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Social Mobility in a Town

An Intergenerational Analysis

S P Jain

Data on social mobility in a middle-sized town community show a high rate of movement between the subject's and his father's generations than between the subject's father's and his grandfather's generations.

Religion-wise, the Muslims who constitute the majority population of the town show a higher rate of mobility over the three generations than the Hindus who are in a minority. The trend of social mobility among Muslims approximates to that of the town community.

It is concluded that, if a town community is divided into majority and minority on the basis of religious differentiation, the majority group is likely to monopolise the channels of social mobility.

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IN India's caste-structured society, the people had little scope for movement from their predetermined status.¹ With industrialisation, modernising forces tended to accelerate the movement of people from one status to another.² Social mobility began to increase, keeping pace with population, urbanisation and secular education. The introduction of the democratic form of government with no special privileges accorded to any caste or creed, and the economic changes that followed, have favoured the trend still further. Studies on the subject have revealed a higher rate of occupational mobility. For example, the studies conducted by Gist³ and Driver⁴ show that intergenerational occupational mobility is frequent. They have also concluded that, both in rural and urban areas, social mobility is taking place but that it is generally restricted to occupations of comparable rank. Few studies, however, have attempted to examine the extent of mobility in terms of the occupational status of an individual in a given social structure.

It is from this standpoint that the present paper attempts to analyse the trend of intergenerational mobility in a middle-sized town of Uttar Pradesh. Broadly, it is intended to study the trend in social mobility among Hindus and Muslims who constitute the minority and majority, respectively, in the town. An attempt is also made to see the extent to which the trends in social mobility of the two religious groups correspond to the trend for the town as a whole. The objective is not to obtain quantitative measurement of social mobility, but to determine the trend and direction. Since the present

study emphasises a particular time span, no attention has been given to the age factor of individuals. The definition of social mobility accepted here is, "a change in the hierarchical structure of a society by virtue of change in the social status of individual members, either in their own life-time or between the generations within a single line of lineal succession".⁵

FIELD OF STUDY

The community selected for study is a middle-sized town (Seohara) in North India. Its 19,000 population (1961 Census) is made up of two religious groups, Hindus (38 per cent) and Muslims (62 per cent). The majority of both religious groups are engaged in agriculture or allied occupations, the economy being predominantly agricultural.⁶

For the collection of data, a sample of 236 household heads — whether men or women — was drawn by the method of systematic sampling from

the household list of the town. However, the framework of the present inquiry was prepared taking into consideration the position of the subject at the time of the investigation (1962) and the last position of the subject's father and grandfather (in the case of women respondents, the last position of their fathers-in-law or grandfathers-in-law has been taken into consideration). The sample was arranged in two ascending intergenerational pairs: (a) subject's present status and his father's final status and (b) subject's father's final status and subject's grandfather's final status. As the data with regard to the final status of the subject's father's father, i.e. grandfather, could not be obtained, the following sample, as given in Table 1, has been adopted.

In this study, occupation was accepted as the main basis of class status, since identification of social class on the basis of the prestige of occupation is more objective and useful. Thus the four classes employed in this study are

TABLE 1: SAMPLE OF HINDU AND MUSLIM SUBJECTS, SUBJECTS' FATHERS AND SUBJECTS' GRANDFATHERS

Subject's Category	Number of Subjects	Grandfather's, Father's or Subject's Status Not Known	Number of Subjects Included in the Analysis
Hindus			
Subjects	81	3	78
Subject's Father	81	6	75
Subject's Grandfather	81	6	75
Total	243	15	228
Muslims			
Subjects	155	7	148
Subject's Father	155	7	148
Subject's Grandfather	155	23	132
Total	465	37	428

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE SUBJECTS AND THEIR FATHERS AMONG FOUR OCCUPATIONAL STATUSES

		Subject's Status (1962)				Total
		I	II	III	IV	
Subjects' fathers' last status	I	69.6	11.4	0.0	19.0	100
		88.7	29.0	0.0	16.4	(79)
	II	8.3	70.8	8.3	12.5	100
		3.2	55.0	4.8	3.3	(24)
	III	7.7	5.1	82.0	5.1	100
	4.8	6.4	76.2	2.2	(39)	
IV	2.4	3.6	9.0	84.5	100	
	3.2	9.7	19.0	78.0	(84)	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
	(62)	(31)	(42)	(91)	(226)	

based on the prestige criterion of occupations.⁷

The class positions of the individuals in the different periods have been presented in the following Tables. The procedure used is similar to that used in other important studies,⁸ viz, consideration of the diagonal cells of the Table, where two class positions coincide.

