CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL BOYS IN NORTH KOLKATA

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BY

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Abstract

The present study explores the unearthed area about how masculinity is constructed among the high school boys of North Kolkata. The kernel departure point here was to explore how boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of different schools of North Kolkata practice and construct notions of masculinity both at home through their structured and unstructured leisure activities and at school through their school activities and their interaction with school and neighbourhood peers. Despite the nascent beginning of the arena of masculinity in India, yet the issue of masculinity construction among high school going adolescents is to be considered of significance in the discipline of Sociology of Gender. It is against this backdrop, the present research involved the objectives of how parents' contribution helped in the construction of masculinity of their adolescent sons. It also explores how these adolescent boys negotiate and practice their notions of masculinity through various structured and unstructured leisure activities that they engage in along with the different types of peers that these boys interact with both at school and at neighbourhood. Methodologically, the present research has been carried out with the help of in-depth face-to-face (unstructured) interviews of 100 high school boys of North Kolkata where the attempt has been made to reflect how family (parents from Bengali middle class) produces a significant impact in the adolescent life of youngsters through the different parenting styles adopted by them and whether any kind of changes in family structure are significant for the development of male adolescents. Such in-depth interviews also helped to explore how these adolescent boys of North Kolkata negotiate and construct masculinity by engaging in their leisure activities like attending coaching classes of Cricket and Football, usage of social networking sites, online dating, and body-building, reading magazines and story books, classical dance and music. The study also explores how peer group produces an impact in the construction of masculinity of the high school adolescent boys not only through their interaction with male and female peers, but also through their topics of discussion with their peer group along with their acceptance or marginalization from the group based on the topics they discuss and the activities they engage in school with their peers. However, more fruitful research on the construction of masculinity of adolescent boys need to be given importance so that sociologists in India can widen the horizon of academic discipline to a more enriching one.

Signature

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historically, studies on masculinity can be traced back to the inception of studies of gender and boyhood in the nineteenth century. Gender not only signifies power relationships but is also an element of social relations. Research in masculinity which emerged and developed in academics in Western societies during the 1990s was mainly due to the impact of the feminist movement which questioned and challenged the stereotypical conceptualization of masculinity and regarded masculinity as a gendered category. Due to this, the stereo-typification of masculinity was challenged in various debates to develop an in-depth understanding of men and masculinities and also to understand the way gender identities are formed. This was followed by significant changes in traditional gender roles in western societies during the late twentieth century which lead to the social construction of masculinity.

The ways by which cultural and social contexts shape gender development have always intrigued development researchers since they were interested in how gender is a socially constructed category where social status, power and patriarchal norms shape the beliefs about gender. (Best & Williams, 1997; Hamby & Dennis, 1997). While applying the social constructivist approach to the study of masculinity, Connell (1995) argued that social context contributes to the production of masculinities where there is a relation between idealized beliefs about masculinity and the well-being of adolescent boys in global South, especially India. (Guttentag & Secord, 1983). This signifies that it is the culture which helps in the social construction of masculinity. Masculinity involves a set of attributes, traits, behaviors and roles which are associated with boys and men. It is socially constructed since it is socially defined. It is also manifested in traditional gender roles and privileges which accept dominant position of men and subordinate position of women. This implies that masculinity implies the socially constructed traits of being a man ---- physically strong, courageous, aggression, emotionally detached, sexual potency. All of this helps boys and men to establish and maintain their superiority and control over women.

Cultural approaches to the study of masculinity have explored how culture contributions to the social construction of masculinity like machismo and also about cross-cultural variations in beliefs about masculinity as an ideology. Machismo involves a set of beliefs about

masculinity which is also a cultural ideal and it legitimizes the male authority in public and private spheres. (Cuellar, Arnold, Gonzalez, 1995; Gilmore, 1990)

Gilmore (1990) in a review of anthropological studies of masculinity identified four features of masculine beliefs which prevail in cultures: (a). aggression (b). virility (c). ability to protect family honour and resources (d). being a good provider. However, these traits are manifested and the appropriate code of masculine behaviour is determined specific cultural contexts where upbringing takes place.

Since adolescent boys are socially expected to be aggressive and macho, they are also socialized to internalize the idealized beliefs about masculinity (Gregg, 2055). Boys are also socialized to be hyper-masculine which signifies the traits that are valued and respected in an ideal man and boys feel pride in striving up to these ideal traits of being a man (Mhalingam, 2006; Spiro, 1982). In India, masculinity studies have been mostly dominated by cultural theorists who have examined the relationship between various socio-cultural factors and the construction of masculinity like cultural upbringing of boys. (Chatterjee, 1989; Osella & Osella, 2004; Nandy, 1998; Sinha, 1995). Jost and Hunyady (2005) regarded that internalizing patriarchal norms and values, especially culturally mandated expectations and internalizing idealized beliefs about masculinity is also related to the well-being of boys. (Crocker & Park, 2004)

Adolescence (defined within age group 10-19 years) is one of the most crucial of human development where construction of gender attitudes and perceptions take place. Due to the intense identity work that occurs during adolescence, it has turned into a fruitful site in contemporary society where teenage years are often the ones where youths explore and consolidate their identity (Erikson, 1959/ 1980). Thus, adolescence is a period which is constructed as a turbulent time both biologically and socially, in which teenagers work to create identity by relying more on their peers for decision-making and make the transition from childhood to adulthood (Tait, 2000). It is also a phase which is influenced by gender norms and beliefs which has implications for boys. The consequences for adolescent boys involve engaging in physical violence, high risk of substance abuse, victims of bullying and peer pressure (Blum, Mmari & Moreau, 2017). As adolescents, boys are socially constructed to abide by the hetero normative standards of masculinity by showing their physical strength and aggression, especially during their leisure activities like playing cricket and football or

when they are in conversation with their peer group. They are aware of being pressurized to conform to the appropriate gender roles of society (Yu et al, 2007).

Masculinities scholars regarded that adolescent boys and their masculinity have hardly been treated as subjects of scholarly research since the 'man' as male occupies the space of 'universal, normative subject' (Louie 2002:5). Adolescent boys have been absent even in gender studies which have put them at the centre of scholarly inquiry as gendered beings. As a result of such a dearth of literature on adolescent masculinity, there has been an explosion of writings on masculinities. Since most of the research is based either in Japan or South Asia (Derné 2000; Osella et al 2004; Banerjee 2005), there have been considerably less research on the social construction of adolescent masculinities in Southeast Asia (Peretz, 1995: 102).

In the Indian context, hardly any such research has been carried out on the construction of masculinity among high school boys as compared to Western literature. In India, research work has been conducted regarding the construction of masculinity of middle-class Bengali men during colonial rule. It is against this backdrop that the present research explores how adolescent boys from North Kolkata construct their notions of masculinity through their interaction with parents, and peer groups and through the different leisure activities that these boys engage in.

Review of existing literature:

Social Constructionist Perspective in Understanding Masculinity:

Although masculinity has been studied systematically for many years, construction of masculinity among adolescent boys is a relatively recent concept. Today construction of masculinity is one of the most research topics in gender studies in Britain and Australia. Social Construction is a continuous process where both the individual and society play an important part (Chimanzi, 2016: 6). Social constructionists argue that gender constructions are due to the intersecting historical, social and cultural factors at particular time period. Social constructionists argue that ideas about masculinity are fluid concepts which are informed by cultural beliefs, traditions and religion, among other contributors. (Chimanzi, 2016: 7). Gender is displayed by boys and men in situation ally specific ways which needs to be upgraded and maintained by them in and through their interactions within social context (West & Zimmerman, 1987). The concept of masculinity is a product of social construction of gender and is constructed differently in different locations. This suggests that masculinity

is constructed differently in each location and epoch. Masculinity is constructed differently depending upon social conditions in which people are situated (Chimanzi, 2016: 7).

Since a large body of scholarship on gender in Southeast Asia emphasizes on the lives of women, any issue or question of masculinity is understood in terms of women's interaction with men ----- as husband, father, employer or agents of the state. Men are rarely treated as subjects of gender-based research due to which one's understanding about masculinity is inferred from the study of women and femininities. (Ford & Lyons, 2012: 1) However, recent literature on men and masculinity resembles feminist forebears since its cynosure involves men's own experiences followed by men's gender-specific suffering which has given birth to a new field of enquiry, "Men's Studies" (Segal: Lyons, 2012). Due to the danger of obscuring the focus on the study of gender and power, men's study may make equal claims to gender inequality as victim of patriarchy. As a result of this, scholars working on men and masculinities have rejected the term 'men's studies' in favour of 'critical studies on men' (CSM) or 'studies of men and masculinities'. (Lyons, 2012: 2) Thus, there is also a dearth of research on how the performance of heterosexuality is related to the dominant construction of masculinity in Southeast Asia, especially India. (Lyons, 2012: 1)

In the *South Asia*, certain stereotypes are also associated with boys in terms of their conformity to the norms of hegemonic masculinity ---------- being physically active, strong, and aggressive and assumption of leadership. In terms of playing games with peers, boys are expected to play with them outside home away from family responsibilities while girls are expected to remain close to home while playing in order to confine them to domestic sphere (Dhume, 2018: 2). Masculinity in global South including India is a social construct of young men which provides a framework to understand the cultural rules related to their actions. Even in Indian society, those men who are unable to conform to the hetero normative masculine traits of *'aslimard'* (real man) in terms of their physical (good physical and handsome looks along with muscular body), attitudinal and behavioural attributes are subjected to social humiliation and bullying and are even stigmatised as '*emasculate*' or *'effeminate'*. These physical attributes like physical strength, toughness, aggression, courage are regarded important since they provide the mechanism for Indian boys to use their sexual prowess to attract and satisfy women (Dhume, 2018: 2). Thus, according to the socially constructed norm of masculinity, a real man is expected and socialised to be daring, courageous, violent and should possess capability in order to prove his manhood (Dhume, 2018: 2). Although there is detailed agreement regarding the role of masculinity which

creates vulnerabilities among young men, there exists little information on the construction of gender identity and how such identity is enforced in young men's lives in India (Dhume, 2018: 3).

It is in the light of this literature and due to lack of substantial research in India that the present research attempts to explore how masculinity is constructed in family where the contribution of parents in the construction of masculinity of their adolescent sons has been explored.

