opportunity towards a study of

responsiveness to the school (Craft, 1970 : 3). Although they concentrate on demographic details (as in the case of government reports), they are also important for the emphasis which they place on the social and cultural aspects of family life. Thus, they not only tell us *what* and *how many* about social class differences in educational attainment, but also *how* and *why* there are social class differences in the motivation to excel.

Glass's (1954) study was the basis of many later studies. It deals with the processes of social selection and differentiation in British society, with the formation of social strata, and with the nature, composition and functions of those strata. The object of the general investigation is the study of social mobility in Britain and of the extent of movement in social status by individuals of diverse social origins (Glass, 1954 : 3-6). In this respect, it showed quite clearly the advantages of a grammar school education for those of working class or lower middle class origin. They were more likely to be socially mobile than those who had received no more than an elementary education. A child of the lower class group is more likely to be socially mobile if he has a superior education; and superior education also lessens the possibility of downward mobility (Glass, 1954 : 291-307).

This aspect of social mobility and educational opportunity was also demonstrated in Floud, Halsey, and Martin's (1956) study of movement between social classes in England. Their object was to study how the educational system affects the process of social selection, and also the problems of providing equality of

opportunity in post war English education. The investigation was carried out in two contrasting social class neighbourhoods - South West Hertfordshire which is typically middle class, and Middlesbrough which is typically working class. The study was concerned with the effects of the material environment on children's performances in the eleven plus entry examinations into secondary schools. The influence of social origins and family environment, both on children's achievement in various types of secondary schools and on their occupations, was investigated systematically over a number of years.

One of the significant findings of this study was that in the comfortable middle class South West Hertfordshire area, the material environment of the home was of less importance in differentiating between the successful and the unsuccessful child than differences in the size of the family, education, attitudes and ambitions of the parents (Floud, Halsey and Martin, 1956 : 87-94). In Middlesbrough where incomes were lower and housing conditions were less favourable, the successful children at each social level were distinguished by the relative prosperity of their homes.

Though this study points to significant differences in the material environment, it doesn't emphasise the part played by material factors in school achievement. There is a need to know how material factors operate. Studies such as those of Fraser (1959), Mays (1962), Jackson and Marsden (1962) and Douglas (1964) are careful to point out that material factors do not in themselves influence school performance directly.

These studies indicate that the true indices of material deprivation are not poverty and bad housing, but absence through illness, neglected homework, inability to pay fees, and other related factors. School achievement is thus not related to isolated factors in the material environment but to family life as a whole. For example, poverty can make a parent less willing to keep a child at school; can make it difficult for him to afford books and toys.

Fraser's study attempted to analyse the influence of such components as the child's age, the size of his family and his ordinal position within it, his parents' education and reading habits, home living conditions, and so on (Fraser, 1959 : 29-39). She related the school performances of 400 Aberdeen primary school children to four types of home background factors. These were: cultural (e.g. parents' education), material (e.g. income and overcrowding), motivational (e.g. parental attitudes and encouragement), and emotional (e.g. harmony in the home).

Jackson and Marsden examined the educational opportunities and achievements of a sample of 88 working class and middle class children in Marburton. They concluded that working class children who get a good education have certain common social characteristics (Jackson and Marsden, 1962 : 44-81). They belong to small families; they go to schools where the influence of the middle class is felt; their parents are *sunken* middle class who have gone to grammar school or could have done so; their parents are also active in local community groups. Thus, though such children are ranked as working class on the basis of their fathers' occupations, they tend to come from backgrounds which display at least some of the characteristics and aspirations

generally associated with the middle class.

Mays, on the other hand pointed to distinct characteristics of working class subculture in several inner city districts of Liverpool. This study was concerned with the interaction of school and community. Teachers who were interviewed by Mays were of the opinion that certain social factors retarded and impeded their efforts to improve the educational levels of their pupils (Mays, 1962 : 57-58). Among the factors which were mentioned were: attitudes of inertia and absence of enthusiasm among parents, physical limitations in the homes and lack of facilities and other incentives to study, poor housing and occasional poverty. Like the *Crowther Report*, and the study by Douglas (1964), this study shows that children from smaller families do better at school and stay on longer. He found that only 12 children out of 400 from a sample of 570 households were pursuing secondary education, which amounted to three per cent of children between the ages of 11 and 15 years (Mays, 1962 : 29). These children were from small families.

The scope of the studies of the mid-sixties was extended to focus deliberate attention on aspects in the educational system related to the home background of pupils. The best known of these studies are those of Douglas (1964), and Little and Westergaard (1964) which examine the rates of educational success between children of different social classes. They showed how the inequalities in selection were magnified in the proportions reaching higher education. Wiseman's (1964) study looked at home background and

neighbourhood or community influences. Goodacre (1968) was concerned with the attitudes of infant-school teachers to their pupils' home background. Cullen (1969) did not extend the scope of her study to the same extent as those already mentioned. Her study was similar to that of Fraser (1959), but more comprehensive. It looked at the many facets of home background and commented particularly on parents' attitudes to education.

Douglas (1964 : 11-26) investigated the problem of ability and attainment. His study included children who were born in March 1946. They were all children of manual and self employed workers. The main variables used in this research were parental encouragement, children's attitudes and behaviour, sex differences and position in the family. These children were studied over a period of eleven years, and Douglas concludes that children from the lower manual working class are doubly handicapped in that their performance in tests of mental ability and school achievement shows a relative decline between the ages of eight and eleven, and their chances of going to secondary school are low (Douglas, 1964 : 52-59). He relates this to parental interest in education.

This study is also important for the insight which it gives into the relationship between family background and streaming in the primary school. It revealed that a greater proportion of children from large families and poor circumstances were found in the lower streams at each level of ability. These social class differences became progressively reinforced at the upper levels. While all children in Douglas's upper streams improved their average test scores between eight and eleven years, middle class children

gained far more than those from working class homes. In the lower streams, working class children suffered most (Douglas, 1964 : 144-150). This study shows us that the influence of streaming in the primary school is particularly strong for manual working class children.

Little and Westergaard (1964) looked at social class differences on a much wider plane. They looked at social selection in England and Wales from school to university, and pointed out that at each successive stage of education progressively smaller numbers of children survive to enter the next stage. They also state that as this process of elimination goes on, the relative prospects of survival of children of different social origins become steadily less equal (Little and Westergaard, 1964 : 303). Of children born in the late 1930s those of professional or managerial parents had, at ages between 11 and 13, nine times the chance of children of unskilled workers to enter grammar or independent schools. At 17 years their chances of still being at school were nearly thirty times as high. Whereas one in four of non-manual working class children entering grammar school went on to university, only one in fifteen to one in twenty from unskilled working class homes did so.

Wiseman's (1964) study in Manchester points to some significant factors in the working class environment which to some extent accounts for the under-representation of the manual working classes in higher education. He considered such neighbourhood predictors as birth and mortality rates, population density, and provision

of play areas. However, he was careful to point out that the most important influences were the attitudes of pupils, teachers, and parents (Wiseman, 1964 : 26). This study indicates that the diverse forces influencing children's educational performances include the child's motivation towards school, the parents' attitudes towards education, and the number of domestic responsibilities shouldered by children.

Goodacre (1968) contributed to a new dimension of home-school studies when she investigated teachers' attitudes towards their pupils' home background. The research was carried out in 100 infant schools and was concerned specifically with the reading abilities of middle class and working class children, and teachers' attitudes towards these children (Goodacre, 1968 : 17-25). Some aspects which she studied included: teachers' ratings of the importance of home background in the teaching of reading; how teachers categorise pupils in relation to home background; teachers' personal contacts with pupils and their homes; and teachers' opinions about home background.

Cullen's (1969) study was moulded along the lines of earlier studies such as that of Fraser (1959). However, it made a more extensive examination of social relationships, physical and cultural milieu on children's attainment in school. It was specifically concerned with the social causes of educational backwardness in Ireland, and compared educationally advanced and retarded children in respect of family structure, social class and economic background, cultural experiences of the family,



parental attitudes towards education, and parental aspirations for their children's future occupations (Cullen, 1969 : 42-43).

The studies of Wiseman (1964), Goodacre (1968), and Cullen (1969) reveal quite clearly that the attack on selective schooling was only one of the criticisms levelled against the British class system. They focussed on the environment in general, while the studies of Miller (1971), and Chazan and his associates (1971) pursued the environmental perspective with greater enthusiasm. This new trend was mainly the result of American experience of *compensatory education* which was designed to meet the needs of the so called *culturally disadvantaged* children. *Compensatory education* was based on the assumption that some educational intervention should be made before the child comes to school so as to eliminate the effects of cultural disadvantage.

To some extent Miller's (1971) study was cast into this mould. He studied aspects of social and personal adjustments of children, which influence academic success and failure. A number of important areas in the child's personality development were identified, and Miller based his study on the assumption that these areas have a critical influence on the child's intellectual development and educability. This study also included other variables associated with learning behaviour, such as age, sex, family size, and number of schools attended (Miller, 1971 : 71-73). These were related to the children's own perceptions of home relationships, and the importance of parent-child relationships was also investigated.

Chazan and his associates (1971) based their study more specifically

on the *compensatory* educational argument. They carried out a research and developmental project in *compensatory education* at the University College of Swansea, where they studied children of infant school age in selected areas of England and Wales. They made longitudinal studies of children living in deprived areas. Information was obtained on the children's response to schooling, and the effects of the material and cultural environment on their educational progress and emotional development (Chazan et. al., 1971 : 6). This information was compared with that gained from a group of children living in non-deprived areas. The major aims were to investigate the extent to which the parents were providing experiences which might be considered as helpful to the children in their subsequent adjustment to school. The two groups were compared in respect of play habits, interest and ability to profit from radio and television, interest in books and reading, family size, parents' education, parent-teacher relationships, and so on (Chazan et.al., 1971 : 37-67).

Though this study pointed to some important aspects of home environment and their influences on education, it did not really come to grips with the question of unequal educational opportunities. In the U.S.A. where a great deal of work was done with disadvantaged children, it was found that out-of-school and pre-school programmes did not in the long term provide much equality of opportunity. It soon became clear that the roots of educational failure went far deeper than the amount of cultural stimulation found in the home and neighbourhood environment.

For example, Jencks (1972 : 30) studied social mobility in the U.S.A. and showed that equality of opportunity cannot be easily related to isolated aspects such as compensatory education. Though social class and educational opportunity studies are generally relevant to Britain, Jencks's American study is important for its comprehensive analysis of the American social structure. Unlike several British studies which were already discussed, Jencks claims that the quality of the school environment is largely irrelevant to inequality in cognitive skills and life chances.

He also denies the significance of family background as a major determinant of life chances. However, when examining the national distribution of educational qualifications, family background was found to have more influence on an individual's attainment than I.Q. The family's influence depended partly on its socio-economic status and partly on cultural and psychological characteristics (Jencks, 1972 : 254-256). This study also revealed that though occupational status was closely related to educational attainment, there was a great deal of variation in the status of men with exactly the same amount of education. It would appear that the family does not exert the same amount of influence on educational attainment, as is evident in most British studies. Jencks says "*... since educational attainment is only partly determined by family background, and since occupational status is only partly determined by educational attainment, family background ends up exerting a moderate influence on a man's eventual occupation.*" (Jencks, 1972 : 254).

Generally, this study shows that educational opportunities, cognitive

skills, educational qualifications, occupational status, income, and job satisfaction are all unequally distributed. Therefore, social class and home background do not assume the same degree of importance as in the case of British studies. Jencks also found that the association between one variety of inequality and another is usually quite weak and therefore concluded that educational reform alone was inadequate in bringing about equality of opportunity.

#### 5.4.3 Interpretative and Interactionist Studies

The studies of the *educational opportunity era*, reviewed in the previous section illustrate the general relationship which exists between home background, social class and education. In some cases they also demonstrate in detail the underachievement of working class children. But, one of their serious shortcomings is that they do not explain or explore the great variety of home motivational factors which working class and middle class children may experience. This is mainly due to the fact that too often they make use of a simple two-level model of social class stratification which conceals this variety. For example, the middle class family is said to be child-centred, future-oriented, and interested in achievement and mobility. The lower class family, on the other hand, is described as adult-centred and present-oriented.

However, despite this, the full impact of these studies can only be seen when we examine their findings in the light of what is revealed by the new *interpretative* studies which are mainly of the interactionist type. The studies of the *educational opportunity era* have benefitted greatly by the emphasis which

*interpretative* studies place on values and beliefs of the family, community and school. The works of Bernstein (1973a) and Craft (1974), in particular, have provided valuable information about subcultural values and family life. Hargreaves (1972) and Lacey (1970), on the other hand, used interpretative techniques to study social class values in secondary schools.

Bernstein's major contribution has been to illustrate a connection between social structure, language and educability. He studied language models used by parents and children, and related social class differences in school achievement to class differences in language use. In his early works (Bernstein, 1958; 1964), Bernstein described two linguistic codes characteristic of the middle class on the one hand, and the lower working class, on the other. At first he called these linguistic codes *public* and *formal language*, but later these were replaced by the terms, *restricted code* and *elaborated code*.

At this stage, his research showed that the *elaborated code* which is the mode of speech typical of the middle class is one in which there is high individual selection. The *restricted code*, on the other hand, which is the speech mode typical of the lower working class is characterised by the limited exploitation of the structural possibilities for sentence organisation (Bernstein, 1971 : 123-137). The social interaction of adults and children in the family is thus crucial to the development of the children's linguistic skills. Bernstein indicates that the quality of middle class family life leads to the possession of well developed linguistic skills which are fundamental to the child's success

in school. The linguistic code is related to the educative experiences of the home and its social class value system.

It has been suggested that the child in the small middle class family is more likely to possess the *elaborated code* because of his greater contact with adults. The larger working class family does not provide similar opportunities for language development. However, Bernstein is careful to point out that the possession of an *elaborated* or *restricted* linguistic code is more than simply a matter of acquiring vocabulary. He argues that these *codes* are linguistic forms generated by the life experiences of these particular subcultures (Bernstein, 1971 : 118-123). They reflect different assumptions about the social environment and social relationships in the children's homes.

Bernstein's latest studies are concerned with analysing and interpreting the nature of these social relationships by adopting the approach of the conflict theorists (Eggleston, 1974 : 270). In this respect, a major difference between his earlier and more recent work is its interpretative nature. He avoids the use of a simple two-level model of social class stratification, but is concerned more with the depth of complexity of social class differences in language usage (Stubbs, 1976 : 42). For example, he indicates the importance of differential parental value systems as expressed in the use of language in child socialisation in middle and working class families (Bernstein, 1971; 1973). These studies emphasise the significance of values, attitudes and perceptions as a key area of causality in social class differences in language.

Using the conflict approach, Bernstein links the *restricted* and

*elaborated* codes to the typology of family control. He distinguishes two types of families: the *positional* family and *person centred* family. In *positional* families which are basically authoritarian, there are said to be clear-cut definitions of the status of different members of the family, such as father, grandmother, and so on. This is typical of the larger working class family. In *person centred* families such distinctions are blurred, and each member of the family has sufficient opportunities to reveal his unique characteristics. Bernstein claims that the communicative structure in these two family types is differently focussed, such that we should expect the *restricted code* in *positional* families and the *elaborated code* in *person centred* families (Bernstein, 1971: 206-209). However, he is careful to point out that both types of families can be found in the middle and working classes, but implies that *positional* families are more characteristic of the working class. Though his latest studies are still broadly related to social class in general, their valuable contribution to home background studies lies in their closer microscopic type of analysis of the complexity of interactional patterns amongst family members.

Another study which examined the complexity of social class values and family life is that of Craft (1974 : 47-63). The value of this study lies in its exploration of school, peer group and community experiences. It is based on the assumption that the values of home and school can only be understood when they are related to the values of the wider social structure. Craft argues that few studies have sought to relate style of family socialisation to the occupational and social structure, and fewer still to fundamental attitudes such as time. His contribution to

home-school studies lies in the insight which he gives us into educational aspirations and attitudes in different social groups.

Craft's study was concerned with school leaving in Dublin, mainly with Catholic, working class parents. He selected two groups of adolescents who were matched for social class, religion, ability, family size, sex and age. The study revealed that those staying on at school beyond the minimum school-leaving age were found to have parents who had significantly higher achievement values on activity, time and relational dimensions.

Unlike the studies of Bernstein and Craft, those of Hargreaves (1972) and Lacey (1970) do not deal directly with values in the home; they deal with social class differences in values in secondary schools. Nevertheless, their studies have some important implications for home-school relationships. It is in this context that these studies will be briefly discussed.

Both used participant observation techniques and studied the inside of schools for prolonged periods. In doing so they pointed to some of the weaknesses of the positivist point of view of the *educational opportunity era* studies. In particular they showed that the structural inequality built into the educational system, which positivism linked with the wider social structure, did not offer a deep enough insight into the intra-school processes. Hargreaves and Lacey used interpretative techniques such as case studies to study streaming in secondary schools. By employing a microscopic analysis, Lacey (1970), in particular, focussed on minute descriptions of the process by which individuals are



differentiated academically, and develop positive or negative attitudes to school. He showed how this gave rise to subcultures, the one supportive of educational attainment, and the other hostile to education. This type of analysis can also be applied to study attitudes which stem from the home, especially those related to parental encouragement.

#### 5.5 RELEVANCE OF THESE STUDIES TO THE PRESENT INVESTIGATION

Though a whole range of studies have been reviewed, clearly not all of them are directly related to the present investigation. However, it was necessary to take a comprehensive look at the entire field so that the present study could be understood in its proper theoretical context. The review also helps to trace the shift in emphasis from *structural functionalism* in the earlier studies to *interactionism* in the later studies. An awareness of this developmental sequence is necessary if we are to understand why certain aspects of home background have been highlighted by both the *normative* and the *interpretative* studies.

With this in mind the design of the present investigation is influenced greatly by the emphasis which the British studies place on cultural differences in the life-styles of the middle and lower working classes. Using the *normative* perspectives of studies such as the *Plowden Report* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967); Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956); Fraser (1959); Cullen (1969); and Chazan et.al., (1971), this study investigates social class differences ranging from material comforts of the home to parents' attitudes to education. These

differences are then explored along the lines of the *interpretative* studies such as those of Bernstein (1973a), and Craft (1974).

Within this integrated framework, the research of the present study was designed to incorporate the following aspects of pupils' home background:

- (a) material comforts
- (b) educational and cultural level
- (c) parents' attitudes to education
- (d) family size.

Material comforts of the home can be ascertained by the income of the family and through the possession of certain essential amenities. Poverty, for example, may be due to low wages, unemployment, a large family, or the loss of a breadwinner. However, poverty only assumes importance when it implies poor quality housing, overcrowding, lack of privacy, inadequate study facilities, and strain and conflict in the family's personal relationships. Poverty which results in malnutrition and poor living conditions can have adverse influences on the health of the child, and on his ability to learn. In many cases, it also leads to early school leaving, frequent absence through illness, and neglect of homework.

There is, therefore, a close relationship between poverty, material comforts and life style (Banks, 1976 : 75). A poor family, for example, may find it difficult to afford books and toys, and to provide general educational experiences for its children. However, poverty and material comforts should not be related to school performance in an isolated way. The present study has, therefore, been careful to note the views of Floud and Halsey who say:

"... the emphasis in investigation has shifted in recent years from the study of material disabilities to explore the social and cultural circumstances affecting their attainment and performance..." (Floud, Halsey, and Anderson, 1961 : 7)

In the present study, "*social and cultural circumstances*" has been defined to include the level of parents' education, their cultural interests such as reading habits, and membership of libraries. Parents' attitudes to education have been highlighted since differences in such attitudes centre mainly on the emphasis which each social class places upon education. The variables used to measure parental attitudes to education are: frequency of visits to school, reasons for these visits, values placed on formal education, aspirations for their children's future education and occupation, and encouragement and assistance with homework (Musgrove, 1971 : 77).

These variables are useful indicators of the intellectual climate and motivation which foster favourable attitudes to learning and the value which parents place on academic achievement (Douglas, 1964 : 67-68). The present study has focussed more attention on parents' attitudes to education than on some other aspects of home background, since previous research has confirmed that these are more accurate indicators of educational success. For example, Wiseman's study for the *Plowden Committee* pointed out that there are many *good* homes among the working class, and many *bad* homes in the middle class (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 373). It is what the parents do in the home rather than their status characteristics which influences the children's educational achievement.

Closely linked with parents' attitudes and parent-child interaction is the factor of family size. This factor assumes importance when it is related to the quality of experiences which parents provide for children in large and small families. This study, therefore, investigates whether parents and children watch television or listen to the radio together; and whether parents explain and discuss television and radio programmes with their children; and the extent to which they offer help with homework. The impact of these influences of parents on children can be seen when family size is examined in the context of family organisation.

Research studies have shown that family size has important implications for cognitive and educational stimulation. For example, Nisbet (1953 : 286) and Fraser (1959 : 53-54) have shown that a negative correlation exists between family size and measured intelligence. They also show that children from large families have lower educational performances. It has been suggested that these children do not receive the same amount of verbal and intellectual stimulation from adults as children from small families. Generally, large families come from the working class, and as the family grows larger the working class mother is less likely to give personal attention to her children. Increase in family size also accelerates existing problems of poor housing and insufficient space.

In general, it may be said that with the incorporation of these four aspects of home background into this study an attempt has been made to understand social class differences through an understanding of the culture and the general socialisation process in the family. This involves knowing how the child acquires not only the values and skills of his group, but also the motivational influences in the home. By integrating the *normative* and *interpretative*

perspectives, this study focusses attention not only on the structural aspects of home background, but also on the quality of social and cultural experiences found in the home.

## CHAPTER SIX

## 6. DESIGN OF THE SURVEY

6.1 CHOICE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH AREA

This research could have been conducted in a number of schools selected from different suburbs of the city, or alternatively in one particular suburb in which all the children live and attend school. The former approach was rejected because of problems which would be encountered in the selection of schools. If, for example, a school in one of the predominantly working class areas of Chatsworth, and a school in a predominantly middle class suburb such as Reservoir Hills were taken, the differential social class composition of pupils, quality of teaching and physical accommodation would all have to be taken into account. The differing conditions would make it difficult to determine to what extent the academic achievement of children is directly related to home background, and to what extent it is a function of variables connected with the school environment such as size of classes, peer group values, and general level of ability in the class.

Therefore, it was decided to find a particular suburb with a heterogeneous social class structure which would be reflected in the composition of the schools serving the area. The suburb should have about six to eight senior primary schools from which a sample of 150 pupils could be drawn. All schools should participate in the study so that the problem of selection of schools could be eliminated. Very few Indian areas in Durban are sufficiently self-contained in meeting these requirements. The only suburb which was considered to be ideal - especially in its social class composition was Merebank,

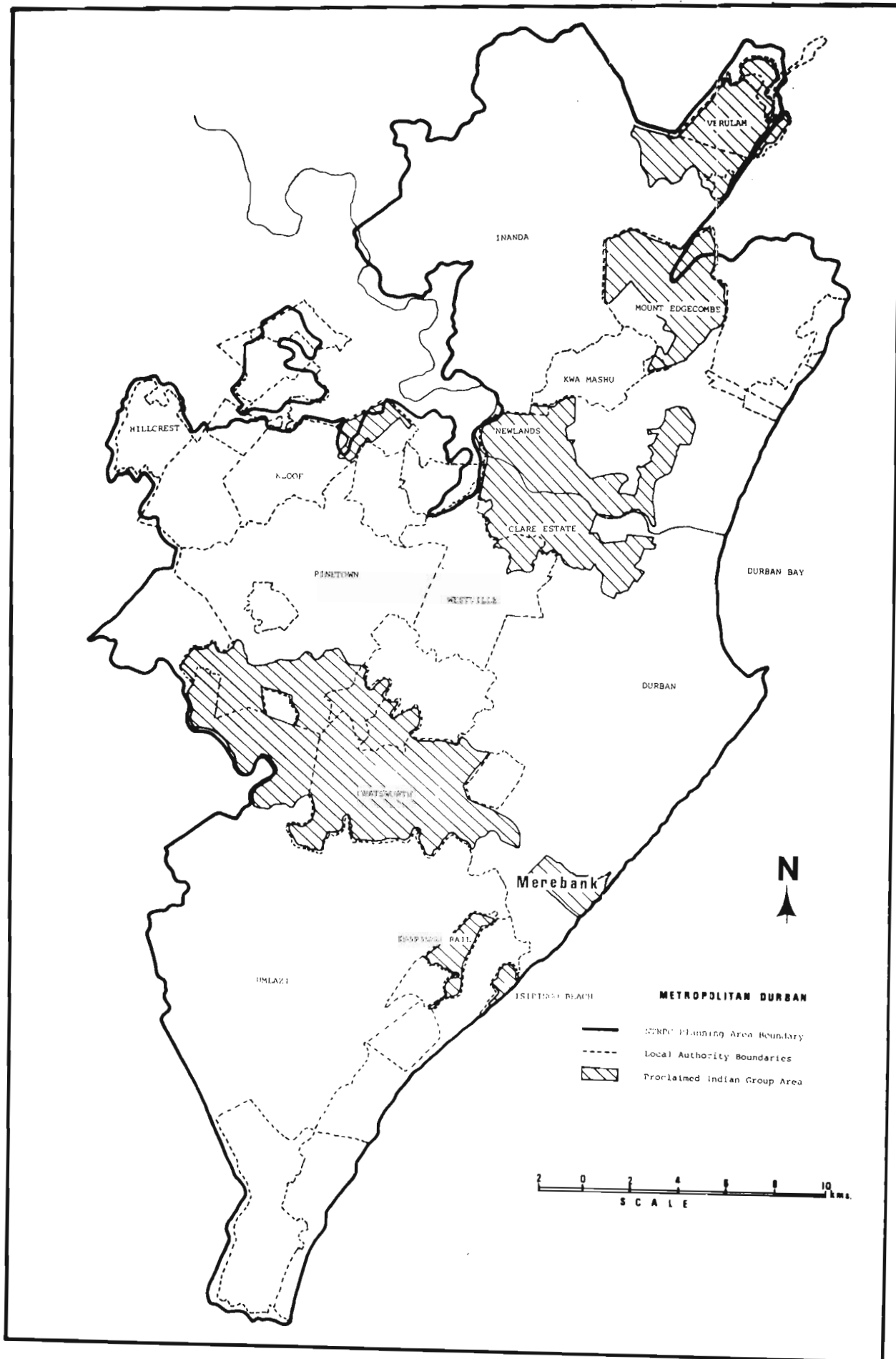
one of the southern suburbs of the City of Durban. Figure 1 shows the location of this area, and figure 2 the layout of the area and the location of the schools in which the study was conducted.

Merebank which is about 950 acres in extent is one of the more established Indian areas which was first occupied by Indians in 1900. The livelihood of the majority of its early residents was market gardening. However, the social and economic composition of the community has changed greatly in the years which followed. Today it reflects both the traditions of a well settled community of the past, as well as the changing aspects of community life which resulted from the resettlement of Indians in terms of the Group Areas Act of 1950.

The educational aspirations of this community can be traced back to 1921 when a private English school was established through the efforts of the *Merebank Indian Society* (Golden Jubilee Brochure, Merebank Primary School, 1977 : 6-33). In 1923 the residents formed the *Merebank Indian Association* which established the first government-aided school in this area in 1927. The community was also very active in building temples, organising vernacular classes, and erecting other state-aided schools.

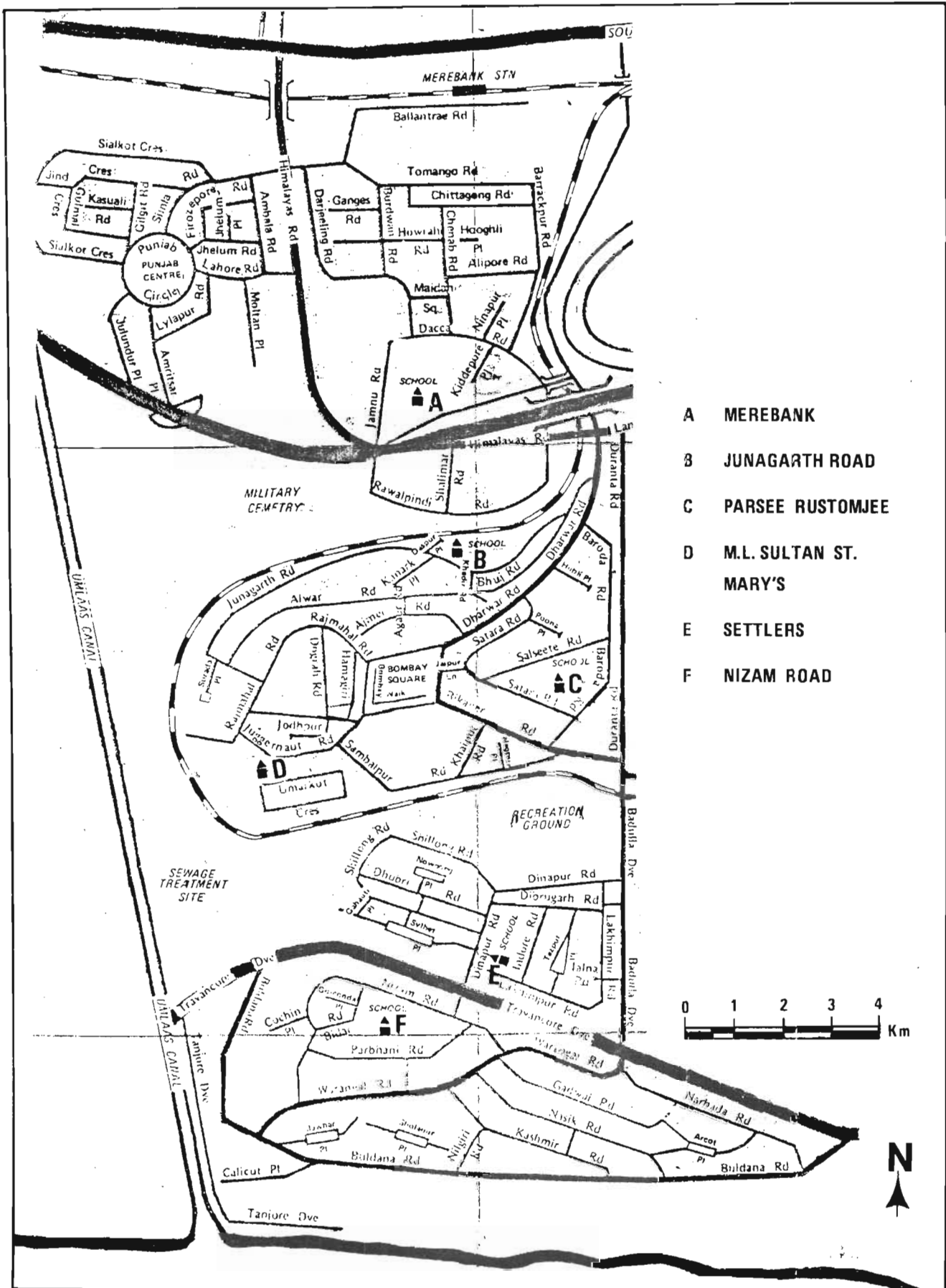
By the late 1950s the Durban City Council started a *housing scheme* for Indians who were *disqualified* from living in the White areas of Durban. In the early 1960s there was an influx of people from Mayville, Cato Manor, Riverside, Sea-View, Bellair, Hillary and Malvern. Thus, the physical and social character of the area changed considerably. Despite this, Merebank can still be regarded as a comparatively well established community, especially when one considers some of the new Indian townships such as Chatsworth, Shallcross and Phoenix.

**FIG.1 : LOCATION OF MEREBANK**





**FIG. 2: MEREBANK, LOCATION OF SCHOOLS**



This area was considered to be ideally suitable for the present investigation because it affords a good opportunity to study a wide range of pupils from both the middle and the working classes. The primary schools draw their pupils from a variety of home backgrounds - economic and sub-economic municipal homes, privately owned cottages, flats, and a municipal barracks.

The older residents live in cottages built about three or four decades ago. The majority of the new residents live either in economic or sub-economic homes built with the financial assistance of the City Council. The quality and cost of the homes vary. The economic homes are aesthetically pleasing and have the essential material comforts. The sub-economic homes which are semi-detached buildings with one, two or three bedrooms are built in rows and are similar in design, and have little architectural variation. They are built of concrete, hollow-blocks, with cement floors and no ceilings. In addition to this, there are four privately owned flats. For the very low income group, the City Council has built a sub-standard *transit scheme*, which is poor quality housing. It is erected on the low-lying flats where the roads are corrugated, and where there is no provision for drainage. None of these houses has electricity, interleading doors, tiled floors, ceilings, bathrooms, toilets, or running water. They are provided with communal ablution blocks and washing facilities. This scheme is known by the local residents as *Minitown Barracks*.

Many of the residents of Merebank are employed by the light and heavy industries in the surrounding areas of Jacobs, Mobeni, Clairwood, Prospecton and Isipingo. The nearby paper mill, motor plant, oil refineries, chemical, engineering, and leather industries are important sources of employment. Though industry employs a large share of the local labour force, Merebank also has a fair percentage

of non-manual workers such as self-made businessmen, clerks, school-masters and other professional workers.

Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the social structure of this area does not differ markedly from that of the rest of the Indian community, as judged from the 1970 census data presented in chapter two. The data reveals that approximately 72 per cent of the Asian population of the Republic of South Africa earn less than R1 200 per annum (Republic of South Africa, Statistics Year Book, 1974 : Table 1.30). In Natal 69 per cent, and in the Durban and Pinetown District approximately 65 per cent, of the Asian population fall into this category. According to the University of Natal's Indian Domestic Budget Survey of 1969, this figure of R1 200 per annum can be regarded as the Poverty Datum Line for Indian households (Pillay and Ellison, 1969 : 20-23). In the absence of a social class index for Indians, those falling in the category earning less than this figure can be considered to be working class.

Though census figures are unavailable for Merebank, from the pattern which emerges in the Durban and Pinetown District, it is safe to assume that about 60 to 70 per cent of its population is working-class, and that it is typical of the social structure of Indians in general. Therefore, the choice of this area affords an excellent opportunity to include in the sample a proportionate representation of the social class-structure of the Indian community as a whole.

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The 1970 census data for the Asian population of South Africa is not indicated for different suburbs in cities. It indicates distribution according to magisterial districts. Inferences from the 1970 population census about Merebank are based on figures for the Durban and Pinetown district.

## 6.2 THE SCHOOLS IN THE SURVEY

There are six senior primary schools in the area, all of which participated in the study:

- A. Merebank Primary School
- B. Junagarth Road Primary School
- C. Parsee Rustomjee Primary School
- D. M.L. Sultan St. Mary's Primary School
- E. Settlers Primary School
- F. Nizam Road Primary School

The situation of these schools in figure 2 shows that they are in close proximity to children living in the vicinity. In this sense, the schools maybe regarded as *neighbourhood schools*. Midwinter (1972 : 11-45) gives a useful account of *neighbourhood* or *community* schools in the inner areas of Liverpool.

Permission was obtained from the Division of Education of the Department of Indian Affairs to make use of the schools. Preliminary visits were then made to the schools to ascertain information about the pupils' social class background, and to make arrangements for pupils to fill in questionnaires.

All six schools indicated that they have a heterogeneous social class intake, and that they admit pupils from their immediate neighbourhood. Though there are no official boundaries which demarcate the area from which a school may admit its pupils, the six schools have an unofficial agreement on certain pre-determined boundaries. There is also an internal arrangement between the schools that all of them will admit

new pupils on an appointed day and time. This is done to ensure that parents would admit their children to schools which are nearest to their homes. Thus, admission of pupils to each school is based on proximity of residence to the school, rather than on age, sex, religious denomination, or social class affiliation. The six schools therefore afforded an excellent opportunity to include in the sample a full range of middle-class and working class pupils.

It should also be pointed out that the choice of six primary schools falls closely in line with what most small-scale research studies on social class, home background and education have adopted. Fraser (1959 : 22) conducted her study in six schools in Aberdeen. Cullen (1969 : 39) used nine schools in a town on the east coast of Ireland. Miller (1971 : 74) selected ten schools from contrasting social class neighbourhoods in London. Jackson and Marsden (1962 : 28) drew their middle class sample from records supplied by four grammar schools in Huddersfield.

### 6.3 THE RESEARCH POPULATION

The next problem was to select the research population or the universe to be surveyed. Since the present study deals with the effects of home background on pupils' academic performances, it was considered that if the effect of a good or bad home environment were cumulative, this would be more apparent in the later years of primary school education, particularly as the age of transfer to secondary school approached. The choice of a senior primary school population was also dictated by certain other considerations which were revealed by the research studies reviewed in chapter five. Some of the more important ones are:

- (a) The wastage of talent begins in the primary school.
- (b) Children of all levels of ability and attainment are present in the senior primary school.
- (c) This is the stage which presents the last opportunity to study children before they are allocated to differential types of secondary school courses.
- (d) It is also the stage at which differences between high- and low-achievers begin to increase rapidly. Distinct comparisons can therefore be made between high- and low-achievers.

In order to obtain clear results and significant data rapidly, it was decided to limit the study to only one standard in the senior primary school phase. This would ensure taking a fairly large number of children of about the same age, rather than children of several different age-groups. The choice of a single standard would also ensure that assessment of the academic achievement of pupils would be relatively easy because of the uniformity of the curriculum.

Standard four pupils were chosen as the research population because this is the final standard of the senior primary school. The standard four examination results are also the basis on which pupils are placed in standard five which is the first year of the junior secondary school. At this stage the pupils are between eleven and twelve years old, and this seemed preferable since by this time parents would probably have some idea about what courses their children would be likely to take in the junior secondary school. At this age pupils also provide the opportunity to study the impact of social class and home background on education at a stage when they have had sufficient time to become adjusted to life at school.

They would have been at school for about seven years.

Most British researches into social class, home background and education have been done in primary education, and especially with pupils who were taking the eleven plus entry examinations for secondary school. For example, Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 70) investigated the material environment of the homes and schools of pupils taking the eleven plus selection examinations in South West Hertfordshire and Middlesborough. Fraser (1959 : 21) studied primary school pupils at the age of eleven, and followed them up to the age of twelve when they were transferred to secondary schools. In his longitudinal study, Douglas (1964 : 34) studied children between the ages of eight and eleven. Cullen (1969 : 37) took children who were between eleven and thirteen years old. The Manchester Survey (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967, 2 : 91-135) carried out by Wiseman for the *Plowden Committee* in 1964 was concerned with ten-year-old children.

Initial visits were made to the six senior primary schools in Merebank to explain to the school principals the purpose of the research. Information was also sought about the number of standard four units in each school, the number of pupils in each unit, and the basis on which these units are organised. Three of the schools indicated that their standard fours are mixed ability groups, while the remaining three stated that their pupils were streamed on the basis of the standard three examination results. The population which consisted of the entire 757 pupils reflected a balance between mixed ability groups and streamed pupils.

Table 6.1 indicates the number of standard four class units and the total number of pupils in standard four in each school. All schools have about 36 to 38 pupils in each unit, with the exception of Nizam Road Primary School which has about 30 pupils in each unit.

TABLE 6.1

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND CLASS UNITS ACCORDING TO  
SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	NO. OF STD 4 UNITS	NO. OF PUPILS
Merebank Primary	5	185
Junagarth Rd. Primary	2	72
Parsee Rustomjee Primary	3	109
M.L. Sultan St. Mary's Primary	3	114
Settlers Primary	5	189
Nizam Rd. Primary	3	88
TOTAL	21	757

#### 6.4 INSTRUMENTS USED TO MEASURE SOCIAL CLASS

The population had to be classified into social class groups, and thereafter a decision had to be made as to which two social classes were sufficiently contrasting to be taken for comparison. Since there is no index of social class measurement in South Africa, it was decided to use the British criterion of father's occupation as a determinant of the child's social class status. Notable British studies which used this criterion are those of Cullen (1969 : 48), Ford (1969 : 35), and Miller (1971 : 74).



#### 6.4.1 The Use of Father's Occupation as a Determinant of Social Class

A discussion of the concept *social class* in chapter two, and a review of studies on social class in chapter five showed quite clearly that occupation is the most reliable single criterion for determining social status. It should be noted, however, that occupation is not the only criterion. Educational level and income are also rated highly as social class determinants. But since occupation is closely linked with educational qualifications and economics, it may be regarded as the most important criterion of social class (Hall and Jones, 1950 : 31-32). This assertion is also supported by Worsley (1970 : 293) who says that though the criteria used to measure social class vary, the most common indicator used in both Britain and the U.S.A. is occupation. Over 30 000 officially named different occupations are recognised by the Registrar General in Britain for grading according to social prestige. The following five classes shown in table 6.2 are customarily used by the Registrar General of England and Wales (Glass, 1954 : 38-39):

TABLE 6.2

REGISTRAR GENERAL'S SOCIAL CLASS CLASSIFICATION IN ENGLAND  
AND WALES

SOCIAL CLASS CATEGORY	OCCUPATIONAL GRADE
Social Class 1	Professional, Managerial and Administrative
Social Class 2	Intermediate
Social Class 3	Manual Skilled
Social Class 4	Manual Semi-skilled
Social Class 5	Manual Unskilled

Appendix A contains the questionnaire which was used to obtain information regarding each pupil's social class background. Firstly, general information was sought on the pupil's age, sex, religion, home language, and home address. However, the most important information required was father's occupation. The child was also required to supply information about his mother's occupation and his parents' level of education. This additional information was required in cases where fathers were unemployed or deceased. *Educational level* is also a useful criterion which can be used to distinguish between certain similar types of occupation. However, such information must be treated with caution, and was not really used to any extent in this study. In the case of the sample, the researcher himself determined the educational level of the parents during his interviews with them.

