

INTERGENERATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG SCHEDULED CASTES: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT SAMBA (J&K)

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to ascertain the change if any in the occupational status of the Scheduled Castes and to determine the factors that influence intergenerational mobility. Purposive multistage sampling has been used to select 50 households from each of the three major Scheduled Castes in the study area namely Chamars, Meghs and Mahashas. Therefore a total of 150 Scheduled Caste households were covered in the study and respondents were interviewed using a well structured schedule. The Chi-Square test for independence of attributes has been used to examine the association between the son's and father's occupation. The study concludes that the education and occupation of the father along with the respondents' own education are the key determinants influencing his occupation. The higher the education or occupation of the father, it is more likely that the son will end up getting a higher education or higher occupation.

Keywords: Caste, Hierarchy, Generations, Education, Occupational mobility.

INTRODUCTION

Casteism has been one of the important characteristics of Indian society since time immemorial. The caste system in its entirety constitutes a status hierarchy with one caste there at the top and the other at the bottom. In India, it is widely recognized that the social organization of the traditional Hindu society was based on the theory of Chaturvarnya, which means the division of society into four varnas or classes. These four varnas or classes were Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (menials). The society was organised in such a manner that a particular job was performed by a particular caste. In the context of traditional Hindu society, the Shudras were mainly given the occupation of serving the other three varnas or castes. They were associated with such occupations which are regarded as ritually impure. These occupations involved leatherworking, butchering, disposal of garbage etc. However, with the passage of time, many Shudras were able to uplift themselves and became farmers or artisans in their own rights. In this way, when Shudras improved their status, they began to adopt the rituals and habits of the twice-born castes. The menial tasks were then

performed by the 'out-casts' of the society- the untouchables. So, until the emergence of untouchables as the fifth varna, the Shudras were considered by the Hindus as the lowest of the low.

The untouchable were those people who were considered outcast from the Hindu society. They usually lived apart from the other castes and were given occupations which no one else wanted to perform. As a result of engaging in such occupations, they were considered unclean or polluted. They were not allowed to enter a temple or school and could not use water from the public lake. They were also forbidden to enter the streets in which the houses of upper castes were situated and there were many customs and laws that kept them beyond the villages and towns (**Deshpande, 2010**). Sometimes, precautions were undertaken by the upper castes to prevent incidental contact with the untouchables because people believed that their touch or even the sight of them would compromise their purity.

In the 1931 census of India, the untouchables were classified as 'exterior castes'. The term 'Scheduled Caste' was coined by the Simon commission in 1935. The untouchable castes were listed in a separate schedule in the act and this practice was continued in the Constitution of India, 1950. Thus the Scheduled Castes were placed at the bottom in the traditional caste structure and were therefore characterised by the lowest social status in the caste hierarchy.

The present study is an attempt to ascertain the change if any in the intergenerational occupational status of the Scheduled Castes. In other words, the study attempts to analyse the occupational mobility among Scheduled Castes. Occupational mobility is the transition or movement of an individual from one occupational level to another. When the change in the level of occupation between an individual and his parents is considered, it is known as intergenerational occupational mobility.

Many studies regarding the socio economic status of the depressed and excluded classes has been done in India and abroad. Studies have also been done on the social, occupational and educational mobility among various classes of the society especially the excluded ones. **Srinivas** (1953) formulated the concept of sanskritisation which explained change in the original status. **Blau and Duncan** (1967) have analysed the occupational mobility in America. According to Blau and Duncan, whether an individual rises socially or not is determined by four factors. The first two factors are concerned with the educational and occupational level of the father and the other two factors relates to the son's education and the nature of his first job. **Malik** (1979) in her study deals with an analysis of mobility in three generations. According to Malik, education, occupation and income are the three dimensions of socio-economic status and social mobility can be measured in terms of movement or change in these dimensions. Malik analysed the nature of relationship among these three variables of socio-economic status and found that education