The data are given in percentages except the total of each marginal column which represents actual frequencies. For subjects who were in a particular class and remained in the same class only the percentages were given. The percentages provided by vertical columns (in the bottom left hand corner in each cell) relate to the previous status of the subjects in the given class. On the other hand, horizontal rows show the percentages for the subjects who were in any class and also found in the same class.

In accordance with the objectives of this paper, an analysis of social mobility in the entire community will be first undertaken. This will be followed by an analysis of social mobility among the Hindus and Muslims separately. It may be mentioned, however, that,

TABLE 3: SUBJECTS WHOSE STATUS IS THE SAME AS, OR DIFFERENT FROM THEIR FATHERS

Father's Status	Same	Different	Total	Percentage of the Same to the Total
I	55	24	79	69.6
II	17	7	24	70.8
III	32	7	39	82.0
IV	71	13	84	84.5
Total	175	51	226	77.4

for analytical purposes, the two religious groups have been treated as homogeneous.

SUBJECTS AND THEIR FATHERS

Table 2 presents the data with regard to this pair of generations. The highest percentage (88.7 per cent) of subjects who were in their fathers' status is in Class I. This is followed by Class IV, III and II where such subjects constitute 78, 76.2 and 55 per cent, respectively. The lowest percentage for Class II indicates that there must be a higher degree of movement from this class. On the other hand, 84.5 per cent of the subjects who were found in a particular class and their fathers were

also in the same class are found in Class IV. In the remaining classes the representation of such persons runs as 82 per cent in Class III, 70.8 per cent in Class II and 69.6 per cent in Class I. The minimum percentage in Class I shows that movement from this class has been difficult.

It may be further noticed from Table 3 that as many as 77.4 per cent subjects in the town have remained in their fathers' status while 22.6 per cent have moved upwards or downwards. Thus the movement from one class to another has been fairly high in this pair of generations.

It is apparent from Table 4 that subjects' fathers who were in their fathers' class are in the largest percentage

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECT'S FATHER'S LAST STATUS AND GRANDFATHER'S LAST STATUS

		I	II	III	IV	Total
Subject's grand-father's last status	I	86.6	2.7	2.7	8.0	100
		94.2	12.5	5.1	7.0	(75)
	II	18.0	82.0	0.0	0.0	100
		4.3	87.5	0.0	0.0	(17)
	III	0.0	0.0	87.1	1.5	100
	0.0	0.0	97.1	2.9	(35)	
IV	1.2	0.0	3.8	95.0	100	
	1.5	0.0	7.8	91.5	(80)	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		
	(69)	(16)	(39)	(83)	(207)	

(94.2) in Class I. While the representation of such cases in other classes runs as 91.6 per cent in Class IV, 87.5 per cent in Class II, and 87.1 per cent in Class III. It is obvious from the figures that movement from Class II and Class III, has been relatively higher. Conversely, subjects' fathers who were in any particular class and their fathers were also in the same class are found in the largest percentage (97.1) in Class III. Then come Classes IV, I and II where they constitute 95 per cent, 86.6 per cent and 82 per cent, respectively.

It may be noted from Table 5 that as many as 91.3 per cent of subjects' fathers have remained in the class position of their fathers. As against this only 8.7 per cent have moved up or down.

Further compilation of data as given in Table 6 shows the number and proportions of individuals in separate classes over three generations. It indicates that there is a decrease in the proportions from G₃ to G₁ in Class I, while in Class II there is a continuous increase from G₃ to G₂. A somewhat similar pattern of continuous increase is observed in Class III. As regards Class IV, first, there is a slight decrease from G₃ to G₂ and then a slight increase over G₁.

TABLE 5: STATUS OF SUBJECTS' FATHERS IN RELATION TO THAT OF THEIR FATHERS

Subject's Grandfather's Status	Same	Different	Total	Percentage of Same to the Total
I	65	10	75	86.7
II	14	3	17	82.4
III	34	1	35	97.0
IV	76	4	80	95.0
Total	189	18	207	91.3

Having studied the trend of social mobility over three generations in the town as a whole we may now turn to a study of social mobility among the Hindus and Muslims separately.

