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Educational and Occupational Mobility of Dalit Youth in Pondicherry: A Sociological Perspective

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Abstract

A majority of youth in developing countries are in the low-income families where development constraints pose additional challenges to youth due to their limited access to resources, education and training, health care, employment and broader socio-economic development opportunities. The parents have few resources to invest in them and, as a consequence, their homes have the fewest cognitively stimulating materials, and their parents invest less in their education. The stress of living in poverty and struggling to meet daily needs can also impair parenting.

The present study explores the elements of the intergenerational mobility among the lower-income families of scheduled caste communities predominant in Puducherry. A quantitative and qualitative approach is used to analyse the intergenerational mobility process. The educational status, occupational experience, family background, socioeconomic status, income variation, school, and college experience, and impact on caste and the government policy, political activities and geographical locations related to research are critically examined and consolidated in the study. They are still performing the traditional occupation and the occupation has even transformed to the next generation too. The government took many initiatives to uplift the socially disadvantaged people through implementing various schemes free educations, scholarships, free hostel, reservation policies to provide for the Dalit youth. Through these schemes, many youths have benefited from this category.

Key Notes: Intergenerational mobility, Education, Occupation, Dalit and Youth.

Introduction

A majority of youth in developing countries are in the low-income families. These youth or children are more likely to experience multiple family transitions, move frequently, and early change schools or colleges. These schools or colleges attend are less well funded, and the neighbourhoods and there also live in are more disadvantaged. The parents have few resources to invest in them and, as a consequence, their homes have the fewest cognitively stimulating materials, and their parents invest less in their education. The stress of living in poverty and struggling to meet daily needs can also impair parenting. The majority of the world's youth are in developing countries where development constraints pose additional challenges to youth due to their limited access to resources, education and training, health care, employment and broader socio-economic development opportunities. Today, 62 per cent of the world's youth live in Asia, whereas the second largest proportion (17 per cent) lives in Africa. Current financial, economic and other crises have had a strong impact on youth. Nearly 40 per cent of the world's unemployed about 81 million are between 15 and 24 years of age. More youth are poor and underemployed than ever before, often working at wage levels below the poverty line, in unsafe conditions, death line work and insecure jobs with less benefit and no prospect for advancement. Globalization and rapid technological development, while presenting many young women and men with opportunities for education, innovation and productive rewarding work, has created uncertainty and insecurity for millions of other youth, by exacerbating already vulnerable situations. Giving young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work is central; it represents an opportunity to pursue a more balanced and sustainable development, with direct positive consequences for poverty alleviation, promoting social integration and stability.

Social and lack of economic background during childhood and adolescence can have a lasting effect on individuals, making it difficult for children who grow up in low-income families to escape poverty when they became adults. Because the negative effects of deprivation on human development tend to cumulate, individuals with greater exposure to poverty during childhood are likely to have more difficulty escaping poverty as adults. This study examines the intergenerational mobility among the rural Dalit youth on below poverty line (BPL) families during childhood and the association between the changes of events live compared with their parents on education and occupations in the levels of adulthood or youth.

The present study explores the elements of the intergenerational social mobility among the lower-income families of Dalit communities predominant in Puducherry. A quantitative and qualitative approach is used to analyse the impact of modernization, intergenerational social mobility process. The educational status, occupational experience, family background, socioeconomic status, income variation, school, and college experience, and impact on caste and the government policy, political activities and geographical locations related to research are critically examined and consolidated in the study.

The empirical studies of intergenerational social mobility suggest that the transmission of economic status across generations is higher in less developed countries than in developed ones. That is, with economic development, and particularly with the expansion of the educational system, a country's social mobility will increase. The developing region's education and occupation have generally been associated with high demand among the population for higher levels of education. This is said to have led to a tremendous increase in educational attainment across social strata. Yet, instead of observing an increase in social mobility across generations, a widespread narrative in the developing country has been that of a decline in social mobility among the increasingly well-educated youth. People between the age group of 18-30 are significant in determining the country's economy and development.

Life changes are inevitable and one, who accepts the change and tries to mobilize with the change, occupies a comfortable place in the social setting. Hence the change is a very significant aspect of development for both individuals and society. None of the societies escapes from the change, whether it is total or partial. Since August Comte to the present sociologist, 'change' tend to dominate the writings of most sociologists Karl Marx, stress the need for a 'social change' that can cause a social transformation from the capitalist society to socialist society. In the Indian context, the presence of the caste system welcomes an obstacle to any kind of positive changes in the social and communal settings especially in the phase of globalization. Many factors contribute to the changes occurring in Indian societies. Some of them are the changes made in the political system, westernization of education, the emergence of positive thoughts among the people etc.

