CHAPTER 7
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In this chapter the conclusions of this piece of research are summarized. The chapter is subdivided into three sections of 1. Major Findings; 2. Implications; and 3. Suggestions for further research.

7.1. MAJOR FINDINGS

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data on intergenerational Educational Mobility, Occupational Mobility and Income Mobility made in chapters 4, 5 and 6 respectively, the major findings of the study are reported below.

7.1.1  INTERGENERATIONAL EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

With regard to the intergenerational educational mobility through three generations and the determinants of educational attainments the study leads to be the following major findings.

1. In absolute terms the rate of upward educational mobility between fathers and children, aged 18-50 years, has been very high while rate of downward mobility has been very low with a moderate rate of stationariness. Men have exhibited higher rates of upward educational mobility than women while women have experienced higher rates of downward mobility. The rate of stationariness is a little over 22% for both men and women.

The rate of upward educational mobility between mothers and the children is higher than that between fathers and children. With respect to mothers, daughters have exhibited greater upward mobility than sons. There is not much difference between men and women in their rates of stationariness.

Comparing the absolute educational attainments of parents and children lower rates of inheritance are found but if the relative educational attainments between the two generations were compared much higher rates of inheritance may be noticed. Even in terms of absolute educational attainments the data reflect a very high dependence of a person’s educational attainments on the educational attainments of the parents.

The rate of stationariness of educational attainments between the fathers of respondents and their fathers (Grandfathers of respondents) was about 16%. Between the fathers and grandfathers of men it was greater about 19% than between the fathers
and grandfathers of women 13%. Between those generations also rates of upward educational mobility are very high. As between the generations of parents and respondents so, between the generations of their fathers' and grandfathers' stationariness may be much higher if educational attainments in relative terms were compared. One striking fact revealed by these data is that the rate of stationariness or educational inheritance has increased between three generations of grandfathers, fathers and respondents and not declined as one would expect to happen with progress of the nation.

In comparison with the educational attainment of their grandparents respondents indicate very little stationariness and high rates of upward educational mobility. This implies that the grand parents’ education may not be directly influencing respondents’ educational attainments but it does so through their parents. Thus both parents’ and grandparents’ educational attainments are very strong determinants of a person’s access to higher education.

2. Gender of a person is also an important determinant of educational attainments. While there was no illiteracy among men in the age group 18-50, 0.31% of women in this age group were illiterate. While larger proportions of men than women had access to higher education in general, the proportion of professional graduates was larger among women than men. This may because B.Ed. which has been considered a professional graduation more women than men take this degree.

3. Another determinant of educational attainments is a person’s residence. In this respect while urban residence enhances access to education especially to higher education, rural residence is a very strong hindrance in the acquisition of higher education, especially of professional and technical type. In this regard the women are affected most. Thus rural residence is a greater disadvantage in the acquisition of education, especially higher education, for women than men.

4. Membership of a particular religion determines educational attainments of a person. While there was practically no illiteracy in the population (aged 18 to 50) under study, 91% had completed the compulsory elementary education of eight years with over 99% among Muslims having attained this level of education followed by about 96% among Hindus, 92% of ‘Others’ and smallest proportion about (72%) with this level of education was among the Christians. However, Hindus had the greatest access to higher education in general while the Christians had the least access to it. The largest proportion (16%) of professional graduates was found among the Buddhists and
smallest (5.52%) among again the Christians. Among the women ‘Others’ women were the most privileged as far as access to higher education is concerned and the Christian women most disadvantaged. When the proportions of higher educated among different religious communities are compared to their respective proportions in the population it is seen that it is the Hindus who are underrepresented while all other communities are over represented both among men and women.

5. Membership of a social category also affects a person’s access to higher education. Thus members of the ST category had the largest proportion with higher education and those of the General category had the smallest. When the proportions of members from different categories are compared with their corresponding proportions in the population all the categories except the General are overrepresented in participation in higher education while those of the General category are underrepresented. This is true for both men and women. However, it is interesting to note that the proportion of women with higher education is smaller than their men counterparts in all categories except the General where the proportion of women is a little larger than that of men.

