Social Mobility and Role of Education in Promoting Social Mobility

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Abstract: *This paper is an attempt to provide conceptual frame work of Social Mobility in the light of education. The paper provide detailed discussion of meaning, types and factors affecting the social mobility. The present paper also highlights the important role played by education in promoting social mobility.*

Keywords: Social mobility, education, Horizontal Social mobility, vertical social Mobility.

1. Introduction

A society is constituted by the people who are dynamic (over –changing) in nature. From the primitive uncivilized form it has evolved in to modern civilized and cultured society. This proves beyond doubt the dynamic (ever-changing) nature of the society in which social mobility has played a dominant role since time immoral. The social position, status and economic conditions of people change from time to time. In many cases social status and economic standard of person changes due to hard work or lighter education or purely due to superior intellect. Better education and better service also help in change of the socially disadvantaged groups like women and the people belonging to scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes or backward classes. Lack of better education and will to do hard work have made rich people poor, thereby lowering the standard of living. Such type of changes which are observed in the social status, class, economic condition and standard of life of a person are spoken of as Social Mobility.

1. **According to P.A. Sorokin:** " By social mobility is meant any transition of anl individual from one position to another in a constellation of social group and strata."
2. **According to S. Bogardus:** " Social mobility is any change in social position, such as occupational changes where persons move up or down the occupational scale, or relation to office whereby a follower becomes a leader, or a leap from a low economic class to a high one, or vice-versa."

In the above definitions the nature of social Mobility has been dearly explained ldin relation to occupation, income organizational membership etc. Individuals with high aspirations tries to improve his social status and moves upward.

2. Types of Social Mobility

In accordance with the direction of movement of the people in the society, Social mobiulity can be categorized into two types.
1. Horizontal Social Mobility
2. Vertical Social Mobility.

Horizontal Social Mobility
When the movement of a person occurs from one situation to another at the same level i.e. within the single stratum, the process lis called horizontal social mobility . In other words, in this type of mobility, there is no change in the social status of the individual but there is a change in his affiliations. For example, when a Principal of Secondary School at palm joins at the same post in a Secondary School at South Ex. In this example the status and role of the person working as a Principal remains the same but there is a change in the place of work which brings about change in this affiliations, thus he shows horizontal social mobility.

Vertical Social Mobility
Sorokin says, " By vertical mobility. I mean the relations involved in a transition of An individual (or social object) from one social stratum to another". The movement of a person from one stratum of the society is referred as Vertical Social Mobility i.e. , in Vertical Social Mobility there is a change in the status of the individual . The individual attains high education and becomes rich, He moves upward in the social hierarchy. For example, when a teacher becomes a lecturer in a college is said to have moved vertically in the types :Upward Social Mobility (Ascending Mobility) and Downward Social Mobility (Descending mobility)

Upward Social Mobility
It refers to the movement from lower to higher occurs from position. Ascending mobility means the entry of i.e., within persons from lower strata and prestige to higher status and prestige groups. For example, if a person is born in a family of a sweeper and after acquiring must learn the cultural behaviors of officers. This requires the individual trying for upward social mobility to learn the following.
(i) Ability to behave and work according to upper class people.
(ii) Language, style and their dress pattern.
(iii) He must live in that area of city where upper class people live.
(iv) He must also develop the ability to participate in social functions organized by them.

Another examples of upward social mobility are promotion of a lecturer to readership and promotion of a minister of state to minister of cabinet rank etc.

Downward Social Mobility

Downward or Descending mobility means going down of a person from higher position prestige and status to lower ones. It may occur due to political changes, Economic

depression and crests of character etc. This type of mobility is caused due to following two factors.

(i) The first factor; is lack of initiative and efforts on the part of the people. Due to lethargy, rich and prosperous people have faced deseeding social mobility.
(ii) The second factor which leads to downward vertical social mobility is social change.

Downward mobility occurs in government and private services and is generally the outcome of some sort of inefficiency or acts of criminal tendencies.

