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ROLE OF VERTICAL SOCIAL MOBILITY IN REDUCING DISCRIMINATION IN THE INDIAN SOCIETY: A NEW APPROACH

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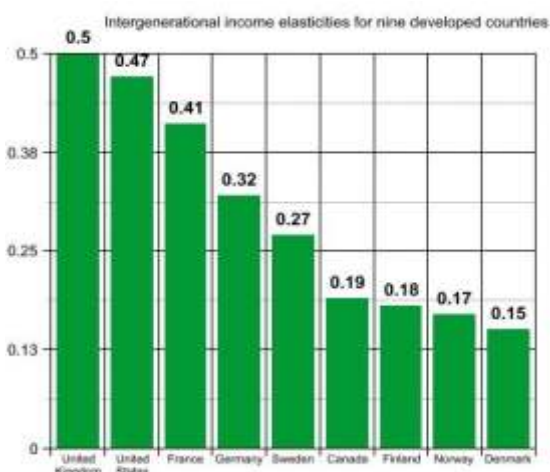
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ABSTRACT

Mobility stands for shift, change and movement. The change may be of a place or from one position to another. When we prefix 'social' along with mobility it would imply that people or individual occupying a social position, move to another position or status. On mobility Sorokin was the first sociologist who wrote a book "Social and Cultural Mobility". He was the opinion that there is no society which is closed and no society which is completely open. As defined by Barber, "social mobility refers to movement, either upward or downward between higher or lower social classes; or more precisely, movement between one relatively fulltime, functionally significant social role and another that is evaluated as either higher or lower. In this sense, mobility "provides the individual with more or less of the benefits which his economy and society have to offer."

KEYWORDS : *Vertical Social Mobility, Indian Society, social position.*



INTRODUCTION :

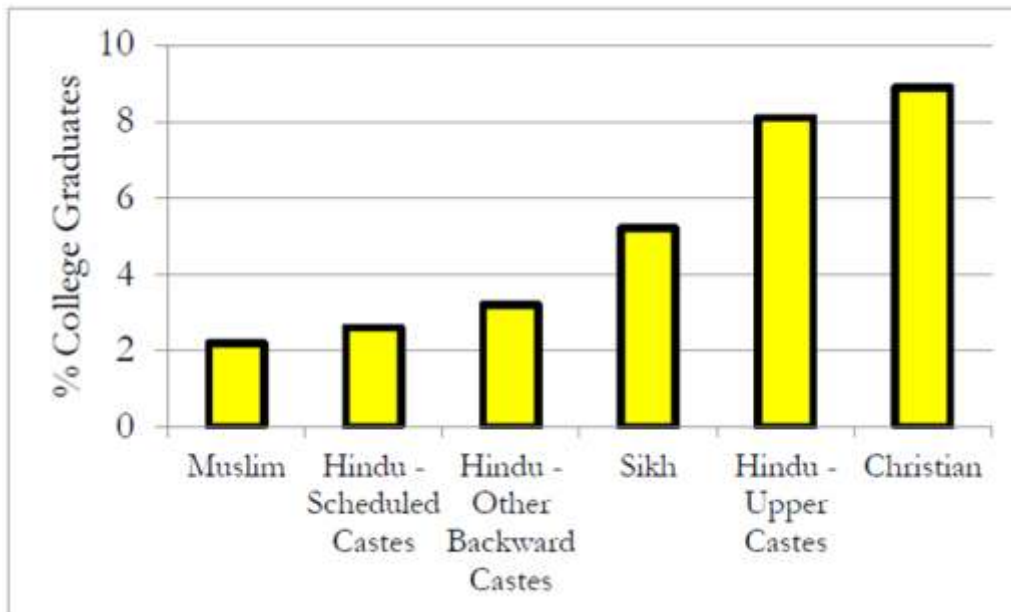
All social groups or subgroups do not enjoy the same position in the society. Some of them are considered high and some are low with respect to social status. If an individual or group is able to change his social status by his own efforts and he rises up in the hierarchy it is called vertical mobility. In the words of Sorokin, "By vertical mobility I mean the relations involved in a transition of an individual from one society stratum to another." Vertical mobility is actually a

relative phenomenon.

