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How Do Education Access and Skill Development Programs Help to Increase Social Mobility?

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Abstract

Education is an important mediating factor in economic mobility. Sociology has a long research tradition that examines this role. Education is a central vehicle for reproduction because advantaged parents can afford more schooling for their children, which pays off in the labour market by generating skilled human resources. In this article we will examine the importance of education access and skill development to increase social mobility in Indian context. Education access and skill development are the key factors which generate informed human resources and have positive impact on intergenerational and intragenerational mobility.

Keywords: social mobility, education access, skill development, intergenerational mobility and intragenerational mobility

1. Introduction:

Social mobility is a tool that helps policymakers identify areas for improvement and reform policies to promote equally shared opportunities for all citizens.

India's score on the global social mobility index 2020 (WEF) is 42.7, while most European countries are above 75, including Japan from Asia. China scores 61.5 with a comparable population to India. Low-populated Asian countries like Singapore (74.6), Korea Rep. (71.4), Malaysia (62.0), Sri Lanka (52.3), and Indonesia (49.3) are far ahead of India. South Africa (41.4) and Bangladesh (40.2) are just behind India and are trying to bridge the gaps to join the global growth path.

As per global social mobility report India has to work on education access and skill development.

The gaps in educational attainment between boys and girls have been attributed, at least partially, to a marked parental preference for sons over daughters in many nations. Researchers have documented gender-unequal intrahousehold allocations of resources critical for educational attainments, such as nutrients, in contexts such as India and China (Song et al., 2008). Girls living in rural areas appear to be particularly handicapped (Lillard et al, 2006). However, these patterns are not universal across the developing world: In some contexts, including very traditional and low-income societies, rough investment equality between sons and daughters appears to be the norm (Kevane et al, 2003; Mulder et al., 2019).

Researchers found that uneven parental investments in resources are critical to schooling, or schooling itself, between sons and daughters. First, the unequal allocation of household resources in favor of sons may be changing rapidly, driven by growing returns to schooling among women. For example,

Rosenzweig and Zhang (2013) found that returns to schooling in the urban labour market are higher among women than men in China and that they are rising along with rising levels of schooling. The authors suggest that these trends are driven by women's comparative advantage in 'skill' versus 'brawn' occupations in the context of substantial economic development and structural change since the 1980s. Second, when examining differences in parental investments and transfers by gender, it is essential to consider the entire family portfolio. For example, a study in rural Philippines found that daughters received lower parental investments in education and land transfers than sons; however, they were compensated with other non-land assets (Quisumbing, 1994).

In the developing world, economic crises affect educational attainment differently for poor and wealthy households. A positive substitution effect results in educational gains among the wealthy, whereas a negative income effect produces losses among the poor (Ferreira, 2009). The result is a more substantial influence of social origins on educational attainment among the cohorts affected by economic contraction.

2. Background Study:

2.1 Observation on education access & skill development in a global context:

Education is a central vehicle for reproduction because advantaged parents can afford more schooling for their children, which pays off in the labour market and other markets. Education is also the primary vehicle for mobility because factors other than parental advantage account for most of the variance in educational attainment, thus weakening the link between socioeconomic origins and destinations. As proposed in the influential book The American Occupational Structure (Blau et al, 1967), the total socioeconomic association between parents and adult children can be decomposed into the pathway mediated by educational attainment and a direct pathway that is net of education. The education pathway includes the association between parents' socioeconomic standing and individual educational attainment ('inequality of educational opportunity') and the association between educational attainment and adult children's socioeconomic position ('returns to education').

The direct pathway that is net of education captures multiple factors, such as the direct inheritance of property, variations in the probability of marrying and assortative mating patterns by social origins, the use of family-based social networks or cultural capital for occupational placing, and the transmission of personality traits, among many others. A significant concern is educational attainment's role in the intergenerational stratification process in the developing world. Given the high earnings returns to schooling that characterize developing countries (Psacharopoulos et al, 2018), education will likely play a pivotal role in intergenerational reproduction. So far, the evidence is scarce, but existing studies suggest variation across regions. In Latin America, the mediating role of education is vital, perhaps even more decisive than in the advanced industrial world (Torche, 2014).