Social change refers to an alteration in the social order of a society. It may refer to the notion of social progress or sociocultural evolution, the philosophical idea that society moves forward by dialectical or evolutionary means. It may refer to a paradigmatic change in the socio-economic structure, for instance, a shift away from feudalism and towards capitalism. Accordingly, it may also refer to social revolution, such as the Socialist revolution presented in Marxism, or to other social movements, such as Women's suffrage or the Civil rights movement. Social change may be driven by cultural, religious, economic, scientific or technological forces. The scholarly work of M.N. Srinivas explores the significant changes that occurred in India. Through aspects of Sanskritisation, modernization and westernization changes in the Indian societies. Globalization, liberalization and privatization add fuel to the changes. Therefore, there is a need to examine, the areas in which change has influenced and the extent of the change. The present paper specifically gives attention to explore the changes in modernization and intergenerational social mobility with special reference to the education and occupational status of Dalit youth in Pondicherry.

Social Mobility

It is generally agreed that the rate of social mobility the amount of movement from one stratum to another is significantly higher in one social position to another social position. Such as class of origin, sex, race and kinship relationships have less and less influence on an individual's social status. Status is seen to be increasingly achieved based on merit with talent, ability, ambition and hard work. Indeed, many sociologists have suggested that this mechanism of social selection is built into the values of society. Individuals are judged and accorded prestige in terms of their educational and occupational status which is seen to be largely achieved by their effort and ability.

P.A. Sorokin and many Sociologists have identified two main types of social mobility. The first, intra-generational mobility refers to social mobility within a single generation. It is measured by comparing the occupational status of an individual at two or more points in time. Thus, if a person begins his working life as an unskilled manual worker and ten years later is employed as an accountant. The second type, intergenerational mobility, refers to social mobility between generations. It is measured by comparing the occupational status of sons with that of their fathers. Thus, if the son of an unskilled manual worker becomes an accountant, he is socially mobile in terms of intergenerational mobility. Intergenerational social mobility is most frequently studied by a sociologist (M. Harlmbos, 2008). This paper examines the focus of how modernization impacting on the intergenerational social mobility among the Dalit youth related to compare their educations and occupational mobility between their parents.

Intergenerational Mobility

Inter-generational social mobility refers to the relationship between the socio-economic status of parents and the status their children will attain as adults. Put differently, mobility reflects the extent to which individuals move up or down the social ladder compared with their parents. A society can be deemed more or less mobile depending on whether the link between parents and children's social status as adults is looser or tighter. In a relatively immobile society an individual's wage, education or occupation tends to be strongly related to those of their parents. Intergenerational mobility depends on a host of factors that determine individual financial success, some related to the inheritability of qualities, others related to the family unit and social environment in which individuals develop. Among environmental factors, some are only loosely related to public policy, while others can be heavily affected by policies. The instance of policies that forms access to human capital formation, such as public support for early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education, as well as redistributive policies that may reduce or raise economic and other barriers to access higher education. In fact, in an economic sense, intergenerational social mobility is generally defined in terms of the possibility to move up or down the income or wage scale relative to one's parents. Such mobility is closely related to educational achievement, given the direct link between, on the one hand, human

capital and, on the other hand, labour productivity. It is a challenge to measure intergenerational wage or educational mobility and to identify the main ways in which the socio-economic status of parents can influence that of their children as adults. A key issue is that it is difficult to disentangle the effect of parents' socio-economic status from that of inherited abilities or disposition of individuals that influence their wages and educational achievement.

Factors Influencing modernization and Intergenerational Social Mobility

The number of factors influencing modernization, intergenerational mobility among the various way, are, family backgrounds, it means the socio-economic status of family conditions are important to the development of upward or downward mobile towards the parents and children's in their status. Especially, the investment to child's future, like education, occupation, income, etc., In India the educational status is still very low. So, they are provided for a good education in early childhood likes on the primary level, secondary, higher secondary, and college, universities, etc., to invest money for children to grow the educational status compare with their parents. At the same time, the low-income family are disadvantaged families deprivation of low-income resources family backgrounds, low educational status of parents, poor facilities for children school or colleges, temporary jobs for low wages and doing dirty kind of work doing on uneducated persons. The involvement to develop an education for all has been a political mantra and successive governments have introduced a series of educational interventions focused on getting children into school educational status for current children like providing free education, dress, midday meals, and free textbooks and so on.

