

# **Knowledge about family and school contributions in academic achievement: The context of schooling and social representations in India**

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## **Abstract**

The present paper seeks to identify the social representations of the family and school contribution in students' academic achievement. Earlier studies have taken family and school contribution in terms of taken for granted causal factors but how they are embedded in our everyday understanding and interactions may provide an alternative perspective. The qualitative methodology of content and correspondence analysis of categorical data derived from interviews and written responses from parents, teachers and students are utilized. It is discussed that family and school contributions are not just representations as portrayed in the dominant theories but its notions depend upon the identities and roles people are conscious. However, people think in a context which may further have shaped by the interaction patterns, so, social representations becomes not some stagnant appropriations but crosses the boundaries of mainstream understanding. Thus family and school contributions comprise multidimensional pictures and diversified meanings which are not particularly dependent upon the given or generally expected notions of family and school contributions to academic achievement.

*Keywords:* Academic Achievement, Family, School Contribution, Social Representations, India

## **1. Introduction**

In what capacity does the knowledge about any social object becomes routinized and taken as reality? And how does identity is shaped in any context which further contributes or goes beyond the discursive trends about the particular social object? Pertaining to the above questions, this study explored how family and school contributions to the students' academic achievement are socially represented and whether they are part of the dominant educational

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discourses or go beyond. In the recent research on the similar lines, the meaning of academic achievement and failure were explored and it was observed that they are not antinomies but socially represented in multidimensional ways (Sinha & Mishra, 2015). Further, researches in different social science disciplines affirmed the predictive effect of family and school in the students' academic achievement and failure. Research in the recent past reported that parenting practices and parenting styles have a significant impact on the children school achievement (e.g. Areepattamannil, 2010). The significant impact of family SES, parental belief system, encouragement and monitoring on the academic achievement shaped the view of education as instrumental and utilitarian. Abd-el-Fattah (2006) noted that the effect of parent education and family structure on student' academic achievement and school disengagement was mediated by the students' perception of parental involvement. Also, it was observed that parent education has a considerable effect on the school disengagement. The actual sense of family contribution dominantly comprises socioeconomic status (SES), parenting style and monitoring, birth order and family size and attachment, joint or nuclear family structure, religion and caste. In some cases, the family contribution was made synonymous with the parenting style and disciplining and its effect was reported on the children's internalization of the moral values and standards (Karmakar, 2015). In the Indian school context, the moral internalization of students seems to be connected to the family and parental socialization and any breach of the morality is attributed just not to the students' weak moral values but also in the parental training of the child. The notion of family is complex and the attribution of family and parental training is widely connected to the families' social history and the social categories they belong. For example, some studies reported that students' treatment in the classroom by teachers and peer group may depend upon the students' family background and identities. This shows to some extent the importance of the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) students have inherited from their family background which eventually benefits or limits the students' adjustment and adaptability to the school values systems and indirectly fitting or not to the larger dominant values system (see also Kasser & Linn, 2016). The construction of aspiration and the model which family provides in order to achieve significantly orients the social representations and formation of the image about the constructs like family and schools. The perception about the different forms of capitals such as social, cultural, human and academic (Marjoribanks, 1998) framed the foremost social discourses.

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The prevalent and most regarded predictor to understand the students' grade was/is considered to be an intellectual ability which acts as a funnel through which family background influences academic success (Teachman, 1996). However, human capital such as skills or capabilities is incomplete if not added with social capital embedded in the family structure (Coleman, 1988). The current trends of signifying the psychological capital such as self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1993) in understanding the academic achievement was observed to be deficient without understanding the family background such as SES, parental school involvement (see also Bouffard & Hill, 2005; Sriram & Sandhu, 2013), quality of parental relationship, parental educational aspiration (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Keith et al. 1993; from Weiser & Riggio, 2010) and wider social context. Though Weiser and Riggio (2010) didn't found these family backgrounds to be the robust predictors of academic achievement, the self-efficacy was found to be a strong and consistent predictor and mediating the relationship between parental involvement and expectations of academic success. There are differences in the nature of family backgrounds and socio-cultural capitals, thus, signifying the differences in the aspirations and academic capital.

The family and school in terms of SES, value systems, and locality had a direct correlation with the students' performance, the way the meaning of family and school contribution formed the everyday reality of people has been at the initial stage in the social psychological research in India. The context of education has linked with many diverse groups and the connection or clash of the dominant meanings override the other aspects of education. The role of family and community in reformulating the successful educational action opened the avenues of social and cultural interactions between families and students (Flecha, 2012). Also, it was observed that children from the lower SES family background identified better with schools as it increases the chances of upward social mobility. Together with this, many research also showed the negative effect of being from a low SES background when it comes to performance in the classroom or attaining a better job in the future or going for higher education. Some researches focused on the role of parental involvement and students' performance in the academics, for example, Topor, Keane, Shelton, and Calkins (2010) examined the mechanism by which parental involvement affects the performance. They found the mediating role of children's perception of cognitive competencies and quality of student-teacher relationship in the above relationship (see also Hossain & Anziano, 2008). This showed that family engagement in the form of positive involvement fosters students' academic

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achievement (see also Wilder, 2014). It can be inferred from the above research that meaning of academic achievement and failure has been embedded in the value systems which is derived from the competitive job markets, competencies and skills. Together with the role of families' contribution to the effectiveness of school-related tasks, the role of schooling plays an important role in the academic socialization of children and future performance. Family and schools were studied in terms of discourses and attitudes as derived from the observational perspective but very few studies explored how they are socially represented (Boulanger et al. 2014; Pelt & Poncelet, 2012). The understanding of the social representations will help in the knowledge of various associated features of family and school contribution embedded in the everyday discourses of people and how people make the sense of reality both at the agentic and intentional and social level (see Lahlou, 2015).

The formation of the meaning system and self-concept in the context of school and classroom is derived from broader macro system featuring social structure, history of schooling and prevailing value system at the point of intersection between and schools and family system. Howarth and Andreouli (2014) applied social representations theory to understand how school contributes meaningfully to the enhancement of intercultural relations. They considered the role of socio-political context, local community context and immediate school context in the handling of the discriminations. It was noticed that the broader socio-political context confines the schools' capacity to stay within its boundary and thus restricting the healthy intercultural relations. Though this has taken the hermeneutic turns through the emphasis on the marks and grades and putting other social activities as secondary. However, schools have the potentiality to act as a change agent and cross the boundary limited by the socio-political conditions and they can adopt a bottom-up approach to offer change to the individual and social context. One of the agenda of schooling, in general, is to infuse the spirit of nationality among the students by promoting the cultural values which are based on the students' academic engagements and participation (Howarth & Andreouli, 2014). The current school systems in India face the extreme kind of differences and the dominant neoliberal capitalistic ideology derive the students' sense of being. There are different kinds of schools regulated by social class divisions and the differences in the students learning and achievement outcomes are displayed as a matter of individual agency rather than contextual. Masino and Nino-Zarazua (2015) identified some policy intervention for improving quality of education and learning outcomes, as the provision of physical and human resource, influence through incentive and intertemporal preference of

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teachers, households and students, and bottom-up and top-down participatory and community management.