Parenthood and Masculinity:

The majority of available literature in *global South including India* portrays that one of the major social institutions by which gender inequality is sustained and reinforced is family. It is within the family that the children learns social values, internalizes the norms and values from their parents (father and mother) and also learns about what gender means to them (**Coltrane & Adams, 1997; Connell, 1987; Hearn, 1992).** It is in this context that this chapter explores how adolescent boys within family come to understand their privileged status as sons and how this male privilege equates to power (**Coltrane, 1996; Kaufman, 1999).**

The existing literature on Indian middle class family has transformed the ways of treating children. Hia Sen (**2016)** in her work stresses on the importance of social class especially during the nineteenth century where children lived separately from their parents. However, Sen also portrayed a dichotomous picturesque in modern childhood where children has an inseparable relation with their parents within family. The middle class family was the space in which processes that changed practices of sending children away on apprenticeship' or of treating children unequally within the same family were staged. This suggests that the influence of middle class became significant with the onset of modern childhood during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Though the class in which the children belonged had long been the matter of concern for sociologists, within the family, yet other agencies like school and education also became significant themes since the second half of twentieth century to understand the debate regarding class and childhood (**Robertson, 1974).**

By linking cultural practices with the social class of children, social educationists have emphasized on the impact of privilege on the educational achievement of the child. With Bourdieu's focus on social inequalities where he gave importance to concepts like habitus,

cultural capital and social class, these processes of cultural reproduction were used to understand that children from privileged families can use their inherited cultural resources in a better way than children who come from poor socio-economic background. Habitus, for Bourdieu involves the practical mastery of self where social practice is arranged in such a way that individuals can adjust to diverse social situations without considering each adjustment as it is made of. Such argument is regarded as the major focus of educational research and research on social stratification (Bourdieu, 1990: 53).

The family's transition during middle childhood brings with it new issues and concerns both for parents and children that arises when the interpersonal equilibrium during middle childhood is disturbed by the contextual changes associated with adolescence. Thereby, adolescence remain the crucial period of the child's development for which even parents express their apprehension. However, if parents allow greater independence to their children where their children become victims of violence, they are regarded as culpable and responsible for such atrocities against their children since parental risk anxiety is caused by discursive construction of responsibility. (Pasley and Gecas, 1984). This signifies that since parents from family are the major agents, so their modes of thinking, feeling and behaving which are linked to their social position (class) are internalized their children's habitus. Thereby, primary habitus is about 'internalizing the external'. This is the way Bourdieu regards class habitus (habitus de classe) which reflects the different social positions of people due to which they have different lifestyle, tastes and interests among social classes (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu &Darbel, 1969).

Though there has been extensive literature on parenthood and masculinity, there is dearth of literature on the contribution of Bengali middle class parents in the social construction of their adolescent sons. Further, there is also lack of Indian scholarship on how Bengali middle class adolescent boys spend their leisure time by engaging in different structured and unstructured activities. It is in the light of this context that the present research also explores how these adolescent boys of North Kolkata practice and negotiate their notion of masculinity through the different leisure activities that they engage in, both at school and at home.

Leisure and Masculinity:

Another unexplored theme is leisure studies where existing literature mainly discusses the meaning and different types of structured and unstructured leisure activities along with the

focus on activities like Cricket and Football as major forms of leisure activity of adolescent boys.

Adolescence is a time when adolescents emphasize on their leisure needs. Since youngsters have more free time and opportunities with lesser responsibilities, they are restricted by lack of spending power along with parental restrictions. It is during the stage of adolescence that youngsters ponder upon the importance of leisure in their everyday life, their attitudes towards leisure, meanings and constraints imposed upon leisure and the varied social forces which influence and shape their involvement. Adolescents regard any form of leisure activity as significant possessing personal meaning and a means of social expression. These interests are coloured and influenced by agencies like family, educational institutions, media, peer group and social change like rise in unemployment. Thereby, the leisure of adolescents (structure/ unstructured) can be seen as an interaction of influences from within the individual and from social environment (Leo & Janet, 2005: 53-54).

With the dearth of Western literature on the impact of peer group in masculine construction, existing research has been conducted on social changes of children during adolescence followed by the problems faced by them through homophobia, bullying and locker-room culture. However, limited literature on the construction of masculinity by peer group in my area of study had made it an unexplored theme.

As children step into adolescence, they start spending less time with their families and more with their peer group. This decrease of spending less time parents continues throughout the middle and high school years due to the increasing opportunities for academic, recreational and social activities outside family. Since peer relations become more important for the adolescents, they act as emotional confidantes and also serve as influential models of behaviour and attitudes for the adolescents. Though family continues to have primary influence on their children, yet they may find it difficult to adjust to their child's increasing interest in peer activities than family activities. As pointed out by Steinberg, parents from family can find their children seeking advice from their peers or even modelling their behaviour under the influence of peer group which can turn out to be objectionable for the parents (Buhrmester, 1996).

Though peers influence the adolescents in appositive way, it can also produce a negative impact on children by forcing them to take recourse to drugs, tobacco, alcohol as well as delinquency (Mounts and Steinberg 1995; WentzelandCaldwell1997). It is during this time

that peer group become important points of reference in the social development of adolescents. The day to day behavior of adolescents is shaped by peer group and friendships which encourage them to conform to the standard norms and values. Adolescents are also helped by such groups to learn social adjustments which are useful for their acceptance in society (Katerina, 2014: 140).

Since peer group also involves discussion with peers about sexual intimacy with girlfriends' in order to attain popularity among male friends, so this research also studies about locker-room culture which prevails among the high school boys in the West.

Against this backdrop, the present research attempts to explore how peer group plays a significant role in the construction of masculinity of adolescent boys of Kolkata through bullying and locker-room culture where boys are involved due to peer pressure.

Thereby, it is the light of this literature in the global South including India that the present research explores how the Bengali middle class adolescent boys of Kolkata construct their notions of masculinity through the leisure activities that they engage in along with the different types of peers that they interact with.

Peer group and the construction of Masculinity:

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Social changes of children due to peer group during adolescence:

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Though adolescents generate major social values in life from their parents during adolescence (Ochiltree, 1990), the major trends across adolescence is towards increasing importance of peer relationships. Peer group play a decisive role in the adolescents' life by providing vital feedback to them at times of personal and social change and enhance their communication with others as equal partners. This indicates that the major function of peer group as an agency of socialization is to provide security and assistance to the adolescents outside family setting (Steinberg, 1994: 25). Though parents play significant role in determining long-term preferences, attitudes and values during adolescence, it is relationship with peers which cause the most concern of the adolescents as they grow up. One of the significant aspect of adolescence as a stage is the search for new identity. It is during this stage that the influence of peer group torments where acceptance in the peer group helps in maintaining the identity of the adolescents while marginalization from the group produces negative impact on them (Steinberg, 1994: 30).

Friendships are based on a different set of structural relationship as compared to the relation with parents since friendships are more symmetrical, involve reciprocity and are evolutionary during teenage. At the onset of adolescence, friendships are characterized by transformation ---- with more emphasis on intimacy that includes development of more exclusive focus, debunking of self-disclosure and sharing of problems and advice. The ideology of sharing about each other's life with friends becomes a matter of prime importance during adolescence. Friends even reason together in order to organize experience and for the purpose of defining themselves as persons (Youniss and Smollar, 1985)

Adolescents tend to be dependent on their peer group and friends for help and advice with decisions and for discussing current activities whenever there is less parental interest. (Hunter, 1985). This suggests that though parents being the primary socializing agents are more influential in situations involving family values and future decision making, yet adolescents seek help from their friends only when they regard their parental attitudes as indifferent and rejecting (Larson, 1972; Smith, 1976).

The interaction of adolescents with their family and peers are shaped by certain developmental changes involving cognitive, verbal and reasoning abilities and the changes associated with puberty. Furthermore, the developmental changes of adolescence require more complex interpersonal skills which allows the adolescents to understand their friends' thought sand problems in a better way. The stable and meaningful friendships that they make allow them to understand the significance of mutuality and reciprocity (Berndt, 1982). In certain instances, while describing conflicts in authority context, adolescents regarded that adults would win over it since adults occupied a powerful position. (Berndt, 1982). Adolescents regard peer relationship as more favorable due to equal exchange of ideas where each other's views can be heard and respected. In this way, peers can perform the function of conflict resolution by means of mutual agreement and respect (Berndt, 1982).

Peers and friends perform multiple functions in adolescents' lives. Peer group plays a dynamic role in the life of adolescents, the influence of which shifts across adolescence Adolescents are able to evaluate the perspective of others and develop self-judgment by experiencing the values and norms of the peer group. Since most groups are oriented towards fostering identity development, certain developmental changes in peer pressure supersedes the group differences. There are different activities that teenagers learn by exposure to peer models like dressing style, language use, musical interest, leisure activities along with the method of handling social relationship by observing and emulating peers. This shows that peer group offer various opportunities to adolescents both for role-taking and role-modeling. The most important aspect in adolescence is the ability of being admired, accepted and definition of one's role within the peer group (Berndt, 1982).

Social acceptance is an urgent pre requisite for most adolescents due to the importance of peers in the adolescents' lives (Berscheid and Walster, 1972). Acceptance and popularity in peer group is related to similar attitudes and perceived attractiveness (Cavior and Dokecki, 1973). A study on peer group culture and masculinity showed that in terms of the popularity

of peer group, adolescents emphasize more on physical characteristics and abilities (handsome and sportive for young men and pretty and nice figure for women (Hendry and Jamie, 1978).

Objectives of the study:

The core of the present research has explored the following objectives:

a. Construction of masculinity of the high school adolescent boys of Kolkata within the family (parents) ---- how parents (father and mother) contribute to the masculinity of their adolescent sons through the different parenting styles adopted by them and whether gendered parenting style continue to exist even to this day.

b. Practice and negotiation of masculinity of the adolescent boys through their different structured and unstructured leisure activities ----- Watching movies, Attending coaching classes of football and cricket, Surfing the Net and social media, Reading magazines, Body-building, swimming and cycling.

c. The impact of the peer group in the construction of masculine identity of the high school boys of Kolkata ----- how masculinity of the adolescent boys are strengthened or solidified through their interaction with their male and female peer group.

Since the present research explores how masculinity is socially constructed among the Bengali middle-class boys followed by their parental perception of middle class, so the concept of the middle class in the context of India, especially Bengali community has been explored.

The available literature on Bengali middle class is also limited where focus is mainly on its historical emergence along with the physiological changes in Bengali middle class boys. However, hardly any research has been conducted on construction of masculinity among Bengali middle class boys.

Against this backdrop, the present research has used the concept of Bengali middle class to signify those middle income groups of North Kolkata with their income range between Rs 2,00,000-5,00,000 lakh per annum and those groups of people involved in professions like lawyers, entrepreneurship and government school teachers.

Research Methodology

Research Design:

The present study has attempted to use a mixed-method approach to explore how adolescent boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of North Kolkata construct their notions of masculinity at home (parents) and in school. The mixed-method which is a new approach in social research is also known as the third methodological movement which emerged as an alternative to the dichotomy of qualitative and quantitative traditions (Teddlie, Tashakkori, 2007:04).

Methods used for the research:

In this research, I as a researcher have used qualitative approaches like face-to-face in-depth interviewing following the narrative interview method and observation (to understand non-verbal behavior). The study has used a semi-structured interview schedule for conducting the interview and recording the experiences of respondents that they shared during the interview method.

Through narrative analysis is highly significant in humanities and social science research, qualitative researchers hardly pay attention to the narrative nature of interaction during interviews.

Against this backdrop, I have attempted to present the demographic questions quantitatively. The demographic data has also been represented using univariate variables. As my research is particularly based on a qualitative approach, therefore the data regarding adolescent boys' meaning of boyhood, their leisure activities, and their interaction with peer groups followed by their parents' perception of the boyhood of their sons (belonging to the middle class). In this study, all the respondents' names have been changed to maintain the confidentiality of their identities.

