Research Paper

Exploring Experiences of Identity Formation amongst Young Students

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Abstract: *The study seeks to understand how expectations and pressures from middle class families particularly parents influence the identities of the young generation. It has been observed that expectations of parents residing in Anushaktinagar, Mumbai with respect to the academic performances of their children are very high. It is also observed that adolescents and youth in this society are experiencing diverse challenges on an everyday basis through the friendship groups they develop, their usage of the internet (particularly for social networking) and wider urban cultural influences on their lifestyles. Along with the parents, socio cultural, psychosocial and social perspective all of it works when we talk about identity formation.*
Key Words: *Youth, Middle class, Identity, Lifestyle, Peer pressure*

I. INTRODUCTION

The future social and political development of our country is completely depended on the youth of the country, which constitute a critical segment of the Indian population as the future demographic. To reap the benefits of the demographic dividend it is critical for the youth and adolescent section to develop a sense of strong and stable sense of themselves. Adolescence is a period of change for young people where they are conscious about themselves the most. Lifespan Perspective describes every phase of human life extending from conception to death and according to this perspective; it is a critical phase of adolescent stage.

Adolescence and its extension into youth is a phase between childhood and adulthood where, there is personal and bodily changes, influencing the attitude. From the young age, the children usually consume large chunks of media and social media platform, which keeps on highlighting the salary packages of IIM and IIT's.

The proposed study seeks to understand how expectations and pressures from middle class families particularly parents influence the identities of the young generation. It has been observed that expectations of parents residing in Anushaktinagar with respect to the academic performances of children are very high. Adolescents and youth in this colony are experiencing diverse challenges on an everyday basis through the friendship groups they develop, their usage of the internet (particularly for social networking) and wider urban cultural influences on their lifestyles. The objective is to study experiences of youth concerning the issues of identity formation and further to examine the influence of other stakeholders including family, peers, media and educational institutions. The objectives are formed with a motive to research on understanding issues faced during identity formation and how these interactions influence young people?

With a sample size of ten participants who are currently in higher and senior secondary school, the present study applied qualitative research design with a constructive epistemological theoretical framework. The research focused on purposeful snowball sampling technique to reach to students who are currently pursuing either arts and humanities or science in their respective career.

When we talk about a reality in the present scenario, youth's endeavors in the existing system have the unlimited power to conform and at the same time reform and alter the reality. It is been concluded that the social and cultural institutions play a very prominent role in shaping the trajectory of human youth. We have focused on understanding adolescent students who are pursuing higher and secondary higher education i.e., students from IX-XII. With the increase in awareness, there is steep increase in the pressure of the society on youth. Emerging from the narratives, the task of individuation is negotiated within the fold of family by the urban class Indian youth. It came out that school and teachers look at the educational practices in a new and critical ways. The social institutions primarily the educational processes and the message communicated to youth with respect to – 'what *you want to become in future'* or *parents' expectations* or *idea of success;* plays out the most important factor of what message these institutions are giving out. The identity is product of several

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intersectional spaces including images and habits of parents including significant adults and the roles they played in their childhood. With respect to Indian context, one cannot leave the political scenario with respect to caste, class and gender aspect. The following bonds and emotions form identifications with images and roles, which is observe throughout pre-adolescent period.

With the ever-revolving era of social structure and openness about topics, the stakeholders need to focus on positive identity formation where the aim is to open oneself to many possibilities and at the same time relations and habits which can provide a form of grounding. With the following research, one aims to focus on creating and providing more space for open discussions and debate. Definitely the period of adolescent is confusing, daunting, transformative and evolving but if these factors are addressed it might create an inclusive space based on equity and healthy form of learning.

With regard to youth resources, India has a distinct edge over the developed nations most of which will be facing the burden of a fast-ageing population in the coming decades (Indian Youth, 2010). The adolescent and the youth population constitute a critical segment of the Indian population as the future demographic, social, economic and political development depends on them. To reap the benefits of the demographic dividend it is critical for the youth and adolescent section to develop a sense of strong and stable sense of themselves. Adolescence is a period of change for young people. All sorts of changes in relation to their body, mind and social interaction occurs at this stage.

Typically, Identity involves managing and organizing these changes in relation to the social environment around. It includes a sense of uniqueness, sameness and a sense of belonging with others. It refers to our sense of who we are as individuals and as members of social groups. Although Identity development occurs throughout one's lifetime, a strong and stable sense of self is widely considered to be one of the central tasks of adolescence. It is during this stage that they are more conscious about their selves. Lifespan Perspective describes every phase of human life extending from conception to death and according to this perspective, it is a critical phase of adolescent stage. In the 1960's, psychologist Erik Erikson argued that adolescents face a major identity crisis which he considered as one of the stages of psychosocial development. He also spoke about identity crisis, which is the phase of instability, and confusion that adolescents experience while they are interacting with their peers and with others within the social context. Successful resolution of this crisis depends on one's progress through previous developmental stages, centering on fundamental issues of trust, autonomy, and initiative. By the age of 21, about half of all adolescents are thought to have resolved their identity crises and are ready to move on to the adult challenges of love and work. Others, however, are unable to achieve an integrated adult identity, either because they have failed to resolve the identity crisis or because they have experienced no crisis.