The researcher supervised the filling in of the questionnaires in each of the twenty one class units. Class teachers were also present, and were of great assistance when difficulties were experienced. The purpose of the study was explained briefly to the pupils. They were also assured of the confidential nature of the research. The researcher then read one question at a time, and helped the pupils to fill in the required details. Careful explanations had to be given as to what was required by the questions concerning home language, religion, and parent's level of education. Pupils experienced great difficulty in answering these three questions.

The two most crucial questions (8 and 9) were answered at the end. It was essential to do so because in the case of these two questions

precise instructions and guidance had to be given. The importance of obtaining absolutely accurate information about father's occupation was crucial to the research design. Question 8 asked, *"What is your father's job?"* Question 9 asked, *"Imagine that you were explaining to a new friend what your father does, try and give as much information as you can of what he does during a day's job."* Before the pupils answered these questions, they were given examples of various types of jobs in factories, industry, professions etc. An example of an account of a typical day's work was also read out to them. They were then encouraged to write freely so that they would not be hindered by fear of incorrect expression and spelling. However, where assistance was required this was given by the researcher and the class teacher.

Question 9 was considered to be absolutely necessary because the mere naming of a father's occupation (as in question 8) by a child can produce ambiguous, misleading and useless information. A graphic account of how father is occupied in a typical day's work helps greatly to get a more accurate picture of the nature of the job. Miller (1971 : 74) and Ford (1969 : 35) who used similar questions in order to group pupils into social classes found that there was considerable gain in the clarification of the precise nature of the occupation.

Information was also sought on mother's occupation, and father's and mother's level of education. Parents' educational level was used only if it was difficult to classify a particular occupation. Mother's occupation was taken into account in cases where fathers were deceased, and if she was the sole breadwinner of the family.

In cases where fathers were unemployed, pupils were asked to state the father's last permanent job. In the case of pupils whose fathers were deceased or no longer lived with the family, and whose mothers were not working, they were asked to indicate the last jobs that their fathers were engaged in. Where pupils could not supply this information, they were asked to indicate the occupation of the main breadwinner of the family. This could refer to elder brothers or sisters, uncles, aunts or relatives.

After all the necessary precautions had been taken, the researcher was satisfied that the information given by pupils would be reliable enough to be used for social class classification. It took each class approximately twenty-five minutes to fill in the questionnaires. Since personal supervision was necessary, it took the researcher six days to do so in all twenty-one classes. In the cases of absentees, the class teachers supervised the filling in of questionnaires when those pupils returned to school.

When the forms were checked, it was found that dubious information had been given in 219 cases. This meant that a second and in some cases a third visit had to be made to schools to check the accuracy of the relevant details.

#### 6.4.2 The Use of The Hall-Jones Scale of Occupational Gradings as an Index of Social Class Classification

Since 1911 various social gradings of occupations have been attempted in England. These have been mostly modifications and extensions of the Registrar-General's classification. One of the most commonly used scales is the *Hall-Jones Classification* (Hall and Jones, 1950 : 31-55). Table 6.3 (see page 137) shows the standard classification in this scale.

TABLE 6.3

## STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF THE HALL-JONES SCALE

SOCIAL CLASS GROUP	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY
Social Class 1	Professional and High Administrative
Social Class 2	Managerial and Executive
Social Class 3	Inspectional, Supervisory and other Non-Manual Higher Grade
Social Class 4	Inspectional, Supervisory and other Non-Manual Lower Grade
Social Class 5	Skilled-Manual and routine grades of Non-Manual
Social Class 6	Semi-Skilled Manual
Social Class 7	Unskilled Manual

Social class 1 includes those occupations which demand highly specialised and high educational qualifications. This frequently implies the possession of a university degree or comparable professional qualifications. Hall and Jones cite the following as examples of such occupations: architect, surgeon, and bank manager.

Social class 2 includes those who are responsible for initiating or implementing policy. Examples given are: secretary of a small business employing 10-99 hands, headmaster of an elementary school, and personnel manager. Persons in social class 3 have no such responsibility, but may have some degree of authority over others. Farm bailiff, police inspector, and assistant teacher of an elementary school are examples of such occupations.

Examples of occupations are as follows: social class 4: insurance agent, costing clerk, and relieving officer; social class 5: carpenter, compositor, routine clerk, and shop assistant in a drapery store; social class 6: assistant in a butcher's or fishmonger's shop, an assembler or a sheet metal worker; and social class 7: builder's labourer, canteen assistant, and porter.

Hall and Jones are careful to point out that the distinction between skilled and semi-skilled manual work is not always easy to draw. For example, if a trade has no special name it is as a rule safe not to class it as a skilled occupation. Skilled work requires special training, adaptability and responsibility. Semi-skilled work is that which needs no great degree of skill or training, and is habitual work generally associated with a particular industry. For example, an agricultural worker is semi-skilled, while a general labourer is not. Unskilled manual work is that which is general and is not associated with any particular industry, and can be done with very little practice by one who has had no special or vocational training. This category will include such persons as counterhands, machine minders, and railway porters.

The Hall-Jones Classification was tested in England to ensure that it was in line with the opinions of the man in the street, as well as with those of academics (Moser and Hall, 1954 : 29-50). The conclusions reached on social gradings have thus been related only to *average* opinion. These indicate that social classes 1 to 4 may be regarded as *middle class*; and those between social classes 5 to 7 as *working class*. A more detailed classification shows that social classes 1 and 2 may be regarded as *upper middle class*; social classes 3 and 4 as *lower middle class*; social class 5 as *upper working class*; and social classes 6 and 7 as *lower working class*.

The Centre for Applied Sciences of the University of Natal devised a code of occupations for rating social status, which is similar to the Hall-Jones Scale. This code which was adapted to the occupational structure of the white population in South Africa may be regarded as a modification of the Hall-Jones Scale.

TABLE 6.4

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL'S MODIFIED CLASSIFICATION OF THE HALL-JONES SCALE

SOCIAL CLASS GROUP	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY
Social Class 1	Independent and High Professionals.
Social Class 2	Executive and High Administrative in large organisations.
Social Class 3	Salaried and Professional equivalent
Social Class 4	Lower Executives and similar Administrative in large firms and Civil Service; Executives in medium firms.
Social Class 5	Semi-Professionals and equivalents.
Social Class 6	Owners and Executives of small private firms and equivalent; Senior Clerical, White-Collar Technical and Supervisory.
Social Class 7	Clerical, Sales, and Representatives
Social Class 8	Blue-Collar Technical, Supervisory and Inspectional.
Social Class 9	Skilled-manual and Semi-skilled foremen.
Social Class 10	Routine non-manual ranks in Services; Street traders.
Social Class 11	Semi-skilled and unskilled equivalent.

Table 6.4 shows that the seven social classes of the Hall-Jones Scale were retained, but each social class was ramified

prestige ranking of occupations ranging from the highest ranking occupations through to the most menial is discussed by Stopforth and Schlemmer (1978 : 14-70). The scale was modified to incorporate eleven social classes altogether.

Appendix C is a selection of examples of occupations classified in each of the eleven social classes by the University of Natal. This modified scale indicates that social classes 1 and 2 correspond to social class 1 of the Hall-Jones Scale; social classes 3 and 4 correspond to Hall-Jones' social class 2; social classes 5 and 6 to Hall-Jones' class 3; social classes 7 and 8 to Hall-Jones' class 4; social classes 9 to 10 to Hall-Jones' class 5; and social class 11 to Hall-Jones' classes 6 and 7.

Table 6.5 shows how these eleven social classes reflect the social class divisions of the middle and working classes.

TABLE 6.5

UNIVERSITY OF NATAL'S MODIFIED CLASSIFICATION OF THE HALL-JONES SCALE, AND ITS REFLECTION OF MIDDLE AND WORKING CLASS STRUCTURE

SOCIAL CLASS CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Social Classes 1 to 4	Upper Middle Class
Social Classes 5 to 8	Lower Middle Class
Social Class 9	Skilled or Upper Working Class
Social Classes 10 and 11	Semi-skilled, and Unskilled, or Lower Working Class



Approximately 800 occupations are alphabetically listed and categorised according to Table 6.4. The present researcher found this scale suitable for the classification of occupations of the fathers of the children in the research population of Merebank. However, a few modifications had to be made to adapt this classification to the occupational structure of Indians. This was done after discussions with Prof. L. Schlemmer, Director of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the University of Natal.

The University of Natal's modified Hall-Jones Scale classifies the *hawker* into social class 11, and the *market trader* into social class 10. The present researcher doubted the validity of these two classifications. The cultural background and the life-style of Indian hawkers who conduct their business through the use of delivery vans suggest that they fall into a higher classification. Hawkers constitute a significant proportion of the affluent section of the Indian community in Durban and they enjoy a fairly comfortable standard of living. Similar observations were made about market stall holders. Consequently, in accordance with the criteria set out by Hall and Jones (1950 : 33-34), it was decided to classify these two occupations into social class 7.

#### 6.5 SOCIAL CLASS CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION

The occupations of parents, indicated by the 757 standard four pupils were coded and classified into the eleven social class categories of the University of Natal's modified Hall-Jones scale. In the cases of occupations which are not included in this scale, the researcher used the basic criteria employed by Hall and Jones and then classified these appropriately. Some occupations which had to be classified in this way are: cone-winder, curry-powder maker, metal-worker, dispensary assistant, handyman, quality-production

clerk, cardex clerk, gezer spinner, cinema usher, storeman, and reservation clerk.

The following is a list of the main occupations found in the eleven social classes:

- Social Class 1 : minister of religion.
- Social Class 3 : high school teacher, high school and primary school headmaster, college lecturer.
- Social Class 4 : manager of factory.
- Social Class 5 : chef, primary school teacher, personnel officer, photographer.
- Social Class 6 : jeweller, small-shop owner, senior clerk, butcher-shop owner, small-factory owner.
- Social Class 7 : costing clerk, vegetable and clothes hawker, cardex clerk, wage clerk, salesman, traveller, market stall-holder, hotel receptionist.
- Social Class 8 : factory foreman, factory supervisor, reservation clerk in hotel, storeman, tailor, watchmaker and repairer, headwaiter, punch card operator.
- Social Class 9 : engraver, machine repairer, factory chargehand, bricklayer, carpenter, painter, skilled mechanic, cabinet-maker, welder, cook, crane-driver, cinema projectionist, miller, printer, metal designer, dispensary assistant, carpet fitter, upholsterer, glazier, electrician, fitter and turner, sign writer, boiler.
- Social Class 10 : shop assistant, counterhand, waiter, cashier, cinema usher, postman, switchboard operator, caretaker, messenger, bus conductor, barman, police constable, pedlar, factory checker, sorter.
- Social Class 11 : factory presser, machinist, builder's labourer, painter's assistant, semi-skilled mechanic, labourer, handyman, electrician's mate, dyer, tractor driver, weaver, hyster driver, cone-winder, curry powder-maker, gezer spinner, tin-cutter, furniture polisher, gardener, butcher's apprentice, road construction worker.

After being placed in the appropriate social class categories, the pupils were grouped according to the social class divisions shown in Table 6.5. Table 6.6 shows the classification of the research population into middle class and working class divisions.

TABLE 6.6  
SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION

SOCIAL CLASS CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL CLASS STRUCTURE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Social Classes 1 to 4	Upper Middle Class	12	1,59
Social Classes 5 to 8	Lower Middle Class	180	23,77
Social Class 9	Upper Working Class	163	21,54
Social Classes 10 and 11	Lower Working Class	402	53,10

From this it is evident that 25,36 per cent of the population is middle class, and 74,64 per cent of the population is working class. This is consistent with the pattern which emerges from the 1970 census data which was discussed earlier in this chapter, and also in chapter two. It may be said, therefore, that the social class structure of standard four pupils in the Merebank area reflects a heavy working class composition, and a fair percentage of the middle class. Though this is typical of the social structure of Indians in general, it may be said that this research population shows a slightly higher concentration of the working class.

#### 6.5.1 Choice of Two Contrasting Social Class Groups

The two ideal social class groups which should be taken for comparison are the upper middle class and the lower working class.

However, the researcher decided against this because of the relatively small size of the upper middle class (1,59 per cent of the population), as against the large lower working class (53,10 per cent). Though these two groups are of a very contrasting nature and would have suited the objectives of the present research, their disproportionate sizes would have made comparisons difficult.

The next best design is to make a straight comparison between the entire middle class, consisting of social classes 1 to 8, and the entire working class, consisting of social classes 9 to 11. The entire middle class made up 25,36 per cent of the population, and the entire working class made up 74,64 per cent. Though the proportions were better than the previous design, this design was also rejected because of the inclusion of social class 9 in the latter group.

Social class 9, the skilled working class constitutes a grey area which reveals many social and cultural overlaps with social class 8 on the one hand, and social class 10, on the other. This is because of the aspirations of skilled workers to achieve middle class status. On this group, the effects of social mobility are great. But in a few cases, where aspirations are lacking, there may be downward mobility into the lower working class. Because of the effects of social mobility, it was considered that comparisons made between the entire middle class and the entire working class would not be sufficiently contrasting to suit the objectives of the present research.

Consequently, it was decided to omit the skilled working class (social class 9) from the empirical design of this research, and to make a straight comparison between the entire middle class (M.C.) (social classes 1 to 8) and the lower working class (L.W.C.) (social classes 10 and 11). It should be noted, however, that the bulk of the middle class is made up of the lower middle class. Though there

is a very small number in the upper middle class, it was decided not to omit this group. Their inclusion would not affect the composition of the middle class to any significant degree.

The stratified research population was therefore made up of:

- (A) 192 middle class pupils (25,36 per cent of the total population)
- (B) 402 lower working class pupils (53,10 per cent of the total population).

With social class 9 omitted from the research design, the research population was now reduced to 594 pupils. The middle class constituted approximately one third and the lower working class pupils approximately two thirds of the new population.

#### 6.5.2 Note on The Skilled or Upper Working Class Group which was omitted from The Empirical Design

The omission of this group from the empirical design of the present study should not be interpreted to mean that the upper working class is an unimportant social class group. This group was omitted simply because it did not fit in with the objectives of the study which are outlined in chapter one. It should be mentioned, however, that in any class-structured society the skilled working class is a very important group because of the high degree of social mobility which affects it (Banks, 1976 : 43-44). Studies of social mobility in the upper working class show quite clearly the aspirations which this group has for superior educational qualifications and better job opportunities. Therefore, they are much more likely to be socially mobile than those who have little or no education, and who generally belong to the lower working class. It should also be noted that

superior education and higher level jobs lessen the possibility of downward mobility for those in the upper working class.

With increasing opportunities for mobility, they soon become an important segment of the middle class, bringing with them some of their former working class values. The social, economic and educational potential of this group is vitally linked with the opportunities which society offers. In this sense, it may be said that the upper working class in the Indian community, as in the case of western societies generally, is likely to play an important role in the shaping of the future society.

#### 6.6 THE SAMPLE

A sample of not less than 120 and not more than 150 had to be chosen from the research population of 594. The main conditions determining the choice of the sample were:

- (a) It should be as nearly as possible representative of the social class background of the population.
- (b) It should be large enough to provide reasonably stable results.
- (c) It should be small enough to allow the home interviews to be completed by a single interviewer within a reasonable time.

The size of the sample was in line with most of the small-scale studies in Britain, using home interviews as a method of studying social class, home background and education. The sample sizes of these studies were mainly between 120 and 150 pupils. For example, Cullen (1969 : 36), in her study, limited the number of home interviews to 120. She felt this to be a feasible number for one individual interviewer to manage. Chazan et. al. (1971 : 7-8)

also selected a sample of 120 children from two contrasting social class neighbourhoods. Jackson and Marsden (1962 : 59) interviewed 86 working class families.

By contrast, the larger studies, especially those of a national scale, used much larger samples. Fraser (1959 : 22), for example, used a sample of 408 pupils. The *Plowden Committee's* 1964 National Survey Among Parents of Primary School Children (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967, 2 : 97-98) selected 173 schools, from which an interview sample of 3 237 parents was chosen. The *Plowden Committee's* Manchester Survey of ten year old children chose a 25 per cent sample from 176 primary schools in Manchester. The size of the sub-sample of children whose parents were to be interviewed at home was limited to 200, or one tenth of the sample size (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967, 2 : 347-352).

It was decided to choose a sample of 150 for the present study so as to satisfy condition (b) in particular. To satisfy condition (a), the sample had to be chosen at random from the entire population. A table of random numbers (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 328-329) was used for this purpose. The procedure of random sampling is explained in Appendix D.

In selecting the random sample, an important consideration was that each unit was to represent the basic population only once (Mayntz et.al., 1976 : 70). This was done to ensure that not more than one child per home was included in the sample. For example, in the case of brothers and sisters who came from the same home, the second, third ... nth children were excluded from the sample when

their numbers appeared. If more than one child per home was included, then the number of homes would have been less than 150, and the social and cultural factors in certain homes would have been repeated when data was collected. It was preferable to obtain information on 150 *different* home backgrounds.

Another consideration was whether the sample should be made up of eleven to thirteen year-olds only; or to include older pupils as well. There were very few pupils who were fourteen years or older, and they were mainly those who failed more than once in previous standards. If the older pupils were excluded, this would have meant that the home backgrounds of a group of underachievers would not have been adequately researched. Therefore, it was decided not to control the sample for age.

Lastly, the researcher also considered the possibility of stratifying the sample according to sex. Most studies on primary education usually take into account sex differences. However, it was decided not to stratify the sample of the present study in this way because this would confuse the main purpose of the study which is to consider social class differences in the home. Since the sample was to be stratified according to social class, it was felt that any further kind of stratification would unduly complicate the design of the survey.

#### 6.6.1 Stratifying the Sample According to Social Class

Since the middle class constituted approximately one third, and the lower working class approximately two thirds of the population, it was decided to stratify the sample in the same proportions so that it would be as nearly as possible representative of the social



class background of the population. This meant that 50 pupils had to be chosen at random from 192 middle class pupils, and 100 pupils had to be chosen at random from 402 lower working class pupils. A table of random numbers (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 328-329) was used to do this. Reserves were also chosen in each group, if replacements should be necessary. See Appendix D for an explanation of the procedure of random sampling.

The advantage of stratifying the sample proportionately in this way is that *"it tends to give a more precise estimate of population values in the sense that the sampling error of a mean or a proportion as estimated from a stratified sample is nearly always smaller than the standard error in a simple random sample of the same size."*

(Butcher, 1966 : 7-8). Therefore, if the proportion of individuals per stratum in the sample is the same as the proportion represented by the stratum in the population, one can be confident of greater precision.

A further advantage of designing the sample in this way was that the middle class and the lower working class strata could be studied separately, and the findings relevant to each of these groups could be compared without any confusion. Highly satisfactory estimates could be made of the sampling error in terms of probability.

Lewis (1973 : 99) says that *"... because of the 'control' involved in selection, measures from stratified samples fluctuate less from sample to sample than measures from random samples."*

#### 6.6.2 Error of The Sample Size

Since the present investigation was based on a proportionately stratified random sample, it was necessary to calculate firstly, the error of the size of the entire sample, and then the errors of the

sizes of the sub-samples. This would give some indication of the accuracy of the sampling procedure. The calculation of error of size of sample was based on the formula used by Cullen (1969 : 40) in designing a stratified sample to study the effects of socio-cultural factors in the home. In explaining the use of this formula, Cullen states that:

*"The sampling error of a percentage (p) of the sample (n) can be estimated at the 95% confidence level by using the following formula which includes correction for a finite universe (N)."*

$$\text{Sampling Error} = \pm 1,96 \sqrt{\frac{p(100-p)}{n} \left(1 - \frac{n}{N}\right)}$$

Since the error will be greatest when the percentage is 50, the maximum error of the entire sample (n = 150) can be calculated by substituting 50 for p in the above formula. In this case N = 594.

Similarly, the maximum error of the middle class sub-sample (n = 50; N = 192) can also be calculated by substituting 50 for p. The maximum error could also be calculated in the same way for the lower working class sub-sample (n = 100; N = 402).

The calculations reveal that the maximum error of

- (a) the entire sample of 150 is 6,92 per cent
- (b) the middle class sub-sample of 50 is 11,92 per cent
- (c) the lower working class sub-sample of 100 is 8,42 per cent.

The larger errors in the case of the sub-samples are to be expected since these are stratified samples. It should be noted, however, that these calculations reveal maximum errors which could be expected.

Since the actual errors could be lower than these, they were considered to be satisfactory.

To reduce the errors, it would have been necessary, firstly, to increase the size of the entire sample, and then to increase the sizes of the sub-samples proportionately. Since 200 home interviews were deemed to be the absolute maximum that a single interviewer could cope with in the limited time available, the size of the entire sample could only have been increased by a further 50. Consequently, the proportionate increase of the middle class sub-sample would be 66, and the lower working class sub-sample would be 134. Cullen's formula was used to calculate the maximum errors of the increased sizes of the samples:

- (a) The error of the entire sample of 200 is 5,64 per cent.
- (b) The error of the middle class sub-sample of 66 is 9,77 per cent.
- (c) The error of the lower working class sub sample of 134 is 6,91 per cent.

From this it can be seen that despite increasing the size of the sample by the maximum number possible, the reduction in the error of the sample size was very small. The error of the size of the entire sample was reduced by only 1,28 per cent. The error of the size of the middle class sub-sample was reduced by 2,15 per cent, and the error of the size of the lower working class sample was reduced by 1,58 per cent. Since the increase in the size of the sample from 150 to 200 resulted in a very small margin of error, it can be safely concluded that the sample size of 150 in the present study is quite adequate.

### 6.7 THE HOME INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Information about home background of the pupils could have been obtained in three possible ways. Firstly, the pupils could have been questioned. Secondly, a questionnaire could have been sent to parents. Thirdly, personal visits could have been made to the homes to interview the parents. Since the present research is *non-participant* in the sense that the researcher is observing home circumstances "from the outside" (Mayntz et. al., 1976 : 86), the third approach was considered to be the most suitable way of *encountering social phenomena* in the home. It also affords an excellent opportunity of combining perceptive observations with collection of data according to specific structures or categories. Therefore, the home interview schedule was to be structured according to specific categories, and at the same time to contain questions which are sufficiently probing into the social and cultural circumstances of the home. This is the integrated theoretical approach which was discussed in chapter four - that is, integrating positivism and *structural functionalism*, on the one hand, with symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology, on the other.

The first and second approaches would not have afforded this opportunity. If, for example, pupils were questioned about their home backgrounds, this would have had to be done in a severely restricted way, and information provided by them was likely to be unreliable. A very superficial assessment of the home would have been possible. This would hardly have met the requirements of the symbolic interactionist and social phenomenological theoretical approaches.

The questionnaire method was likely to prove to be just as unsatisfactory. There would have been such problems as questionnaires not being returned, returned incomplete, or inaccurately completed. Behr (1973 : 79)

points out some of these disadvantages in using questionnaires. Observations during the pilot study also showed that semi-literate and illiterate parents would have been incapable of reading and answering the questions in writing.

From every point of view, except for the considerable time involved, the researcher preferred personal visits to the home. Certain crucial aspects of family relationships, and the emotional and cultural climate of the home could be observed. In this respect, special provision was made on the interview schedule for recording observations, and for interviewer's comments. In the absence of documentary and case studies, and participant observation, which are the methods of social phenomenology and interactionism this was considered to be the most appropriate way of coming to grips with the social phenomena involved.

The home interview schedule which is shown in Appendix B2 contained both open-ended and closed-type questions. The closed-type which is *structural functional* in character was used to record information about home conditions into specific categories. The open-ended questions were designed to probe more deeply into the quality of the social, cultural and educational experiences of the home.

There were two main stages in the development of this schedule:

- (1) The discovery of the main categories of home background, in terms of what was revealed by the relevant research studies reviewed in chapter five.
- (2) The testing of the actual wording of the questionnaire and its total structure by means of a small pilot survey.

Finally, the questions were structured under the following categories:

- (a) Material Environment of the home.
- (b) General Cultural and Educational level of the home.
- (c) Educational Motivations and Aspirations of parents.
- (d) Family size.

The schedule also included other questions of a more general nature concerning demographic, social class and other details. These were not included under specific categories.

The *material environment* was assessed by general living conditions as measured by the number of rooms in the home in relation to the number of persons sharing them; whether the home has electricity, cold water, hot water, radio, television, and telephone; and the provision of study facilities for the child in question.

The *general cultural and educational level* of the home was studied to gauge whether the atmosphere in the home is likely to be favourable or unfavourable to the child's educational progress. To do this, information was sought on the parents' level of education, their awareness of the subjects which their children study in school. Parents' interest in their children's education was also gauged by whether they had met the child's present teachers; the reasons for their visits to their children's schools; newspapers and magazines which the family reads; whether parents belonged to libraries and their frequency of reading. From the children's angle, the atmosphere of the home was judged by the amount of time the child spent on homework; their frequency of borrowing books from the library; radio and television programmes preferred; and their special interests and hobbies.

The next category, *educational motivations and aspirations of parents*

is quite closely linked with the previous category. Relevant questions, here, were those concerned with the stages at which parents would prefer their children to leave school; their preferences in the matter of their children's education; the type of work they would prefer for their children; whether they bought books for their children; help given to children with homework; and whether parents watch, listen, and discuss television and radio programmes with their children.

The size of the family was indicated by the number of children in the family, and the number of other persons living with the family. The ordinal position of the child in question was also considered.

Though there is a considerable amount of overlap between these main divisions, an attempt was made to study specifically all four types of environment, so as to trace the shift in emphasis from the material to the socio-cultural environment, which contemporary sociological studies on social class and home background highlight.

The order in which the items appear on the interview form is different from that in which the data was analysed. The order in which the items appear in the form was determined by the course which the interview was expected to take so that recording of the information would be in sequence. This would also help to complete the interview without unnecessary wastage of time.

The interview schedules were filled in by the researcher himself. This approach was also adopted in a survey among parents of primary school children carried out for the *Plowden Committee*. The schedules were filled in by trained Social Survey interviewers who interviewed

the parents in their homes (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2 : 98). The responses to the various questions and their interpretation in terms of the measures of variables under consideration are discussed in the next two chapters. The first of these discusses the background variables, the educational performances of the pupils, and the material environment of the home. The following chapter discusses the general cultural and educational atmosphere of the home, the educational motivations and aspirations of parents, and the effects of family size. This division shows clearly the distinction which research into social class and home background makes between the material environment and the socio-cultural-educational experiences in the home.

#### 6.8 THE PILOT STUDY

Initially, visits were made to twelve homes to interview parents from both the middle and the lower working class groups. Six parents were chosen from each group. The pilot study was carried out to identify some possible problems that were likely to be encountered during the survey proper, to test the length of the questionnaire, and to make modifications if necessary.

The six middle class parents coped very well with the questions, and were able to supply information in excess of that which was required. Some of the lower working class parents did not understand what was meant by *home language*, *ordinal position of child*, and *help given with homework*. These questions had to be carefully explained. However, in general the wording of the questions was found to be very satisfactory. They were clearly understood, and there was no need for any prompting.

The length of the questionnaire was also found to be adequate. Each



of the interviews took about 25 to 30 minutes to complete. Since all the parents spoke quite freely about their children's activities at home, it was decided to include two questions about this aspect. The questions concerned the pattern of the children's activities after school hours, and the child's general interests and hobbies. Four parents enquired why teachers do not visit the homes of their pupils. Because of this interest shown by parents, it was decided to include a question on whether class teachers visited their pupils' homes.

To facilitate the accurate recording of information, many of the questions were pre-coded. But, it soon became clear that if an in-depth picture of home background was to be obtained the responses should first be recorded in their raw form wherever this was relevant. This referred especially to interesting comments and suggestions made by parents. When responding to open-ended questions parents spoke frankly of their feelings about school, of conditions at home, and of their children's general behaviour. Venables (1971 : 27) in a study of the roles of teachers and youth workers adopted a similar approach. She discusses the advantages of this approach in understanding the social climate of behaviour in organisations such as schools.

It was necessary to scrutinise each completed form at the end of the day's interviewing to check the accuracy of the recording of data, and to make detailed comments about any striking features in the home. Any delay in doing this would have resulted in distorted pictures about certain crucial details. This was a clear pointer to what was to be done during the survey proper when a larger number of interviews would be conducted each day.

Working from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., it was possible to complete six interviews per day. In three cases, both parents were at work. It was therefore necessary to visit these homes in the evening.

#### 6.9 THE HOME VISITS

Prior to the visits, letters were sent to the parents who were to be interviewed, informing them of the intended visits, explaining the purpose of the study and stressing the importance of parental co-operation. A copy of this letter appears in Appendix B1.

The addresses of the pupils' homes were obtained from the preliminary questionnaires which they answered. Information was also obtained from the pupils in the sample about the location of their homes so that visits could be made with the minimum amount of delay. Since the homes were spread throughout the entire area, to expedite the visits, it was decided to concentrate on three major divisions.

These were: the flat area near the oil refinery and the ridge; the navy area; and the inner circle area. Figure 2 shows that the first division stretches from Shillong and Dinapur Roads to Buldana Road. The navy area stretches from Sialkot Crescent and Tomango Road to Himalayas Road. The inner circle area is bordered by Himalayas, Dharwar, Bhuj, Junagarth, Sambalpur and Baroda Roads. The area was divided in this way so that homes on the outlying fringes could be visited first. The homes in the inner circle area were visited last since not much time was required to visit homes where streets were in close proximity.

Every single interview was done by the researcher himself. It was decided not to use field workers because the researcher wished to get a first hand knowledge of social and cultural factors in the

homes. He could then combine his perceptive observations with the collection of relevant data, which is the basis of the integrated theoretical framework of the present study. This would enable him to feel the *pulse* of the culture of home backgrounds in the two contrasting social classes. A team of field workers who do not have the relevant theoretical and academic knowledge of home background studies would not have been able to do this as effectively. In this connection, it is useful to cite the example of the 1964 Isle of Wight Survey which made use of specialists trained in child psychiatry to interview parents (Rutter, Tizard and Whitmore, 1970 : 153-155). Such persons who have an in-depth knowledge of the situation which they are investigating are able to get a more complete picture.

The majority of the homes were visited during the July winter school vacation in 1977. The remaining interviews were conducted between August and September. The winter vacation was considered to be a suitable period since most mothers and their children were likely to be at home. Since the children already knew the researcher it would be easy to approach the parents.

With the limited time available it was decided to interview any one of the two parents who happened to be at home at the time of the visit. If, however, both parents were present there was no harm in interviewing both since their joint opinions were likely to give a clearer picture of the home. There were very few cases where both parents were interviewed. In the majority of cases, the child's mother was interviewed. This proved to be very satisfactory since in most of the families the mother is the housewife and therefore has more direct contact with the school. Table 6.7 (see page 160) shows which members of the home were interviewed.

TABLE 6.7

## RELATIONSHIP OF INTERVIEWEE TO THE CHILD

INTERVIEWEE	MIDDLE CLASS		LOWER WORKING CLASS	
	No.	%	No.	%
Mother	28	56	69	69
Father	4	8	8	8
Mother and Father	17	34	15	15
Guardian	1	2	8	8
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

In cases where children were not in the care of their parents, the guardians were interviewed. One middle class child and eight lower working class children came into this category. In three cases the children were orphans cared for by grandparents or relatives. In the remaining cases, the children were left by their parents in the care of uncles and aunts. For the purpose of the survey no distinction was made between parents and guardians.

Though children and other members of the family were often present, the researcher made it quite clear that the questions were to be answered only by the parents. Children and relatives were asked not to answer any of the questions, unless specifically asked to. In the case of questions concerning radio and television programmes preferred by the child, time spent on listening and viewing, and newspapers and magazines read by the family, children were permitted to answer only if parents were not able to reply. If the parents

could not supply this information, it did not really matter if the children did so. It was more important to obtain the relevant information, rather than to judge whether the parents were aware of these details or not.

On the average, eight homes were visited per day. The times of the day suitable for visits were between 9.30 a.m. and 4 p.m. Mealtimes (between noon and 1.30 p.m.) were avoided. Therefore, the most effective time available for interviews during the day was restricted to about two and half hours in the morning, and two and half hours in the afternoon. The allowance of time for finding the homes and for moving from one to another reduced even further the effective interview time.

TABLE 6.8

NUMBER OF VISITS MADE TO HOMES

GROUP	ONE VISIT	TWO VISITS	THREE VISITS
Middle Class	39	7	4
Lower Working Class	76	19	5
TOTAL	115	26	9

In cases where it was difficult to meet parents during the day, visits had to be made in the evening. Table 6.8 shows the number of visits made to middle class and lower working class homes. Though 150 homes were visited, altogether 194 calls had to be made. Twenty six homes required a second visit, and nine required a third visit. In these cases the mother was either shopping or visiting, or both parents were at work. A few more visits had to be made to the lower working class homes.

On the average, each interview took approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete. In a few cases, where parents spoke freely about their children, domestic problems and so on, the interview took about half an hour to 45 minutes to complete. There was a 100 per cent response rate, and in the majority of homes there was a very cordial reception. Hospitality was often extended in the way of providing refreshments.

During the visits it was discovered that two pupils had moved away from the area and were attending schools in other districts. They were replaced in the sample. In four other cases, after the parents had been interviewed, the families moved out of the area. These pupils had to be omitted in the final analysis, and replacements had to be made in these cases as well. It was necessary to do this in order to obviate problems which might arise later in the research when information had to be sought on the academic performances of the sample. In the case of these pupils it would have been necessary to trace them to schools outside the area, and to scale their scores in terms of their performances in their new schools. This would have introduced unnecessary problems into the research design.

During the visits the researcher came across a great variety of home backgrounds ranging from wealthy homes where the child was provided with every facility for study, and for developing hobbies and interests, to homes which were poverty-stricken. However, in the latter group there were more homes where many lived in tiny

one bed-roomed homes, outbuildings and garages where there was little or no privacy. Some of the worst conditions were seen in the municipal barracks of *Minitown*.

Many parents showed keen interest in the study by discussing the problems of the child in question or of their other children. They also asked for advice on particular matters concerning their children's education, spoke freely of their fears, displayed books and other educational material which they bought for their children and so on. The researcher took this opportunity to record freely his general impressions of the home, parent-child relationships, emotional climate, and other details which help to give a clear insight into home conditions. Table 6.9 reflects some of these details.

TABLE 6.9

INTERVIEWER'S GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF HOMES

OBSERVATION	MIDDLE CLASS	LOWER W. CLASS
1. Parents who discussed educational and related matters	14	12
2. Parents who complained about their children's behaviour	2	6
3. Parents who revealed domestic and social problems	3	9
4. Very comfortable material conditions	5	5
5. Very poor material conditions	0	8

#### 6.10 ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL PROGRESS

The school performances of the pupils were assessed in terms of their examination results. This takes into account the pupils' cumulative performances during the year. It was decided not to use standardised scholastic tests since this would not give as accurate an indication of cumulative performance as the two school examinations. Some studies in this field, such as those of Fraser (1959 : 22), Douglas (1964 : 34-36) and Miller (1971 : 77) have also used I.Q. scores when evaluating school performances. It was not possible to do this in the present study since the Department's psychologists had not conducted such tests in the case of most of the standard four pupils. Some headteachers said that their pupils' I.Qs would only be tested when the pupils entered standard five.

Since the present study was concerned with assessing the pupils' cumulative school performance during the year, the best measure of determining this would be their composite examination results. The pupils in standard four take two examinations during the year - the first during the mid-year, and the other at the end of the school year. Though all schools have the same curriculum, and use the same prescribed textbooks, the pupils do not write common examinations. The examinations are arranged internally by each school, but there are certain standard requirements set by the Division of Education, which have to be met. These concern the basis on which pupils are promoted and retarded in standard four. These requirements are contained in circular CM AY/1977 of the Division of Education of the Department of Indian Affairs.

According to this circular, the subjects to be examined for promoting



pupils and the marks assigned to each are as follows:

English - First Language	240
Afrikaans - Second Language	180
General Mathematics	180
Elementary Science	60
History	60
Geography	60

These subjects are grouped into four categories namely:

- Group 1 : English First Language
- Group 2 : Afrikaans Second Language
- Group 3 : General Mathematics
- Group 4 : Environmental Studies (History, Geography  
and Elementary Science)

There is also a stipulation that in the case of each subject, the pupils' performance in the mid-year examination shall account for one third, and the end of the year examination shall account for two thirds of the composite marks obtained in that subject.

Table 6.10 (see page 166) indicates this distribution in the case of the four groups of subjects.

The minimum requirements for promotion are:

Group 1	96 marks
Each of the remaining groups	72 marks
Aggregate (40 per cent)	312

TABLE 6.10  
DISTRIBUTION OF EXAMINATION MARKS, ACCORDING  
TO SUBJECT GROUPINGS

SUBJECT	MID YEAR EXAM. TOTAL	END OF YEAR EXAM. TOTAL	COMPOSITE TOTAL
1. English	80	160	240
2. Afrikaans	60	120	180
3. General Mathematics	60	120	180
4. Environmental Studies:			
(Science)	20	40	60
(History)	20	40	60
(Geography)	20	40	60
	} 60	} 120	} 180
TOTAL	260	520	780

Using the procedure which was adopted by all six schools, it was decided to use the composite examination results and to evolve a scaling system which would take into account the differences which exist between the intake of each school. This method of scaling is discussed later on. Headteachers were accordingly requested to make available mark lists for the relevant classes, after these had been approved of by the circuit inspector of education. It was important to consider the marks at this stage because when scrutinising and finalising the results, the inspector takes into account not only the differences which exist between the schools in the area, but also the national norms which apply to all schools.

Though this accounts for a certain degree of standardisation between the schools, the nature of the internal examinations, the varied

great range of abilities of the pupils, and the varied social class intake of each school were markedly different. The problem therefore was to find some way of assessing all the children on a common scale by equating the marks in the different schools. Faced with a similar problem in the Manchester Survey for the *Plowden Committee*, Wiseman (1964 : 16-17) states that:

*"If the results from one test or examination can be compared with those from another, we must find some way of converting their quite arbitrary 'raw' scores into other units having a more rational basis."*

The simplest way of showing differences between schools was to give the mean score of each school, but such an analysis would be very crude since it gives no information about the spread of scores, or the overlap between different groups of pupils. Consequently it was decided to adopt the generally accepted technique of using standard scores, having a mean of 50 and a standard deviation (a measure of 'spread') of 10. The statistical technique of calculating such standard scores (called T scores) is explained in Appendix E. The means and standard deviations were worked out for each subject grouping in each of the six schools. Each pupil's raw score was then converted to a T score in each of the subject groupings. The pupil's overall performance or criterion score was also expressed as a T score.

A similar technique was used by Douglas (1964 : 34) to assess the school performances of eleven-year-olds on tests devised by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales.

The T scores placed the children in order according to their success or failure in reading, vocabulary and arithmetic tests. No matter which school the children came from they could be compared with each other. Taking the example of a child obtaining a T score of 60, Douglas explains that this child lies one standard deviation above the average score made by all children in that test. In other words he is in the top 16 per cent of the group.

In the present study T scores were found to be very convenient for the calculation of means, standard deviations, standard errors of means, and correlation coefficients when the data was statistically analysed.

#### 6.11 CODING AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The information obtained from the interview schedules were transferred to coding sheets. In all, 64 items of information were coded. The scores for each respondent were transcribed onto a single line of the punching instruction sheet. This meant that if punch cards were necessary the information of each respondent could be accommodated on one punch card.

Initially, it was decided to analyse the data by using a computer. However, after a few trial calculations were attempted by hand, it was found that because there were relatively small numbers involved all the calculations could be done quite easily by hand. For this purpose, a scientific electronic calculator was used. Each calculation was worked out at least twice so that errors could be rectified. Finally, all calculations were checked by the Mathematics Division of the University's Faculty of Education.

It was considered unnecessary to analyse every section of the interview schedule. The factors which were analysed are those which overseas studies have found to be most significantly associated with social class, home background and education. These studies were reviewed in chapter five.

#### 6.12 STATISTICAL PROCEDURES USED IN THIS STUDY

The main statistical procedures used in this study were chi-square, z tests of significance, and correlational analysis. The formulae of these statistics are explained in Appendix E.

Since this study is concerned mainly with the relationships between various social and cultural factors in home backgrounds of the pupils, the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical technique was used to test the significance of differences between these variables. It was used to test differences between proportions of the middle class and lower working class sub-samples. In the case of relevant variables, observed frequencies (O) were compared with expected frequencies (E). The null hypothesis was that the observed frequencies in question do not differ from the expected frequencies by chance (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 197-199).