6. Fathers’ Occupational status is another strong determinant of a person’s access to education. The children of manual workers have very few chances of acquiring higher education while children of non-manual fathers have very few chances of dropping out the education system before taking at least a first degree from a university. Even the mothers’ occupation has a bearing on the educational attainments of children. However, fathers’ occupation affects the chances of acquiring higher education more than that of mothers’. Parents’ being in manual occupations is a greater hindrance in the education of daughters than that of sons.

7.1.2. INTERGENERATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

With regard to the intergenerational occupational mobility through three generations and the determinants of occupational attainments, the study leads to the following major findings.

1. Comparing the occupational statuses of the respondents with those of their fathers it is found that over 45% had inherited their occupational status while about 35% had experienced upward mobility and 20% had experienced downward mobility.

The rate of stationariness was very high over 56% among men than among women, about 34%. It was very low when the occupations of respondents were compared to those of their mothers.
Considering the binary division of occupations into manual and non-manual categories, the rates of inheritance shoot up very high as over 78% of the respondents were found inheriting their fathers' occupations. Among the children of manual workers 89% had remained in manual work while among the children of non-manual fathers about 68% were in non-manual occupations like their fathers. The rate of inheritance was considerably greater among men than among women. Mothers' manual status was inherited by over 99% of their children while non-manual status of mothers was inherited by only about 29% of their children. The results were similar for both men and women respondents.

As the data above indicate, whatever occupational mobility has occurred it has been mainly short range between somewhat adjacent ranking occupations and very little long range occupational mobility across manual- non-manual divide has taken place and whatever little mobility has occurred across this divide is between the highest manual occupations and the lowest non-manual occupations.

Thus one of the most important determinants of occupational attainment is parents' occupation, especially that of father.

Comparing the respondents' occupational attainments with those of their grandfathers it was found that about 60% had inherited their grandfathers occupational status, about 60% had inherited manual status and 40% had inherited non-manual status. About 29% of the respondents were in higher occupations compared to their grandfathers and about 11% were the lower occupations. Inheritance from grandfathers was noticed to a greater extent among women than among men.

Comparing the occupational status of fathers of respondents with that of their fathers'(grandfathers of respondents) about 86% of the fathers had inherited their occupational status from their fathers, over 63% had inherited the manual occupational status while about 37% had inherited non-manual status.

As in the case of fathers' and respondents' generations, between the generations of grandfathers and fathers most mobility, upward or downward, has been only short range between the occupations adjacent to each other in the hierarchy and long range mobility across manual- non-manual divide has been very little and mainly between the highest manual occupations and the lowest non-manual occupations.

Thus the trend in occupational inheritance is maintained through three generations of grandfathers, fathers and the respondents. Hence, in occupational attainment process not only fathers' occupation but even the grandfathers' occupation is a strong
determining factor. Grandfathers’ occupation affects both directly as well as indirectly through father’s education and occupation.

2. Only about 39% of the rural residents were employed in non-manual occupations despite their higher education while as the corresponding proportion among the urban residents was over 71%. Although the proportion of urban women employed in non-manual work was a little greater than their men counterparts, among the rural women far larger proportion was employed in manual work than their men counterparts. Out of a total of 352 non-manual respondents about 55% were urban and only 45% were rural while as in the manual work there were about 77% from rural background and only 23% from the urban backgrounds. The situation is more adverse in the case of women than men.

Thus rural residence is hindrance in entering non-manual occupations while urban residence is a great advantage in this respect. Rural women have greater disadvantage than not only urban women but also than the rural men. Thus gender and rural-urban residence have combined effect on the chances of entering non-manual or manual occupations.