With the rapid technological change and extensive economic and social uncertainty, the lives and identities of young people are being challenged every day. Family, peer group, school etc serves as an important social mechanism for them to become an important contributing member of the society. In addition, they also serve as major socializing institutions for the acquisition of interpersonal skills and socially responsible behavior.

Adolescence and its extension into youth is a phase between childhood and adulthood. Along with the changes taking place on professional front, there is personal and bodily changes, impacting the attitude. From the young age the children usually consume large chunks of media and social media platform which keeps on highlighting the salary packages of IIM and IIT's. The aim of the study is to focus on understanding *what is urban youth and what comprises as major hold points of their identities?* The study focuses on the narratives of the students and look at their social realities including peer pressure, individualism, competition and psychosocial realities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Benson and Elder (2011) in their paper 'Young Adult Identities and Their Pathways: A Developmental and Life Course Model' studied developmental and life course studies of young adult identities focusses on two dimensions, subjective age and psychosocial maturity. This study examines the developmental synchrony of these two processes. In a longitudinal sample of young adults from Add Health (18 to 22), a person-centered analysis of indicators of these dimensions identified four identity profiles. Two depict early and late patterns of identity; the others represent contrasting types of discordance, "pseudo-adult", subjective age more advanced than maturation level and "anticipatory", with subjective age less advanced than maturational level. The profiles vary by gender, socioeconomic status, and race-ethnicity as well as by adolescent (ages 12–16) pubertal maturation, psychosocial adjustment, and family context. These results provide support for a more holistic, interdisciplinary understanding of adult identity, and show that young adult identities in the Add Health sample follow differentiated paths into the adult years, with largely unknown consequences for the subsequent life course.

A Longitudinal Research titled the Study of Adolescent by Identity Formation 2000–2010 by Meeus (2011), has shown that personal identity develops progressively during adolescence, but also that many individuals do not change identity, especially ethnic identity. Researchers have found rank-order stability of personal identity to be larger in adulthood than in adolescence and stability of ethnic identity to be larger in middle and late than early adolescence. Personal identity appears to progress in adulthood, as well. Adolescents with a mature identity typically show high levels of adjustment and a positive personality profile, live in warm families, and perform well at school. There is little evidence for developmental order, however, and studies instead have mainly found covariation over time between identity and the other developmental processes. This review demonstrates that the dimensional approach to the study of identity formation can be very successful. The studies into narrative identity have shown that continuity of identity and coherence of the life story both grow in adolescence.

Schwartz,Hardy , Zamboanga, Meca, Watermand, Picariello, Luyckx, Crocetti, Kimh, Brittiani, Roberts, Whitbourne, Ritchie, Brownm, Forthun (2014) studied young adults to understand identity development by deriving latent profiles from intrapersonal and interpersonal indices of identity synthesis and confusion. A sample of 9737 college-attending young adults completed measures of identity,mental health, and health risk behaviors. Four latent profiles emerged: Synthesized (high synthesis, low confusion), Diffused (moderate synthesis, high confusion), Elevated (high synthesis and confusion), and Moderate (moderate synthesis and confusion). The Synthesized profile was associated with the highest well-being and the lowest levels of internalizing, externalizing, and health risks. The Diffused and Elevated profiles were both associated with low well-being and with high internalizing, externalizing, and risky behaviors — with the Elevated profile highest on all of the negative outcomes. The Moderate profile scored intermediately on well-being, internalizing, externalizing, and health risks. These results are discussed in terms of the role of identity within a successful transition to adulthood.

Ragelienė (2016) in his paper, Links of Adolescents Identity Development and Relationship with Peers: A Systematic Literature Review, speaks about adolescents' identity development which is positively related with their relationships with peers. Belonging to a peer group and good relationships with peers based on mutual respect and acceptance are positively related with adolescent identity development. Further he states that personality related factors that could be linked with adolescents' identity development and their relationship with peers is not clear. Potential factors of interest, which are associated with good social relationships are adolescent's ability to be empathic and his/her differentiation of self. Further empirical research investigating links between adolescent identity development, empathy, differentiation of self, and relationships with peers is needed.

The paper on Identity Formation in Adolescence: The Dynamic of Forming and Consolidating Identity Commitments by Crocetti(2017) studies the biological, cognitive, and social changes that occur in adolescence stimulate young people to think about themselves, reflect on the kind of people they want to become, and find their place in society. Traditionally, these changes have been explained by Erikson's theory and Marcia's identity status model, but process-oriented models of identity provide new insights. In particular, dual-cycle models, such as the three-factor identity model, focus on the dynamic process by which young people iteratively form and maintain their identity over time. This iterative process is captured by the interplay of commitment, in-depth exploration, and reconsideration of commitment, as well as by distinct identity statuses. Furthermore, the extent to which adolescents find a stable identity is intertwined strongly with their psychosocial functioning and well-being.

Schwartz and Petrova (2017), in their paper Fostering Healthy Identity Development in Adolescence say that the field of identity interventions is young, and many advances remain to be accomplished. These advances include connecting schoolwork with real-world outcomes, encouraging youth to adopt college-related possible identities, incorporating identity development into prevention programs, and leveraging adult-youth partnerships to facilitate and capitalize on adolescent identity development. In so doing, the construct of identity can realize its potential to improve Identity in Adolescence adolescent well-being and prevent a number of negative adolescent outcomes. If harnessed properly, identity can help us to avoid short-sighted policies, interventions, and educational systems that focus on fixing a problem immediately and can challenge us to focus on the larger picture and on young people's long-term well-being.

