

Research Article

Intergenerational Occupational Mobility of Scheduled Caste: A Micro Level Study

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ABSTRACT

Occupational mobility actually modifies the real labour income and in-turn changes the socio-economic profile of an individual or a family. The occupational mobility may act as a catalyst in case of Scheduled Castes (SCs) upliftment because they are subjugated since time immemorial. They are still engaged in low-ranked fixed occupations. If they are able to show intergenerational upward occupational mobility then their social and economic status has may improve over the period of time. But such studies on occupational mobility of SCs' population are insufficient in numbers and quality. Thus, in this work, an attempt is made to study occupational mobility and immobility of SC population. There is necessity to have regional analysis of occupational mobility for rational planning and legitimate minimisation of regional disparities to foster a healthy and balanced development. The empirical data on the problems and questions were collected through the direct questionnaire method from the respondents of Askaranpur Maghrohani village and were arranged in tabular form after necessary calculations and processing. From the results of the study, it is clear that SC people of Askaranpur Maghrohani village manifests positive sign of intergenerational occupational mobility but at a slow rate. This context will be examined in the detailed paper.

Keywords: Occupational mobility, Scheduled caste workers, Micro level study

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental issue that can be studied about any society is its' transformation from one generation to another. Do children live in a world that is different from the one in which their parents lived? Are they better educated? Are they involved in better occupation? Does this process of transformation provide equal chance to everyone?

However, quite a few works have focused on the questions mentioned above. In recent years, issues like discrimination specifically caste discrimination and social exclusion have been discussed extensively in India. However, while the linkages between caste and society have been studied widely, the interface between caste and economy requires little more attention. The economic interpretation of the caste system is fixed economic and social right to each individual. According to Ambedkar (1936) unlike many other societies, the Hindu social order governed by the caste system does not recognise an individual and his distinctiveness as the centre of social purpose. The empirical studies on market discrimination will give more visibility to research on discrimination. The standard economic theory of discrimination implies that market discrimination will generate consequences that adversely affect overall economic efficiency and lower economic growth. Market discrimination in terms of immobility will lead to failure of the market mechanism, which in turn induces inefficiency due to less-than-optimal allocation of labour and other factors among firms. Thus, factor immobility brings gross inefficiency in resource allocation and economic outcome (Ambedka, 1987).

The economic outcomes occupation occupies the central role, as occupation determines the income, and income determines the purchasing capacity and expenditure pattern of an individual or a family. Occupation which affect our belief, values and preferences, and thereby our choice is a vital factor for the economic progress of any community (Henreich *et al.*, 2004). Thus occupation is one of the best indicators of class, because people tend to agree on the relative prestige they attach to similar jobs (Karade, 2009). Those at or near the top rung of the prestige ladder usually have the highest income, the best education and the most of the power. According to Giddens (2009), a famous sociologist, occupation is the most critical factor in an individual's social standing, life chances and level of material comfort. Individuals in the same occupation tend to experience similar degrees of social advantage or disadvantage, maintain comparable lifestyles and share similar opportunities in life (Giddens, 2009). The people try to shift from one to another job depending upon their circumstances and this shifting of jobs is called occupational mobility. Occupational mobility is defined as the percentage of currently employed individuals who report a current occupation different from their most recent previous report of an occupation, as explained by Kambourov and Manovskii (2004) in their study. The sociologist conceived that, as the movement from one occupational category to another, the person's category consists with the social and cultural prestige.

A micro level study on occupational mobility of scheduled caste (SC) is done by Wilson (2004). In his study, he has analysed the effect of the change of agricultural techniques, poverty, outmigration and many other factors on the occupational mobility of SC population of two selected villages. He found that pastoralist, leather work and basket

making are the main occupations of SC in selected villages of Madhya Pradesh. Some of the caste occupations are directly related to animals but the caste occupation related to dead animals is no longer officially practiced. This is a sign of upward economic mobility, indicating that community members are not forced to do ritually impure acts. Some of the affluent SC households have secured their livelihood through the land ceiling act and investment in agriculture as a result of outmigration.

Caste-wise occupational mobility in India has been studied by Majumder (2010). In his work, he found that only few castes (*Ahirwar*, *Chadhar*) among the SC have shown upward occupational mobility while other few castes of SC like *Bunkar* and *Basod* has shown marginal downward mobility. Jhiliam and Majumder (2010), in their work, have observed that general castes are showing vertical occupational mobility, whereas, excluded castes like [other backward castes (OBCs), SCs and scheduled tribes (STs)] are showing much of their occupational mobility in lateral direction. However, Motiram and Singh (2012), in their work, have used both transitional matrix and mobility measures and found that SC and ST shows higher persistence over the generations in the lower order occupations than non-SC and STs and they are showing sometimes downward occupational mobility. Hnatkowska *et al.* (2011) have used NSSO data in their study and concluded that historically disadvantaged SC and ST are showing low social and economic mobility.