In contrast, Assaad and Saleh (2018) and Binzel and Carvalho (2017) show that growing educational mobility across cohorts in Jordan and Egypt, respectively, has not resulted in more income mobility, suggesting that the educational pathway plays a limited role in economic mobility, and offering a word of caution about the strategy of focusing on equalizing educational attainment to improve socioeconomic mobility. The evidence also suggests that the role of education in the economic mobility process may vary by gender. Gender variation could emerge from parents investing more in the schooling of their sons than of their daughters (Behrman, 1988; Song et al, 2008), from different returns to schooling for men and women (DiPrete et al, 2006; Dougherty, 2005; Montenegro et al, 2014), or from gender variation in the portion of the intergenerational economic association that is not mediated by education. To date, evidence

of gender differences in the role of education for economic mobility is very limited in the developing world. A study in rural Philippines found that the intergenerational income association was accounted for by parental investments in capital—education, health, and landholdings—among sons.

In contrast, a direct intergenerational income association was found among daughters, even after their educational attainment and other types of capital were accounted for, suggesting the use of social capital and the direct transfer of assets among women, probably related to finding a 'good' husband (Bevis & Barrett, 2015). In the case of Mexico, the role of education in intergenerational economic persistence is similar for sons and daughters (Torche, 2015). Both national cases diverge from high-income countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, where the mediating role of education and occupation appears more critical for daughters than sons (Blanden et al, 2014). The heterogeneity of findings suggests the need to consider other developing nations to understand patterns of gender variation.

2.2 Observation on education access & skill development in Indian context:

There are 1,12,674 government secondary and higher secondary schools in India catering to (1 Crore+) 1,10,84,787 students. Of these schools, 10% offer vocational courses under NSQF to 12,08,485(10%) students nationwide.

NSDC has worked with the Ministry of Education to restructure the implementation model of skill development training in schools from 4 years (1 entry at 9th class and one exit at 12th class) to 2-year model (entry at 9th and exit at 10th; again entry 11th and exit at 12th class) to offer skill training under 73 job roles (pegged at NSQF level 2 to 4) across 21 sectors. More students at the school level need to be brought under vocational education to create a skilled society. The NEP 2020 paves the way forward. NEP 2020 aims to expose 50% of school and higher education learners to vocational education by 2025. It also aims to start coding classes for students starting at class 6 for future job readiness.

A national committee for the integration of vocational education has been formed consisting of representatives from across ministries and vocational education experts in collaboration with industry to oversee the integration and identification of domains based on skill gap analysis. Secondary schools will also collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industries, etc. Skill labs will be set up and created in the schools using a hub and spook model, allowing other schools to use the ITI and polytechnic facility for skill purposes.

Higher education institutes will also be allowed to conduct short-term certificate courses in various skills, including soft skills, which are highly sought after in industry.

Every institute will aim to have an Artist (s) in Residence to expose students to art, creativity, and the country's rich treasures and train them in local crafts.

Niti Aayog has established over 10K+ Atal Tinkering Labs nationwide to offer exposure and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) along with robotics, 3D Printing, IOT, etc. The Aspirational District Program was conceived to uplift backward districts and to converge central and state schemes. The federal government started a vocational training program in Germany in 1969, creating a solid foundation for skilled traders, industry, and commerce.

The share of the youth population in India is 34.33%. As per the GOI 2014 report, In India, 2.3% of the workforce had undergone formal skill training, whereas in the UK, 68%; Germany, 75%; the USA, 52%, Japan 80%; South Korea, 96% - has been reflected in Global social mobility index as well.

National Book Trust will promote digital libraries for children and adolescents to build a culture of reading. The Ministry of Education's FY 23-24 budgetary allocation increased by 8.2% from Rs 1,04,277 crore to Rs 1,12898 crore, of which school education saw an 8.4% increase and higher education an

expansion of 7.9%. Allocation to Kendriya Vidyala (central school) increased by 9%, and mid-day meals increased by 13.35% (Chandra, 2023).

