

Social Capital in an Elementary School: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

Introduction

Education is an essential agent for social change. It contributes through development of human capital, fosters social mobility, self-actualisation and in turn, a holistic development of an individual. Schools are primary centres for teaching social norms to individual. It addresses social inequality, inequity by fostering community participation. In context of Rajasthan, the social hierarchies (Rathore and Saxena, 1987) still stands strong, as it continues to face challenges like poverty (Singh and Rao, 2020), gender disparity (Verma, 1986), low literacy rate (Census 1961, 1971, 1981, 2001) and high infant mortality rate (Singh and Rao, 2020). Social capital, as conceived by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988, 1994) and Putnam (1993) sheds light on the benefits of social interactions and relationships in achieving our collective goals.

Capital: A Prologue

The concept of capital was explored by identifying commodity as the germplasm of capital, which has use and exchange value. Lin (2008) perceived capital to be processed twice; as resource and investment, secondly as causal factor in production. Loury (1976,1981) in his exploration of social capital related it with the family background of an individual. The readiness to allocate resources within the family contributed to shape a child's development and future. Hence, social capital enhances efficiency and effectiveness of an individual at the societal level.

Pierre Bourdieu's Notion of Social Capital

Bourdieu (1987,1988) defined capital as the accumulated resources in different forms that empower individual or group, when these resources are leverage either as material or live labour. He opined that capital can exist in many forms and is uneven in distribution across social structure, making it a rare resource. Bourdieu (1987,1988) identified three forms of capital that mainly exists, namely economic, cultural, and social. For Bourdieu (1987,1988) social capital is referred to as when resources are linked with a durable network, which facilitates access to various assets, including education. For Bourdieu (1987,1988), social capital was a 'socially given' resource rather than 'naturally acquired', as it involves different investment strategies towards development and maintenance of social relations. Bourdieu (1987,1988) also opined that the forms of capital have a potential to transform into different forms of capital.

Hence, it is dependent upon the efforts towards developing sociability by individuals within a group.

Coleman's Conception of Social Capital

Coleman (1988) defined social capital by its 'function' which is composed of different entities that are united by the social structure and actions of actors. Hence, it essentially inheres in the relationships between individuals, that functions to enhance the productivity and resource sharing in a group. Social capital according to Coleman (1986) exists in three forms viz. obligation and trustworthiness, information channels and norms (effective and prescriptive). These three forms influence our interactions, in turn our social relationships. Coleman (1986,1990) also put forth the idea of Intergenerational closure as an effective norm that garners collective support and enforcement of norm. Lastly, Coleman (1990) opined that social capital is a public good rather than individually ascribed good which facilitates group consensus, and empowers individual as a positive impact.

Putnam's Insights on Social Capital

Putnam (1993,2000) emphasised the role of social capital to foster relationships that serves individual interests. Elements like trust, civil societies, and norms reduce the transaction costs by instilling conviction within the members of a group. Hence, Putnam (1993) also considered social capital as a 'public good' rather than 'private good'. Putnam and Goss (2001) identified three forms of social capital based on its existence at network level: bonding (within same background), bridging (between different background), and linking (between individual and powerful institution). Hence, social capital is dependent on the quality of relationship, which could impact utilisation of resource, collective actions, and different social outcomes.

Social Capital in Elementary Education

Early thinkers like Dewey (1900) and Tocqueville (1840) identified the importance of societal integration and relationships among the communities. Hanifan (1916) in his early conception of social capital defined it as the presence of goodwill, fellowship and cooperation that benefits the community. Papapolyrodou (2011) highlighted the role of social capital as generator and product of education in her study of students' educational outcomes. Hence, schools are critical in developing social capital among students through social connections and providing opportunities to access different forms of

capital. The elementary school years are important as a child is influenced more by peers who can mould their habitus. Hence, it is important to understand social capital in the realm of educational paradigms will be effective in its application in school.

Policies Insights and Initiatives on Social Capital

Various policies, commissions and committees did not mention social capital explicitly, but stressed on the need to increase community participation, social cohesion, and national integration through education. These policies have highlighted the importance of inclusion and social development that can only be achieved when there is a cognizance of prioritising collective goal over individual goals. Hence, it was important that through education a conducive and nurturing learning environment is created. This has been done and achieved through initiatives in Rajasthan like *Shiksha Karmi*, *Lok Jumbish Pariyojana*, and District Primary Education Programme, yet its literacy rate stands far below the national literacy rate as per Census 2011. Hence, by recognising the potentials of social capital would aid the policymakers and planners to implement much effective educational interventions.

