Research Article

Indian Journal of Extension Education
Vol. 59, No. 3 (July–September), 2023, (74-78)

ISSN 0537-1996 (Print)
ISSN 2454-552X (Online)

Intergenerational Social Mobility among Scheduled Caste Families in Haryana

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Social mobility, Intergenerational, Scheduled caste families, Education, Occupation

http://doi.org/10.48165/IJEE.2023.59314

Conflict of Interest: None

ABSTRACT

To explore the intergenerational social mobility among scheduled caste families in Hisar district of Haryana state, the study was conducted in the year 2020 with 200 respondents. The results revealed that there has been a significant improvement in the educational qualifications of subsequent generations. Similarly, the occupation distribution of successive generations showed a decreasing proportion of individuals engaged in farm labour and livestock, while an increasing proportion of individuals engaged in non-farm labor, private service, and business. There is a shift in the occupational class distribution of consecutive generations. A strong and positive correlation was found between occupational mobility and factors such as family size, family income, and livelihood status. On the other hand, educational mobility was positively correlated with family size, family income, education status, and information source utilization, but negatively correlated with age. Additionally, social mobility is negatively correlated with livelihood status.

INTRODUCTION

Social mobility is a complex notion that is often associated with the ability of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to improve their social status, reflecting the idea of equal opportunities. It involves a change in an individual's, group's, or category's position within the social hierarchy (Young & Mack, 1962). The term social mobility has been defined as the process by which individuals in their lifetime and between generations move from one position to another in society positions, either upwards or downwards which by general consent have been given specific hierarchical values (Breen, 2004). The idea of social mobility is related to equality of opportunities so that individuals can achieve higher social position regardless of the social background of their parents (Corak, 2020). In rural areas income from animal husbandry, income from marginal works and income from labouring, are positively correlated with livelihood diversity; but land holding, income from agriculture, possession of household assets, average family education and maximum family education are negatively correlated with diversity (Pal et al., 2017)

In ancient India, education, skills and occupation were determined by the caste of a person, thus there was not much freedom for moving between different levels of society (Singh et al., 2021). Despite the emphasis on abolishing the caste structure and providing equal opportunities to all since 1950, strong limitations still exist in the occupational structure of the country (Reddy, 2015). In rural areas, lower castes still face challenges in moving away from caste-specific occupations and accessing resources, which can impede social mobility. Amongst the various inequities typically associated with the caste system in India, probably one of the most debilitating is the perception that one is doomed by birth, i.e., social and economic mobility across generations is difficult (Hnatkovska et al., 2013). In recent years, various modern developments in rural India have had a significant impact on changing the occupational and educational status of individuals, as well as the intergenerational occupational structure.

Received 11-05-2023; Accepted 10-06-2023

These changes have been rapid and extensive, leading to shifts in status from father to son and alterations in the overall occupational structure. (Raj et al., 2018). However, in urban areas, caste has become less influential in daily life, although it still functions as a means of competing for resources and power in modern India, such as better educational opportunities, new jobs, and improved life prospects (Sekhon, 2000). This trend is linked to India's preferential policies and their implementation.

Intergenerational educational mobility and intergenerational occupational mobility are important determinants of intergenerational social mobility. As it has been well-demonstrated, education is the main factor in both upward mobility and the reproduction of status across generations (Hout & DiPrete, 2006). In the literature on social mobility, occupation is considered a good indicator of social status, incomes, and living standards (Weeden, 2002), (Goldthorpe & McKnight, 2006) and (Lambert & Bihagen, 2014). Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the intergenerational social mobility of Schedule Caste (SC) families in Haryana. The findings of the present study would help in better understanding of the social mobility pattern of the SC families that can help in making policies more inclusive.

METHODOLOGY

The area for present investigation was *Hisar* district of Haryana state, specifically five villages selected randomly from a comprehensive list of villages with a high percentage (40%) of Scheduled Caste population according to the 2011 census. The chosen villages were Nangthala from Agroha block, Mangali and Dahima from Hisar I block, while Patan and Ludas from Hisar II block. A total of 200 respondents were included in the study, where 40 respondents were randomly selected from each village. The study was conducted in the year 2020 and data was collected by personal interview using a well-structured interview schedule. The pre testing of interview schedule was done on a non-sample population outside the locale of study. Necessary modifications were done based on pre testing. It was developed with the provisions for all the relevant variables in keeping with the objectives of the investigation. Before administering the interview schedule, the objectives of study were explicitly explained to them in their dialect, ensuring that they perceived the questions correctly. The present investigation examined social mobility in terms of intergenerational educational and intergenerational occupational mobility across three generations. For the purpose of the study the parents of selected respondents were considered as the 1st generation, respondent and their spouse as the second generation, and respondent's children as the third generation. For the present study, education and was operationalized as the education attained by parents, respondents and offspring. The occupational mobility was operationalized as the specific major work which parents, the respondents and children perused to earn livelihood. For calculating the mobility each educational qualification and occupation was given assigned a numeric value. The score obtained by the each generation were calculated. The score obtained by the each generation was subtracted from the previous generation. In order to assess the extent of relationship between the selected dependent variable and the independent variables, the data was subjected to Pearson's correlation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Intergenerational educational mobility of scheduled caste families