Units of Analysis and Sampling:

The primary units of analysis of this study are parents (father and mother) and the high school adolescent boys two dichotomous groups of parents and their children have been studied for the collection of authentic data. In this study, I, as a researcher chose to collect data from 100 adolescent boys including their parents on the objectives of the study. In this study of exploring the perception of middle-class adolescent boys and their parents regarding the

construction of masculinity, I tried to obtain responses from the boys and their parents who are following the respondents' maturity and their socio-economic background.

The present study is an exploratory study that has been conducted by studying 100 adolescent high school boys who are aged 16-17 years of age studying in XIth and XIIth standards of schools along with their parents (father and mother) who are within 45-55 years of age with varied socio-economic (upper and middle class) and professional background, residing in areas of North Kolkata like Shyambazar, Bagbazar, Kumortuli and Shobhabazar. The age group of the school boys and their parents have been selected from their profile. These respondents have been selected from North Kolkata, West Bengal keeping in mind the objectives of the research.

In terms of sampling technique, Non-Probability Purposive and Snowball sampling methods are used for the selection of respondents for this study. Purposive sampling is used since it is based on the researcher's judgment followed by the Snow-Ball sampling technique.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The major theory that I have used in my dissertation are the Theories of Masculinity to understand how Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity and submissive masculinity is socially constructed. In my research, I have used the notion of hegemonic masculinity to portray how such notion socially constructs the adolescent boys of Bengali middle class parents to conform to the hetero-normative standards of masculinity --- by being physically strong, courageous, aggressive and emotionally detached. I have also used Connell's concept of submissive masculinity to show how adolescent boys who learn classical dance and singing are accepted or ostracized by their peer group and how their parents (father and mother) encourage them to engage in such activities since they regard that activities like classical dance involves softness and grace which would challenge their sons' hegemonic masculinity and turn them submissive.

I have also used Parenting theories by Diana Baumrind in order to understand the different parenting styles adopted by the parents to discipline their adolescent sons. This research also uses the concept of 'risk society' to signify the different risks that are associated with the safety and security of the adolescent sons (Beck, 1955). It also depicts how parents of these sons perceive the risks by imposing temporal restrictions on their adolescent sons and specifying the notions of 'good risk' for them due to their concern about their son which turns into a matter of 'bad risk' for their sons as such restrictions infringes into their private space (Lupton 1999).

Since children are no longer passive beings, so the research also uses New Sociology of Childhood where the term socialization which has an individualistic connotation is inescapable and so it is replaced by the notion of interpretive reproduction. The notion signifies that children being the product of society not only internalize culture and society but also contribute to cultural production and change. This means that children and their childhoods are affected by the societies and cultures of which they are significant members, especially through the means of peer cultures (Corsaro, 2016)

Another major theoretical understanding of this research was Bourdieu's concept of habitus where role of the caregivers or parents who socializes their children in terms of their gender and their children adjusts themselves to such gendered norms and practices of their parents

comes into the scenario. Such habitus is gained by socialization within family and school. During such habitus formation, some capitals are involved depending upon the context in which children live and actualize them (Dewi & Tlonaen: 2019).

Further, this research also uses the social constructionist views of the body through the activities engaged by the adolescent boys like body-building, beautification of their bodies through social media. Such social constructionist view of the body is influenced by three theorists: Mary Douglas; emphasis on power, discourse, and the body by Foucault; and the study on Presentation of self and social identity by Erving Goffman.

Since adolescent boys spend most of their time in different leisure activities, the present research explores this unexplored theme by looking into the adolescent perceptions about leisure, theoretically. Out of both structured and unstructured leisure activities, research suggests that structured activities provide a range of opportunities for adolescents to acquire and practice their physical, social, and intellectual skills and also to form a network with friends and adults in their life (Larson and Verma, 1999).

In order to maintain such muscular body and abide by the socially constructed notion of keeping themselves physically fit, boys engage in body-building and activities like Cricket and Football. They also beautify their bodies through tattoo and through self-presentation in the form of selfies by posting it over social media like WhatsApp and Facebook. The advent of technology has led to the emergence of the Internet which is either used for business and other official purposes or entertainment. One such social networking site is Facebook which in this fast-paced world, helps its users to keep in touch with their family members, friends, and relatives virtually (Flad, 2010:8-9).

However, in these works, there is no such mention of how parents help in the construction of masculinity of adolescent boys of North Kolkata.

CHAPTER 3

PARENTHOOD AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

This chapter explores whether stereotypically gendered parenting exists in the middle-income groups of Bengali households of North Kolkata even to this day. Since this chapter emphasizes how parents belonging to Bengali families help in the construction of masculinity of the high school adolescent boys of North Kolkata, so I try to analyze different dimensions like the kind of encouragement/surveillance that parents engage in boys' studies, to what extent the parents allow their sons to go outside, along with the restrictions imposed on their sons if they are late followed by their surveillance over the unstructured leisure activities of their sons. This chapter also explores how fathers reinforce gender stereotypes than mothers in the family which gets reflected in their treatment and discipline of their sons and also in their social interaction with their sons (Caldera, Huston, & O'Brien, 1989; Fagot & Leinbach, 1993; Lytton & Romney, 1991).

The present research has been carried out among the Bengali middle-class families residing in north Kolkata. The northern part of Kolkata was dominated by traditional building structures with street-level verandas comprising of families with long traditions or lineage behind them (bonedi bari). It mainly comprised areas like Shyambazar, Bagbazaar, Kumortuli and Shobhabazaar. The northern part of Kolkata with the onset of twentieth century changed from a religious pilgrimage (due to its location on the banks of river Hooghly which became the spot of pilgrims to pay homage to 'Holy Ganga' followed by the emergence of Shri Ramakrishna) to a place which was partly inhabited by the descendants of feudal gentry and the remaining parts are rented out to shopkeepers and tenants. While the old trades continue to operate like small shops of grocers, tailors and carpenters along with few sweet shops, new trades have also come into existence in recent years like the ubiquitous Xerox stalls and phone booths. (Banerjee, 2016: 106). Further, the onset of the twenty-first century was marked by Metro railway station followed by two-storied departmental store run by Raymonds (clothes brand) and Sriniketan (two-storied mall) on Baghbazar Street. While the traditional buildings of the dewans became dilapidated, small brick houses came up which was inhabited by the new Bengali middle-class people including lawyers, teachers and medical professionals. This new Bengali middle class mainly resided in the Baghbazar and Shyambazar streets (Banerjee, 2016: 90).

1. **Parenting the boys:**

This research which depicted the traditional part of Kolkata was also characterized by joint families where spouses lived with their children along with parents. The adolescent boys play with other boys in the neighborhood which keeps the para culture strong even to this day. This chapter aims to analyze how the family (parents from the Bengali middle class) produces a significant impact on the adolescent life of youngsters followed by the impact of parental supervision on their adolescent sons. It also explores how parents help to construct their son's masculinity through their disciplinarian attitude, supervision of their sons' activities including interaction with peers, impositions regarding attires, career aspirations, and association with the outside world. This chapter also portrayed how parents convey gender messages to their adolescent sons where they are motivated to conform to the traits of hegemonic masculinity and the culturally valued masculine ideals. It has also shown how society places greater emphasis on the gender identity of men which reflects an androcentric gender bias that valorizes masculine traits and behavior (Bem, 1993; Lorber, 1994).

This research emphasizes on the different forms of **discipline** carried out by the parents along with their perception of them their son. The treatment of both father and mother tends to be different for their son and daughter. *This study emphasizes the different ways by which parents discipline their sons, supervise their studies/careers followed by supervision over their structured/ unstructured leisure activities, sharing about the private life of their sons, where on one end of the continuum is Authoritative and Authoritative-Directive parenting, on the other end is Permissive parenting.* The common characteristics of parents who indulge in the same type of parenting have also been studied in this theme along with how parenting is connected with the perception of risks of their sons. This study has also observed how a continuum exists ranging from gendered to non-gendered forms of parenting.

Types of parenting:

1.1.1 *Authoritative parenting of sons:*

The father of Utpal (16 years), who is a businessman by profession summarized;

"The treatment of my son is based on his behavior at home. If he is obedient and obeys my command then I treat him liberally since disobedience is not something that I like or entertain. When Utpal disobeys me or my command (which is mainly for his safety), he is punished for his deeds though such punishment is never violent."

Utpal's father disciplines his son depending on his obedience/ disobedience at his house. If his son is obedient and does studies and follows his command of returning home by 8p.m in the evening, he treats Utpal liberally. However, if his son does not listen to him by being disobedient and returning home late, then Utpal's father disciplines him in an authoritarian manner. This is how Baumrind explains *the authoritative parenting* style as a style that has a positive outcome on children and adolescents like high self-esteem, good academic performance, and good emotional control. The behavior of Utpal's father showed traits of authoritative parenting which involves being disciplinarian in such a way that children are socialized in a spirit of disciplined conformity, obedience, and adherence to the rules and regulations of the head of the family (the father). Utpal's father tries his best to satisfy the physical and emotional needs of his son and even encourages independent thinking to an extent but he fixes the rules of the house with logical sense which needs to be abided by his child. He is demanding and responsive and treats his son in an authoritarian manner and when this style is developed, it grows to fit the propagative parenting and civilization. Utpal's father is a businessman by profession who sets clear standards for his children and monitors the limits that he sets but also gives freedom to his children to develop autonomy and independence. His statement regarding the disobedience of his order can involve punishment that is measured and consistent but never violent and arbitrary. (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62). Such a form of parenting leads to the construction of masculinity in Utpal as he is being socialized by his father to be obedient, disciplinarian, and adhere to the rigid rules and regulations of his authoritarian father.

This type of parenting style is *gendered parenting* not only because Utpal's father imposes stringent discipline on his son in terms of obedience to his decision as to the male patriarch of the family but also because such adherence to his rules and regulations is different for his son and Utpal's mother. His mother, being a house worker, not only obeys all instructions of her spouse but she is also not given time restrictions (7:00p.m) for staying outdoor either with their son or with her friends during any outing. Such gender discrimination is highly prevalent in the parenting style used by Utpal's father not only against his son but also his mother as well.

1.1.2   Authoritarian-directive parenting of sons:

Rishav's mother (40 years) who is a housewife expressed,

"I stringently treat my son during studies so that he can be more focused on his career, so I do not grant excess liberty to him at this age being an adolescent. Due to this, I don't allow him to hang out with friends after 7:00 pm and supervise all his activities at home."

Even Rishav's mother who is a housewife by profession conforms to the norms of authoritative-directive parenting style since she disciplines her son to be a careerist and does not give him the liberty of going outdoor with his friends after dawn.(7:00 p.m.). This type of parenting style by Rishav's mother portrays Baumrind's authoritarian-directive parenting style where she is highly intrusive of her son Rishav's whereabouts by setting clear timing rules of staying outdoor with his friends. She also conducts surveillance of his activities at home like his studies and usage of social media like WhatsApp, and Facebook as she wants her son to be ambitious and be more focused on his studies, than on interacting with his friends. (Baumrind: Darling, 1999& Foucault, 1985)

However, Mayukh's father (49 years) who is a school teacher summarized,

"I allow my son to stay till 8:00 p.m. provided he can justify his reasons for coming late. If I am not available due to work, he needs to be answerable to his mother for the needful. Yet I hardly force my son to remain indoors after dawn since he might turn aggressive being at this stage of adolescence and can take recourse to a dangerous initiative for which we as parents have to repent forever."