3. Factors Affecting Social Mobility

Economic Prosperity
There are three main groups; in the society known as poor, middle and rich. There are various differences in their standard of living, Rich people are respected vary much in the society due to their riches. Therefore, every individual in the society is trying his best to earn money and to improve upon his position so as to enter into the category of rich people.

Structure of Society
Social structure of society influences the social mobility. The societies of the world can be divided into two groups-closed societies and open societies. Closed societies are caste ridden (as in India) and the status of a person is determined by his being born in a particular caste. Therefore, in such a society chances of mobility are very less because such society remains within the bonds of caste and heredity. Fore example. A person born in a family of Brahmins, may be poor. of bad character, will enjoy the status of Brahmin due to his birth; in a Brahmin family. But in an open society equality of opportunities are provided which encourage more social mobility due to the capabilities and educational achievement of the individuals.

Level of Aspiration and Achievement
Social mobility is directly proportional to the aspirations of the people. If, the people are more aspirants, we will find more social mobility in that society.

Demographic Structure
Social mobility is closely related with diffusion of population. Its size and density. Birth rate and migration of village folks towards towns and cities are closely connected to social mobility.

Education
Social mobility is promoted through development. Propagation and spread of education. The people who receive more and more education achieve higher and higher social status.

Occupational Prestige
All the occupations in the society do not get the same respect. Some professions carry higher prestige in comparison to other professions. For example. I.A.S. officers and Doctors are considered to be better than the Engineers, Lawyers and Teachers.

Administration
In a democratic society grater opportunities are provided for social mobility in comparison with other types of administrative societies, Democratic administration promotes social mobility to be great extent.

Legal and Political Factors

Many of the legal and political restrictions have been removed after independence. Untouchability has become a sin. Every one has seen provided political equality and equality of educational opportunities etc. Any member of the society can visit temples/gurudwaras etc. By these changes in the legal and political restrictions, mobility takes place from the lower group to the higher group.

Intelligence Factor

In the modern industrialized society. The inherited positions have become less and less because the person occupying the hair cannot always give the same chair to his son or daughter. Thus , there are changes in the social positions held from one generation to another generation and, thus , making the people mobile.

Education and Social Mobility

Education is a very potent means of encouraging social mobility the Indian society. It has multidirectional influence in promoting social mobility. Education plays such an important role in following ways.

1. Education is the need of every person because on it depends proper development of man. It is education that reveals the latent qualities and potentiates of man and enables him to understand 'Self and the environment surrounding him.
2. Education sharpens the intellect, widens the vision, helps in the wholesome and balanced development of man and above all it leads to social , economic and political development of a nation.
3. Both the streams of education i.e. formal and Non-formal play a great role in bringing about social mobility.
4. Formal education is directly and causally related to social mobility. This relationship is generally understood to be one in which formal education itself is a cause or one of the cause of vertical social mobility.
5. Education is directly related to occupational mobility and the subsequent improvement lin economic status and on the other hand, kit forms and element of social change. Persons with higher education and better employment are respected more in the society.
6. It is a purpose of education to develop within the individual such motivation as will make him to work hard for the improvement of his social position.
7. Higher education helps in gaining higher income and, thus, education is an ;important means for upward social mobility.
8. A change in occupation is considered to be the best single indicator of social mobility. The reason for it is that occupational status is closely correlated with educational status. Income style of life and the other determinants of class status.

9. Education helps students belonging to lower strata of the society to go up in the social scale and attar in a high social position in the society.

10. Education helps in preparing one-self employment , which is an important aspect of social uplift meant.

11. The popularity of education among women has considerably altered the social status of women. It has helped in raising their social position , status and achievement of high social prestige; which indicates upward social mobility of the women.

Medium of instruction in educational system can play a great role in bringing about mobility among the people of the society. One of the effects of adopting a regional language as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges is that it hinders spatial mobility of students and teachers which is related to both horizontal and vertical social mobility.