A paper on Role of School in Adolescents 'Identity Development, A Literature Review by Verhoeven, Poorthuis&Volman (2018)
(https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10648-018-9457-3.pdf) talk about the role of schools in forming adolescents' identity. They said that till date, research on the role of school in adolescents' identity development remains scattered across research fields that employ different theoretical perspectives on identity. The aim of the literature review was to integrate the findings on the role of school in adolescents' identity development from different research fields and to provide schools and teachers with insights into how adolescents' identity development can be supported. Using constant comparative analysis, 111 studies were

analyzed. They included articles on personal and social identity and on school-related identity dimensions. Three groups of studies emerged. First, studies on how schools and teachers unintentionally impact adolescents' identity showed that, at school, messages may unintentionally be communicated to adolescents concerning who they should or can be through differentiation and selection, teaching strategies, teacher expectations, and peer norms. Second, studies on how schools and teachers can intentionally support adolescents' identity development showed that different types of explorative learning experiences can be organized to support adolescents' identity development: experiences aimed at exploring new identity positions (in-breadth exploration), further specifying already existing self-understandings (indepth exploration), and reflecting on self-understandings (reflective exploration). The third group suggests that explorative learning experiences must be meaningful and situated in a supportive classroom climate in order to foster adolescents' identity development. Together, the existing studies suggest that schools and teachers are often unaware of the many different ways in which they may significantly impact adolescents' identity development.

Flum and Kaplan (2006) points out that the development of identity is one of the most excruciating aspect of adolescence. It shapes as to what an adult wants to become in their professional and personal life. However, it is argued that the concept of "identity formation" is been constantly been challenged because of the changing process of individualization, migration and emancipation. As they further argue that *identity development also gets affected* by a place where adolescents spend a lot of time and where their identity development is/can be supported. School is a very important and crucial aspect of the identity formation. Glaser and Strauss (1976) use constant comparative analysis to compare and group the various codes on the explicitly mentioned educational process. They pointed out the role of teacher and paid attention on low performing students and role of teacher explicitly communicating positive expectations towards the students. Both the affirmations were then combined in the overarching process, 'teacher's expectations. They pointed out different form of verbal and non-verbal presence including *unintentional educational process* (like selection practices, teaching strategies and peer norms), *intentional process* (in breadth exploration, in depth exploration and reflective exploration) and *pre conditions* (meaningful learning experiences and a supportive classroom climate). It was on the following basis argued that the formation of identity is a heterogeneous process combined with different permutation and combinations and influenced by multiple standpoint and factor.

III. METHODOLOGY

Following section focuses on the methodology, which has guided the research process. The methodology used for conducting the present study encompasses the objectives, research designs, sampling technique, tools of data collection along with ethical concerns and limitations involved in the study. The main approach for the research is qualitative in nature.

3.1 Rationale for the study

Most of the above cited studies adopted quantitative tools to measure identity as per their aims and objectives. The focus has not been on eliciting a personal experiential perspective. Exploring narratives and personal experiences of these age groups becomes necessary especially for a study on identity formation. It can add very rich qualitative dimension towards understanding factors that contribute to identity formation.

Further, studies on identity formation have largely focused on religion, gender, influence of media, low socio-economic status etc. There are limited qualitative studies on young people belonging to middle class families or coming from better socio-economic status.

Anushakti Nagar is the residential township of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Nuclear Power Corporation of India. Spread over more than 940 acres, this residential complex for the employees of Department of Atomic Energy of the Government of India in Mumbai, is situated in North-east Mumbai. Anushaktinagar claims to be the largest scientific community (in a single area) in the world (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anushakti_Nagar). Education wise, Anushaktinagar is a host to six high schools and one junior college run by Atomic Energy Education Society.

The proposed study seeks to understand how expectations and pressures from middle class families particularly parents influence the identities of the young generation. It has been observed that expectations of parents residing in Anushaktinagar with respect to the academic performances of children are very high. It is also observed that adolescents and youth in this colony are experiencing diverse challenges on an everyday basis through the friendship groups they develop, their usage of the internet (particularly for social networking) and wider urban cultural influences on their lifestyles. They face issues with regards to interpersonal skills and substance abuse including smoking and alcohol. There is a need to study and understand the experiences of these young people and how they impact identity formation. On one hand there is parental expectation to get good grades, have great friends, excel in extracurricular activities, and be well-behaved, responsible for themselves and sometimes for their younger siblings is a lot of pressure. On other hand there is peer pressure

and the urge to become "popular," youngsters feel pressured to conform in their tastes, behaviors, and appearance.

When all the people surrounding the youth are attempting to mould him/her into a different shape, the pressure builds. Parents, teachers, family elders, siblings, friends, schoolmates, and social groups all play a part and pull the teenager in different directions. They may have trouble making decisions and may get involved in unhealthy relationships. Developing a strong sense of identity and high self-esteem is important for many reasons. People who don't have a strong sense of their own identity may be easily influenced by others. They experience stress and difficulty prioritizing and managing their time. People that have poor self-esteem may be susceptible to a number of psychological problems like depression, anxiety and eating disorders. They may be more likely to become addicted to alcohol or drugs. Low self-esteem is not the only cause of these problems but it is often a contributing factor. Children and adolescents with poor self-esteem are more likely than other children to have behavior problems and have trouble getting along with authority figures.