Recently, Ratan, Savani, Chugh and Dweck (2015) suggested about the leveraging of available mindsets, for example, fixed or malleable (Aronson, Fried & Good, 2002), in promoting academic achievement, where school plays an important role. In another context, Furrer and Skinner (2003) taking Ainsworth and Bowlby's perspective on attachment, showed that the sense of relatedness among children increased the probability of academic engagement and performance. They pointed towards the role of parents, teachers and peers contributing uniquely to the students' academic engagement. The logic of relatedness leads to the feeling of belongingness in the classroom and schools (Anderman, 1999; Anderman & Anderman, 1999) which also corresponds to school identification of the students. However, the issues of group-based identity in the social context of schooling were evident in few kinds of literature (see Cohen & Sherman, 2014; Steele & Aronson, 1995), where a school or any educational space creates a platform of perceived discriminations. It was noticed that students from the different social and family background find difficulty in coping with the school climate and conform to the stereotypes associated with their groups. Thus the agenda of providing equitable platform becomes redundant due to these subtle operations of stereotypes and school becomes a threatening space for learning where dominant and positively stereotyped groups have the advantage. The neutral stance which schools displays seem to nurture the stereotypes and prejudices thus defying the agenda of multicultural and diversity inclusion. Schools contribution to the academic achievement had been studied through different connection of variables (see also Mavor, Platov & Bizumic, 2017) such as school climate, student-teacher engagements, students' social identity such as gender, SES and their effect on students' metacognitive ability, interests, epistemic thinking, classroom participation, self-esteem and academic efficacy (see Winne & Nesbit, 2010). It depends upon the insight gained from people who were high on their achievement in terms of their ability to be in a power position and elevating their socioeconomic status.

The singular meaning of academic achievement and its associated contingent factors such as intelligence is observed to be neglected by both families and schools. However, it is also noticed that the dominant trend of associating cause behind one's performance is mostly related to cognitive ability and socioeconomic status (see Sirin, 2005; see also Sidhu, Malhi &

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Jerath, 2010). The notion that school provides an equalizing platform to the students from diverse background to achieve in the future seems like artificial equalization and more derived by the social structural factors such as social class stratification, caste and gender. It was noticed that schools, in general, are the culturally biased environment and may disaffect children from a marginalized background. Though many efforts to artificially curtail the lower outcomes of students from marginalized background has been formalized, such as formative learning environment, where classroom collective effort becomes necessary to come out with optimal performance for students from a disadvantaged background (see Clark, 2014). The academic achievement has deep historical meaning embedded in the social structure shaped through interventions of various social contexts such as modernity, occupational differences, linguistic variation and dominance, power dynamics of class and caste etc. For example, Santhya, Xavier and Jejeebhoy (2015) conducted a school-based study class 10th students in 30 government regulated secondary schools where it was found that school quality in terms of non-discriminatory treatment by teachers, egalitarian gender-based attitudes and health awareness effects the competencies and academic performance of both boys and girls. The high fee-charging schools in India provides the infrastructure and other amenities to the students who usually come from an upper-middle-class background where ability stereotypes for these students may acts as boosting. However, in the government and low fee-charging private schools, the situation is different. In order to understand the learning outcome based on the teaching quality, Singh and Sarkar (2015) studied public and low fee private schools in Andhra Pradesh and noticed better mathematics performance in the private schools. It was also found those teachers' characteristics such as gender, general educational qualification, experience and content knowledge doesn't have a significant influence on students learning the outcome. More variance was observed in the structural contexts such as professional qualification, the proximity of residence, routine checking of the books and teachers' attitude towards the school. These findings is connected to the study done in Punjab province of Pakistan by Aslam and Kingdon (2011) where the improvement of teaching practice was found to be important in raising students achievement but more effect was seen in terms of teachers attitude towards the schooling comprising the classroom practices and teaching process rather than certifications and experience.

Thus, the role of family and school as a major interconnecting contributory factor to the perceptions of students' academic achievement is an important move to understand the

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politics of education. The effort to humanize pedagogy (see Wrigley, 2014) for effective implementation of curriculum proved to be important for students, teachers and educational policy makers for a critical understanding of present scenario of education. The meaning of family and school contribution embedded in the experiences of students, parents and teachers have not been much studied. The present study utilizes the social representation literature to understand the meaning of family and school contribution to the students' academic achievement. Social representations theory offers a perspective to understand the taken for granted concepts prevalent in varied discourses. Social representations are shared cognitive constructs that originates in everyday social interaction and furnish individuals with a commonsense understanding of their experiences in the world. In words of Moscovici (1981), social representations are, "a set of concepts, statements and explanations originating in daily life in the course of inter-individual communications... [and are] the equivalent, in our society, of the myths and belief systems in traditional societies; they might even be said to be the contemporary version of commonsense" (P. 181). Therefore, social representations are the understandings based on consensus which emerge from everyday informal discussion and communication, in order to satisfy the individual's need to understand the world. As such, social representations transform the unfamiliar into the familiar and provide a framework for interpreting our experiences. Social representations are internalized or acquired through the process of self-categorization associated with common group membership, or social identity (see Breakwell, 1993). Contextual factors will determine identity salience and thus the relevant level of common group membership which dictates the specific social representation which is engaged as a working hypothesis or internalized as a new frame of reference. Thus, the concept of social representations seems to include stereotypes and normative beliefs and thus highlights the latter's underlying function to furnish an understanding and explanation to account for relevant events, experiences, or features of the environment. Therefore, the underlying dynamic seems to be associated with the social identity. Social representation theory largely concerned with the contents of representations and not how the contents differentiate among different social groups (Breakwell, 1993). The metatheory of social representations is aligned to the social rather than only individual (Moscovici & Hewstone, 1983). Some of the meta-theorists (e.g. Parker, 1987) critically highlighted the cognitive nature of social representations which was seen as ignoring the discursive and narrative part of social reality. However, social representations of any phenomenon are a matter of individuals' approach to have a cognizant

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of surrounding reality which is shared among the group members. In the context of academic achievement which is itself represented in multidimensional ways (e.g. Sinha & Mishra, 2015), family and school contribution in the students' school engagements seems to have varied representations among different social roles and identities.

## **2. Methodology<sup>1</sup>**

Total 145 participants were involved in the study. Consent was obtained from 107 students' (Age range between 13 to 14 yrs), 30 parents (Age range between 34 to 40 yrs) and 15 teachers (Age range between 30 to 40 yrs). Responses from five students who withdraw latter from the study and two students who were not able to give response both verbally and in writing were not taken into account (see Sinha & Mishra, 2015)<sup>2</sup>.

After taking demographic information from the students in different schools of Medak and Rangareddy district, an open-ended schedule was given to the students, parents and teachers. The schedule was designed in order to examine participants understanding of the social representations of family background and school contribution on students' academic achievement. The question addressed was "In what way students' family background contribute to students' academic achievement?", and "In what way does school contribute to the students' academic achievement?"

School authorities were approached in order to get permission to get information from the students. Then, through the schedule, basic demographic information about the students was obtained. After getting the basic information, students were re-approached for further exploratory work. The schedule was given to the students in one to one situation or in dyads or in groups depending on their availability. Their responses were noted down by the researcher. Care was taken to provide full freedom of expression to the participants. Some

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<sup>1</sup> The current research is part of the doctoral thesis which was approved by the Dean/Chairperson committee for Advanced Studies and Research of the School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India in its 382<sup>nd</sup> meeting (No. SSS/394). The location of the research conducted and the structure of the topic was later amended with approval.