3. Religion also plays a role in a person’s chances of entering manual and non-manual occupations. Thus among the members of the category labelled ‘Others’ the largest proportion (92%) was in the non-manual occupations followed by Hindus 58%, Muslims 47%, Buddhists 44% and the Christians 39%. Thus the ‘Others’ who form a miniscule of the population dominate in access to non-manual occupations. The other community that has registered a dominant position in non-manual occupations, Buddhists, Muslims and Christians in non-manual occupations are respectively double and about four times their respective proportions in the population while Hindus are highly underrepresented.

4. Belonging to a social category too has a bearing on the occupational status of a person. While the ST’s had largest proportion employed in non-manual occupations, OBC/MOBC had the smallest proportion employed in this category. Consequently ST had the smallest proportion in manual occupations and OBC/MOBC had the largest. Comparing the proportions of persons employed in non-manual occupations from each category with their respective proportions in the population one finds that SC’s are underrepresented in non-manual occupations while OBC’s/MOBC’s are a little overrepresented and the ST’s and General category people are highly overrepresented in this category of occupations.
Thus SC’s continue to have a disadvantage in access to non-manual employment. It is interesting to note that while among the ST’s proportion of men employed in non-manual occupations a bit larger than their women counterparts, among the General much larger proportion of men than women were in non-manual employment, among the OBC’s/MOBC’s a little larger proportion of women than men were found in non-manual occupations. Among the SC’s proportion of women in non-manual occupations was almost double of that of their men counterparts.

5. Educational attainments of a person appear to be a strong determinant of occupational status, i.e. higher the educational attainments higher is the occupational status. However, this does not seem to apply to the levels of education up to higher secondary stage, but among those with higher education of a bachelor’s degree in liberal arts and above occupational status is commensurate with their educational attainments.

A very small proportion of persons with higher education are employed in manual occupations as over 85% of them are employed in non-manual occupations only. In this respect women are a bit unfortunate as among them only about 82% with higher education were in non-manual occupations.

6. Fathers’ education is also an important factor affecting a person’s occupational status. Children of fathers with higher education have very great chances of entering elite occupations while the children of fathers with lower levels of education or illiteracy have very few chances of entering such occupation despite their own education. This is true for both men and women; however women appear to have somewhat still fewer chances than men in this respect.

Like that of fathers, mothers’ education is also a strong determinant of a person’s occupational status. Thus the children of mothers with higher education have practically no chance of ending up in a manual occupation. Mothers’ higher education is especially an advantage for men’s chances of entering elite occupations. Thus occupational status of person is a function also of his/her parents’ education.

7.1.3. INCOME MOBILITY

Since a miniscule of respondents could report the income of their grandfathers and majority of them could not report even their fathers’ income, it could not possible to study income mobility through even two generations, not to speak of studying it through three generations.
However, since the data on the respondents' background including parents' education, occupation, religion and category they belonged to and their personal attainments are available an attempt has been made to examine the factors (other than parents' and grandparents' income) that affect the income of a respondent. The following factors appear to determine a person's income:

1. The data show that on an average the rural residents' have lower incomes than their urban counterparts. Women, both rural and urban have a little higher income than men as large proportion of them than men are employed in higher income jobs.
2. The group 'Others' had the highest incomes while the Muslims and the Christians had the lowest with Hindus and Buddhists in between.
3. Among the different social categories SC's had the largest proportion in the lowest income bracket while OBC's/MOBC's and ST's had the smallest proportion in this bracket with General Category in between. However it were the General category and OBC/MOBC that had the largest proportion in the highest income bracket while SC's and ST's did not have anyone in the highest income bracket.

Thus on the whole SC's were the poorest and ST's the second poorest. Among the men poorest were SC's and the richest General category and among the women poorest were from General and the richest among OBC/MOBC.
4. On the whole higher the educational attainment higher the income. Women with education up to high school had lower income than men with the similar educational attainments, but women with higher educational attainments had higher income than their men counterparts with similar education.
5. On the whole persons employed in non-manual occupations had higher income than those employed in manual occupations. Fewer women than men employed in manual occupations were in lowest income bracket but larger proportion of women than men in non-manual occupations were in the highest income bracket.
6. Fathers' education also affects a person's income. In general higher the fathers' education higher is the child's income. This holds true for both men and women. Again while mothers' education also affects both men's and women's income, lower levels of mothers' education affects sons' income more adversely than that of daughters but higher educational attainments are more favourable to a daughter's higher income than that of a son's.
7. A person's income also depends on the occupation of parents. Thus higher the occupational status of father and mother higher is a person's income. This is true for
both men and women. However, lower occupational status of father affects a son’s income more adversely than that of daughter’s while mothers’ lower occupational status affects a daughter’s income more adversely than that of a son’s.