The continued association of SC people with their traditional unclean occupation is responsible for their sluggish occupational mobility and in turn for their slow socio-economic growth. If they will be able to show intergenerational upward occupational mobility then their social and economic status will surely be improved. But such studies on occupational mobility of SC population are meagre. So in this study, the occupational mobility of SC population is dealt at a village level. The first and most important reason for the selection of this village is that the selected village (Askaranpur Maghrohani) is SC dominated village which is located in one of the socio-economically backward district, that is, Kaushambi district in Uttar Pradesh. In this study, researcher will do a comparative study of the occupations of different generations of SC population of Askaranpur Maghrohani village, and will try to identify the factor responsible for occupational upgradation and downgradation. This study groves the geographical literature about the meagre availability of studies on occupational mobility of SC population as their occupational mobility. This can aid policy makers and planners to give insights into the constraints that limit the SC to move from low skilled/menial occupation to a better occupation. Thus, it can be safely said that this study will surely be helpful in improving the socio-economic status of this downtrodden segment section of the Indian society who accounts around 16% of the total population of India's 21% population of Uttar Pradesh and only 1% population of the selected village Askaranpur Maghrohani.

OBJECTIVES

To meet the current problem, following objectives are formulated.

- i. To study the intergenerational occupational mobility among the SC population of Askaranpur Magrohani village.
- ii. To find out various determinants of intergenerational occupational mobility of SC population in Askaranpur Magrohani Village.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

This study is based on the primary data, generated by comprehensive survey of SC population in the Askaranpur Magrohani Village of Kaushambi district carried out during April 2017. The data are collected through the direct questionnaire method in which head of the household is interviewed to tell the information of other family members along with his own information. This rural survey consists of 25% of households of SC population in the village. The data regarding the occupational characteristic of four generations of SC population are obtained to find out the intergenerational occupational mobility. In the intergenerational occupational mobility, the occupational structure of total workers of a generation is compared with the occupational structure of the workers of its previous generation and finally its percentage is calculated. Apart from it data regarding the demographic and socio-economic characteristics are also obtained through this household survey.

STUDY AREA

Askaranpur Magrohani is a SC dominated village located in the southern part of Sirathu block of Kaushambi district. The village is economically and politically isolated from the nearest major commercial centre, that is, Allahabad. It is a satellite village of a small town (Manjhanpur). The household of the village are mostly engaged in subsistence farming and local wage labour as their primary source of income. The household population of SC accounts for 70% of its total population. However, other 28% population is contributed by Hindu general (8%) and Hindu OBC (20%) and rest of the 2% population is contributed by Muslims.

DISCUSSION

Intergenerational Occupational Mobility of SC Population in Askaranpur Magrohani Village

In intergenerational occupational mobility, the worker changes their occupation compared with the occupation of their parents (Miller, 1960). In the intergenerational occupational