<sup>2</sup> This study was conducted on the same sample along with the study to understand the social representations of academic achievement and failure published somewhere else (Sinha & Mishra, 2015)



student participants who hesitated to reply in the school were pursued to their home as the home environment was more comfortable. Similarly, some participants were given the schedule to make them express their viewpoints openly through writing. Teacher participants were pursued in the school where they responded both in writing and orally. Parent participants were approached with the schedule at home with the help of students' profile obtained in the school which they responded in writing or expressing orally. Though language problem was confronted while engaging in verbal interaction, it was sorted out with the help of a mediator (friend of a student who had basic knowledge of Hindi, English and Telugu). However, by and large, most of the participants had familiarity with at least two languages mentioned above.

The present study utilized the method which was earlier used to explore the social representation of intelligence (see Miguel, Valentim, & Carugati, 2010). The obtained responses were broken down into categories and cross checked by an independent coder for the 25% of the responses. The obtained categories were then coded and frequency was noted and compared till saturation point with the help of independent coder. The themes were located by putting similar categories together. The number of response to these categories and hence common themes were counted and correspondence analysis was applied to understand links between the various representational components and to shed light on the relationship between these components and individuals' group membership.

### **3. Findings**

In the course of content analysis, a plurality of categories was generated, which evidence the polysemic nature of the concept and attests to the difficulty in providing it with a unique and definite meaning.

#### **3.1. Contribution of students' family background in their academic achievement**

Family background of the child comprises many associated factors which affect the children's psychological processes in multiple ways. Children's socialization in the form of learning societal values, attitudes, and behavioural standards depends on the associated effects of dimensions related to the family background (Grusec, 2011). Family background in terms of related dimensions such as SES, caste, family structure and community becomes a major component of one's social identity depending on what situation one is thriving in. The

responses showed the importance of family background where themes were generated through the content analysis (see Table 1 and 2).

**Table 1**  
**Categories for “Role of students’ Family background in Academic Achievement”**

Category	Definition	Example from the responses
Socioeconomic status (SES)	Parents’ education was considered important though some participants used it in a way to devalue others whose parents are low in education.	<p><i>“Because of their lower standard and education children of uneducated parents unable to understand the value of education”</i></p> <p><i>“Parental occupation has not any bearing on students’ success because many can buy books but knowledge or mind (brain) to a student. It is the hardship faced by student which matters”</i></p> <p><i>“yes, parental education is a key for the success of students because educated parents can give guidelines and suggestion and opinions and they can mold in such a way to achieve the goal”</i></p> <p><i>“Only parental education is important”</i></p> <p><i>“Feeling of inferiority complex because of students’ low socioeconomic background” (Teacher, 42).</i></p>
Home culture <sup>3</sup> (HC)	Indigenous value, language or any other artifacts where Childs socializations and cultural practices vital in his/her self-development.	<p><i>“Home environment decides whether one can concentrate or not”...</i></p> <p><i>“Providing basic support and relaxation is the responsibility of home environment (LSES student, Female, 15)”</i></p>

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<sup>3</sup> Home culture and sociocultural factors are treated as same phenomenon in the present research and therefore, used interchangeably.

<b>Parental Support (PS)</b>	The role of parental expectation and support in the Childs' agency	<p><i>"Irrespective of caste and socioeconomic status, the parents having the awareness of the importance of educating their ward, they support their child"</i> (Teacher-Parent, 38)</p> <p><i>"Providing basic support and relaxation is the responsibility of home environment"</i></p> <p><i>"Fulfilling the needs, helping, support in the time of depression"</i></p> <p><i>"The role of family depends on the students' fathers' education, money and the job they do and this decides the support and encouragement students get which in turn helps him in achieving the marks and better job in future"</i> (LSES student, Male, 14)</p>
<b>Encouragement (E)</b>	Positive response and trust directed towards the child	<i>"Family can contribute to students' success or failure but if he succeeds then they wish him for the best and if he fails then to give him courage to do best for the next time"</i>
<b>Correct path (CP)</b>	Direction and orientation for the child in his/her future achievement and performance based on the family's sociocultural environment and value system	<i>"Well discipline with good culture and social activities"</i>
<b>Family communication (FC)</b>	Transference of the values and the pattern of socialization of the child	<i>"If the liking and disliking of the parents are kept in front of the child in the form of expectation it may affect the Childs achievement"</i>
<b>Caste (C)</b>	Individuals' social position on the basis of hierarchy which becomes the basis of discrimination towards the people situated at the lower levels of strata for example, untouchables studying in the higher caste dominated school	<p><i>"Empowerment to SC/ST students brings mobility which was earlier stopped and dominate" and even today</i></p> <p><i>"Some caste and religious belief teachers discriminate students on the basis of identity"</i></p> <p><i>"I think the caste plays an important role in students' failure and success as if the child comes first then people say you have upper our caste and if the child fails people say that you have broken our caste nose"</i></p> <p><i>"Well, some students think that if they are of low caste the children may make fun of them and would cheat them which makes them think or bring bad thought in mind"</i></p> <p><i>"Caste is important in the sense that general candidates are discriminated despite having capability"</i></p>

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		<p><i>"Caste is not the problem now a day's students' are effective in working with each other, no one talks about caste, student think they all are equal"</i></p>
<b>Freedom of Expression (FE)</b>	Part of socialization pattern of the child where he/she is freely able to express and discuss his/her desires, expectation of self, and ambitions.	<p><i>"Child is allowed to express his viewpoints and expectation from himself, his desires and likings in front of the parents"</i></p> <p><i>"Family background of students helps the child in his achievements if everyone's view is respected, taken into account and not stopped including the Childs"</i></p> <p><i>"If each other views are shared then it may help in academic achievement of the child-as child will communicate his ambitions, liking and disliking to the parents and parents in turn help the child in achieving that"</i></p>
<b>Motivation (M)</b>	Motivation is conceptualized as a factor that influences learning	<p><i>"Family contributes by encouraging, supporting, guiding and by motivating for bright and good future"</i> (HSES student, Female, 15)</p>
<b>Cognitive development (CD)</b>	Category of human psychology describing "the way things are" positioned within the ability domain of individual which is essential in the performance	<p><i>"Home environment will effect on their mind"</i> (Teacher-Parents, 38)</p> <p><i>"Family background has not any direct bearing on students' success because money can buy books but not knowledge or mind (brain) to students. It is the hardship faced by student which matters in the child intelligence development"</i></p>
<b>Discrimination (D)</b>	Perceived sense of unfairness because of one's social position based on lower status identity.	<p><i>"Students feel discriminated because of economic differences" and "Some caste related and religious beliefs lead teachers to discriminate against the students on the basis of identity"</i> (LSES student, Male, 14).</p> <p><i>"Sometime urge to get higher than others led to dissatisfaction and feeling of discrimination which decrease the value of education and dump it into the ocean of competition and inhumane activities"</i></p>

**Table 2**

*Number of respondents endorsing a particular meaning of the role of family background in Academic Achievement (% response obtained by dividing frequencies by N of each category multiplied by 100)*

	HSES (N=50)	LSES (N=50)	PAR (N=30)	TEACH (N=15)
SES	15 (30%)	28 (56%)	4 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)
HC	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	6 (20%)	7 (46.66%)
PS	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	6 (20%)	6 (40%)
E	6 (12%)	6 (12%)	6 (20%)	5 (33.33%)
CP	5 (10%)	6 (12%)	6 (20%)	5 (33.33%)
FC	1 (2%)	5 (10%)	0	0
C	6 (12%)	1 (2%)	0	3 (20%)
FE	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	0	0
M	6 (12%)	5 (10%)	0	0
CD	4 (8%)	2 (4%)	1 (3.33%)	0
D	0	0	0	4 (26.66%)