3.2 Objectives
- To study experiences of adolescents & youth concerning the issue of identity formation.
- To examine the influence of family, peers, media & technology and educational institutions on their identity formation.
- To focus on the significant struggles faced by youth in developing and moving towards a stable identity.

3.3 Research Questions
- What are the significant factors that contribute to identity formation?
- What are the issues faced around building of identity formation?
- How are the interactions between adolescents and family, peer group, school, media constructed?
- How these interactions influence identity formation in young people?
- What are some most likely factors, which could contribute to developing a stable identity?

3.4 Research Design
The researcher has chosen the qualitative research design to achieve the objectives. The following research design can help to provide an awareness and look into the deeper emotion's thoughts and feelings of the research participants under the study. It helps and provides a conjecture to meanings people attribute to their experiences, lives, events, their perception and assumptions. The particular research design adopts constructivist epistemological stance (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie,2004) which basically points out that there are multiple truths based on the way each individual construct his/her reality in relation to their lived experience.

3.5 Sample
The present study involves ten participants who are currently studying in senior secondary high school. The students comprise from arts and humanities and science background who is currently in X and XI background.

3.6 Sampling Technique
Purposeful snowball sampling technique was used to reach out to the participants. The process in the following technique includes that one or two participants are identified and then they rely on those initial ones to help and identify with the additional study participants. The following method is useful when the researcher wishes to study a specific phenomenon.

3.7 Sampling Tools
The research is conducted by using primary as well secondary techniques. With primary the researcher has used an interview guide in order to approach the respondents. Although there is a semi structured form of methods but an interview guide has provided with the wholesome understanding of basic questions. With the secondary method of conducting research, the researcher focused on collecting articles, journals and researching different contents via internet sources.

Data Analysis For the following study, where to highlight the lived experiences of student's vis-a-vis different ongoing factors, like caste, class, gender, religion and hence to highlight those experiences a narrative framework has been adopted as a tool for theoretically analyzing the data. As, Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova (2006) points out that narrative allows researcher to present experience holistically in all its complexity and richness. The past more than two decades the importance of narrative method of analysis in educational research has grown significantly among a wide range of disciplines. The particular method of analysis has been the product of modernism and postmodernism. Where the two important philosophies and philosophical thought have influenced in thinking behind teaching strategies and methodologies.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Consent before undertaking interviews was one of the major considerations. The objective and purpose of the study was elaborately explained and they were reassured that the study was undertaken to fulfill the academic obligation of the researcher. The main aim was to make the respondent comfortable and the interviews were scheduled as per their convenience and timings. Confidentiality was assured and students where severe mental health issues were approached in safe space with ultimate sensitivity.

IV.   ANALYSIS

When we talk about the contents of identity formation, we refer to the markers and identifications coming from their personal lives, personal pasts which is relied on relationships built in young adulthood. The formation of identity keeps on shifting and evolving with the period. This formation is influence by different societal changes with a time period from traditional values build up in home to the values that the child is in conflict with while growing up.

On one hand where the identity is formed and influenced by the societal references, the young also drive social change (Bansal,). This formation is inspired by the locus of personal and professional lifestyle of the child shaped and constructed by the family, peers, school, to an extent the State, the religion and culture. The religion and culture also affect the identity of a child. It lays important foundation in a life of a child during its formative years and a lot of interaction and education is influenced by it. In respect to India, these institutions have a very central role to play and influence identity. Family in India, "considered as the central institutions of socialization and psychological locus in the lives of a vast majority of people" (Bansal).

The individual identity of a child varies in different class and caste scenario. The present study conducted in BARC. Bhabha Atomic Research Centre as a society is divided into different schools. The students are allocated schools on the basis of distance of school from their locality. During the research, the children pointed out how there is certain qualms among the children and family that a certain area of a school is better than the rest of it. All of these also form a very crucial aspect in terms of formation of identity. Students from a certain class background attending a socially renowned school will have a very different outlook in comparison to the students of other school. Along with the existing social context in terms of different institutions like family, schools and peers, these "created" social stratifications give rise to new forms of social order which contributes in the formation of identity of a youth.

The following chapter attempts to study the in-depth illustrations of youth to understand what contributes in the formation of identity vis-à-vis the social and psychological contexts.

With the advent of globalization and liberalization, education became one of the most powerful discussions among the policy makers. The policy that was constructed in a way it can influence the economy vis-à-vis the student. The education system has a very layered sections of impact on a student life. There is plethora of changes that a student undergoes during these foundation years. When we talk about a specific context of India, we need to refer to the diversified background and socio-economic and political location of a child. Occupying multiple and simultaneous locations of exclusions in respect to caste, gender, religion, class, the formal education in India brings out a very different picture. Education in India is influenced by different factors and impact the psychology of a student in layered form. These factors can include both, mental and physical which can influence the identity formation of a child. Erikson (1968) a thinker of the concept of identity, talks about the developmental process that focuses the formation of a workable identity. As, discussed earlier the identity formation "underlie the formation in the stage of youth and is multidimensional.