Caste and Social Mobility

Earlier the ideology of caste prescribed specific occupation-specific caste groups, which had a specific place in the social hierarchy. The upper caste occupations were considering to be most prestigious and purity while the occupation of lower castes, especially the untouchables were considered to be polluting and defiling. But due to forces like modernization, urbanization and industrialization and also the most important is the advent of the British which open new economic opportunities in the sphere of the plantation, the development of towns and cities laid the basis for economic development, which intruded into the functioning of the caste system.

One of the oldest and most enduring social arrangements in India dating back thousands of years is the caste system. The system is an offshoot of a method of organizing society into ordered classes such as priests, warriors, traders, workers etc., A key characteristic of this system is that caste status is inherited (by birth). Given the traditional assignment of jobs by castes, the social restrictions imposed by the hereditary nature of the system have been viewed as probably the biggest impediment to social mobility for the poor and downtrodden. They believed in numerous superstitions in principle they were a part of the socio-political organization at the village, town or city level and were governed under the same not allowed to use freely their conscience in decision-making any issue and their views were presumed, on the whole, their low

rank "was derived from cumulative inequalities in the social, economic, political and rituals system" (Beteille, 1969). So here they were condemned to permanent social degradation.

In the 1950s, soon after political independence, the several thousand castes and tribes that had previously been enumerated in the Indian census were classified into one of four categories: Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and a residual category often referred to as the General or Forward Castes (FCs). In 1961, SCs and STs were 15% and 7% of the population respectively and became the recipients of a range of affirmative action policies leading to their greater representation in politics, state employment and publicly funded education.

The combination of massive programs of public good construction in Indian villages, caste-based reservations in political bodies and preferential selection in education and employment resulted in considerable convergence in educational and occupational outcomes across social groups. The gaps observed today are, as a result, small from a historical perspective.

In short, the Indian Caste system has changed due to the forces such as Westernization, industrialization and urbanization impact of the British period and the provision of legal and constitutional safeguard to both upper caste and lower caste in the field of ritual, occupation, education and so on. With the forces of modernization, industrialization and urbanization in India, the ideology of caste has become less pervasive in an individual's everyday life and has become a personal affair, rather than public. Place of residence and food habits are influenced more by an individual's workplace and occupation than by his caste or religion.

Objectives of this study

- To profile the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
- To know the educational and occupational variation among the past and present generations.
- To know the impact of government policy on social mobility

Methods and Materials

Research Design

This study describes different aspects of intergenerational social mobility among Dalit youth. Since it is a fact-finding study, it focuses on the different magnitude of the problems faced by the Dalit youth. The information gathered by this study will be more useful in formulating further research problems in different aspects. Keeping this observation, a descriptive research design is used for this study.

Universe of the Study

As the research paper aims to understand the intergenerational mobility among the rural Dalit youth in Pondicherry with special reference to Kalapet, the researcher has selected the younger generation male members to provide details of the family.

Sampling Technique

As the study focuses on Education and Occupational Mobility among the Dalit youth and his parents, the researcher chose the study area of the Chinnakalpet, Pillaichavady, Kalapet, Peria kalapet and Ganapaththy chettikulam in Pondicherry. As the study area is one of the developing areas and people belong to Vaniar, Patinathavar and Adidravidar communities are reside in this place.

Here the researcher interviewed respondents for the present research which is one of the methods which provides scope for both qualitative and quantitative requirements. The respondents were identified through the snowball sampling technique.

Sampling size

The sample size is an important attribute of any empirical study. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the expense of data collection, and the need to have sufficient statistical power. Here the researcher collected data from 102 samples from the research area.

Sources of Data Collection

The study draws its information largely from the primary data collected from the male member of younger generations especially in the age group of 18 to 30 years.

Tools and Technique of data collection

While there is a range of tools and techniques for data collection, an interview schedule was used to collect information from 102 respondents for the present study while in-depth interviewing was conducted for a few respondents.

The tools consist of two parts

Part-A: It deals with general information regarding respondents. This section consists of items on age, sex, religion, and marital status, number of children, family type, house type, education, occupation and income of the respondent.

Part-B: It comprised of information regarding the Education and Occupational Mobility of two generations specifically with the father and son.

Limitation of Study

The researcher analysed the socio-economic position and relation between education and the occupational mobility of the caste at a given point in time. Information was collected only from younger generation male members. The study deals with the Dalit community other communities are neglected.

Findings

This research endeavour entitled "Educational and Occupational Mobility of Dalit youth in Pondicherry" was victorious in the picture some useful findings. Major findings of this research, which is derived from the data analysis and interpretation, are listed as follows.