HSES-High socioeconomic status students; LSES-Low Socioeconomic status students; PAR-Parents; TEACH-Teacher

The participants highlighted the importance of SES in the family background where parental education was given prominence, for example, “Parental education is important for children to move on the correct path”. Similarly, home culture and practices facilitated the development of an identity of the students having value and emotional significance (also see Tajfel & Turner, 1979). These identities based on the socialization pattern of home culture impinge on students’ future school performance and their adjustment to its value system. Students have to face discrimination based on their different familial and cultural value system which is often rejected in the school as a deficit in its orientation. Different family background together with its value orientation and the difference in the socioeconomic stability create a difference in the actual classroom performance. The correlates of academic achievement such as motivation and cognitive ability have been differentially regulated by the family backgrounds such as SES. These psychological aspects of academic achievement became the

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basis of discrimination as faced by the students. Familial cultural values and practices are also found to be dominantly regulated by the caste-based value system and practices which affect students' performance and their long-term interaction in the school and outside. Caste of students found to play important role in the students' achievement as many students of low caste background has been discriminated in the schools dominated by high caste administration.

The above-obtained themes were put to correspondence analysis to get a better picture with broader dimensions from the qualitative data (see Table 3). Correspondence analysis of the answers to the question "In what way students' family background contributes in students' academic achievement?" reveals three major dimensions that explained 82.02 %, 12.96 % and 5.02 % of the inertia.

Table 3 depicts coordinates and contributions for the three retained dimensions. The first dimension (82.02 % of inertia) where LSES students, parents and teachers show their greatest share of inertia in increasing order where LSES students show the nearly equal share of inertia. Dimension one emphasized on the following themes as clustering alongside viz, SES (0.99), home culture (0.88), parental support (0.86), encouragement (0.78), correct path (0.73), family communication (0.53) and freedom of expression (0.53).

The second dimension (which explains 12.96 % of inertia) shows the greatest share of inertia for HSES students only. Dimension two emphasized themes viz, family communication (0.47), Caste (0.80), freedom of expression (0.46), motivation (0.71) and cognitive development (0.99). Family communication and freedom of expression seem to be slightly overlapping with dimensions one. Due to its theoretical stand and greater share of inertia these themes were retained in the dimension one only. The third dimension (which explains 5.02 % of inertia) highlighted the share of inertia by teachers (0.11) which emphasized only one major theme viz, discrimination (0.57). Therefore, discrimination is retained in the dimension three.

**Table 3**

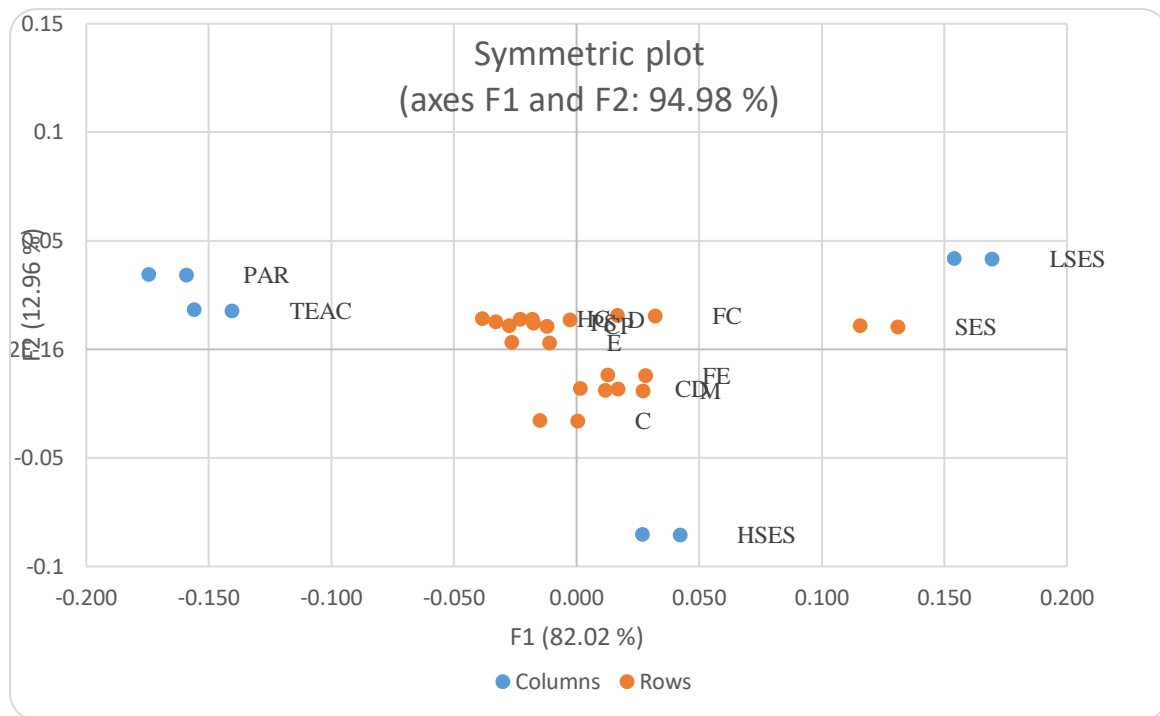
*Dimensions and their correspondence to group membership and representations of family background in academic achievement*

	Coordinates			Contribution to dimension			Explained by dimensions		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
HSES	0.20	-1.58	0.15	0.01	0.70	0.01	0.09	0.91	0.00
LSES	1.13	0.77	-0.02	0.45	0.21	0.00	0.93	0.07	0.00
PAR	-1.28	0.64	1.67	0.28	0.07	0.48	0.87	0.03	0.09
TEACH	-1.15	0.34	-1.60	0.26	0.02	0.51	0.88	0.01	0.11
SES	0.85	0.20	0.05	0.72	0.04	0.00	0.99	0.01	0.00
HC	-0.28	0.26	-0.08	0.08	0.07	0.01	0.88	0.12	0.00
PS	-0.24	0.23	0.15	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.86	0.12	0.02
E	-0.19	0.06	0.40	0.04	0.00	0.16	0.78	0.01	0.21
CP	-0.20	0.20	0.38	0.04	0.04	0.15	0.73	0.12	0.16
FC	0.12	0.29	-0.03	0.02	0.08	0.00	0.53	0.47	0.00
C	-0.11	-0.60	-0.20	0.01	0.36	0.04	0.17	0.80	0.03
FE	0.09	-0.22	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.53	0.46	0.00
M	0.09	-0.35	0.05	0.01	0.12	0.00	0.28	0.71	0.01
CD	0.01	-0.33	0.03	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.01	0.99	0.00
D	-0.13	0.26	-0.78	0.02	0.07	0.62	0.27	0.16	0.57

Thus, emphasizing the first two dimensions showing the maximum amount of inertia, Figure 1(a and b) show the relationship among four distinct categories of group membership and themes associated with the students' family background. HSES students share a representation of family background in academic achievement which is largely organized around students' freedom of expression, motivation and cognitive development. LSES students share a representation of family background in academic achievement which is largely organized around students' SES, family communication. On the other hand, parents and teachers share a representation of family background which is largely organized around Home culture, parental support, encouragement, parental support and discrimination.