4.1 The Role of Social institution
4.1.1. The school

The stress in the students of class XI and XII takes a different toll on students every year. According to Vinayk (2005), a rising number of students suffer from extreme traumatic disorders related to *fear of examination*. Stress is induced and ignited at several levels in the student. The level of stress can be induced due to number of intra and inter- personal factors that can be operating in isolation or cumulating different factors. During an interview, Farreb who is pursuing Physics, Chemistry and Biology (name changed) replied-

"I *am pursuing science in my senior secondary school. I have classes till three'clock and then I have my coaching classes. The classes are conducted alternatively where they provide us with worksheets to complete. Then we have school work to complete. Sometimes we have our coaching classes in the morning as well. As early as 4:30 AM. I don't have time to play. I use to play badminton before. I use to read as well sometime before. Really enjoyed Amish Tripathi's, Shiva Trilogy. Last time I read any fiction book for leisure time was back in IX std. Now I don't have time for anything personal. Like I have books and I can read it but there is pressure from home to not read course books and waste time "Be careful, it is 11th and 12th".*

When we look at the current time table prescribed by the school among the students, we tend to have this thought as to how and why it different from other classes routines? Secondary student's mental health has

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become a serious public health issue. Academic course and structure are one of the defining stress inducers. According to Verma and Gupta (1990), there exists *academic stress* that is defined as mental stress that typically arises from potential academic failure. As, Farreb replies, 'I use to love reading books but I don't feel like reading it now', implies that there is a fear of performance among students due to expectations of school intertwined with expectations of parents.

The *academic stress* in India is systematically placed in the students with the help of this timetable and coaching classes. The time table in the school followed by the extra classes, encourages parents and teachers to invest their child to study for long periods of time in order to get more marks. The school also plays a very prominent role in the formation of identity and personality of the adolescents. The different parties involved in the school also plays a very significant role in impacting, intentionally or unintentionally the identity of a child.

4.1.2 The Teachers

The teacher's involvement with the student, especially in the higher and senior secondary school, leads to teachers' expectations and this most of the times intentionally/unintentionally plays in the development of adolescents. From one of the excerpts in the interview, Harsh, points out that the teachers constantly approach him with respect to the preparations and marks obtained. The following approach of questions and teacher's constant enquiry, limits adolescents' ways to position themselves. As study conducted by Velter (2010) &Worthman (2006), provides insights into how teacher expectations shapes adolescents narrated self-understanding.

In one of the interview narrations, *Sreyansh,* who is currently studying in XII std., keeps on repeating that he is not serious about his life decisions because his teacher believes so and therefore it is ingrained him now. "*Anyway, I am not that smart or intelligent and as good as the others, they(teachers) think that too*", the statement may not be a direct statement from the teacher but their unintentional behavior along with their expectations, led to self- doubt in the child. The study done by Fields & Enyedy (2013) on the similar lines provides a backup and stronger evidence for the identity formation even when the expectation is communicated implicitly. On similar lines, *Sreyansh,* who is working hard towards his goals find it difficult to believe in his dreams and himself because the environment around him fails to do so and keeps on reinforcing the idea of him not being serious enough.

4.1.3. The Family

In one of the interviews, Priya Mishra (name changed), she added

"*Science is the only stream I was allowed to take. My elder brother was also in the same stream. Although there was not much pressure from my family but it was unsaid. Like there is no career dream but I just want IIT. After doing Bachelors from IIT, I shall do MBA. No one told me about this but this how it is.*

Arts and Commerce is not an option? There is not much scope. In the school and family there is hierarchy in the school also. The level of hard work in our field is insane".

As per the following excerpt, the ongoing daily stress through the interaction with school, students feel another level of anxiety coming from their parents. With a pre-ordained perception about science and humanities stream, there is an unsaid authoritative positioning of family members. Although there is some level of pressure from the parents but with the constant socialization among certain culture, there is *self-induced* pressure which the kids start bearing. As per Stober (2004) the anxiety is the product of performance testing caused by anticipation of exam and affects the confidence. According to him the factors associated with students' academic stress in India, is the combination of parental pressure and exam anxiety. The risk factors for students in higher grades doubles.

The socialization of accepting certain jobs as more influential in comparison to others brings out the comparison as why science is better than other streams. The idea of education in the mind of young students in clearly market driven. The assembly of money and stability which made them want these market lucrative jobs. The perspective is not to attain knowledge or something they wish for. Farreb enjoys reading and exploring new films and Priya, plays basketball. One may ask the question as to what is plated as choice, is really a choice?

The idea of selection of stream is based on the employment opportunity in the future. It brings out the prevailing social status which once again contributes to the academic stress. Chatterjee and Barman (2011), communicated a strong inter connection between emotional problems and parental expectations for academic success since the changes in education policy in 2009. This change was closely studied and seen as varying in terms of gender and economic condition. The one belonging to slightly upper class was ready to take a risk in terms of career choices.