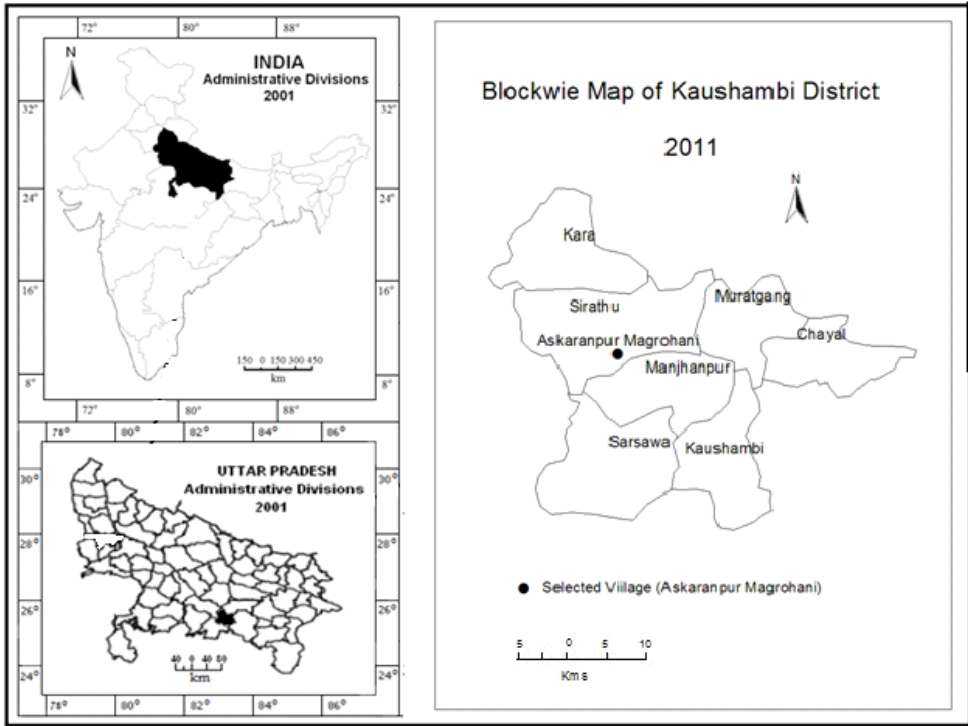


Figure 1: Location Map of Study Area

mobility, it should be examined whether father influences occupational position of the son/daughter.

From the calculation of surveyed data, it is clear that no occupational mobility is found in second generation of SC population of Askaranpur Magrohani village. From Table 1, it is clear that in the first generation of SC population only 5% males were cultivators whereas no female of this generation was falling in this category. Most of the SC people whether the male or the female are working as agricultural labourer. Their share is 25 for male and 20 for female of this first generation. Apart from that, 2% among the males and 1% among the females are working as labourers in the construction work. However, only 4% among the males and 2% females of this generation are involved in low-ranked service sector like sweeper, gardener, dyers, etc. In the low-ranked government sector only 1% among the male is absorbed but no female lies at this rung.

Generation I Grand Father and Grand Mother, Generation II Father and Mother Generation III Son and Daughter. Generation IV (not included here as they are not in the age of working population) Grand Son and Grand Daughter.

Table 1: Inter-Generational Occupational Mobility of SC Population in Askaranpur Magrohani Village of Kaushambi District, Uttar Pradesh, 2017

Gender	Cultivators	Agri Lab	Const Lab	Contractor	Service providers (Gardeners, dyers, Sweepers)	Low-ranked Govt. sector
I Generation						
Male	5	25	2	x	4	1
Female	x	20	1	x	2	x
Total	3	22	1.5	x	3	0.5
II Generation						
Male	4	20	5	1	4	2
Female	0.5	20	4	x	2	x
Total	2.5	19.5	4.5	0.5	3	1
III Generation						
Male	4	20	7	2	4	1
Female	x	18	5	x	2	x
Total	2	19	6	1	3	0.5

Source: Based on calculation of the data generated by field survey conducted by researcher

In the second generation, the job profile of the SC shows only a little upgradation. A significant per cent of people have shifted from agriculture sector to construction sector (3.5%) and to service sector (0.5%). The in-depth analysis of this table shows that 1% loss and 0.5% gain of cultivators is observed among the SC males and females of the second generation from its previous generation. From the data (Table 1), it is clear that 5% male workers have slipped from the category of agricultural labourer; whereas, the percentage of female workers in this sector remains the same. However, 3% addition is observed in the category of construction labourers for both males and females. One percent male workers have occupied a new category, that is, contractor with no female in this category. In the low-ranked government sector 1% males are added with no females in this group.

From the results it is clear that in the third generation the proportion of cultivators remains the same for male and female population. However, 2% of female workers have slipped from the category of agricultural labourer with no change in the proportion of male population in this group. In the construction sector 2% and 1% gain is observed in the category of male and female construction labourers and 1% gain in the category of male contractor. It is also visible from the table 1 that no change is observed in the category of service providers or low-ranked government sector in the third generation from its previous generation.