Govt of India will give a chance to a foreign university with a rank among the top 500 global rankings, or a foreign educational institution of repute in its home jurisdiction can apply to the UGC to set up a campus in India. (Chandra, 2023)

2.2. Government Scheme related to education access and skill development:

Social Mobility Determinants	**Government Policies**	**Role of Policy to uplift social mobility**
Education access	1. National Education Policy 2020 2. ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) Dept. of School education and literacy (Ministry of education)	• Flexibility • No hard separations between subjects, curricular and extra-curricular activities • Multi-disciplinary education • Conceptual understanding • Critical thinking • Ethical Values • Teachers as the heart of the learning process • The strong public education system • It aims to provide widespread access to basic literacy and critical life skills by leveraging technology.
Skill Development	1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 2. Craftsmen Training Scheme (CTS) 3. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) 4. Vocational Training Program for Women 5. Schemes for Upgradation of ITIs	• Enable people to take up industry relevant skill training

2.3 Challenges at root:

As per MOE (Ministry of Education), approximately 35 lakh students enrolled in class 10 in FY 21-22 did not progress in class XI, and only 4.5 lakh students appeared in exams through the National Institute of Open Schooling and there too the failure rates ranged between 47% - 55%. The rate of failure (85% - 30 lakh approx.) is mostly populated among 11 states out of 28 states 8 UTs (UP, Bihar, MP, Gujarat, TN, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Assam, WB, Haryana, Chhattisgarh) (Porecha, 2023)

China upped its focus on science and technology and investments by 1976 as a part of the 'Four Modernizations' program. India needs a high budgetary outlay for higher education. India's overall world scientific publication share is about 4.81%, whereas China's share is 26% as of 2018. The Chinese government has facilitated massive research investment; Chinese universities have increased by 140%, research faculty by 69%, and public research funding by tenfold. (Babu, 2023)

3. Research Design:

3.1 Research Plan & Research methodology:

In this study we are discussing intergenerational mobility and intergenerational mobility as a determinant of social mobility. Hence discussions on drivers of social mobility are very important. Drivers of social mobility related to social welfare schemes (Health access, education access, social protection scheme), Job related conditions (working conditions, working opportunities, fare wages), Skill development (lifelong learning, technology access, inclusive institutions) are indicators of overall growth factor. India's social mobility ranking shows that, government need to take steps under social welfare scheme, industry policy framework to satisfy the conditions of social mobility (majorly in educational mobility, income mobility, occupational mobility, inclusive growth factor). Government schemes related to (healthcare, education and skill development, working opportunities, infrastructure development, and technology access) are important to assess the impact of policies and schemes on social mobility.

Above social mobility pillars have direct impact on intergenerational and intragenerational mobility. Here we will discuss two parameters, education access and skill development.

This research study used the qualitative research method. In this study, we discussed how, what, why, and mainly, how studies help formulate a relation between education access, skill development and social mobility

Qualitative research focuses on understanding a research query using a humanistic or idealistic approach. The method generates non-numerical data and is used to understand people's beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behavior, and interactions. Integrating qualitative research into intervention studies is a research strategy gaining increased attention across disciplines. Although once viewed as philosophically incongruent with experimental research, qualitative research is now recognized for adding a new dimension to interventional studies that cannot be obtained by measuring variables alone.

We have used grounded theory in qualitative research. Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that involves the construction of theory from data rather than testing theories through data. The method follows a systematic process of data collection, coding, categorization, and analysis to generate hypotheses and theories that reflect the meanings of people's interactions, social actions, and experiences.

We have collected qualitative information through interviews involving people from different segments of society, such as educationists, industry practitioners, policymakers, entrepreneurs, urban and rural consumers, university students, and job aspirants. The interviewees have partial or comprehensive experience with the community and current government policy in the country. Also, interviewees have experience with different government scheme benefits.

3.2 Research findings: Qualitative Analysis (Grounded theory, interview method)

To understand the domain expert's opinion, Interviews have been conducted among thirty interviewees as a part of grounded theory. Interviewees have been selected from different strata of society based on their domain expertise. Interviewees have been chosen from different part of India like east, west, north and south India. Age group has been chosen between 26 to 69 years based on their experience in their own

field. Out of 30 interviewees, 13% were female interviewee and 87% were male. Interviewees had diversified backgrounds. 3 interviewees had work experience in low level management, 9 interviewees had work experience in middle level management and 18 participants had experience in top level management.