was able to predict itself the occupational prestige and income of the person. So education is the most important index of socio-economic status. In respect of intergenerational social mobility, the kind of association found between the father's and son's occupation showed that the father occupation has a crucial role in determining the occupation of the son. If the occupation of the father is higher, it is more likely that the son will end up getting a higher occupation. **Dahiwale** (1989) examines various factors contributing to occupational mobility among Scheduled Castes. He observes the motivational aspect of mobility such as encouragement by the persons in the respondent's life, the economic hardships they underwent, influence of ideologies of the reformers like Ambedkar, Patil, Phule and Gandhi and the self-awakening of their own degraded status were the sources of motivation for their occupational mobility. **Richardson** (1980) also assumes that certain psychological attributes like motivation and ability are important determinants of upward mobility and that lack of these may lead to downward mobility. **Wankhede** (1999) has explored the nature and degree of occupational mobility among the educated Scheduled Castes. According to Wankhede, occupational mobility is determined by social background, educational achievements and the reservation policy. Educational achievement is very crucial in bringing a positive change and is directly linked to occupational mobility. In the case of Scheduled Castes, educational attainment is the sole determinant of entry into white collar occupations from traditional ones. **Leelakumari** (1989) explains various factors responsible for mobility between the two generations. Leelakumari found a considerable educational and occupational mobility between the two generations of the Scheduled Caste women. She observed that the mothers were mostly illiterate but the daughters were literates and were provided with more educational facilities, more opportunities for employment and more welfare schemes by the government. **Majumder** (2010) found a moderate upward mobility in educational level across generations in India and significantly low upward mobility for occupational level. Within this context, the condition of the excluded castes is further lower. He explores the fact that educational mobility is not being transformed to occupational mobility. **Azam** (2013) examines the intergenerational occupational mobility among men born during 1945-85. He grouped the occupations in four categories- white collar workers, skilled /semi skilled workers, farmers and unskilled labourers (which include agriculture labourers) and with the help of various statistical techniques, measures the intergenerational mobility.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of educational and occupational mobility is very important as it tells about the movement or change that has occurred between and among the generations. It also tells us about the number of people who are moving upward or downward or are standing still on the socio-economic ladder. The study of educational and occupational mobility also tells us about the factors or reasons responsible for such a movement and/or no movement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on following objectives

1. To ascertain the change if any in the intergenerational occupational status of the Scheduled Castes.
2. To determine the factors that influence intergenerational occupational mobility.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The study is based on following hypotheses

1. The occupational profile of Scheduled Castes has changed significantly over the period of generation.
2. A significant determinant of the occupational status of the respondent is the occupational status of his father.

METHODOLOGY

The present study area has been selected based on purposive multistage sampling. 50 households have been selected from each of the three major Scheduled Castes in the study area namely Chamars, Meghs and Mahashas. Therefore a total of 150 Scheduled Caste households have been covered in the study and primary data was collected from them with the help of interview method. The heads of the households were the respondents in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Total Sampled Population

In the study area, the three castes namely Chamars, Meghs and Mahashas are almost equally spread and are the major Scheduled Castes in terms of population. So, 50 households have been taken from all of these three major Scheduled Castes in the study area. The total sampled population in the study area is 851. Out of this total sampled population of 851, three castes namely Chamars, Meghs and Mahashas comprise 32.7 percent, 32.4 percent and 34.9 percent respectively (Table 1).

Table 1: Total Sampled Population in the Study Area

Scheduled Castes	Number of households taken	Total Sampled Population
Chamars	50(33.3)	278(32.7)
Meghs	50(33.3)	276(32.4)
Mahashas	50(33.3)	297(34.9)
Total	150	851

Source: field survey

(Figures in brackets are percentages w.r.t column wise total)

Housing Condition

8 percent of the total 150 sample households are having kacha house whereas 18 percent of the households are having semi pacca house and rest 74 percent of the households are having pacca houses. So it can be concluded that the majority of the households are living in pacca houses. Among Chamars, 2 percent of the total households are having kacha house whereas 16 percent and 82 percent of the households are having semi pucca and pucca house respectively. Similarly among Meghs and Mahashas, majority of the households are having pacca houses (table 2).