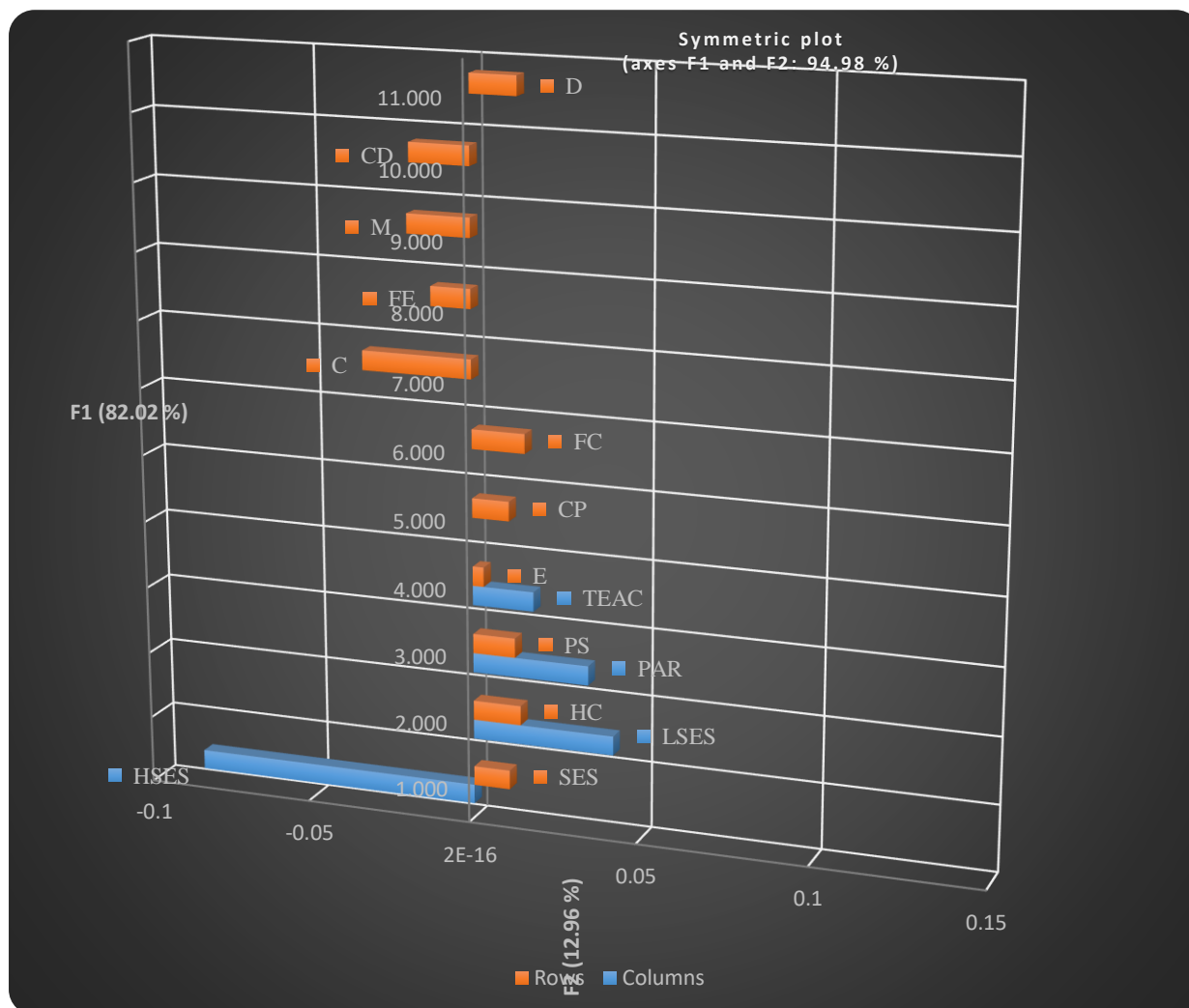
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**Figure 1(a).** Scatter plot showing the correspondence analysis on the relationship between components of social representation of family background in academic achievement and participants' group membership.

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**Figure 1 (b).** 3-D clustered bar showing the correspondence analysis on the relationship between components of social representation of family background in academic achievement and participants' group membership.

The sources of inequality appear to lie first in the home itself and the cultural influences immediately surrounding it (Coleman, 1966). The role of family background in the academic achievement of students has varied effects posing a persuasive effect on the students' classroom achievement. Though this factor has been observed under the individualistic perspective and in terms of deficit approach, recent literature began to accept the multiple and associated function of family background (Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2001). The family background of the students was represented more in terms of students' SES where most of the economic support and encouragement of parents seems important domain. Family background of the students Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Chetan Sinha, Ph.D., Jindal Global Law School, OP Jindal Global University, Sonapat, India-131001. Email: [csinha@jgu.edu.in](mailto:csinha@jgu.edu.in), [sinchetan@gmail.com](mailto:sinchetan@gmail.com)

builds positive or negative self-concept of an individual which is one's collective self-perceptions formed through experiences with and interpretations of the environment and heavily influenced by reinforcement and evaluation by significant others' (Shavelson & Bolus, 1982). Students' from supporting background were able to manage their self-esteem and efficacy by submitting their reliance on their SES as an important resource in the students' achievement. Increasingly, researchers have concluded that the family into which a child is born is often the best predictor of student achievement and attainment (Henderson & Berla, 1994). From the very beginning of life, families play a critical role in the socialization of their children and are essentially responsible for their evolving personality and identity (Ansalone, 2009).

Identity status is often derived from belongingness to various social groups (Mishra, Akoijam & Misra, 2009; Walton & Cohen, 2007). Therefore, academic stream, parental education, and family often operate as the sources of identity (Tiwari & Joshi, 1996). Family background has different meaning towards which academic achievement seems to be associated. However, these meanings became dominant among different groups. In the present study, parent and teacher lie opposite to HSES and LSES students in the ascription of family background as a precursor in the students' academic achievement. Parents and teachers supported the home culture, parental support, correct path (for example, attaining educational capabilities and knowledge as a matter of family honour), encouragement, and discrimination felt by the students' on the basis of family background. The above themes *prima facie* seem to be linked and completing the development cycle of family socialization and mismatch/match with the school value system. The home culture of the student assembles around the sociocultural practices towards which the children identified and expressed their familiarity.

Home culture oriented students for the school identification which depended on the values that the school portrays. The home culture of students plays an important role where student witnessed the parental support as a precursor for their academic engagement (e.g., Hokoda & Fincham, 1995). It was noticed that students of LSES background expressed that the more parental support was required for doing well in studies. These together showed the students' endorsing the value in the form of the correct path to achieve, however, this may depend upon the SES of the student which inclines some to perform well. These themes of home culture paving way for parental support and the correct path becomes the basis of students' perception of encouragement and more reliance on their identity based on their

background. Although this is not always the case, as societal discriminations in the form of stereotype directed towards students of different family background and home culture become part of students' identity processes. Several studies also attribute academic deficit to lower economic resources, lower expectations and less involvement by parents in the academic life of their children (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996).