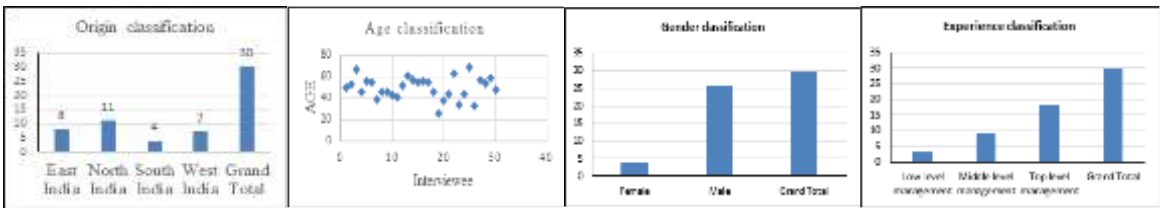

Fig1: Classification of interviewees based on origin, age, gender, experience

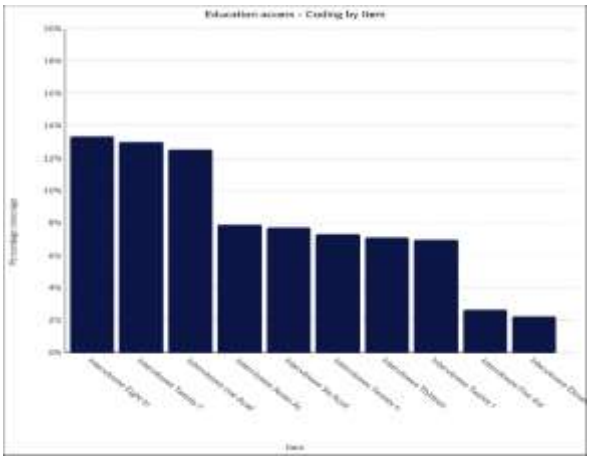

Fig 2: Education access: coding outcome through Nvivo 15 qualitative analysis

Around 10% of interviewees expressed deep concerns about the need for education access, 17% of the interviewees expressed moderate, and 6% expressed shallow concerns. Educational access is the key to social mobility, and it generates an informed, skilled workforce with organized training. Thus, it is related to the availability of human resources, which creates a good supply pool for industry and motivates foreign investors to invest. The adult literacy rate increased from 61% in 2001 to 74% in 2018. In 2011, rates were 60 per cent for Scheduled Castes and 52 per cent for Scheduled Tribes. In 2015, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the primary level stood at 99 per cent (98 per cent for boys and 100 per cent for girls). At the Upper Primary level, 93 per cent (89 per cent for boys and 97 per cent for girls) and the annual dropout rate at the primary level was around 21 per cent, with a slight advantage for girls. The Gender Parity Index has begun to favor girls at all levels of school education, except for Scheduled Caste students in higher education and Scheduled Tribe students at all levels of education. However, the pandemic has changed the success rate downward in recent times due to school closures.

Intergenerational mobility depends on family earning background—people from farming backgrounds and the lower middle-class struggle to uplift social mobility. Socioeconomic factors play a vital role in uplifting social mobility. If teachers are not attending classes due to other commitments like census surveys or the distribution of free bees under government welfare schemes, the education process at school suffers. Here, the objective of education access suffered due to the government policy execution process.

National education policy has a scope of multidimensional teaching and skill-based learning opportunities, but it needs teachers' training before ground-level execution. Of course, India is a country where policy implementation comes first, and then policymakers think of infrastructure for implementation; otherwise, it takes many years to conceptualize and execute. Teachers need a structural course curriculum for the self-development and upskilling process. If teachers are not interested in taking relevant courses for the students, then the whole objective of NEP will be lost. Project-based learning is the process that needs to be executed in the classroom among students. However, teachers are taking NEP as a burden and want to implement it with an ongoing curriculum process. Therefore, measurable outcomes are missing. Students have their dreams to fulfil. Teachers need to act as catalysts to turn the dream true. Students come from different socioeconomic levels, from Tier One and Tier Two cities or rural areas to high schools and universities, to brighten their careers. However, it has been found that many students need to write more letters in the English language and their mother language, even at undergraduate and post-graduation levels. This is pathetic to digest. It concludes that the education system needs to be more foolproof, and there are gaps to fill. Education access is spread across society's pyramid, but skill development programs still need to be in the back seat due to a lack of industry-institute collaboration. Students avail themselves of scholarship programs and sometimes take advantage of system lacuna. Accountability is absent against policy implementation. This is the biggest problem in the current education system. Even in some universities, teachers can skip regular or biometric attendance forms. Teachers sometimes associate themselves with outside commercial institutes for better pay whereas they need to pay more attention to their regular commitment, for which they are accountable to the government. After all, their salary comes from taxpayer's hard-earned money. Therefore, education access is moderate, and we need to work on gaps to achieve better social mobility.