It should be noted that though the 2 x 2 chi-square tables in this study reflect the differences in proportions both by discrete numbers, as well as by percentages, all chi-square computations were based on the discrete numbers and not on percentages. Since all the calculations involved one degree of freedom, the chi-square formula which includes Yates' correction was used (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 202). A composite table of all chi-square calculations in this study appears in Appendix F1.

When comparing certain home background factors between the two social classes, such as the number of children in the family, parents' level of education, number of bedrooms, general school performance, performance in separate subjects and so on, differences between the means of the two samples had to be compared. Since the sub-samples in this study were considered to be large ( $n > 50$ ) the z score was used to test the significance of the difference between such means (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 178). When these were computed, the standard deviation and the standard error of the mean of each sub-sample had to be calculated first. Then the standard score, z was expressed as the ratio of the difference between the means to the standard error of the difference between the means. Behr (1973 : 107) calls this the critical ratio (C.R.). He says that when using this statistical technique, the degrees of freedom need no longer be considered. All we need to know is that if the value of z is more than 1,96 then the difference between the means in question is significant at or greater than the 0,05 level; and if the value of z is more than 2,58 then the significance is at or greater than the 0,01 level.

Since it was also necessary to compare the mean general educational performance of the six schools involved in the survey, it was decided to determine whether the groups selected from these schools are samples from the same population or not. The F ratio, a technique of analysis of variance was used for this purpose (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 215-222). Appendix F2 is a composite table of F ratios, and Appendix F3 is a table of z tests of significance of difference between means.

The third major statistical procedure used in this study is correlation analysis. Since most of the social and cultural factors of the home have some bearing on the pupils' general educational performances, certain factors which have been prominently mentioned in overseas research studies were correlated with the criterion (i.e. general school performance).

Since the term *correlation* will be frequently used from now on, a brief explanation of its meaning may be useful for the reader who is not acquainted with statistical methods. Correlation is, basically, a measure of relationship between two variables. In this study, for example, pupils' general school performances have been correlated with each of the following variables: fathers' level of education, mothers' level of education, ordinal position of child in the family, assistance with homework, number of days absent from school, time spent on homework, time spent watching television, number of children in the family, types of newspapers and magazines read, and material comforts of the home. Since each of these factors was taken singly and correlated with the criterion, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used in the cases of variables which were continuous. In the cases of variables which were considered to be genuinely dichotomous, such as whether children received help with homework or not, the point-biserial correlation coefficient was used (Wiseman, 1966 : 21). Composite tables of product-moment correlations of gross  $r$ s, and point-biserial correlational coefficients calculated in this study appear in Appendices F4 and F5, respectively.

Correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) range from +1 (perfect agreement), through 0 (no correlation at all) to -1 (complete disagreement). Most correlation coefficients tell us the magnitude of the relationship between the variables concerned. However, it should be noted that  $r$

is not a measure of causality, though in some cases a causal relationship may exist between two variables. In this respect, Downie and Heath (1970 : 94) state *"An important thing to bear in mind is that the correlation in itself is not the most important thing, but it is the situation in or purpose for which it is being used that determines how we evaluate it."*

It is especially important to bear this point in mind in a study of this kind because many of the research studies reviewed in chapter five show quite clearly that when variables are taken singly and correlated with the criterion, the correlation coefficients are generally low. However, recent research - such as that of Walberg and Marjoribanks (1976 : 547-549) - indicates the need to look at multiple effects of related variables in the home environment. This means that the relationship between general school performance and the combined effects of two or more variables upon this must be analysed.

The multiple correlation (R) was used for this purpose. When examining the combined effects of two or more variables upon another variable, it frequently happens that the relationship between these variables is influenced by one or more other variables. Therefore, before multiple R can be computed, partial correlations (r) have to be worked out. Partial r is the measure of the effect of one factor on the dependent factor when the effects of all other factors are controlled (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 120). This statistical technique enables one to measure the relationship between two variables while *partialling* out the effects of other variables. Composite tables of partial rs and multiple Rs computed in this study are included in Appendices F6 and F7, respectively.



It is only through techniques such as multiple R and partial r that the complex nature of interrelationships between several factors in the home background could be clearly seen. If a simple analysis of single variables is carried out, this offers nothing more than a superficial, clinical account of home background. Such an analysis contradicts the basic theoretical principles of symbolic interactionism and social phenomenology, on which the present study rests.

Once multiple Rs and gross rs have been computed, it is logical to ask to what extent the combined effects of the relevant home background factors account for variability in pupils' school performances. In the present study the combined effects of factors in the home background related to the material environment, general cultural and educational atmosphere, parental motivations and aspirations, and family size have been analysed through the use of the coefficient of determination of multiple R (Pearson and Bennet, 1942 : 186). This statistical device measures the proportion of variation in pupils' school performances, which can be accounted for through the interactional effects of the factors mentioned above. In the case of factors which were correlated singly with pupils' school performances, the coefficient of determination of gross r (Garret and Woodworth, 1964 : 180) was used to measure the proportion of variability.

One of the advantages of using the coefficient of determination of multiple R is that it enables us to determine the extent to which the inclusion of each new factor in the study increases variability in school performances. For example, after the combined effects of general cultural and educational atmosphere have been examined, it may be necessary to see whether the inclusion of other factors such

as those related to the material environment increase the proportion of variability in school performances or not. The resultant increases in R were tested for significance (Wiseman, 1966 : 38). A composite table of tests of significance of increases in Rs computed in this study is included in Appendix F8.

Finally, it should be pointed out that since much use was made of correlation analysis, it was necessary to ask how low can a correlation be and still be of value. Downie and Heath (1970 : 230) state that to answer this question one must first determine the significance of  $r$ . Thus, the present study expresses all  $r$ s in terms of levels of significance. Multiple Rs were also subjected to tests of significance (Wiseman 1966 : 37). A composite table of tests of significance of R is included in Appendix F7. Though special care was taken to do this, it is necessary to mention that though a correlation coefficient may be statistically significant, it may be of little or no practical value.

Since many variables were correlated with the criterion in the case of both sub-samples in this study, it was also necessary to test the significance of differences between different sets of correlations. Fisher's Z transformation (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 233-234) was used in these computations. Appendix F9 is a composite table of significance of differences between different sets of correlations computed in this study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

7. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY : DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS,  
EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS, AND THE MATERIAL  
ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME.7.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of the present study are presented in this chapter and the next one. The categories under which they are presented are similar to those of some well-known studies undertaken in this field, such as those of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956), Fraser (1959), and the 1964 National Survey of Parental Attitudes And Circumstances Related to School and Pupil Characteristics (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 91-114). The present chapter deals with the background variables or demographic aspects of the sample, the educational performances of the two social class groups, and the material environment of the home. The next chapter presents the findings on the general cultural and educational experiences in the home, the educational motivations and aspirations of parents, and the effects of family size.

Though the research studies mentioned above do not strictly adopt the same procedure, nevertheless all of them deal firstly with the material circumstances of the home, before discussing socio-cultural aspects. For example, Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 35-53) deal with the material conditions of the home, and then proceed to discuss socio-cultural aspects such as parental interest in education, parental aspirations and other characteristics in the home environments of successful children. Fraser (1959 : 41-46) also presents her findings on the material environment of the home before dealing with the

motivational and emotional climate of pupils' home backgrounds. Perhaps, the best example of a study which adopted this procedure is the 1964 National Survey of Parental Attitudes And Circumstances Related to School and Pupil Characteristics (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 99-101). This study begins with a discussion of the socio-economic status of families, and then goes on to discuss related factors such as educational support given by parents, and their educational aspirations for their children.

The present researcher decided to adopt a similar approach because it seemed to be the most logical way of establishing a clear relationship between the material and socio-cultural characteristics of pupils' home backgrounds. The review of research studies in chapter five showed quite clearly that if the socio-cultural aspects of parent-child relationships are to be fully understood, the material aspects of the home should be studied first. The manner in which the research findings are presented in these two chapters is also an attempt to illustrate in practical terms the shift in emphasis from the material to the socio-cultural aspects of pupils' home backgrounds. This trend was clearly noticed in the review of the relevant research studies in chapter five.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that since the present chapter is mainly a descriptive account of demographic characteristics, and tabulations of educational performances of pupils and their material environments, in the light of discussions on sociological theories and research models in chapter four, it may be regarded as *normative* or *structural functional* in character. On the other hand, chapter eight, which not only tabulates and describes relevant sociological and educational data, but also illustrates these with references to real social situations, may be regarded as being more *interpretative*, *interactionist* and *social phenomenologically* orientated. In social

phenomenological language, it can be considered as an attempt to encounter the social and cultural phenomena in the home.

## 7.2 BACKGROUND VARIABLES AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

The research data relating to demographic characteristics of the sample will be discussed under the following headings: social class composition of the research population in the survey schools, sex, age, religion and home language. The findings in this section of the study should be seen in relationship to the social class descriptions of Merebank in the previous chapter, and to the social class structure of the Indian community in South Africa as presented in chapter two.

### 7.2.1 Social Class Composition of The Research Population in The Survey Schools

TABLE 7.1

SOCIAL CLASS COMPOSITION OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION IN THE SURVEY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	M. C.		SKILLED W. C.		L. W. C.		TOTAL
	N.	%	N	%	N	%	
Merebank	44	23,78	31	16,70	110	59,46	185
Junagarth Road	20	27,78	22	30,56	30	41,67	72
Rustomjee	28	31,82	21	23,86	39	44,32	88
St. Mary's	28	25,69	23	21,10	58	53,21	109
Settlers	30	15,87	43	22,70	116	61,38	189
Nizam Road	42	36,84	23	20,18	49	42,98	114

Table 7.1 reveals that all the schools have a larger proportion of

working class pupils (i.e. skilled working class and lower working class combined). The general ratio of one-third middle class to two-thirds working class which emerged from the entire population of 757 pupils applies to four of the survey schools. The schools which have the heaviest working class intake are Settlers, Merebank and St. Mary's. These schools are situated in neighbourhoods which draw their children mainly from the one and two bedroom sub-economic homes. Settlers, in particular, accommodates children from *Minitown Barracks*, the low quality sub-standard housing. Nizam Rd., on the other hand, has a comparatively high proportion of middle class pupils. This school accommodates pupils, both from sub-economic as well as affluent economic homes which are situated on the élite ridge area. The population of Rustomjee and Junagarth Rd, reflects the typical social class composition of the area as a whole. In general, it may be said that though entry to the survey schools is not determined by social class, the social class composition of the population in each school reflects the social characteristics of its catchment area. Table 7.2 reflects the number of pupils in the two social groups chosen from each of the schools.

TABLE 7.2

SOCIAL CLASS DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
Merebank	9	18	32	32
Junagarth Road	7	14	6	6
Rustomjee	8	16	9	9
St. Mary's	7	14	18	18
Settlers	10	20	24	24
Nizam Road	9	18	11	11
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

It should be noted that the middle class and lower working class sub-samples were stratified according to the population and not according to schools. Hence, tables 7.1 and 7.2 reflect differences in the proportions of pupils from each of the schools.

### 7.2.2 Sex

TABLE 7.3  
DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SEX

SOCIAL CLASS	MALE		FEMALE		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
Middle Class	29	58	21	42	$\chi^2 = 0,41$	$p > 0,05$
Lower Working Class	51	51	49	49		
TOTAL	80 (52,5%)		70 (45,5%)		df=1	

Though the research population was not stratified according to sex, the sub-samples reflected a good balance between males and females. The entire sample consisted of 52,50 per cent boys, and 45,50 per cent girls. Though there was a slightly higher proportion of boys in the middle class group, the difference in the numbers of boys and girls between both social class groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,41$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). The sample can therefore be regarded as being well balanced in terms of its composition of boys and girls. Because of this there was no need to compare the academic performances of the sexes.

However, some studies on primary education adopt the practice of analysing separately the academic performances of boys and girls.

But studies on home-school relations, such as that of Fraser (1959), indicate that differences between the sexes are not as impressive as their similarities. The factors which seem to promote achievement in boys also hold true for girls. Sex differences in studies on home-school relations can therefore be largely disregarded.

### 7.2.3 Age

TABLE 7.4  
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN AGES OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER  
WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	11,92	0,91	0,13	0,29	1,73	p>0,05
L.W.C.	100	12,21	1,05	0,10			

Though the sample was not controlled for age, the reason for selecting the sample from a single standard of the senior primary school was to study a group of 11 to 12 year olds. This objective was achieved to a large degree. Table 7.4 shows that the lower working class group was only slightly older than the middle class group, and the average age of the 150 pupils was 12,06 years. Despite the fact that the lower working class group was 0,29 years older than the middle class group, this difference in age was statistically not significant ( $z = 1,73$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). This finding revealed that the sample as a whole was homogeneous with respect to age. The average age of 12,06 years of the entire sample fitted in well with the general plan of this study which was to investigate the home conditions of Indian pupils who are



eleven plus.

#### 7.2.4 Religion

TABLE 7.5

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO RELIGION

RELIGION	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
1. Christian	8	16	15	15
2. Hindu	37	74	80	80
3. Muslim	5	10	5	5
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

Though the Indian community in South Africa is made up of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Moslems and Zoroastrians, the sample in this study consisted only of Christians, Hindus and Moslems. There are similar proportions of Christians and Hindus in both social classes, but the Moslems who are the more affluent section of the Indian community are noticeably under-represented in the lower working class group. A further observation is that though the religious stratification of the sample is not markedly different from the national Indian situation, it is remarkably close to the pattern found in the Indian community in Durban. The 1970 census data reveals that 68,35 per cent of Indian South Africans belong to the Hindu faith. The Moslems make up 20,17 per cent of the population, while 8,19 per cent are Christians. These calculations are based on figures extracted from Table 1.37 of 1974 Statistics, published

by the Government Printer of the Republic of South Africa.

The census data does not provide information on the religious stratification of the population of Durban, but in 1969 an independent survey of 835 Indian households in the city revealed that 80 per cent of Durban Indians are Hindus, while 11 per cent are Moslems, and 9 per cent are Christians (Meer, 1969 : 94). The sample of the present study reflects a higher percentage of Christians than that of the population of Durban.

#### 7.2.5 Home Language

Each of the religious groups has its own vernacular language, though the children in the various groups do not necessarily use these as their home languages. The Hindus are divided into four language groups: Tamil, Telegu, Hindi, and Gujerati. The Moslems are divided into the Urdu, Gujerati and Kutchi language groups. Among the Christians are Tamil, Hindi, Telegu and a few Gujerati speakers.

TABLE 7.6

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO HOME LANGUAGE

HOME LANGUAGE	M. C.		L. W. C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Mainly English	49	98	91	91	$\chi^2=1,62$ df=1	p>0,05
2. Vernacular and some English	1	2	9	9		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Though Indian vernacular languages are still spoken in many Indian homes, with the younger generation it can be said that the vernacular is regarded as less important than English. This is clearly evident in the present study in which more than 90 per cent of the pupils in both social classes speak mainly English at home. The difference in the number of children between the two social classes whose home language is mainly English is statistically not significant. ( $\chi^2=1,62$ ;  $p>0,05$ ) English can therefore be regarded as the home language in the case of the majority of pupils in both the middle class and lower working class groups. A striking feature is that 98 per cent of the middle class group use mainly English at home. This is hardly surprising, because like most middle class children in other western societies, the Indian middle class child is increasingly socialised into the dominant language of the macro-society. In South Africa, English is the medium of instruction in the majority of Indian schools. It is used at most places of employment, and is the common medium of communication for persons of different vernacular language affiliations. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that English is the language of survival for the majority of Indian South Africans.

The findings of the present study are similar to those of Ramphal (1961 : 169), and Maasdorp (1966 : 29), (1968 : 43), who also found that Indian school children spoke mainly in English when communicating with each other and with their parents. The vernacular is generally used when communicating with grandparents and other elder members of the family.

It should be pointed out that the findings of the present study can be explained not only with reference to western socialising experiences, but also by referring to language socialisation through the impact of mass media such as the press, radio and television. Most Indian

families read English language newspapers, listen to English programmes on the radio, and watch English programmes on the television.

However, the findings of this study should not be interpreted to mean that the vernacular is no longer spoken by Indian children. Ramphal's and Maasdorp's studies have shown beyond doubt that vernacular languages are used mainly when communicating with elders such as grandparents. However, it may be safe to assume that in recent years many of the younger, better educated grandparents in the community communicate with their grandchildren mainly in English. Some children attend vernacular schools which are run by community and cultural organisations. In the present study, in response to a question of how children spent their time after school hours, it was found that 18 per cent of middle class pupils, and 11 per cent of lower working class pupils attend vernacular schools. Despite the attempt to keep the vernacular languages alive, even these children speak mainly English at home.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study, and those of Ramphal and Maasdorp differ greatly from the facts which emerge from the 1970 census data. Though the present study has revealed that over 90 per cent of standard four pupils speak mainly English at home, the 1970 census data for standard four Asian pupils in English medium schools in South Africa reveals that 1,03 per cent speak mainly Afrikaans at home; 48,52 per cent speak mainly English; 1,12 per cent speak English and Afrikaans; and 49,33 per cent speak mainly the vernacular (Republic of South Africa, Report No. 21-03-05, 1971 : Table 3.3). These calculations were based on figures extracted from the table referred to.

Perhaps, one of the reasons for this discrepancy lies in the fact that when census data are collected, the majority of the respondents do not clearly understand what is meant by *home language* which they generally

take to mean affiliation to a particular vernacular group, even though the vernacular is not the main medium of communication at home. In the case of the present study, when the researcher interviewed parents he was absolutely careful to stress that *home language* means the language that is used mainly at home when the survey child communicates with his brothers, sisters, parents, relatives and friends. Therefore, in the context of what is understood by socialisation, education and home language, the findings of Ramphal, Maasdorp and those of the present investigation seem to be more acceptable than what is revealed by the 1970 census data.

### 7.3 EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

Since the present study is concerned with the relationship between home circumstances and pupils' school performance, it was necessary at the outset to establish the educational performance of the two social class groups under consideration. This was done by determining their cumulative performance in the four main subject areas of the curriculum: English, Afrikaans, general mathematics, and environmental studies. This general educational performance is the criterion with which various social and cultural factors in the pupils' home backgrounds have been compared.

The pupils' performance in English, general mathematics, and environmental studies was investigated: each subject being separately analysed. This was done to see how the pupils performed in different areas of the curriculum. It was decided to take English instead of Afrikaans because English is studied as a first language; whereas Afrikaans is taken as a second language. English is also the medium through which the curriculum is taught in Indian schools. General mathematics

results were taken into account since studies such as those of Wiseman (1964 : 15-29), and Douglas (1964 : 161-164) used mathematics and English tests to determine the educational levels of pupils. Environmental studies was also included in the analysis of the present study since it is regarded as social studies which reflect the cultural values on which the curriculum is based. An analysis of the performances of the two social classes in this area of the curriculum would therefore give some indication of how pupils from different home backgrounds cope with the culture of the school. Lawton's studies on social class and the relevance of the school curriculum point to social and environmental studies as being an extremely important aspect of the culture of the school (Lawton, 1975 : 99-112).

This section of the present chapter also analyses the pupils' attendance at school, and the number of years they failed at school. These two factors were regarded as important determinants of the pupils' general educational performance.

### 7.3.1 General Educational Performance

The studies which were reviewed in chapter five showed clearly that despite efforts at equalising educational opportunities in Britain and the U.S.A., there is still a great deal of evidence which indicates the persistence of social class inequalities in educational performance. There is a consistent tendency for the children of manual workers to perform less well (Banks, 1976 : 67). British studies, particularly, have concentrated on the connection between social class status and educational attainment, showing the effects of the class structure on education (Wiseman, 1964 : 44). In assessing differences in educational performances, and access to secondary and university education, they were interested in the connection between social class and educational opportunity.

TABLE 7.7

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF  
MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNI- FICANCE
M. C.	50	53,48	8,85	1,26	5,08	3,12	p<0,01
L. W. C.	100	48,4	10,17	1,02			

Though the present study is not directly concerned with equality of opportunity in the macro-society to the same extent as the British and American studies, it also reveals clear differences in the general educational performances of middle class and lower working class pupils. The procedure regarding the assessment of general educational performance and the calculation of means were explained in section 6.10 of chapter 6. General educational performance refers to the overall performance in the four main subjects. Table 7.7 shows that the difference of 5,08 between means in favour of middle class pupils is statistically significant ( $p < 0,01$ ). Though the difference is not very great, nevertheless the findings reveal that lower working class pupils in the present study are not performing as well as their middle class counterparts.

To get an unbiased estimate of whether the difference between the means was really significant, the variance in general educational performance within and between the middle class and lower working class pupils was also analysed.

TABLE 7.8

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF  
MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between groups	1	793,82	793,82	8,28	p<0,01
Within groups	148	14192,08	95,892432		
TOTAL	149	14985,9			

The F ratio of 8,28 ( $p < 0,01$ ) confirms the finding of the z test of significance applied previously: that the lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level than the middle class pupils, and that this difference is highly significant.

The findings of the present study are similar to those of the average scores of middle and lower working class pupils on reading, vocabulary, and arithmetic tests in Douglas's study. Douglas used the technique of T scores to compare the performances of these two groups (Douglas, 1964 : 184).

Other well-known post war British researches with which the findings of the present study can be compared are those of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956). They were concerned with educational opportunity as reflected by success in the eleven plus examinations. They compared opportunities offered between 1950 to 1953 with those existing earlier. The study revealed differences in educational performances of children from two contrasting social class areas, by comparing the percentage of children of manual workers gaining entry to grammar school with that of professionals and managers. A greater percentage of middle



class children in S.W. Hertfordshire and Middlesborough gained grammar school places. The difference in the number of entrants to grammar school between the two social classes was indicative of the lower educational performance of the working class pupils in the eleven plus examinations.

Though Fraser's study was not specifically concerned with social class differences in attainment, nevertheless it was a carefully controlled research contrasting two sets of correlations: the home environment and I.Q. with those of home environment and educational attainment. In this respect, her findings can also be compared with those of the present study. Fraser (1959 : 62) drew attention to abnormal and normal home circumstances. Her definitions of *normal* and *abnormal* embraced certain social and cultural factors relevant to middle class and lower working class lives. She found that children from abnormal homes performed less successfully than children from normal homes. Though the present study does not deal with normal and abnormal home backgrounds in the same context as Fraser, nevertheless, the social class differences in general educational performances are similar to the findings of Fraser.

The findings of the present study are also consistent with those of Glass (1954) in England, and Jencks (1972) in the U.S.A. Glass (1954 : 15-19), who studied the effects of social mobility on education in Britain made a careful study of the proportion of grammar school pupils and university students coming from working class homes. His study shows that though there is considerable mobility in the working class generally, the percentage of lower working class children who enter grammar schools and universities remains small. In a review of Glass's work, Floud says "*only one working class boy in fifty proceeded to the universities in the postwar period, as compared with one in five of*

*boys from other families"* (Floud, 1970 : 36).

This lack of educational mobility and differential educational performances between the two social classes has also been recently demonstrated in a study of social mobility by Halsey at Nuffield College, Oxford (Banks, 1976 : 56). His study shows that despite improvements in educational provisions, the children of the upper middle classes are three times as likely as those of the lower middle class to reach a university; the lower working class have half the chance of the lower middle class (Banks, 1976 : 56). Though no large-scale studies have been done on social class stratification in secondary and university education in South Africa, the general pattern of social class differential performances in education in most western countries suggests that similar patterns are likely to be found here. Therefore, in a restricted way, when compared with the studies of Glass and Halsey, the findings of the present study may be regarded as an indication of what is likely to be found in the social class stratification of Indian secondary school and university populations. However, before any definite conclusions are arrived at in this matter, it is necessary to point out that South Africa cannot be regarded as a class-divided society to the same extent as Britain is. Nevertheless, within its first order stratification of race, social class differences have important implications for mobility.

Jencks, in a large-scale national study in the U.S.A. estimated that a family's economic status probably correlates about 0,35 with children's academic performances (Jencks, 1972 : 72). He demonstrated social class differential performances in education by comparing children whose fathers rank in the top fifth of the occupational hierarchy with children whose fathers rank in the bottom fifth. He found that there was a discrepancy

in the academic test scores between these two groups. Jencks referred to the families in the top fifth of the economic hierarchy as upper middle class, and those in the bottom fifth as lower class.

The importance of Jencks's findings, when compared with the findings of the present study, is in its wider implications for educational and social mobility. His findings lead him to conclude that roughly half the children born into the upper middle class will end up with upper middle class credentials, and with more schooling than eighty per cent of their contemporaries. Likewise, about half the children born into the lower class will end up with lower class credentials, and will have less schooling than eighty per cent of their peers.

While it is difficult to make such definite predictions in the case of the sample in the present study, nevertheless the studies of Jencks, Floud and Halsey can be used meaningfully to interpret the present findings within the macro-framework of Indian education in the South African society.

### 7.3.2 Performance in English

The performance in English of the pupils is based on oral and written examinations. The former are taken in reading, speech and conversation. The latter are based on composition and letter writing, grammar, reading study, spelling and dictation. The marks obtained in the written and oral sections of the examination are combined and expressed as global scores.

Table 7.9 (see page 192) indicates that the middle class pupils scored approximately four points higher on the average than the lower working class pupils. Though the difference is once again not very great, nevertheless it is statistically significant ( $p < 0,05$ ). The performance of the lower working class pupils in English is consistently lower

than that of the middle class group.

TABLE 7.9

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH OF MIDDLE CLASS  
AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNI- FICANCE
M.C.	50	52,7	9,28	1,33	3,93	2,36	p<0,05
L.W.C.	100	48,77	10,02	1,01			

To get an unbiased estimate of whether the difference between the means was really significant, the variance in performance in English within and between the middle class and lower working class pupils was also analysed.

TABLE 7.10

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH OF MIDDLE  
CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between groups	1	514,83	514,83	5,31	p<0,05
Within groups	148	14356,21	97,001418		
TOTAL	149	14871,04			

The F ratio of 5,31 (p<0,05) confirms the finding of the z test of significance applied previously: that in English the lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level than the middle class pupils.

The scores of middle class and manual working class pupils on the eleven year tests in English in Douglas's study revealed similar differences. However, the differences in favour of the middle class in Douglas's study are slightly higher than those of the present study (Douglas, 1964 : 185).

Miller's study also suggests that the language abilities of middle class children are superior to those of working class children. Unlike the present study, or that of Douglas, Miller drew his conclusions from I.Q. tests of verbal ability which are generally biased in favour of the middle class. He found that the difference in verbal scores between manual and non-manual groups was highly significant ( $p < 0,001$ ) (Miller, 1972 : 77). He suggests that the working class milieu militates against the development of verbal ability, and consequently this results in lower performances in language and other educational studies.

Though the findings of the present study cannot be compared directly with those of Bernstein of the Sociological Research Unit of the University of London Institute of Education, nevertheless it may be useful to point to some similarities. Bernstein's research is mainly in the area of socio-linguistics (Bernstein, 1958; 1964; 1965; 1971; 1973a). Like that of the present study, some of his early experimental studies showed distinct differences in the language performances of middle class and lower working class children. Lawton (1968 : 91) in a review of one of Bernstein's experimental researches of the 1960s points out that in a study of 61 working class and 45 middle class boys who were tested on the Raven's Progressive Matrices and the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scale, Bernstein found wider differences in the verbal abilities of the two groups than in their non-verbal abilities.

The value of Bernstein's study in the light of the present research lies in the interpretation which he gives to language scores as indicators of the general educational abilities of the middle class and lower working classes. The fact that the lower working class pupils perform lower than the middle class pupils can be attributed either to their cultural environment or to the fact that they are genetically deficient. Bernstein, however, in the light of his sociolinguistic theories rejects the latter point of view. He assessed the educational level of lower working class pupils in relation to the deprived linguistic and cultural environment in which they are socialised (Bernstein, 1970 : 114-119).

In the 1960s, Lawton's association with the Department of Sociology of Education at the London Institute of Education led him to carry out follow-up studies to test the linguistic models postulated by Bernstein. He examined the speech and writing abilities of middle class and working class boys in several schools in London (Lawton, 1968 : 103-143). He confirmed Bernstein's hypotheses by establishing clearly the superiority of the language skills of middle class boys. In recent years, Lawton has branched out into a related area of study, namely that of curriculum relevance to social class and culture (Lawton, 1975 : 1-51).

However, the researches of Bernstein and Lawton are so complicated that it would be naive to make a straight comparison of their studies with the present investigation. Bernstein, in particular, is not simply concerned with social class differences in language. To appreciate fully the implications of his research concerning the *restricted* and *elaborated* codes discussed in chapter five, one has to make a careful study of his early theoretical papers between 1958 to 1961, his experimental researches between 1960 to 1965, and his recent theoretical discourses from 1971 onwards on the *classification* and *framing* of educational

knowledge.

Nevertheless, though the differences in the English performances of the two social class groups in the present study are not determined in the same way as Bernstein's and Lawton's researches, they have similar implications for the education of working class pupils. As in the case of Bernstein's studies, the findings of the present study suggest that the lower performance in English of the lower working class group is likely to affect their general educational performance. Proficiency in language is crucial to learning in all areas of the curriculum. This relationship between language and learning, and language and the development of thinking, is clearly revealed in Lawton's review of the researches of Vygotsky, Piaget, Luria, Yudovich, Osgood and Chomsky (Lawton, 1968 : 36-38).

### 7.3.3 Performance in General Mathematics

TABLE 7.11

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL MATHEMATICS OF  
MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M. C.	50	52,92	8,74	1,25	4,82	2,99	p<0,01
L. W. C.	100	48,1	10,11	1,02			

The difference of 4,82 in the mean performance in general mathematics between the middle class and lower working class pupils is larger than that of the mean performance in English. However, as in the case of performance in English, though the difference is not too great, it is nevertheless statistically significant (p<0,01). The inference is that

the lower working class pupils perform consistently lower than the middle class pupils in general mathematics. Douglas found similar differences between middle class and manual working class pupils in the eleven year tests in arithmetic (Douglas, 1964 : 185).

To get an unbiased estimate of whether this difference between the means was really significant, the variance in performance in general mathematics within and between the middle class and lower working class groups was also analysed.

TABLE 7.12

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL MATHEMATICS  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNI- FICANCE
Between groups	1	622,08	622,08	6,45	p<0,05
Within groups	148	14266,48	96,395135		
TOTAL	149	14888,56			

The statistical significance of the F ratio of 6,45 ( $p < 0,05$ ) is lower than that revealed by the z test of significance applied previously. Nevertheless, it confirms the finding of the z test that: in general mathematics the lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level than the middle class pupils.

Douglas, Ross and Simpson, in a sequel to Douglas's 1964 study investigated mathematics and reading performances of pupils at eleven and fifteen years of age. They found that at the age of eleven, the middle class pupils had higher scores in mathematics and reading than the manual working class pupils. However, whereas the reading scores were



significantly higher, the mathematics scores did not quite reach significance (Douglas, Ross and Simpson, 1968 : 51). The findings of the present study are different to that of Douglas, Ross and Simpson. In the present study, reading performance was included in the assessment of English, and we notice that the middle class pupils have significantly higher scores in both mathematics and English.

The present study also reveals that there is a positive relationship between mathematics and English in both the middle class and lower working class groups. In the entire sample of 150,  $r = 0,58$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); in the middle class group  $r = 0,49$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); and in the lower working class group  $r = 0,60$  ( $p < 0,001$ ). The difference between the lower working class  $r$  of 0,60 and the middle class  $r$  of 0,49 is statistically not significant ( $z = 0,88$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). (See Appendix E for formula of test of significance of difference between set of correlations). The relationship between the performance in the two subjects in the two social class groups is similar.

In a review of research studies which examine the relationship in performance between subjects such as reading and mathematics, Wiseman suggests that there is a need for further investigation of differential performances in different areas of the curriculum before any definite conclusions can be reached (Wiseman, 1964 : 71). He suggests enquiries into social class differences - not only in performances in mathematics and English, but also in literary, practical and vocational subjects. Despite this uncertainty of research findings in general, it is fair to conclude that in the present study, when English and general mathematics performances are considered, the mean differences between the two social classes suggest that middle class pupils perform consistently better in each of these two crucial areas of the curriculum.



7.3.4 Performance in Environmental Studies

TABLE 7.13

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN PERFORMANCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	53,44	8,81	1,26	5,37	3,38	p<0,01
L.W.C.	100	48,07	9,63	0,97			

The performances in history, geography and elementary science, taken together, indicate the overall performance in environmental studies. The procedure regarding the assessment of performance in environmental studies was explained in section 6.10 of chapter 6. Table 6.10 shows that the cumulative performance in science, history and geography are combined to give a global assessment. The difference of 5,37 between the two social classes in the mean performance of environmental studies is greater than the differences in general mathematics and English. The lower working class pupils perform consistently lower than the middle class pupils by 5,37 points, and this social class difference in performance in environmental studies is statistically significant ( $z = 3,38$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ).

To get an unbiased estimate of whether this difference between the means was really significant, the variance in performance in environmental studies within and between the middle class and lower working class groups was also analysed.

TABLE 7.14

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF PERFORMANCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between groups	1	961,23	961,23	10,82	p<0,01
Within groups	148	13144,83	88,816418		
TOTAL	149	14106,06			

The F ratio of 10,82 ( $p < 0,01$ ) confirms the finding of the z test of significance applied previously that: in environmental studies the lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level than the middle class pupils.

This finding is consistent with Jencks's observations that social class differences in studies of general information are greater than those of mathematics, and other subjects which are not so dependent on experiences related to the environment (Jencks, 1972 : 78). His explanation is that there are small social class differences in performance in subjects where the skills are taught in school largely because the general experiences of the environment affect these subjects less than environmental studies. If we apply this explanation to the findings of the present study, it is possible that the wider range of cultural experiences of the middle class pupils - such as the availability of reference books in the home, and the higher educational level of their parents - are associated with their higher performance in environmental studies. Conversely, we may also infer that the lower performance of the lower working class pupils may be attributed to the discontinuity between their cultural experiences and that which is

reflected in the curriculum of environmental studies.

### 7.3.5 Absence from School

TABLE 7.15

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF DAYS OF ABSENCE OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	7,72	8,25	1,18	0,35	0,25	p>0,05
L.W.C.	100	7,37	7,39	0,74			

Table 7.15 indicates that the lower working class pupils were absent from school on fewer occasions than the middle class pupils, but the difference of 0,35 days is so small that it is almost negligible. No statistical significance could be attached to it ( $z = 0,25$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). From this we can conclude that both social class groups attend school regularly, and that there are no social class differences in this respect. The middle class and lower working class pupils are exposed to the school curriculum and the general culture of the school for similar periods of time. Despite this, the lower working class pupils perform consistently poorer in all areas of the curriculum.

The finding of the present study is similar to that of Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 173-175) who found very small, almost negligible social class differences in the number of days that pupils are absent from primary school. Goodacre (1968 : 17) also found no significant social class difference in attendance at infant schools where she studied teachers and their pupils' home backgrounds.

In the present study, though there were a few pupils who were absent for as many as twenty to forty days, generally it may be said that the overall attendance was good. In both social classes, the average number of days of absence was approximately seven. In the light of the findings of Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 174), this figure is below that of two and a half weeks which is reported to be usual for pupils in the middle years of primary schooling.

When general educational performance was correlated with absence in the present study, there were inverse relationships in the case of the entire sample of 150, and in each of the sub-samples. In the entire sample  $r = -0,34$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); in the middle class group  $r = -0,41$  ( $p < 0,01$ ); and in the lower working class group  $r = -0,33$  ( $p < 0,001$ ). This means that in both the social classes, the pupils who stayed away from school less frequently had higher educational performances. In all three cases, the inverse relationships are statistically highly significant. This finding is similar to that of Wiseman's Manchester Survey undertaken for the *Plowden Committee*, which showed that good attendance at school was associated with higher educational performance (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 357).

However, it should be noted that while the general relationships are the same, in the case of the present study, there is no significant statistical difference between the middle class correlation of  $-0,41$  and the lower working class correlation of  $-0,33$ . ( $z = 0,52$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). This indicates that, despite the fact that absence is inversely related to general educational performance, there is no evidence in this study to indicate that there is any significant social class difference in this respect.

In the discussion thus far, absence from school was seen as an individual feature of the home environment and was isolated from other related variables. Because of this, it was possible to examine only the gross relationship between absence from school and pupils' general educational performance. It now remains to consider this and other home background variables, not in isolation but together. This will enable us to obtain a more precise relationship between absence from school and general educational performance, and also to assess how great is its increased relationship with school performance. The combined relationship of several home background variables also indicates which of these variables contributes most to general educational performance. The multiple and partial correlation techniques were used for this purpose (see Appendix E). These take into account not only the correlation of each home variable with the criterion, but also the correlation of each home variable with every other. This approach was also used by Fraser (1964 : 71), Wiseman (1964 : 113), and Miller (1971 : 100) in their studies on home background and education.

Without this approach, absence from school may appear to be a variable related only to the physical environments of home and school, and takes little or no account of related socio-cultural variables such as parents' level of education, and their interest in education. However, when the combined effects of these other variables are considered, one is able to appreciate more fully that an educated parent who is interested in his child's education is more likely to check on his child's absence from school than a parent who is poorly educated and who is not interested.

To study the degree of association between some such variables, the following nine were taken into account. The rationale underlying the choice of these variables is explained fully in section 8.4 of

chapter 8.

variable 1: general educational performance of pupils (the criterion)

variable 2: parents' level of education

variable 3: assistance given to the child with homework

variable 4: time spent by the child on homework

variable 5: newspapers and magazines read by the family

variable 6: number of children in the family

variable 7: ordinal position of the survey child in the family

variable 8: provision of essential amenities related to the material environment

variable 9: absenteeism from school

At this stage, it may be mentioned briefly that this order was decided upon because the criterion could be related to each of the four dimensions of home background discussed in chapters five and six. For example, variables 2,3, 4 and 5 are concerned with general cultural and educational experiences in the home. Variable 3 is more specifically concerned with parental encouragement and motivation given to children. Variables 6 and 7 are concerned with family size; variable 8 with the material environment; and variable 9, absenteeism with parental control and interest in children's education.

To establish a more precise relationship between absence from school (variable 9) and pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), the effects of variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 were controlled or partialled out. In the entire sample of 150,  $r_{19.2345678} = -0,31$  ( $p < 0,01$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r_{19.2345678} = -0,35$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r_{19.2345678} = -0,32$  ( $p < 0,01$ ). These findings indicate that within the context of related home background variables frequency of absence from school is significantly

related to lower general educational performances in both social classes. These findings are lower than, but similar to, the gross relationship between variables 1 and 9, which was reported earlier on.

TABLE 7.16

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO  
ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u>						
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,44$	0,1936	19,36	7			
( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,54$ )						
variable 9	0,0980	9,8	1	0,098	5,67	$p < 0,05$
residual	0,7084	70,84	41	0,01727		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u>						
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,46$	0,2116	21,16	7			
( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,54$ )						
variable 9	0,0800	8,00	1	0,08	10,28	$p < 0,01$
residual	0,7084	70,84	91	0,00778		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150</u>						
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,38$	0,1444	14,44	7			
( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,48$ )						
variable 9	0,0860	8,60	1	0,086	15,78	$p < 0,01$
residual	0,7696	79,96	141	0,00545		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			



An analysis of variance indicates that absence from school (variable 9) contributes significantly to variation in pupils' general educational performance (see Appendix E for formula of coefficient of determination of R which was used in testing the significance of increase in R. This Appendix also explains how F is calculated when determining the significance of increase in R).

Table 7.16 indicates that the inclusion of variable 9 in this combined relationship of other home background variables accounts for a significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. In the middle class sub-sample it accounts for 9,8 per cent of variation ( $F = 5,67$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ); in the lower working class group it accounts for 8 per cent of variation ( $F = 10,28$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ); and in the entire sample of 150, there is 8,6 per cent of variation ( $F = 15,78$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). These findings are to be expected since frequent absence from school is likely to affect school performance adversely, and regular attendance at school is likely to improve school performance.

Goodacre (1968 : 17), and Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 173) also looked at absence from school in relation to socio-cultural variables within the total cultural context of the home. However, they concentrated mainly on the reasons for absence. The present researcher adopted a similar approach by asking the class teachers to indicate the reasons for absence in the cases of pupils who stayed away for lengthy periods. In this way, he was able to get some insight into the home circumstances of these pupils. The most common reasons were: illness, lack of parental control, and disharmony in the home. Goodacre (1968 : 17), and Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 173) came across similar reasons.

When reasons for absence are analysed in this way, it is possible to get some insight into the interest which parents have in their children's education.

### 7.3.6 Failure in Previous Standards and Classes

Since the sample consisted of some pupils who failed in previous standards and classes, it was decided to see whether there were any significant social class differences in the number of years which pupils failed in their school careers. The mean difference of 0,2 years was so small that it was statistically not significant ( $z = 1,60$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

TABLE 7.17

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF YEARS OF FAILURE OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	0,38	0,62	0,09	0,2	1,60	p > 0,05
L.W.C.	100	0,58	0,87	0,09			

Though there are significant differences in the general educational performance of the two social class groups, the pupils in both groups experienced similar rates of failure and success in their previous standards and classes. If this finding is combined with that of absenteeism, we can conclude that both social classes were exposed to the curriculum and the general culture of the school for similar periods of time between class one and standard four. Therefore, the cause of differential social class performances cannot be attributed directly to absenteeism or to the number of years which children have failed at school. These factors must be seen in relationship to other factors which are discussed in the sections which follow.