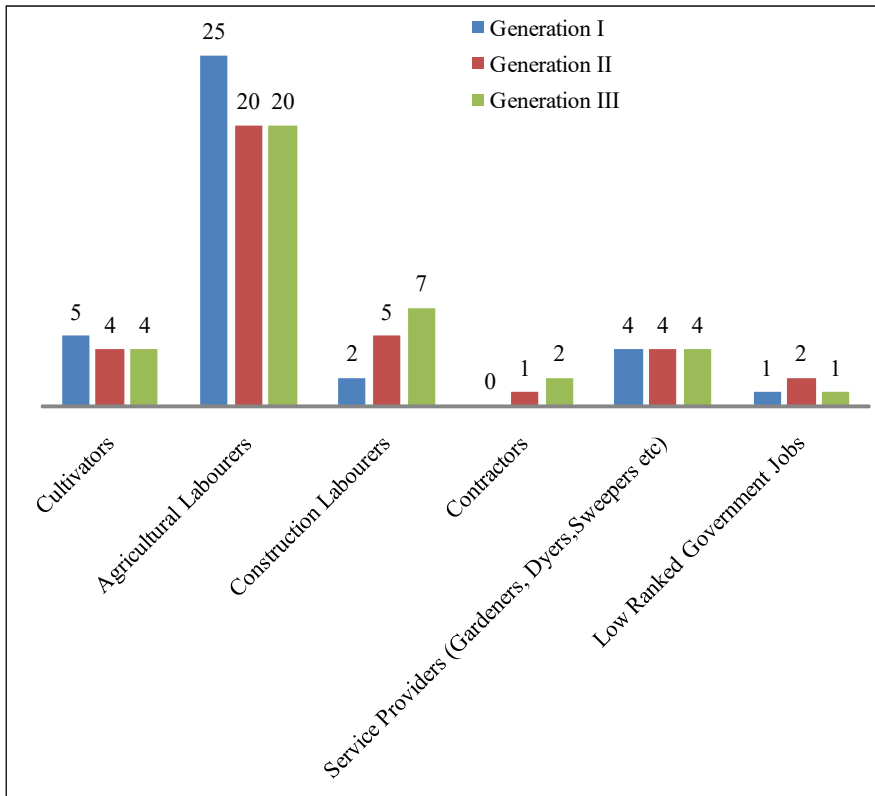


Figure 2: Intergenerational Occupational Mobility among the SC Male Population, Askaranpur Magrohani Village, 2017

The shift of a small proportion of SC workers from agricultural sector to construction sector and service sector in the second and third generation (Figures 2 and 3) reflects the upward intergenerational occupational mobility among the SC population of Askaranpur Magrohani village of Sirathu block of Kaushambi District.

Determinant of Occupational Mobility

Demographic Determinants

Gender. It is clear from the household survey of SC of Askaranpur Magrohani village that 80% of the total young SC males have migrated either to other part of the same city (Manjhanpur Kaushambi city) or other neighbouring cities like (Allahabad) as they are working as labourers or they got the service of sweeper in government institution or private institutions. It is also clear from the household survey of SC of Askaranpur Magrohani village that 40% of the SC females have migrated among which 35% accompanied their husbands as non-workers and 5% migrated alone as they are aged

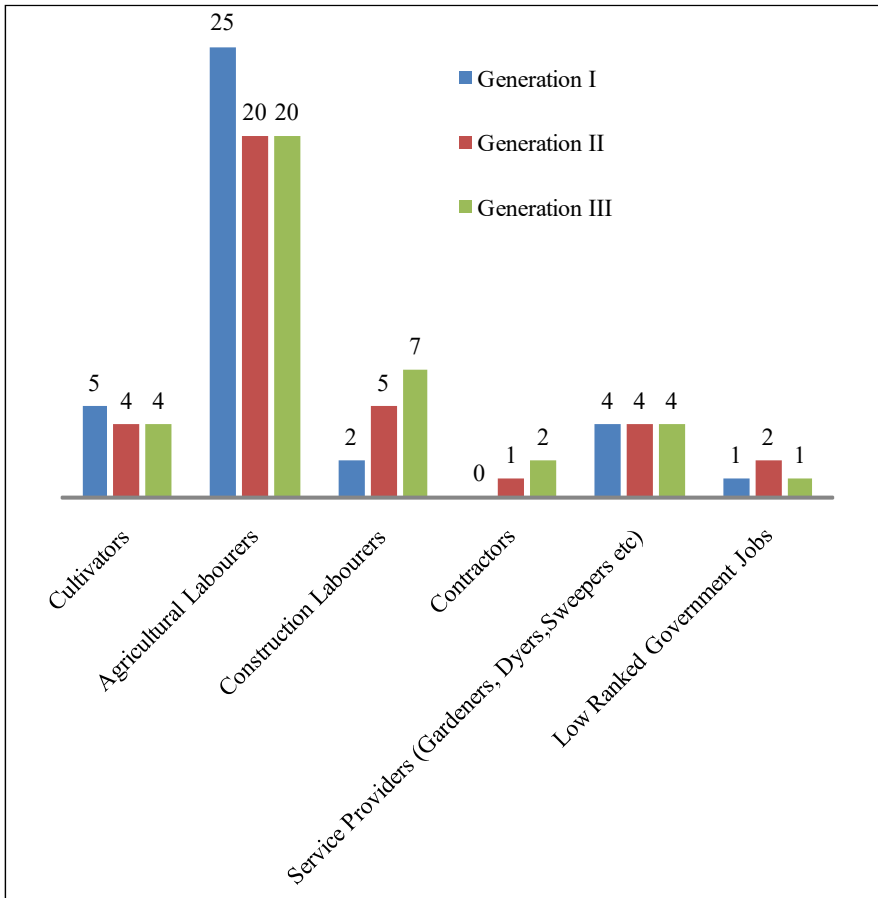


Figure 3: Intergenerational Occupational Mobility among the SC Females Population, Askaranpur Magrohani Village, 2017

females and they don't have any other member in the family to look after them in the village.