HSES students expressed that the factors associated with a family background such as family communication pattern, caste, freedom of expression, motivation and cognitive development influence academic achievement. Family communication in the family decides the nature and socialization pattern of the family. This communication pattern depends on the community and affiliation with the social group based on region, religion and SES (see Cohen, 2009). However, in the Indian context, caste is seen as a major involuntary identity which has divergent effects on the bearer of that identity. It was found that students from the lower castes were the victim of social stereotype in varied contexts, one of which is education. The identity processes depending upon the caste-based identity seems to be manifested in the multiple stereotypes and discrimination making the caste-based functioning of individual more stigmatized. Different castes had a different level of social experiences and interaction with the society where dominant caste controls the power resource legitimizing it as status quo. This processes of dominance by the upper caste discriminated against the lower caste from achieving in the historical time plane. However, the situation is diluting among the educated class, it is still the menace in a wider context. Though the increase in multicultural education respecting the diversity is increasing, the need for a more eloquent form of education was expressed by the participants. HSES students expressed that family background helps in developing the freedom of expression which seems important for the students' achievement. Freedom of expression also elaborates on the language sophistication which was valued in the school.

Educated parents play a key role in the development of sophistication of the students' language which matches with the formal culture of the school. Students from lower SES were in most of the cases were deprived of this cultural capital making their situation more deprived and discriminating. The motivation of students to achieve in the classroom and their development of cognitive ability to excel depend to large extent on the students' family background (Weiser & Riggio, 2010). Motivation as a non-cognitive factor has been acknowledged by the HSES students as important in academic achievement. The non-cognitive factors such as interest, hard work, motivation etc are the result of a family background which

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promotes this value among their children. Apart from these non-cognitive factors, HSES students pointed towards the role of cognitive factors which depend on the students' family background. Cognitive factors were given highest importance as the determinant of students' achievement. HSES students indicated the importance of family background in the students' cognitive development, thus, accepting the role of deficit environment as the major reason behind the students' failure and vice versa. Even teachers in the school who were considered as socializing agents of school value system witnessed the discrimination based on the group affiliation of students. The discrimination felt by student affected their classroom performance and thus their interaction patterns.

### 3.2. Schools contribution to the students' academic achievement

School is a microcosm of society. It reflects the society and its value in a very formalized and synchronized way. School structure and its representations of value system add input to the thinking pattern of children and, thus, rationalize it with the societal norms. However, this process of structuring the thought is not a single entity but it depends on many factors one of which is students' identity which becomes activated in the interconnected situations. This identity forms the basis of students psychological processes which either work for or against students depending on the circumstances. The responses showed the importance of school contribution where themes are shown in Table 4 and 5.

**Table 4**  
***Categories for "School Contribution in Students' Academic Achievement"***

Category	Definition	Example from the responses
<b>Cognitive Development (CD)</b>	Category of human psychology describing "the way things are" positioned within the ability domain of individual essential in the performance	<i>"Intelligence is not responsible in the classroom performance. A person who has not studies [studied] can be an intelligent". "Marks and knowledge"</i>
<b>Future Achievement (FA)</b>	Success in the academic performance together with gaining knowledge and expertise. Teachers' leadership as an anchor of school plays an important role in the shaping of children mind. However, this behavioristic representation acknowledges the child's agency as potential	<i>"Students' success depends also on the school contribution. How the artist paints beautiful painting? Students are just like clay, the teacher will mold them in</i>

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	<p>learner. The metaphor ‘clay’ denotes the above pattern of learner where teachers as an efficient guide <i>scaffolds</i> the children for future achievements.</p>	<p><i>a definite shape for the bright future” (Teacher-Parent, 38).</i></p>
<b>Social (S)</b>	<p>Having the ability to adjust and adapt in the social group.</p>	<p><i>“Making student know about the society and its people” and “if school is paying attention then success shall be shared and not only the individuals”</i>  <i>“Every teacher likes to have classroom session more interactive. Hence teachers always like their student to concentrate, understand and respond back to them” (Teacher-Parent, 38).</i></p>
<b>No Contribution (NC)</b>	<p>School doesn’t play any role in the students’ achievement as it depends upon students only. This showed that HSES students understanding of academic achievement were based on their own ability and attitude towards academic domain and the role of school in shaping the students’ agency was not seen as an important factor. However, among the LSES students school has important role to play in their academic achievement and failure. As in most of the cases students pointed towards the discrimination in the form of lower teachers support in the academic domain.</p>	<p><i>“Every students’ deeds are responsible for their success or failure” and it depends on the attitude of the student toward school” (HSES student, Male, 15).</i></p>
<b>Character (CHAR)</b>	<p>Characters are the moral disposition decided by the societal norms.</p>	<p><i>“Every school is the character builder of a student. The bookish knowledge and the other teaching for the student will surely contribute to one or the other level”</i></p>
<b>Discipline (DISC)</b>	<p>Temperament which is based on conventional value system appropriated within the individual from the social institutions.</p>	<p><i>“School contribute 100% in the students’ development and the way they want to develop and disciplined”</i></p>
<b>Motivation (M)</b>	<p>Motivation is conceptualized as a factor that influences learning.</p>	<p><i>“For students the given work should be easy so that they can show interest and can approach automatically towards the given work”</i></p>

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<b>Discrimination (D)</b>	Perceived sense of unfairness because of one's social position based on lower status identity.	<p><i>"Teachers may fail some category of students who they don't like because of difference in their identity or situation" (LSES student, Male, 15).</i></p> <p><i>"Students get discriminated by the friends' circle and discriminated in the studies"</i></p> <p><i>"The social identity of the student is responsible for the students' failure and success as if the social identity of the student is not good some people do not give them college or job as they think his image in society is not good and he will also spoil our college or job"</i></p>
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**Table 5**

*Number of respondents endorsing a particular meaning of school contribution in Academic Achievement (% response obtained by dividing frequencies by N of each category multiplied by 100)*

	HSES (N=50)	LSES (N=50)	PAR (N=30)	TEACH (N=15)
CD	8 (16%)	8 (16%)	4 (13.33%)	5 (33.33%)
FA	8 (16%)	8 (16%)	9 (30%)	6 (40%)
S	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	6 (20%)	4 (26.66%)
NC	5 (10%)	0	0	0
CHAR	0	0	4 (13.33%)	6 (40%)
DISC	7 (14%)	8 (16%)	7 (23.33%)	9 (60%)
M	5 (10%)	5 (10%)	2 (6.66%)	5 (33.33%)
D	3 (6%)	8 (16%)	7 (23.33%)	3 (20%)

These themes were put into correspondence analysis to get a descriptive picture with broader dimensions from the qualitative data (see Table 6). Correspondence analysis of the answers to the question "In what way schools contribute in the students' academic

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achievement?” reveals three major dimensions that explained 50.90 %, 33.48 % and 15.61 % of the inertia. Table 6 depicts coordinates and contributions for the three retained dimensions. Under dimension one (50.90 % of inertia) HSES students, parents and teachers show the greater share of inertia. Dimension one emphasized the following themes as clustering alongside viz, cognitive development (0.82), no contribution (0.64), character (0.85) and discipline (0.38). The second dimension (which explains 33.48 % of inertia) clearly opposes LSES students and teachers in their share of inertia. Parents have the least share of inertia. Dimension two emphasized themes viz, future achievements (0.55), motivation (0.31) and discrimination in school (0.95). The third dimension (which explains 15.61 % of inertia) opposes LSES and parents in their share of inertia. Dimension three emphasized four themes, that is, future achievements (0.45), social (0.87), discipline (0.42) and motivation (0.51). Though the theme future achievement is found to be overlapping on both dimensions three and two, it is retained in the second dimension only. Discipline is found to be overlapping on the dimension one and three, it is retained in the third dimension only and motivation has been noticed to be overlapping on dimension two and three, it is retained on both the dimension for the theoretical purpose.