The kids in the interview have been occupied with the thought of getting into a more "serious", conventional and status-oriented career choices in the Indian society. With an overwhelming majority in the interviews, their siblings and then parents either inspired the students. As, Sohail, coming from a religious orthodox family structure where parents in their religious ways incorporated the idea of *stability.* The concept

which Sohail questioned in his own small ways and agency. As, a student of class XII, he was asked pursue either medical or engineering, which would have allowed easy access to moderate corporate world with all its glory, power and stability including status. Despite of the provided choice which was not one, Sohail found peace in his books which he reads sometimes under the bed or when everyone sleeps off. *Somewhere the translation of customs, traditions and norms by the parents lost out in imparting the vitalizing meanings inherent in them, hence the rebel in small ways.* As, Parul Bansal points out, the equation changes when there are heavy moral obligations in the household with sector where the culture institution of religion and family become highly ritualized and projects images of good vs bad, superior and inferior, good and bad, masculine and feminine, important and unimportant. All these factors might not appear on the surface which can drastically impact the identity formation of a child but it certainly does.

4.1.4 The Ideology and Caste politics

The youth being the most powerful and impacting time of life, gives rise to strong perspective building space. The scenario becomes very difficult when it comes to Indian youth as there a lot which is going in the scene. Them trying to seek for balance with relation to parents' figures and ongoing personal and political politics. It is fascinating to notice how the youth try to draw a mental boundary within their own head space and try to negotiate with the society order. *Sreyansh,* pointed out his ongoing differences with his parents with respect to their thought process on treatment of domestic worker. In the interview he points out, 'I *really don't understand their rude behavior with Asha Tai (the domestic worker) and why she drinks tea from a separate glass?* At one level he is trying to comprehend the actions of the society enforced on him in the form of caste politics on a very casual basis and on the intrinsic level he is questioning the very dominant aspect of the social order. In between the two Sreyansh is trying really hard to maintain his personal politics by questioning the social system as there is no space for him to put forth the anxiety and thoughts.

The school system fails to address the socio-political nature of the society which definitely impacts the student's psyche. The youth which are trying really hard to make sense of social realities including competition, democracy, family, emotions including the personal and physical changes vis-à-vis the society are left to take the journey alone.

Sigmund Freud, points out, "*at broader level, the work reflects on the nature of intergenerational continuity and change due to social change in the society. The theoretical and methodological precepts of psychoanalysis have been the bedrock.* The aim of the psychoanalysis is that it definitely provides an axis between the mind framework and social life/society. As, Erikson framework points out that in any given socio-economic culture within an order, certain psychological tendencies develop which influences the social forms later in life. The conflict which taken place within an individual with respect to their identity where in most cases can relate to sexuality, personal orientation, competition, ideology, political scenario reflects in pattern which later on harbingers as an important key element of either social change or conflict behavioral pattern.

The matter of caste politics is intrinsic among the school students in school parameters. Things go unnoticed as there is lack of awareness and discussions on such topics. The matter of caste is very much part of the Indian politics but the noticeable activities and conversation often takes place in isolation. As, Erikson (1968) points out, '*they are likely to feel estranged from the society but mostly upset in sexuality, and most of all unable to apply aggression constructively'.* During conversation with Sohail, there was a brief discussion with his parents who commented, "Sohail, is very short tempered in the house. He might look normal outside but he put out all the issues at home and behave in estranged manner with us". One of the biggest manifestations of identity works is by understanding the core background of the person. The product of identity formation is an amalgamation of intersectionality of caste, ethnicity, class, sexuality politics. One cannot not work these sectors and talk about identity formation in youth.

Sohail, is a Muslim who follows Islam as his religion. The politics of India is majorly impacting the youth of the country is different today. Therefore, Sohail who belong to the Muslim minority group in India expresses to be constantly alert and "feeling of guilt" in this majoritarian environment. There was a sense of "otherness" which was "unexplainable" according to him and it impacted his interactions with family and friends.

4.1.5 The Peers

Another important aspect of id entity formation during the adolescent period is the presence of peers and friends. Adolescents occupies major space with respect to peer influence. The peer ship is an altered condition which is historical as somewhere parents no longer serve as complete role models. The transition to adolescents focuses on more individual decision as well as diversifies. The kids during this phase find themselves adaptive and curious to most of the interpersonal skills. In one the interviews with Sreyansh, he pointed out, "*I was not very sure of which stream to choose. So, I went with my friend's choice. My parents wanted Physics Chemistry Biology but I was not keen to take them seriously. Me and friend choose Physics*

Chemistry and Maths. I think that do have higher scope than Biology". The narrative gives a glimpse that the child is more secure and influence outside the family including peers and mass media.

There is a sense of innate security and relativity which comes out from the role of peers. Kids find more similarity adjourned with the same wavelength and almost same issues. The identity construction can be created by affirmations by peers which can lead to development/ influence the self-image. With Sreynash, he never cared about studies that much. He looked himself as an average student who was not competitive. He would study for the exam score decent marks, *get into an average engineering college and then work.* For him the priority was to get out from the house at any cost. In the following case affirmations and reassurance from the peers is the only and most important source of indulging oneself in the current activities i.e., studying.