Education in India is gaining momentum. The quality of education also increased—the cost of education in India is cheaper than in European countries. The child policy in European and American countries is helping high-earning parents better support the next generation for better access to education. The average age in China is increasing, and China has a shortage of educated young people. Migrants from Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Pakistan are working in China as China has a lack of young working groups. Migrants also prefer to migrate to developed countries and are reluctant to return to their home country. Intergenerational & intragenerational development among migrants and social mobility are happening. Chinese migrate to the United States of America for better intergenerational and intragenerational mobility. As the Chinese government has shown stricter civil rules in the last couple of years, therefore Chinese parents are suggesting that their children stay in the United States of America and not come back to China. This means all fellow citizens are conscious of their mobility, regardless of government intervention.

In India, education access is not universal, and it is gender specific. Boys are getting more advantage over girls. Girl children struggle to reach schools in remote areas. Cast-based educational access still exists in different parts of the country. Quality job creation and skill-based job creation are facing challenges as the government needs a firm policy on that subject. People are now self-motivated, but spending patterns still need to be improved. Equal opportunity for girls in education and employment is critical to achieving gender equality and women empowerment.

Education enables women and men to become equal social, economic, and political stakeholders and is the basis for developing a democratic society. In India, the gender gap expands in secondary education compared to primary education and widens further at tertiary levels. The higher the level of education, the

wider the gender gap. Girls dropping out prematurely and lagging boys in retention rates are the issues of highest concern in our country. Scholarships and the establishment of safe dormitories will facilitate girls' participation in secondary education. Policymakers and people to come forward and support the cause of equal opportunity to help our girls feel valued and become contributing citizens of our great nation.

Here, we need to take reference from an article (Singh et al., 2021, Social Mobility in India) The rapid rise in income inequality in India is a serious concern. While the emphasis is on inclusive growth, it seems complicated to tackle the problem without looking at the intricacies of the problem. Social mobility is an essential tool that helps reach the cause of the problem and focuses on bringing long-term equality to the country. The notion of social mobility is related to equality of opportunities so that individuals can achieve higher social positions regardless of the social background of their parents. It has two motivations: first, allowing better utilization of available talents leads to increased overall efficiency and productivity in the labour market; second, its objective seems more realistic than equality of outcomes among citizens, which is a desirable objective from many points of view, (Corak, 2020). It encourages human capital investment that can be made equally available to all sections of society through better public institutions and policies. While equality of opportunities leads to more social mobility, higher income inequality threatens social mobility. In this context, the famous Great Gatsby Curve shows a negative cross-country relationship between income inequality and inter-generational mobility mentioned in Corak (2013), which suggests that inequality skews opportunity and lowers inter-generational mobility. In ancient India, a person's caste determined education, skills, and occupation. Thus, there was not much freedom to move between different levels of society (Deshpande, 2010). Although, since 1950, the emphasis has been on abolishing the caste structure and providing equal opportunities to all, substantial limitations still exist in the country's occupational structure, as shown by Reddy (2015).

Within the same period, the country has experienced a substantial increase in income inequality, which can be proved by the fact that the share of the top ten per cent income group in national income is increasing, and the share of the middle 40 per cent and lower 50 per cent income groups is decreasing (Chancel et al., 2019). Interestingly, the country has also experienced rapid economic growth during this period. In this regard, Aiyar and Ebeke (2020) conclude that the low level of inter-generational mobility may be the cause of why high economic growth coexists with rising income inequality. Social origin is strongly tied to education attainment and is associated with later access to occupation opportunities. For instance, higher education has strong ties with white-collar occupations. India needs to Improve the quality and equity of education, with a particular focus on early childhood education. The government needs to enhance investment in youth-centric interventions to support the transition from schooling to employment and develop pathways for youth to enter professional/organized sector careers irrespective of their backgrounds at birth. Improve labour market conditions through structural reforms and encourage more inclusive companies without biases in hiring, promoting, and remunerating.