7.2. IMPLICATIONS
The findings of this piece of research reported above have some serious implication for educational and employment policy.

It is heartening to find that various programmes and schemes for the eradication of illiteracy implemented from time to time since independence have borne fruit and there is practically no illiteracy among the people below the age of 50 years. In other words all those born in 1960 and after in the District of Lakhimpur, a backward district, are all literate. Not only are they all literate but over 91% of them had acquired at least compulsory education of eight years, the proportion for women being over 92% and for men about 90%.

It is also heartening to find that about 35% of these people – about 37% of men and over 32% of women – were at least graduates.

Thus the widening educational opportunities at all levels and implementation of the policies of protective discriminations have brought positive results, reflected in the progress of education among all sections of society, irrespectively of religion, category or rural-urban origin.

However, while opportunities for school education have, for all practical purposes, been equalized, the opportunities for higher education continue to be unequal. Although very high rates of upward educational mobility are found in the district but in relative terms there continues to be very high extent of inheritance of educational attainments. Thus the weaker sections of rural population, SC’s, ST’s, OBC’s, Muslims and dalit Christians continue to suffer from disadvantage in access to higher education and it is only elite among them who continue to corner the benefits of special provisions under protective discrimination and other schemes. Thus, as has been reported in the findings access to higher education is determined by the education of parents and grandparents, their occupational status and caste and class which the people inherit.

Similarly, the rates of stationariness in occupational status between three generations of grandparents, parents and the incumbents, reflects that although the employment opportunities have been expanding like those of educational opportunities manual or non-manual occupational statuses continue to be mainly hereditary in nature with
some short range mobility taking place between the highest rungs of the manual occupations and the lowest rungs of non-manual occupations. Long range mobility across manual – non-manual divide continues to be rare.

Thus the children and grandchildren of manual workers and those of poorly educated parents continue to be less educated and employed mainly in manual occupation and the children and grandchildren of the elite continue to get higher education through which they enter elite occupations like their parents and grandparents.

Although there appears to be a very strong relation between higher educational attainments and occupational placements, the relationship is spurious as only the children of parents and grandparents employed in elite occupation have access to higher education and through it to elite occupations. So, here also the weaker sections in general excluding the elite among them continue to have a disadvantage in higher echelons of non-manual occupation despite their higher educational attainments. Finally, it has been found that higher the occupational status higher is the income of a person. Therefore, as has been shown that higher occupational status depends on the parents’ occupational status, educational attainments of parents and grandparents, castes, religion, etc. inherited by an individual and the individual’s own educational attainments which also depend on his background, even the income of a person is determined by these background factors.

Thus from what has been discussed above shows that education, conceived by the founding father of the Constitution as a mechanism of social engineering, has not served that purpose and on the contrary it only serves as a social stabilizer for the dominant classes of the society. This is especially true of higher education, which has actually been suffering from inflation as the middle classes continue to keep their children in the school system longer only to give them an edge in the employment market as the lower classes cannot afford the luxury of keeping children in the system too long. Thus in all non-manual occupations persons with much higher levels of education than the required get employed to the exclusion of those who have only the requisite qualifications but belong to the lower class or lower middle class.