HINDU SUBJECTS AND THEIR FATHERS

It may be noted from Table 7 that the largest percentage (88.8) in fathers' status is in Class IV. Next to this are Classes I, II and III where such subjects constitute 88, 72 and 70.6 per cent respectively. The lowest percentage in Class III shows a higher degree of movement from it. On the other hand, the subjects who are in a particular class and whose fathers were also in the same class are found in the highest number in Class II (86.6 per cent) and Class III (85.8 per cent). The representation of such subjects in

Classes I and IV is by and large equal, 75 per cent, and 73.9 per cent, respectively. The lowest percentage in Class IV indicates that movement was difficult for anyone in this class.

Analysis of Table 8, which presents number of subjects who have remained in their fathers' status and those who have deviated shows that as many as 80.8 per cent subjects are in their fathers' grade while only 19.2 per cent have moved up or down.

It is evident from Table 10 that the maximum percentage (89) of those who have remained in their fathers' status is to be found in Class I. This is followed by Classes III and IV, constituting 80 and 74 per cent, respectively, of such subjects. The lowest percentage (30.8) is in Class II, indicating a high degree of movement. The largest

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS AMONG FOUR STATUS CATEGORIES OVER THREE GENERATIONS

Status Category	Number of Individuals			Total	Percentages of Total		
	G ₃	G ₂	G ₁		G ₃	G ₂	G ₁
I	75	79	66	220	36.0	35.0	29.0
II	17	24	33	74	8.0	10.0	14.0
III	35	39	41	115	17.0	17.0	18.0
IV	80	84	91	225	39.0	38.0	39.0
Total	207	226	231	634	100.0	100.0	100.0

G₃ Grandfather's Generation, G₂ Father's Generation, G₁ Subject's Generation

TABLE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF THE HINDU SAMPLE ACCORDING TO SUBJECTS AND SUBJECT'S FATHER'S LAST STATUS

		Occupational Status of Subjects (1962)				Total
		I	II	III	IV	
Last occupational status of subjects' fathers	I	75.0	15.0	0.0	10.0	100
	II	88.2	16.6	0.0	8.4	(20)
	III	6.7	86.6	6.7	0.0	100
	IV	6.4	72.2	6.0	0.0	(15)
	Total	0.0	7.1	85.8	7.1	100
	I	0.0	5.6	70.6	3.8	(14)
	II	3.4	3.4	13.8	73.9	100
	III	6.4	5.6	23.5	88.8	(29)
	Total	100	100	100	100	(78)
		(17)	(18)	(17)	(26)	(78)

TABLE 8: HINDU SUBJECTS WHOSE STATUS IS THE SAME AS, OR DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THEIR FATHERS

Occupational Class of Subjects	Same	Different	Total	Percentages of Same to Total
I	15	6	20	75.0
II	13	2	15	86.6
III	12	2	14	85.8
IV	23	6	29	79.3
Total	63	15	78	80.8

percentage (87.6 per cent) of those who were in a particular class, and whose fathers were also in the same class, is in Class IV. Then comes Class III where the representation of such persons is 80 per cent, while in Class I such persons constitute only 69 per cent. The lowest number of such persons is found in Class II (44.4 per cent). It shows that movement from this class has been difficult.

An examination of data given in Table 9 indicates that as many as 75.7 per cent of Muslim subjects have remained in the class positions of their fathers while the remaining 24.3 per cent subjects have moved up or down.

In this pair of generations among Hindus, mobility does not show any occurrence in any of the classes. This is evident from the figures presented in Table 11. There has been no deviation between the status of subjects' father and grandfather in Classes III and

IV. As regards Classes I and II, 86.7 per cent and 84.6 per cent, respectively, of the subjects' fathers have remained in the status of their fathers. Similarly, 88.2 per cent and 84.6 per cent of the subjects' fathers, who were in a particular status and whose fathers were also found in the same status are in Classes I and II, respectively. In Classes III and IV no change is noticeable. Thus there is slight mobility in Classes I and II but no mobility in Classes III and IV.

A probe into Table 12 shows that as many as 94.5 per cent of the subjects' fathers have not deviated from their fathers' status. Only 5.5 per cent have moved from their positions.

MUSLIM SUBJECTS' FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS

Among Muslims, all the subjects' fathers have remained in their fathers'

status in Class II, followed by Class I (96.2 per cent), Class IV (86.6 per cent) and Class III (80 per cent). On the other hand, the highest percentage of subjects' fathers who were in a particular class and whose fathers were also in a similar class is to be found in Class III (95.2 per cent). In the immediate neighbourhood is Class IV where the representation of such cases is 92 per cent, while in Classes I and II such persons constitute 86.3 per cent and 75 per cent, respectively (see Table 13). Apparently, movement has taken place in every class in this pair of generations.