In rural areas, students are first-generation learners. They are nowadays literate but need to be made aware. Awareness of literacy makes the students well-informed fighters in the job market. For first-generation learners, skill development and academic background are the key. University offers many skills development programs along with academics, but due to a lack of awareness, particularly rural students miss the opportunity. Their family needs to be better informed as well. Therefore, family counselling is also required for a student's development. Students need moral support from their families to adopt modern learning processes and acquire new skills. National education policy is based on project-based learning. Here, the mother should be taught at the primary level as it is necessary for the overall growth of a student

from the beginning. Skill training is needed at all levels. Intragenerational and intergenerational mobility will happen while students undergo customized skill development programs, which will help them secure jobs or entrepreneurship in this competitive world. It will allow them to increase social mobility.

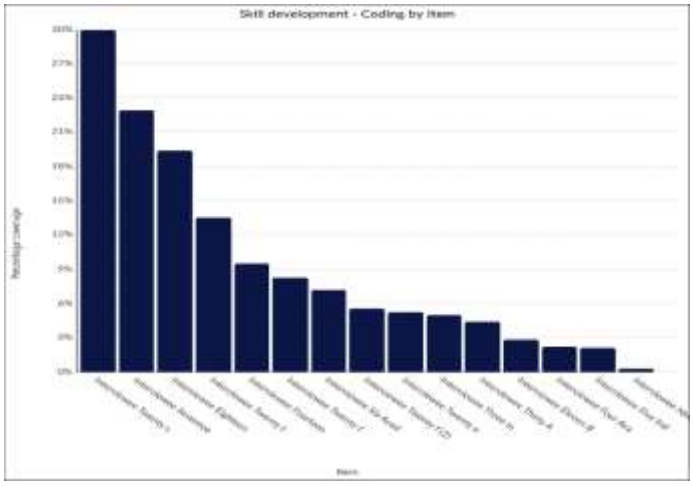

Fig 3: Skill development: coding outcome through Nvivo 15 qualitative analysis

Skill development is a hot topic in the Indian context. Half of the interviewees touched on the point firmly to moderately. The Ministry is responsible for the coordination of all Skill Development efforts across the country, the removal of the disconnect between the demand and supply of skilled manpower, building the vocational and technical training framework, skill up-gradation, building of new skills and innovative thinking, not only for existing jobs but also jobs that are to be created. The Ministry aims to develop skills on a large scale with speed and high standards to achieve its vision of a 'Skilled India'. It is aided in these initiatives by its functional arms: Directorate General of Training (DGT), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and 37 Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) as well as 33 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs/NSTI(w)), about 15000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) under DGT and 187 training partners registered with NSDC. The Ministry also intends to work with the existing network of Skill Development centers, universities and other alliances in the field. Further, collaborations with relevant Central Ministries, State governments, international organizations, industry and NGOs have been initiated for multi-level engagement and more impactful implementation of Skill Development efforts. The Ministry of Skill Development has a vision for 2025:

Enable individual economic gains and social mobility; create a learner-centric and demand-driven skills market; facilitate aspirational employment and entrepreneurship generation; improve overall productivity for enterprises; and catalyze economic growth.

Though skill development activity is limited to the tenth or twelfth standard, graduates get different skill development activity opportunities. The government has developed the education ecosystem in a healthy manner so that per capita income has increased. GDP also increased from lower strata to higher strata. Easy access to technology helps students reach out to different foreign institutes through online platforms and allows them to be upskilled. Due to high intragenerational mobility, both husband and wife earn decent salaries and can care for family expenses under moderate inflation. Now, children's education is a small challenge for double-income couples. So, education access and skill development are helping social mobility to increase in the Indian context. At the same time, the teaching process should not be robotic by

reflection. Reflective teachers evaluate themselves through the teaching process and avoid predetermined deliverables.

If we do the gap analysis, job aspiration is different in India between rural and urban areas. Rural people have government job aspirations. However, the government has limitations on permanent job creation. Entrepreneur development and startups are the way out where job aspirants need to take the initiative and take the challenges to create jobs instead of asking for jobs. Rural young people have plenty of opportunities to use new technologies in different areas. This is how education access and skill development can increase social mobility. People must take the initiative on their own.