The father of Mayukh who is a school teacher by profession also sets a time frame for his son only if he can give justification for coming late at home. Even in his absence, Mayukh remains answerable about his late arrival at home to his mother since his father believes he is at the critical stage of adolescence where he can become a victim of any kind of atrocities like smoking, gambling, or other illicit activities like eve-teasing. All of such atrocities can reduce a profound impact on his career. However, his father still allows his son to remain outside till late at night as he also fears not allowing his son to spend time outside with his friends can produce a negative impact on his son where he can become stubborn by taking recourse to the dangerous attempt of suicide, being adrift from the social life of friends. Such parenting practice adopted by Mayukh's father is authoritative-directive parenting since he allows his son to stay outdoor till 8:00 pm only if his son can justify his reasons for returning

late at home. During his absence, he assigns such responsibility to Mayukh's mother as he regards that his son must be answerable to anyone parent for returning late to the house. Since he is authoritarian and disciplined, so he imposes such restrictions on his son.

Since parents play an important role in sons' supervision of their activities, especially studies, they also play a decisive role in the provision of their freedom of career aspirations. I explore whether parents provide freedom to their sons regarding their career along with the reasons behind such provision or non-provision.

Fathers in this study from North Kolkata mostly granted freedom in terms of finance to their sons regarding their careers provided their sons inspired them with good academic performance and preferred their sons to pursue Science/ Engineering/ Doctor for a better prospect.

Sounak's father (45 years) who is a government school teacher opined,

"Since my son wishes to pursue his career in music (singing) I do motivate him but with certain conditions. Since he is a 'boy', so building a career in 'classical music' will not be fruitful for him as career in Music is not lucrative for future. Further, the musical journey is not flowery but involves hardships and struggle".

Sounak's father provides freedom to his son regarding his choice of career but worries about his son's secure future in Music which cannot always be flowery as it requires hard work and struggle since a Musician's career is filled with hardships. His father also allowed Sounak to develop a career in music provided his son builds a career in studies. Further, Sounak's father regards that since his son is a boy so he has to abide by the socially constructed notion of masculinity by being in the profession where there is lucrative job and future where he can be financially secured and independent rather than being in a profession where there is hardly any secured future. This contrasts with the masculinity of Sounak since music is his passion and he wants to build a career as classical music singer. Though he has been bullied by his father for his choice of career since it deviates from the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity', yet he is firm in his decision. (Connell, 2005).

Such interpretation of Sounak's masculinity also portrays how he interprets through his own meanings and interpretations by since he has the ability to create a culture of his own through interpretative reproduction. This is how Hirschfield explained the 'New Sociology of Childhood' which involves the interpretative understanding by children through their own

meanings and interpretations since children have the ability to create a culture of their own. (Corsaro, 2016; Hirschfeld, 2002)

On a similar note, Aritra's father who is a teacher in government school summarized,

"Since Aritra always wanted to become a classical dancer being interested in the profession since a young age, he even attends dance classes of the needful. However, I don't always support the idea of him being a dancer as he is a boy who not only requires a lucrative future but also need to portray his boyhood."

Aritra's father disapproves his son's interest in classical dance since practicing such dance form does not conform to the hetero-normative standards of masculinity since classical dance involves grace, softness with the absence of physical toughness and aggression. According to his father, boys who practice classical dance are not socially constructed to be a boy but conform to the notion of Submissive Masculinity since such form of masculinity involves softness with a different body movement and gait followed by expression of emotions. This is how Connell explains the notion of submissive masculinity which involves those men whose power is oppressed by hegemonic masculinity. Simultaneously, Aritra's power as a boy was also oppressed by the socially constructed notion of hegemonic masculinity since he did not abide by its traits. (Connell, 2005). Further, career in classical dance would not promise his son a lucrative future prospect which was a matter of concern for his father too as being a boy he wants his son to choose a career prospect which would help his son to be financially independent and provide him a lucrative job in future.

On the other hand, mothers were mostly liberal to not impose any restrictions on their sons regarding their careers and allow them to pursue their desired careers.

Rohit's mother (36 years) who is a school teacher from northern Kolkata summarized,

"I provide freedom to my son regarding the choice of his career. I always support him in his career decisions in whatever he wants to pursue in the future. However, I still wish that he becomes an Engineer since it is my dream to see him shine in this profession which demands success."

Though Rohit's mother provides much freedom to his son regarding his choice of career yet she mostly wants her son to become an Engineer by profession which according to her, holds a bright secure future with proper remuneration. This is because financial security is crucial

for her son as he is a man. This is how Connell explains hetero normative standards of masculinity where a boy is socially constructed to be physically strong and financially independent so that he can be the financial support of his family anytime (Connell, 2005)

The remaining mothers of the study expressed their desire of following the stereotype of wanting their son to be an efficient and successful Doctor/Engineer since such a profession demands reverence, honour with lucrative success in society.

Table 1: Parental difference regarding freedom of choice of career of their sons:

WHICH PARENTS GAVE FREEDOM TO THEIR SONS REGARDING CHOICE OF CAREER:	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
a. Father	46	46
b. Mother	54	54
Total	100	100

Table 1 shows that 46% of fathers from North Kolkata mostly granted freedom in terms of finance to their sons regarding their career and preferred their sons to pursue Science/ Engineering/ Doctor for a better prospect. They did not want their sons to pursue a career in subjects like Music since a career in Music requires hard work and is filled with hardships. On the contrary, 54% of mothers provided the freedom to their sons regarding their choice of career --- whether he pursues a career in Science or Humanities. However, mothers also expressed their desire of following the stereotype of wanting their son to be an efficient and successful Doctor/Engineer since such a profession demands reverence, and honor with lucrative success in society.

1.1.3   Permissive parenting of sons:

Atul's mother (39 years) who is a school teacher also expressed,

"I treat my only son in a friendly manner being my only issue and so I try to pamper him by providing his freedom in terms of career, hanging around with friends, and letting him share about his private life with me, as his friend. I always encourage him to give his best in whatever he aspires for."

Atul's mother's treatment of her son in a friendly manner is non-traditional and lenient, which does not require maturity and allows self-regulation followed by avoidance of

confrontations. She is both nurturing and communicative with his child, often taking on the status of *a friend* than being a stringent parent. This is how Baumrind explains *the permissive parenting style* whereby Atul's mother has fewer demands from his son due to low expectations of self-control. Atul's mother is warm, responsive, and caring towards his son's needs and aspirations. She is a friend to her son and also possesses the traits of being encouraging as a parent and tends to be evasive of conflicts, harmony oriented with non-restrictive child discipline strategy which characterizes permissive parenting practice as the family hierarchy is flat with role equality between parents and children. (Baumrind: Darling, 1999)

Such form of parenting of Atul's mother conforms to the *non-gendered form of parenting style* whereby she interacts with her sons as a friend than being an astringent parent. She not only imposes lesser temporal restrictions on her son but also has fewer demands from him being responsive and caring towards his son's needs. This is also because of gender equality between Atul and her mother where the family hierarchy of patriarchy does not exist due to which there is a harmony-oriented and non-restrictive child-discipline strategy. Such a form of parenting by Atul's mother also leads to the construction of masculinity of her son as Atul regards his mother as his friend and his environment is also congenial where he can interact and share about his friends with his mother.

The fact that most parents (both father and mother) of the study do not provide consent to their children to remain outdoor after dawn (7:00 pm) also conforms to the traits of Baumrind's authoritative parenting style. Most fathers have fixed rules for staying outdoor which are highly authoritative and disciplinarian in nature. Since most fathers of the study are the head of the family, their sons are bound to adhere to the rules set by their fathers. If anytime their sons turn up late, punishments are given though not violent or arbitrary.

Majority of Bengali fathers negated allowing their sons to stay away from home till late at night (7:00 p.m.) citing that society is not a secure place for men along with women. This means that fathers are concerned about the risks associated with the safety and security of their adolescent sons' as they believe that their sons can become victims of any violence or atrocities against men like drug addiction, and sexual assault and they feared that their sons can get involved in illegal activities like drug trafficking due to peer pressure. Due to this, they used temporal restrictions on their son which was a matter of 'good risk' for them but it became a matter of 'bad risk' for their sons as such impositions were an encroachment into

their private space when they are spending time with their friends outside home. (Lupton, 2003) On the other hand, Bengali mothers in the study treated their sons in a friendly manner as they do not believe in impositions on their sons. They maintain a friendly bonding with their sons so that their sons can share anything about their personal life with their fathers.

Concerning the interaction of their sons with their peer group, parents allowed their sons to interact and mix freely with both male and female friends and encourage their sons to mix more with female friends since they regard females as being more helpful before their sons' exams and whenever they fall into any troublesome situation.

As far as dresses and dispositions are concerned boys are hardly allowed to wear short dresses in both private and public spheres whereas girls are not given such freedom since wearing such attires can question their sanctity and are often criticized for wearing inappropriate attire. Parents imposed restrictions on their sons regarding their outing after dawn as they are at the critical stage of adolescence which involves risks associated with the safety and security of their sons.

This chapter also explores whether parents supervise their children's leisure activities like sports, usage of social media, and interaction with friends at school / tuition/ neighbourhood, watching movies, and dating. It emphasizes parental supervision over their sons in terms of taking them to tuition or a friend's place and accompanying them back to their home. It also deals with the impact of such vigilance of the parents over their sons who help in the construction of masculinity.

Table 2: Parental supervision over their sons' structured/ unstructured leisure activities (Multiple responses):

PARENTAL SUPERVISION OVER THEIR SONS' STRUCTURED/ UNSTRUCTURED LEISURE ACTIVITIES:	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (parents)	PERCENTAGE (%)
a. Watching movies	40 (mother- 30, father- 10)	40
b. Usage of social media like WhatsApp/ Facebook/ Instagram	15 (mother- 15, father- 15)	15
c. Playing mobile games (PUBG)	15	15
d. Gossip/ adda with neighbourhood friends	20 (mother-10, father-10)	20
e. Attending coaching classes of cricket and football	10 (mother-5, father-5)	10

Table 2 depicts that the father and mother supervise their sons' structured and unstructured leisure activities differently. While 30% of mothers supervise their sons' leisure activity of watching any action/ romantic movies due to the presence of obscenity in such films, 10 % of fathers get time to supervise their sons' watching movies (total= 40), 30 % of parents (both father and mother) supervise their sons' usage of social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram along with their sons' usage of mobiles to play games like PUBG. The remaining 20% of parents (father and mother) mostly supervise their sons' unstructured leisure activity of adda that their sons engage with their neighborhood friends by escorting them to their friends' place; on the other hand, 10% of parents supervise their sons' structured activities like their involvement in Sports (football/ cricket) than 10 % of their mothers (total= 40) to make them physically strong and fit.