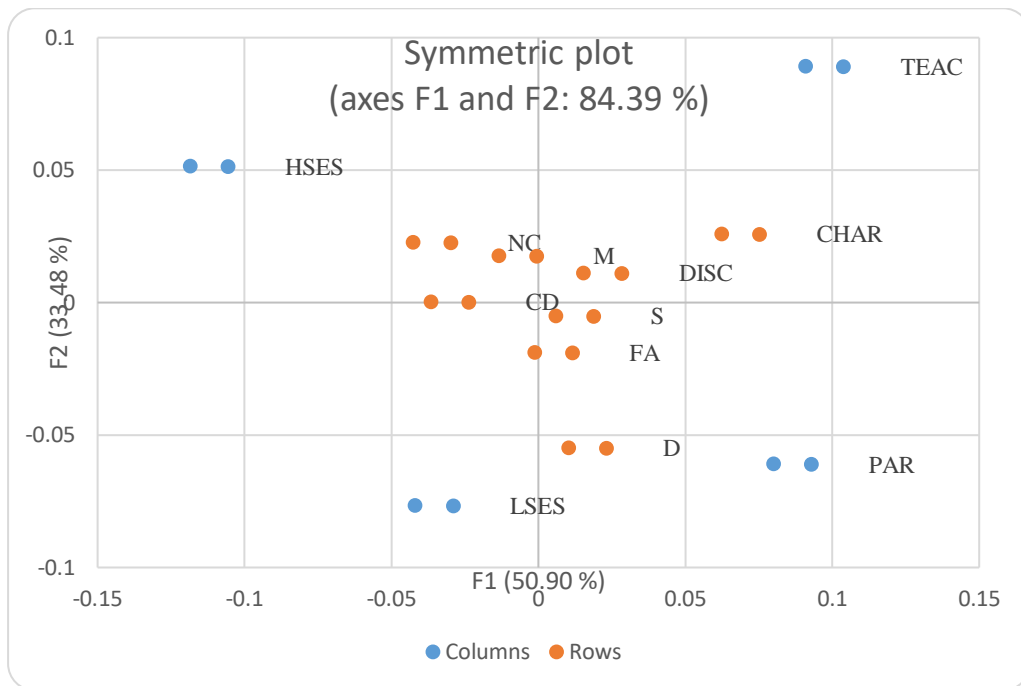
**Table 6**

*Dimensions and their correspondence to group membership and representations of school contribution in academic achievement.*

	Co-ordinates			Contribution to dimension			Explained by dimensions		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
HSES	-1.36	0.73	0.71	0.48	0.14	0.13	0.79	0.15	0.07
LSES	-0.48	-1.08	-1.22	0.06	0.30	0.38	0.16	0.53	0.31
PAR	0.92	-0.86	1.22	0.21	0.18	0.37	0.47	0.27	0.26
TEACH	1.04	1.26	-0.71	0.26	0.38	0.12	0.47	0.46	0.07
CD	-0.42	0.00	-0.35	0.18	0.00	0.12	0.82	0.00	0.18
FA	-0.01	-0.26	0.35	0.00	0.07	0.12	0.00	0.55	0.45
S	0.07	-0.07	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.17	0.08	0.05	0.87
NC	-0.49	0.32	0.46	0.24	0.10	0.21	0.64	0.18	0.18
CHAR	0.71	0.37	0.08	0.51	0.14	0.01	0.85	0.15	0.00
DISC	0.18	0.16	-0.34	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.38	0.20	0.42
M	-0.15	0.25	-0.47	0.02	0.06	0.22	0.18	0.31	0.51
D	0.12	-0.77	-0.15	0.01	0.60	0.02	0.03	0.95	0.02

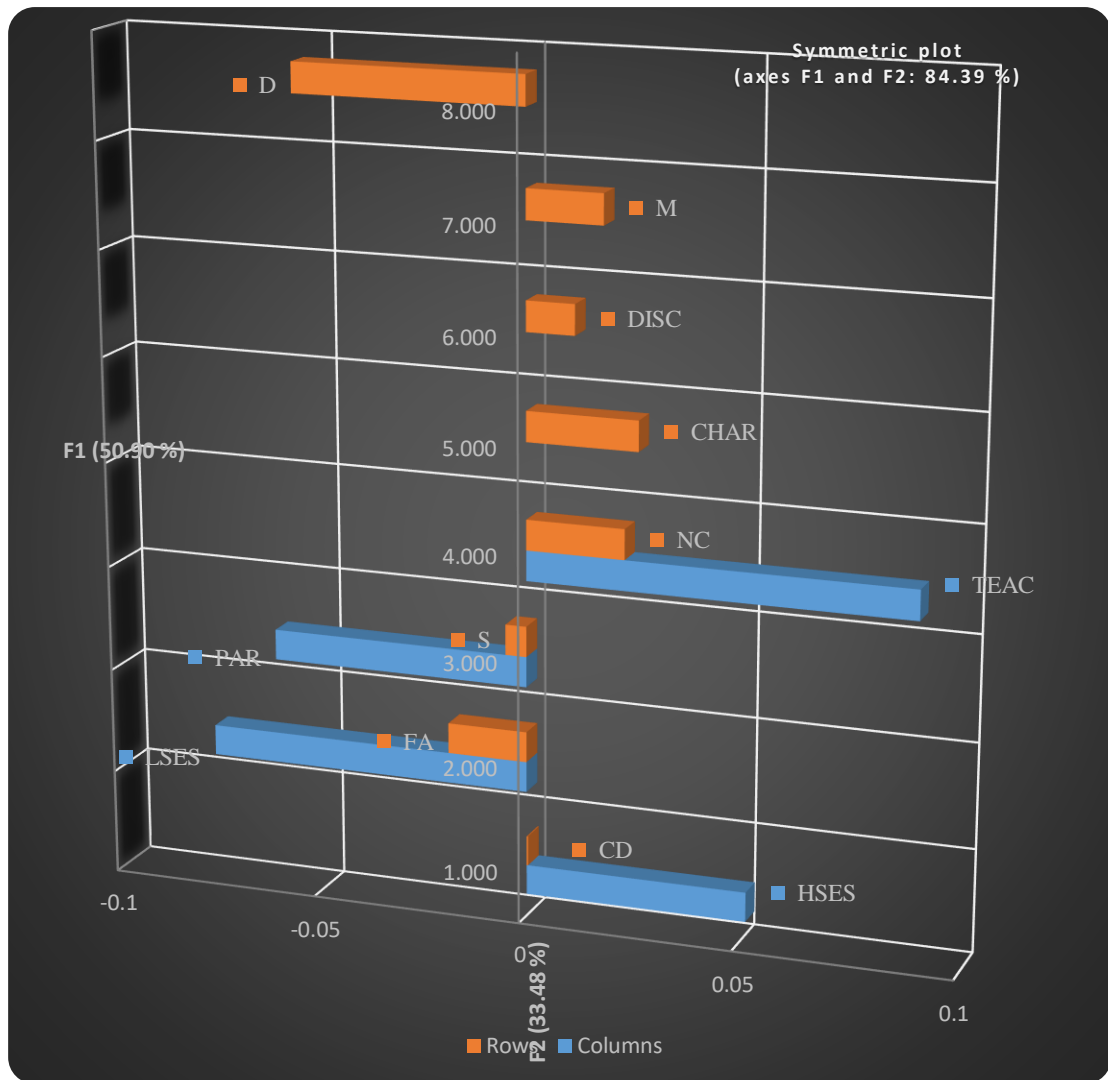
Emphasizing the first two dimensions showing the maximum amount of inertia, Figure 2 (a and b) show the relationship among four distinct categories of group membership and themes associated with the school contribution. As shown in Figure 2 (a and b), HSES students shared a representation of school contribution which is largely organized around ‘no contribution of schools’, LSES students share a representation of school contribution which is largely organized around students’ experience of ‘discrimination’ and its impact on their future achievement. These discriminations are present in the school in subtle forms of bias and attribution towards their high or low performance and subtle form discriminations which are not as direct as prejudice, directed towards them. Parents share a representation of school contribution organized around discrimination and social factors, and Teachers share a representation of school contribution which is largely organized around students’ conventional personality orientation such as character and discipline.