Along with finding the confidant, peers can also act competitive and can generate the feeling of self-doubts. *Manvi,* a student of IX std said:

The moment I reached into higher secondary school; everything just became about career instantly. *I don't know what changed inside me that everything became about career. It was just books, books and books. The routine comprised of coaching classes, school, tuitions and then homework, school work and tuition work. The aim is to get more than average marks in X std for getting a seat secure for Science side. As all my friends are planning to either take Science i.e., Physics, Chemistry and Math's or PC and Biology. My cousins call me "padauks" (nerdy) but I am not bothered of anything else now. Although few kids from class come to play basketball in the evening but I don't feel like wasting my time. I am utilizing that time for studying and completing my work. I think I can skip all these things for a while".*

There has been systematic shift in the identity development of children with respect to peers. In one case there is affirmations and reassurance seeking tendency in adolescent while on the other hand there is a self-inflicting pressure and competition tendency inflicted by the kids on themselves with comparison to their peers.

During one of the interviews, *Sohail,* added, *I don't really like to go out anymore. I am fine with me doing my school work. If not, I will nightmares where I failed or received bad marks. My parents are strict but I am actually very comfortable in my own space. I feel rather than wasting my time in playing I can complete EVS project (*EVS as it is less demanding than other subjects).

There is a constant rage in these kids in order to prove something. Either they want to prove a point to their parents or friends. The concept and meaning of peer are either of confidant or of competition. The friends and classmates create a sampling of identity development among adolescent which might help them but also give rise to imbalanced form of competitiveness and self- burden.

4.2. COVID

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 has a severe impact on each and every sector in the economy. The health pandemic bought a standstill and lead to re think of the old and traditional ways of living. Education as a sector is no exception. As per the department of the American Council of Education, enrollment is likely to drop by 15% in the fall of 2020. One of the biggest turning points in the education sector is that the classes shifted from offline to online and remained virtual throughout 2020. This impacted the students gravely and led to intrinsic disparities on the surface level. Students faced a lot of uncertainties with respect to increased hostile environment where initially they had threat for resources like laptop, phone devices with good internet connection. One of the biggest challenges that students face was in respect to the transition to online learning which may have affected their academic performance and hence leaving residual impact on mental health and coping behaviors of children. The physical absence of peers and familiar work/school environment impacts the personal and cognitive side of the students. In one of the interviews, *Harsh* who is currently in IX std pointed out:

It is difficult to not see friends around and online it just doesn't feel right. We know we can't do much but this year was a total waste. We have classes online from 8 in the morning till 1 or sometimes till 2 p.m. Sticking oneself from the laptop, I usually get distracted with other things around either on the laptop or on the internet. Also, there is no more fun in the classes and classes as well.

The average attention span in the class and towards the subjects have taken a huge toll via online classes. *Manvi,* a higher secondary school student reported that students mark their presence on online classes and leave as soon as the classes start. When probed to ask why is the situation like this, she said *students are not familiar with the settings and a personal touch is missing. We have classes since morning till midafternoon and then coaching classes and then personal tuitions.*

As *Pranjal* also says, *there has been significant increase in the worksheet and homework during COVID times as teachers have this perception that if a student is at home, he/she is in comfortable position and has time. My laptop is supposed to be shared with my other two siblings (two sisters) and therefore it gets really difficult and create added pressure. Also, BARC does not have a proper network connection and I have friends who I know cannot afford the connection also.*

The situation of pandemic had severely affected the coping mechanism of students. Under high pressure scenario, they are unable to cope up in the closed environment along with less privacy and outlets. There are students who were financially weaker on the periphery as it was difficult for them to cope up with the lockdown and emerging work load. There was this overwhelming feeling of missing out on studying from school and attending classes. The effects of pandemic are highly heterogeneous leading to high anxiety among students with respect future and exams and the uncertainty of future.

4.3 The Streams

One of the most important model of identity formation in India is the field and stream the student is picking or planning to take for higher studies. There have been judgments and opinions about one stream better than the other. The dominant and conventional streams are in the following order; science, commerce and arts. The science stream is the supreme and potentially students and parents first choice. As per *Sohail,* a student of XI std points out the *rivalry among the two streams i.e. science and arts. I think science is not everyone cup of tea also. I don't disrespect the students of other stream but there is the general view (also I feel) science is more difficult than arts or commerce.*

An increasing and dangerous debate in an increasingly technological world, the primacy of STEM discipline is a common narrative we come across. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math and the discipline is usually elevated above the rest of the pack based on things like earning potential, job security and overall contribution to the society.

When asked, *Sreyansh,* as the reason to pick science for future he replied, *my friend was taking science, my father is officer in BARC and my mother is a doctor. So, I guess this explains itself. No one in my family was into Arts or Commerce. I don't think I was ready for the risk. I don't enjoy the science stream much but I am sure it will fetch me money and I can move out of the house.*

Priya Mishra who is in XI std opted for science because his elder brother was a mechanical engineer. *What value is an Art History degree compared to an Engineer one? There is far less jobs and specifically high paying jobs also the colleges are not very great for arts. Also, I think one needs to be creative for taking Arts and clearly, I am not. The most creative I can get is during experiments in Chemistry Lab. It was very clear since IX std only that I wanted to take Science. My parents also planned about it.*

Pranjal jokingly said *we don't really get along well with the ARTS students. Like they don't have coaching classes, tuitions classes, then worksheet to solve like us. I don't disrespect the stream but I do believe that science has more potential.*

The ferocious debate of science vs commerce vs arts debate is never ending. It is a facile and a dangerous debate whose roots are connected with the upbringing and society. Plato, a long time ago wrote about things existing in emerging from pairs, i.e. the concept of binary existence. Like, life exists with Death, winners with losers and therefore science is superior to Art where science as a composite to great art. The issue with Indian education system is that both the stream or any stream in comparison to the science stream is seen as competition and rivalry. Whereas noble laureate believed both, Arts and Science go hand in hand and one cannot survive without the other. Students from an early age believe, Science as a noble profession whereas Arts is for passing time and for *fun.* The binary and the difference are clearly seen in the contemporary education system within parents coming down to children and then passed to the contemporaries.