Due to the change in social definition, adolescents experience loosening of impositions followed by increasing autonomy and opportunity in various spheres. Though adolescents feel free to welcome such autonomy and freedom, their parents find such social transitions to be a challenge to their ability to supervise, and control behaviour and other activities in their teenage lives. Thus, this chapter is concluded with the ideology of parents being the major socializing agents who transmit the notion of masculinity as they want their sons to be socially constructed as a man.

CHAPTER 4

LEISURE STYLES OF ADOLESCENT BOYS

Adolescents regard leisure as a form of relaxation and freedom from their routine life (studying) in terms of time and choice. Adolescents also regard leisure as a condition of easy, unstructured enjoyment where they can spend time with friends with little emphasis on their work (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995). Historically, sociological writings have mostly referred children only in reference to their socialization which was underpinned by the fact that children were of interest to sociology only when they disclosed clues about their adulthood (Alanen, 1992 &Mayall, 2013). The fact that children can also be seen as social actors having their own right were never heard within the sociology of family and education. Further, any form of information about their lives came from their parents or teachers and children were hardly included in any research project as participants (Scott, 2000). However, such scenario transformed with the onset of *'New Sociology of Childhood'* during 1980s where a new paradigm shift in the childhood research in sociology occurred. Such paradigm shift changed the focus of looking at childhood as a period of life to regarding it as permanent and structural segment of society With the advent of new sociology of Childhood, conceiving childhood changed from a biological given to a structural feature which helps to understand how experiences of childhood differ across time and space (Mukherjee, 2020).

This chapter provides an in depth understanding about how high school adolescent boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards and belonging to joint and nuclear families of North Kokata define boyhood and leisure and construct their notions of masculinity in terms of their different leisure activities both within school and outside their school premises in their neighbourhood (para). This chapter also studies how these adolescent boys negotiate and construct masculinity by engaging in their leisure activities like watching movies, attending coaching classes of Cricket and Football, body-building and beautification of body through tattoo and body-piercing, usage of social networking sites, online dating, and body-building, reading magazines and story books.

High school boys defined leisure as any free time activity that they utilize for relaxation in order to escape from the mundane and routine aspects of daily life. Leisure time is a time which allows them to engage in their hobbies (i.e. attending coaching classes of football and cricket and playing online games like PUBG with friends) which provides them with peace

and satisfaction in life, as defined by McMeeking and Purkayastha where they showed how adolescent boys regard leisure as a condition of easy, unstructured enjoyment where they can spend time with friends with little emphasis on their work (McMeeking & Purkayastha, 1995).

This study also explored the different types of structured leisure activities the boys are engage in ------ body-building or gym, attending coaching classes of Cricket and Football, learning different enrichment activities like Dance and Music. Majority of high school boys prefer spending their leisure time by engaging in structured activities like *body-building or gym.*

1. *Types of structured leisure activities engaged in and the reasons behind their involvement:*

This study explores the different types of structured leisure activities the boys are engaged in ------ body-building or gym, playing sports (cricket, football, rugby), learning Music in classes.

Majority of high school boys prefer spending their leisure time by engaging in structured activities like *body-building or gym.* They also preferred *playing different outdoor games like football, cricket during their leisure time where they are enrolled with fees,* learning Music in classes followed by Dance.

Rupen Das, (17 years, XIIth standard) summarized,

"The most preferable leisure activity for me is body-building or gym as I am obsessed with physical fitness. I have always been very much concerned about keeping my health fit due to which gym gives me solace to lead a healthy life. I also tend to ignore those boys in my school who are feminine and are unfit to practice body-building."

Atul (17 years, XIIth standard) also responded in the same way like Rupen by defining body-building as,

"Body building is my favourite activity during leisure. When I used to study in VIIth standard, I used to be thin with no muscular body and was depressed due to such an unhealthy body, whereas my friends always possessed a muscular and healthy body without any form of slimness or stoutness. Now during my XIIth standard, I love my body as now I undergo regular body building during my recess from studies. Having a toned muscular body has given me strength to upkeep with the society's demands of being fit and healthy.

Rupen Das and Atul Biswas prefer body-building or gym as the most preferable leisure activity as he is concerned about his physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. Thier obsession with physical fitness initiated since the age of 12 years when he just started practicing body-building. Their concern about physical fitness and regime to keep a muscular, well-built body which gives him confident conforms to *'body reflexive practice'* which helps in the construction of hegemonic masculinity as much as it undermines it (Connell, 2005). Rupen is inclined towards body-building in order to abide by the traits of heterosexual masculinity (Labre, 2002; Mosley, 2009; Pope & Phillips, 2000; Smolak & Stein, 2010).

However, this chapter also explored how few adolescent boys was socially humiliated by their parents, especially father since their interest in Dance has been unwelcomed by their school peers who bully him at times as any form of classical/ kathak Dance by boys has been socially constructed as a feminine activity and the boys who practice them are regarded as an 'effeminate'. This is because boys are socialized to conform to the traits of being physically strong, tough, emotionally stoic which is absent in Kathak dance. A classical dancer has to be soft, emotional and submissive and needs to portray his emotions as a part of his act and need not be violent always (unless the act requires). Such is the situation for those adolescent boys since they had to portray their softness, emotions during his Dance due to which most of his school friends used to interact less with them (Connell, 2005).

Table 3: Types of structured leisure activities engaged by the adolescent boys (Multiple responses):

DIFFERENT FORMS OF SRUCTURED LEISURE ACTIVITIES ENGAGED BY THE ADOLESCENT BOYS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
a. Attending coaching classes of Cricket and Football	50	50
b. Body-building	40	40
c. Learning music in music classes (cultural activity)	10	10
d. Dance (cultural activity)	10	10

Table 3 signifies that 50% adolescent boys prefer attending coaching classes of Football/ Cricket as their preferred structured leisure activity. On other hand, 40 % boys prefer keeping themselves physically fit through body- building. The remaining 20 % either attends and learns Music in classes or prefers practicing dance as their chosen leisure activities.

2. *Types of unstructured leisure activities engaged in and the reasons behind their involvement:*

This study also explored how adolescent boys construct their boyhood through the different unstructured leisure activities they are engaged in ------ watching movies supervised by their mother (family leisure), playing online games (PUBG or any other preferred game of their choice), *'adda'* with their school or neighbourhood peers, using social media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram), cooking, listening to music, reading magazines and story books.

On the other hand, adolescent boys also pointed out their preferred unstructured leisure activities mainly include watching Action/ Thriller movies either on Netflix or Amazon Prime (as referred by their parents), playing online games (PubG or any other preferred game of their choice), *'adda'* with their school or neighbourhood peers, using social media (Whatsapp, Facebook, Instagram), reading magazines and story books.

Rupen (17 years, XIIth standard) chooses his preferred watching movies as his leisure activity,

"For me, spending leisure time is mainly watching any kind of Action/ Thriller movies over Netflix/ Amazon Prime but only as referred by my parents, especially Mom. I like Action/ thriller movies since it gives me ideas to seek vengeance over the enemies through a critical perspective. I like watching some English romantic movies too. However, the choice of such movies depends upon my mother."

Since Rupen's preferred unstructured leisure activity is watching Action/ Thriller/ Romantic English movies, he likes to watch such movies as most action/ thriller movies helps him with ideas of vengeance over enemies and the ways to defeat them through a critical stance. He also watches English romantic movies which also portrays his aggressive and soft masculinity as well. However, he is allowed to watch only those English romantic movies which have been approved by his middle-class mother since most of such movies involve scenes which are obnoxious in nature. This is how Rupen's supervision over his unstructured leisure activity conforms to *'family leisure'* which is one of its major components. Family leisure is the outcome of negotiation between Bengali middle -class parents and their children where the sons watch movies approved by their parents, especially mother (Roosemalan and Krahn, 1996).

On the contrary, Sourav ((16 years, XIth standard) summarized his preferred unstructured leisure activity,

"I prefer playing online games over Mobile like PUBG and Mind Craft. PUBG is my favourite as it helps me to fight my enemies (without fear) and there are rewards if I win. Mind Craft helps me to hunt treasure which is hidden. I love playing these games with my school friends mostly and even challenge them. I also enjoy interacting with friends over social media like WhatsApp too."

Sourav prefers spending his leisure time in unstructured leisure activity of playing online games like PUBG and Mind Craft. These are his preferred games since PUBG helps him to defeat the enemies through militant attitude and it portrays how aggressive he can be by defeating all his enemies (friends) and winning over his friends. This is how Connell also explains hegemonic masculinity where a boy is socially constructed to conform to the traits of being physically strong, aggressive and being inexpressive to emotions. Since both the games require physical strength for defeat with lack of emotional stoicism, so both the games have been the preferred activity for Sourav. Further unstructured leisure activity does not require any enrolment with fees due to which he can easily download the games which is free of any charge. Such activity of playing games is also a form of casual unstructured leisure for Sourav as it helps him to spend time with his friends through the games.

Sounak (17 years, XIIth standard) cited his leisure activities,

"During my leisure time, I like writing English poems as it is one of my hobby and I write them to my school peers in order to gather opinion about my writing style from friends. Another hobby which I engage during free time is cooking delicious cuisines like Chicken curry and eating food, especially different Bengali cuisines which I have learnt from my mother."

Sounak chooses his leisure activity as writing English poems which is an unstructured leisure activity since the age of 12 years. He also likes writing and showing to his school peers as they always encourage him to write and takes keen interest in his writing prowess (Roosemalan and Krahn, 1996; Mukherjee, 2020). Besides writing, Sounak also spends his free time by cooking different cuisines, especially Bengali cuisine like Chicken curry and sweets like rosogolla as he is a foodie. Since he takes interest in cooking, so he challenges the notion of hegemonic masculinity since activity like cooking are not socially constructed to conform to the hetero-normative standards of masculinity.

Table 4: Types of unstructured leisure activities engaged by the adolescent boys (Multiple responses):

DIFFERENT FORMS OF UNSRUCTURED LEISURE ACTIVITIES ENGAGED BY THE ADOLESCENT BOYS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
a. Watching action/ thriller/ romantic movies (with parental consent)	45	50
b. Playing online game s like PUBG/ MIND CRAFT	35	40
c. Adda or interaction with neighbourhood peers	20	10
d. Reading magazines/ story books	08	10

Table 4 signifies that 45% adolescent spends their leisure time by watching action/ thriller/ romantic movies during leisure. On the other hand, 35% of high school boys prefer either playing online games like PUBG/ MIND CRAFT or using social media like WhatsApp for interaction with their school peers for any academic help or for entertainment purpose. The remaining 20% boys prefer spending leisure time by interacting (adda) with their peers at their 'para' over the ro'ak or at their home, while 10% boys either likes reading magazines like *Reader's Digest, Tell Me Why* or story books like *Hardy Boys and Feluda series or* they like beautifying their bodies through tattoo or hairstyling.