Elementary Education in Rajasthan

Early education in Rajasthan was provided through Pathshalas, Maktabas, and Upasara. English education was introduced in 1819 through missionary schools and later the princely states opened different schools under their patronage. Girl education was promoted despite patriarchal norms. Post-Independence, Rajasthan focused on improving elementary education despite challenges like low enrolment and high dropout rate. As per U-DISE+ 2021-2022, there were 106240 schools in Rajasthan, where most of the schools were private schools. Despite challenges, there have been significant efforts to improve access and quality in education, with the potential role of social capital emerging as a key theme in fostering educational progress.

School as an Agent of Fostering Social Capital

In education, social capital is the product of socialisation that is fostered through trust, sense of belonging, open communication, reciprocity, solidarity, and engagement of school members. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), explained three dimensions in an organizational context to describe the contribution of social capital towards development of intellectual capital. The first dimension of social capital is, structural dimension, which is defined as, the connections and engagement among the members

of an organization. It encompasses tangible and intangible aspects. In the context of education, this can be understood through school policy, infrastructure, and leadership the school culture and school environment are affected. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) defined cognitive dimension of social capital as shared understanding, common language, and beliefs that enables effective communication and collaboration within an organization. When seen in the context of education, it focuses on alignment of expectations, perceived role of individual and ease of information-sharing. Lastly, the relational dimension of social capital as per Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) talks about quality of connections and engagement within an organization. These bring forth the importance of interactions and its role in facilitation of learning, participation, and engagement in school context.

Rationale for the Study

In education, social interactions play a critical role in refining our sensitivities and perceptions, leading to national cohesion, a scientific temper, and independence of mind and spirit. When a school is viewed as a social organization, our major focus remains on its internal structure. At the same time, it is important to remember that every school has its own culture and sub-cultures, filled with legends, heroes, stories, rituals, and ceremonies. Hence, the school is shaped through the interactions between the stakeholders and the school itself. This idea that outcomes in education are conditioned by social interactions had a titillating appeal.

The schools play a critical role in providing a space for children to interact with their friends, teachers, and the administration, forming their own social support systems. Hanifan (1916), Coleman (1988), and Morgan and Sorensen (1999) respectively opined that schools employ social capital to enhance their interconnectedness with community life, nurture high parental involvement, and expand the possibilities of students to achieve in both scholastic as well as non-scholastic activities. Furthermore, Ostrom (2000) noted that social capital aids in generating shared knowledge, understanding, norms, rules, and expectations within groups of individuals.

Social capital exists through our social relationships and the benefits that these social relationships have the potential to generate. This acts as a support for stakeholders to use their membership and networks to secure benefits in the school such as aspiration (Onyx and Bullen, 2000), academic achievement (Goodard, 2003; Huang, 2009),

adjustment (Lee, 2007), safety (Vieno et al., 2010) and others. The proponents of social capital advocated values such as knowledge-sharing (Ekinci, 2012), empathy (Dolan, 2022), tolerance (Onyx and Bullen, 2000; Paxton, 2002), solidarity (Hakim et al., 2012; Shoji et al., 2014; Poltacan and Balci, 2019), and trust (Onyx and Bullen, 2000; Parcel and Dufur, 2001; Paxton, 2002; Goodard, 2003) among others as valuable and critical for people to be able to collaborate and accomplish together. Hence, in a school context, Qvortrup (1994) pointed out, that social capital should be regarded as an asset that students, teachers, administration, and other stakeholders can draw on and benefit from.

