

**INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG  
BACKWARD CLASSES**

**Final Report**

*of*

**UGC funded Major Research Project**

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**UGC-funded Major Research Project in Economics**

**INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG BACKWARD CLASSES**

**Summary of the Project Findings**

Educational attainment levels of the people are substantially lower by international standards. More than 30 per cent of them are Illiterate, and only about 20 per cent have completed secondary schooling. Within such low standards, the situations of the Excluded Castes are still worse. 45 percent of OBCs, 60 per cent of STs, and 55 per cent of SCs are illiterate, compared to only 27 per cent for the Advanced Castes. Children and young people are having better educational levels than their parents and older age group persons. Also, standards have improved over time. The upward mobility witnessed is more prominent among the advanced castes and marginal among the excluded castes, especially for the women. It is observed that the workers of the Excluded Castes are much more concentrated in the Grade-III jobs compared to the Advanced Castes, while the proportion of the latter in Grade-I jobs is unduly large. Some improvements are observed over time and across generations whereby proportion of excluded caste workers in higher occupation classes are increasing. However, the rate of improvement is much more pronounced for the advanced castes. About half of present generation have higher educational levels compared to their parents. At detailed occupational level, only about one-fifth of the boys and one-seventh of the girls are moving to higher level of jobs compared to their parents. It is evident that upward mobility across generations in India is moderate for educational level and significantly low for occupational level. Within that, the condition of the excluded classes is further lower. Though educational levels of the second generation is higher than their parents in 2004, this is not adequately reflected in occupational mobility matrix. People are stuck in their parental occupational class and whatever movement is perceived is mostly among advanced classes.

A multivariate econometric approach indicates that for the rural areas parental educational levels have a significant impact on children's educational level. Notably, for daughters, the impact of maternal education is stronger than paternal education. Parental impacts are lower for younger cohorts, indicating a decline in intergenerational inertia in educational achievements over time. Parental education has a significantly greater impact for all three Excluded groups compared to the Advanced groups – supporting our hypothesis that intergenerational mobility is lower for these groups. As with education, a child's occupational status is significantly influenced by the parent's occupation, both at the 1-digit NOC and our broad occupational grade levels. As expected, the association is on an average stronger for the ECs compared to the ACs, and for broad occupational grades compared to 1-digit NOC, confirming our earlier finding that much of the intergenerational mobility is lateral and not vertical.

Regional pattern suggests that mobilities in general are lower in many of the lagging states. Relatively lower mobility of the excluded groups is also evident in most of the regions. This lack of upward

mobility especially among the socially excluded classes is a matter of grave concern. The fact that educational mobility is not being transformed to occupational mobility brings up the possibility of discrimination in the labour market. This also brings to fore the fact that historical discrimination and social exclusion have had a long run effect and it is very difficult to come out of this inertia.

Field data suggests that in large parts of South West Bengal, educational and occupational mobility is considerably lower for the Scheduled Tribes and Castes compared to the Upper Castes. Educational status of the current generation are higher than that of their parents for about two-third of the persons. Occupational status of the excluded sections of the society are notably similar to their parents.

State support in terms of financial grant for various livelihood promoting projects have helped excluded sections of the society to improve their occupational status vis-a-vis their parents. It is necessary to support the excluded sections in general, and scheduled tribes in particular, to achieve educational qualities and diversify into higher occupational types through coordinated financial packages.

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