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**Figure 2 (a).** Scatter plot showing the correspondence analysis on the relationship between components of social representation of school contribution in academic achievement and participants' group membership.

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**Figure 2 (b).** 3 D clustered bar diagram showing the correspondence analysis on the relationship between components of social representation of school contribution in academic achievement and participants' group membership.

The school was seen as equalizing the preexisting differences between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Schooling had been explained as providing the platform for upward mobility where teachers act as an agent in shaping the students' future course of action (Ansalone, 2009). Exploring the social psychological dimensions as an outcome of school contribution, present research came out with divergent views. It was noticed that HSES students and parents stand in opposition to each other where HSES students emphasized on cognitive development and motivation of students. The shaping of students' cognitive structure has been found to be an important contribution of the school where children's activities are socialized and synchronized in the frame valued by the school. Also, the non-cognitive behaviour such as students' motivation to achieve is shaped by the school. However, this was

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seen as limited to the particular category of students who were either from HSES background or high achiever or both. School as playing no role in the achievement of students was also emphasized depending on over-reliance on students' cognitive agency only despite ample experiential evidence of discrimination and power asymmetry in the demanding context of school. Parents, on the other hand, laid importance to the socializing function of the school which contributes to students' future achievement. Parents also highlighted the discrimination faced by students' in the school. The form and structure of discrimination were found to be mixed with both overt and inert manifestation. Students who were from different socioeconomic background faced discrimination in terms of pervasive low performance in the majority of cases. Also, students who were performing low despite their belongingness to ability non-stereotyped group (e.g., HSES students) were seen to be positioned as a different category of low performers possessing the deficit traits. Teachers emphasized the non-cognitive valued entities such as building the character of the student and disciplining. These conventional personality orientations of students' have been noticed to be the basis of school identification of student, thus, portraying them as high achievers.

The efforts by the agents of schooling such as teacher played important role in shaping the students' achievement in the direction as represented in societal values. In opposition to teachers, LSES students emphasized discrimination faced by the students due to their low family SES support in education thus restricting their future achievements. Also, schools are places where social inequalities seem to be equalized. Excellence in education has been supported not only by our historic belief that education is valuable in and of itself but also by our commitment, since the nineteenth century, to education as the surest path to economic and social equality (Ansalone, 2009). Limited access to education was viewed as a means of maintaining a caste-like system of stratification and a mechanism by which the rich maintain their privileged position (Ogbu, 1978). Karl Marx (1844/1963) was among the first to call for universal and free public education. He believed that free universal education could break the stranglehold that the advantaged held over the masses (Marx & Engels, 1844/1963). But the unspoken reality is that unequal access to quality schooling remains pervasive and that "savage inequalities" between schools facilitate academic success for some and failure for others (Ansalone, 2009). Different schools mirror the societal expectations of dominant groups for the students within those schools and thereby perpetuate inequality.

Thus, according to proponents of the conflict perspective, its primary function is to create workers who will follow the system, pay attention to rules and perform their respective jobs in a capitalistic system. The school's organizational structure teaches children that the world of work is hierarchal. Disadvantaged students in poor schools are taught to accept authority, cope with evaluation and do a good work. Advantaged students are taught to be creative, engage in independent study and take a leadership role (Bourdieu, 1993; Falconer and Byrnes, 2003; Gracey, 1972).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The current research argued about two major points, first, the family and school contributions are social representations embedded in the everyday understanding of students, their interaction with parents and teachers. This may offer a challenging perspective to the realist account of academic achievement where it is taken for granted and dependent upon the set of attributes. Attributes and specified causal factors have their importance, however, their nature of positioning within the understanding of people and the way meaning is derived out of it shows the overriding feature of the dominant value systems and capitalistic agenda of current school systems. However, there are other instances, for example, schools in the conflict area, such as Palestine, offered the routine and disciplined life to the students amidst the conflict. Here the students' identities have been diffused into the common identity as students with regular classroom engagements where schools are the space of hope despite continuous harassment from the Israeli military personnel (see Skovdal & Campbell, 2015). So, it seems that family also plays important role in this context in defining the meaning of schooling and facilitating school inclusion. The second point this paper argued about the role that people perceive about their self in a context is combining both the structural and process view of social representations. The way people understand their identity as parents, teachers or students of different social classes position themselves as representative of the prevalent notion about any phenomenon. However, they are thinking beings and construct their reality through varieties of social acts and interactions, they, thus, become alterity to the position they hold. It was observed that people view about the family and school contribution in academic achievement went beyond the specified standards such as education and cognitive ability, and other variants were considered as the token for family and school contribution. Thus, reification of knowledge was challenged and negotiated through active social engagements.

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On exploring the role of family contribution background and SES play in academic achievement, it was observed that HSES students represented family background in students' academic achievement, as the development of students' ability to freely express, motivation and cognitive maturity. On the other hand, LSES students shared their representations of family background in academic achievement as largely organized around students' SES and family communication patterns. However, when exploring the social categories based on roles, parents and teachers shared their representation of family background as home cultural values, parental support and encouragement to do well in school, and discriminations faced by students in the school. Social representations of school contributions, as an important contextual variable where students engage in the process of self-stereotyping and outer discriminations, in the students' academic achievement becomes a major variable to be explored. Thus, it was observed that HSES students represented school contribution in terms of 'no role school plays in the students' academic achievement. On the other hand, LSES students shared their social representation of school contribution as a platform where students face discriminations in terms of low marks. Discriminations were also found in the subtle form of bias where LSES students' high or low performance was attributed generally to the outer sources such as 'helping hand' or 'cognitive incompleteness'. Exploring further the social representations of school contribution among other social categories based on the roles, parents shared a representation of school contribution in terms of discrimination and other social factors such as LSES, whereas teachers represented school contribution as largely organized around students' personality, character and discipline. The novelty of the findings explicates about the nature of discourses regulated by the dominant features of the institutionalized knowledge about family and school contribution. This taken for granted notions about family and schools are supposed to be embedded in the general understanding of people and thus came under the policies as a marshalled form of regulations. There is other understanding too which complement the mainstream views but not highlighted in the policies which are dominated by the empirically hard social sciences. These subjective and experiential dynamics of common sense understanding may be an added value to the understanding of notions of academic achievement. The need is to understand the dearth of equality and social justice discourse in the school context defies the agenda of equitable and inclusive education (see also Tiwary, Kumar & Mishra, 2017). The challenge is to go deep into the available and hidden knowledge about the family and school to understand the making of discourses which is bounded by the

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individuality, commodification of education, and sociopolitical dominance instead of wider reciprocity and discursive practices which itself signify social change.

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