The policies and committees have illuminated the importance and need to inculcate the spirit of socialism, secularism, and democracy as enshrined in our Constitution. While social capital was not mentioned in their deliberations definitively, it was talked about through the perpetual usage of cohesion and national integration. Lareau (2000) pointed out that schools are burdened with social and cultural expectations of parents of different socio-economic statuses; hence schools could perpetuate inequality due to their bias towards the elite. Schueller et al. (2000) opined that this limits the percolation ability of policies at all levels. The state of Rajasthan due to high poverty (Unnithan-Kumar, 1997), female foeticide (Aravamudan, 2007), child marriage (Nagi, 1993), and low female literacy rate (Jindal and Pandey, 2012) became one of the BIMARU states in the late 1980s by the Indian economist, Ashish Basu (Sharma, 2015). Despite the continuous efforts that have been made by the State government through collaboration with the Centre and other international organisations to improve the status of education, the average literacy level of the state is far behind the national literacy rate as per the Census 2011. Ramachandran (2004) saw this as the residual effect of the social disparities that were prevalent in the socio-cultural history of Rajasthan.

Social capital, as per Jack and Jordan (1999) is a powerful social equalizer as it potentially presents equality of opportunities right from the elementary level of the school. Hence, inculcating values, and social skills in a conducive school environment can enable students to form friendships that could ultimately help them during their time of need, thus generating social capital from their social relationships.

Most of the studies have relied upon surveys as a basis for understanding the effect of social capital on various curricular aspects. These studies followed a nomothetic approach to present a macro-level picture of social capital within the schools, but have

not focused on how and in what forms it comes to fruition, especially in the case of an Indian school. On the contrary, a microscopic study for an extended period would allow me to observe and understand the complexities of context, relationships, behaviour, and experience of the stakeholder within an elementary school. Hence, it was important to investigate how social capital is formed within an Indian school at the elementary level. Furthermore, it is of significance to examine the impact of social capital on circumstances associated with schools, namely parents, students, teachers, and principals. This will help in reflecting the sustenance of social capital between the principal, teachers, students, and parents within an elementary school.

Research Questions

- How is social capital constructed, enacted, and experienced by members of school community within an elementary school?
- How does social capital influences engagement of members of school community within an elementary school?
- What are the challenges to the formation and use of social capital within an elementary school?

Statement of the Problem

The school experience is beyond the teaching-learning process. It involves interactions that shape the educational experiences and aspirations of students. Social capital has been identified as one of the vital factors, defined as an embedded resource in the social relationships that impact students' engagement, teachers' engagement, and the overall atmosphere of the school. Yet, we are limited by studies as to how social capital develops and maintains, particularly in specific instances. This thesis aimed to explore different dimensions of social capital that emerge in an elementary school community. The study also investigated the impact of social capital on the different stakeholders of the school, namely students, teachers, and principals.

Title of the Study

“Social Capital in an Elementary School: A Case Study”

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the factors that contribute towards generation and maintenance of social capital within the elementary school community.

2. To analyse the influence of the identified factors on generation and maintenance of social capital within the elementary school community.
3. To study the impact of school activities on the manifestation and sustenance of social capital within the elementary school community.
4. To assess the impact of school leadership in shaping the social capital within the elementary school community.
5. To understand the role of teachers in shaping social capital within the classrooms of the elementary school community.
6. To identify the challenges to the development and sustenance of social capital within the elementary school environment.

Explanation of the Term

Social Capital: Social capital is characterized as the set of resources that are derived from interpersonal behaviours, fostering an environment of trust, a sense of belonging, open communication channels, reciprocity, solidarity, and substantive cognitive, emotional, and social engagement of the members.

Elementary School Community: The group includes students, teachers, principal, and parents who are connected and interact within the elementary school setting.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to an Upper Primary Private Unaided School, affiliated to the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE) in the city of Jaipur.

Implications of the Review

Portes (1998) and Morrow (1999) criticized the paradoxical definition of social capital by Coleman (1988) which incited an erratic chain reaction of studies. Coleman (1988) conceived the idea of social capital by utilizing High School and Beyond (HSB) data to show the effect of social capital on dimensions of trust, norms, intergenerational closure, and networks. By following Coleman's path, most of the studies have relied on secondary databases such as NELS, CEPS, KELS, NLSY, YiN, and many more. At the same time, some studies have used Cronbach alpha to measure the internal consistency of scales, and questionnaires. The absence of Validity, specifically construct validity, remains a cause of concern as neither the survey databases employed nor the indicators in them such as family size, and the number of siblings, etc. present an accurate picture of nature and factors leading up to the development of social capital from the process of

socialization. The survey designs have used scales and even subscales, which again limits the responses of the participants. The studies have tried to understand the social capital effects of individuals, educational institutions, families, neighbourhoods, or communities on different educational-related aspects, but could not point out the clear picture of possession of what type of social capital could lead to desirable educational outcomes. The studies presented a positive effect of social capital on educational achievement, school success, well-being, belongingness, and others across gender, race, and community. Such uniform findings across the studies raise a question as to whether social capital generates, manifests, and sustains in the same way across all social contexts. Thus, it is important to note that the indicators used were derived from different continents and different social settings, hence it becomes necessary to contextualize the research on social capital.