Table 2: Housing Condition of the Households in the Study Area

Housing Condition	Chamar		Megh		Mahasha		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Kacha	1	2.0	5	10.0	6	12.0	12	8.0
Semi Pucca	8	16.0	7	14.0	12	24.0	27	18.0
Pucca	41	82.0	38	76.0	32	64.0	111	74.0
Total	50	100.0	50	100.0	50	100.0	150	100.0

Source: field survey

Percentages are w.r.t column wise total

Family Type and Size

62 percent of the total households are having nuclear family while 38 percent of the households are having joint family. So the majority of the households are having nuclear families. Further,

26 percent of the total households have a small family of up to 4 members. 30 percent of households have a medium family of 5 members while 44 percent of the households are having large families comprising of more than 5 members. Also 64 percent households among Chamars, 60 percent households among Meghs and 62 percent households among Mahashas are having nuclear families where most of the households among all these three castes are having a family size of above 5 (Table 3).

Caste	Family type			Family size			
	Nuclear	Joint	Total	Up to 4	Equal to 5	Above 5	Total
Chamar	32(64.0)	18(36.0)	50	21(42.0)	14(28.0)	15(30.0)	50
Megh	30(60.0)	20(40.0)	50	8(16.0)	15(30.0)	27(54.0)	50
Mahasha	31(62.0)	19(38.0)	50	10(20.0)	16(32.0)	24(48.0)	50
Total	93(62.0)	57(38.0)	150	39(26.0)	45(30.0)	66(44.0)	150

Source: field survey

(Figures in brackets are percentages are w.r.t row wise total)

Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratio is a measure showing the number of dependents (aged under 15 and 65 & above) to the total productive population (aged 15-64). The dependency ratio tells us about the number of persons of non working age compared to those of working age. Dependency ratio can be calculated by the formula:

$$\text{Dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of people aged under 15 and those aged 65 and over}}{\text{Number of people aged 15 - 64}} \times 100$$

The dependency ratio can again be divided into child dependency ratio and aged dependency ratio.

$$\text{Child dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of people aged under 15}}{\text{Number of people aged 15 - 64}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Aged dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{Number of people aged 65 and above}}{\text{Number of persons aged 15 - 64}} \times 100$$

Out of the total sampled population of 851 from 150 households taken in the study area, the total dependent population (people aged under 15 and those aged 65 and over) is 191 and the total productive population (number of people aged 15-64) is 660. So, the total dependency ratio in the study area is 28.9 whereas the child dependency ratio is 24.7 and aged dependency ratio is 4.2. Similarly the dependency ratio among Chamars is 39.0 which mean that approximately 40 per cent of the population of Chamar community is dependent on remaining 60 per cent of the productive population. The child dependency ratio and aged dependency ratio among Chamars is 33.0 and 6.0 respectively. As far as the caste Megh is concerned, the dependency ratio among Meghs is 21.6 where child dependency ratio is 18.5 and aged dependency ratio is 3.1. The situation among Mahashas shows that the dependency ratio is 27.5 whereas child and aged dependency ratios are 23.6 and 3.9 respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: Dependency Ratio in the Study Area									
Age group	Number of Dependents								
	Chamar			Megh			Mahasha		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Under 15	41 (62.1) ^a	25 (37.9) ^a	66 (84.6) ^b	26 (61.9) ^a	16 (38.1) ^a	42 (85.7) ^b	31 (56.4) ^a	24 (43.6) ^a	55 (85.9) ^b
65 & Above	10 (83.3) ^a	2 (16.7) ^a	12 (15.4) ^b	4 (57.1) ^a	3 (42.9) ^a	7 (14.3) ^b	7 (77.8) ^a	2 (22.2) ^a	9 (14.1) ^b
Total	51 (65.4) ^a	27 (34.6) ^a	78	30 (61.2) ^a	19 (38.8) ^a	49	38 (59.4) ^a	26 (40.6) ^a	64