Intergenerational educational mobility status of SC families was studied and data is presented in Table 1 that shows the educational qualifications of three generations (1st, 2nd, and 3rd). Overall education mobility increased in 2nd and 3rd generation. The table shows, the first generation has a larger proportion of illiterate individuals (92%), while the second and third generations have a significantly lower proportion of illiterate individuals (32.5% and 0.7%, respectively). The proportion of individuals with up to primary education is highest in the third generation (19.4%) and lowest in the first generation (5.2%). Similarly, the proportion of individuals with up to secondary education is highest in the third generation (35.4%) and lowest in the first generation (1.5%). The proportion of individuals with higher education qualifications such as Diploma/Certificate, Graduate, Technical education, and Postgraduate is very low in all three generations. However, there is a slight increase in the proportion of individuals with higher education qualifications in the later generations (2nd and 3rd) compared to the first generation.

An overview of intergenerational educational mobility of SC families depicts that literacy increased significantly in 3rd generation. An increasing trend for higher education was also observed. Similar findings were reported by Chouhan (2013). Another study conducted on education and occupation intergenerational mobility, utilizing data from National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) rounds spanning from 1983 to 2005 has indicated that the rates of conditional probabilities of education mobility among non-SC/STs and SC/STs caste groups are converging. (Hnatkovska et al., 2013).

Table 1. Intergenerational educational mobility of Scheduled Caste families

Educational qualification	1st Generation (n=400)	2nd Generation (n=400)	3rd Generation (n=513)
Illiterate	368(92.0%)	130(32.5%)	4(0.7%)
Up to Primary	21(5.2%)	105(26.2%)	100(19.4%)
Up to Secondary	6(1.5%)	86(21.5%)	182(35.4%)
High & 10+2	5(1.2%)	67(16.7%)	156(30.3%)
Diploma/ Certificate course	0	1(0.2%)	9(1.7%)
Graduate	0	7(1.7%)	47(9.1%)
Technical education	0	1(0.2%)	9(1.7%)
Post graduate and above	0	3(0.7%)	7(1.3%)

Intergenerational occupational mobility of scheduled caste families

Jena & Kanungo (2022) in their study noted that the occupations which were adopted by the parents now not remained the same in the new generation. The data in Table 2 presents observations regarding generational occupational mobility of Scheduled caste families. The number of members engaged in work increased from first to 2nd generation and the declined in 3rd generation may be probably because they were still young and of school going age.

From the presented data, it is clear that in the first generation Scheduled caste population has a larger proportion of individuals engaged in farm labor (42%), followed by non-farm labor (21.5%) and livestock (14.9%).

In the second generation, the job profile of the scheduled caste shows only a little up-gradation. A significant percent of people have shifted from farm labor to non-farm labor works and the business sector. The in-depth analysis of the table shows that the second generation has a higher proportion of individuals engaged in non-farm labor (40.5%), followed by private service (10.1%) and farming (7.8%). The third generation also has a higher proportion of individuals engaged in non-farm labor (53%), followed by private service (19.7%), farming (11.1%) and govt. service (4.9). Caste-based occupation perished in the second generation, while no individual from the third generation is engaged in livestock. Similar results are in line with Ray & Majumdar (2010). The proportion of individuals engaged in business and government service is also low in all three generations, although there is a slight increase in the proportion of individuals engaged in business in the later generations (2nd and 3rd) compared to the first generation.

With a decreasing proportion of individuals engaged in farm labor and livestock and an increasing proportion of individuals engaged in non-farm labor, private service, and business,. Similar observations were made by Tiwari et al., (2023) which revealed that the households are shifting from crop-based enterprises towards wages & salaries at all India levels. Theoverall data suggests that there has been a significant shift in the occupation distribution of subsequent generations.

Period of work engagement mobility

Period of work engagement mobility was studied among three generations of SC families and data is presented in Table 3. Full time work engagement was maximum in third-generation (83.9%), followed by second-generation (80.0%) whereas (68.0%) of the first generation were least engaged in full time work.

An opposite trend was observed in part time work engagement. In first-generation, 31.1 per cent, in second-generation 19.9 per were working part time. However, a mere 16.0 per cent of 3rd generations were engaged in part time work.