It was observed that most of the studies employed the assistance of a team of research assistants to collect data through surveys, interview the participants, and even transcribe the interviews. It was observed that even studies that adopted qualitative methodologies, such as narrative research and case studies relied on pre-meditated indicators and conducted interviews and observations around them. The studies have used sophisticated statistical tools such as regression models and structural equation models. These analyses can present the findings based on an existing tool that the researcher(s) have administered with a pre-conceived notion about the existence of social capital and its dimensions. This directly undermines the principle of doing research objectively and free from bias.

Research Design

The present study followed a qualitative framework of research. This meant that the strategies employed emphasis over words rather than quantification of data. In view of Bryman (2012), qualitative research resides in the embodiment of social reality as an individual's creation. Candy (1991) opined that inquiry is always value-laden. This is because the researcher is a part of the society. These values, in turn, influence our entire research process right from the conception of the study to the reporting of the data related to it.

The current study followed an Instrumental Case Study design. An instrumental case study design, according to Stake (1995) is employed to draw a deeper understanding of

a particular issue, revisit generalizations, or theory-building. Here, the case itself is secondary yet plays a supportive role to facilitate an understanding of a phenomenon. Thus, the case is detailed based on its context, and the activities are scrutinized. The foundation of an instrumental case study design as per the view of Stake (1995) is a collaboration between the researcher and participant(s) to reconstruct their experiences. It offers a ‘thick description’ of a certain individual, institution, site, or group(s). Concurrently, Stake (1995) warned that an instrumental case study does not allow a scope of generalizing as done in quantitative research. Rather, it tries to identify patterns and themes that are comparable to other cases.

Defining the Field

Patton (1990) defined a field as a physical environment that sufficiently provide support to the researcher to visualize and conduct a study. Flick (2009) elaborated that in a field, the information is recognized and collected through effective communication between the researcher and the respondent. Thus, defining the field of study is imperative to establish a spatial framework. The focus of the current study was to understand how social capital presents itself in an educational context, which in this study was an elementary school.

The overall literacy rate of Rajasthan, according to Census 2011 stood at 66.11%, much less than the national average. According to U-DISE+ 2019-20 data, there were 9112 schools in Jaipur district, out of which 1990 were Private Unaided Recognised Upper Primary Schools. Thus, the total share of Private Unaided Recognised Upper Primary Schools was 21.8% in the Jaipur district. These upper primary schools are those schools that have classes from I to VIII only.

By understanding the concept of the case study and its related assumptions, I explored many schools in Jaipur. I came across SFS school through one of my contacts. The SFS school was a Private Unaided Recognised Upper Primary School located in the periphery of Jaipur city. Typically, there are many schools in Jaipur city that are affiliated with the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE). The SFS school was established in 2000 by an Air Force couple and was affiliated with RBSE. The school did not have any permanent infrastructure and hence would shift within an area after some time. Apart from this, the school was largely dominated by Rajput teachers and students. A school like this was something that I never heard of. This could be due to

reasons such as limited exposure to a realm of schools that has a permanent infrastructure, which remains same for a long time, and a consistent number of students and teachers. This led to a curiosity to understand how social capital would be generated and sustained in such a school, and how the school is thought of by its community members.

During my association of more than two and a half years, the school had shifted twice. The dwindling numbers of students, and teachers in a school that shifted its location and continued to remain functioning during and after the COVID-19 lockdown, motivated me to look upon this school as a case for conducting my research. In addition to this, SFS school offered me a free hand to talk and interact with students and teachers. This was a relief as compared to the constraints such as no interaction with teachers and children, no photography, and the compulsion to share the findings that were put forth on me in other schools. The understanding of repercussions in the future deterred me from continuing my quest and thus, SFS emerged as the case for the study.