Thus, the provisions of protective discriminations in the form of quota of ST’s, OBC’s/MOBC’s has helped the urban residents improve their educational attainments and occupational status, the Muslims as a community has not done so well as for them quota and special schemes have introduced recently it will take some time to show results. Again, since the occupational attainments are largely inherited and education
acts only to stabilize the non-manual occupational status, providing quota only in admission to education will not help in using education as an instrument of social engineering implying thereby that the disadvantaged groups be provided a guarantee that they will be employed if they acquired requisite levels of educations. In fact, it would be advisable to make right to work a fundamental right which would not only equalize occupational opportunities, as advocated by ‘Boudon’ (Boudon 1974), but also diminish inequality in access to higher education. At the least, Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) must be extended for employment for at least 300 days instead of 100 days at present.

The inheritance of educational and occupational status also implies that among the categories recognized as disadvantaged Constitutionally, as ST, SC, OBC/MOBC, elite groups have emerged through the quotas provided for them and the quotas are cornered by their children generation after generation leaving their weaker brethren weaker. To remedy this malady it would be necessary to the implement the process of descheduling of the elite groups from the lists of SC’s, ST’s and OBC’s. Again, as advised by the Supreme Court for OBC’s, individual families belonging to a creamy layer among all these groups need to be excluded from the purview of the quota system. Although the provision of excluding the creamy layer has been implemented in several states but the minimum income for such exclusion is very high and will not help in raising the status of those who should be considered non-creamy but actually help to perpetuate the existing inequalities.

It would also be appropriate to restrict the benefits of quota system only to a maximum of two generations. This can help prevent skidding back into manual occupations of those who have just crossed the dividing line between manual and non-manual work and entered the lowest rungs of non-manual work. Besides, it is necessary to open more professional and technical institution in rural and far flung areas to enhance the opportunities of acquiring education with employment potential for members of rural and backward communities. It is also imperative to increase the member of freeships and the number and amount of scholarships and financial assistances for the members of the weaker sections. As has been pointed out the benefits of subsidized higher education are essentially concerned by those who can afford to pay for it, it would be advisable introduce differential fee structure, that is charging fee according to one’s capacity to pay.

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7.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The piece of research reported in the foregoing pages, like any other research, suffers from certain limitations which restricts the general applicability of the results arrived at. Some of these limitations are given below.

The study has examined a sample of only one district which is one of the economically backward districts of Assam and as such the generalizations arrived at will have to be applied to other districts with caution. Although the sample included respondents from SC’s, ST’s and OBC/MOBC’s, but the number of such respondents was so small that a comparison of different castes/sub-castes and different tribes could not be made. Again, the study has not examined the changes in the attitudes and aspirations of the older and younger generation.

Since the data on income was available only for the generation of respondents but not for their parents and grandparents, income mobility could not be studied at all. In order to overcome these limitations and to arrive at more reliable and generalisable applications, the following suggestions for further research are in order.

1. A study involving several districts including developed and under developed ones may be made to assess how the stages of development affect the process of occupational placement and mobility as well as the accessibility to education especially to higher education.

2. To comprehend the process of educational and occupational attainments it is suggested that studies of mobility involving samples from various occupational categories be made especially through random samples of the populations. Such a study would help one understand the impact of various social and economic variables on the process of educational and occupational placement as well as the relationship between educational attainment and occupational placement.

3. To overcome these limitations and arrived at generalizations which can have a more general applicability it is suggested that several such studied be made on samples from different groups from several states using larger samples. Comparative mobility studies including different castes (among the SC’s) and different tribes (among the ST’s) be made. Again, comparative studies of tribals in the North-East India and those in the rest of India also be made. Mobility studies involving larger samples of women from different walks of life should be made. Marriage as variable in status attainment needs to be also examined.
4. Since the data on income was available only for the generation of respondents but not for their parents and grandparents, income mobility could not be studied at all. It is therefore suggested that studies be undertaken to examine the extent of income mobility or its inheritance which would indicate whether the standards of living between generations are rising or falling.

5. Social Mobility, being essentially an individual phenomenon, it is suggested that the personality and characteristic of the mobile individual, especially those called "self made" be studied.

6. Most mobility is of structural type than that of circulation type, the extent of structural and circulation mobility need to be delineated.