It is apparent from Table 14 that as many as 89.4 per cent of the subjects' fathers have not deviated from their fathers' status while only 10.6 per cent moved up or down.

Data have been compiled in Table 15 to show the number and proportions of individuals in different occupational classes as in the three generations among Hindus and Muslims. It is apparent from the Table that among Hindus the proportions in each category among the three generations fluctuate very little. However, three significant features are observed: (a) there is a continuous, though minor, increase in the proportions of each successive generation in Classes II and III; (b) there is a continuous decline in equal proportions of each successive generation in Class IV; and (c) there is a small increase in proportion from G₃ to G₂. Again, it declines in G₁ in Class I. On the other hand, there is a tendency of decreased proportions in each successive generation in Class I whereas in Class III there is an increase from G₃ to G₂ and again a decrease from G₂ to G₁. However, only in Class II is there a continuous increase, though very small, while in Class III the proportion of individuals in G₃ and G₂ is by and large the same and there is an increase in G₁. There is a tendency for successive

TABLE 9: MUSLIM SUBJECTS WHOSE STATUS IS THE SAME AS, OR DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THEIR FATHERS

Subject's Class	Same	Different	Total	Percentage of Same to the Total
I	40	19	59	67.8
II	4	5	9	44.4
III	20	5	25	80.0
IV	48	7	55	87.6
Total	112	36	148	75.7

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIM SAMPLE ACCORDING TO THE SUBJECT'S FATHER'S STATUS

	Occupational Status of Subject (1962)				Total
	I	II	III	IV	
I	67.8	10.2	0.0	22.0	100
II	80.9	46.2	0.0	20.0	(59)
III	11.1	44.4	11.1	33.3	100
IV	2.2	30.8	4.0	4.5	(9)
III	6.6	7.6	80.0	1.5	100
IV	1.8	1.8	9.0	87.6	(25)
IV	2.2	15.4	16.0	74.0	100
Total	100	100	100	100	(55)
	(45)	(12)	(26)	(65)	(148)

TABLE 11: DISTRIBUTION OF HINDU SUBJECTS' FATHERS' AND GRANDFATHERS' STATUS

	Subject's Father's Last Status				Total	
	I	II	III	IV		
		88.2	11.8	0.0	0.0	100
I	86.7	15.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	(17)
		15.4	84.6	0.0	0.0	100
II	13.3	84.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	(13)
		0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100
III	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	(14)
		0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100
IV	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	(31)
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(75)
	(17)	(13)	(14)	(31)		

TABLE 12: HINDU SUBJECTS' FATHERS WHOSE STATUS IS THE SAME AS, OR DIFFERENT FROM THEIR FATHERS'

Status of Grandfather	Same	Different	Total	Percentage of the Same to the Total
I	15	2	17	88.2
II	11	2	13	84.6
III	14	—	14	100.0
IV	31	—	31	100.0
Total	71	4	75	94.5

decrease in the three generations from G₃ to G₁ in Class IV.

On the other hand, the Muslims show the following broad features: (a) there is a decrease in the proportions of each successive generation in Class I; (b) there is a continuous increase in each successive generation in Class II; (c) the pattern of increase is similar in Classes III and IV; and (d) the variation in the proportions is most marked between G₂ and G₁. Broadly speaking, there is a continuous decrease in the proportions from G₃ to G₁ in Class I and a continuous increase in Class II. These two classes thus exhibit a contrary tendency so far as the variations

in the proportions are concerned. In Class III, first, an increase in proportions from G₃ to G₂ and then decrease in G₁, while in Class IV the proportions in G₃ to G₂ are by and large equal but show an increase in G₁.

It may thus be said that, so far as the two religious groups are concerned movement of status between the subjects' and their fathers' generations is relatively less among Hindus than among Muslims, whereas between the second pair of generations, viz, subjects' fathers, and grandfathers, the rate of movement among the subjects' fathers has been found in higher proportion than among grandfathers. The

rate of movement in the first pair of generations is relatively higher than the second pair.

In the foregoing analysis an attempt has been made to study the extent of social mobility over three generations in a town community. The study of social mobility was made in terms of four classes, identified on the basis of the prestige hierarchy of occupations. An attempt was also made to compare the pattern of intergenerational social mobility in the majority and minority religious groups on the one hand and the town community — inclusive of these two religious groups — on the other. Thus, the main intention was to see if any variation occurs in the two religious groups in relation to the entire town. And, if such a variation occurs, what its causes would be.