Discrimination is treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against a person or thing based on the group, class or category to which that person or thing is perceived to belong rather than on individual merit.

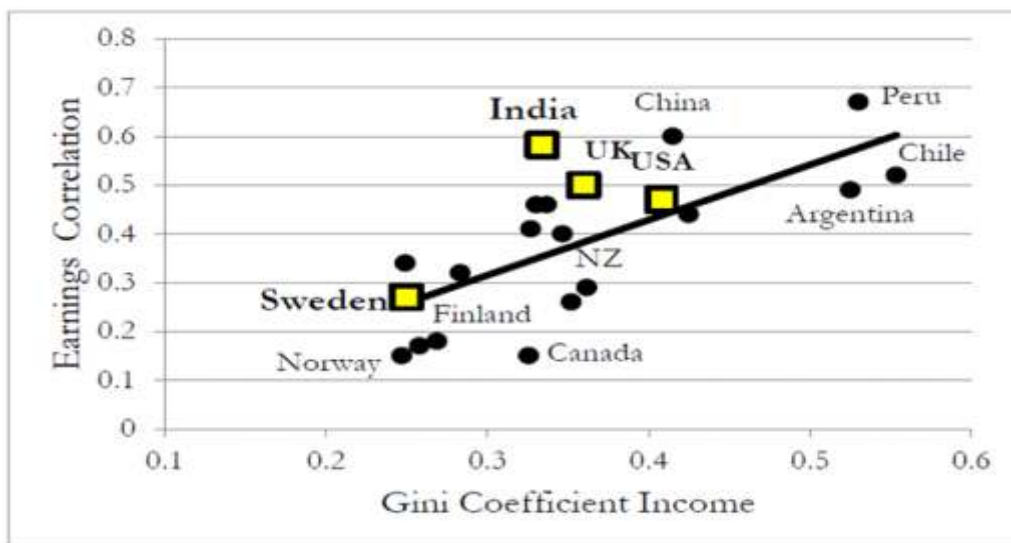
The present article examines the role of vertical social mobility in reducing discrimination in the Indian society. Before go to the main points let's see few statistics in this regard:

Figure 1: College Graduation Rates by Social Group, India, 2000



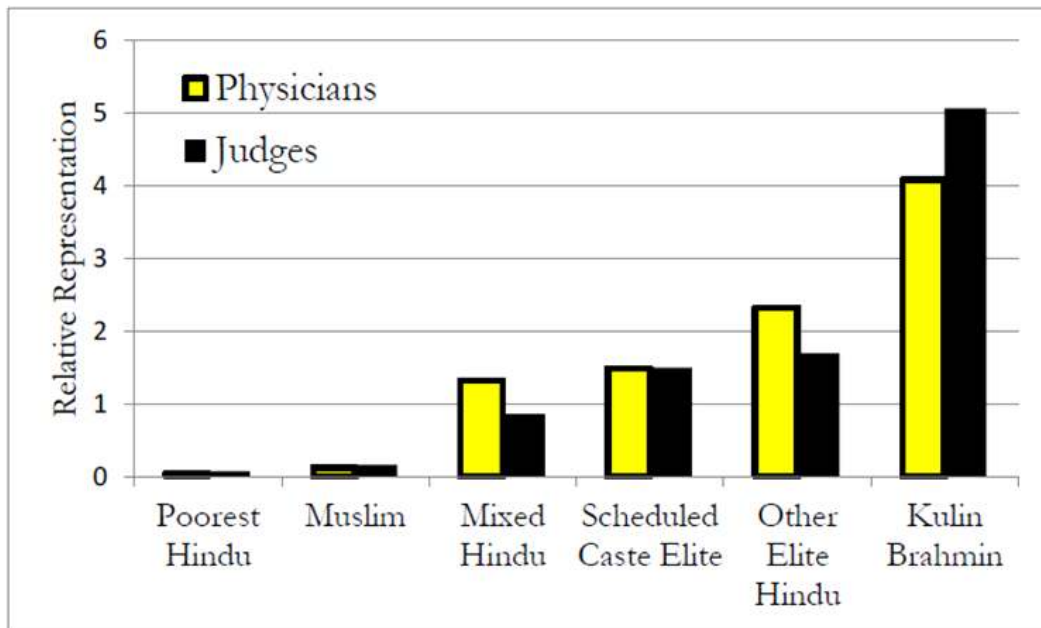
Source: University Grants Commission, 2008, 105.