### 7.3.7 General Educational Attainment of the Schools

Though this study is not specifically concerned with a study of school variables, it is nevertheless, necessary to see whether the schools differed significantly in their general educational attainment. This was judged by comparing the mean general educational performances of the pupils who were selected in each of the schools. The procedure regarding the assessment of general educational performance or attainment was explained in section 6.10 of chapter 6. Since this comparison was not between social classes, but between schools, the scores of both the middle class and lower working class pupils were taken together when calculating the mean attainment in each school.

TABLE 7.18

MEAN GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PUPILS OF BOTH SOCIAL CLASSES IN THE SURVEY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	MEAN ATTAINMENT
Merebank	50,02
Junagarth Road	49,92
Rustomjee	50,05
St. Mary's	49,92
Settlers	50,05
Nizam Road	50,50

Table 7.18 shows that the mean general educational attainment of the schools ranges from 49,92 to 50,50. The range of 0,58 appears to be negligible. To test whether the differences between the means were significant, and to get an unbiased estimate, the variance in general educational attainment within and between the six schools was analysed.

TABLE 7.19  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF  
THE SURVEY SCHOOLS

SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
Between schools	5	5,1955	1,0391	0,01	p>0,05
Within schools	144	14981,24	104,03638		
TOTAL	149	14986,435			

Table 7.19 shows that the schools in the area do not differ significantly in their mean general educational attainments. On the whole they produce similar results. Exposure to the teaching in any one of the schools would seem to make no difference to the educational achievement of children of both social classes. Neither the middle class nor the lower working class pupils are disadvantaged in any way by attending any particular school in the area.

This finding is to be expected since Indian primary schools have similar facilities and resources. This includes staff-pupil ratios, buildings, general equipment, a uniform curriculum, teachers' qualifications and length of teaching experience. Furthermore, most teachers in Indian education have been trained in one of two institutions which provide basically similar training. Because the schools provide similar educational environments, there is very little variation in attainment between the six schools in the Merebank area.

This finding is consistent with that which has generally been revealed by most British studies on primary education (Morrison and McIntyre, 1971 : 61). Differences in attainment among British children are

much less closely related to their school environment than to their home environment. For example, Peaker in a survey undertaken for the *Plowden Committee* found that very little variation in attainment among primary school children could be accounted for in terms of school variables (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 179-195).

Similarly, in the U.S.A., a national survey undertaken by Coleman and his associates showed that differences in attainment between schools account for only a small fraction of differences in pupil achievement (Coleman et.al., 1966 : 21). Another U.S. study, that of Jencks (1972 : 147), found that there were very small differences in the general educational attainments of elementary schools (Jencks, 1972 : 148).

Though a similar pattern is observed in British studies there are a few exceptional studies which point to the greater impact which social class influences have on the middle years of primary schooling. This has clearly emerged in the studies of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956) on social class and educational opportunity, and Douglas (1964) on the relationship between the home and the school. Though the present investigation has no evidence to indicate social class preferences for schools, or differential social class educational performance according to schools, nevertheless it is useful to compare the present findings with those of the studies cited above. Both these studies have shown that the main criterion by which parents and educationists judged the reputation of primary schools was the marked differences in the rate at which the various primary schools helped their pupils to gain grammar school places. Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 96) showed, for example, that even within a single district such as the Borough of Watford, some schools gained a significantly higher

number of grammar school entries than other schools.

Though the present study did not analyse the academic reputation of schools in this way, nevertheless the findings indicate that though Merebank is a self contained suburb the schools in the area do not reflect such wide variations as in the case of the two British studies referred to. However, one should not overlook the fact that, whereas the present study is localised, those of Floud and her associates, and that of Douglas are large-scale studies. Therefore, it might well be useful to consider the type of analysis they employed should a large-scale study into social class and education be undertaken in Indian schools that are situated in several different suburbs.

The British studies, being large-scale had to take into account regional differences in educational provisions, such as size of classes, amenities, and age of buildings (Wiseman, 1964 : 64-68); (Douglas, 1964 : 134); (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 222-242). These studies have shown that middle class parents are highly selective in their choice of primary schools for their children. They favour schools which have the reputation of gaining grammar school places for their children. The more reputable British primary schools are also known to be located in the more prosperous middle class residential areas.

When this is compared with the social class composition of the Merebank schools, there is no evidence that any of the schools are middle class or working class, in the sense of parents' preferences. Though all schools show a heavier intake of working class pupils (see Table 7.1) none of them could claim to be catering for higher proportions of any one social class group. Table 7.1 shows that the six schools have

a similar intake of middle class, skilled working class, and lower working class pupils. This, together with the fact that all schools have similar levels of general educational attainments can hardly be used as supportive evidence to describe the Merebank schools as being *good* middle class, or *bad* working class schools.

However, in studies such as those of Douglas (1964 : 135), there is sufficient evidence to indicate that in each social class, pupils at the academically more successful schools have greater gains than those of the less successful ones. This is contrary to the present investigation which shows that children from each of the social classes in any one school perform just as well as their counterparts in any other school in the district. Douglas attributes the differential attainments between schools in his study to the superior social class intake of the academically more successful schools, rather than to the superior quality of the teaching. A social stratificational analysis of this sort would have been inappropriate to the present study in view of the fact that all schools have similar levels of success in school examinations, irrespective of social class.

Douglas's study lent itself to an even more refined type of analysis which took into account the comparative rates of progress of middle class and manual working class children at *successful* and *unsuccessful* schools. Again, this type of analysis was irrelevant to the present study since all schools had similar reputations of success and failure. However, because of the greater class consciousness in the British society, Douglas was able to study the advantages enjoyed by middle class children at the successful schools (Douglas, 1964 : 136-138).

The findings of the present study in respect of differential attainment between schools, and the comparisons made with oversea studies point to the following conclusions:

- (a) Like most British and American studies, the differences in the overall academic achievement of schools were very small.
- (b) Unlike the British studies, notably those of Douglas, and Floud, Halsey and Martin, there is no evidence in the present study to suggest differential rates of progress and gains between middle class and lower working class pupils in the different schools.
- (c) Unlike the situation in Britain where parents generally may choose the primary schools which they wish their children to attend, Indian pupils in Natal are compelled to attend schools which are nearest to their homes. Parental choice does not exist. Thus, there are no social class differences in parental preferences of primary schools in the present study.
- (d) All schools reflect similar proportions of pupils from the different social classes. The proportions are typical of the area in general.
- (e) The schools serving the area are generally alike in their facilities, curriculum provision and staffing. This contrasts greatly with the regional variations, and variations in single districts, pointed out in the British studies.

#### 7.4 MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME

The discussion on the effects of the material environment on school performance in chapter five showed quite clearly that researchers over the years have shown that the material environment of some working class children has had a detrimental effect on their school performance. In several of these studies the material environment has been defined in different ways. For the purpose of the present investigation the



following have been taken as indices of the material environment: type of house which the child lives in, essential amenities in the house, living space, and facilities for homework. Some of these indices were also used in the studies of Douglas (1964); Fraser (1959); Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956); and Chazan et. al. (1971). In assessing the material environment in this way they realised that the quality of housing influenced not only the child's homework, but even his opportunity for reading and constructive play (Banks, 1976 : 71).

However, the index of income of the family, usually taken in most studies of this sort, was omitted in the case of the present investigation. This was done because of the reluctance of some parents to reveal the income of the family. The lack of this information was not regarded as being serious since a reliable indication of income was the father's occupation. Because social class stratification was crucial to the design of the present study, the fathers' occupations were carefully determined. This, together with the information obtained from the 1970 census data on income and occupation (see chapters two and six), provided sufficient evidence of the income levels of the homes.

Though these different indices tend to fragment the material environment into different aspects, it is important to realise that if we are to understand the influence of material factors on school achievement, we need to know how they operate in combination with other variables discussed in the next chapter of this study. Some of these other variables include the educational background of the parents, parents' aspirations and motivations concerning their children's education, and the size of the family. The effects of these several aspects of the home generally overlap. For example, Douglas (1964 : 65) was careful to explain that parents who are unskilled workers generally have inferior formal

educational qualifications, show little interest in their children's school work, have large families, and live in houses lacking certain essential amenities. Therefore, it is important to note that the findings in this section of the present study should not be viewed in isolation. Before any definite conclusions are to be reached on the significance of the material environment of the homes, these findings should be seen in the context of the study as a whole.

#### 7.4.1 Types of Houses

The majority (66 per cent) of the children live in sub-economic, council houses which are semi-detached and much smaller in area and less comfortable than the privately owned economic houses. The privately owned economic homes have larger gardens, more playing space, and are separated from one another, thus allowing greater freedom of movement. The sub-economic homes are not provided with ceilings, tiled floors, indoor bathrooms and toilets, and hot running water. However, during the home visits the researcher observed that in several cases the owners improved their sub-economic houses by adding ceilings, papering the walls, carpeting the floors, and by building additional rooms.

Very few children, irrespective of social class come from privately owned economic homes. There is a very small, and statistically insignificant difference between the number of children in the two social classes, who live in economic homes ( $\chi^2 = 0,10$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ) (see table 7.20 on page 215). The type of houses in which the children live is not linked with social class. At first glance it would therefore seem that both middle class and lower working class children are exposed to similar material environments in their homes. However, before reaching any definite conclusion on this, it is necessary to look closely at the provision of certain essential amenities in the homes.

TABLE 7.20

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE ACCORDING TO TYPES OF HOUSES

TYPE OF HOUSE	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Sub-economic	33	66	66	66	Bet. 2; and 1,3,4 and 5 combined. $\chi^2 = 0,10$ df = 1	p>0,05
2. Economic	5	10	7	7		
3. Flat	2	4	0	0		
4. Barracks	0	0	5	5		
5. Other (e.g. outbuildings and garages)	10	20	22	22		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

The findings of the present study contrast sharply with those of some other studies on the types of houses which children from different social classes come from. Though the quality and the type of council and privately owned houses in Britain differ greatly from those provided for Indians in Durban, nevertheless it is important to note that Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 71-73) found important social class differences in the types of homes from which pupils in their sample came. These children were reared under varied conditions at home. Floud, Halsey and Martin found that the majority of families in the predominantly middle class South West Hertfordshire area lived in detached or semi-detached houses, while the majority in the predominantly working class area of Middlesborough lived in terraced houses.

In a more recent study, Midwinter (1975 : 63) compared 100 suburban homes and 100 inner ring houses in Liverpool. He also found distinct

social class differences in the types of homes owned. The majority of the lower working class occupied the poorer quality inner-ring houses, while very few of this group lived in better quality suburban houses.

Other British studies which also confirmed strong links between social class and type of house ownership are those of Cullen (1969 : 84) and the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 112).

In the case of the present study it is hardly surprising that social class is not closely linked with type of house ownership. Because of the great shortage of higher quality housing, and inflated prices of building plots, many aspiring middle class Indians have been compelled to live in sub-economic homes (Pillay and Ellison, 1969). Therefore, in the present study, unlike those in Britain, the differentiation in the nature of the material environment is determined not so much by the type of houses that the children live in, as by the provision of essential amenities in the houses.

#### 7.4.2 Essential Amenities

To judge whether the home had certain essential amenities the parents were asked whether they had electricity, cold running water, hot running water, radio, television, telephone and an indoor bathroom separated from the toilet. The council houses in Merebank are provided with outdoor toilets and showers, not separated from each other.

In the analysis of the data it was found that electricity and cold running water were available in 100 per cent of middle class homes,

and in 94 to 97 per cent of lower working class homes. Since these items did not enable a clear distinction to be made between the two social classes, they were omitted in the final analysis. The possession of a telephone was another item which was found to be non-discriminating. Because of the shortage of telephone lines in Merebank, only 11 per cent middle class and 3 per cent lower working class homes had telephones. Since the possession of a telephone was not linked with the economic status of the family, this item did not provide a reliable basis for discriminating between the material comforts in the homes of the two social classes.

Eventually each home was rated quantitatively in terms of the number of the essential amenities it had: these included hot running water, radio, television, and a separate indoor bathroom. A home which had all four amenities was given a score of four; those with fewer amenities were given scores according to the number they had possessed.

Table 7.21 shows that middle class homes have an average of approximately two essential amenities, while the lower working class have approximately one amenity. The difference between the mean essential amenities of the two groups is 0,83. This difference is highly significant, statistically ( $z = 4,23$ ;  $p < 0,01$ )

TABLE 7.21

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN ESSENTIAL AMENITIES OF MIDDLE CLASS  
AND LOWER WORKING CLASS HOMES

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE MEAN	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNI- FICANCE
M.C.	50	1,98	1,24	0,18	0,83	4,23	p<0,01
L.W.C.	100	1,15	0,84	0,08			

This table reveals that there is a genuine difference in the level of the material comforts between the homes of the two social class groups. Though they come from similar types of houses (see table 7.20), the middle class children enjoy better material facilities.

TABLE 7.22

PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL AMENITIES IN MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS HOMES

AMENITY	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
1. Electricity	50	100	94	94
2. Cold water	50	100	97	97
3. Hot water	19	38	13	13
4. Radio	49	98	82	82
5. Television	17	34	15	30
6. Telephone	11	22	3	3
7. Indoor bathroom	16	32	6	6
8. Renovation and Extensions	29	58	41	41

Table 7.22 indicates the better range of provisions in the middle class homes. For example, 38 per cent of middle class homes have hot running water, while only 13 per cent of lower working class homes have this amenity. Thirty two per cent of middle class homes have indoor bathrooms as opposed to 6 per cent of the lower working class. Though renovations and extensions to the home were not taken into account when assessing material comforts, nevertheless table 7.22 shows that a higher proportion of middle class homes have been

improved in this respect. The middle class parents seem to be more conscious of improving the general standard of their houses.

Other studies have also shown that the provision of essential amenities is linked with social class. This relationship is stronger in the case of the present study, than in some of Britain. For example, Midwinter (1975 : 63), who conducted a survey in Liverpool between a *model* suburban and a *model* lower working class block of an average of hundred houses, found that the majority of the suburban houses had normal amenities such as hot water, a fixed bath, and an indoor toilet, while very few of the inner ring, lower working class homes had these. Roma Morton-Williams' survey among parents of primary school children, undertaken for the *Plowden Committee* emphasised similar social class differences (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) 1967 : 2, 1970).

As far as improvement to homes is concerned, over a period of eleven years Douglas (1964 : 61) found that there was greater improvement in the housing conditions of manual lower working class families. Though the present study is not a longitudinal one like that of Douglas, it is important to note that in Merebank the finding is the opposite. Greater improvements were found in the middle class homes. A possible explanation for this difference is that in Britain, when the lower working classes move into council estate homes, they are provided with the modern amenities which many of them did not have previously when they lived in privately rented accommodation. Douglas therefore assessed housing *improvement* in this context. In Durban, on the other hand, when Indians move into council sub-economic homes, they are not provided with hot running water, indoor bathrooms and so on. Those who have improved their homes by making their own provisions are mainly the middle class, as is the case in the present study. If Douglas

those of local authorities, his findings would possibly have been different.

Douglas also estimated the extent to which the general standard of housing influenced the test scores of his sample (Douglas, 1964 : 62-65). He found that those who lived in poor quality housing are handicapped in their test scores at the age of eight, and their test performances deteriorated in the next three years. A significant finding of his is that as the children grow older, of all those who come from poor quality housing, the performance of middle class children is less likely to deteriorate to the same extent as that of manual working class children. He attributes this to middle class values and attitudes to education. This point is explained more fully later on.

Because the scope and the scale of the present study is limited when compared with that of Douglas, it was not possible to assess academic achievement in this way. Nevertheless, some effort was made to see if there was any relationship between the provision of essential amenities in the home and general educational performance. In the case of the entire sample there was a very slight, but positive relationship ( $r = 0,04$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). In the case of the middle class group  $r = 0,08$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and the lower working class group  $r = -0,14$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). In all three cases, not much importance could be attached to the findings because of the low values of  $r$ .

#### 7.4.3 Living Space and Overcrowding

The availability of living space, which is related to the material environment of the home, affects the child's general development. For example, Douglas (1964 : 64) showed that overcrowding and the



lack of space have adverse effects on children's test scores. The survey on home circumstances, done for the *Plowden Committee*, revealed that overcrowding may result in ill health and fatigue for both parents and children. It also results in lack of space for playing and variety of stimulation (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 112). Since children have little space and privacy this will depress their school performance by making it difficult for them to concentrate on homework. An overcrowded home is also one in which children may have to share their bedrooms with other persons. This may interfere with their sleep, cause fatigue, and result in lack of concentration in school.

In the present investigation a living space index, and a bedroom space index were used to estimate the availability of space. The living space index was similar to that used by Fraser (1959 : 55). It was based on the number of persons living in the household in relation to the number of rooms available. The indices were obtained by dividing the number of room units by the total number of persons. The living space index gave some idea of the general amount of space available, while the bedroom index indicated sleeping arrangements. If the index is low it indicates the lack of space in the home. For example, a family of ten living in a three roomed house will have an index of 0,30; whereas a family of five occupying the same number of rooms will have an index of 0,60.

When calculating the total number of rooms per household, only those which were available to the family for eating, sleeping or *living*, or any combinations of these were taken into account. Bathrooms and toilets were not included. If rooms in the house were sublet to other families these were also excluded. In the calculation of the total number of persons per household, in addition to children and parents,

any other person who lived permanently with the family and shared in the general living arrangements was also taken into account.

TABLE 7.23

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF ROOMS IN MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS HOMES

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE MEAN	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	4,92	1,51	0,22	1,33	4,93	p<0,01
L.W.C.	100	3,59	1,62	0,16			

The mean difference of 1,33 in the total number of rooms between the two social classes is highly significant, statistically ( $z = 4,93$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). The middle class families have more living space than the lower working class families. The middle class homes have a total of 246 rooms which are shared by 373 persons. The lower working class homes have a total of 359 rooms which are shared by 783 persons. The middle class families have a higher living space index (0,66), compared with the lower working class (0,46). The lower working class homes are overcrowded when compared with the middle class homes.

The bedroom space index shows that the middle class families are once more at an advantage in terms of availability of space. There is also a very significant difference in the mean number of bedrooms between the two social classes ( $z = 3,53$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) (see table 7.24 on page 223). The middle class homes have a total of 121 bedrooms, shared by 373 persons (index = 0,32). The lower working class homes have a total of 184 bedrooms, shared by 783 persons (index = 0,23). There

is greater overcrowding in the sleeping arrangements of lower working class homes. However, the fact that the index is quite low even in the case of the middle class group indicates that there is overcrowding even in these homes, as far as sleeping arrangements are concerned.

TABLE 7.24

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF BEDROOMS IN MIDDLE CLASS  
AND LOWER WORKING CLASS HOMES

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	2,42	0,94	0,13	0,58	3,53	p<0,01
L.W.C.	100	1,84	0,95	0,10			

This is confirmed by the findings on the relationship between the number of children in the homes and the number of bedrooms available. In the case of the middle class  $r = 0,39$  ( $p < 0,01$ ); in the lower working class  $r = 0,18$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). The difference between these two relationships is statistically not significant ( $z = 1,29$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). Though there is generally greater overcrowding in lower working class homes, when children and sleeping arrangements are analysed separately, middle class homes are also overcrowded. However, the bedroom index is higher (0,51) for middle class than lower working class homes (0,38). There is an average of 1,95 children per bedroom in middle class homes compared with 2,61 children per bedroom in the case of lower working class homes.

During visits to the homes the researcher observed several which were

just one room in an outbuilding or garage which was used as a kitchen, diningroom and bedroom. In one or two cases, the single room was partitioned so that one half was used as a kitchen. In many cases, families living in these circumstances shared an outdoor toilet and bathroom with two or three other families. The researcher also came across three middle class families who lived under these conditions. The lower working class families in *Minitown Barracks* share certain essential amenities. The researcher found that twenty four families in one block had to share eight outdoor toilets and four outdoor showers.

There were very few homes where children had their own bedrooms, or which had playrooms. In his entire survey of 150 homes, the researcher only found two such homes which had playrooms equipped with educational toys, books and writing material. Though the middle class homes have more general living space, the researcher's general observations indicated that on the whole the Merebank homes are overcrowded.

When compared with the findings of some other studies, the present investigation shows that there is more overcrowding in Merebank. But like other researches, the present study shows that there are genuine social class differences in the availability of space. Fraser (1959 : 55) found a mean living space of 0,75, which is much higher than that revealed in the present study. Overcrowding in Midwinter's (1975 : 63) Liverpool study was not as great as that of the present study.

Though the present study reveals some similarities in the findings on the bedroom space index with that of the survey among parents of primary school children of the *Plowden Committee*, there are also differences. The social class differences in the present study are not as great as those of the *Plowden Committee's* survey. In the latter, the children of manual workers were worse off than those of non-manual workers

(Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 112). Cullen (1969 : 86) also found greater overcrowding among the working classes. In general the findings of these British studies show more distinct social class differences than those of the present study. But the degree of overcrowding revealed in the present study is just as high or even higher than in the British studies. This again can be attributed to the greater housing shortage, and the larger family size in the Indian community.

#### 7.4.4 Facilities for Homework

One of the most obvious differences between social classes is the facilities which are available for the child to do his homework in comfort. Though this provision can sometimes reflect the parents' attitudes towards homework, it is often determined by limitations of accommodation, finance and the general material environment of the home. Lack of space, inadequate facilities such as a table, and a place where there is minimum disturbance can have disrupting effects on the child's progress at school. A child doing homework in an overcrowded home is likely to be disturbed and distracted by others or by the radio or television if he is forced to do his homework in the living room.

In this study the parents were asked where their children usually did their homework. Table 7.25 (see page 226) reflects the parents' responses to this question.

TABLE 7.25

PLACE WHERE CHILDREN USUALLY DO THEIR HOMEWORK

PLACE	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Study, or in own bedroom which has a desk	5	10	1	1	Bet. 1; and 2 to 6 combined $\chi^2=4,88$ df=1	p<0,05
2. Bedroom	9	18	38	38		
3. Lounge	17	34	33	33		
4. Diningroom	13	26	12	12		
5. Kitchen	5	10	15	15		
6. Other	1	2	1	1		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Table 7.25 shows that 10 per cent of children from middle class homes do their homework either in studies or in their own bedrooms which have desks or tables, compared with 1 per cent of children from lower working class homes. The remaining children (about 90 per cent in the middle class) do their homework in less favourable conditions. The social class difference in the facilities for homework is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 4,88$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). The middle class pupils have better facilities. Despite this, a striking feature in the homes of both social classes is that 10 to 15 per cent of children do their homework in the kitchen where there is often much disturbance. The lounge and the diningroom are the most popular places, and disturbance can also be expected here especially when there are visitors, or when other members

of the family listen to the radio or watch television. Radios and television sets are found in the homes of both social classes (see section 8.1.5.2 of chapter 8).

During the home visits, the researcher noted that often in many lower working class homes there was constant interruption from other members of the family, mainly children. This made the researcher acutely aware that in such homes it is not just one single factor which is responsible for a pupil's lack of progress, but an interacting combination of factors. However, one or two of these factors are often clearly noticeable. Two such factors are the lack of facilities for homework, and disturbance.

Cullen's (1969 : 91) study, like that of the present investigation, also found significant social class differences in facilities for homework. She found that educationally advanced children (mainly middle class) had better facilities.

#### 7.4.5 The Effect of The Material Environment within The Total Context of Home Background

Though the findings on the material environment in the present study have been separated, the full impact can only be appreciated if the various aspects are seen in relationship to each other. The type and quality of housing, availability of living space and the extent of overcrowding must be seen as a whole. Similarly, the entire material environment is just one part of the whole pattern of life-style related to home background.

In this study, the provision of essential amenities in the home was taken as the index of the material environment, when multiple relationships were analysed. The material environment (variable 8) was examined in relationship to variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 in order to observe its effect upon pupils' general educational performance (variable 1).

To obtain a more precise relationship between variables 1 and 8, the effects of variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were controlled or partialled out. In the entire sample of 150  $r_{18.234567} = -0,07$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r_{18.234567} = -0,07$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r_{18.234567} = -0,17$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). When the effects of other home background variables are controlled, the relationship between the material environment and pupils' general educational performance is almost negligible. This confirms the earlier finding of the gross relationship between provision of essential amenities and pupils' general school performance, which also indicated a negligible relationship.

An analysis of variance shows that the material environment of the home does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. Table 7.26 (see page 229) indicates the extent to which this variable, within the multi-relationship context of variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, accounts for variation in general school performance. Table 7.26 indicates that the inclusion of variable 8 in this combined relationship of other home background variables does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. In the middle class sub-sample there is no variation at all. In the lower working class group it accounts for 1,80 per cent of variation ( $F = 2,10$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and in the entire sample of 150 there is 0,75 per cent of variation ( $F = 1,24$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). The finding of the present study is similar to oversea research studies which suggest that the effects of the material environment do not exert any significant influence on pupils' school performance, except under conditions of extreme poverty (Morrison and Mc Intyre, 1971 : 36).



TABLE 7.26

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO THE MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u>						
$R_{1.234567} = 0,44$	0,1936	19,36	6			
( $R_{1.2345678} = 0,44$ )						
variable 8	0,0000	0	1	0,0000	0	
residual	0,8064	80,64	42	0,0192		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u>						
$R_{1.234567} = 0,44$	0,1936	19,36	6			
( $R_{1.2345678} = 0,46$ )						
variable 8	0,0180	1,80	1	0,0180	2,10	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,7884	78,84	92	0,00856		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150</u>						
$R_{1.234567} = 0,37$	0,1369	13,69	6			
( $R_{1.2345678} = 0,38$ )						
variable 8	0,0075	0,75	1	0,0075	1,24	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,8556	85,56	142	0,006025		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

In the present study, the almost negligible influence of the material environment is illustrated by these four cases. Two of the poorest performers in the entire sample of 150 came from middle class homes which have above average provision of essential amenities. These pupils had T scores of 34 and 30 respectively. When questioned about their children's education, the mothers of both these pupils knew very little about their progress in school, nor did they have high aspirations for their children's future. On the other hand, the two best performers (with T scores of 74 and 70 respectively) are from lower working class homes. The pupil with the highest score lived in a garage, and one other room. The other pupil lived in a one bedroom outbuilding. His family shared an outdoor toilet and bathroom with three other families. However, the mothers of both these children knew a great deal about their children's progress in school. They also had high aspirations, indicating that they wanted their children to proceed beyond matriculation. From this it could be seen that the social environment of these children is more important than their material environment.

The finding of the present study is similar to that of the *Plowden Committee*, and that of Douglas (1964). The *Plowden Survey* took into account not only the material conditions of the home, but other factors as well, such as parental attitudes and family size. It concluded that "*more of the variation in the children's school achievement is specifically accounted for by the variation in parental attitudes than by either the variation in the material circumstances of parents or by the variation in schools.*" (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 184). In a separate study, Wiseman's Survey for the *Plowden Committee* also confirmed that

educational deprivation is not mainly the effect of the material environment. He asserted that parental attitudes and maternal care are more important than the level of material needs (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 369).

Douglas (1964 : 64) was also very sceptical about attributing the low test scores of manual working class children in his sample directly to the effects of poor material conditions in their homes. He asked, *"If overcrowding, bad sleeping habits, and lack of amenities are associated with deterioration in the test performance of manual working class children, why are they not equally associated with a deterioration in the progress of middle class children?"* (Douglas, 1964 : 67). He suggested that the effects of the material environment must not be seen in isolation. There is a need to consider the values and attitudes to education which predominate in the environments in which the children grow up. Middle class children from poor circumstances may have more opportunities to mix with other middle class children.

Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 89) made a similar observation in South West Hertfordshire which has good quality housing. In differentiating between successful and unsuccessful children they found that the material environment was of less importance than differences in the size of the family and in the education, ambitions and attitudes of the parents. But in Middlesborough which has poor-quality housing they were able to distinguish successful children at each social level by the material prosperity of their homes.

Consequently, the findings of the present study and the other studies referred to indicate that the true indices of material deprivation are not the material conditions as such, but related factors such as

absence through illness, neglected homework, and parental encouragement. There is a close relationship between the material environment and the whole way of life of the family.

The many recent studies on home background and education have concentrated on the more subtle areas which touch upon the role of values and motivation in the home. However, these researches are not yet sufficiently advanced to enable us to understand the precise relationships between fundamental values (Floud, 1970 : 38). Nevertheless, in the next chapter this study examines some attitudes which parents have towards education. These are analysed within the categories of the general cultural and educational experiences in the home, and the educational motivations and aspirations of parents.

#### 7.5 SUMMARY

The findings in this chapter may be summarised as follows:

The social class composition of each of the schools in the Merebank area is similar. They have similar proportions of middle class, skilled working class, and lower working class pupils. The ratio of one-third middle class to two-thirds working class pupils is typical of the area in general.

There are hardly any differences between the general educational achievement of these schools. In fact, they are so small that they can be considered negligible. Since the schools are achieving similar rates of success and failure in the examinations, attending any one of the schools can be regarded as neither an advantage nor a disadvantage to any of the two social classes.

Despite this, there is a distinct difference in the general educational performance of middle class and lower working class pupils in the area as a whole. The lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level in all areas of the curriculum, and especially in general mathematics and environmental studies. Though there is also a distinct social class difference in the performance in English, English is the home language for more than 90 per cent of the pupils.

The difference in general educational performance can hardly be attributed to absence from school. The attendance of pupils from both social classes is good. There is a very small, almost negligible social class difference in the number of days that pupils are absent from school. However, when absence from school is related to other home background variables it accounts for a significant amount of variation in the general educational performance of both middle class and lower working class pupils.

When the material environments of the pupils' homes are related to their general educational performances, the relationship is not so clear. Though the majority of the pupils live in similar types of houses (mainly sub-economic homes), nevertheless there is a genuine difference in the material comforts between the homes of middle class and lower working class pupils. The middle class homes have more of the essential amenities. Though the majority of children in both social classes do not have adequate facilities for homework, the middle class children are nevertheless better off in this respect. The lower working class homes are also overcrowded when compared with middle class homes. But when sleeping arrangements are taken into account, the difference between the two social classes is not so distinct.

Finally, when the influence of the material environment is studied in the context of other home background variables, it does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance in either of the social classes.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

## 8. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY : GENERAL CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE HOME, EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF PARENTS, AND FAMILY SIZE

8.1 GENERAL CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE HOME

The general cultural and educational atmosphere which prevails in the home is likely to affect the attitudes of parents and children towards education in general. Therefore, the cultural and educational experiences in the home were judged by both the parents' and the children's characteristics. Education in this context was interpreted broadly to include both formal and informal aspects. The formal aspects included parents' level of education, their awareness of their children's educational needs, and the time spent by children on homework. The informal educational aspects took into account parents' reading habits, radio and television programmes preferred by the children, and children's interests and hobbies.

8.1.1 Parents' Level of Education

The educational level of parents is a useful indication of the educational climate of the homes in which children are socialised. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to inculcate positive attitudes in the children towards education (Goodacre, 1970 : 106-107). Parents who have little or no formal education may find it difficult to understand what schools are trying to achieve, and consequently they fail to appreciate the value of their children's formal and informal educational experiences.

In the present study, an attempt was made to examine the educational levels of mothers and fathers, separately at first, and then to arrive at a common assessment of the combined levels of education of both parents. Five categories of educational levels were devised and the parents were given scores of between 0 to 5 according to the following pattern:

- 0 = no education
- 1 = less than standard 1
- 2 = between standard 1 to standard 3
- 3 = between standard 4 to standard 6
- 4 = between standard 7 to standard 9
- 5 = standard 10 and beyond

Categories 0 and 1 are indications of illiteracy, category 2 of semi-literacy, category 3 of basic primary education, category 4 of basic secondary education, and category 5 of higher secondary education and further education.

The more highly educated parents obtained higher scores and these were indicative of the more stimulating educational climates of their homes. A similar procedure of assessing parents' levels of education was adopted by Fraser (1959 : 41), Chazan et. al. (1971 : 24) and Cullen (1969 : 62).

Table 8.1 (see page 237) shows that there are significant differences between the educational levels of the fathers of middle class and lower working class pupils. For example, 17 per cent of lower working class fathers may be considered to be illiterate, as opposed to none of the middle class fathers ( $\chi^2 = 7,97$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). There is a significantly higher number of illiterate fathers in the lower working class group. The social class difference in the educational level of fathers is



even more revealing when educational levels of up to matriculation and beyond are taken into account. Eighteen per cent of middle class fathers have reached matriculation or beyond, as opposed to none of the lower working class fathers ( $\chi^2 = 16,09$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). There is a significantly greater number of middle class fathers who have had higher secondary and further education.

TABLE 8.1

## FATHERS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Nil	0	0	6	6	(A) Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 to 5 combined. $\chi^2=7,97$ df = 1	p<0,01
1 Less than std. 1	0	0	11	11		
2 Std. 1 to 3	2	4	11	11	(B) Bet. 0 to 4 combined; and 5. $\chi^2=16,09$ df = 1	p<0,001
3 Std. 4 to 6	20	40	61	61		
4 Std. 7 to 9	19	38	11	11		
5 Std. 10 and beyond	9	18	0	0		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Cullen's (1964 : 64) study shows similar social class differences in the educational level of fathers of educationally retarded and educationally advanced children. The majority of fathers of the children in the former group left school at fourteen years or younger. In the present study, 89 per cent of fathers of lower working class pupils did not proceed beyond standard six, while 56 per cent of fathers

of middle class children have post primary education.

Table 8.2 shows that the educational level of the mothers between the two social classes is not as marked as in the case of the fathers.

TABLE 8.2  
MOTHERS' LEVELS OF EDUCATION

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0. Nil	10	20	27	27	(A) Between 0 to 1 combined; and 2 to 5 combined. $\chi^2 = 1,75$ df = 1	p>0,05
1. Less than std. 1	1	2	7	7		
2. Std. 1 to 3	9	18	18	18		
3. Std. 4 to 6	24	48	47	47	(B) Between 0 to 3 combined; and 4 to 5 combined. $\chi^2 = 6,76$ df = 1	p<0,01
4. Std. 7 to 9	5	10	1	1		
5. Std. 10 and beyond	1	2	0	0		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Thirty four per cent of lower working class mothers may be regarded as illiterate, as opposed to 22 per cent of middle class mothers. The difference in the number of illiterate mothers between the two social class groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,75$ ; p>0,05).

However, when secondary educational qualifications are taken into account, the social class difference in the educational levels of mothers becomes more apparent. Twelve per cent of middle class mothers have educational qualifications of at least standard seven and beyond as opposed to 1 per cent of the lower working class mothers ( $\chi^2 = 6,76$ ; p<0,01).

In the present study, 88 per cent of middle class mothers and 99 per cent of lower working class mothers did not proceed beyond standard six. Cullen's (1969 : 64) study, by contrast revealed wider social class differences in the educational levels of mothers. She found that very few mothers of educationally retarded children had any post-primary education, as opposed to a comparatively larger number of mothers of educationally advanced children. In the present study, 12 per cent of middle class mothers had some form of secondary education, compared with 1 per cent of lower working class mothers.

The differences in the educational levels of fathers between the two social class groups are more marked than the differences in the educational levels of the mothers. This is probably because the fathers are generally the breadwinners in the Indian families. The educational qualifications of fathers rather than those of mothers are more closely linked with occupational status and social class. Another reason for the smaller range in difference between mothers' levels of education is that the history of Indian education in Natal reveals that Indian parents were generally conservative in their attitudes to the education of girls. For many years girls received no more than a basic primary education, and in many cases they received no education at all (Lazarus, 1966 : 20-24). It is only in the last three or four decades that the situation has begun to change.

When the educational levels of fathers and mothers were assessed together, the middle class parents had a mean score of 6,02, compared with the lower working class parents' mean of 4,48. The difference between these means is statistically highly significant ( $z = 4,68$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) (see table 8.3 on page 240). Middle class parents have higher

educational levels than lower working class parents. One would therefore expect a more stimulating educational climate to prevail in the middle class homes.

TABLE 8.3

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN LEVELS OF EDUCATION OF THE PARENTS  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNIFICANCE
M.C.	50	6,02	1,88	0,27	1,54	4,68	p<0,01
L.W.C.	100	4,48	1,88	0,19			

The relationship between parents' level of education and pupils' general educational performance was also studied. Fathers' and mothers' levels of education were correlated separately with the criterion. There is a positive relationship between fathers' level of education and the criterion. In the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,37$  ( $p < 0,001$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r = 0,18$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class group  $r = 0,35$ ; ( $p < 0,001$ ). There is a statistically significant social class difference in the relationship between fathers' level of education and pupils' general educational performance ( $z = 3,08$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). The relationship is stronger in the lower working class group.

In the case of mothers' level of education, there is also a positive relationship with pupils' general educational performance. In the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,17$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); in the middle class group  $r = 0,22$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class group

$r = 0,11$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). These findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the relationship between mothers' levels of education and the general educational performance of pupils of both social classes ( $z = 1,88$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

The findings of the present study differ from those of Douglas (1964 : 72) who found that the influence of the mothers' education on the test scores of pupils was as strong as that of the fathers' education. In the present study, the relationship between fathers' level of education and pupils' general educational performance in the lower working class sub-sample is much stronger than that of mothers' level of education. This also applies to the entire sample of 150 pupils.

When the educational levels of both parents were combined together, they were found to be positively related with pupils' general educational performance. In the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,27$  ( $p < 0,01$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r = 0,23$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r = 0,20$  ( $p < 0,05$ ). The relationship between the higher level of parents' education and better general school performance is more clearly noticeable in the lower working class group. There is a distinct social class difference in the relationship between parents' level of education and pupils' general educational performance ( $z = 2,46$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). The relationship is stronger between these two variables in the lower working class group.

The findings in the entire sample of 150 and in lower working class sub-sample point to the fact that children who have better educated parents achieve higher levels in their schoolwork.

#### 8.1.2 Interest in Reading

The formal educational experience of parents is only one way of

measuring the educational background of the home. Studies such as those of Fraser (1959 : 43 - 45), Chazan et, al (1971 : 59-60) and Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 109-112) have attempted to assess the education of the home in a more direct way by looking at other variables such as the reading habits of the parents and children. This approach is based on the assumption that the parent who is interested in reading is likely to provide an atmosphere in the home which will motivate children to succeed at school. It has also been argued that the general reading habits of parents are likely to influence indirectly the language development of their children. Parents who are better read are likely to have a wider vocabulary which should benefit their children in their language development. They are also likely to encourage them to read widely.

The interest in reading was a significant area of investigation of the Manchester Survey of the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 373-383). Measures such as reading and library membership were taken as indications of the literacy of the home. Wiseman who directed this survey found literacy to be a highly significant measure of pupils' attainment, brightness and backwardness.

The present study was based on the approaches of the *Plowden Committee* and the other studies mentioned earlier on, and information was sought on the library membership of parents; the frequency with which they borrowed books; the newspapers and magazines which the family bought.

#### 8.1.2.1 Reading of Newspapers

The reading patterns of newspapers were rated on a four-point scale:

0 = never (no reading)

1 = seldom (a daily or a weekend paper occasionally)

2 = often (a daily or a weekend paper regularly)

3 = very often (more than one daily or weekend papers regularly).

TABLE 8.4

PATTERNS OF NEWSPAPER READING

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFI- CANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Never	3	6	13	13	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 to 3 combined.  $\chi^2 = 4,62$	p<0,05
1 Seldom	1	2	11	11		
2 Often	7	14	11	11		
3 Very Often	39	78	65	65		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Categories 0 to 1 of the above table indicate poor patterns of reading, while 2 and 3 indicate good patterns. Table 8.4 reveals that lower working class families have poorer patterns of reading. Twenty four per cent may be regarded as poor readers, as opposed to 8 per cent of middle class families. Ninety two per cent of middle class families have good reading patterns, as opposed to 76 per cent of lower working class families. There is a distinct social class difference in the patterns of newspaper reading ( $\chi^2 = 4,62$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). The middle class families have superior reading patterns.

#### 8.1.2.2 Reading of Magazines

The magazines read by the family were classified into *serious* and *non-*

*serious* types, according to the procedure adopted by Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 111). Families were classified on a four-point scale ranging from no reading, through less serious reading, to more serious reading. The highest scores were awarded to families which read educationally orientated magazines, and the lowest scores to those who read purely for entertainment, for example picture story books and comics. The following scale was used:

- 0 = no reading
- 1 = comics and picture story books
- 2 = family magazines
- 3 = general educational magazines
- 4 = specific educational magazines.

Categories 0, 1 and 2 may be regarded as *non-serious* reading; and categories 3 and 4 as *serious* reading.