Sampling

The principal focus of a case study, hence, was to select an information-rich sample, that would enhance the depth of information and validates the gathered information. According to Bryman (2012), purposive sampling aims to sample cases or participants in such a way that sampled cases or participants are relevant to the framed research questions. Brumann et al. (2008) employed purposive sampling in their study of environmental disputes among different stakeholder groups. Falk (2003) employed purposive sampling to choose twelve VETs in his instrumental case study in Australia. The studies by Eng (2013) and Roth (2013) to study educational achievement and educational inequality of students respectively had use purposive sampling.

In this study, I initially interacted with all the teachers, students, and principal. This was done so that the members of the school would not feel that they were either being outrightly rejected or the focus was on a particular group. During the pre-COVID-19 phase of my study, there were seventeen teachers and around one-fifty students in school. However, after the COVID-19 lockdown, there were only seven teachers and nearly ninety students in total. This was further aggravated by students switching between online and offline classes. Hence, twenty-five to thirty students were taken as sample who were consistently coming to the school were selected for the study. In the

case of teachers, out of seven teachers, six teachers voluntarily agreed to be a part of the study. The principal was also chosen as the sample to understand the school structure, administration, and other aspects.

Entering the Field

My breakthrough to enter the field was meeting an English teacher from Happy Rites School, Mrs. Karuna Rathore. She was the mother of my brother's junior. She agreed to arrange a meeting with SFS school's principal. The school was situated in an area called *Khirni Phatak*, which was on the outskirts of Jaipur City. I visited SFS school and spoke to the principal in the presence of Karuna Madam. The principal agreed to let me conduct the study by requesting to cause minimal disturbance to the school activities. She asked for a formal letter from the institution, without which she would not permit. I assured her that on my next visit, I would provide a formal institutional letter.

The entering in the field happened in two stages- before and after COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Initially, I took a permission letter from my department and handed it to the principal of SFS school. I was introduced to the whole school in its assembly. The principal asked everyone including the teachers to cooperate with me. Later, one of the teachers, in my presence shared her apprehension of bringing in a stranger into the school. The principal introduced me as a relative of Mrs. Karuna Rathore. The principal reiterated the rules of not engaging with students and teachers during their classes, no loitering in the school, asking permission from the teachers in case I am interested in observing their classes and lastly, she added that in no way I should interact with the parents. I assured her that I would be mindful of my movements, tone, and behaviour in school.

During my visits, I observed reluctance among the teachers. They would shut the doors if they saw me loitering near their class. On the other hand, the students particularly in class V were curious to know who I was. They began spending their lunch break with me. Once I could not go to school for two days, when I returned, a student from class V asked about my whereabouts. It was an unexpected question but I told him the reason. He seemed to squint his eyes and went away. Later the students of class V would ask me to come to their class during their free time. I requested the principal to give me any empty classes so that I could teach as well as interact. I received a negative response from the school on account of syllabus completion. With COVID-19 making its presence known in India, the schools were eventually closed. I came back to the

University. During the first 21 days of the lockdown of COVID-19, I called the school principal once. We exchanged greetings on the phone and asked about each other's well-being. When I inquired about how the school is managing itself in terms of classes and examinations, she sounded assured that the school would reopen after the 21-day lockdown.

When the principal stopped responding to phone calls and messages, I resolved to wait for the schools to reopen. I revisited the school in September 2021, as the school personnel were allowed to come but the students were being taught online. The principal informed me that the school would open for 3 hours every day and the teachers were taking online lectures from the school. Upon reaching I noticed the lock on the door. I asked the neighbours who told me that the school had shifted. I called the principal who gave me the new school address.

Upon meeting, I reiterated my study. She ignored my question about the change in the building and instead asked me to come on alternate days as they were trying to settle into the new building. She refused to take my help in setting up the new building. In the upcoming days, the teachers seemed to remain oblivious to my presence as they did not return the pleasantries nor they agreed to talk.