4.4 The hierarchy

There is inherit hierarchy among the society which definitely impacts the identity formation of the students in mostly all the ways. The youth in the current scenario is mostly either forced or voluntarily dragged into everything. The school asserts pressure on them to perform in school and at times in co- curricular activities as well. The idea of "successful person" laid out by the society and therefore family is the byproduct of hierarchy incremented inside and within the society for the longest period of time. The hierarchy was based in the form of grades, caste, religion, gender, stream, parents background and school. The hierarchy which is a product of minimal functioning of the society impacts and determine the wave and politics of identity among the youth. School plays a major role in understanding and churning the procedure into a continuous cycle. *Pranjal of IX std said, there is an unsaid group in the class. The toppers will hang out with toppers like in our school officers' students will hang out officers' kids only. Not hundred percent all the time but one sees this happens most of the time. In our school even if a boy is hanging out with a girl, students and teachers starts noticing and starts assuming it differently. As if we both are romantically involved. To be honest teachers also support certain students and it is very visible.*

Winnicott (1971) points out the aspect of cultural experience where he points out an interjection and connection between the inner world of dreams and outer world of facts. Erikson, who goes a step further says, "the central psychological dimensions of individualism: a place where autonomy and options are granted to the growing individual in areas of vocation, love, recreation etc".

There is a sense of inhibition and non-acceptance with the emotion of love as it is dramatized and put in an accusing manner. There is high possibility and chance of building a negative context to the emotion in future and impacting his/her personal life and orientation. It is very clear from the narratives that gender identity is kind of forced on the students. The education of spectrum is bleak and heteronormativity is assumed. Any other and different form of orientation is mocked and looked down upon. The battling guilt of just being romantically linked to someone creates a trauma point for someone that the anxiety leaps in forever. The concept of safe space, intimacy and love and sex is frown upon and still consider a taboo.

V. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study is to understand the contextual changes in the "identity formation" among the cycle of youth generation. The cycle focused on understanding the panoramic view of the factors that influences the overall development of identity among the youth and there after affect them in spaces of their lives. When we talk about a reality in the present scenario, youth's endeavors in the existing system have the unlimited power to conform and at the same time reform and alter the reality. There has been consistent shift in the power positions and scope to receive knowledge. It is no longer the task of just teachers and parents to teach young the meaning of life. The horizon of receiving knowledge has widen up and there are different entry points for students to get inspired from. It is been concluded that the social and cultural institutions play a very prominent role in shaping the trajectory of human youth. The changes taking place in the society and the formation of identity go parallel and is an interplay between *inertia and flux*. The interplay between the two i.e. inertia which is maintained by traditional psychological patterns and flux that is stimulated by the pressure towards the change are strong. In the study we have focused on understanding different stakeholders involve consciously and sub consciously which impacts the identity formation of a child. We have focused on understanding adolescent students who are pursuing higher and secondary higher education i.e. students from IX-XII. With the increase in awareness, there is steep increase in the pressure of the society on youth. There is a plethora of expectations from the society which creates an immense pressure and load on the students. Emerging from the narratives, the task of individuation is negotiated within the fold of family by the urban class Indian youth. It was observed that school and teachers look at the educational practices in a new and critical ways. The education system which is considered as unproblematic can unintentionally shape how adolescents interpret themselves and provides suggestions for how did the learning experiences support adolescents identity formation. The social institutions primarily the educational processes and the message communicated to youth with respect to – 'what *you want to become in future'* or *parents' expectations* or *idea of success;* plays out the most important factor of what message these institutions are giving out. It is exactly in this relation and such messages, which develop their identities. As per the narratives of the students it was observed that although it was assumed that education was considered flawless and efficient, adolescent's self-understandings of the same was different and mostly negative. The teachers reinforce the idea of conventional understanding of success and thus indirectly making sure that the students fall for it.

As, Erikson points out, identity present a sense of present with upcoming future. Which goes on without saying that the past, present and future are all interconnected, inspired by each other. One cannot oversee one aspect of the past and construct an opinion about the future. The identity is made out of several intersectional spaces including images and habits of parents including significant adults and the roles they played in their childhood. With respect to Indian context, one cannot leave the political scenario with respect to caste, class and gender aspect. The following bonds and emotions forms identifications with images and roles which is further recognized throughout pre-adolescent period. Therefore, looking at the current ever growing changing patterns of living, education, social structure, the identity is formulated dynamically and throughout, acquired through new identifications with fellow students and peers or the upcoming leader figures outside school, family sometimes online or fiction characters. It is safe to say that the identity transformation takes place both externally as well as internally.

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