Figure 2: Intergenerational Earnings Elasticity's and Inequality



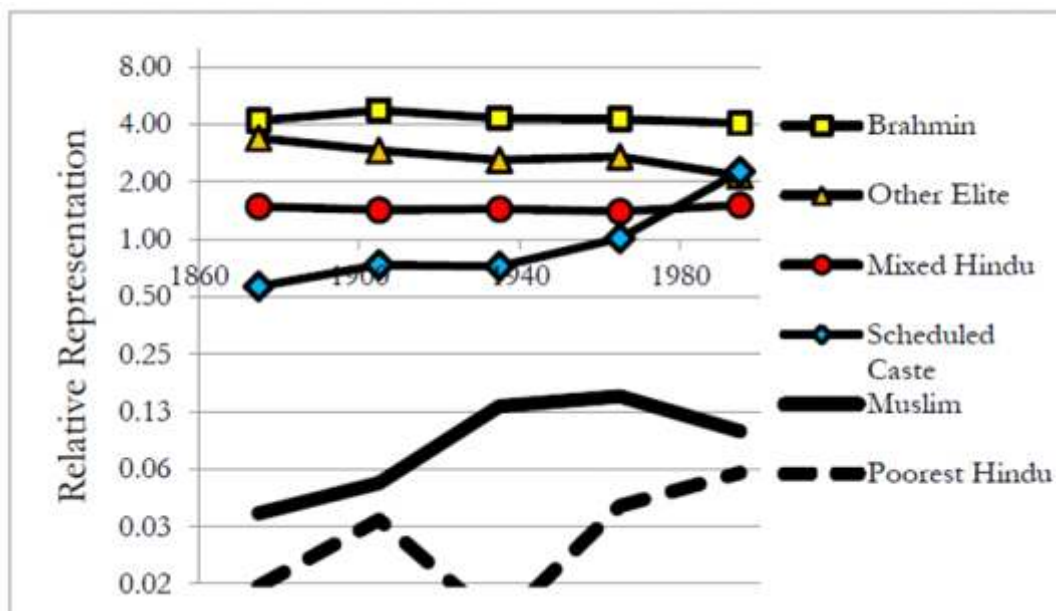
Source: Corak, 2012, Figure 2 (coefficient for Canada, personal communication from Miles Corak). Income elasticity for India from Hnatkovska et al., 2012, table S12. Gini for India from the World Bank.

Figure 3: Relative Representation of Surnames among Doctors and Judges, 2011



Sources: Surname frequency among doctors in west bengal from indian medical register, doctors first registering 1950-2009. Surname frequency among West Bengal judges, 2011, from the High Court Roll of High Court and District Judges. Surname frequency in the population estimated as in the appendix.

Figure 4: A summary of social mobility by surname type, 1860–2011



THE AREAS OF DISCRIMINATION

There are certain areas of discrimination in India regarding social status.

1. **Employment:** Government jobs are mostly captured by the rich classes in India. Middle and lower

classes are unable to make their position in this sector in an appropriate proportion.

2. Qualitative education: The discrimination is always there in the educational sectors. The Government made so many policies, laws, commissions, committees and programs to give equal opportunity for education but problems are still there. If we talk about quality education then we will see the miserable conditions of the lower socioeconomic classes.

3. Life style: There are huge difference between the life style of the high class and low class people. The middle class is struggling for their livelihood. It may be observed on the basis of food habit, dress, shelter, safety, entertainment, medical services and so on.

What are the barriers to social parity?

There are many reasons behind social disparity in India:

- _poverty
- _Illiteracy
- _Population Explosion
- _Industrialisation
- _Globalization
- _Class division
- _Religious beliefs and superstitions etc.

Why is social mobility important?