Source: Field Survey

a- Percentage w.r.t row wise total

b- Percentage w.r.t column wise total

Earning and Dependent Members

40.7 percent of the total households are found to have only one earning member in their family. 31.3 percent households are having two earning members and 18.0 percent households have three earning members. Only 10.0 percent of the total households have four and above earning members in their family. As far as the dependent members in the household are concerned, 4.7 percent of households have only one dependent member in their family, 18.0 percent of

households have two dependent members, 26.7 percent of households have three dependent members and 50.6 percent of households have four and above dependent members in their family (Table 5).

Table 5: Earning and Dependent Members among Households in the Study Area

Caste	Earning members in households					Dependent members in households				
	One	Two	Three	Four& above	Total	One	Two	Three	Four& above	Total
Chamar	24(48.0)	13(26.0)	6(12.0)	7(14.0)	50	2(4.0)	13(26.0)	14(28.0)	21(42.0)	50
Megh	19(38.0)	18(36.0)	11(22.0)	2(4.0)	50	2(4.0)	5(10.0)	16(32.0)	27(54.0)	50
Mahasha	18(36.0)	16(32.0)	10(20.0)	6(12.0)	50	3(6.0)	9(18.0)	10(20.0)	28(56.0)	50
Total	61(40.7)	47(31.3)	27(18.0)	15(10.0)	150	7(4.7)	27(18.0)	40(26.7)	76(50.6)	150

Source: field survey

(Figures in brackets are percentages are w.r.t row wise total)

Educational Status

53.3 percent of the respondent's fathers are illiterate while only 15.3 percent of the respondents are illiterate. No one is graduate or have educational level of PG & above in fathers generation. Whereas in respondent's generation, 10 percent of the respondents are graduate while 2.7 percent of the respondents are educated to the level of PG & above. Thus there is a major change in terms of educational levels across the generation of father and son. This may be due to the reason that fathers were unable to get education because of traditional and financial constraints besides the lack of awareness regarding education. But with the change in attitude and increase in awareness regarding education, the respondents have been exposed to the modern educational facilities (Table 6).

Table 6: Educational Level of Respondents and their Fathers in the Study Area

Educational Level	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondent's Fathers
Illiterate	23(15.3)	80(53.3)
1-8	70(46.7)	60(40.0)
9-12	38(25.3)	10(6.7)
Graduation	15(10.0)	0(0.0)
PG & above	4(2.7)	0(0.0)
Total	150	150

Source: field survey

(Figures in brackets are percentages w.r.t column total)

Occupational Status

18 percent of the respondent's fathers were wage employed in organised sector whereas 53.3 percent of the respondents are wage employed in organised sector. Again in comparison to 22.7 percent fathers who are wage employed in unorganised sector i.e. labourers, only 16.7 percent of the respondents are wage employed in unorganised sector. The percentage of self employed respondent is more as compared to their fathers whereas only 11.3 percent of the respondents are engaged in farming compared to 48.7 percent among their fathers. This shows a change in the occupational status among the respondents as compared to their fathers (Table 7).

Table 7: Occupational Status of Respondents and their Fathers in the Study Area

Occupational Status	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondent's Fathers
Wage Employed (Organised Sector)	80 (53.3)	27 (18.0)
Wage Employed (Unorganised Sector)	25 (16.7)	34 (22.7)
Self Employed	28 (18.7)	16 (10.7)
Farming	17 (11.3)	73 (48.7)
Total	150	150

Source: field survey

(Figures in the brackets are percentages w.r.t column total)

Occupational Mobility

To ascertain the association between the occupational status of the respondent and that of his father, the chi-square analysis has been used. Table 8 shows the 4x4 contingency table of occupational status of the respondents and their fathers.