3. **Construction of boyhood through the preferred structured and unstructured leisure activities:**

This study explores how the adolescent boys construct their notions of masculinity through their involvement in their chosen structured unstructured leisure activities --- from playing sports, watching action/ thriller movies, body-building, adda with their friends, reading magazines and story books and learning dance.

Table 5: Whether involvement in these leisure activities helps in the construction of masculinity of boys:

DOES ENGAGEMENT IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES HELPS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY?	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
a. Yes	85	85
b. No	15	15
Total	100	100

Table 5 denotes that 85 % adolescent boys of North Kolkata affirms that their engagement in both structured and unstructured leisure activities like playing sports, watching action/thriller movies, surfing social media, body-building, interacting with 'para' friends helps in the construction of boyhood as through these activities, they are socially constructed to abide by the hetero normative standards of masculinity ----- physical toughness, courage, aggression, emotional stoicism, muscular body. On the contrary, the remaining 15 % negated about constructed of their masculinity through these leisure activities like sports, watching movies, body-building. Instead, they cited other factors like interaction with friends at school and the role of the peer group which helps in the construction of their boyhood.

As another preferred form of leisure activity, these adolescent boys of North Kolkata frequently uses social networking sites like Whatsapp and Facebook in order to communicate with their friends, acquaintances and even their lovers. They engross or engage most of their leisure time in accessing these two social networking sites which helps them to reduce proximity with its varied features (video calling) and also acts as a solace to escape from the loneliness, mundane and hectic schedule of life. Self-presentation in the form of clicking selfies or beautifying themselves through the means of tattoo or body piercing are the various means of enhancing their self-identity in order to attain a higher status and reputation among their peers and also to attract more female friends. Since hegemonic heterosexual masculinity involves portraying the socially acceptable and dominant form of masculinity like strength, muscular, power, so high school boys engage in these forms of self-presentation in social networking sites in order to enhance their self-identity which helps in the construction of their masculine identity or masculinity. These school going adolescents also portrayed a strong relation between leisure and usage of social networking sites since social networking sites such as Whatsapp & Facebook serves as a means of entertainment from the mundane aspects of life. By connecting the school adolescents with their peers and close family members, social media serves as a means of recreation through verbal (language) and non-verbal interaction (through emoticons, online symbols and stickers) over social media.Though social media like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram provides a forum to develop and build intimate relationship with strangers, yet high school adolescent boys denied establishing or being in any intimate relationship with any stranger over social media as they expressed their reluctance in trusting any stranger over social networking sites like Whatsaap and Facebook where actual identity is hardly disclosed and there are chances of being duped.

Since the high school boys expressed their willingness to beautify their body as a fashion orientation, this study also explored how these high school boys of Kolkata practice their masculinity by different forms of beautification of their body ---- hair styling, tattoo inscription, body piercing, and hair styling. Hairstyling was the preferred way to beautify the bodies of most adolescent boys since it is trend which helped them to look appealing to others and increase their self-esteem. Adolescent boys also preferred using tattoo as a form of beautification and body modification as his appearance in the presence of his friends in public conveys an impression about him to others which also has an inherent reason for mobilization of his activity. (Goffman, 1959) However, their tattoo inscription also turned their body docile since being an adolescent; he is socially constructed to conform to the standards of beautification like tattoo. This is how Foucault explains the process of 'discipline' on his theory on docile body where he elaborates that body is socially constructed and normalized to suit the social norms and regulations. He regarded docile body as one which can be subjected, sued, transformed and improved as per socially constructed social expectations of beautification**.** (Foucault, 1975) Finally, beautification for most school boys produces significant impact on boyhood as through any means of beautification, they can be more appealing and popular along their peers, especially among girls for physical attraction which helps them to construct their notions of masculinity.

Thereby, it can be concluded that the high school adolescent boys practice and construct their masculinity through the means of different forms of structured and unstructured leisure and enrichment activities ----- sports, body- building, listening music or practicing dance, adda with their neighbourhood peers, online games, usage of social networking sites (WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram), beautification of their bodies along with reading magazines like *Men's Health, Readers Digest and Tell Me Why along with reading books like HARDY BOYS and FELUDA series.*

CHAPTER 5

PEER GROUP AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY

With the onset of adolescence, boys who study in XIth and XIIth standards construct and practice their boyhood by their participation in the peer group. Peer pressure increases since the teenager is a critical phase as most boys rely more on their friends or close peers to seek decisions rather than on their parents which turns out to be fatal for them. Peer pressure also results in a troublesome situation for the adolescent boys of Kolkata. However, adolescent boys even feel a sense of belongingness in the peer group which helps to practice hegemonic masculinity ----- boys can flaunt their strength, capability, toughness, aggression, and courage (Connell, 2005).

Against this backdrop, this chapter explores how peer group produces an impact on adolescent boys who are aged 16-17 years and study in high schools of North Kolkata, West Bengal, India. It also explores and analyzes how adolescent boys include the importance of their friends in their leisure activities. The cynosure of the chapter is how these high school adolescent boys belonging to Bengali middle-class families treat their male and female peers, whether they accept or ostracize them along with the reasons behind their acceptance or marginalization.

This chapter also helps to understand how peer group produces an impact on the construction of masculinity of the high school adolescent boys of North Kolkata not only through the means of their interaction with their peers but also through their topic of discussion with their peer group, interaction with those peers who do not conform to the notion of hegemonic masculinity along with the importance of peer group in their daily lives which helps to understand its impact in the construction of masculinity in India.

This study explored how adolescent boys define peer group and whether peer group plays a decisive role in the construction of masculinity among the adolescent boys. For the majority of school-going boys, peer group plays a significant role in the construction of masculinity since peer group is most helpful during good and bad times of life which inspires these boys to develop trust in these peers. These youngsters also cited the importance of their peers in different ways in terms of their friendship with peer group helps to increase their interactive skills; new friends could help to bring new experiences in their lives. Further, friends with similar mentality and attitudes help to increase and reciprocate knowledge with each other.

1. Adolescent boys' idea of peer group:

This study explores how adolescent boys define peer group and whether peer group plays a decisive role in the construction of masculinity among the adolescent boys. It also explores how peer group produces a positive or negative impact on teenage boys which helps in the construction of their boyhood.

For the majority of school-going boys, peer group plays a significant role in the construction of masculinity since peer group is most helpful during good and bad times of life which inspires these boys to develop trust in these peers. These youngsters also cited the importance of their peers in different ways in terms of their friendship with peer group helps to increase their interactive skills; new friends could help to bring new experiences in their lives. Further, friends with similar mentality and attitudes help to increase and reciprocate knowledge with each other.

Peer group also plays a decisive role for these schoolboys as their peers are not toxic and harmful but inspire these boys to attain physical and mental strength which serves as a means of motivation to excel in academic and non-academic activities (co-curricular activities like singing).

However, Marcel (17 years) studying in XIIth standard pointed out the existence of peer groups for a different purpose,

"Peer group should exist, for me, for bullying and teasing my juniors (which I also engage in) as a means of entertainment and teach a lesson to those juniors who mistreat their female peers or women at large and discuss their sexuality in locked rooms."

Marcel cited that the importance of peer group lies only to bully his junior classmates at school (which he engages in often) since these juniors mistreat their female peers by teasing them in a sexually explicit manner. He also added that he engages in policing the behavior of his juniors as most of them discuss their female peers' sexuality in locked rooms. This is how Whitehead describes *'locker-room culture'* whereby adolescent boys interact with their peers at times in locked rooms as such discussions involve sexually aggressive and explicit talk about women. These discussions of boys with their friends can range from relationships with their girlfriends to treating them as objects of sexual pleasure. If by chance the peer group discovers the discussion of the boys, the boys involved face humiliation and are also ridiculed and bullied so that the speakers can reveal details about women's sexuality. For this reason,

the discussion in the locker room takes place silently without the notice of anyone in school. (Whitehead, 2006: 45).

This study also explored the type of peers the adolescent boys interacts with, at their schools and in the neighbourhood of North Kolkata. Majority of High school boys mix with both male and female peers in school while the remaining boys preferred mixing with mainly male peers due to sharing of similar mentality (regarding the choice of games like PUBG and topics involving body-building) and association with the same gender.

1.1 Interaction with different types of peers at neighbourhood and school:

This study explores the type of peers the adolescent boys interacts with, at their schools and in the neighbourhood of North Kolkata.

The majority of High school boys interact with both male and female peers in school while the remaining boys preferred mixing with mainly male peers due to sharing of similar mentality (regarding the choice of games like PUBG and topics involving body-building) and association with the same gender.

Sounak (17 years, XIIth standard) responded,

"I like mixing with both of my male and female friends since both help me in providing notes and books during studies and also in solving any form of problem regarding my fight with other friends in school. I don't discriminate since the support and encouragement for my academic performance are mutual irrespective of gender. I love being around both my male and female peers."

Sounak regards that he interacts with both boys and girls in his peer group in school since all his friends irrespective of gender, help him during troublesome situations like during his fight with any of his classmates. Sounak who regards his friends as pillars of strength socially interact through the means of both verbal and non-verbal communication which helps them to interact with their peers. For this reason, peer relation helps in the internalization of social interaction. Furthermore, from the perspective of interpretative reproduction, children's activities and social interaction with their peers are matters of high significance because peer culture affects the adult-child routine in the family and cultural spheres (Mead, 1934).

Sounak interacts with both male and female peers as both of them help him during his fight with other classmates at school. He receives rewards from his peers who help him in

maintaining his friendship with them (Kelley, 1983). He also summarized that his relationship with his male and female friends is symmetrical as they are of the same age so they have similar thoughts and attitudes. This is how interdependency in peer-group relationships has been enunciated in Social Exchange Theory which occurs in an everyday context. (Laursen & Graziano, 2002)

This study explores whether adolescent boys are accepted or marginalized by their male and female peer group in the schools where they study and how these high school boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of different schools of North Kolkata respond to such acceptance or ostracism. It also explores the impact of such acceptance and marginalization on high school adolescents. Adolescent boys are accepted by their peer group since they are helpful to their friends and share similar attitudes towards life like friends and even known their peers since childhood.

1.2 Interaction with peers who takes interest/ practices music and dance:

In this study, I, as a researcher explore whether high school-going boys of North Kolkata interact with their male and female peers at school who takes interest and participates in singing and dancing co-curricular at their schools along with the reasons behind such mixture with their friends.

The majority of schoolboys interact closely with their peers who take interest in both singing and dancing as most boys like listening to music from their peers which serves as a form of relaxation for them. However, some boys do not interact intimately with peers having an interest in music as they treat such peers differently and regard them as *'effeminate'.*

Anish (17 years, XIIth standard) shared his experience of ostracism from peer groups,

"I am always fond of playing flute and have been learning to play since I was 10 years old. Initially, my friends used to interact with me without maintaining closeness since my passion was playing flute and disengaging in Sports. When I started participating in sports, my friends accepted me wholeheartedly. My passion for music abandoned me since most of my friends used to tease me for being a passionate lover and not having the passion to play sports being a boy."

