



## IMPACT OF EDUCATION IN FOSTERING SOCIAL MOBILITY

 Mainul Hoque <sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Research Scholar, Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, UP.

\*Corresponding Author: [mainulhoque.amu@gmail.com](mailto:mainulhoque.amu@gmail.com)

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Education is the most important weapon to change society as well as the whole nation. Without education, social mobility is not possible. That's why education is considered an important ladder of social mobility. Education and social mobility are intimately connected to each other. Education is capable to promote the growth and remove the backwardness of a country. Education is liable to achieve a balance between upward and downward social mobility. This paper gives a theoretical concept of social mobility. This paper also provides information about factors responsible for social mobility and highlights the impact of education in fostering social mobility.

**Keywords:** *Social Mobility, Horizontal Mobility, Vertical Mobility, Inter-Generational Mobility, Intra-Generational Mobility.*



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion of social mobility is an important issue of social stratification. Social mobility is one of the integral parts of social stratification (Azam, M., Bhatt, V. 2015). The nature, scope, and extent of social mobility depend on the nature of stratification (Becker, G.S, Tomes, N. 1979). Through the process of stratification, the position of individuals at different levels of society is determined, and through the discussion of social mobility, the process of determining the position or place of different individuals can be understood (Blanden, J., Haveman, R., Smeeding, T, & Wilson, K. 2014).

Society is dynamic and moving. Social structure is not rigid and immovable (Corak, M. 2013). Naturally, just as there is stratification in society, the social

structure also changes. Social stratification is like a ladder. People go up and down this social ladder. This is a normal thing in all social situations, actually going up or down the social ladder is a kind of change. This change results in a change in the status of an individual or a group of individuals which promotes social mobility (Creedy, J. & white field, K. 1988).

### 2. MEANING OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

Social mobility means a change in the social status of an individual or group of individuals. Social mobility is a change in status within a social structure (Hoskinsa, K, and Barker, B. 2019). That may be to acquire different educational qualifications or to change professional status or standard of living. This change may be upward or downward, inter-generational, or intra-generational according to the

needs, demands, desires and efforts of an individual and it is not always possible to tell if a change is for the good or bad (Nizamuddin, S.K. 2014). In the word of Dresler, “Social mobility is the movement of an individual from one social position to another”.

According to P.A. Sorokin, “social mobility is any transition of an individual from one position to another in a constellation of social group and strata”.

According to Barber, “social mobility refers to movement, either upward or downward between higher or lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively full-time, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower.”

### 3. CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The idea of social mobility was first introduced by P.A. Sorokin in his book “Social and Cultural Mobility,”. He asserts that neither a fully open society (such as the class system) nor a fully closed society exists (like the caste system in India) (Ritterman Weintraub, M. L., Fernald, L. C., Adler, N., Bertozzi, S., & Syme, S. L. 2015). He goes on to say that different cultures (societies) have different attitudes on social mobility and that the rate of change can fluctuate constantly. The level of modernism in society affects how quickly things change. This change can take place over a period of time. The individual or group move from one social status to another because of various social interaction. It is the change of people’s class or social hierarchical position within the social structure. The main indicator of social mobility is occupational change and the main means of this mobility is education or technological change. For example, the son of a clerk becomes a doctor, and the son of a rickshaw puller becomes a lawyer. Every time, a shift in the relationship between a father and son gives the latter more opportunities to enjoy life.

### 4. TYPES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

According to Sorokin, there are two kinds of social mobility namely;

- 1) Horizontal Social Mobility
- 2) Vertical Social Mobility

#### 4.1 Horizontal Social Mobility

Horizontal social mobility means the movement of an individual from one occupation or position to another occupation or position of equal status within the same social stratum. In this social mobility, the position of an individual may change, but his salary,

grade, honour, and prestige remain the same. For example, when a professor leaves a college job and takes the same job in another college near his home. In this example, the social status of the professor remains the same but his place of work is changed.

Sorokin mentioned the following types of horizontal social mobility;

- **Occupational Mobility-** Shift from one occupation to another within the same social stratum.
- **Party Mobility-** Resigning from one political party and joining another.
- **Inter-Religious Mobility-** Conversion from one religion to another.
- **Family and kinship Mobility-** Marriage or remarriage, divorce.
- **International Mobility-** Migrate from underdeveloped countries to developed countries for better living conditions.
- **Territorial Mobility-** Leaving one territory for another territory for better living conditions.

#### 4.2 Vertical Social Mobility

Vertical social mobility occurs when an individual or group achieve higher social status and prestige to lower and lower to higher social status and prestige. According to Sorokin, “By vertical mobility. I mean the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or social object) from one social stratum to another”.

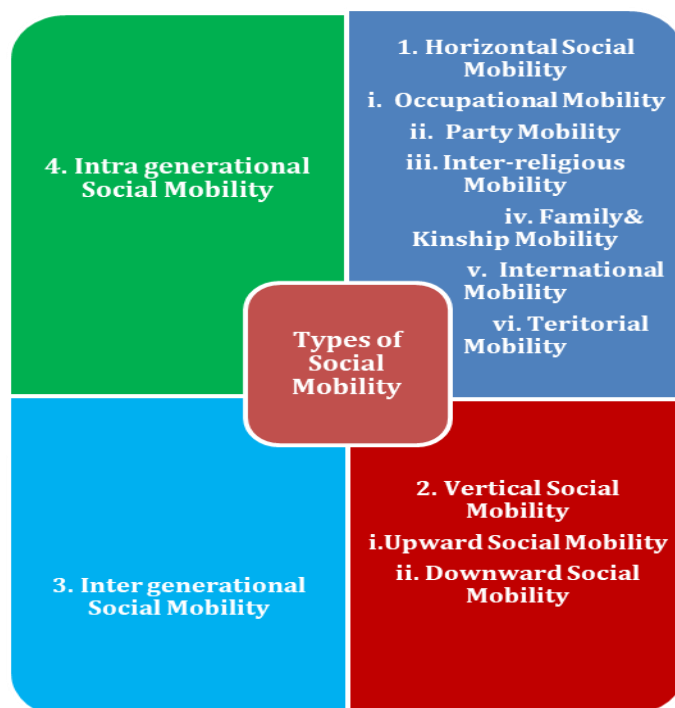


Figure 1 Types of Social Mobility

Sorokin has discussed two types of vertical social mobility;