Intergenerational class wise occupational mobility

Class wise occupational mobility of SC families over three generations is presented in Table 4. Administrative/ managerial and Class I posts were held only by (5.0%) from 3rd generation and none other from 2nd or 1st generation. Class II posts among second generation was held by (12.7%) whereas among the third generation 15.0 per cent occupied Class II posts. The share of first-generation was maximum in Class III posts (73.3%). From second generation 21.2 percent were at Class III posts. 55.0 per cent of third generation were at Class III posts. Class IV posts were dominated

Table 2. Intergenerational occupational mobility of scheduled caste families

Occupation	1st Generation (n=302)	2nd Generation (n=306)	3rd Generation (n=81)
Farm labor	127 (42.0%)	50(16.3%)	5(6.1%)
Non-farm labor	65 (21.5%)	124(40.5%)	43(53.0%)
Livestock	45 (14.9%)	37(12.0%)	0
Caste occupation	4 (1.3%)	0	0
Business	4 (1.3%)	24(7.8%)	4(4.9%)
Farming	43 (14.2%)	24(7.8%)	9(11.1%)
Govt. Service	10 (3.3%)	16(5.2%)	4(4.9%)
Private Service	4 (1.3%)	31(10.1%)	16(19.7%)

Table 3. Period of work engagement mobility

Period of work	1st Generation (n=302)	2nd Generation (n=306)	3rd Generation (n=81)
Full time	208(68.0%)	245(80.0%)	68(83.9%)
Part time	94(31.1%)	61(19.9%)	13(16.0%)

Table 4. Intergenerational class wise occupational mobility

Occupational Class	1st Generation (n=15)	2nd Generation (n=47)	3rd Generation (n=20)
Administrative/ managerial	0	0	1(5.0%)
Class I	0	0	1(5.0%)
Class II	0	6 (12.7%)	3(15.0%)
Class III	11(73.3%)	10 (21.2%)	11(55.0%)
Class IV	4(26.6%)	31 (65.9%)	4(2.0%)

Table 5. Relationship between respondent's socio personal antecedents with social mobility

Variables	Occupational mobility	Educational mobility	Social mobility
Age	.015	-.320*	.019
Family type	.127	-.085*	-.071
Family size	.217*	.245*	.267*
Occupation of Head of household	-.199*	.056	.182*
Family income	.206*	.242*	.260*
Education status	.064	.409*	.411*
Information source utilization	.038	.146*	.150*
Social participation	-.034	.001	-.002
Livelihood status	.446*	.184*	-.329*

*significance level = $p < 0.05$

by second-generation (65.9%) followed by first-generation 26.6 per cent male. However, only 2.0 per cent from third generation were at Class IV posts.

Overall, the data suggests that there has been a significant shift in the occupational class distribution of subsequent generations, with a decreasing proportion of individuals belonging to lower occupational classes (Class III and Class IV) and an increasing proportion of individuals belonging to higher occupational classes (Class II, Class I, and administrative/managerial).Similar findings in regards of steady increase of SC at class I job were reported by Jadhav (2008).Overall, the picture of intergenerational class mobility in India is hence one of "continuity and change" (Vaid, 2018), with high stability, but steady increases in absolute mobility, and changes in relative mobility for men.

Relationship between respondent's socio personal antecedents with social mobility

The data presented in Table 5 convey the relationship between respondent's personal antecedents and social mobility (occupational mobility and educational mobility). The data point out that variables *viz*; family size (r = 0.217*), family income (r = 0.206*) and livelihood status (r = 0.446*) were found to be significantly and positively correlated with occupational mobility. Contradictory results were reported by Shaik & Chauhan (2022), the study revealed that annual income was non-significantly correlated with the willingness of farmer's next generation (son) to stay physically and work in the rural area. However, occupation of head of household (r = -0.199*) was found negatively and significantly associated with occupational mobility. Krishna (2017) in the study revealed that SC and ST children of professional fathers are at much higher risk of large occupational descents and concluded that sustaining occupational achievements is harder for minority households. Equalizing opportunity can help unleash the potential of the population, which as it stands is constrained by persistent income and occupational rigidity (Chapman, 2020).

As far as educational mobility is concerned family size (r = 0.245*), family income (r = 0.242*), education status (r = 0.409*) and information source utilization (r = 0.146*) and livelihood status (r = 0.184*) were significantly and positively correlated with educational mobility. Age (r = -0.320*) was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with educational mobility, thus indicating that younger generation, with large family size, more income, better education information source utilization and better livelihood status had more educational mobility. Similar results with regards to relationship of age with livelihood security were reported by Pradhan et al., (2021).

Thus it can be concluded from Table 5 that family size (r = 0.267*), occupation of head of household (r = -0.199*) family income (r = 0.260*), family education status (r = 0.411*) and information source utilization (r = 0.150*) were positively and significantly associated with social mobility. Livelihood status was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with social mobility (r = -0.329*).

CONCLUSION

The literacy rate increased significantly over three generations. An increasing trend for higher education was also observed. Encouraging occupational mobility may act as a catalyst for uplifting the Scheduled Castes. Family size, family income and livelihood status were found to be significantly and positively correlated with occupational mobility. Occupation of head of household was found negatively and significantly associated with occupational mobility. Educational mobility was significantly and positively correlated with family size, family income, education status and information source utilization whereas it was significantly and negatively correlated with age. Livelihood status was significantly and negatively correlated with social mobility. Equalizing opportunities can help unleash the potential of the population, which is currently constrained by persistent income and occupational rigidities. Further research is recommended to identify the issues and concerns that impact social mobility among scheduled castes and to develop strategies to improve it.

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