Tools and Techniques for Data Collection

According to Bryman (2012), **semi-structured interviews** have a contextual tonality about the questions. It offers a scope to the researcher to vary the sequence of the questions and even pose further questions to receive significant information from the participants. To have fruitful interviews, Yow (1994) pointed out that it was important to develop an interview guide. I developed an interview guide for students, teachers, and principal. However, there were many sets of questions that were developed separately for the principal, teachers, and students. The **informal conversations** happened outside the school, in the staff room, during lunch breaks, and in preparation for a festival celebration or any other event. This increased the scope of acquiring data as sometimes the participant would engage in a conversation, that they might not have, had they been aware of being on record. **Participant observation** was one of the best techniques to collect data from participants. However, for me, this did not happen overnight. As a Gold's (1958) complete observer, the initial days in the field were a concoction of doubt and fear about how to navigate myself in a new environment. I slowly acquired the role

of Gold's (1958) observer-as-participant as I increased the frequency of my visits. The observation during this time was more formal in nature with limited opportunities for participation. This superficiality of participation transformed with the persistence to become Gold's (1958) participant-as-observer as I became a part of the school activities in the form of teaching classes and organizing activities. According to Bryman (2012), **field notes** are generally used as a reflective tool by ethnographers as a "detailed chronicle of events, conversations, and behaviours." Field notes were sometimes written as quick notes about an incident or behaviour on the field. The inconspicuous prompts added in it can serve as a trigger to write an elaboration about the day on the field. I initially carried a notebook with me and would instantly note down if I was unable to record it. Later, I would record the field notes in my voice while I was in the field, which were later transcribed. I also depended on making mental notes where it was not feasible to either write or record, or could be deemed inappropriate, such as attending the staff meeting. I would later write down the moment as soon as I got some space away from the participants. As a researcher, Parul (2016) highlighted that it was important to **listen to the participants**. This listening was not merely limited to being focused on getting the answers we want. In one of the semi-structured interviews, the interviewee talked about her family life, husband, divorce, and life as a single mother. I could not find anything conclusive in that recorded interview during my transcription. But the behaviour of that interviewee changed towards me who would later come upfront and later became a key informant about the school. In retrospect, I realized that listening, as Palmer-Mehta (2016) pointed out is a powerful tool that had a potential to change the nature and quality of our interactions. The realm of research is founded on proof. While doing research **documents** such as research articles, journals, theses, publications, and reports helped me to frame my research questions. Later, I used the information and findings of these studies to corroborate my findings. This was done to provide much stronger support to my findings, thereby adding to the existing body of knowledge about social capital in a regional context that resonates closer to Indian roots. In addition to this, I was shown lesson planners by the teachers, but access to see the content was vehemently denied.

Data Analysis

For Bogdan and Biklen (2007) qualitative data analysis encompasses organizing data, generating codes, categories, and themes, identifying patterns among themes, and

finally interpreting the data in the form of a write-up. The data analysis began the moment I entered the field. The qualitative data analysis for the current study is based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) framework of qualitative data analysis which is done in three steps, namely, data condensation and data display ultimately leading to drawing conclusions. Based on this framework I have provided details about the steps such as transcription of data, organizing, coding, and categorizing, thematic generation, and categorization, and lastly interpretation and reporting.

a. Transcription of data

I recorded the semi-structured interviews as audio, I would write the conversations that were off-record in a small notebook. This formed a part of my transcription. I transcribed the semi-structured interviews verbatim in English and Hindi.

b. Organizing, Coding, and Categorizing

While I was in the field, my primary focus was to gather data. I periodically transcribed my interviews. I would read them again to understand how to proceed. The data condensation allowed me to select, and simplify the data which was obtained in the form of field notes, transcripts of interviews, informal conversations, and documents. The transformed data was then extracted to identify concepts and patterns. By doing this step, there was an ease of identifying patterns.

c. Thematic Generation and Thematic Categorization

The data display as per Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) is the second step that entails a comprehensive assembly of information that allows one to draw conclusions. Once I was able to categorize, I was able to identify themes. By corroborating with the research questions and objectives, I generated more categories that in turn led to a much clearer understanding of the pattern. This helped me to gain much-needed clarity for interpreting the data and reporting the findings.

d. Interpretation and Reporting

During the fieldwork, I consciously left room for scepticism toward the information I obtained. Thus, it ended up making the initial conclusions equivocal. As the study proceeded my engagement with the participants increased. This provided a relative ease of access to the information that aided in identifying repetitive patterns and meanings. Thus, the final conclusions drawn from verification and re-verification were tested on

the credibility, confirmability, and robustness of the data by triangulating from different sources.