Table 8: 4x4 Contingency Table of Occupational Status of Respondents and their Fathers

Occupation of Respondent's Fathers

		Wage Employed (Organised Sector)	Wage Employed (Unorganised Sector)	Self Employed	Farming	Total
Occupation of Respondents	Wage Employed (Organised Sector)	27	4	10	41	82
	Wage Employed (Unorganised Sector)	0	19	0	6	25
	Self Employed	0	11	6	9	26
	Farming	0	0	0	17	17
	Total	27	34	16	73	150

The hypotheses for the chi square analysis are as follows:

H₀: There is no association between the occupation of the respondent and that of his father.

H_a: There is some association between the occupation of the respondent and that of his father.

The results of the Chi square analysis shows that the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance which shows that there is a dependence of the occupation of the son on the occupation of the father. So, it can be stated that if the father is in higher occupation, it is more likely that his son will end up getting higher occupation (Table 9).

Table 9: Chi Square Analysis of Occupational Status of Respondents and their Fathers

Occupation of Respondent's Fathers

		Occupational Status	Wage Employed (Organised Sector)	Wage Employed (Unorganised Sector)/ Labourer	Self Employed	Farming	Total
Occupation of Respondents	Wage Employed (Organised Sector)		27 14.760	4 18.587	10 8.747	41 39.907	82
	Wage Employed (Unorganised Sector)/ Labourer		0 4.500	19 5.667	0 2.667	6 12.167	25
	Self Employed		0 4.680	11 5.893	6 2.773	9 12.653	26
	Farming		0 3.060	0 3.853	0 1.813	17 8.273	17
	Total		27	34	16	73	150

Chi-square=95.318 Df=9

(The critical value of Chi-Square Df=9 and 5% Level of Significance is 16.919)

Factors responsible for mobility

To examine the relationship between the occupation of the respondent and its various predictors such as years of schooling of respondent, years of schooling of respondent's father and the occupation of respondent's father, the binary logistic regression has been used.

Response Information

Variable	Value	Count
Occupation of Respondent	1	125 (Event)
	0	25
Total		150

Deviance Table

Source	DF	Adj Dev	Adj Mean	Chi-Square	P-Value
Regression	3	56.264	18.7545	56.26	0.000
Years of Schooling of Respondent	1	8.220	8.2203	8.22	0.004
Years of Schooling of Father	1	1.038	1.0376	1.04	0.308
Occupation of Father	1	17.880	17.8801	17.88	0.000
Error	146	78.905	0.5404		
Total	149	135.168			

Regression Equation

$$P(1) = \frac{\exp(Y)}{1 + \exp(Y)}$$

$$Y = -1.280 + 0.2283 \text{ Years of Schooling of Respondent} + 0.213 \text{ Years of Schooling of Father} + 2.366 \text{ Occupation of Father}$$

In this binary logistic regression, the response variable is the occupation of the respondent and has two categories namely non labourer and labourer where 1 indicates a non labourer and 0 indicates labourer. In the study, out of total 150 respondents, 125 respondents are non labourer and 25 respondents are labourer (wage employed in unorganised sector). The results obtained through binary logistic regression shows that there is no evidence to suggest that the years of schooling of father has any effect on the occupation of the respondent after other independent variables are accounted for. However evidences have been shown by the results to say that the years of schooling of respondent and occupation of father has a significant effect on the occupation of the respondent. This means that if the respondent's father is in higher occupation, it is more likely that the respondent will get a higher occupation and if the respondent is educated to a higher level, then also it is more likely that he will get a higher occupation.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the study shows that there has been a fair degree of mobility among the respondent's generation as compared to their fathers. The respondents in the study area are better educated and are placed in better occupations compared to their fathers. This intergenerational transition or mobility in occupation can be attributed to the modern educational facilities enjoyed by the respondents as it has been found that the respondents were more educated compared to their fathers. Further it has also been found in the study that the education of the respondent himself and the occupation of his father are the significant determinants influencing the occupational status of the respondent.

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