In this narrative, Anish cited his incident of playing flute since the age of 10 years due to which his friends and classmates did not interact with him closely as he did not participate in

sports like football too. His friends accepted him as a part of their peer group when he participated in Sport in XIth standard as involvement in sports conforms to the notion of hegemonic masculinity --- physical toughness, courage, valorization of violence, inexpressiveness to emotion. (Connell, 2005 & Wellard, 2007)

1.3 Acceptance/ marginalization from peer group:

In this study, I as a researcher explores whether adolescent boys are accepted or marginalized by their male and female peer group in the schools where they study and how these high school boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of different schools of North Kolkata respond to such acceptance or ostracism. It also explores the impact of such acceptance and marginalization on high school adolescents.

Adolescent boys are accepted by their peer group since they are helpful to their friends and share similar attitudes towards life like friends and even known their peers since childhood.

Aritra (17 years, XIIth standard) cited about his reason of marginalization from his group of peers,

"Since I take interest in classical dancing and have learnt the dance since the age of 10 years, so whenever I discuss about the dance with my peers, they either ignore the topic or they exclude me in the peer group at school. The mostly discuss about Cricket and Football followed by their body-building classes which does not interest me much."

Aritra's interest in classical dancing does not allow him to be accepted in his peer group at school since classical dance is a dance form which involves softness, grace with proper expression of emotions. Such form of dance, according to the peer group, can make Aritra 'submissive' by challenging his masculinity. His friends expected him to discuss about topics related to Sports like Cricket and Football and Body-building as boyhood implies conforming to the socially constructed hetero normative standards of masculinity by showing physical strength, courage, muscular body and violence. Since Aritra's interest in these activities were absent followed by his staunch interest in dance, so his group of peers ostracized him in school as they regard that Aritra has failed to be a *'man'* by showing interest in classical dance and not in activities like Sports and body-building. This is how Connell also explains his notions of hegemonic and submissive masculinity of boys where the traits of hegemonic masculinity have the power to oppress or subdue the power of those men possessing the traits of submissive masculinity. (Connell, 2005)

Soumen (16 years, XIth standard) also narrated a similar incident due to his interest in classical singing,

"My interest in classical singing has been since the age of 8 years where I have learnt Gharana too. With minimal support from parents, especially father, I faced exclusion from my peer group both at school and my neighbourhood as my friends regard that boys who listen to such form of music and practice classical singing cannot be accepted in their group. They at times laugh and bully me for my choice of songs as they mostly listen to rock music bands. I have tried my best to explain them but they did not show interest. Due to this, I only interact with those peers who encourage me in my interest."

Soumen's interest in classical music and his training in the same never helped him to be accepted by his parents or peer group. Though he received minimum support from his parents, his school and neighbourhood peers would tease and bully him by imitating him as according to them, his interest in classical music would deviate him from the socially constructed standards of being a *'boy'* by making him soft and submissive as such kinds of music involves softness with hardly any kind of usage of physical prowess and toughness. Due to this, his peers marginalize him from the peer group and Soumen also kept his friend circle confined to those peers who listens to his songs and his interest in music. (Connell, 2005)

This portrayed that boys who took interest in classical dance and singing were not accepted by their peers at school since classical dance is a dance form which involves softness, grace with proper expression of emotions. Such form of dance, according to the peer group can turn the boys 'submissive' by challenging their masculinity. Their friends expected the boys to discuss about topics related to Sports like Cricket and Football and Body-building as boyhood implies conforming to the socially constructed hetero normative standards of masculinity by showing physical strength, courage, muscular body and violence. Since few of adolescent boys' interest in these activities were absent followed by their staunch interest in dance, so their peer group ostracized them in school as they regard that they have failed to be a *'man'* by showing interest in classical dance and not in activities like Sports and body-building. (Connell, 2005) Such interest in dance also made these boys subjected to bullying by their peer group at school due to their failure to affirm the socially constructed notion of masculinity by not showing interest or participating in cricket, football and body-building.

1.4 Boys' experiences of bullying and cyber bullying:

As a researcher, I have explored how high school adolescents understand bullying by their peer group at the schools where they study. This study also explores what these adolescent boys understand about cyber-bullying by their peer group and how it is different from the concept of bullying.

In this study, I as a researcher also analyze whether the high school adolescent boys from North Kolkata encounter or have experienced any form of bullying by their peer group at their schools. It also explores the experiences of such bullying by these adolescent boys.

Most of the boys' incidents of bullying portrays how bullying has become a major avenue through which boys possessing hyper-masculine traits positions other boys as inferior and assert their dominance over them by ridiculing them as 'effeminate'. The way friends used to bully those adolescent boys and stigmatized him into categories like 'Taak' ostracized them not only from the peer group but also from other classmates at school. This also portrays how peer group and peer pressure subjects those boys to bullying where adolescent boys who display notions of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity marginalize the 'feminine' boys by stigmatizing them into categories of *'faggot', 'sissy', 'nerds', 'geeks'*. Those men who fail to perform their masculine tasks of physical competence, heterosexual prowess, strength, and sexual assertiveness are often stigmatized as 'fag' or 'faggot'. Fag or faggot serves as the discourse with which boys discipline themselves through ridicule or joking relationship with their male peers. Those who are labelled by *'fag identity'* are often bound to face humiliation and harassment from their male peers which go to the extent of marginalization of such boys from the peer group. (Pascoe, 2007: 54)

Most high school boys shared versatile incidents of bullying in their school life. Adolescent boys have been largely bullied by their peers at school for being overweight due to which they had to join body-building to come to shape and turn slim to conform to hetero normative notions of masculinity. As a result, their peer group also accepted them wholeheartedly. Another notable experience by one the adolescent boy was when he was in XIIth standard of his school where he was bullied by his seniors who coerced him to dance in front of all his schoolmates which was embarrassing for him and produced a negative impact on him.

The cynosure of all incidents came from Rishav, a XIIth standard adolescent boy who shared his gruesome experience of bullying,

"When I was studying in IXth and Xth standards of Holy Child School, I became a victim of bullying by the teachers and classmates of the school due to my previous schooling in St. Xaviers, due to which my teachers regarded me as snobbish. I was astonished to notice my teachers treating me in a disrespectful manner which adversely affected my personality due to which I was in severe depression for few years until I changed my school."

Rishav's gruesome bullying by his classmates at his previous school (Holy Child) which coerced him into depression emphasized the impact of bullying and peer rejection on adolescents. Such marginalization by peer groups faced Rishav in his previous school followed by social solitude increased his victimization by bullying. Due to such bullying, Rishav questioned his socially constructed masculinity due to which he was bound to change his school after two years of schooling at Holy Child School. This is how Olweus explains the concept of bullying of adolescents at school which was faced by Suresh which coerced him to take recourse to illicit means to put his life at stake by engaging in drugs or committing suicide (Olweus, 1993).

1.5 Topic of discussion with school peers:

In terms of conversation with the peer group, I as a researcher explore the different forms of the topic of discussion that the teenage boys discuss with their group of male and female peers. This study also explores why these boys discuss their chosen topic of interest with their peer group.

Sambhav (16 years, XIth standard) expressed his favorite topic of discussion with his friends,

"Whenever I am with my friends, I like discussing either Sports or my favorite mobile games like PUBG. My peer group at school and at my para like watching and playing sports which have intrigued my interest also. Being a sports player since the young age of 11 years, watching and playing sports like cricket has always been my passion. I also like playing Mobile games like PUBG since the physical strength involved in the game helps me to portray my manliness. I also love discussing my favourite storybooks with my friends too."

Sambhav expressed Sports and mobile games being his favourite topic of discussion with his peers at school and in his neighbourhood. Since he likes watching and playing sports, especially cricket from the age of 11 years, so any kind of discussion about the game with his friends intrigues him most. He also likes discussing Mobile games like PUBG with his friends since playing PUBG requires physical strength and aggression which helps him to

conform to the hetero normative standards of masculinity --- physical toughness, violence, and courage (Connell, 2005).

Sourav (17 years, XIIth standard) expressed,

"My topic of discussion with my friends mostly involves gossip about female friends at school or regarding their femme fatale as this is the age to discuss these issues. But whenever we discuss in school, I tend to discuss in locked rooms."

Sourav's interaction with his peers at school in locked rooms involves a discussion about his female peers which is sexually aggressive and explicit talk. This kind of discussion with his friends can range from relationships with their girlfriends to treating them as objects of sexual pleasure. If by chance the peer group discovers the discussion of the boys, the boys involved face humiliation and are also ridiculed and bullied so that the speakers can reveal details about women's sexuality. For this reason, the discussion in the locker room takes place silently without the notice of anyone in school. (Whitehead, 2006: 45).

1.6 Forced participation in any activity due to peer pressure:

Since this chapter analyzes the impact of the peer group in the construction of masculinity among the high school boys of Kolkata, this study finds out whether the adolescent boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of their schools are coerced to participate in any kind of activity due to peer pressure or are forced to take recourse to any action due to the enormous impact of their group of male and female peers. I have also explored the reasons behind the forced participation in the concerned activities by the high school boys due to peer group influence.

Peer pressure coerced Souvik (17years, XIIth standard) to participate in various activities against his consent,

"Mostly during inter-school competition, I was coerced by my peers to engage in dance and Carol singing which was though not my interest I had to do it for the entertainment of my friends. I was also forced to take recourse to drugs like smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol due to peer pressure to be accepted by my peer group at my class since marginalization from the group adversely affected me."

Souvik cited a few incidents from his school when he was forced by his friends to dance and sign in an inter-school competition at his school. He also had to take recourse to drugs like

smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol due to peer pressure due to the fear of his marginalization from the peer group which would affect his identity adversely in his class as his friends would bully him and ostracize him from his peer group. This is how Olweus explains the concept of bullying of adolescents at school which was faced by Souvik which coerced him to take recourse to illicit by engaging in drugs, smoking, and drinking alcohol forcefully (Olweus, 1993).

1.7 Adolescent boys' choice of friends in peer group:

In this study, I as a researcher also analyze how these adolescent boys chose their friends along with the reasons behind their chosen factors for choosing male/female peers in their peer group.

High-school boys largely pointed out that the factors responsible while choosing friends in their peer group are similar mentality and attitude, their friends should be honest, helpful, and trustworthy, and Peers should be worthy enough never to abandon these boys during any situation of crisis and should consistently support them during both pros and cons in life.

However, Suresh (16 years, XIth standard) expressed,

"My only criteria in choosing my friends are simply by judging him/her on the ground of a good human being. If my friend is humane by nature, I will be able to understand it by his/her actions or gestures. A good human being can always be a great friend of mine. Maybe due to this reason, my group of friends tends to be less."

Suresh regards keeping his peer group as small as he chooses his friends based on his/nature as a good human being. He summarizes that peer group plays a significant role in his life due to which he is careful in choosing his friends who are ready to help him during any troublesome situation like during examinations and safeguarding him from all problems (drinking, smoking, bullying).