The analysis showed that social mobility in the town community has occurred at a higher rate in the pair of subjects' and his father's generations than in the pair of generations of the subject's father and grandfather. Generation-wise, there is a continuous de-

TABLE 13: DISTRIBUTION OF MUSLIM SUBJECTS' FATHERS' AND GRANDFATHERS' STATUS

	Subject's Father's Last Status				Total	
	I	II	III	IV		
		86.3	0.0	3.4	10.3	100
I	96.2	0.0	8.0	11.5	0.0	(58)
		25.0	75.0	0.0	0.0	100
II	1.9	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(4)
		0.0	0.0	95.2	4.8	100
III	0.0	0.0	80.0	1.9	0.0	(21)
		2.0	0.0	6.0	92.0	100
IV	1.9	0.0	12.0	86.6	0.0	(49)
Total	100	100	100	100	100	132
	(52)	(3)	(25)	(52)		

TABLE 14: MUSLIM SUBJECTS' FATHERS WHOSE STATUS IS THE SAME AS, OR DIFFERENT FROM THEIR FATHERS'

Status of Grandfather	Same	Different	Total	Percentage of the Same to the Total
I	50	8	58	86.3
II	3	1	4	75.0
III	20	1	21	95.2
IV	45	4	49	92.0
Total	118	14	132	89.4

crease in the rate from the grandfathers' generation to the subjects' generation in Class I. Conversely, there is a continuous decrease over three generations in Class II. The mobility trend in Classes III and IV is rather insignificant in that it does not indicate any definite trend.

Religion-wise, the rate of mobility between the subject's and his father's generations among the Muslims (the majority religious group) corresponds with that of the town community. Between the generations of the subject's father and grandfather, the Muslims show a relatively high rate of mobility as compared to that of the town community and the Hindus. Significantly, among Hindus there was slight mobility in Classes I and II but not at all in Classes III and IV, while there was mobility in all the four classes of Muslims. On the whole the pattern of mobility among Muslims corresponded with that of the town.

Over three generations, there was a gradual increase in the proportions of the two religious groups and the town as a whole in Class II. On the other hand, in Class I Muslims approximate the trend of mobility in the town in Class I while in Class III the Hindus show similar tendency. In Class IV there is no similarity in patterns of mobility between the town,

and the majority and minority religious groups.

In a middle-sized town community, characterised by a predominantly agricultural economy and few employment opportunities, the rate of mobility is fairly significant, though it was more in the subject's and his father's generations than the previous generation. The majority religious group (Muslims) showed more mobility than the minority group (Hindus). This is probably due to the occupational structure of the town community. The majority religious group is concentrated in some particular occupations while the minority group is so concentrated in others.⁹ Therefore, there is a possibility of more mobility in the former group. The spillover of occupation from one group to another in the total population of the town tends to be less due to religious differentiation.¹⁰ Thus, one may visualise the possibility of further mobility in the majority religious group than in the minority.

On the basis of the finding one can say that, if a town community is divided into majority and minority groups on the basis of a single socio-cultural factor (in this case religion), it is likely that the majority monopolises the channels of social mobility.

A uniform plan of urbanisation or development will not be a proper plan

since it does not take into consideration the majority and minority constituents of a given community. Further, from this point of view and in the light of this study, the implication is that the planners will have to take into consideration the relative benefits and deprivations that might accrue to a majority and a minority group in a given area.

NOTES

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TABLE 15: DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS IN FOUR STATUS CATEGORIES BETWEEN THREE GENERATIONS BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Status Category	Number of Individuals			Total	Percentages of Total		
	G ₃	G ₂	G ₁		G ₃	G ₂	G ₁
Hindus							
I	17	20	18	55	22.7	25.6	22.5
II	13	15	19	47	17.3	19.2	23.8
III	14	14	17	45	18.7	18.1	21.3
IV	31	29	26	86	41.3	37.1	32.5
Total	(75)	(78)	(80)	(243)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Muslims							
I	58	59	48	165	44.0	40.0	31.8
II	4	9	14	27	3.0	6.0	9.2
III	21	25	24	70	15.9	17.0	15.9
IV	49	55	65	169	37.1	37.0	43.0
Total	132	148	151	431	100.0	100.0	100.0