High rates of social mobility may be desirable for a number of reasons:

- _Politically, because equality of opportunity is an aspiration of politicians across the political spectrum;
- _Economically, because it is inefficient to waste the talents of even one single person. Economic growth depends on the extent to which everyone's talents can be fully utilized; and
- _Socially, because social cohesion and inclusion may be more likely to be achieved in a society where people believe that they can improve themselves through their abilities, talents and efforts than in a society where opportunities and qualities of life depend on social background.

Why is vertical social mobility essential?

In general, horizontal and vertical social mobility are the main two types of social mobility. In horizontal social mobility, social status of a person does not change or this change is so insufficient that it is given no importance. It means position of a person may change but his salary, grade, prestige, privileges, etc. remain unchanged. On the other hand, in vertical social mobility the individual is able to change his or her social status by his own efforts and he rises up in the hierarchy. Vertical mobility refers to both achieving social status and economic position. Another important thing is that in vertical social mobility a person can achieve both higher and lower status in the society. In vertical social mobility a sound competitive attitude develops and it is essential for any developing country like ours. Vertical mobility works in both sides by lifting a person or group on the top and putting down a person or group from a high status. So, there is always a chance for social change.

What are the roles of vertical social mobility?

Vertical mobility can play vital roles in reducing discrimination in Indian society in the following way:

- a) It can raise individual status in the society. The person receives recognition, prestige, honour, and position in the society and he inspires others to give their efforts for better achievement.
- b) It can bring social change to the positive side. The structure of the society may change from close to

open.

c)It can make the balance in the society in respect of job attainment both government and non-government sectors

d)The educational system may be change towards advancement through vertical social mobility.

e)It ensures equalization of opportunities and entrusted the people of any developing country that all have equal chance to grow their potentialities.

f)Economic, political, social and educational parity can be achieved through vertical social mobility.

How it can be possible?

To ensure and promote vertical social mobility the following points can be carefully considered:

1)Aspiration level: If people in the society are ambitious to raise their status in the society vertical social mobility will be positive. This ambition or aspiration level of the people depends on the trend prevailing in the society and achievement level of certain groups.

2)Education: Education plays the most dominant role in increasing social mobility. A layman can become a lecturer or a D.M.only after education. Thus his status will automatically go up.

3)Proper democracy: Democracy is a philosophy which gives equal opportunity for all. If we safeguard Democratic values in our country then vertical social mobility will be possible. Example of late Indian President Dr.Abul Kalam can be cited here. He started his career as a research scholar but elected President of India later.

4)Intergenerational mobility: This type of mobility was that one generation changes its social status in contrast to preceding generation. Children who are more capable than their parents are likely to be upwardly mobile, especially open class societies.

5)Motivation: Each individual has a desire not only to have a better way of living but also wants to improve upon his social stand. In open system it is possible to achieve any status. This openness motivates people to work hard and improve upon the skills so that one can attain higher social status.

6)Skill and training: Provisions for skill and training programs to the younger generation is essential. When they complete their training, they are entitled to high positions. Skills and training facilitate in improvement of the position, this leading to vertical social mobility.

DISCUSSION

The present article examined the various aspects of vertical social mobility along with the features of discrimination in the Indian perspective. It has been observed that caste system, class status, economic and political powers etc. are creating hindrance on the way of social mobility. We all know that without proper social mobility the development of any nation cannot be satisfactorily possible. The discrimination is seen in the India scenario is a matter of serious concern. Such discrimination causes national disintegration. To avoid this condition there is urgent need for high vertical social mobility as it is better than that of the horizontal social mobility. The role of vertical mobility in India very crucial in reference to social, economic, political and educational opportunity and parity. Qualitative education, human resource development through skill and training attainment programs, creating employment opportunity through industrialisation, securing the masses from the adverse effects of globalization are essential for positive social change and hence it facilitates vertical social mobility. New policies, laws, rules should be introduced for uplifting the lower status people.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude briefly, the vertical social mobility is more essential than other types of social

mobility to give equal opportunities in the various sectors of the society and in reducing discrimination in the fields of education, economy, polity and society. Not only Government role for making new policies, programs, laws is important but self-motivation, high aspirations of individuals also required for vertical social mobility. It is education that plays key role for social mobility in the changing scenario of liberalization, industrialization and globalization.

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