TABLE 8.5

## TYPES OF MAGAZINES READ

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Nil	34	68	81	81	Bet. 0 to 2 combined; and 3 to 4 combined. $\chi^2 = 5,21$	p<0,05
1 Comics and picture story books	0	0	3	3		
2 Family magazines	7	14	11	11		
3 General educational magazines	3	6	2	2		
4 Specific educational magazines	6	12	3	3		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		



Table 8.5 shows that the majority of families in both social classes do not read any magazines. Eighty two per cent of middle class families and 95 per cent of lower working class families may be regarded as *non-serious* readers; and 18 per cent of middle class and 5 per cent of lower working class families read *serious* magazines. There is a distinct social class difference in the types of magazines which are read ( $\chi^2 = 5,21$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). A significantly larger number of middle class families read educationally orientated magazines. Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 110) made a similar observation in a study of the homes of boys at traditional grammar school and a comprehensive school. They found that *manual* working class families were less likely to read *serious* magazines than non-manual families in all schools.

Children who belong to families which have such preference in their general reading are likely to perform better in English. In the present study, the relationship between types of magazines preferred and pupils' performance in English revealed that in the middle class sub-sample there is a positive relationship ( $r = 0,22$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); an inverse, negligible relationship in the lower working class sub-sample ( $r = -0,04$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and a low positive relationship in the entire sample of 150 ( $r = 0,10$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). Because of their low levels of significance, not much importance could be attached to these findings.

To get some idea of the general reading experiences of the family, the ratings of the reading of newspapers and magazines were expressed as composite scores. A similar procedure was adopted by Fraser (1959 :45) who argued that magazines and newspapers constitute the main reading material in many homes. In the present study, the general

reading experiences of the family were coded on a scale ranging from 0 to 7. This incorporates the points on the scales for newspapers and magazines. The families which have wider reading experiences have higher scores.

It is generally assumed that children who come from families with wider reading experiences perform better in English. In this study, there is a positive relationship between general reading experiences in the family and pupils' performance in English. In the middle class group  $r = 0,27$  ( $p < 0,05$ ); in the lower working class group  $r = 0,17$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,23$  ( $p < 0,02$ ). However, when general reading experiences are related to pupils' general educational performance, we notice that there is a positive but lower relationship. In the middle class  $r = 0,14$ ; ( $p > 0,05$ ); in the lower working class  $r = 0,10$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,16$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). Because of the low levels of significance not much importance could be attached to these findings. Fraser (1959 : 45) found a stronger relationship between newspaper and magazine reading in the family and pupils' general educational performance.

In order to obtain a more precise relationship between general reading experiences in the family (variable 5) and pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), it was decided to examine variable 5 in the context of related socio-cultural variables such as parents' level of education (variable 2), assistance given with homework (variable 3), and time spent by the children on homework (variable 4). When the effects of variables 2, 3 and 4 are controlled or partialled out, there is a positive relationship in the middle class sub-sample ( $r_{15.234} = 0,13$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); a negative relationship in the lower working class sub-sample

( $r_{15.234} = -0,06$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and a positive relationship in the case of the entire sample ( $r_{15.234} = 0,02$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). Once again, not much importance could be attached to these findings. When compared with the gross relationships established earlier, the partial relationships between variable 5 and variable 1 appear to be even lower.

An analysis of variance showed that general reading experience in the home does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. Table 8.6 indicates the extent to which this variable, within the context of multiple relationships with variables 2, 3, and 4 accounts for variation in general school performance.

TABLE 8.6

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO  
GENERAL READING EXPERIENCES IN THE FAMILY

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u>						
$R_{1.234} = 0,34$	0,1156	11,56	3			
( $R_{1.2345} = 0,36$ )						
variable 5	0,0140	1,40	1	0,014		
residual	0,8704	87,04	45	0,01934	0,72	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u>						
$R_{1.234} = 0,41$	0,1681	16,81	3			
( $R_{1.2345} = 0,42$ )						
variable 5	0,0083	0,83	1	0,0083		
residual	0,8236	82,36	95	0,008669	0,96	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			

TABLE 8.6 (Continued)

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE</u> <u>OF 150</u>						
$R_{1.234} = 0,36$	0,1296	12,96	3			
( $R_{1.2345} = 0,36$ )						
variable 5	0,0000	0	1	0	0	
residual	0,8704	87,04	145	0,0060		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

Table 8.6 indicates that the inclusion of variable 5 in this combined relationship of related socio-cultural variables does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. In the middle class sub-sample it accounts for 1,4 per cent of variation in school performance ( $F = 0,72$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). In the lower working class group it accounts for 0,83 per cent of variation ( $F = 0,96$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and in the entire sample of 150 there is no variation at all.

### 8.1.2.3 Reading of Library Books

To establish whether parents read material other than newspapers and magazines, they were asked whether they belonged to any library, and how often they borrowed books.

Table 8.7 (see page 249) reveals that the majority of parents in both social classes do not belong to libraries. Eighty per cent of middle class parents and 95 per cent of lower working class families fall into this category. Of the small number who are members, there are significantly more middle class parents who belong to this group

TABLE 8.7

## PARENTS' MEMBERSHIP OF LIBRARIES

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1 Members	40	80	95	95	$\chi^2 = 6,75$ df = 1	p<0,01
2 Non-members	10	20	5	5		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

However, membership of libraries does not indicate clearly the reading experiences of the parents. In order to get a more comprehensive picture, information was also sought on the frequency with which parents borrowed library books. They were classified into three categories: those who never borrowed books; those who borrowed seldom (less than once a month); and those who borrowed often (once a month or more often).

TABLE 8.8

## FREQUENCY WITH WHICH PARENTS BORROW LIBRARY BOOKS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Never	40	80	95	95	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 $\chi^2 = 4,99$ df = 1	p<0,05
1 Seldom	2	4	1	1		
2 Often	8	16	4	4		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Categories 0 and 1 of table 8.8. may be regarded as poor reading patterns, and category 2 as a good reading pattern. Sixteen per cent of middle class parents have good reading patterns, as opposed to 4 per cent of lower working class parents. A significantly larger number of middle class parents borrow books more frequently ( $\chi^2 = 4,99$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). However, a striking feature is that the great majority of parents in both social classes are involved in little or no reading at all. When the reading patterns of library books are compared with the patterns of newspaper reading, both social classes reveal superior patterns in the case of reading of newspapers. Generally, there is very little reading of library books.

TABLE 8.9

## FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CHILDREN BORROW LIBRARY BOOKS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Never	3	6	17	17	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 $\chi^2 = 5,22$ df = 1	p < 0,05
1 Seldom	4	8	16	16		
2 Often	43	86	67	67		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Table 8.9 reveals that the children of both social classes are engaged in a greater amount of library reading than their parents. The majority of children (86 per cent in the middle class group, and 67 per cent in the lower working class group) borrow books often. Despite this, there is a significantly larger number of middle class children who fall

into this category ( $\chi^2 = 5,22$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). The high frequency of borrowing books in both social classes is due to the fact that there is a municipal lending library in the area and schools encourage their pupils to become members. The library is centrally situated and pupils from all schools have easy access to it.

The *Flowden Committee* also found that the majority of school children borrowed books from libraries other than their schools (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 108). This report also highlights the social class differences in children's reading patterns. It found that there was a slight dropping off in the lower social classes compared with higher social classes in the proportion of children borrowing books. The children from manual working class families were less likely to borrow books than those of non-manual families.

The present researcher noted some of the comments of parents, which reflect their attitudes towards reading in general. At least three lower working class parents and one middle class parent openly expressed their disapproval of their children using the public library. One of the reasons which they advanced was that since the library was too far away it was dangerous for their children to walk to it. A lower working class mother said that her husband has such a strict control over his children's movements that he does not allow visits to the library. By contrast, it is interesting to observe the comments by a middle class mother who was deeply aware of the educational value of general reading. She said that she checks on the number and the type of books which her child borrows.

In general it may be said that apart from the reading of newspapers, and library books by the children, the findings of the present study

indicate a low level of reading habits in many of the homes in both social classes. The majority of the parents, for example, do not read any magazines nor do they belong to lending libraries. The researcher's general observations also indicated that there were very few books in most of the homes, apart from magazines and children's school books.

The findings of the present study are similar to that of Chazan et, al. (1971 : 59) who found that in most homes there was very little reading matter. But, as in the present study they also found that parents from better homes read more educationally orientated material. Another of their findings which is similar is that the differences in reading patterns of newspapers are not as marked as those of magazines.

The general findings of Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 109-111) are also similar to those of the present study. The majority of parents in their sample were classified as occasional or non-readers. The social class difference in the reading patterns in their study is shown by the fact that the fathers of sons at the traditional grammar school were more likely to be regular readers than other fathers. The *Plowden Committee's* findings also revealed significant social class differences in the reading patterns of parents. Over half of unskilled parents owned fewer than six books, and about half of them made no use of lending libraries (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 107)

### 8.1.3 Parents' Contact with School

The survey of literature in chapter five reveals that children's progress in school depends to a great extent on the interest which their parents show in their education. One of the ways of gauging such interest is to study the contact which parents have with schools, and to establish



the reasons for such contact.

In the present study, the parents' interest in their children's education was partly based on the frequency of their visits to schools, the reasons for such visits, and whether they had met their children's class teachers. Other variables used to study parental interest deal with parents' aspirations, motivations, and assistance offered to their children. These are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

TABLE 8.10

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH PARENTS VISIT SCHOOLS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNI- FICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Never	7	14	31	31	Bet 0 to 1 combined, and 2. $\chi^2 = 0,21$ df = 1	p>0,05
1 Seldom	36	72	59	59		
2 Often	7	14	10	10		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Categories 0 and 1 of table 8.10 indicate the number of uninterested parents, while category 2 refers to interested parents. This table reveals a very high percentage of uninterested parents in both social classes. Eighty six per cent of middle class parents and 90 per cent of lower working class parents fall into this group. Of the very small percentage of interested parents who visit schools often, the difference in the number of such parents between the two social classes is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,21$ ;  $p>0,05$ ). There is no social class difference

in the frequency with which parents visit schools. The majority of parents in both social classes have limited contact with schools.

This finding is opposite to that which British studies have revealed. For example, Douglas (1964 : 81) found that middle class parents visit schools more often than manual working class parents. Chazan et.al. (1976 : 76), and Goodacre (1968 : 33) also found similar social class differences.

TABLE 8.11

PARENTS' CONTACT WITH CLASS TEACHERS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1 Has met teacher	21	42	29	29	$\chi^2 = 1,98$	p>0,05
2 Did not meet teacher	29	58	71	71		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100	df = 1	

Table 8.11 indicates that the majority of parents in both social classes did not meet their children's class teachers, and the difference in the numbers of such parents between the two groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,98$ ; p>0,05). Both middle class and lower working class parents have limited contact with their children's teachers.

Once again, the findings of the present study contrast sharply with those of British studies. Douglas (1964 : 82), Cullen (1969 : 97-100), and Chazan et.al. (1971 : 76) found that middle class parents have more contact with their children's teachers than is the case with lower working class parents. The *Plowden Committee* also established that

parents' willingness to discuss their children's progress with the class teachers was closely linked with social class (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 128). It found that it is mainly middle class parents who speak to class teachers about their children's progress in school.

Since the amount and type of parental contact with schools and teachers does not indicate any significant difference in the interest shown by parents between the two social classes, it is also necessary to examine the extent to which parents show interest in their children's education by discussing their progress with class teachers. When reasons for parents' visits to school were analysed, it was found that many parents did not visit the school after admitting their children. Several others made only one or two visits to attend to routine matters such as getting the principal to fill in forms to claim welfare grants, to seek permission for their children to leave school early, to complain about their children's behaviour, and so on. Parents also visited the school to attend sports meetings, open days and concerts. Then there are those parents who visited schools specifically to discuss their children's progress with class teachers (see table 8.12 on page 256).

Categories 1 and 2 of table 8.12 indicate reasons which are not exclusively educational; whereas category 3 does. The majority of parents in both social classes visit schools for reasons other than those relating to discussions on their children's school progress. Seventy four per cent of middle class parents fall into this group, as opposed to 89 per cent of lower working class parents. By contrast, a small percentage of parents (26 per cent middle class and 11 per cent lower working class) visit schools specifically to discuss their children's school progress. Despite this small percentage, there is a significantly larger number

of middle class parents who fall into this category ( $\chi^2 = 4,52; p < 0,05$ ). This indicates the greater interest which middle class parents show in the educational progress of their children. Of the three variables used to study parental interest, the "*Reasons for Visiting School*" is the only one which indicates a distinct difference between the two social classes.

TABLE 8.12

## PARENTS' REASONS FOR VISITING SCHOOLS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. To attend to routine matters	23	46	65	65	Bet. 1 to 2 combined; and 3 $\chi^2 = 4,52$ df = 1	p < 0,05
2. To attend school functions	14	28	24	24		
3. To discuss child's progress in school	13	26	11	11		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Douglas (1964 : 81) found similar social class differences when reasons for school visits were analysed. Cullen (1969 :98) indicated that mothers of educationally advanced children were far more disposed to discuss their children's progress with teachers, than were the mothers of educationally retarded children.

On the whole, the findings of the present study indicate that parents of both social classes have limited contact with schools. There is a small percentage of parents who maintain contact because they are concerned about their children's school progress.

The present research also attempted to study the visits made by teachers to their pupils' homes. In the entire sample of 150, only 4 homes (2.6 per cent) were visited by teachers. In three of these cases the parents were relatives or friends of the teachers, and the visits were social. In the remaining case, the child was involved in a motor accident, and the teacher visited him at home. Goodacre (1968 : 35) also found that very few teachers were in the habit of visiting pupils' homes. In general, it may be said that teachers have hardly any direct contact with the homes of their pupils.

#### 8.1.4 Parents' Awareness of Their Children's Progress in School

Parental contact with school does not give a deep enough insight into parents' interest in their children's education. This section is therefore concerned specifically with parents' awareness of their children's educational progress so as to get some indication of the amount of interest shown by parents in their children's day to day educational activities. This was done by trying to ascertain whether parents were aware of the subjects which their children were studying in school, and how well their children were coping with these subjects. Parents who are interested in their children's educational progress are more likely to show a greater awareness of their children's progress than those who are apathetic.

In the present study, parents were asked to name the subjects which their children are studying in school. Their level of awareness was assessed according to the number of subjects which they could name. There are 13 subjects in the standard four curriculum. The following scale was used to assess parents' levels of awareness:

0. nil = very poor  
 1. between 1 to 3 subjects = poor  
 2. between 4 to 6 subjects = satisfactory  
 3. between 7 to 9 subjects = good  
 4. between 10 to 12 subjects = very good  
 5. 13 subjects = excellent

TABLE 8.13

## PARENTS' AWARENESS OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Nil	15	30	52	52	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 to 5 combined. $\chi^2 = 9,81$ df = 1	p<0,01
1 Poor	6	12	18	18		
2 Satisfactory	15	30	21	21		
3 Good	9	18	8	8		
4 Very Good	5	10	1	1		
5 Excellent	0	0	0	0		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Categories 0 and 1 of the above table indicate a basic unawareness of the school programme; while categories 2 to 5 indicate an awareness of this. Table 8.13 shows that 42 per cent of middle class parents, as opposed to 70 per cent of lower working class parents are basically unaware of the subjects which their children study in school. Fifty eight per cent of middle class parents, as opposed to 30 per cent of lower working class parents have at least a basic awareness of subjects

taken by their children. From this we can conclude that there is a significantly greater number of middle class parents who are aware of the subjects in the school curriculum which their children have to follow ( $\chi^2 = 9,81$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). This social class difference in educational awareness is probably due to the higher educational level of middle class parents. Table 8.13 also indicates that there is a very small percentage of parents in both social classes whose educational awareness may be described as good or very good. No parents were rated as excellent.

Though the social class difference in this study is similar to that found by Cullen (1969 : 94), the finding of the latter indicates a higher proportion of educational awareness among parents of educationally advanced children.

Though parents may be aware of the curriculum studied by their children, there is no guarantee that they understand whether their children can cope with particular subjects or not. To see whether they were aware of this, the parents in the present study were asked to name the subjects in which their children were: weak, above average, or strong. Some parents merely named the relevant subjects, while others went further and indicated the reasons for their awareness of their children's progress. This showed that such parents had more than just a superficial awareness of the subjects studied by their children. The following rating scale was used:

- 0 = unaware
- 1 = aware of specific subjects
- 2 = aware of specific subjects and reasons stated for awareness.

TABLE 8.14

PARENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR CHILDREN'S PROGRESS IN SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 Unaware	13	26	58	58	Bet. 0; and 1 to 2 combined.  $\chi^2 = 12,44$ df = 1	p<0,001
1 Aware of subjects	14	28	13	13		
2 Aware of subjects and reasons stated for awareness	23	46	29	29		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Category 0 of the above table is an indication of unawareness of children's progress in school; while categories 1 and 2 are indications of awareness of children's progress in school. Table 8.14 shows that there is a significantly greater number of middle class parents who are aware of their children's progress in school. Seventy four per cent of middle class parents fall into this category, as opposed to 42 per cent of lower working class parents ( $\chi^2 = 12,44$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ). This table also reveals that a higher percentage of middle class parents are acutely aware of their children's educational progress. They were able to justify their awareness by advancing specific reasons for their observations about their children's progress.

Through discussions with these parents, the researcher was able to get a more penetrating insight into the educational climate of the homes. The majority of parents mentioned that their children found English and mathematics to be the two most difficult subjects. They felt that



their children were doing well in history, geography, music, art, and handwork.

Though the middle class parents were more keenly aware of the importance of education, a few lower working class parents also displayed a similar attitude. They were mainly the better educated parents who were employed in lower category jobs. Some of the comments made by parents of both social classes are quoted below. These reflect the parents' own educational background, and their attitudes to their children's education.

Parent A. (M.C.): *"He is weak in English. His pronunciation is poor. We test him at home in preparation for the exams."*

Parent B. (M.C.): *"I help him in geography. My child does not like this subject, but I try to interest him by locating places in the atlas. I want to show him that this is an enjoyable subject."*

Parent C. (L.W.C.): *"She is weak in spelling and reading. I give her library books to read. I check on this and help her with difficult words by breaking them up. Reading is a pleasure."*

One of the lower working class parents made the following interesting comments about the teaching of mathematics:

*"Many are weak in maths. today. Don't you think that today's teachers rely too heavily on the class textbook, getting children to work examples from the book without understanding them? Children should first get a good grasp of problems, before they work from textbooks. Anyway, the methods are different*

*today from what they were in the 1940s when I was in school."*

Another lower working class parent showed the researcher his child's school report on which he wrote the following comments directed at the child's teacher. His child was performing poorly in elementary science and Afrikaans.

*"On my behalf I will carry out further and thorough research into these subjects without, of course, conflicting with your style of teaching."*

#### 8.1.5 General Pattern of Children's Activities at Home

Up to this point, the general cultural and educational experiences in the home were discussed mainly from the point of view of parents' characteristics. Now the attention is focussed mainly on children's activities. As was the case with the discussion on parents' characteristics, this section concentrates firstly on informal experiences such as children's interests and hobbies, radio and television programmes. The discussion then moves on to formal educational activities such as the amount of time spent on homework.

##### 8.1.5.1 Main Activities of Children

Parents were asked to name the main activities in which their children are engaged at home. Table 8.15 (see page 263) indicates the responses to this question, and the categories of activities indicate that reading, hobbies and special interests contrast greatly with activities such as routine household duties. Children whose main activities are

reading, stamp collecting, drama and so on are more likely to have a wider range of cultural and educational experiences which are related to the experiences of the school curriculum. Table 8.15 indicates that a comparatively larger number of middle class children (36 per cent) are involved in such activities. By contrast, the majority of lower working class children (62 per cent) are engaged in routine household duties such as running errands, cleaning, washing, etc. These could hardly be described as educational in the sense that reading, hobbies and special interests can be described. From this we may conclude that a comparatively larger number of middle class pupils are engaged in educationally orientated activities at home.

TABLE 8.15

MAIN ACTIVITIES WHICH CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN AT HOME

ACTIVITY	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
1. Parent doesn't know	0	0	5	5
2. Sports and related activities	6	12	15	15
3. Routine household duties	17	34	62	62
4. Attending vernacular school	9	18	11	11
5. Reading, hobbies and special interests	18	36	7	7
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

#### 8.1.5.2 The Influence of Radio and Television

The patterns of viewing television and listening to the radio were studied so as to obtain some indication of the influence of these

mass media in the homes. For many years the radio has been regarded as an important source of information and entertainment in many Indian homes; but it was only in 1975 that television was introduced in South Africa. Therefore, it may appear to be premature to study the influence of television at this stage. Nevertheless, it should not be overlooked since it is such an important source of educational influence in our mass industrial society of today. Exposure to both radio and television helps to supplement not only the child's general knowledge, but also his language patterns.

TABLE 8.16  
POSSESSION OF RADIOS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Yes	49	98	82	82	$\chi^2 = 6,34$ df = 1	p<0,02
2. No	1	2	18	18		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Table 8.16 reveals that the majority of homes in both social classes own radios. This includes 98 per cent of middle class homes, and 82 per cent of lower working class homes. However, a larger number of middle class families possess radios, and this social class difference in ownership is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 6,34$ ; p<0,02). It may therefore be argued that the influence of the radio on middle class children is likely to be greater than on lower working class

children. However, before any definite conclusion can be reached on this, it is necessary to study the amount of time which the children of both social classes spend listening to the radio, and the type of programmes which they prefer.

TABLE 8.17

AMOUNT OF TIME PER DAY CHILDREN LISTEN TO RADIO

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
0 - 1 hr.	44	88	79	79
1 - 2 hrs.	2	4	19	19
2 - 3 hrs.	3	6	1	1
3 - 4 hrs.	1	2	0	0
4 - 5 hrs.	0	0	1	1
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

In analysing this variable, children whose families do not possess radios, but who listen regularly at neighbours', friends' or relatives' homes were also included. Table 8.17 shows that the majority of pupils in both social classes spend less than an hour per day listening to the radio. Eighty eight per cent of middle class pupils and 79 per cent of lower working class pupils fall into this category. From his discussion with the parents of these children the researcher gained the impression that children spent very little time listening to the radio mainly because they prefer watching television. Many

parents said that their children don't really care to listen to the radio. They also felt that the amount of time which children spent in this way has decreased considerably since the introduction of television.

TABLE 8.18

## CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE RADIO PROGRAMMES

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Adult Educational	0	0	4	6	Bet. 1 and 2 combined; and 3 $\chi^2 = 0,41$ df = 1	p>0,05
2. Children's Educational	1	3	1	2		
3. Entertainment	37	97	59	92		
TOTAL	38	100	64	100		

The preferences for radio programmes were analysed only in respect of children who are actually involved in some amount of listening. This included 38 middle class pupils, and 64 lower working class pupils, giving a combined total of 102. Those children who do not listen at all were not included in the analysis. The statistical calculations for this variable are based on these figures.

From the responses recorded on the interview schedule (Appendix B2) the programmes were categorised into three groups. Category 1 of table 8.18 includes news items, quiz, discussion and interview programmes.

Category 2 includes quiz, serials based on literary works, and discussion programmes. Category 3 includes popular light music, comedies, western and detective serials, and sports programmes. The programmes in the first two categories are distinctly educational and are more likely to widen the children's general educational experiences than the programmes in category 3.

This table shows that very few children in both social classes prefer educationally orientated programmes. This includes 3 per cent of middle class children and 8 per cent of lower working class children. The majority (i.e. 97 per cent of middle class and 92 per cent of lower working class children) prefer mainly entertainment programmes. There is no social class difference in the types of programmes which the children prefer ( $\chi^2 = 0,41$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

The finding of the present study may be compared with that of Chazan et.al. (1971 : 56) who found that although most homes possessed radios, this did not exert any significant educational influence on children. Although many children listened frequently to the radio, very few listened to stories. The majority of children listened mainly to light musical programmes.

In the present study, too, many parents indicated that their children listen mainly to popular light music on Radio Five, Radio Truro and Radio Swazi. These are commercial radio stations whose programmes are almost exclusively devoted to popular light music.

The most popular adventure series preferred by the children are: *Squad Cars*, *The Mind of Tracy Dark*, *Jet Jungle* and *Consider Your Verdict*. The most popular comedies are *Friends and Neighbours*,

and *Father Dear Father*. The most popular quiz programmes are: *Check Your Mate*, *Pros and Cons* and *Hot line*.

Generally, the findings indicate that though a significantly greater number of middle class families possess radios, the educational influence of the radio on the children of both social classes is very limited. Some parents even expressed the view that they did not consider the radio to have any educational influence at all. One such lower working class parent said, "I think that the radio keeps them away from schoolwork, though many people say its educational."

TABLE 8.19

POSSESSION OF TELEVISION SETS

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Yes	17	34	15	15	$\chi^2 = 6,08$ df = 1	p<0,02
2. No	33	66	85	85		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

When the pattern of ownership of television is compared with that of radio, it can be seen that comparatively few families own television sets. Table 8.19 reveals that thirty four per cent of middle class families and 15 per cent of lower working class families own television. Despite this low percentage, a significantly larger number of middle class families have television sets ( $\chi^2 = 6,08$ ; p<0,02). From this we can conclude that the influence of this medium is greater on



middle class pupils. However, before reaching any definite conclusion on this, it is necessary to examine the amount of time which children of both social classes spend watching television and the types of programmes which they prefer.

Though the majority of homes in both social classes do not have sets, many pupils from these homes watch television regularly at the homes of their neighbours, friends and relatives. Some children also visit the shopping complex of Merebank where television is available for public viewing. In the analysis of viewing patterns, all these children were also taken into account.

TABLE 8.20

AMOUNT OF TIME PER DAY CHILDREN WATCH TELEVISION

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.	
	N	%	N	%
0 - 1 hr.	30	60	59	59
1 - 2 hrs.	6	12	28	28
2 - 3 hrs.	13	26	12	12
3 - 4 hrs.	1	2	1	1
4 - 5 hrs.	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	50	100	100	100

Table 8.20 shows that the majority of children in both social classes spend not more than two hours per day watching television. This includes 72 per cent of middle class pupils, and 87 per cent of lower working class pupils. When compared with the pattern of listening to the radio, the children in both social classes spend

more time watching television. For example, 28 per cent of middle class and 13 per cent lower working class pupils spend between two to four hours per day watching television, compared with only 8 per cent of middle class and 1 per cent of lower working class pupils who listen to the radio for a similar period of time.

Since television has only recently been introduced, its long term effects on school performance cannot be reliably assessed at this stage. However, discussion with parents suggests that many of them believe that an excessive amount of viewing results in a deterioration in school performance. This belief was expressed by several parents, some of whose comments are recorded below.

- (A) Middle class parent: *"My child has to be scolded to stop viewing. His position in class has deteriorated from third to twelfth. Television is definitely a bad influence on my child's progress in school."*
- (B) Lower working class parent: *"I don't like my children to watch TV. They will neglect their studies."*
- (C) Lower working class parent: *"He watches at the neighbour's house. I will have to control this. His report is not good. Its a bad influence on him."*

Some parents also stated that their children are attracted by television to such an extent that they actually do their homework while watching programmes.

The children's preferences in television programmes were analysed in respect of all children who watched television, irrespective of whether they watched in their own homes, in the homes of neighbours', friends',

relatives' or at the shopping complex. This included 43 middle class children, and 76 lower working class children, giving a combined total of 119. The children who did not watch at all were not included in the analysis. The statistical calculations for this variable are based on these figures.

TABLE 8.21

## CHILDREN'S FAVOURITE TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Adult Educational	0	0	1	1	Bet. 1 and 2 combined; and 3 $\chi^2 = 0,04$ df = 1	p>0,05
2. Children's Educational	36	84	65	86		
3. Entertainment	7	16	10	13		
TOTAL	43	100	76	100		

Just as in the case of radio programmes, categories 1 and 2 of the above table may be regarded as being distinctly educational in their influence on children, as opposed to category 3 which cannot be regarded as such. Category 1 includes discussion, interview, quiz, news, drama and ballet programmes. Category 2 includes children's quiz programmes, discussions, documentaries, and serials based on children's novels. Category 3 includes western, crime and adventure series; popular light music, comedies, and sports programmes.

Table 8.21 shows that a large number of children in both social

classes prefer mainly children's educational programmes. This includes 84 per cent of middle class and 86 per cent of lower working class children. The difference in the number of such children between the two social classes is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,04$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). From this we can infer that a similar number of children in both social classes are exposed to educational programmes. Chazan et.al. (1971 : 148) also found that there was no significant difference between children from deprived and advantaged homes in respect of the impact of television on children.

In the present study, the most popular educational programmes preferred by children were: *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *Children's Playhouse*, *Compass Quiz*, and science documentaries. The most popular entertainment programmes included the following western and adventure series: *Bonanza* and *The Saint*. Other popular entertainment programmes were: *The Brady Bunch*, *Hazel*, *The Rolf Harris Show*, *The Villagers*, *The Dingleys*, *Rupert the Bear*, and *Laurel and Hardy*.

The findings on radio and television in the present study indicate that though television is a new experience in many homes it seems to have a greater educational influence on children than radio. This influence is judged by the amount of time spent in listening and viewing, and by the quality of programmes preferred. However, as in the case of radio, though a larger number of middle class families possess television sets, there is no evidence in this study which indicates any significant social class difference in respect of the informal educational influence of television on children.

It is also important to point out that from his discussion with parents, the researcher was struck by the fact that several parents in both social classes seem to have little or no faith in the educational value of radio and television.

### 8.1.5.3 Time Spent on Homework

The amount of time which children spend on homework also gives an indication of the educational climate of the home. Class teachers and principals of the schools in the survey felt that pupils in standard four should be involved in at least half hour of homework per day. However, they were careful to point out that homework is not given everyday. Homework is allocated according to a timetable, and though it is not compulsory, pupils are expected to be involved in some homework everyday.

TABLE 8.22

AMOUNT OF TIME PER DAY CHILDREN SPEND ON HOMEWORK

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0 No time	3	6	7	7	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 to 4 combined. $\chi^2 = 0,01$ df = 1	p>0,05
1 Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.	5	10	8	8		
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 hr.	20	40	51	51		
3 1 - 2 hrs.	16	32	31	31		
4 More than 2 hrs.	6	12	3	3		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

If half hour per day is taken as the minimum requirement, then categories 0 and 1 of table 8.22 indicate those pupils who spend less than the required amount of time, whereas categories 2, 3 and 4 indicate those who spend more than the required time. This table

indicates that the majority of pupils in both social classes spend more than the required amount of time on homework per day. This indicates 84 per cent of middle class and 85 per cent of lower working class pupils. The difference in the number of such pupils between the two social classes is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,01$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). A similar number of middle class and lower working class pupils are engaged in more than the required amount of time set down for homework.

The finding of the present study differs from that of Cullen (1969 : 104) who found a significant social class difference in the amount of time which children spend on homework. In her study, educationally retarded children spend much shorter periods on their homework than educationally advanced children.

In the present study, there is a positive relationship between the amount of time which children spend on homework and their general educational performance. In the entire sample of 150  $r = 0,27$  ( $p < 0,01$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r = 0,08$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r = 0,35$  ( $p < 0,001$ ).

To get a more precise relationship between time spent on homework (variable 4) and pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), variable 4 was examined in the context of related socio-cultural variables such as parents' level of education (variable 2), and assistance given with homework (variable 3). When the effects of variables 2 and 3 are controlled or partialled out, there is a negative relationship in the middle class sub-sample ( $r_{14.23} = -0,05$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and positive relationships in the lower working class sub-sample ( $r_{14.23} = 0,32$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ), and in the entire sample of 150 ( $r_{14.23} = 0,23$ ;  $p < 0,02$ ). Though the values of these partial rs are lower than the

gross rs which were established earlier, nevertheless they confirm the findings of the gross rs.

An analysis of variance shows that time spent on homework accounts for a significant variation of general educational performance in the case of pupils in the entire sample of 150, and for lower working class pupils, but not for middle class pupils. Table 8.23 indicates the extent to which this variable, within the context of multiple relationships of variables 2 and 3, accounts for variation in general educational performance.

TABLE 8.23

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT ON HOMEWORK

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u>						
$R_{1.23} = 0,33$	0,1089	10,89	2			
( $R_{1.234} = 0,34$ )						
variable 4	0,0067	0,67	1	0,0067		
residual	0,8844	88,44	46	0,01922	0,35	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u>						
$R_{1.23} = 0,27$	0,0729	7,29	2			
( $R_{1.234} = 0,41$ )						
variable 4	0,0952	9,52	1	0,0952		
residual	0,8319	83,19	96	0,00866	10,99	$p < 0,01$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			

TABLE 8.23 (Continued)

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150</u>						
$R_{1.23} = 0,29$	0,0841	8,41	2			
( $R_{1.234} = 0,36$ )						
variable 4	0,0455	4,55	1	0,0455	7,63	p<0,01
residual	0,8704	87,04	146	0,00596		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

Table 8.23 reveals that in the middle class sub-sample, variable 4 accounts for 0,67 per cent of variation in school performance ( $F = 0,35$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); in the lower working class group it accounts for 9,52 per cent of variation ( $F = 10,99$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ); and in the entire sample there is a variation of 4,55 per cent ( $F = 7,63$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ).

#### 8.1.6 General Assessment of Cultural and Educational Experiences in the Home

Since several variables were used to get an estimate of the cultural and educational experiences in the home, it is necessary to arrive at some general assessment of the climate of the homes of both social classes. This was done by assessing each social class in simple quantitative terms into *favourable* and *unfavourable* home environments in terms of each of the sixteen variables which were used to study the cultural and educational climate. The rating scale which was used is similar to that of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 91-93).



In the case of each variable, the social class which was found to show significantly more favourable characteristics scored two points. The group which showed unfavourable characteristics scored no points. Where there were no significant social class differences, each of the groups was awarded one point.

TABLE 8.24

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE HOMES OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

VARIABLE	M.C.	L.W.C.
1. Parents' level of education	2	0
2. Patterns of newspaper reading	2	0
3. Types of magazines read	2	0
4. Parents' membership of libraries	2	0
5. Frequency with which parents borrow books	2	0
6. Frequency with which children borrow books	2	0
7. Frequency with which parents visit schools	1	1
8. Parents' contact with class teachers	1	1
9. Parents' reasons for visiting schools	2	0
10. Parents' awareness of school subjects	2	0
11. Parents' awareness of children's progress in subjects	2	0
12. Possession of radios	2	0
13. Children's favourite radio programmes	1	1
14. Possession of television	2	0
15. Children's favourite television programmes	1	1
16. Time spent on homework	1	1
TOTAL	27	5

The distribution of scores in table 8.24 shows that the middle class homes scored 27 out of a possible 32 points (84,38 per cent); whereas the lower working class homes scored a meagre 5 points (15,63 per cent). On the rating of these sixteen variables, it is clear that the middle class homes have highly favourable cultural and educational climates compared with the less favourable climates in the lower working class homes. The difference in scores between the two groups is so great that the general cultural and educational disadvantage suffered by the lower working class group can be clearly seen. Some of the crucial variables which highlight this disadvantage are those which are closely related to parental interest in education. These include parents' levels of education, reading experiences in the home, parents' reasons for visiting school, their awareness of school subjects, and their awareness of the children's progress in these subjects. From this, we may conclude that the general cultural and educational disadvantage of lower working class homes must be partly responsible for the lower rate of success of the lower working class pupils.

## 8.2 EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF PARENTS

We now turn our attention to the interest which parents display in their children's education by motivating them and encouraging them to succeed in school. In considering some aspects of parental attitudes which seem likely to support or to hinder children's educational progress, the attention is once again focussed both on formal and informal aspects of education.

In the present study, firstly, there is an attempt to examine the extent to which parents spend time with their children and stimulate and widen their general knowledge by discussing radio and television

programmes which they have watched together. This provides a good opportunity to see the practical implications of *symbolic interactionism* by studying the social relationships and interactions between parents and children; and by examining social phenomena which parents and children experience together. Then there is an attempt to study whether parents buy books for their children, and whether the children are assisted with their homework. The parents' aspirations for their children's educational and occupational careers were judged by studying the stage at which they wanted their children to leave school, and the jobs which they wanted their children to take. When these variables are related to each other, they give some indication of how parental goals and aspirations can influence children's school performance, their attitudes towards education and their motivation to excel.

#### 8.2.1 Parent-child Contact and Interaction through Radio and Television

Listening to the radio or watching television can provide good opportunities for parents and children to discuss general educational and cultural experiences which they are exposed to. Parents who are knowledgeable can help children to benefit greatly by clarifying doubts and misconceptions which may arise out of the programmes. Thus, frequent listening or viewing, followed by discussion is likely to stimulate children's general educational development. This also indicates the amount of contact which exists and interaction which takes place between parents and children; and the encouragement and motivation which parents offer to their children.

The amount of time which parents and children spend listening to the radio together was analysed in respect of children who are actually involved in some listening. The figures used in the statistical calculation of this variable are the same as those in table 8.18

which reflect the children's favourite radio programmes. Categories 0 and 1 of table 8.25 indicate very little time listening together, while category 2 indicates frequent listening. This table is therefore indicative of the amount of social contact which exists between parents and children in respect of listening to the radio. The majority of parents and children in both social classes have hardly any contact with each other. This includes 68 per cent of the middle class and 78 per cent of the lower working class. The difference in the number of such parents between the two groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,73$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). There is no social class difference in the amount of time which parents and children spend listening to the radio together. Because of this limited parent-child contact there is unlikely to be much opportunity for discussion and explanations of programmes which children listen to.

TABLE 8.25

HOW OFTEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN LISTEN TO THE RADIO TOGETHER

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0. Never	11	29	37	58	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 $\chi^2 = 0,73$ df = 1	p > 0,05
1. Seldom (less than once a week)	15	39	13	20		
2. Often (at least once a week)	12	32	14	22		
TOTAL	38	100	64	100		

Very few parents in both social classes indicated that the whole family listens to the radio at the same time. In fact, many of them, especially the lower working class parents said that they are far too tired at the end of a day's hard work to have any time to listen to the radio.

TABLE 8.26

PARENTS' DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN ABOUT RADIO PROGRAMMES

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Discuss	17	45	19	30	$\chi^2 = 1,75$ df = 1	p>0,05
2. Do not discuss	21	55	45	70		
TOTAL	38	100	64	100		

Table 8.26 indicates that the majority of parents in both social classes do not discuss radio programmes with their children. This includes 55 per cent middle class and 70 per cent lower working class parents. The difference in the number of such parents between the two groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,75$ ; p>0,05). There is no social class difference in the number of parents who motivate or encourage their children through discussing radio programmes. From this we may conclude that parents in both social classes offer little encouragement or motivation to children to widen their general educational experience through the use of radio.

From some of the comments made by parents, it seems that discussion of programmes takes place more frequently between brothers and sisters

than between children and parents. One such typical comment was "she asks her elder sister who is in high school. She can explain better than I can."

TABLE 8.27

## HOW OFTEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN WATCH TELEVISION TOGETHER

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0. Never	21	49	50	66	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2 $\chi^2 = 1,15$ df = 1	p>0,05
1. Seldom (less than once a week)	9	21	11	14		
2. Often (at least once a week)	13	30	15	20		
TOTAL	43	100	76	100		

This variable was analysed only in respect of children who are involved in at least some amount of viewing. The figures used in the statistical calculation of this variable are the same as those in table 8.21 which reflects the children's favourite television programmes. Categories 0 and 1 of table 8.27 indicate very little time viewing together, while category 2 indicates frequent viewing. The majority of parents in both social classes hardly watch television with their children. This includes 70 per cent of middle class parents and 80 per cent of lower working class parents. The difference in the number of such parents between the two groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,15$ ; p>0,05). There is no social class difference in the

amount of time which parents and children spend watching television together.

TABLE 8.28

PARENTS' DISCUSSIONS WITH CHILDREN ABOUT TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Discuss	14	33	6	8	$\chi^2 = 10,25$ df = 1	p<0,01
2. Do not discuss	29	67	70	92		
TOTAL	43	100	76	100		

Table 8.28 indicates that the majority of parents in both social classes do not discuss television programmes with their children. This includes 67 per cent of middle class parents and 92 per cent of lower working class parents. The difference in the number of such parents between the two groups is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 10,25$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ). Of the limited number of parents who discuss television programmes with their children, it is mainly the middle class parents who do so. Broadly speaking, it would seem that it is television rather than radio which provides more opportunity for discussion between middle class parents and their children.

However, several parents in both social classes indicated that their children discuss programmes with each other rather than with their parents. The younger children discuss with their older brothers and sisters

who are in the higher standards. In many cases, parents of both social classes also said that their children usually relate what they have seen, rather than question the parents about the details of the programmes. One such lower working class parent said of her child: *"She seems to understand better than me. She tells me the stories."* There were yet other parents who felt that their children were quite capable of understanding the programmes on their own, and therefore there was no need for any discussion. A typical comment of one such parent was: *"He is intelligent so he understands everything himself. He doesn't have to ask."*

#### 8.2.2 Books Bought by Parents for their Children

When questioning the parents about books which they bought for their children, the researcher was careful to point out that this did not refer to stationery or to books which were provided by the school, or books which the school requested parents to buy. The object of seeking this information was to try to find out to what extent parents encourage their children to read books of general interest and consult reference works. Parents who do this are more likely to inculcate in their children a love for learning, and positive attitudes towards education.

Table 8.29 (see page 285) reveals that comparatively few parents buy books for their children. This includes 38 per cent of middle class parents and 18 per cent of lower working class parents. The difference in the number of such parents between the two social classes is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 6,14$ ;  $p < 0,02$ ). From this we can infer that more middle class parents buy their children books which are likely to broaden their general knowledge, and encourage them to develop independent study habits.