The teachers belonging to the lower case , by joining this noble profession of teaching. Help in upward social mobility. Teachers engaged in research work innovations and imparting higher education help ;in breaking the barriers of caste and are respected by the students community for their help ,guidance and scholarly taste and talent and promote intergenerational social mobility.

Education is a means to achieve higher social status and position in society . Hence, all students try to obtain more and more education to gain higher and higher social status without education. Achievement of higher status or social, mobility is not possible Content of Education, Amount area and college and universities play n important part in the social mobility of students.

Not only the formal system of education but the non-formal system of education also acts as an important channel of social mobility. This system helps individuals who were devoid of the opportunities of education at a proper age to educate themselves.

There are various ways of facilitating social mobility , such as political power, marriage, family affiliations and education, But the most sought after lis education which is readily available to more people as educational facilities are expanded all over the world. Education is regarded as the channel of mobility as it is:

- High educational achievement is the aspiration of people .
- Few would question about a person's integrity when high academic qualification.
- Education has high relationship with income and occupation. The higher the educational level, the more prestigious the occupation, leading to higher annual
- This turn is associated with property , prestige, and

Formal education is closely linked to upward social mobility and in this aspect, schools play an important role in sorting out individuals into their prospective levels, This is done through the system of examinations, supervision and promotions, Thus, education can assist the movement of persons into the top positions in society or elite mobility . Hence , formal education has become a prerequisite for many established professions such as doctors, lawyers,

accountants, teachers, engineers and so forth. How does education enhance social mobility?

- First, education plays the role of a mechanism whereby social class positions are maintained across generations. A person from a higher social class is more likely to have be better educated which will enable him or her to maintain social class position.

- Second , education acts as a mechanism for social mobility. In this case, access to education is the key in determining the extent of mobility an individual can aspire in society. However, this is only possible if everyone gets an equal education; thus providing an avenue for mobility among the disadvantaged. For this group of people , education serves to move upwards or to reduce the likelihood of downward mobility.

Education has a functional value as well as a symbolic value. What is meant by functional value? Education is said to have a functional value when a person attends university to study education and upon graduation becomes a teacher. Or a person who studies pharmacy and becomes a pharmacist. Here education has a functional value. What is meant by symbolic value? You could have a situation where a person who graduates withy a degree in engineering but chooses not want to work. Instead he uses the degree as a symbol of status, Similarly, an uneducated man works hard and earns money to send his daughter to study in a private college. When his daughter graduates and gets good job,, the daughter's education ;is seen as symbol of value. In the United States, after 1900, parents were convinced that educating their children would open opportunities for better jobs and salaries, Schools and higher education institutions began developing and designing programmers to meet the needs of the market. Student enrolment in technical and engineering courses increased because there were more job opportunities in factories and industries. In short, stress was on the functional value of education. Great Britain and Australia also stressed on the functional value of education in the 1940s with emphasis on educating children at the secondary and tertiary levels, Prior to this, societies in these countries believed that people could be successful in polities, business, and public service even without formal education.

4. A Case Study: Indian Government's Policy on Social Mobility

The Indian government adopts a policy of positive discrimination or affirmative action termed as reservation towards the 'backward classes' of society.

1) In accordance to this policy, 15% of government jobs and 15% of students admitted to universities must be reserved for individuals from the scheduled caste or Dalits. These were people who have been disadvantaged because of the long history of discrimination, socially, economically and politically.

2) Another group of people given priority were the scheduled tribes or minorities where e 7.5% of government jobs and places in educational institutions were reserved for this group.

3) Along with the central government, the state governments of India to follow a policy of reservation.

Different states have different figures of reservation based on the population composition of each state.

4) While most Indians support the policy, tensions have arisen because high caste communities feel discriminated against by the government. Large number of high caste members have to compete for a few places reserved for them. At times, reserved positions remain unmanned because there were few candidates from the lower caste causing further tension between the castes.

5. Conclusion

Thus, education is a liberating force and in the present age it is also a democratizing force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances, thereby, bringing about mobility among the people in the social structure of the society.

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