However, the peer group provides an enormous impact on the construction of masculinity since peer group is most helpful during good and bad times of life which inspires these boys to develop trust in these peers. In other words, masculinity is determined by the status that a boy enjoys in his peer group. Moreover, male peer group acts as a powerful context to promote gendered selves often involving compliance and engagement in hegemonic heterosexual identities and relationships.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This research work entitled *'Construction of Masculinity: A Sociological Study of High School Boys in North Kolkata'* is an attempt to explore the unearthed area of how masculinity is constructed among the high school boys of North Kolkata. The kernel departure point here was to explore how boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards of high schools practice and construct their notions of masculinity both at home through their interaction with parents, parental supervision of their activities along with leisure activities in the neighbourhood and at school. It also explores the construction of masculinity of these adolescent boys through their interaction with peers in their neighbourhood and school.

This research which depicted the traditional part of Kolkata was also characterized by joint families where spouses lived with their children along with parents. The adolescent boys play with other boys in the neighbourhood which keeps the para culture strong even to this day. This chapter aims to analyze how the family (parents from the Bengali middle class) produces a significant impact on the adolescent life of youngsters followed by the impact of parental supervision on their adolescent sons. It also explores how parents help to construct their son's masculinity through their disciplinarian attitude, supervision of their sons' activities including interaction with peers, impositions regarding attires, career aspirations, and association with the outside world. This chapter also portrayed how parents convey gender messages to their adolescent sons where they are motivated to conform to the traits of hegemonic masculinity and the culturally valued masculine ideals. It has also shown how society places greater emphasis on the gender identity of men which reflects an andro-centric gender bias that valorizes masculine traits and behavior (Bem, 1993; Lorber, 1994). Concerning the interaction of their sons with their peer group, parents allowed their sons to interact and mix freely with both male and female friends and encourage their sons to mix more with female friends since they regard females as being more helpful before their sons' exams and whenever they fall into any troublesome situation. Regarding career aspiration, parents generally allow boys some freedom and space in comparison with a girl child. Parents are willing to undertake more financial burden for boys' career aspirations compared to the girl child. As far as dresses and dispositions are concerned boys are hardly allowed to wear short dresses in both private and public spheres whereas girls are not given such freedom since wearing such attires can question their sanctity and are often criticized for wearing

inappropriate attire. Parents imposed restrictions on their sons regarding their outing after dawn as they are at the critical stage of adolescence which involves risks associated with the safety and security of their sons.

The next chapter provides an in-depth understanding of how high school adolescent boys studying in XIth and XIIth standards define boyhood and leisure and construct their notions of masculinity in terms of their different structured and unstructured leisure activities. This chapter also studies how these adolescent boys of North Kolkata negotiate and construct masculinity by engaging in their leisure activities like attending coaching classes to practice football/ cricket, usage of social networking sites, online dating, and body-building, beautification of their bodies, and reading magazines and storybooks.

Boyhood, for the high school adolescent boys, implies the ability to portray one's strength, power, heterosexuality, and sexual assertiveness followed by the hiding of emotions which is often regarded as an *'effeminate'*. The teenage boys spend their leisure time watching movies i.e. Action thrillers & suspense. They also preferred playing different outdoor games like football, and cricket during their leisure time. High school boys also spend their leisure time surfing the internet especially by accessing social media like Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram. Bodybuilding/ Gym was chosen as one of the preferable leisure activities by most boys. The remaining boys prefer reading magazines like Reader's Digest and Tell Me Why.

High school boys engage in two types of structured leisure activities ---- coaching classes of cricket and football and cultural activities (music, dance, and painting). Adolescent boys show greater interest in sports during leisure as such activity not only helps to improve their physical and mental health but also helps to provide life satisfaction (Blecker, 1990). Enrichment in any sports activity is not an obstruction to the academics of adolescent boys. Bengali middle-class parents like their adolescent sons to cultivate their talent through sports. Further, adolescents who participate in sports have a greater intimacy with their parents followed by a better self-identity (Harrison & Narayan, 2003).

Adolescent boys also engage in unstructured leisure activities like interaction with their male and female peers during leisure time not only in their school but also in their neighbourhood. All adolescents of the Bengali middle class engage in some form of unstructured activities which involves 'hanging out with friends either in their school or in their neighbourhood during weekends which is regarded as adolescents' preferred free time activity. Two components of unstructured leisure activities include --- *family and casual leisure*.

Adolescent boys also engage in family leisure which is the outcome of negotiation between Bengali middle-class parents and their children where the sons watch movies approved by their parents, especially their mother (Roosemalan and Krahn, 1996). Gaming tends to be a frequent activity for adolescent boys, especially car racing and PUBG.

Since the high school adolescents regarded activities like Football and Cricket as their preferred form of leisure activity, they portrayed a strong relation between attending coaching classes on such activities and Violence. Attending coaching classes to practice Cricket/ Football involves emotional stoicism as any kind of injury/ pain during the game does not affect the players. Often any kind of physical abuse (Fight) with the opponent team leads to aggression followed by the tendency of losing the game, which produces a negative impact on the losing team. These high school youngsters also encountered problems while participating in such activities at their respective schools which ranged from physical injuries (leg sprain) while playing sports like football to sarcasm from their peers for not being to perform well in the game as a player.

Adolescence is an age when boys spend most of their leisure time accessing and frequent users of social networking sites. The virtual world (social media) produces a profound impact on the lifestyle of adolescent boys which helps in the construction of masculine identity. Internet is the major means of communication for adolescents which is used by them either for instrumental purposes like schoolwork or information gathering or for the means of interacting with their peers over social media ------ email, instant messaging, blogging, and chatting. As another preferred form of leisure activity, these adolescent boys frequently use social networking sites like Whatsapp and Facebook to communicate with their friends, acquaintances, and even their lovers. They engross or engage most of their leisure time in accessing these two social networking sites which helps them to reduce proximity with its varied features (video calling) and also acts as a solace to escape from the loneliness, mundane and hectic schedule of life. Self-presentation in the form of clicking selfies or beautifying themselves through the means of tattoo or body piercing are the various means of enhancing their self-identity to attain a higher status and reputation among their peers and also to attract more female friends. Since hegemonic heterosexual masculinity involves portraying the socially acceptable and dominant form of masculinity like strength, muscular, and power, so high school boys engage in these forms of self-presentation on social networking sites to enhance their self-identity which helps in the construction of their masculine identity or masculinity. Children of Bengali middle-class parents are also engaged

in casual leisure activities like interaction with their friends through social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Adolescent boys face lesser restrictions as compared to the girls' parents.

These school-going adolescents also portrayed a strong relation between leisure and usage of social networking sites since social networking sites such as Whatsapp & Facebook serve as a means of entertainment from the mundane aspects of life. By connecting the school adolescents with their peers and close family members, social media serves as a means of recreation through verbal (language) and non-verbal interaction (through emoticons, online symbols, and stickers) over social media. Though social media like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram provides a forum to develop and build an intimate relationship with strangers, high school adolescent boys denied establishing or being in an intimate relationship with any stranger over social media as they expressed their reluctance in trusting any stranger over social networking sites like Whatsap and Facebook where actual identity is hardly disclosed and there are chances of being duped.

In terms of beautification of body, the adolescent boys expressed their willingness to beautify their bodies since any kind of beautification helps to enhance their self-identity by increasing their sense of appeal to their friends at their respective schools and other individuals in Indian society. Hairstyling was the preferred way to beautify the bodies of adolescent boys since it is a trend that helped them to look appealing to others and increase their self-esteem followed by the inscription of tattoos on different body parts. These high school adolescents undergo different forms of beautification to attain a self-identity which helps them to construct their notions of masculinity. Regarding the relation between gender and body beautification, these school-going adolescents asserted that everyone irrespective of their gender had the right to be presentable in society and beautify their concerned bodies which help to boost their self-confidence. Finally, beautification for most schoolboys produces a significant impact on boyhood as through any means of beautification, they can be more appealing and popular along with their peers, especially among girls for physical attraction which helps them to construct their notions of masculinity. Thereby, this chapter is concluded by emphasizing how high school adolescent boys practice and construct their masculinity through the means of different forms of leisure activities ----- sports, usage of social networking sites (WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram), body-building along with reading magazines like Men's Health, Readers Digest and Tell Me Why.

The next chapter explores how peer group produces an impact on adolescent boys who are aged between 16-17 years. With the onset of adolescence, boys who study in XIth and XIIth standards construct and practice their boyhood by their participation in the peer group. Peer pressure increases since the teenager is a critical phase as most boys rely more on their friends or close peers to seek decisions rather than on their parents which turns out to be fatal for them. Peer pressure also results in a troublesome situation for the adolescent boys of Kolkata. However, adolescent boys even feel a sense of belongingness in the peer group which helps to practice hegemonic masculinity ----- boys can flaunt their strength, capability, toughness, aggression, and courage (Connell, 2005).

This means that peers within a peer group use their dominant discourses (fights, topic of discussion, acceptance or negligence of certain peers, dependence on their friends) to prove to each other their 'manhood' of being strong, powerful, tough, and aggressive. (Gault, 1942) However, this chapter also studies whether the high school adolescent boys of northern part of Kolkata, India regards peer group as a treacherous place that imposes a threat on them to renegotiate to prove their masculinity.

It also explores and analyzes how adolescent boys include the importance of their friends in their leisure activities. The cynosure of the chapter is how these high school adolescent boys belonging to Bengali middle-class families interact with their male and female peers, whether their peer group accepts or ostracize them in the neighbourhood and at school along with the reasons behind their acceptance or marginalization. This chapter helps to understand how peer group produces an impact in the construction of masculinity of the high school adolescent boys of Kolkata not only through the means of their interaction with their peers but also through their topic of discussion with their peer group, the impact of peer pressure, treatment of peers who do not conform to the notion of hegemonic masculinity along with the importance of peer group in their daily lives which helps to understand its role in the construction of masculinity in India.

One of the major institutions and agencies of socialization where masculinity is carried out and practiced is school. Bullying is the one of the major avenues through which boys possessing hyper-masculine traits positions other boys as inferior and assert their dominance over them by ridiculing them as 'effeminate'. Boys who display notions of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity marginalize the 'feminine' boys by throwing and stigmatizing them into categories of 'faggot', 'sissy', 'nerds', 'geeks', and 'wimps'. (Pascoe, 2007: 54) Boys who

fail to perform their masculine tasks of physical competence, toughness, strength, and sexual assertiveness are often stigmatized as 'fag' or 'faggot'. Fag serves as the discourse with which boys discipline themselves through ridicule or joking relationship with their male peers. Those who are labeled by 'fag identity' are bound to face humiliation and harassment from their male peers which go to the extent of their marginalization from their peer group.

Finally, it can be concluded by emphasizing the initiatives that can be taken regarding the social construction of gender, especially masculinity among high school adolescent boys to understand the how masculinity is constructed by the parents of their family and also the significance of their leisure activities and peer group in the construction of masculine identity of these boys of Kolkata.

Furthermore, new research in the sociology of gender, especially masculinity should be welcomed along with femininity in India to create an egalitarian society in terms of gender. Thereby, more fruitful research on the construction of masculinity in adolescent boys needs to be given significance so that sociologists in India can widen the horizon of academic discipline to a more enriching one.

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