TABLE 8.29

## BOOKS BOUGHT BY PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNI- FICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Parent buys books	19	38	18	18	$\chi^2 = 6,14$ df = 1	p<0,02
2. Parent doesn't buy books	31	62	82	82		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Evidence of this was visible during the home visits when some middle class parents proudly showed the researcher books which they had bought for their children. These included annuals for boys and girls, books on nature, science, history, travel, encyclopaedias, and children's classics such as *Robinson Crusoe*, *David Copperfield* and *White Fang*. Two middle class families said that they had spent about three hundred rands on a series called *Systems for Education*.

### 8.2.3 Assistance Given with Homework

It should be noted that whether parents buy books or not, and parents' levels of education are not in themselves causal variables of variation in pupils' school performance. One of the ways in which the effects of these variables may be judged is to study the assistance which children get with their homework. This gives some indication of the encouragement and motivation which children receive from parents and others in the home.

TABLE 8.30

## CHILDREN'S SOURCE OF HELP WITH HOMEWORK

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0. Nobody	3	6	15	15	Bet. 0; and 1 to 3 combined. $\chi^2 = 1,78$ df = 1	p>0,05
1. Parents	24	48	24	24		
2. Brothers and sisters	20	40	50	50		
3. Others	3	6	11	11		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Table 8.30 indicates that the majority of pupils in both social classes receive help from someone. This includes 94 per cent of middle class and 85 per cent of lower working class pupils. The difference in the number of such pupils between the two groups is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,78$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). A similar number of children in both social classes have at least some source of help. However, a striking feature of this table is that whereas 48 per cent of middle class children are helped by their parents, only 24 per cent of lower working class children fall into this category. This is probably due to the significantly higher educational levels of middle class parents (see table 8.3). Another striking feature is that 40 per cent of the middle class and 50 per cent of lower working class pupils are assisted by brothers and sisters who are in the higher standards, or who have already left school. We notice that once again, as in the case of discussion of radio and television programmes, older children are important sources of educational stimulation to younger

children. This may be due to the fact that the older children have higher levels of education than their parents, and have more time at their disposal to assist their younger brothers and sisters. Of course, it is also possible that contact between younger children and older children rather than between younger children and their parents is part of the fundamental value system of the Indian family structure. We cannot, however, reach any definite conclusion on this without conducting an *interpretative* type of study into Indian family life.

Generally, the finding of the present study is similar to that of Cullen (1969 : 107) who also found that a number of children in her study were helped by siblings.

Most parents indicated that they help their children mainly in mathematics and English. Several also said that they read through their children's notes on environmental studies and question them on this.

TABLE 8.31

TYPE OF HELP GIVEN WITH HOMEWORK

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
0. No help	3	6	15	15	Bet. 0 to 1 combined; and 2. $\chi^2 = 3,27$ df = 1	p > 0,05
1. Help with little guidance	20	40	48	48		
2. Help with specific guidance	27	54	37	37		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Table 8.31 indicates the extent to which parents and others at home give definite help and specific guidance with homework, as opposed to indefinite, vague help with little or no guidance. Parents who named the subjects in which children were helped, and who were able to describe the exact nature of the type of help given were placed in category 2. Those parents who named only the subjects and were uncertain of the type of help given or gave vague answers were placed in category 1.

Table 8.31 indicates that the majority of middle class pupils (54 per cent) receive help with specific guidance; whereas only 37 per cent of lower working class children fall into this category. However, the difference in the number of such pupils between the two social classes is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 3,27; p > 0,05$ ). There is no social class difference in the type of help which children receive with their homework.

In the present study, there is a positive relationship between assistance given with homework and pupils' general educational performance in the entire sample of 150 ( $r_{pb} = 0,15; p > 0,05$ ), and in the lower working class group ( $r_{pb} = 0,21; p < 0,05$ ). In the middle class group there is a negative relationship ( $r_{pb} = -0,17; p > 0,05$ ). However, no importance could be attached to these findings except in the case of the lower working class group.

To obtain a more precise relationship between assistance given with homework (variable 3), and pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), it was decided to relate variable 3 to parents' level of education (variable 2). When the effects of variable 2 are controlled or partialled out, there is a positive relationship in the entire sample of 150 ( $r_{13.2} = 0,11; p > 0,05$ ), and in the lower

group there is a negative relationship ( $r_{13.2} = -0,25$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).  
As in the case of the gross relationships established earlier, not much importance could be attached to these findings.

An analysis of variance shows that assistance given with homework does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance.

TABLE 8.32

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO  
ASSISTANCE GIVEN WITH HOMEWORK

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u> $r_{12} = 0,23$ $(R_{1.23} = 0,33)$ variable 3 residual	0,0529 0,0560 0,8911	5,29 5,60 89,11	1 1 47	0,056 0,01895	2,96	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u> $r_{12} = 0,20$ $(R_{1.23} = 0,27)$ variable 3 residual	0,0400 0,0329 0,9271	4 3,29 92,71	1 1 97	0,0329 0,00955	3,44	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			

TABLE 8.32 (Continued)

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE</u> <u>OF 150</u>						
$r_{12} = 0,27$	0,0729	7,29	1			
( $R_{1,23} = 0,29$ )						
variable 3	0,0112	1,12	1	0,0112		
residual	0,9159	91,59	147	0,00623	1,80	$p > 0,05$
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

Table 8.32 indicates that the inclusion of variable 3 in this combined relationship accounts for 5,6 per cent of variation in the middle class sub-sample ( $F = 2,96$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); 3,29 per cent of variation in the lower working class group ( $F = 3,44$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and 1,12 per cent of variation in the entire group of 150 ( $F = 1,80$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

Some oversea studies, such as that of the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 109) have shown that assistance given with homework becomes less significant from the higher levels of the primary school onwards. Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 112-113) relate this tendency to the difficulties which parents have in coping with methods of teaching which become more complicated at the higher levels of schooling. They mention in particular the difficulties which parents have in assisting their children in subjects such as mathematics and foreign languages.

### 8.2.4 Parents' Educational Aspirations for Their Children

Parents were asked to indicate the stage at which they would prefer their children to leave school. Those who were undecided were omitted in the calculations. This was done because parents who refused to commit themselves could not be classified as having low or high aspirations. This included 6 per cent of middle class and 12 per cent lower working class parents.

TABLE 8.33

PARENTS' PREFERENCES OF STAGES OF EDUCATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Primary	0	0	5	6	Bet. 1 to 3 combined; and 4 $\chi^2 = 7,84$ df = 1	p<0,01
2. Junior Secondary	4	8	4	4		
3. Senior Secondary	15	32	50	57		
4. Beyond Secondary	28	60	29	33		
TOTAL	47	100	88	100		

Parents classified into category 4, who wanted their children to proceed beyond secondary school or beyond the age of 18 years were considered to have higher aspirations than those who preferred their children to get merely secondary education. Cullen (1969); and Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956) also used this criterion of differentiating between parents of higher and lower educational aspirations.

Table 8.33 indicates that 60 per cent of middle class parents prefer their children to proceed beyond secondary school, compared with 33 per cent of lower working class parents. The difference in the number of such parents between the two groups is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 7,84; p < 0,01$ ). There is a larger number of middle class parents than lower working class parents who have higher aspirations for their children's educational future. However, it is necessary to ask whether the parents' preferences reflect their actual attitudes towards education; or whether they are affected by other considerations such as economic pressures. It is quite possible that many lower working class parents appear to have lower educational aspirations when they are in fact merely responding to pressures imposed by their limited economic resources.

Table 8.33 indicates that the majority (57 per cent) of lower working class parents wanted their children to proceed at least up to matriculation level of the senior secondary school. However, it is possible that owing to their insecure economic position, many of these parents were reluctant to commit themselves openly by stating a preference for education beyond secondary school. This attitude is reflected in the following comments of two parents.

Parent A: *"I got no wealth to give my children. If they do well in school, I am prepared to sacrifice all that I have for them. This is the wealth I can give them!"*

Parent B: *"He is my eldest child. We like him to go up to standard eight. At least there will be someone to help at home."*



Parent C who said, *"my daughter left in standard five, and another left in standard six; but I like this child to continue to get a better education,"* was typical of several lower working class parents who were eager to achieve educational and social mobility.

By contrast, middle class parents were more certain in their preferences. Many of them said quite frankly that education is a continuous process and there should be no limits. One such parent remarked, *"age is no criterion. My child can proceed as far as she wants to. There is no limit to education. I promised her that she will get all the support from me."*

The social class difference in the educational aspirations of parents established in the present study is similar to the findings of several oversea studies. For example, the *Plowden Committee's* survey on parental attitudes found that hardly any non-manual occupation parents wanted their children to leave school as soon as possible; whereas many unskilled parents definitely wanted their children to leave at the minimum age (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 2, 110).

Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 53) also found that middle class parents had higher aspirations than working class parents. Parents who were mainly middle class, with sons at grammar schools had higher aspirations than those who had sons at comprehensive schools, and who were mainly working class. The difference between the number of such parents was significant.

Cullen (1969 : 109-111) found a great disparity between the educational aspirations of parents of educationally advanced and educationally

retarded children. Almost half of the parents in the latter group wanted nothing higher than primary education for their children, compared with the majority of parents in the former group, who wanted their children to proceed beyond secondary school.

Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956 : 75-76) also found a significant social class difference in the aspirations of parents related to school leaving age. A significantly higher number of parents in the middle class area of S.W. Hertfordshire favoured a leaving age of 17 or 18, compared with those in the working class area of Middlesborough.

#### 8.2.5 Parents' Job Aspirations for Their Children

When parents were asked what types of jobs they preferred for their children, a large number refused to commit themselves. Nineteen (38 per cent) middle class parents and 55 (55 per cent) lower working class parents were undecided, vague, or refused to commit themselves. Because of the difficulty of classifying their responses as high or low aspirations, they were omitted in the statistical calculations of this variable. Many of these parents did, however, state that they preferred their children to decide for themselves, but that they would encourage them to pursue the occupations of their choice.

Category 1 of table 8.34 (see page 295) refers to unskilled, and semi-skilled jobs, while category 2 refers to skilled-manual jobs, clerical, semi-professional and professional jobs which require at least a secondary level of education. This table reveals that the majority of parents in both social classes have high job aspirations. Ninety seven per cent of middle class and 96 per cent of lower working class parents fell into this category. The difference in the number of such parents between the two social classes is

statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0,11$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). There is no social class difference in the job aspirations which parents have for their children.

TABLE 8.34

PARENTS' JOB ASPIRATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN

CATEGORY	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. Low job aspirations	1	3	2	4	$\chi^2 = 0,11$ df = 1	p > 0,05
2. High job aspirations	30	97	43	96		
TOTAL	31	100	45	100		

The high level of job aspirations of the parents seems to be inconsistent with the social class difference in their educational aspirations, established earlier. A possible explanation for this discrepancy is that many of the lower working class parents who prefer high status jobs for their children are not fully aware of the educational requirements for these jobs. Thus, their job preferences are inconsistent with their educational preferences for their children. Nevertheless, this finding indicates that the majority of the parents are aware of the importance of social and occupational mobility.

The remarks of one of the lower working class mothers is typical of this awareness for mobility. She is a paper cutter in a nearby mill. She said, "I would be pleased if my daughter becomes a teacher. My mum stopped me from school, but I would like to see my daughter become a teacher. I'm just working for my children. Look at the bruises

*hard job, but I work just for my children."*

Many middle class parents expressed the wish that their children would become doctors, while several lower working class parents wished their children to be doctors, nurses and teachers. These were the most popular jobs mentioned.

The finding of the present study differs greatly from most overseas studies which reveal distinct social class differences in the job aspirations of parents for their children. For example, Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 100) found that larger numbers of upper middle class parents rather than lower working class parents hoped that their sons would enter professions such as accountancy and teaching. Cullen (1969 : 120-123) also found that career aspirations were higher for parents of educationally advanced children than for parents of educationally retarded children. Pallister and Wilson (1970 : 59-60), in a small-scale research of 33 middle class and 44 working class mothers, found that middle class parents tended to be ambitious beyond their children's intellectual capacity; while working class parents tended to be under-ambitious and to underestimate their children's intellectual ability. Upper middle class parents showed a preference for professions which carried the highest social status; while more parents in the lower social classes preferred lower status jobs.

The fact that there is no social class difference in job aspirations of parents in the present study may be attributed to the great value which the Indian community in South Africa has always placed on education and occupational mobility. The discussion in chapters two

and three on the efforts made by the Indian community in achieving mobility by uplifting themselves through providing their own schools long before state assistance became available is ample evidence of the high esteem with which they held education. Much of this voluntary effort was made by parents who themselves had very limited or no western education, but who had great faith in education as a means of overcoming social, economic and political barriers. It seems as if this faith in educational and occupational mobility still persists as a fundamental value in the culture of the present generation of Indians.

#### 8.2.6 General Assessment of Educational Motivations and Aspirations of Parents

The procedure used in the assessment of this dimension of home background is the same as that which was used to assess the general cultural and educational experiences in the home (see section 8.1.6).

TABLE 8.35

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PARENTS

VARIABLE	M.C.	L.W.C.
1. How often parents and children listen to radio together	1	1
2. Discussion of radio programmes	1	1
3. How often parents and children watch TV together	1	1
4. Discussion of television programmes	2	0
5. Books bought by parents for children	2	0
6. Source of help with homework	1	1
7. Type of help given with homework	1	1
8. Educational aspirations of parents	2	0
9. Job aspirations of parents	1	1

The distribution of scores in table 8.35 shows that the middle class homes scored 12 out of a possible 18 points (66,6 per cent); whereas the lower working class scored 6 (33 per cent). Though the middle class homes are rated more highly on motivations and aspirations, the social class difference is not as great as in the case of the general cultural and educational experiences in the home. Six of the nine variables which were used to indicate motivations and aspirations revealed no significant social class differences.

### 8.3 FAMILY SIZE

The discussion in section 5.5 of chapter five emphasised the fact that children from small families at all social levels tend, on the average, to perform better in intelligence tests and at school. Nisbet (1953 : 273-287), and Douglas (1964 : 114-117) in particular, pointed out that the presence of a large number of siblings has an adverse effect on children's educational attainment. Low intelligence is also generally associated with large families.

Nisbet's study has the subtle implication that the child of a large family is at a disadvantage in learning the necessary verbal skills from adults, which is crucial for success in intelligence tests and school performance. This is so because he associates more with his peers and learns less effectively from them, than a child from a small family who is more frequently in the company of his parents. Nisbet argued that the symbolic system underlying language and words is a great advantage in increasing the ability to think abstractly. Therefore, limitations of opportunities for verbal development, such as is evident in a large family, is likely to depress school performance. Douglas's study has shown that this disadvantage is reflected in the

school performance of manual working class children up to the age of eleven.

### 8.3.1 Number of Children in The Family

TABLE 8.36

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEAN NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF MIDDLE CLASS  
AND LOWER WORKING CLASS FAMILIES

SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS	z	SIGNI- FICANCE
M.C.	50	4,72	1,70	0,24	0,01	0,32	p>0,05
L.W.C.	100	4,82	2	0,20			

Table 8.36 indicates that in the present study the average number of children in both social classes is approximately five. In comparison with other studies, the families in the Merebank area may be regarded as large. Fraser (1959 : 53) found a mean of 3,87 children per family; Nisbet (1953 : 282), a mean of 3,18; Dale and Griffith (1965 : 70) found a mean of 3,9 among underachievers and a mean of 2,1 among successful pupils. They also reported that a family which has four or more children is usually associated with deterioration in academic performance.

In the present study the difference in means of 0,01 between middle class and lower working class pupils is so negligible that it is statistically not significant ( $z = 0,32$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). From this we can conclude that the families of both social classes are relatively homogeneous in respect of family size.

There is an inverse relationship between the number of children in the family and pupils' general educational performance. In the entire sample of 150  $r = -0,20$  ( $p < 0,05$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r = -0,25$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r = -0,17$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). Except for the entire sample, not much importance could be attached to these findings.

In order to obtain a more precise relationship between the number of children in the family (variable 6) and pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), the effects of variables 2, 3, 4, and 5 were controlled or partialled out. There are negative relationships in the entire sample of 150 ( $r_{16.2345} = -0,07$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ), and in the lower working class sub-sample ( $r_{16.2345} = -0,05$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). But in the middle class sub-sample there is a positive relationship ( $r_{16.2345} = 0,11$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). As in the case of the gross relationships established earlier, these findings are not really significant.

The findings of the present study are similar to those of Chazan et.al. (1971 : 88), and Banks and Finlayson (1973 : 104) who also found no significant social class difference in family size. The latter study in particular found no relationship between family size and school achievement of boys in grammar schools because of the relative homogeneity of their family size. They concluded that working class pupils in grammar schools were therefore not at a disadvantage with respect to family size.

However, the studies of Fraser (1959 : 53); Douglas, Ross and Simpson (1968 : 34); and Dale and Griffiths (1965 : 77-78) found significant social class differences in family size, and a more definite relationship between family size and school performance.



Douglas, Ross and Simpson found that children who had many brothers and sisters scored lower in tests than those who had few. They also found that at the completion of primary school children from small families gained more places at grammar school than those from large families. Dale and Griffith compared children who deteriorated in their school performance with those who improved. They found that a greater number of those who deteriorated came from families which had four or more children, while very few improvers came from families of a similar size.

In the present study, an analysis of variance shows that the size of family as determined by the number of children does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. Table 8.37 indicates the extent to which this variable accounts for variation in general educational performance within the context of multiple relationships of variables 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Table 8.37 (see page 302) indicates that the inclusion of variable 6 in this combined relationship of socio-cultural variables does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. In the middle class sub-sample it accounts for 0,73 per cent of variation ( $F = 0,37$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); in the lower working class group there is no variation at all; and in the entire sample of 150 there is a variation of 0,73 per cent ( $F = 1,22$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ).

TABLE 8.37

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO  
SIZE OF FAMILY

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u>						
$R_{1.2345} = 0,36$	0,1296	12,96	4			
( $R_{1.23456} = 0,37$ )						
variable 6	0,0073	0,73	1	0,0073	0,37	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,8631	86,31	44	0,01961		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u>						
$R_{1.2345} = 0,42$	0,1764	17,64	4			
( $R_{1.23456} = 0,42$ )						
variable 6	0	0	1	0	0	
residual	0,8236	82,36	94	0,00876		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150</u>						
$R_{1.2345} = 0,36$	0,1296	12,96	4			
( $R_{1.23456} = 0,37$ )						
variable 6	0,0073	0,73	1	0,0073	1,22	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,8631	86,31	144	0,00599		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

### 8.3.2 Ordinal Position of Children in The Family

The studies of Douglas (1964), Chazan et.al. (1971) and Cullen (1969) have pointed out that the experiences of children are influenced to a considerable extent by their ordinal positions in the family; for example, as an only child, eldest or youngest. An only child, first born and second born children are said to be greatly influenced by their parents from their earliest years. These social and intellectual experiences are generally restricted in the case of children who are born later. Those who are born later, and who occupy lower ordinal positions in large families spend more time in the company of each other than in the company of parents. Thus, the size of the family and the ordinal positions which children occupy within it are important determinants of the influence which parents exercise over their children.

TABLE 8.38

ORDINAL POSITIONS OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS CHILDREN

POSITION	M.C.		L.W.C.		$\chi^2$	SIGNIFICANCE
	N	%	N	%		
1. First	7	14	16	16	$\chi^2 = 1,03$ df = 1	p>0,05
2. Second	15	30	18	18		
3. Third	10	20	22	22		
4. Fourth	8	16	19	19		
5. Fifth	3	6	7	7		
6. Sixth and above	7	14	18	18		
TOTAL	50	100	100	100		

Categories 1 and 2 of table 8.38 reflect the number of children who are first or second born and who are likely to receive much more stimulation from their parents than those in categories 3 to 6, who occupy lower ordinal positions. Forty four per cent of middle class children, as opposed to 34 per cent of lower working class children are either first or second born. The difference in the number of such children between the two social classes is statistically not significant ( $\chi^2 = 1,03$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ). A similar number of middle class and lower working class children occupy higher ordinal positions in the family. A striking feature of this table is that 20 per cent of middle class and 25 per cent of lower working class children occupy positions of fifth, sixth and above sixth. They come from large families.

There is an inverse relationship between ordinal position of children and pupils' general educational performance. In the entire sample of 150  $r = -0,23$  ( $p < 0,02$ ); in the middle class sub-sample  $r = -0,21$  ( $p > 0,05$ ), and in the lower working class sub-sample  $r = -0,22$  ( $p < 0,05$ ). Except in the case of the middle class group, where the finding is not significant, we may conclude that the higher ordinal positions (i.e. first, second) are associated with superior educational performance.

In order to obtain a more precise relationship between the ordinal position of children in the family (variable 7) and the pupils' general educational performance (variable 1), the effects of variables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were controlled or partialled out. As in the case of the gross relationship established earlier, there is an inverse relationship between these two variables. In the entire sample of

150  $r_{17.23456} = -0,05$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); in the lower working class sub-sample  $r_{17.23456} = -0,14$  ( $p > 0,05$ ); and in the middle class sub-sample  $r_{17.23456} = -0,24$  ( $p > 0,05$ ). However, unlike the gross relationships which were significant in the entire sample and in the lower working class sub-sample, the partial relationships indicate that no importance could be attached to the findings in both sub-samples, and in the entire sample.

The findings of the present study differ from those of Dale and Griffith (1965 : 78), and Cullen (1969 : 78). The former found that the majority of *improvers* in their study were the first born of a small family. Cullen also found that more educationally advanced children were first born.

In the present study, an analysis of variance shows that ordinal position of children (variable 7) does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. Table 8.39 (see page 306) indicates the extent to which this variable within the context of multiple relationships with variables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 accounts for variation in general educational performance.

Table 8.39 indicates that the inclusion of variable 7 in this combined relationship of related socio-cultural variables does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance. In the middle class sub-sample it accounts for 5,67 per cent of variation ( $F = 3,02$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); in the lower working class group it accounts for 1,72 per cent of variation ( $F = 1,98$ ;  $p > 0,05$ ); and in the entire sample of 150 there is no variation at all.

TABLE 8.39

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE DUE TO  
ORDINAL POSITION OF CHILDREN

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F	SIGNIFICANCE
(A) <u>M.C.</u> $R_{1.23456} = 0,37$ ( $R_{1.234567} = 0,44$ )	0,1369	13,69	5			
variable 7	0,0567	5,67	1	0,0567	3,02	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,8064	80,64	43	0,01875		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	49			
(B) <u>L.W.C.</u> $R_{1.23456} = 0,42$ ( $R_{1.234567} = 0,44$ )	0,1764	17,64	5			
variable 7	0,0172	1,72	1	0,0172	1,98	$p > 0,05$
residual	0,8064	80,64	93	0,00867		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	99			
(C) <u>ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150</u> $R_{1.23456} = 0,37$ ( $R_{1.234567} = 0,37$ )	0,1369	13,69	5			
variable 7	0	0	1	0	0	
residual	0,8631	86,31	143	0,00603		
TOTAL	1,0000	100	149			

Generally, it may be said that family size as estimated by the number of children and ordinal positions, is a relatively unimportant dimension of home background in the present study.

#### 8.4 MULTIPLE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELECTED HOME BACKGROUND VARIABLES

The discussion of the results has thus far been concerned with certain individual features in each of the four main dimensions of home background. A number of variables were taken singly, and in isolation, and were correlated with pupils' general educational performance (the criterion). It now remains to consider these various features of home background, not in isolation but together, in order to determine the extent to which each of the four main dimensions contributes to the increased relation with pupils' educational performance. After having studied a variety of home background variables in isolation, Fraser (1959 : 71), Miller (1971 : 100), and Goodacre (1968 : 161) also used this approach in order to arrive at a composite assessment of home background.

In the present study, the following eight variables were correlated individually with pupils' general educational performance: parents' level of education; assistance given to children with homework; absence from school; time spent by children on homework; number of children in the family; general reading experiences in the home; material comforts of the home; and ordinal position of children.

In the multiple correlation analysis the criterion, pupils' general educational performance (variable 1) was correlated with these eight variables which were arranged in the following order:

- variable 2: parents' level of education
- variable 3: assistance given to children with homework
- variable 4: time spent by children on homework
- variable 5: general reading experiences in the home

Variables 2, 4 and 5 are related to the general cultural and educational experiences of the home, while variable 3 is more specifically related to the educational motivation offered by parents and others in the home. However, since these two dimensions of home background overlap to a great extent, they were taken together to indicate the educational climate of the home and the degree of parental interest in children's education.

The remaining dimensions of home background, namely, family size and the material environment were also related to the cumulative effects of the variables mentioned above. The two variables associated with family size are:

- variable 6: number of children in the family
- variable 7: ordinal position of children

Variable 8, the material comforts of the home, was taken as the index of the material environment. The last variable to be included was absence from school (variable 9). This may be regarded as partly a home background variable and partly a school variable. When related to the home, this variable may be linked with parents' interest in education.

The multiple correlations in table 8.40 (see page 309) indicate that in the entire sample of 150, and in the lower working class group, the multiple relationships of these home background variables are significantly related to pupils' general educational performance (see Appendix E for formula of test of significance of R). Though



the combined relationship of the eight variables is the same in both social classes, nevertheless it is statistically not significant in the middle class group ( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,54; p > 0,05$ ). This table also reveals that though the size of the composite R is the same in both social class groups, there are differences of emphasis on the different variables which are included in this combined relationship. For example, variables 4, 5, and 6 account for greater increases in R in the lower working class group than in the middle class group. Similarly variables 2, 3, and 7 assume greater importance in the middle class group.

TABLE 8.40

MULTIPLE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN EIGHT HOME BACKGROUND VARIABLES  
AND PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

VARIABLES	M.C.	L.W.C.	ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150
$r_{12}$	0,23 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,20 ( $p < 0,05$ )	0,27 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.23}$	0,33 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,27 ( $p < 0,05$ )	0,29 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.234}$	0,34 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,41 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,36 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.2345}$	0,36 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,42 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,36 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.23456}$	0,37 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,42 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,37 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.234567}$	0,44 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,44 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,37 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.2345678}$	0,44 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,46 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,38 ( $p < 0,01$ )
$R_{1.23456789}$	0,54 ( $p > 0,05$ )	0,54 ( $p < 0,01$ )	0,48 ( $p < 0,01$ )

TABLE 8.41

VARIATION IN PUPILS' GENERAL EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTED  
FOR BY THE MAIN DIMENSIONS OF HOME BACKGROUND

VARIABLES	M.C.		L.W.C.		ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150	
	R	% VAR.	R	% VAR.	R	% VAR.
R <sub>1.2345</sub> =	0,36	12,96	0,42	17,64	0,36	12,96
R <sub>1.234567</sub> =	0,44	19,36	0,44	19,36	0,37	13,69
Variables 6 and 7		6,40		1,72		0,73
R <sub>1.2345678</sub> =	0,44	19,36	0,46	21,16	0,38	14,44
Variable 8		0		1,8		0,75
R <sub>1.23456789</sub> =	0,54	29,16	0,54	29,16	0,48	23,04
Variable 9		9,8		8,00		8,60
Residual		70,84		70,84		76,96

Table 8.41 reveals that the eight home background variables involved in this multiple correlation analysis account for 29,16 per cent of variation in pupils' general educational performance in each of the two social classes, and for 23,04 per cent in the entire sample. Though home background accounts for the same amount of variation in both social classes, this does not mean that it has a similar effect on middle class and lower working class pupils. The findings of this study indicate that the general educational performance of lower working class pupils is consistently lower than those of middle class pupils. While this is so, we are not very clear about the precise way in which these variables interrelate either to accelerate or to depress pupils' educational performance. Banks (1976 : 68) points

out that this is one of the greatest obstacles which studies on social class background and educational achievement have been faced with.

But in the present study, we do have some indication of the significance of the main dimensions of home background. Table 8.41 shows that the general cultural and educational experiences of the home, and the educational motivations of parents (variables 2, 3, 4 and 5) account for the greatest amount of variation in pupils' general educational performance. The composite table of analysis of variance in Appendix F8 indicates that this variation is statistically significant in the lower working class group and in the entire sample, but not in the middle class group. Absence from school (variable 9) which is partly related to parental interest and the general cultural level of the home also accounts for a significant amount of variation in both social classes. By contrast, family size (variables 6 and 7) and the material environment (variable 8) account for very little and an insignificant amount of variation.

These findings are consistent with those of most other studies undertaken in this field. The discussion in chapter seven (section 7.4.5) indicates that the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967); Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956); and Douglas (1964) also revealed that in the manual working classes similar socio-cultural variables are more important than the material environment or family size. We can therefore conclude that in the present study the negative effects of the cultural and educational level of the home, parents' interest and attitudes to education in the lower working class group have the most influence on the pupils' poorer school performance. Though the middle class homes are rated more favourably in these respects, the findings indicate that these variables

do not account for any significant variation in pupils' school performance.

#### 8.5 SUMMARY

The findings of this chapter may be summarised thus: The most obvious differences between middle class and lower working class homes are those associated with the general cultural and educational experiences, and with the educational motivations and aspirations of parents. The middle class homes are rated more favourably on both these dimensions. The qualitative differences in the life styles of the two groups are clearly evident in respect of: parents' general interest in education, parents' levels of education, reading experiences in the home, parents' reasons for visiting school, and their awareness of their children's progress in education. In all these respects, the lower working class pupils may be described as culturally and educationally disadvantaged.

This disadvantage is revealed in the lower educational levels of parents; in the paucity of reading material in the homes; the low level of reading habits; and the limited educational use of radio and television. However, in respect of reading experiences of the family the middle class children are also disadvantaged to a great extent, and middle class families are rated only slightly more favourably than lower working class families. Another striking feature is that the parents of both social classes have very limited contact with schools, and very few parents show any real awareness of their children's progress in school.

Though the middle class homes are rated more highly on educational motivations and aspirations of parents, the social class difference in this dimension of the home is not as great as that of general

cultural and educational experiences. The parents of both social classes offer little encouragement or educational motivation to their children. However, the most noticeable differences are in respect of books bought by parents for their children, and the educational aspirations of parents for their children.

Lastly, family size is a relatively unimportant dimension of the home and does not influence pupils' general educational performance to any significant degree. The multiple correlation analysis used in this study shows that the most important dimensions of the home are the general cultural and educational experiences, and the educational motivations of parents.

## CHAPTER NINE

### 9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The brief comments, conclusions and recommendations included here are not meant to provide a summary of all the findings of this study. They concern only those observations which seem to be educationally important. However, if one is to appreciate the weight of evidence on which these conclusions are based, it is necessary to refer to the discussions in the earlier chapters.

The observations and conclusions are summarised here in three major categories:

- (1) the nature and significance of the field of study;
- (2) theoretical approaches and research studies on social class, home background and education;
- (3) the empirical investigation.

The fourth section of this chapter deals with recommendations.

#### 9.1 NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

The American and British researches cited in this study stressed the importance of the close links which exist between the educational functions of the home and the school; and have also shown that social class and home environment have a considerable influence on pupils' academic achievement. Middle class children generally perform better than lower working class pupils; end up with better educational qualifications; and enjoy better employment and other opportunities in the wider society.

Social factors in the home have been shown to affect the educational achievement of children in very subtle ways. These subtleties are vitally linked with social class differences in school achievement. The nature of research into home-school relationships is so complex that most studies undertaken in this field have shown quite clearly that the patterns of learning at home become increasingly difficult to discern as the child grows older.

Despite the complex nature of this type of research, generally studies on social class and home background have focussed attention on the need for a broad educational policy which incorporates effective interaction between home and school, and the rest of society. Since the home and the school are recognised as two of the most important agencies of socialisation, research studies in this field have shown a particular interest in the process of socialisation by which certain fundamental roles and values are absorbed and internalised in both the home and the school.

#### 9.1.1 Relevance and Significance of The Present Study to Indian South Africans

This was made evident in the discussion on social stratification, home background and educational achievements of Indians in chapter two.

Since studies on social class and home background are relevant to class divided societies, this field of study is clearly applicable to the Indian community in which there are several social classes. The discussion in chapter two was intended to show that the emergence of economic and social class differences as distinct from caste differences can be traced through a study of the history of Indian settlement in South Africa.

Yet another argument for conducting this type of research is that since the social class composition of Indian schools reveals a very large working class sector, a study of social class and pupils' home background is essential to an understanding of the cultural relevance of the curriculum and the classroom skills demanded of these and other children. This will enable one to see the degree of continuity or discontinuity between the culture of the home and that of school.

An examination of the contemporary primary school curriculum in Indian schools (see chapter three) shows that though it is realistic to the extent that it aims at equipping pupils with the necessary academic and vocational skills for participation in the macro-South African society, this western orientated curriculum does not reflect significantly the salient values of basic Indian culture or the contemporary social class stratification of this community. It should be noted, however, that while the nature of the curriculum was examined in the general survey of primary education for Indians, it did not form a part of the empirical design of this study as this fell outside the scope of the present investigation.

The relevance of home background studies to Indian education could also be justified in terms of the insight which they afford into measures which could be adopted to strengthen the existing links between home and school. The discussion in chapter three pointed out clearly that though members of the Indian community have always taken a keen interest in their children's education, they are not involved in any meaningful home-school partnership such as that



which influences the decision making process.

Despite the need for this type of study in the Indian community, research in this field concerning Indians has been hitherto virtually non-existent. However, it may be said that there is a general lack of adequate research in this field in all sectors of the South African society.

#### 9.1.2 Aims and Limitations of this Study

The present study was therefore undertaken to establish basic research in this field. Briefly, its aims were:

- (a) To explore the literature on social class, home background and education .
- (b) To examine the main theoretical approaches to the study of social class, home background and education .
- (c) To investigate the social and cultural aspects of the home background of two contrasting social class groups of primary school pupils .
- (d) To compare the educational performances of these groups, and to discover which dimensions of home background are significantly related to school progress .
- (e) To gain some insight into the philosophy underlying home-school relationships.

One of the main limitations of this study was that while it attempted to see the relevance of social class and home background to the Indian community in general, it was confined to a single suburb of Durban. Nevertheless, the social class composition of this suburb,

Merebank, may be regarded as typical of the social class stratification of Indians in South Africa.

Another important limitation to bear in mind is that while this study refers to Indian primary education at a general level, its research population was confined to standard four pupils in six primary schools.

Yet, a further limitation was the omission of some variables which very recent studies in this field have concentrated on. For example, since this was to be basic research, and its scope limited by certain practical and theoretical considerations, variables such as those concerning social values - as is evident in the studies of Bernstein and Henderson (1974), Craft (1974), and Bourdieu and St. Martin (1974) - could not be used. All these factors must therefore be regarded as limitations on the generality of the findings of this study.

## 9.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES, AND RESEARCH STUDIES ON SOCIAL CLASS, HOME BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

### 9.2.1 Theoretical Approaches

Because of the lack of existing research into social class, home background and education in South Africa, the present study could hardly be based on any empirically validated theory which points to the direction of the *new* sociology which was discussed in chapter four. Instead, this study was based on an integrated theoretical approach consisting of both the *old* and the new derived mainly from

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New and unfamiliar terms in this chapter, unlike those in the previous chapters have been written in italics only when they were used for the first time. This was done to avoid the frequent use of italics.

the strengths and weakness of the various theories and models reviewed in chapter four. The theories of positivism, symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, and the *structural functional*, and *interactionist* models have been used collectively in the design of this survey and in the analysis of findings.

For example, the influence of scientific positivism which is basically a conservative sociological theory, and which is linked with the traditional structural functional model is evident in the social survey techniques employed in this study. However, while much of the empirical investigation was devoted to statistical analysis and straightforward descriptions of home background variables, the researcher was always mindful of the fact that these positivist techniques were used merely as the foundational structures for the deeper understanding of the social realities and class differences of pupils' home backgrounds.

Therefore, while the basic design of the present study was set within the positivist framework, particular care was taken not to transform the social processes of the home into an impersonal, concrete, scientific type of enquiry. For example, the objective of the detailed statistical analysis of a variety of variables used in this study was to focus attention on the intricate processes of social life such as roles and patterns of interactions between parents and children. These were later explored mainly through symbolic interactionist and social phenomenological approaches. For example, several home background variables were first analysed and then illustrated with actual observations made during the visits to the homes. While it was not possible to conduct this study through the social phenomenologically

approved methods of *participant* observation, or through case studies, every effort was made through the personal visits to the homes to grasp something of the reality of home conditions through the free recording of general observations.

Thus, the integrated approach of this study helped to analyse the real nature of the cultural climate of the home by utilising the best of the two opposing theoretical approaches. While positivism provided for the formulation of relevant categories of observation and precise statistical analysis of these, symbolic interactionism and social phenomenological interpretations gave this study a qualitative dimension.

In this respect, it is necessary to mention the very involved use in this study of multiple and partial correlation analyses, and analyses of variance which isolated and interrelated certain crucial home background variables, thereby indicating vital parent-child roles and networks underlying the quality of social experiences in the home. The use of these techniques was inevitable in the study of such intricate social processes. Without the use of these statistics, the issues which became apparent would undoubtedly have been concealed and would thus have resulted in a very superficial type of analysis of complex home background variables.

#### 9.2.2 Research Studies

Research studies covering a wide range were reviewed in chapter five. Though not all of these are directly related to the present study, in general they point to the shift in emphasis: from positivist, structural functional approaches in the earlier studies to *conflict*, interactionist approaches in the later studies. These earlier studies are generally classified as *normative*, while the later

studies, which pay greater attention to values, attitudes and beliefs implicit in the social and cultural circumstances of the home are regarded as *interpretative*.

One of the main criticisms levelled against normative studies is that they take a somewhat narrow view of education by limiting it to the part that it plays in maintaining the cohesion of the wider social order. By contrast, interpretative studies widened the focus from social class and educational opportunity to fundamental attitudes and values underlying the social life of the home. The value of these studies is in their interpretations of the complex nature of home background and education.

The design of the present investigation was influenced by both the normative as well as the interpretative paradigms. This is apparent in the investigation of social class differences ranging from obvious material comforts to the subtleties of parents' attitudes to education. These differences were then explored along the lines of the interpretative studies by examining the intricacies of the life styles of the two social classes. Attention was focussed on the quality of social and cultural experiences in the home.

To make explicit which processes should be observed in the home, and which concepts should be defined and made operational, the integrated framework of the design of this study incorporated the following main dimensions of home background: material environment; general cultural and educational experiences; educational motivations and aspirations of parents; family size.

### 9.3 THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

The social and cultural aspects of the home background of two contrasting social class groups of standard four pupils in six primary schools in the Merebank area were studied. Merebank was considered to be a suitable area because of its heterogeneous social class structure which is reflected in the social class composition of the schools serving the area.

The research population was stratified into middle, upper working, and lower working classes. Eventually the upper or skilled working class was omitted from this study because it did not fit in with the research design. Since the middle class constituted approximately one third of the population, and the lower working class approximately two thirds, the sub-samples used in this study were randomly stratified according to the same proportions so that they would be nearly as possible representative of the social class structure of the area.

Information about pupils' home backgrounds was obtained through personal visits to the homes by the researcher himself. This provided the basis for the integrated approach used in this study. Personal visits made it possible to employ the interactionist and social phenomenological approaches by combining perceptive observations with the positivist techniques of collecting data.

#### 9.3.1 Educational Performance of Pupils, and Other Related Variables

The pupils' cumulative performance was considered in the four main subject areas of the curriculum: English, Afrikaans, general mathematics, and environmental studies. It was found that the middle class pupils perform consistently better in their studies generally than lower working class pupils, and also consistently better in each of the four subject areas. This general educational performance is the

criterion with which various social and cultural factors have been compared in this study.

Of particular interest is the fact that, though English is the home language of the majority of pupils in both social classes, nevertheless the lower working class pupils do not perform as well as their middle class counterparts in English at school. Since proficiency in language is crucial to success in all areas of the curriculum, it is possible that this accounts for the lower general standard of educational performance of the lower working class group.

Despite this difference in the educational attainment between the two groups, the children of both social classes attend school regularly. Both groups have also experienced similar rates of failure and success in the previous standards and classes. If this finding is combined with that of absenteeism, we can conclude that both social classes were exposed to the curriculum and the general culture of the school for similar periods of time between class one and standard four. Though absence from school accounts for a significant amount of variation in school performance in this study, neither group could be regarded as being disadvantaged in the sense of having attended school less frequently.

The schools which the pupils attend do not differ greatly in their average general educational attainments. Thus, neither the middle class nor the lower working class pupils are disadvantaged in any way by attending any particular school in the area. There is very little variation in attainment between the six schools in the Merebank area.



### 9.3.2 The Material Environment of The Home

This dimension of the home does not account for any significant variation in pupils' general educational performance in both social classes. In this study, the influence of the material environment on school performance has been almost negligible.

However, a detailed study of the material environment shows that though the majority of pupils of both groups live mainly in the poorer quality sub-economic homes, the middle class pupils enjoy better material comforts. It was also found that despite the generally poor facilities for homework in both groups, the middle class pupils are nevertheless better off in this respect.