Ethical Considerations

I adhered to ethical principles throughout my investigation. This included minimizing interference in participants' routines, obtaining informed consent, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining confidentiality. I also practiced reflexivity, acknowledging the potential influence of my background and biases on the research. I obtained institutional permission from the school and provided detailed information about my study's objectives and methodology to the authorities. To protect participants' identities, I used pseudonyms for the school, principal, teachers, and students in the study. I redacted photographs to maintain anonymity.

Major Findings of the Study

SFS school is a low-fee private recognised upper primary school that shifted its location before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The students and teachers called the school a “temple of knowledge” and a “place of learning.” The principal and teacher believed that education is critical in instilling values and morals among the students.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, activities such as morning assembly and lunch breaks had practices like young students being assisted by older students and sharing lunch boxes.

The teachers, principal, and students had strong interpersonal relationships. However, the interpersonal connections with the parents were limited. Expectations, obligations, and their fulfilment were found to play an important role in developing relationships between students, teachers, parents, and principal. Trust was also found to play a crucial role in fostering a sense of community among the students.

The school had multiple information channels between and among students, teachers, parents, and principal. Furthermore, these information channels were streamlined to improve communication within the school community.

The students' aspiration was influenced by their teacher and family members as they chose to pursue high-performing careers like teachers, doctors, and defence. Teachers

also aspired to be remembered for their teaching style and called teaching a “calling” rather than an “occupation.”

The relationship among the teachers had blurred professional and personal boundaries.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the students shared being involved in sports, cultural and artistic activities.

The principal adopted a multi-faceted role of teacher, mentor, and administrator. The leadership style of the principal was criticised implicitly by the teachers.

The teachers and principal refrained from explicitly talking about conflict and resolution. Rather the conflict resolution was done discreetly.

The teachers were involved in the decision-making processes in the school.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the school experienced a structural change by being shifted to a smaller building. There were fewer students in number, hence, varying age groups of students were made to sit together, leading to the formation of multigrade classrooms.

Students opined that English Language Proficiency and success were positively associated with each other.

Students made a distinction between friend and best friend based on the extent to which they would share their innermost concerns and thoughts. However, some of the associations in the form of friendships led to students concealing their knowledge and cheating in examinations.

Longevity of association and relationships also affected the social capital within the school community.

The school mitigated the gender biases among the female students, which they faced at home.

The school relaxed its uniform policy considering financial constraints that emerged due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the students' social, cognitive, and emotional engagement in the school which was seen in the form of switching off the video during the online classes, not sitting for longer time during the classes, and physical fights in

the school. The transition to online classes reduced the access of many students, which affected their engagement and learning in the school after the schools reopened.

Lastly, post-COVID-19 pandemic efforts were made by the school to revive the engagement and interaction with the community through initiatives like summer camp and celebration of festivals.

Implications of the Present Study

From the study, it was observed that more conscious and explicit approaches and strategies need to be pondered upon to instil sense of belonging and trust at the global level among the students. Therefore, the policy-makers and strategists can delve deeper to develop social capital within the school students, that can have a lasting effect on their cognitive, social, and emotional assignation.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of parental involvement in the education of the school. In the cases, where school shows signs of increased conflict and lack of cooperation, the school can provide an avenue to the parents to engage in decision-making as well by convening a parent-teacher association. This could provide a medium for everyone to come together and discuss the issues pertaining to the school.

The shifting schools should be provided the governmental aid to stabilise themselves in a particular place. This could result in more credibility, increased access and a better quality and retention of students who often leave the school as it physically becomes inaccessible.

The study offers opportunities to the school administration and teachers to reflect on the quality and extent of social interactions.

Recommendations for Future Studies

- More case studies can be conducted at different levels of school to gain a better and contextual understanding of social capital within the Indian school.
- The interrelationship between individual, interpersonal, and institutional dimensions can be studied to have a more focused understanding about social capital.
- The studies can also be done on relationship between social capital and school success.
- The studies can be done on the role and effect of the implementation of the philosophy of NEP 2020 across various level of education.