- ❖ Over half of the respondents are graduates.
- ❖ The majority of the parents are illiterates and some completed the primary to secondary level of education.
- ❖ The major type of living analysis in nuclear families.
- ❖ The households largely contain six to eight members including a mainly father, mother, respondent and their siblings.
- ❖ More families are living in their own houses constructed through their own money.
- ❖ Most are families are living in the Katcha house, but with a lack of toilet facilities.
- ❖ The average family income per month is between Rs.5000 to 10000. Income differences exist in these communities. Some get the additional income of old-age pension, widow pension from the Government, etc.
- ❖ Many of the respondents do not have the habit of savings for the future as the income is just sufficient to meet the rising expenses. Hence they borrow and become indebted due to marriage, starting a business, family needs, education and occupation, health problems and festivals etc. They borrow money from the bank, moneylender, neighbour and unknown person who lend at a higher more interest and many families are facing this situation.
- ❖ Some of those who save are the Government servants who have savings in the bank, post office, insurance and or chit fund which is done with a plan to aid at the time of children's education, marriage or important situation.
- ❖ Most of the respondents have basic households gadget like TV, fan, water facilities, power supply, mixers, grinders, gas cylinders, two-wheelers, Mobile Phones with two sim cards etc.,
- ❖ Only a few respondents have domestic animals such as cow, buffalo, hen, cat, dog, goat which helps to substantiate the main source of income. Every respondent and family such as food, housing, clothe, medical, travelling, educational purpose and the recreation ever spend as money for TV, newspaper, internet, mobile recharge, etc.

Government Policy

The implication of government policy for Scheduled castes (Dalit) and backward classes can be grouped as three important fields of education, government job and political representation.

- ❖ After the independent Indian government more systematic attempts have been made to deal with the problems of Scheduled Castes and backward classes. As these groups of people have been faced social disabilities as the restriction on their social contract and use of public properties such as well, roads, ponds etc., and housing, education, recreation entrance into school, economic disabilities are banning from entering higher occupation, possession of wealth and landed property.
- ❖ They have been provided with special rights and privileges and their interests are safeguarded through various provisions made in the constitution by the government of India and also the constitutional safeguards intended to guarantee education, occupational and political mobility which may facilitate the Scheduled Castes to achieve a better position and status in the society.
- ❖ The government of India made such programmes for Dalit youth to develop their skills, attitudes, great awareness for promoting health status, economic and social status inequalities exist between the scheduled caste and non-scheduled castes.
- ❖ The provision of reservation was originally to be in effect for ten years from 1950 to 1959 but since the achievement was not up to the level of government expectation, so, it was still extended every ten years. In 2011, again government extended the reservation policy to 2019.
- ❖ In the field of education, State and Centre government have provided various schemes for Dalit students like Metric, Post-Graduate and Graduate scholarships, free remission, books, boarding grants, dress and 15 per cent reservation for higher education to the member of scheduled castes.
- ❖ In the field of government jobs, a certain percentage of jobs at the Centre and the State level are reserved for the members of the scheduled castes.
- ❖ In addition to the above reservation, the government of India, as well as the State Government, sponsor welfare programmes from time to time to evaluate the rate of progress among the Scheduled Castes and campaign for the eradication of untouchability and casteism.
- ❖ Social welfare programmes taken by the government, are the free acquisition of land for housing and agriculture, loans from the nationalized banks to meet their requirement. And also during every five years plan central government spending on Dalit youth development.

Conclusion

Education has a significant role in changing the status of individuals. Indian Government laid its emphasis on providing education to the people by introducing various schemes, like free education, mid-day meals and various scholarships. The government has set many targets to achieve 100 per cent enrollment in education. To achieve this target, it has implemented many schemes for people from low economic backgrounds to increase their participation in education. Though the government focused on education, still there exist gaps among the educational achievement of several groups of people. Youth should participate in the economic development of our country. Hence the focus is needed from the government towards the youth by implementing several schemes to improve the job opportunities especially for the youth from rural areas. At the same time the family support also is important which may be in the form of interest and involvement by parents in children's education, support and enable them to utilize the opportunities offered by the government and those that are available in the environment.

Recommendations

Based on factors that are identified throughout the study, the researcher made certain suggestions.

- ❖ This study recommends the appointment of professional social workers to assess and monitor the various welfare schemes for the Dalit youth. The professional social workers shall put forward suitable programmes for empowering the youth and their families by evaluating socio-economic, health and working conditions.
- ❖ The government must give necessary facilities and opportunities for education and occupation in modern society.
- ❖ The NGOs to survive more developing programs for Dalit youths and other youth's developments.
- ❖ The government must conduct awareness programmes in their living places.

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