This study also shows that irrespective of social class, the Merebank homes appear to be generally lacking in space and are consequently overcrowded. Nevertheless, the middle class is once again at an advantage, having more living space than the lower working class, whose homes are particularly overcrowded when sleeping arrangements are taken into account.

In general we can conclude that the middle class pupils are reared in a more comfortable environment. From this one would expect the lower educational performance of the lower working class pupils to be attributed to an environment that is materially poorer. However, there is no evidence in this study to indicate that this is so. The real effects of the material environment must not be seen in isolation, but in terms of its influence on the socialisation experiences of children. Therefore, the remaining dimensions of home background have emphasised the influence of the material environment on the values and attitudes to education which predominate in social and cultural environments in which children grow up.



This stresses the significance of the close relationship which exists between the material environment and the whole way of life of the family.

### 9.3.3 General Cultural and Educational Experiences in the Home

An assessment of life style as reflected in the cultural and educational climate of the home indicates that the middle class homes are rated more favourably in this respect. This disparity between the two groups reveals the educational disadvantage suffered by the lower working class pupils. The most significant areas of social class difference are those which are related to parental interest in education. Brief reference will be made to some of the more important findings. This dimension of the home accounts for a significant amount of variation in the school performance of lower working class pupils, but not in the case of middle class pupils.

The more stimulating climate of the middle class homes is reflected in the higher educational levels of middle class parents. This affects the quality of social interaction between such parents and their children. Middle class fathers in particular have superior educational qualifications, especially in respect of secondary and further education. However, the social class difference in the educational level of mothers is not as marked as in the case of fathers.

The analysis of reading experiences shows that there is generally poor reading habits in most homes in both social classes. This is clearly evident in the reading of magazines, parents' membership of libraries and the frequency of borrowing library books. Of the very small number of parents who are rated highly in these respects, more middle class parents fall into this category. It is only in the

reading of newspapers, and frequency of borrowing library books by children that good reading habits are evident in both social classes. However, even in these respects the middle class group is rated more favourably.

The educational climate of the home is also reflected in the amount of interest which parents show in their children's progress at school, and the amount of contact which parents maintain with schools. In this study, the parents of both social classes have very limited contact with schools. Of the very small number of parents who do maintain any contact, very few do so because they wish to check on their children's progress. Despite this, the greater interest shown by middle class parents is reflected by the fact that more of them fall into this category.

When the educational and cultural climate of the home is judged by the activities in which children are engaged, we observe that comparatively larger numbers of middle class children are involved in general educationally orientated activities at home, while more lower working class children are engaged in routine household duties. In respect of radio programmes, very few children in both social classes prefer educationally orientated programmes. The children of both groups prefer entertainment programmes, and it seems as if irrespective of social class the radio exerts a very limited educational influence on children. By contrast, a greater number of children in both social classes prefer mainly children's educational television programmes. Though television is a relatively new experience in many homes it seems to have a greater educational influence on children than is the case with radio.

It now remains to look carefully at the quality of social *interaction*

which exists between parents and children, and the *nature* of the social phenomena evident in the life styles of both social classes.

#### 9.3.4 Educational Motivations and Aspirations of Parents

The study of this dimension of the home is concerned with interactionist and social phenomenological interpretations of the social contexts in which parents and children interact to reinforce certain fundamental educational values, motivations and aspirations. The general finding in this section of the study indicates that though the middle class homes are rated more favourably, the social class difference is not as marked as in the case of the general cultural and educational climate of the home. The most obvious differences were in respect of discussion of television programmes, books bought by parents for children, and the educational aspirations which parents have for their children. There were no differences between the two groups in respect of the amount of time which parents and children spend listening to the radio together or discussing radio programmes; in the amount of time spent watching television together; in the assistance given with homework; and in the job aspirations which parents have for their children.

A close examination of the socialisation process indicates that a larger number of middle class parents have high aspirations for their children's educational future. When motivating their children, they are more likely to instil higher ambitions in them than would be the case with lower working class parents.

By contrast we notice that there is no social class difference in the job aspirations which parents have for their children. Because of their higher educational aspirations, one would have expected the middle class parents to have had higher job aspirations. However,

this study indicates that the majority of parents of both social classes have high job aspirations. This apparent discrepancy between the educational and job aspirations of the lower working class parents is probably due to the fact that many lower working class parents who prefer high status jobs for their children are not fully aware of the educational requirements of these jobs.

The greater interest in education shown by the middle class parents is partly reflected by the fact that though comparatively few parents of both social classes buy books for their children, nevertheless, the greater number of middle class parents who do so are more likely to broaden their children's general knowledge and encourage them to develop independent study habits.

A microscopic analysis of parent-child interactions in the home reveals similar differences. For example, though most parents in both social classes hardly ever watch or discuss television programmes with their children, when this does happen it is once again mainly the middle class parents who do so. Broadly speaking, this study indicates that it is television rather than radio which provides more opportunities for such discussions between middle class parents and their children.

Some aspects of children's socialisation which reveal no social class differences are those associated with the assistance that children receive with their homework, and also with the influence of radio. A fair percentage of children of both groups receive some amount of specific help with their homework. In the case of the radio, we notice that most parents in both groups spend hardly any time listening to or discussing radio programmes with their children.

From the discussion thus far, it will be evident that though middle class parents are involved in a greater amount of social interaction

with their children, motivating them to excel in education, it seems that the quality and the amount of such interactions are greatly restricted in the homes of both groups. This is probably why this dimension and that of the general cultural experiences do not account for any significant variation in the performance of middle class pupils.

The findings also reveal that in educational activities the children of both groups interact more freely with their older brothers and sisters than with their parents. The restricted pattern of parent-child interactions, particularly in the lower working class group, may be attributed partly to parents' traditional attitudes to child-rearing and to education. It is possible that they are more authoritarian in their approach to children than their middle class counterparts.

#### 9.3.5 Family Size

The families of both groups are relatively homogeneous in respect of size. They are large and there is no difference in the ordinal positions of children in the two social classes. Since growing up in a large family is likely to have adverse effects on the children's development, one would expect this dimension of the home to account largely for the restricted parent-child interactions in this study, and for the lower educational performance of the lower working class pupils. On the contrary, there is no evidence in this study which indicates that family size accounts for any significant variation in educational performance.

#### 9.3.6 Global Assessment of Home Background

Within the limitations of this study, the findings indicate that pupils' home background accounts for a significant amount of

variation in the general educational performance of lower working class pupils, and in the entire sample of 150, but not in the case of middle class pupils (see Appendix F8). Though home background accounts for the same amount of variation in both social classes, this does not mean that it has a similar effect on middle class and lower working class pupils. The fact that the lower working class pupils are performing at a consistently lower level than middle class pupils would seem to indicate that certain home background variables are retarding their performance, while other variables are accelerating the performance of middle class children. Despite this, we cannot be certain about the precise ways in which these variables are related either in accelerating or in depressing educational performance. It should be noted, however, that this is not unique to the present study. It is a general characteristic of studies already undertaken in this field, and is one of the greatest obstacles in the assessment of social class and educational achievement.

However, the findings of this study do indicate that generally the two most important dimensions of the home which account for the greatest amount of variation in educational performance are (1) the general cultural and educational climate of the home, (2) the educational motivations and aspirations of parents (see table 8.41). However, these dimensions account for a greater amount of variation in the case of the lower working class pupils. Therefore, if this finding is related to the poor rating of the general cultural and educational climate of lower working class homes, we have some indication of the effects of the social and cultural experiences to which these children are exposed.

Both these dimensions are therefore directly related to the socialisation process, or the life style which influences pupils' educational performance. Though the remaining dimensions, the material environment and family size do not account for any significant variation in educational performance, they should not be dismissed as being totally unimportant. Though in this study they appear to be relatively unimportant within the total context of the home, nevertheless living in a poor material environment and growing up in a large family are important influences on the entire socialisation process which the majority of lower working class children experience. This study therefore emphasises that in the final analysis it is the complete life style of the home, and not isolated fragments of it that influences children's development.

#### 9.3.7 Some Philosophical Issues Which Have Emerged from This Study

Though the present investigation is essentially a study in the sociology of education, there were certain philosophical issues which became apparent within this framework. However, these were not analysed or studied in the philosophical perspective. They merely contributed to a deeper insight into the cultural values embedded in the life styles of the two groups of pupils.

In particular, the general cultural and educational climate of the home, the interest shown by parents in their children's education, and parents' attitudes to child-rearing reflected certain fundamental values embedded in family life. Had this been a study in philosophy of education, these attitudes and values would have been subjected to an axiological analysis to give us some insight into the social realities of the pupils' home backgrounds. One such example of a fundamental value which became clearly evident in this study is the

profound faith which parents of both social classes seem to place in education. This is reflected in the high job aspirations which parents have for their children, despite their limited contact with schools, and their consequent unawareness of their children's progress in school.

Another example is the very limited parent-child interaction in both social classes. Especially in the lower working class group, this seems to indicate that this limited interaction is influenced by parents' basic attitudes to child-rearing. Though there is insufficient evidence in this study to indicate that this is so, it might be a worthwhile investigation to see whether, for example, the authoritarian attitudes of parents are related in anyway to these patterns of social interaction.

Other areas of this study which point to an analysis of cultural values are those relating to parents' interest in reading, parents' contact with schools, and parents' attitudes to their children's leisure time activities. This would be useful to an understanding of the fundamental cultural values of the homes of both groups of pupils, and would offer a sound basis for formulating a philosophy of home-school relationships in the Indian cultural context.

#### 9.3.8 General Comparison with Oversea Studies

Because of the lack of existing research into social class, home background and education in South Africa, constant reference was made in this study to certain similarities and contrasts with the studies already undertaken in Britain and the U.S.A. It is therefore necessary to draw attention to some of the main considerations which have been highlighted here.



Like most overseas studies, the present investigation has shown beyond doubt that despite efforts at equalising educational opportunities, there are still significant differences in the educational performance of middle and lower working class pupils. There is a tendency for the lower working class pupils in this study to perform less efficiently.

As in most overseas studies, it was also found that the material environment of the home does not exert any significant influence on pupils' school performance. The greatest amount of variation in school achievement in this study was specifically due to the cultural and educational climate of the home, and to parents' educational motivations and aspirations. This is very similar to the findings of the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967), the study of Floud, Halsey and Martin (1956), and Wiseman (1964).

However, unlike most of the British studies there is no evidence to indicate that family size contributes significantly to variation in school performance. This is probably due to the homogeneous nature of family size in both social classes involved in this study.

Though the present investigation, like most others of a similar kind, indicates that middle class parents have a greater interest in their children's education, the findings are not so divergent as those of the British studies in pointing to social class differences. This is probably due to the fact that social class differences in the Indian community in South Africa - which is primarily a race stratified society - is not as clearly evident as in Britain which is basically a class divided society.

Generally, it can be said that, though the findings of this study are similar to those of British researches, the emphasis on certain specific factors differs because of cultural differences.

#### 9.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the findings of this study indicate that pupils' home background accounts for approximately thirty per cent of variation in general educational performance in each of the two social classes, it is safe to assume that the other social agencies which account for the rest of the variation are the school, the community, and the wider society. Of these, the school plays a vital role, and just as the school does not operate in a social vacuum, neither does the home. Because of this close interrelationship between the various agencies, the recommendations of this study aim at establishing a broad educational policy of linking home and school with the rest of society.

In this relationship it is the school that should assume special responsibility for those children who depend on it rather than on their families to achieve equality of opportunity in the wider society. Therefore, the suggestions which are offered to improve the quality of the home environment should not be divorced from other suggestions which aim at improving or modifying the cultural environment of the school. These recommendations which include both micro- and macro-sociological issues should be regarded as the product of joint educational and social reform.

It should also be noted that these recommendations are relevant to the whole way of life in the home and the school, both of which influence children's development. They refer to the

heart of the social processes in which children are involved and not to isolated fragments of it. Therefore, this broad policy of linking home and school hints at improving the quality of life to which children are exposed.

#### 9.4.1 Educational Awareness of The Home

The recommendations in this section are based on the findings of this study: that the greatest amount of variation in school performance is due to the cultural and educational climate of the home, and the educational motivations and aspirations of parents. Many of these recommendations will refer more specifically to improving the educational climate in lower working class homes which are comparatively less stimulating, and to instilling a greater interest in education in the parents. However, it is necessary to stress that this does not mean that the essential lower working class culture must be transformed to approximate middle class norms and values. It merely emphasises the importance of being socialised in educationally stimulating environments.

##### 9.4.1.1 Educational Level of Parents

Firstly, it is obvious that very little could be achieved if the parents themselves are educationally ill equipped to handle their children. To improve the educational levels of parents, there should be an extension of existing adult education programmes. This should be aimed more deliberately at increasing the literacy levels of lower working class parents especially, also incorporating relevant and interesting study programmes for mothers who are key figures in the early socialisation of their children. For example, they should

be provided with information about child development, child-rearing practices, and readiness for learning. With the increase in the number of girls attending primary and secondary schools in recent years, this should not be too difficult to achieve in the future.

#### 9.4.1.2 Reading Habits

One of the striking findings of this study is the low level of reading habits of the families of both social classes. To encourage parents to read suitable material, schools should arrange book displays and discussion sessions for parents. They could be advised not only about what to read, but also how to assist their children in the selection of books. Older children who were found to be important sources of educational stimulation to their younger brothers and sisters in this study could also benefit by attending such meetings. These older children could also be valuable sources of educational stimulation to poorly educated parents. For example, they could be encouraged to read to their parents from books, magazines and newspapers.

#### 9.4.1.3 Parental Involvement in The Educational Process

The parent who has little or no insight into the nature of the educational process which involves his child will be unable to assist and motivate him to cope with the skills which are required in school. Parents who have an adequate educational background should be given sufficient opportunities to observe and if possible, to participate in the educational process. Merely inviting parents to attend open days, speech days, parents' evenings and so on is inadequate to instil in the parents the desire to engage in a partnership with teachers and children.

The classroom should be the most profitable focus for this exercise. Teachers and children could invite parents to join them in certain activities. For example, in the lower classes of the primary school parents could join the children who work in groups on projects of an informal nature. Such projects may also be conducted over weekends and holidays.

Teachers can also arrange to have brief but regular meetings with interested parents to advise them on how to assist their children at home in subjects such as mathematics and English. Eventually they should try to get the parent to be involved in the actual process of educating the child. Parent-teacher relationships will also be fostered in this way. The Educational Priority Area Projects in England (Midwinter, 1972; Halsey, 1972) are good examples of how parents can be meaningfully involved in the process of education. These projects were set up by the Social Science Research Council in terms of the recommendation of the *Plowden Committee* that the national education policy should favour *positive discrimination* for schools in neighbourhoods where children are most handicapped by conditions at home (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967 : 1, 464-465). Among the wide variety of measures employed to assist severely deprived pupils, these projects emphasised the importance of getting parents involved in the activities of the school. The Liverpool Educational Priority Area Project has achieved outstanding results in respect of its work with such parents.

#### 9.4.1.4 Children's Leisure Time Activities

Though this study has concentrated mainly on activities related to radio and television, and on hobbies and interests, teachers have ample scope to study a wide range of other activities which their

pupils engage in. Using this information, they could advise parents on how to get their children involved in educationally orientated games, hobbies and interests.

If it is at all possible to use the school as the centre for the pursuit of such activities after hours and during weekends, this should be encouraged. This may be helpful to lower working class pupils whose homes generally lack provisions for games, etc. When schools are used, the boundaries between home and school become less rigid. The school becomes the focal point for community activities.

#### 9.4.2 Social Awareness of The School

Ultimately, the problem of effective home-school liaison will not rest only on improving the quality of life at home. It will also be necessary for schools to become increasingly aware of the social environments from which their pupils come. This means that there is a need to understand the optimum conditions for the integration of home and school environments to minimize the conflict which may exist between the culture of the home and the culture of the school. The following measures are suggested for improvement in schools.

##### 9.4.2.1 Socially and Culturally Relevant Curricula

To prevent the high incidence of early school leaving and high failure rates, it is suggested that educational planners look closely into the social and cultural relevance of the curricula at all levels of education. This is particularly important for children from the lower working class who may be tempted to leave school early because they are compelled to study uninteresting and irrelevant material.

Studies such as those of Lawton (1975 : 83-98) and the curriculum development projects of the Schools Council in England have shown that a thorough examination of the assumptions and values that are embodied in the curriculum is likely to promote a variety of approaches that appeal to children of all social class backgrounds.

Schools should avoid making social and cultural demands of children when they are not equipped to respond to them. The cultural content of the curriculum should be such that it reduces the gap between the demands and assumptions of the school and the skills and assumptions that the children bring with them.

In the initial stages of schooling the curriculum should be flexible and locality-centred. This does not mean that community and local experiences imply the construction of an ethnically orientated curriculum. It does mean, however, that these experiences should be the foundation for the inclusion of wider and more universal experiences in the later stages of schooling. Initially, therefore, the curriculum should contain what is appealing and relevant so that children could become critical and learn to adapt themselves constructively to their environments.

A great deal of scope exists for this in subjects such as history, geography and language studies. For example, the cultural relevance of illustrations and language models used in prescribed readers in the primary school could be analysed in this way.

#### 9.4.2.2 Home Visits by Teachers

It is imperative that teachers should be aware of the social conditions prevailing in their pupils' homes, and this could be effectively achieved through home visits. While it may not be possible to visit

the homes of all pupils, at least some efforts should be made to visit the homes of underachievers. Though the researcher has gained the impression during his discussions with parents that they would welcome visits by teachers, the evidence of this study indicates that such visits are virtually non-existent.

It would be advisable to have at least one teacher on the staff of every primary school, who has some knowledge of sociology and social work, and whose duties should include home visits. This home-school liaison teacher could provide the school with vital information on the backgrounds of underachievers and others.

#### 9.4.2.3 Parents' Contacts with Schools

Since this study reveals that there is hardly any meaningful contact between parents and schools at present, schools should look for ways to explain their aims and methods to parents. Contact of this nature will not only enable parents to understand schools, but schools in turn can become more knowledgeable about the social class and home background of their pupils.

Parents need to be reassured that the schools which their children attend are their concern, and not institutions established and run by an education department which is foreign to them and doesn't understand their needs. They should be encouraged to accept more responsibility in their children's schools and to bring about any necessary changes which the community desires.

Initial contacts could be established through the provision of recreation and leisure activities for parents. These may include



drama, dressmaking, pottery, indoor and outdoor games. The aim of this is to attract the parents to the schools. Once this has been achieved, parents could contribute to other activities such as accompanying teachers and pupils on excursions, and attending *coffee mornings* during which they could observe their children at work in the classroom.

Eventually, when they have developed the necessary confidence and skills, parents should also participate to some extent in decision making. At present, the restricted functions of education committees (discussed in chapter three) do not allow for this. The functions of these committees should be extended to enable parents to present their views on matters such as the provision of courses, availability of employment opportunities and so on. In this way, the planning of education could incorporate relevant social and cultural needs.

#### 9.4.3 Teacher Education

Much more attention should be given in teacher education institutions to the study of the social and cultural environment. This could be effectively done through the study of sociology of education which should exist as a subject in its own right, and not as a subsidiary aspect of some other branch of education. In terms of the recommendations of the *Plowden Committee* (Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England), 1967) this subject is now an essential part of teacher education courses at British universities and colleges of education. In South Africa, at present, sociology of education is a distinct subject in the curriculum for the Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Natal. A study of sociology of education would enable students to see that experiences outside the classrooms -

such as those of the home, neighbourhood and the wider society - affect not only children but teachers as well.

The theoretical aspects of this subject should be meaningfully linked with the practice of education. For example, students can undertake small-scale studies of pupils' home backgrounds, peer groups, and social environments of particular schools to which they are attached. These can form the basis of special studies in the theory of sociology of education, such as those related to social class differences in child-rearing, socialisation and language, social stratification, and social mobility.

It may also be useful if the social and cultural relevance of present practices in teacher education could be assessed periodically by enquiries of the type conducted in 1972 in England by the Nuffield Foundation Enquiry into the Preparation of Teachers for the Socially Deprived, at the University of York.

#### 9.4.4 The Wider Society

Though this study was not specifically concerned with the macro-issues of the wider society, nevertheless it is necessary to point out that equality of opportunity implies access to the resources of society. Therefore, the decisions and actions of central government and local authority bodies, politicians, industrialists, businessmen and community leaders will affect such opportunities. For example, the social mobility of the lower working class is achieved not only through educational progress, but also through social reform. Therefore, every effort should be made at a co-ordinated multi-level approach to ensure that progress secured through education is not obliterated

by inequalities which may exist in the wider society.

#### 9.4.5 Future Research

Since research in this field of social class, home background and education is virtually non-existent in South Africa, it is essential that basic research should continue to be undertaken. As a sequel to the present study, for example, research could be undertaken at the secondary level into the social stratification of the school population, and teachers' awareness of their pupils' backgrounds.

If however, such studies are to make their full contribution, it is essential that they not only describe social class differences, but they should also analyse the actual process of socialisation. The present study indicates that future research should make an in-depth study of the general cultural and educational climate of home background, and parents' interest in and attitudes to education.

To do this effectively future researchers should adopt the general approach of the interpretative studies of the new sociology of education - in an attempt to explain how working class families come to hold values which are different from those of middle class families, and behave in different ways towards their children. Research of this type would undoubtedly refine our perceptions of how different life styles predispose children towards different views of the world around them. In the light of the findings of the present study, one such area which could prove to be a valuable investigation is the language models into which Indian children are socialised. Though the majority of Indian children speak English at home, this study shows that the lower working class pupils perform at a consistently lower level in English studies. Instead of erroneously labelling their

language code as *restricted*, it is essential to make a close study of the social contexts in which they learn their language patterns. Bernstein and Henderson (1974) conducted valuable research in this field with working class children in England.

Interpretative research into home circumstances also implies that interpretative research should be conducted into the cultural relevance of the school curriculum. No study of social class and home background would be complete without an investigation into the cultural continuity or discontinuity between home and school.

This could be achieved most effectively by examining the curriculum from a position within the sociology of knowledge. The researches of Young (1971 : 20), Bernstein (1971 : 48-50) and Lawton (1975 : 70-71) indicate clearly that the curriculum is socially constructed and socially organised knowledge. This type of research in South Africa would contribute greatly to our existing knowledge on social class and home background by not only asking such questions as "*Why do some children fail?*" but also "*How do rates of educational succes and failure come to be produced?*" Schools will then be seen not only as people-processing institutions, but also as knowledge-processing institutions.

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A P P E N D I X A

QUESTIONNAIRE TO ALL STANDARD FOUR PUPILS

<p>Details to be filled in by pupils</p> <p>PLACE "X" IN THE BLOCK THAT APPLIES TO YOU.</p>
---

- 1. School .....
- 2. Name (in full) .....
- 3. Home Address .....
- 4. Age ..... Years ..... months
- 5. Sex
 

male	<input type="checkbox"/>
female	<input type="checkbox"/>
- 6. Religion
 

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
- 7. Home language
 

English	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gujerati	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tamil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telegu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Urdu	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
- 8. What is your father's job? .....
- 9. Imagine that you were explaining to a new friend what your father does, try and give as much information as you can of what he does during a day's job.
 

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX A (Continued)

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

10. What is your father's level of education?  
     nil   
     primary school   
     high school   
     college or university

11. What is your mother's job? .....

12. What is your mother's level of education?  
     nil   
     primary school   
     high school   
     college or university

13. Have you failed to pass any standard or  
     class so far?  
         yes   
         no

14. If yes, state which standards or  
     classes?  
         class 1   
         class 2   
         standard 1   
         standard 2   
         standard 3

A P P E N D I X B 1

## LETTER TO PARENTS

UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE  
Faculty of Education

June 1977

Dear .....

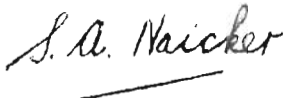
I am engaged in a study which concerns the school performance of standard four pupils in the Merebank area. An important aspect of this study is the relationship between home and school. It is hoped that the findings will be useful to parents, pupils and teachers.

I shall, therefore, be grateful if you would assist in this study by providing some relevant information about your child/ward,  
.....

I hope to visit you shortly so that I can explain more fully what is required.

Thanking you and looking forward to meeting with you

Yours sincerely



S.A. NAICKER

LECTURER: DIVISION OF PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

APPENDIX B 2

## HOME INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NOTE: "N" stands for name of child

Box for Code. 1. PRELIMINARY DETAILS

1.1 Name of child .....

1.2 Home address .....

1.3 Age of child ..... years ..... months

1.4 Sex of child

male female 

1.5 Relationship of interviewee to "N"

mother father other (specify) 

1.6 Home language

English Gujerati Hindi Tamil Urdu Other (specify) 

1.7 Religion

Buddhist Christian Hindu Muslim other (specify) 2. CRITERIA FOR SOCIAL CLASS DIVISION2.1 Father's occupation .....



APPENDIX B2 (Continued)

2.2 Mother's occupation .....

2.3 Father's level of education    nil  
    less than std. 1  
    std.1 to std.3  
    std.4 to std.6  
    std.7 to std.9  
    std.10 and beyond


2.4 Mother's level of education    nil  
    less than std.1  
    std.1 to std.3  
    std.4 to std.6  
    std.7 to std.9  
    std.10 and beyond


3. MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE HOME

3.1 Type of house                    sub-economic  
    economic  
    flat  
    barracks  
    other (specify)


Yes	No

3.2 Does the house have            electricity?  
    cold water?  
    hot water?  
    radio?  
    television?  
    telephone?

APPENDIX B2 (Continued)

3.3	Number of rooms	kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
		bedrooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
		lounge	<input type="checkbox"/>
		diningroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
		indoor toilet	<input type="checkbox"/>
		indoor bathroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
		additions or extensions (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.4	Where does "N" do his homework?	study	<input type="checkbox"/>
		own bedroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
		lounge	<input type="checkbox"/>
		diningroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
		kitchen	<input type="checkbox"/>
		other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. FAMILY SIZE

4.1	Number of children in family .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Ordinal position of "N" .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3	Number of other persons living permanently with the family .....	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. GENERAL CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN THE HOME

(A) READING EXPERIENCES

5.1	Which magazines do you read regularly? .. .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Which newspapers do you read regularly? .....	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Are you a member of the library?      Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	If yes, how often do you borrow books?	
	once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>
	once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
	seldom	<input type="checkbox"/>
	never	<input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX B2 (Continued)

(B) RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAMMES PREFERRED

5.5 How many hours per day does "N" watch television?  
 0 - 1 hr.   
 1 - 2 hrs.   
 2 - 3 hrs.   
 3 - 4 hrs.   
 4 - 5 hrs.

5.6 What are "N's" favourite television programmes? .....

5.7 How many hours per day does "N" listen to the radio?  
 0 - 1 hr.   
 1 - 2 hrs.   
 2 - 3 hrs.   
 3 - 4 hrs.   
 4 - 5 hrs.

5.8 What are "N's" favourite radio programmes? .....

6. EDUCATIONAL MOTIVATIONS, AWARENESS, AND ASPIRATIONS OF PARENTS

6.1 How often do you watch television with "N"?  
 everyday   
 once or twice a week   
 seldom   
 never

6.2 Do you explain things which "N" has seen and doesn't understand?  
 yes   
 no

6.3 If yes, how often?  
 always   
 at most times   
 seldom

6.4 How often do you listen to the radio with "N"?  
 everyday   
 once or twice a week   
 seldom   
 never

## APPENDIX B2 (Continued)

- |      |  |                             |                          |
|------|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6.5  | Do you explain things which "N" listens to and doesn't understand?                               | yes                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | no                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.6  | If yes, how often?   | always                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | at most times               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | seldom                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.7  | Who helps "N" with his lessons at home?  | mother                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | father                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | brother/sister              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | other (specify)             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | nobody                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.8  | What kind of help is given? .....  |                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      | .....  |                             |                          |
| 6.9  | Besides the books which are prescribed and supplied by the school, do you buy any books for "N"? | yes                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | no                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.10 | How often does "N" borrow books from the library?  | once a week                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | once a month                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | seldom                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | never                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.11 | How long does "N" spend on his homework per day?   | no time                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | less than $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 hr.       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | 1 - 2 hrs.                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | more than 2 hrs.            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.12 | How does "N" generally spend his time after school hours? .....                                  |                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.13 | How often have you been to "N"'s school?   | often                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | seldom                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|      |  | never                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX B2 (Continued)

- 6.14 Why did you visit the school? .....   
 .....
- 6.15 Have you met "N"'s teacher?    yes      
     no
- 6.16 What subjects does "N" take at school?
  - English
  - Afrikaans
  - mathematics
  - history
  - geography
  - science
  - health education
  - right living
  - guidance
  - physical education
  - art
  - music
  - handicraft
  - needlework
  - other (specify)
  - dont know
- 6.17 Which are his weak subjects? .....   
 .....
- 6.18 Which are his strong subjects? .....   
 .....
- 6.19 At what age would you like "N" to
  - leave school?                    below 13 yrs.
  - 14 to 16 yrs.
  - 16 to 18 yrs.
  - above 18 yrs.
  - undecided
- 6.20 What standard of education would you  
 like "N" to reach? .....
- 6.21 What job do you have in mind for "N"?   
 .....

7. INTERVIEWER'S OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

.....

A P P E N D I X C

EXAMPLES OF OCCUPATIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NATAL'S MODIFIED  
 CLASSIFICATION OF THE HALL-JONES SCALE

Social Class 1      Independent and High Professional

advocate  
 clergyman  
 dental surgeon  
 consulting engineer  
 medical officer of health  
 professor

Social Class 2      Executive and High Administrative

chief accountant  
 banker  
 town clerk  
 large construction director  
 editor  
 large factory owner  
 stockbroker

Social Class 3      Salaried and Professional equivalent

chartered accountant  
 auditor  
 education officer  
 civil engineer  
 magistrate  
 school principal  
 solicitor  
 social worker  
 quantity surveyor  
 high school teacher  
 university lecturer

Social Class 4      Lower Executives and similar Administrative

works clerk  
 diamond broker  
 chief draughtsman  
 medium factory owner  
 hotel manager

APPENDIX C (Continued)Social Class 5      Semi-Professionals and equivalents

artist  
commercial artist  
computer programmer  
confectioner  
apprentice draughtsman  
librarian  
midwife  
nursing sister

Social Class 6      Owners and Executives of small private firms  
and equivalent

bookkeeper  
butcher owner  
cartage contractor  
senior clerk  
building contractor  
farmer  
food contractor  
garage owner  
jeweller  
laboratory technician  
postmaster

Social Class 7      Clerical, Sales and Representatives

bank teller  
lower civil servant  
accounts clerk  
costing clerk  
commercial traveller  
government employee  
insurance agent  
interpreter  
receptionist  
salesman

Social Class 8      Blue-Collar Technical, Supervisory and Inspectional

canvasser  
diamond cutter  
diesel engineer  
manufacture foreman  
instrument maker  
tailor  
construction supervisor

APPENDIX C (Continued)Social Class 9      Skilled-manual and Semi-skilled foreman

skilled artisan  
 boilermaker  
 bricklayer  
 busbuilder  
 bookbinder  
 carpet weaver  
 chargehand  
 compositor  
 electrician  
 glazier  
 hairdresser  
 joiner

Social Class 10      Routine non-manual ranks in Services

bus conductor  
 store cashier  
 checker  
 counterhand  
 deliveryman  
 messenger  
 milkman  
 nightwatchman  
 paper-seller  
 porter  
 street trader  
 switchboard operator  
 waiter

Social Class 11      Semi-skilled and unskilled equivalent

boot machinist  
 box maker  
 brass finisher  
 chargehand  
 chauffeur  
 clicker  
 cotton-weaver  
 darner  
 driller  
 bus-driver  
 fireman  
 grinder  
 hoist-driver  
 machinist  
 presser  
 shunter



## A P P E N D I X D

## PROCEDURE OF RANDOM SAMPLING

The random samples in this study were selected in accordance with the procedure suggested by Downie and Heath (1970 : 159), and a table of random numbers (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 328-329) was used for this purpose. Each unit of the basic population was given a calculable chance of being included in the sample. The units were well mixed by first numbering each pupil's form from 001 to 192 in the case of the middle class population, and 001 to 402 in the case of the lower working class population. A random sample of 50 was drawn from the middle class group; and then another random sample of 100, was drawn from the lower working class group. These two sections of the population were dealt with separately so that there was no question of confusing the units of the middle class population with those of the lower working class population.

## A P P E N D I X E

### STATISTICAL METHODS

#### 1. T Score, z Score, and Standard Deviation

In assessing educational performance in this study, each pupil's raw score in each of the four subjects was converted to a standard score (T score). The pupil's overall performance was also expressed as a T score which is a common form of transforming raw scores to standard scores and is based upon a mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 50 and a standard deviation (SD) of 10. In equation form this becomes:

$$T = z(10) + 50$$

where  $z = \frac{x - \bar{x}}{SD}$  (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 71)

Starting with the raw scores we have

$$T = \frac{(x - \bar{x})}{SD} (10 + 50) \quad (\text{Downie and Heath, 1970 : 72})$$

where  $SD = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$  (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 57)

where  $d =$  deviation from the mean  
 $= x - \bar{x}$  (where  $x$  is the raw score; and  $\bar{x}$ ,  
the mean  $= \frac{\sum x}{N}$  )

and  $N =$  the number of scores (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 57)

e.g. (see section 6.10). Pupil A in Merebank Primary had a raw score of 96 out of a total of 240 in English. The mean in this subject in this school was 131,9 and the standard deviation was 24.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Pupil A's T score} &= \frac{96 - 131,9}{24} (10) + 50 \\ &= 35 \end{aligned}$$

#### 2. Chi-Square

The chi-square statistic is a test of significance which compares observed frequencies (O) with expected frequencies (E). Since all calculations of chi-square in this study involved the use of 2x2 tables and one degree of freedom, the chi-square formula which includes Yates' correction was used. Downie and Heath (1970 : 202) say that "*some use Yates' correction always with one degree of freedom, regardless of*

## APPENDIX E (Continued)

sample size." Yates formula which includes correction is:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(|O - E| - 0,5)^2}{E}$$

where O = observed frequency  
 E = expected frequency  
 n = number of frequencies

Chi-square is used to test the null hypothesis that the observed frequencies do not differ from the expected frequencies by chance. The level of significance is read from probability tables for (n - 1) degrees of freedom (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 197-199, and 311).

e.g. (see table 8.4) In examining the patterns of newspaper reading it was found that 4 (8 per cent) middle class families are poor readers, as opposed to 24 (24 per cent) lower working class families. To what extent is the higher proportion of poor readers among the lower working class families significant?

N.B. All chi-square computations in this study were based on discrete numbers, and not on percentages.

CATEGORY	M.C.	L.W.C.
Poor readers	(A) 4	(B) 24
Good readers	(C) 46	(D) 76

$$\begin{aligned} \chi^2 &= \frac{N (|AD - BC| - \frac{N}{2})^2}{(A+B)(C+D)(A+C)(B+D)} \\ &= \frac{150 (|4 \times 76 - 24 \times 46| - \frac{150}{2})^2}{28 \times 122 \times 50 \times 100} \\ &= 4,62 \quad (p < 0,05) \end{aligned}$$

The difference in patterns of newspaper reading between the two social class groups is significant, and cannot be attributed to chance.

APPENDIX E (Continued)

3. Z tests of significance

Since the sub-samples in this study were considered to be large ( $N > 50$ ) the z score was computed to test significance of the difference between means (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 178).

Firstly the standard deviation (SD) and the standard error of the mean (SE) of each sub-sample are calculated. Then the standard score z is expressed as the ratio of the difference between the means to the standard error of the difference between the means. Behr (1973 : 107) calls this the critical ratio (CR) and gives the following formula:

$$CR = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{\sqrt{(SE_{\text{mean}_1})^2 + (SE_{\text{mean}_2})^2}}$$

$$\text{where } SE_{\text{mean}_1} = \frac{(SD)_1}{\sqrt{N_1 - 1}} \quad ; \quad SE_{\text{mean}_2} = \frac{(SD)_2}{\sqrt{N_2 - 1}}$$

(Downie and Heath, 1970 : 172)

The degrees of freedom need no longer be considered. All we need to know is that if the value of  $z > 1,96$  then the difference between the means in question is significant at or greater than the 0,05 level; if  $z > 2,58$ , then the significance is at or greater than the 0,01 level.

e.g. (see table 8.3) The difference between the mean levels of education of M.C. and L.W.C. parents yielded  $z = 4,68$  ( $p < 0,01$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the mean levels of education of M.C. and L.W.C. parents is rejected at  $p < 0,01$  level of significance.

4. Analysis of variance

The technique of analysis of variance is used to test the significance of differences between means derived from two or more than two groups.

$$\text{Variation (V)} = (SD)^2 = \frac{\sum D^2}{N} \quad \text{where}$$

D = the deviation of each score from the mean and

N = the total number of scores

4.1 Analysis of variance, testing difference between means of two groups

For testing the difference between the means of two groups with respective scores of X and Y, the data required is:

$$\sum X; (\sum X)^2; \sum X^2; N_X \quad (\text{where } N_X = \text{number of X scores})$$

APPENDIX E (Continued)

$\Sigma Y$ ;  $(\Sigma Y)^2$ ;  $\Sigma Y^2$ ;  $N_Y$  (where  $N_Y$  = number of Y scores)

(Downie and Heath, 1970 : 222-223)

The sum of squares is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Total: } \frac{(\Sigma X^2 + \Sigma Y^2) - (\Sigma X + \Sigma Y)^2}{N_X + N_Y} = A$$

$$\text{Between Groups: } \frac{\Sigma X^2}{N_X} + \frac{\Sigma Y^2}{N_Y} - \frac{(\Sigma X + \Sigma Y)^2}{N_X + N_Y} = B$$

$$\text{Within Groups: } A - B = C$$

The degrees of freedom are calculated as follows:

$$\text{Total: } N_X + N_Y - 1 = D$$

$$\text{Between Groups: } \text{Number of groups} - 1 = E$$

$$\text{Within Groups: } (N_X - 1) + (N_Y - 1) = G$$

$$\text{Variance between groups: } \frac{B}{E} = H$$

$$\text{Variance within groups: } \frac{C}{G} = I$$

$$\text{The F ratio} = \frac{H}{I} = F$$

e.g. (see table 7.14) The difference between the mean performance in environmental studies of middle class and lower working class pupils is 5,37. In this case  $A = 14\ 106,06$ ;  $B = 961,23$ ;  $C = 13\ 144,83$ ;  $E = 1$ ;  $G = 148$ ;  $H = 961,23$ ;  $I = 88,816418$ ;  $F = 10,82$ .

The value of F needed for significance at the 1 per cent level for 1 and 148 df is 6,81. Since  $10,82 > 6,81$  the difference between the means is significant at the 1 per cent level.

#### 4.2 Analysis of variance, testing difference between means of several groups

In the case of more than two groups, the null hypothesis of the analysis of variance asserts that the several groups under investigation are all samples drawn from the same population. To test the statistical significance of the hypothesis, the variance ratio or F ratio is used.

(Behr, 1973 : 108-111)

$$F = \frac{\text{variance between groups (A)}}{\text{variance within groups (B)}}$$

APPENDIX E (Continued)

The deviations and squares of deviations *within* groups are calculated, where:

$x$  = score

$D$  = deviation from mean

$\bar{x}$  = mean of scores in each group

The mean scores of each group ( $\bar{x}$ ) is computed. Then, for each group the sum of the squares of the deviation from the group mean is calculated i.e.  $\Sigma D^2$ . Next, the grand mean (GM) for the scores of each group is worked out i.e.  $\frac{\Sigma \Sigma X}{N}$ . The sum of the squares of the deviations *within* the groups is then calculated. i.e.  $\Sigma \Sigma D^2$

For deviations *between* groups, the difference between the grand mean and each group mean is first calculated ( $GM - \bar{x}$ ). Then the squares of these differences are computed  $(GM - \bar{x})^2$ . Each group  $(GM - \bar{x})^2$  is thereupon multiplied by the number of persons in that group i.e.  $n (GM - \bar{x})^2$ . Finally, all the  $n (GM - \bar{x})^2$  are summed. This gives the sum of the square of deviations *between* groups i.e.  $[\Sigma n (GM - \bar{x})^2]$

The degrees of freedom (df) between groups = number of groups ( $k$ ) - 1 = C.  
The degrees of freedom within groups = sum of the number of cases within each sub-group ( $n$ ) - 1

$$\text{i.e. } (n_1 - 1) + (n_2 - 1) + \dots + (n_k - 1) = D$$

(Downie and Heath, 1970 : 220)

$$\text{variance between groups} = \frac{[\Sigma n (GM - \bar{x})^2]}{df} = A$$

$$\text{variance within groups} = \frac{\Sigma \Sigma D^2}{df} = B$$

$$F \text{ ratio} = \frac{A}{B} \text{ for df, C and D.}$$

The F ratio which is obtained must be looked up in the F ratio variance distribution tables (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 312-317)

e.g. (see table 7.19) For the 150 pupils (M.C. and L.W.C. combined) in the six schools in Merebank in respect of mean general attainment of schools, A = 1,0391; B = 104,03638; C = 5; D = 144; and F = 0,01 ( $p > 0,05$ ).