Economic Determinants

Change in the Economy and Polity. Traditionally, village economies have been shielded from fluctuations in external markets and therefore instability is an inevitable result of agrarian life in an unfavourable climate, with sporadic rainfall and steady increases in population size relative to arable land. The land reform has allocated only a very small patch of agricultural land to the SC population of the Askaranpur Magrohani village on which they are living. Diversification is an important analytical tool to monitor livelihood and socio-economic mobility and in turn occupational dynamism. That is why majority

of them are rearing cattle and few of them are also having the horse cart to carry freight. Households rarely drop an activity completely, but will gradually take up new activities or slowly reduce involvement in other activities in response to short-term shocks or longer-term trends. Livelihood changes evolve slowly over time. Increased rate of cattle rearing is often a response to a short-term shock. However, such responses often influence future behaviour over a long period of time, as households become accustomed to earn from the additional source (Wilson, 2004).

Plate 1: Showing the Raring of Horse for Carrying the Freight



Plate 2: Showing the SC Labourer Collecting Mahua Fruit for Sale as an Additional Source of Income



Level of Income. It is the level of income that largely determines the occupational mobility. The main target of occupational shift of most of the people is a better salary. The migrated adult males are earning more in the cities, where they are working as labourers, sweeper or dyers.

Landownership. Land ownership positively influences the upward mobility, though at a decreasing rate. This seems to indicate the importance of household asset position to exhibit mobility gains over time, with the implication that at the higher end of the land ownership spectrum, individuals are likely to stay in agriculture and exhibit immobility over time or downgrade to agriculture from higher occupational category (Carletto and Kilic, 2009). In case of SC people of Askaranpur Magrohani village they do not possess sufficient agricultural land. They only got small patches of agricultural land (less than 1 *Bigah*) through the land ceiling act of government.

Social Determinants

Level of Literacy and Education. It is found that level of education and nature of employment are closely associated (Chandna, 1989). Education is a vital factor in the social transformation of a society and its economic amelioration (Sachchidananda, 1977). It is clear from the researches that education helps to increase the probability of occupational upgrading. Those who have high education may find better occupational opportunities at the destination, simply because they meet skill and educational requirements of variety of jobs. Low education of SC people augmented with poverty and traditional social system, force them to continue their traditional employment from the childhood (Tripathi and Tiwari, 1991). As far as the education of the adult SC population of Askaranpur Magrohani is concerned, it is negligible and only 10% of the total adult population is just primary literate.

General Health Conditions and Longevity. General standard of health of the people, being an index of their vitality, not only influences the participation rate of population in economic activities but also affects the possibility of occupational change up to limited extent. It is expected that social groups with good general health conditions show a higher participation rate than a social group with poor health conditions (Liang and Lu, 2014). From the household survey it has been observed that one boy from the SC is physically challenged in village one is having some neurological disorder, 2 males are suffering from chronic respiratory disorder; and one female is having some liver problem. These poor SC people generally borrow money on interest from rich class, which further entangles them in the web of poverty.

Social Networking. A strengthening of caste based networks of scheduled could have been at play. The caste based networks can often form quickly amongst the more

disadvantaged groups in order to help them escape low-skill occupation traps (Munshi, 2011). It is visible from the allotment of tenders to the three contractors within the same *Pasi* family of the selected village as reported by other SC villagers during the survey.

CONCLUSION

In India, socio-economic discrimination has received little attention in the area of social sciences. The empirical evidences presented in this article contends that occupational distribution, depending upon the caste is not the problem of past or the incidental force creating inequality, but it is an active agent in widening the gap between those at the top and those at the bottom of Indian Society.

The results confirm that considerable intergenerational occupational persistence across all occupational categories. The father's category is the most likely one that a son could find himself for the SCs population of Askaranpur Maghrohani village. The results also points that SCs are occupying the satisfactory position in economic and social life. The shift of a small proportion of SC workers from agricultural sector to construction sector and service sector in the second and third generation (Figures 2 and 3) reflects the upward intergenerational occupational mobility among the SC population of Askaranpur Magrohani village of Sirathu block of Kaushambi District.

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