**(i) Upward Vertical Social Mobility (Ascending Mobility)** - It refers to the movement of an individual or groups of individuals from lower to higher social position or status. Ascending mobility means the shift of persons from lower status and prestige to higher status and prestige. For example, a farmer's son becomes a doctor, promotion from a clerk to an officer.

**(ii) Downward Vertical Social Mobility (Descending Mobility)** - It refers to the movement of an individual or groups of individuals from a higher social position, prestige and status to a lower position, prestige or status. For example, the child of a doctor or professor is unable to work as a clerk.

Besides these above two types of social mobility there are two other types of social mobility namely;

### (i) Inter-generational Social Mobility

Intergenerational social mobility involves a change in status from one generation to another. This status change of a family member goes beyond the parent's generation to the child's generation. The change in status occurs in such social mobility when a child becomes an adult, the beginning of such social mobility occurs within the family of the parents, but in adulthood, the related person joins the status change. The quality of this mobility can be understood from one generation to another to what extent the existing anomalies exist in society. For example, a farm labourer's son gets the post of village panchayat chief (Pradhan).

### (ii) Intra-generational Social Mobility

If mobility occurs in the personal life of a person during his lifetime, it is considered intergenerational social mobility. It is the change in the corresponding social degradation level or status within a person's lifetime. In the words of sociologists R.C. Wallace and W.D. Wallace, "It is a change in social status which occurs within a person's adult career". For example, a school teacher becomes a college professor or a factory worker becomes an assistant factory manager.

## 5. FACTORS AFFECTING SOCIAL MOBILITY

**1. Structure of Society:** Opportunity structure or structure of society powerfully affects social mobility. There are two kinds of society i. e. closed society and open society. Closed societies do not provide opportunities for horizontal and vertical mobility. On the other

side, open societies provide various opportunities and freedom for both kinds of vertical and horizontal mobility.

- 2. Demographic Process:** Demographic factors greatly promoted social mobility. It is intimately related to population density, size, and diffusion. People migrated towards the congenial atmosphere where the job opportunities and standard of living are high.
- 3. Economic Prosperity:** According to economic prosperity, there are three parts of society as- Upper class, Middle class and Lower class. Among them, the upper class receive greater respect, honour and prestige. Each class in our society endeavours to earn more and more money for achieving higher status and prestige. So, it is clear that economic prosperity influences social mobility.
- 4. Level of Ambition:** People's level of ambitions greatly influences social mobility. When the level of ambitions of people is high, moves towards such places where job opportunity and standard of living is high.



**Figure 2** Factors Affecting Social Mobility

- 5. Occupational Prestige:** Occupational prestige also accelerates social mobility. Some occupations have greater social status and prestige than others. Hence, lower-status people try to achieve higher prestigious jobs and get higher social status and prestige.
- 6. Education:** In promoting social mobility education play a dominant role. The person who is receiving higher education achieves higher and higher social mobility.
- 7. Administration:** The administration set-up of a country and social mobility is intimately connected to each other. In comparison to other forms of administrative systems, a democratic society offers greater prospects for

social mobility. Democratic administration actively encourages social mobility.

### 8. Aspirational Level

The level of aspiration of people is directly connected to social mobility. High-ambitious people are inspired to reach higher positions of status, which fosters social mobility.

## 6. IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON FOSTERING SOCIAL MOBILITY

Education fulfils the needs of society and propagates such ideas which promote social mobility in all fields of life (Saxena, S. N.R. 2015).

In light of social mobility, we are discussing below the impact of education on social mobility (Singh, A., Forcina, A., & Muniyoor, K. 2021).

1. Without education social mobility is not possible. Everything we do is dependent on education because education makes the individual socially conscious and thereby social mobility occurs.
2. Education tries to develop the ability and capacity in the individual to gain higher statuses, and positions of prestige and promotes effective social mobility.
3. It is through education that people's attitudes, mindsets and lifestyles are changed, which leads to social mobility.
4. Education destroys social strictness, social prejudices, social disharmony, etc., besides, education helps in increasing social unrest by removing the birth and caste prejudices and rigid social structure of the society.
5. Education is the driving force of social upheaval. Education can change a person's behaviour, customs, interrelationships and lifestyle, resulting in social upheaval.
6. Education tends to overcome various obstacles in the country and lead to progress, thereby increasing social mobility among the people.
7. Only education increases social mobility by changing society's ideals, norms, values etc.
8. Education is a social process. Society has been patronizing education for its needs. The role of education is immense in socializing the individual. As a result of which social mobility develops among individuals.
9. Education helps the individual to develop various skills to achieve high social, manhood status and properly manage social mobility.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The outstanding role of education in improving the position and status of individuals in society is

undeniable. It is only through education that one can easily gain respect and influence in the society. This is why education is considered an important ladder of social mobility. Education and social mobility are closely related to each other. Education is capable to promote the growth and remove the backwardness of a country. It also gives an impetus to the growth of social mobility in a normal and natural way. Hence, education is liable to achieve a balance between upward and downward social mobility.

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