5. Correlation Coefficients

5.1 Pearson Product - Moment Correlation Coefficient

The raw score, or machine formula for the Pearson product-moment

APPENDIX E (Continued)

correlation coefficient is given by

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

where X and Y are pairs of scores and

N = number of pairs.

The X and Y scores for the various gross correlations which were computed in this study are reproduced in Appendix F4.

5.2 Point-Biserial Correlation Coefficient ( $r_{pb}$ )

The point-biserial is a special case of the product-moment correlation coefficient (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 106-107). This correlation coefficient was used in the present study to measure the relationship between assistance given to pupils with homework (X), and pupils' general educational performance (Y). X is genuinely dichotomous since it has only two categories i.e. assistance given, and no assistance given. Y is continuous. The correlations between these variables were computed by letting 0 stand for no assistance given with homework, and 1 for assistance given.

The formula given is

$$r_{pb} = \frac{N\sum Y_1 - N_1\sum Y}{\sqrt{N_1N_0 [N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

where Y = continuous variable

$\sum Y_1$  = sum of Y values for those observations for which the associated X value = 1

$\sum Y$  = sum of *all* the Y values

$\sum Y^2$  = sum of all squared Y values

$N_1$  = the number of observations where X = 1

$N_0$  = the number of observations where X = 0

N = the total number of paired observations  
=  $N_1 + N_0$

The scores for these various symbols which were used in the calculation of point-biserial correlation coefficients in this study are reproduced in Appendix F5

APPENDIX E (Continued)

5.3 Partial Correlation

In this study, the partial  $r$  was used to measure the effects of each of the eight main home background variables on the criterion, with the effects of the remaining variables being controlled or partialled out. According to Downie and Heath (1970 : 119-120), the partial  $r$  enables us to measure the relationship between two variables while *partialling* out the effects of other variables.

The general formula of partial  $r$  is

$$r_{12.345\dots n} = \frac{(r_{12.34\dots n-1}) - (r_{1n.34\dots n-1})(r_{2n.34\dots n-1})}{\sqrt{(1-r_{1n.34\dots n-1}^2)(1-r_{2n.34\dots n-1}^2)}}$$

(Garrett and Woodworth, 1964 : 411)

Below are two examples of specific cases of partial  $r$ .

$$(A) r_{12.3} = \frac{r_{12} - (r_{13})(r_{23})}{\sqrt{(1-r_{13}^2)(1-r_{23}^2)}}$$

$$(B) r_{12.34} = \frac{r_{12.3} - (r_{14.3})(r_{24.3})}{\sqrt{(1-r_{14.3}^2)(1-r_{24.3}^2)}}$$

In example A, to compute the relation between variables 1 and 2, with the effect of variable 3 partialled out, we must evaluate  $r_{12.3}$ . Therefore, it is necessary to compute the gross correlations,  $r_{12}$ ,  $r_{13}$ , and  $r_{23}$  before evaluating  $r_{12.3}$ .

Similarly in example B, to evaluate  $r_{12.34}$ , it is necessary to first evaluate  $r_{12.3}$ ,  $r_{14.3}$  and  $r_{24.3}$ . In each of these cases, the gross correlations which are involved must first be computed.

With an increase in the number of variables to be partialled out, the computation becomes more involved. See, for example,  $r_{19.2345678}$  in section 7.3.5. The partial correlation coefficients computed in this study, which are reproduced in Appendix F6 must be studied together with the composite table of gross correlations in Appendices F4 and F5.



## APPENDIX E (Continued)

5.4 Multiple Correlation

The multiple correlation coefficient (R) measures the degree of relationship between one variable and a combination of two or more other variables. (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 121). In this study, the multiple correlation technique was used to measure the effects of the eight important home background variables on the criterion.

The general formula for R is

$$R_{1.234\dots n} = \sqrt{1 - (1-r_{12}^2) (1-r_{13.2}^2) (1-r_{14.23}^2) \dots (1-r_{1n\dots n-1}^2)}$$

(Steel and Torrie, 1960 : 286)

While gross r and partial r range from -1 to +1, multiple R ranges from 0 to 1 (Pearson and Bennet, 1942 : 196).

Below are two examples of specific cases of multiple R

$$(A) R_{1.23} = \sqrt{1 - (1-r_{12}^2) (1-r_{13.2}^2)}$$

$$(B) R_{1.234} = \sqrt{1 - (1-r_{12}^2) (1-r_{13.2}^2) (1-r_{14.23}^2)}$$

In example A, to calculate  $R_{1.23}$ , it is necessary to first compute  $r_{12}$  and  $r_{13.2}$ .

In example B, to calculate  $R_{1.234}$ , it is necessary to compute  $r_{14.23}$ . This is calculated according to the formula for partial r in Appendix E.5.3. The correlations  $r_{12}$  and  $r_{13.2}$  have already been computed in example A.

As the variables in the multiple correlation increase, the computation takes more time and becomes more involved. The multiple correlations computed in this study, which are reproduced in Appendix F7 must be studied together with the composite table of partial correlations in Appendix F6, and the gross correlations in Appendices F4 and F5

6. Coefficient of Determination of Multiple R

The coefficient of determination of multiple R was used in this study to measure the degree of association between the criterion and the eight home background variables. The coefficient of determination is obtained by taking the square of the correlation coefficient (Garrett and Woodworth, 1964 : 180).

APPENDIX E (Continued)

The example in table 7.16 illustrates that  $R^2_{1.2345678}$  in the M.C. group is the coefficient of multiple determination which measures the proportion of variation in 1, which is explained by variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. In this case  $R_{1.2345678} = 0,44$ ; and  $R^2_{1.2345678} = 0,44^2 = 0,1936$  (19,36 per cent). This means that variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 determine 19,36 per cent of the variation in 1. In this example, we also notice that  $R_{1.23456789} = 0,54$  and  $R^2_{1.23456789} = 0,54^2 = 0,2916$  (29,16 per cent). Thus, the inclusion of variable 9 increases the percentage of determination by 9,8 per cent ( $R^2_{1.23456789} - R^2_{1.2345678}$ ).

To test whether this increase in R is significant, the F ratio is used. This is done by first calculating the degrees of freedom. In this example, the total number of df is given by  $(N - 1)$  where  $N =$  number of pupils in the sample (Wiseman, 1966 : 37-38). Here  $N = 50$ . The total number of degrees of freedom is therefore 49. Since variables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 = 7df and variable 9 = 1 df, the residual = 41df.

The mean squares of variable 9 and the residual are then calculated. These are obtained by dividing the sum of the squares of variable 9 and the residual by their respective df. The F ratio is obtained by dividing the mean square of variable 9 by the mean square of the residual. In this example it is  $F = \frac{0,098}{0,01727} = 5,67$  ( $p < 0,05$ ).

See Appendix F8 for a composite table of tests of significance of increases in Rs which were computed in this study.

### 7. Significance of Correlation Coefficients

The levels of significance for all product-moment correlation coefficients in this study were obtained from a table of values for r (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 318).

All multiple Rs in this study were tested for significance according to the formula suggested by Wiseman (1966 : 37) which uses analysis of variance. Using this formula in the composite table in Appendix F7 the square of  $R_{1.2345}$  for L.W.C. group gives the variance due to four variables, and  $1 - R^2_{1.2345}$  is the residual variance. The sum of squares, df, and the mean squares for variables 2, 3, 4 and 5, and for the residual are computed separately.

In this example, the total number of degrees of freedom is given by  $(N - 1)$  where  $N =$  the number of pupils in the sample. In this case  $N = 100$ . The F ratio which is used to test the significance of  $R_{1.2345}$  is obtained by dividing the mean square of  $R_{1.2345}$  by the mean square

## APPENDIX E (Continued)

of the residual. In this example  $F = \frac{0,4441}{0,00866} = 5,09$  ( $p < 0,01$ ).

## 8. SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

To transform the significance of a difference between two product-moment coefficients they are each transformed into Fisher's Z by using a table of z values for r (Downie and Heath, 1970 : 319). Then the standard error of the difference between the two Zs is obtained, and the usual z test of significance is made.

The formula for the standard error of the difference between two Zs is

$$S_{D_z} = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1 - 3} + \frac{1}{N_2 - 3}}$$

(Downie and Heath, 1970 : 233)

where  $N_1$  = number of persons in sample 1.

$N_2$  = number of persons in sample 2.

The formula for the z test of significance is

$$z = \frac{Z_1 - Z_2}{S_{D_z}}$$

(Downie and Heath, 1970 : 234)

If z is more than 1,96 the difference is significant at the 0,05 level. If it is more than 2,58 it is significant at the 0,01 level.

e.g. (see page 197) The relationship between performance in general mathematics and performance in English revealed that in the L.W.C. group  $r = 0,60$  and in the M.C. group  $r = 0,49$ . A test of significance between these two correlations indicates that:

	N.	r	z	N - 3	1/(N - 3)
L.W.C.	100	0,60	0,693	97	0,0103
M.C.	50	0,49	0,536	47	0,0213
	Difference =		0,157	Sum =	0,0316

$$SE = \sqrt{0,0316}$$

$$= 0,1778$$

$$z = \frac{0,157}{0,1778}$$

$$= 0.88 \quad (p > 0.05)$$

A P P E N D I X F 1

COMPOSITE TABLE OF CHI-SQUARE RESULTS OF SOCIAL CLASS DIFFERENCES

(df = 1 in each case)

x significant at 5 per cent level

xx significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

TABLE NO	VARIABLE	2X2 SPLIT	$\chi^2$
7.3	Number of males and females	Male/female	0,41
7.6	Home language of pupils	Mainly English/ Vernacular and some English	1,62
7.20	Types of houses pupils live in	Economic/other types	0,10
7.25	Place where children do their homework	Study or own bedroom/ other places	4,88 <sup>x</sup>
8.1	Fathers' levels of education	(A) Literate/ illiterate (B) Matriculation and beyond/lower than matriculation	7,97 <sup>xx</sup> 16,09 <sup>xx</sup>
8.2	Mothers' levels of education	(A) Literate/ illiterate (B) Std. 7 and beyond/lower than std. 7	1,75 6,76 <sup>xx</sup>
8.4	Patterns of newspaper reading	Good patterns/poor patterns	4,62 <sup>x</sup>
8.5	Types of magazines read	Serious/non-serious	5,21 <sup>x</sup>
8.7	Parents' membership of libraries	Members/non-members	6,75 <sup>xx</sup>
8.8	Frequency with which parents borrow library books	Often/seldom or never	4,99 <sup>x</sup>

## APPENDIX F1 (Continued)

TABLE NO.	VARIABLE	2X2 SPLIT	$\chi^2$
8.9	Frequency with which children borrow library books	Often/seldom or never	5,22 <sup>x</sup>
8.10	Frequency with which parents visit schools	Often/seldom or never	0,21
8.11	Parents' contact with class teachers	Has met teacher/did not meet teacher	1,98
8.12	Parents' reasons for visiting schools	To discuss children's progress in school/ other reasons	4,52 <sup>x</sup>
8.13	Parents' awareness of school subjects	Aware of school subjects/unaware of school subjects	9,81 <sup>xx</sup>
8.14	Parents' awareness of children's progress in school	Aware of progress/ unaware of progress	12,44 <sup>xx</sup>
8.16	Possession of radios	Possess/do not possess	6,34 <sup>x</sup>
8.18	Children's favourite radio programmes	Educational programmes/ entertainment programmes	0,41
8.19	Possession of television	Possess/do not possess	6,08 <sup>x</sup>
8.21	Children's favourite television programmes	Educational programmes/ entertainment programmes	0,04
8.22	Amount of time children spend on homework	Less than $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. per day/more than $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. per day	0,01
8.25	How often parents and children listen to radio together	Often/seldom or never	0,73
8.26	Parents' discussions with children about radio programmes	Discuss/do not discuss	1,75

## APPENDIX F1 (Continued)

TABLE NO.	VARIABLE	2X2 SPLIT	$\chi^2$
8.27	How often parents and children watch television together	Often/seldom or never	1,15
8.28	Parents' discussions with children about TV programmes	Discuss/do not discuss	10,25 <sup>xx</sup>
8.29	Books bought by parents for their children	Buys books/doesn't buy	6,14 <sup>x</sup>
8.30	Children's source of help with homework	Somebody/nobody	1,78
8.31	Type of help given with homework	Specific guidance/little or no guidance	3,27
8.33	Parents' preference of child's stage of education	Beyond secondary/secondary or below secondary	7,84 <sup>xx</sup>
8.34	Parents' job aspirations for their children	High aspirations/low aspirations	0,11
8.38	Ordinal positions of children	First or second/third or over	1,03

A P P E N D I X F 2

COMPOSITE TABLE OF F RATIOS USED IN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE  
OF MIDDLE CLASS AND LOWER WORKING CLASS PUPILS

\* significant at 5 per cent level

\*\* significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

TABLE NO.	VARIABLE	SOURCE OF VARIATION	df	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F
7.8	General educational performance	Between groups Within groups	1 148	793,82 14 192,08	793,82 95,892432	8,28**
7.10	Performance in English	Between groups Within groups	1 148	514,83 14 356,21	514,83 97,001418	5,31*
7.12	Performance in general mathematics	Between groups Within groups	1 148	622,08 14 266,48	622,08 96,395135	6,45*
7.14	Performance in environmental studies	Between groups Within groups	1 148	961,23 13 144,83	961,23 88,816418	10,82**

F RATIO USED IN ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF  
THE SURVEY SCHOOLS

7.19	General educational attainment	Between schools Within schools	5 144	5,1955 14 981,24	1,0391 104,03638	0,01
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A P P E N D I X F 3

COMPOSITE TABLE OF Z TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS

\* significant at 5 per cent level

\*\* significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

TABLE NO	VARIABLE	SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BET. MEANS	z
7.4	Mean age	M.C.	50	11,92	0,91	0,13	0,29	1,73
		L.W.C.	100	12,21	1,05	0,10		
7.7	Mean general educational perform.	M.C.	50	53,48	8,85	1,26	5,08	3,12**
		L.W.C.	100	48,4	10,17	1,02		
7.9	Mean performance in English	M.C.	50	52,7	9,28	1,33	3,93	2,36*
		L.W.C.	100	48,77	10,02	1,01		
7.11	Mean performance in general maths.	M.C.	50	52,92	8,74	1,25	4,82	2,99**
		L.W.C.	100	48,1	10,11	1,02		
7.13	Mean performance in environ. studies	M.C.	50	53,44	8,81	1,26	5,37	3,38**
		L.W.C.	100	48,07	9,63	0,97		
7.15	Mean number of days of absence	M.C.	50	7,72	8,25	1,18	0,35	0,25
		L.W.C.	100	7,37	7,39	0,74		
7.17	Mean number of years of failure	M.C.	50	0,38	0,62	0,09	0,2	1,60
		L.W.C.	100	0,58	0,87	0,09		
7.21	Mean essential amenities	M.C.	50	1,98	1,24	0,18	0,83	4,23**
		L.W.C.	100	1,15	0,84	0,08		



APPENDIX F3 (Continued)

TABLE NO.	VARIABLE	SOCIAL CLASS	N	MEAN	SD	SE <sub>MEAN</sub>	DIFFERENCE BET. MEANS	z
7.23	Mean number of rooms	M.C.	50	4,92	1,51	0,22	1,33	4,93 <sup>**</sup>
		L.W.C.	100	3,59	1,62	0,16		
7.24	Mean number of bedrooms	M.C.	50	2,42	0,94	0,13	0,58	3,53 <sup>**</sup>
		L.W.C.	100	1,84	0,95	0,10		
8.3	Mean levels of educ. of parents	M.C.	50	6,02	1,88	0,27	1,54	4,68 <sup>**</sup>
		L.W.C.	100	4,48	1,88	0,19		
8.36	Mean number of children in family	M.C.	50	4,72	1,70	0,24	0,01	0,32
		L.W.C.	100	4,82	2	0,20		

A P P E N D I X F 4

COMPOSITE TABLE OF PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Appendix F4 shows the gross correlation coefficients of the following variables:

- variable 1 : general educational performance of pupils
  - variable 2 : parents' level of education
  - variable 3 : assistance given to children with homework
  - variable 4 : time spent by children on homework
  - variable 5 : newspapers and magazines read by the family
  - variable 6 : number of children in the family
  - variable 7 : ordinal positions of the survey children
  - variable 8 : provision of essential amenities related to the material environment
  - variable 9 : absenteeism from school
- 
- x significant at 5 per cent level
  - xx significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

APPENDIX F4 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	$r$
1 and 2	M.C.	2 664	301	145 780	1 989	16 231	0,23
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	448	244 606	2 362	22 058	0,20 <sup>x</sup>
2 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	749	390 386	4 351	38 289	0,27 <sup>xx</sup>
1 and 4	M.C.	2 664	117	145 780	325	6 271	0,08
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	215	244 606	539	10 715	0,35 <sup>xx</sup>
4 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	332	390 386	864	16 986	0,27 <sup>xx</sup>
1 and 5	M.C.	2 664	179	145 780	805	9 649	0,14
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	273	244 606	1 029	13 376	0,10
5 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	452	390 386	1 834	23 025	0,16
1 and 6	M.C.	2 664	236	145 780	1 258	12 389	-0,25
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	482	244 606	2 722	22 975	-0,17
6 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	718	390 386	3 980	35 364	-0,20 <sup>x</sup>
1 and 7	M.C.	2 664	161	145 780	683	8 415	-0,21
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	351	244 606	1 609	16 544	-0,22 <sup>x</sup>
7 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	512	390 386	2 292	24 959	-0,23 <sup>x</sup>
1 and 8	M.C.	2 664	99	145 780	273	5 317	0,08
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	115	244 606	203	5 445	-0,14
8 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	214	390 386	476	10 762	0,04
1 and 9	M.C.	2 664	387	145 780	6 399	19 139	-0,41 <sup>xx</sup>
1 = X	L.W.C.	4 840	737	244 606	10 899	33 179	-0,33 <sup>xx</sup>
9 = Y	Entire Group	7 504	1 124	390 386	17 298	52 318	-0,34 <sup>xx</sup>

APPENDIX F4 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r
2 and 4	M.C.	301	117	1 989	325	721	0,18
2 = X	L.W.C.	448	215	2 362	539	978	0,09
4 = Y	Entire Group	749	332	4 351	864	1 699	0,15
2 and 5	M.C.	179	301	805	1 989	1 150	0,42 <sup>xx</sup>
5 = X	L.W.C.	273	448	1 029	2 362	1 282	0,19
2 = Y	Entire Group	452	749	1 834	4 351	2 432	0,33 <sup>xx</sup>
4 and 5	M.C.	179	117	805	325	425	0,07
5 = X	L.W.C.	273	215	1 029	539	621	0,23 <sup>x</sup>
4 = Y	Entire Group	452	332	1 834	864	1 046	0,18
2 and 6	M.C.	236	301	1 258	1 989	1 340	-0,51 <sup>xx</sup>
6 = X	L.W.C.	482	448	2 722	2 362	1 988	-0,46 <sup>xx</sup>
2 = Y	Entire Group	718	749	3 980	4 351	3 328	-0,45 <sup>xx</sup>
4 and 6	M.C.	236	117	1 258	325	536	-0,19
6 = X	L.W.C.	482	215	2 722	539	1 015	-0,12
4 = Y	Entire Group	718	332	3 980	864	1 551	-0,14
5 and 6	M.C.	179	236	805	1 258	819	-0,17
5 = X	L.W.C.	273	482	1 029	2 722	1 257	-0,18
6 = Y	Entire Group	452	718	1 834	3 980	2 076	-0,17
2 and 7	M.C.	161	301	683	1 989	863	-0,62 <sup>xx</sup>
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	448	1 609	2 362	1 387	-0,51 <sup>xx</sup>
2 = Y	Entire Group	512	749	2 292	4 351	2 250	-0,53 <sup>xx</sup>
4 and 7	M.C.	161	117	683	325	352	-0,27
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	215	1 609	539	736	-0,11
4 = Y	Entire Group	512	332	2 292	864	1 088	-0,17

APPENDIX F4 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r
5 and 7	M.C.	161	179	683	805	558	-0,11
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	273	1 609	1 029	947	-0,03
7 = Y	Entire Group	512	452	2 292	1 834	1 505	-0,07
6 and 7	M.C.	161	236	683	1 258	795	0,23 <sup>xx</sup>
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	482	1 609	2 722	2 039	0,90 <sup>xx</sup>
6 = Y	Entire Group	512	718	2 292	3 980	2 834	0,71 <sup>xx</sup>
2 and 8	M.C.	99	301	273	1 989	636	0,34 <sup>xx</sup>
8 = X	L.W.C.	115	448	203	2 362	535	0,12 <sup>xx</sup>
2 = Y	Entire Group	214	749	476	4 351	1 171	0,32 <sup>xx</sup>
4 and 8	M.C.	99	117	273	325	236	0,07
8 = X	L.W.C.	115	215	203	539	245	-0,03
4 = Y	Entire Group	214	332	476	864	481	0,05
5 and 8	M.C.	99	179	273	805	399	0,40 <sup>xx</sup>
8 = X	L.W.C.	115	273	203	1 029	359	0,32 <sup>xx</sup>
5 = Y	Entire Group	214	452	476	1 834	758	0,40 <sup>xx</sup>
6 and 8	M.C.	99	236	273	1 258	452	-0,15
8 = X	L.W.C.	115	482	203	2 722	553	-0,01
6 = Y	Entire Group	214	718	476	3 980	1 005	-0,06
7 and 8	M.C.	161	99	683	273	295	-0,21
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	115	1 609	203	421	0,11
8 = Y	Entire Group	512	214	2 292	476	716	-0,05
2 and 9	M.C.	301	387	1 989	6 399	2 225	-0,14
2 = X	L.W.C.	448	737	2 362	10 899	3 021	-0,20 <sup>x</sup>
9 = Y	Entire Group	749	1 124	4 351	17 298	5 246	-0,16

APPENDIX F4 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r
4 and 9	M.C.	117	387	325	6 399	929	0,06
4 = X	L.W.C.	215	737	539	10 899	1 507	-0,12
9 = Y	Entire Group	332	1 124	864	17 298	2 436	-0,05
5 and 9	M.C.	179	387	805	6 399	1 252	-0,18
5 = X	L.W.C.	273	737	1 029	10 899	1 795	-0,17
9 = Y	Entire Group	452	1 124	1 834	17 298	3 047	-0,17
6 and 9	M.C.	236	387	1 258	6 399	1 904	0,11
6 = X	L.W.C.	482	737	2 722	10 899	3 739	0,13
9 = Y	Entire Group	718	1 124	3 980	17 298	5 643	0,12
7 and 9	M.C.	161	387	683	6 399	1 361	0,15
7 = X	L.W.C.	351	737	1 609	10 899	2 677	0,06
9 = Y	Entire Group	512	1 124	2 292	17 298	4 038	0,09
8 and 9	M.C.	99	387	273	6 399	631	-0,26
8 = X	L.W.C.	115	737	203	10 899	759	-0,14
9 = Y	Entire Group	214	1 124	476	17 298	1 390	-0,17

APPENDIX F4 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	$r$
General school perf. (X) Fathers' level of educ. (Y)	M.C.	2 664	185	145 780	717	9 920	0,18
	L.W.C.	4 840	260	244 606	780	12 943	0,35 <sup>xx</sup>
	Entire Group	7 504	445	390 386	1 497	22 863	0,37 <sup>xx</sup>
General school perf. (X) Mothers' level of educ. (Y)	M.C.	2 664	116	145 780	358	6 311	0,22
	L.W.C.	4 840	188	244 606	518	9 239	0,11
	Entire Group	7 504	304	390 386	876	15 550	0,17
Perf. in English (X) Perf. in maths. (Y)	M.C.	2 635	2 626	143 177	142 172	140 471	0,49 <sup>xx</sup>
	L.W.C.	4 877	4 820	247 895	242 336	241 048	0,60 <sup>xx</sup>
	Entire Group	7 512	7 446	391 072	384 508	381 519	0,58 <sup>xx</sup>
Perf. in English (X) Types of magazines read (Y)	M.C.	2 635	47	143 177	151	2 624	0,22
	L.W.C.	4 877	43	247 895	113	2 063	-0,04
	Entire Group	7 512	90	391 072	264	4 687	0,10
Perf. in English (X) Gen. reading experiences (Y)	M.C.	2 635	179	143 177	805	9 656	0,27 <sup>x</sup>
	L.W.C.	4 877	273	247 895	1 029	13 598	0,17
	Entire Group	7 512	452	391 072	1 834	23 254	0,23 <sup>x</sup>
Number of children (X) Number of bedrooms (Y)	M.C.	226	121	1 158	337	577	0,39 <sup>xx</sup>
	L.W.C.	482	184	2 718	428	854	-0,18
	Entire Group	708	305	3 876	765	1 431	-0,03

A P P E N D I X F 5

COMPOSITE TABLE OF POINT-BISERIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Appendix F5 shows the gross correlation coefficients between variable 3 (assistance given to child with homework) and variables 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Appendix F5 should be read in conjunction with section 5.2 of Appendix E.

\* significant at 5 per cent level

\*\* significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma Y_1$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$N_1$	$N_0$	N	$r_{pb}$
1 and 3	M.C.	2 486	2 664	145 780	47	3	50	-0,17
3 = X	L.W.C.	4 191	4 840	244 606	85	15	100	0,21*
1 = Y	Entire Group	6 677	7 504	390 386	132	18	150	0,15
2 and 3	M.C.	289	301	1 989	47	3	50	0,27
3 = X	L.W.C.	388	448	2 362	85	15	100	0,11
2 = Y	Entire Group	677	749	4 351	132	18	150	0,18
4 and 3	M.C.	110	117	325	47	3	50	0,00
3 = X	L.W.C.	188	215	539	85	15	100	0,17
4 = Y	Entire Group	298	332	864	132	18	150	0,13
5 and 3	M.C.	176	179	805	47	3	50	0,36**
3 = X	L.W.C.	252	273	1 029	85	15	100	0,33**
5 = Y	Entire Group	428	452	1 834	132	18	150	0,35**
6 and 3	M.C.	216	236	1 258	47	3	50	-0,29*
3 = X	L.W.C.	399	482	2 722	85	15	100	-0,15
6 = Y	Entire Group	615	718	3 980	132	18	150	-0,18



APPENDIX F5 (Continued)

VARIABLES	SOCIAL CLASS	$\Sigma Y_1$	$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$N_1$	$N_0$	N	$r_{pb}$
7 and 3	M.C.	143	161	683	47	3	50	-0,39 <sup>xx</sup>
3 = X	L.W.C.	293	351	1 609	85	15	100	-0,08
7 = Y	Entire Group	436	512	2 292	132	18	150	-0,16
8 and 3	M.C.	95	99	273	47	3	50	0,13
3 = X	L.W.C.	104	115	203	85	15	100	0,21 <sup>xx</sup>
8 = Y	Entire Group	199	214	476	132	18	150	0,21 <sup>xx</sup>
9 and 3	M.C.	372	387	6 399	47	3	50	0,08
3 = X	L.W.C.	577	737	10 899	85	15	100	-0,19
9 = Y	Entire Group	949	1 124	17 298	132	18	150	-0,11

APPENDIX F 6COMPOSITE TABLE OF PARTIAL CORRELATION  
COEFFICIENTS

\* significant at 5 per cent level

\*\* significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

PARTIAL r	M.C.	L.W.C.	ENTIRE GROUP OF 150
r <sub>13.2</sub>	-0,25	0,19	0,11
r <sub>43.2</sub>	-0,05	0,16	0,11
r <sub>14.2</sub>	0,04	0,34**	0,24*
r <sub>14.23</sub>	-0,05	0,32**	0,23*
r <sub>54.2</sub>	-0,01	0,22*	0,14
r <sub>53.2</sub>	0,28*	0,32**	0,31**
r <sub>54.23</sub>	0,00	0,18	0,12
r <sub>15.2</sub>	0,05	0,06	0,08
r <sub>15.23</sub>	0,13	-0,00	0,05
r <sub>15.234</sub>	0,13	-0,06	0,02
r <sub>65.2</sub>	0,06	-0,11	-0,03
r <sub>63.2</sub>	-0,18	-0,11	-0,11
r <sub>65.23</sub>	0,12	-0,08	0,00
r <sub>64.2</sub>	-0,12	-0,09	-0,08
r <sub>64.23</sub>	-0,07	-0,07	-0,07
r <sub>65.234</sub>	0,12	-0,07	0,01
r <sub>16.2</sub>	0,16	-0,09	-0,09
r <sub>16.23</sub>	0,12	-0,07	-0,08
r <sub>16.234</sub>	0,12	-0,05	-0,07
r <sub>16.2345</sub>	0,11	-0,05	-0,07
r <sub>73.2</sub>	-0,29*	-0,03	-0,08
r <sub>76.2</sub>	-0,13	0,87**	0,62**
r <sub>76.23</sub>	-0,19	0,87**	0,62**
r <sub>74.2</sub>	-0,21	-0,07	-0,11
r <sub>74.23</sub>	-0,23	-0,07	-0,10
r <sub>76.234</sub>	-0,21	0,87**	0,62**
r <sub>75.2</sub>	0,21	0,08	0,13
r <sub>75.23</sub>	0,32*	0,09	0,16

## APPENDIX F6 (Continued)

PARTIAL r	M.C.	L.W.C.	ENTIRE GROUP OF 150
r <sub>75.234</sub>	0,32 <sup>x</sup>	0,10	0,17
r <sub>17.2</sub>	-0,09	-0,14	-0,11
r <sub>17.23</sub>	-0,18	-0,14	-0,10
r <sub>17.234</sub>	-0,20	-0,12	-0,08
r <sub>17.2345</sub>	-0,26	-0,11	-0,08
r <sub>76.2345</sub>	-0,26	0,88 <sup>xx</sup>	0,63 <sup>xx</sup>
r <sub>17.23456</sub>	-0,24	-0,14	-0,05
r <sub>78.2</sub>	0,00	0,20 <sup>x</sup>	0,15
r <sub>83.2</sub>	0,04	0,20 <sup>x</sup>	0,16
r <sub>84.2</sub>	0,01	-0,04	0,00
r <sub>84.23</sub>	-0,01	-0,07	-0,02
r <sub>78.23</sub>	0,01	0,21 <sup>x</sup>	0,17
r <sub>78.234</sub>	0,01	0,21 <sup>x</sup>	0,17
r <sub>85.2</sub>	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	0,30 <sup>xx</sup>	0,33 <sup>xx</sup>
r <sub>85.23</sub>	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	0,25 <sup>xx</sup>	0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
r <sub>85.234</sub>	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	0,27 <sup>xx</sup>	0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
r <sub>78.2345</sub>	-0,09	0,19 <sup>x</sup>	0,13
r <sub>86.2</sub>	0,29 <sup>x</sup>	0,05	0,10
r <sub>86.23</sub>	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	0,07	0,12
r <sub>86.234</sub>	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	0,07	0,12
r <sub>86.2345</sub>	0,28 <sup>x</sup>	0,09	0,13
r <sub>78.23456</sub>	-0,02	0,23 <sup>x</sup>	0,06
r <sub>18.2</sub>	0,00	-0,17 <sup>x</sup>	-0,05
r <sub>18.23</sub>	0,01	-0,22 <sup>x</sup>	-0,07
r <sub>18.234</sub>	0,01	-0,21 <sup>x</sup>	-0,07
r <sub>18.2345</sub>	-0,03	-0,20 <sup>x</sup>	-0,08
r <sub>18.23456</sub>	-0,06	-0,20 <sup>x</sup>	-0,07
r <sub>18.234567</sub>	-0,07	-0,17	-0,07
r <sub>93.2</sub>	0,12	-0,17	-0,08
r <sub>94.2</sub>	0,09	-0,10	-0,03
r <sub>94.23</sub>	0,10	-0,07	-0,02
r <sub>95.2</sub>	-0,14	-0,14	-0,13
r <sub>95.23</sub>	-0,18	-0,09	-0,11

## APPENDIX F6 (Continued)

PARTIAL $r$	M.C.	L.W.C.	ENTIRE GROUP OF 150
$r_{95.234}$	-0,18	-0,08	-0,11
$r_{96.2}$	0,05	0,04	0,05
$r_{96.23}$	0,07	0,02	0,04
$r_{96.234}$	0,08	0,02	0,04
$r_{96.2345}$	0,10	0,01	0,04
$r_{79.2}$	0,08	-0,05	0,01
$r_{79.23}$	0,12	-0,06	0,00
$r_{79.234}$	0,10	-0,07	-0,00
$r_{79.2345}$	0,17	-0,06	0,02
$r_{79.23456}$	0,20	-0,14	-0,01
$r_{19.2}$	-0,39 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,31 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{19.23}$	-0,37 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,28 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{19.234}$	-0,37 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,27 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{19.2345}$	-0,36 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,28 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{19.23456}$	-0,38 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,28 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{19.234567}$	-0,35 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,31 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,30 <sup>xx</sup>
$r_{98.2}$	0,23	-0,12	-0,13
$r_{98.23}$	0,23	-0,09	-0,12
$r_{98.234}$	0,23	-0,10	-0,12
$r_{98.2345}$	0,30 <sup>x</sup>	-0,08	-0,09
$r_{98.23456}$	0,28 <sup>x</sup>	-0,08	-0,10
$r_{98.234567}$	0,29 <sup>x</sup>	-0,05	-0,10
$r_{19.2345678}$	-0,35 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,32 <sup>xx</sup>	-0,31 <sup>xx</sup>

A P P E N D I X F 7

COMPOSITE TABLE OF MULTIPLE CORRELATIONS AND TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE  
OF  $R_s$

\* significant at 5 per cent level

\*\* significant at 1 per cent level

(A) MIDDLE CLASS

MULTIPLE R, AND SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
$R_{1.23}$ = 0,33 residual	0,1089 0,8911	2 47	0,05445 0,1890	2,87
$R_{1.234}$ = 0,34 residual	0,1156 0,8844	3 46	0,03853 0,019226	2,00
$R_{1.2345}$ = 0,36 residual	0,1296 0,8704	4 45	0,0324 0,01934	1,68
$R_{1.23456}$ = 0,37 residual	0,1369 0,8631	5 44	0,02738 0,19615	1,40
$R_{1.234567}$ = 0,44 residual	0,1936 0,8064	6 43	0,03226 0,01875	1,72
$R_{1.2345678}$ = 0,44 residual	0,1936 0,8064	7 42	0,02765 0,0192	1,44
$R_{1.23456789}$ = 0,54 residual	0,2916 0,7084	8 41	0,03645 0,17278	2,11

## APPENDIX F7 (Continued)

(B) LOWER WORKING CLASS

MULTIPLE R, AND SOURCE OF VARIANCE		SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
R <sub>1.23</sub>	= 0,27	0,0729	2	0,03645	3,80 <sup>x</sup>
residual		0,9271	97	0,0096	
R <sub>1.234</sub>	= 0,41	0,1681	3	0,05603	6,47 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,8319	96	0,00866	
R <sub>1.2345</sub>	= 0,42	0,1764	4	0,0441	5,09 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,8236	95	0,00866	
R <sub>1.23456</sub>	= 0,42	0,1764	5	0,03528	4,03 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,8236	94	0,00876	
R <sub>1.234567</sub>	= 0,44	0,1936	6	0,03226	3,72 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,8064	93	0,00867	
R <sub>1.2345678</sub>	= 0,46	0,2116	7	0,03022	3,53 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,7884	92	0,00857	
R <sub>1.23456789</sub>	= 0,54	0,2916	8	0,03645	4,68 <sup>xx</sup>
residual		0,7084	91	0,00778	

## APPENDIX F7 (Continued)

(C) ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150

MULTIPLE R, AND SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
$R_{1.23} = 0,29$ residual	0,0841 0,9159	2 147	0,04205 0,00623	6,75 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.234} = 0,36$ residual	0,1296 0,8704	3 146	0,0432 0,00596	7,25 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.2345} = 0,36$ residual	0,1296 0,8704	4 145	0,0324 0,00600	5,40 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.23456} = 0,37$ residual	0,1369 0,8631	5 144	0,02738 0,00599	4,57 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.234567} = 0,37$ residual	0,1369 0,8631	6 143	0,02281 0,00603	3,78 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,38$ residual	0,1444 0,8556	7 142	0,02062 0,00602	3,42 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.23456789} = 0,48$ residual	0,2304 0,7696	8 141	0,0288 0,00545	5,28 <sup>xx</sup>

A P P E N D I X F 8

COMPOSITE TABLE OF TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE OF INCREASES IN Rs  
IN EACH OF THE FOUR MAIN DIMENSIONS OF HOME BACKGROUND

x significant at 5 per cent level  
xx significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

(A) MIDDLE CLASS

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
R <sub>1.2345</sub> = 0,36 residual	0,1296 0,8704	12,96 87,04	4 45	0,0324 0,01934	1,68
R <sub>1.2345</sub> = 0,36 (R <sub>1.234567</sub> = 0,44) variables 6 and 7 residual	0,1296 0,0640 0,8064	12,96 6,40 80,64	4 2 43	0,032 0,01875	1,71
R <sub>1.234567</sub> = 0,44 (R <sub>1.2345678</sub> = 0,44) variable 8 residual	0,1936 0,0000 0,8064	19,36 0 80,64	6 1 42	0,0000 0,0192	0
R <sub>1.2345678</sub> = 0,44 (R <sub>1.23456789</sub> = 0,54) variable 9 residual	0,1936 0,0980 0,7084	19,36 9,8 70,84	7 1 41	0,098 0,01727	5,67 <sup>x</sup>
R <sub>1.23456789</sub> = 0,54 residual	0,2916 0,7084	29,16 70,84	8 41	0,03645 0,017278	2,11



## APPENDIX F8 (Continued)

(B) LOWER WORKING CLASS

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
$R_{1.2345} = 0,42$ residual	0,1764 0,8236	17,64 82,36	4 95	0,0441 0,00866	5,09 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.2345} = 0,42$ ( $R_{1.234567} = 0,44$ ) variables 6 and 7 residual	0,1764 0,0172 0,8064	17,64 1,72 80,64	4 2 93	0,0086 0,00867	0,99
$R_{1.234567} = 0,44$ ( $R_{1.2345678} = 0,46$ ) variable 8 residual	0,1936 0,0180 0,7884	19,36 1,80 78,84	6 1 92	0,0180 0,00856	2,10
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,46$ ( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,54$ ) variable 9 residual	0,2116 0,0800 0,7084	21,16 8,00 70,84	7 1 91	0,08 0,00778	10,28 <sup>xx</sup>
$R_{1.23456789} = 0,54$ residual	0,2916 0,7084	29,16 70,84	8 91	0,03645 0,007784	4,68 <sup>xx</sup>

## APPENDIX F8 (Continued)

(C) ENTIRE SAMPLE OF 150

SOURCE OF VARIANCE	SUM OF SQUARES	%	df	MEAN SQUARE	F
$R_{1.2345} = 0,36$	0,1296	12,96	4	0,0324	5,40 <sup>xx</sup>
residual	0,8704	87,04	145	0,00600	
$R_{1.2345} = 0,36$	0,1296	12,96	4		0,60
( $R_{1.234567} = 0,37$ )					
variables 6 and 7	0,0073	0,73	2	0,0036	
residual	0,8631	86,31	143	0,00603	
$R_{1.234567} = 0,37$	0,1369	13,69	6		1,24
( $R_{1.2345678} = 0,38$ )					
variable 8	0,0075	0,75	1	0,0075	
residual	0,8556	85,56	142	0,006025	
$R_{1.2345678} = 0,38$	0,1444	14,44	7		15,78 <sup>xx</sup>
( $R_{1.23456789} = 0,48$ )					
variable 9	0,0860	8,60	1	0,086	
residual	0,7696	79,96	141	0,00545	
$R_{1.23456789} = 0,48$	0,2304	23,04	8	0,0288	5,28 <sup>xx</sup>
residual	0,7696	76,96	141	0,00545	

A P P E N D I X F 9

COMPOSITE TABLE OF SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SETS OF CORRELATIONS

NOTE:  $N_1$  and  $r_1$  = MIDDLE CLASS  
 $N_2$  and  $r_2$  = LOWER WORKING CLASS

x significant at 5 per cent level  
 xx significant at 1 per cent level or beyond

VARIABLES	$N_1$	$N_2$	$r_1$	$r_2$	z VALUE OF $r_1$	z VALUE OF $r_2$	$1/(N_1-3)$	$1/(N_2-3)$	SE	z
Absence from school, and general educational performance	50	100	-0,41	-0,33	0,436	0,343	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	0,52
Performance in maths., and perf. in English	50	100	0,49	0,60	0,536	0,693	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	0,88
Number of bedrooms, and number of children	50	100	0,39	0,18	0,412	0,182	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	1,29
Fathers' level of educ., and general educ. perf.	50	100	0,18	0,35	0,182	0,365	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	3,08 <sup>xx</sup>
Mothers' level of educ., and general educ. perf.	50	100	0,22	0,11	0,224	0,110	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	1,88
Parents' level of educ., and general educ. perf.	50	100	0,23	0,20	0,234	0,203	0,0213	0,0103	0,1778	2,46 <sup>x</sup>