Educational access and skill development programs enhance social mobility by providing individuals with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities necessary to improve their socioeconomic status. These programs contribute to social mobility in several ways:

- They ensure equal opportunity by providing access to quality education for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background and implementing inclusive policies like scholarships and financial aid to help disadvantaged groups.
- Skill development programs, including vocational training and lifelong learning, equip individuals with in-demand skills, increasing their employability and ability to secure better-paying jobs.
- These programs support economic empowerment by enabling individuals to earn higher incomes and potentially start businesses, thereby driving community growth.

As per the Ministry of External Affairs, 1.6 crore Indians were living abroad as migrants, with over 80 lakhs working in West Asia alone. After skill development, these people need help finding the right job choice in India and migrating. However, in recent days, many Indians have been looking beyond traditional jobs and venturing into new areas as entrepreneurs. Indians are pursuing sports tech as a new business area and job prospects and taking social media and artificial intelligence as professional choices. Government jobs are very few. From 2014 to 2022, around 22 crore job applications were submitted for various government jobs, and only 7 lakh candidates were selected, which is 0.33% of applications. After over 75 years of independence, youth still queue up for government-stable jobs due to social security. If they have social security, they will venture for private employment and can take risks for uncertainty. Therefore, social mobility is inching up slowly.

By demography, urban citizens have better access than rural citizens. People migrate from urban to rural for better access to education. Migrated people struggle for accommodation in the city and are forced to stay with struggle as city life is expensive. Rural people migrate for higher studies in villages. The government needs to put high schools and colleges with assurance of good faculty and infrastructure. It will help rural students to continue their education from home and to save a lot of money. It will help to decentralize higher education and reduce pressure on cities. Innovative city projects must be conceptualized with education and skill development infrastructure to accommodate local students. Students need ITI in rural areas in a new format, considering future job prospects. Industry institute alignment is required to address future industry needs. The government's role is limited. The government will provide the infrastructure and industry institutes to collaborate on the selection of course curricula.

The government should identify a section of people below the poverty level for skill development. More skill development programs related to information technology and healthcare must be identified. Healthcare practitioners and academics need to be trained on the backdrop of artificial intelligence and information technology. In academics, 100% of the money is not utilized due to improper selection of programs and lack of continual monitoring. Students need to receive stipends regularly. Unhealthy

accommodation is a big issue in urban hostels. Rural areas have a scarcity of high schools and universities, which jeopardized the dream of young rural students on many occasions. Education access and skill development programs need to be implemented with actionable outcomes that may positively impact social mobility.

The practical application of education is lagging. In Singapore, the practical understanding of theories is good as they follow project-based learning. In India, project-based learning has already been implemented, but the actions are not practical as teachers are not trained for implementation.

Adult learning and adult education are also good in developed countries. In Singapore, USA, students of the fifth standard undergo project-based learning, semester structure, audiovisual, and practical examinations. In India, theoretical training is good in the classroom, but practical training is not up to the mark at the school level. Therefore, while students complete their middle school and high school, they acquire more theoretical knowledge than practical knowledge. They become afraid to apply theory to practical purposes, which drags them behind in competition against other students. National education policy is designed to balance practical and theoretical chapters, which need to be implemented irrespective of board at the central and state levels. Teachers need to be trained and focused on teaching and the overall grooming of students. In government schools, teachers are busy with census surveys, distribution of government aid, and election duty, so they struggle to allocate time for teaching.

The government needs to be watchful for grass-roots education access at the bottom of the pyramid and skill development, and periodic performance assessments of teachers are very much required.

Skill development should be linked with artificial intelligence and robotics to match industry expectations. Educational access is paramount and needs bonding between central and state departments. Standardization of syllabus is required to provide a common platform to students across the board. Higher education has been privatized in almost all sectors, and economic factors play a significant role. The government now has less control over higher education as private sectors are present to make money. Corruption among government departments is giving clean entry to the private sector to make money after jeopardizing government infrastructure. In government schools, student and parent counseling are absent; therefore, students need to be more focused. Unemployment among degree holders is increasing. Even career counselling is happening outside of government colleges and universities professionally.

Education mobility and income mobility are the most essential parts of social mobility. Both education and income mobility help to increase intragenerational mobility and intergenerational mobility. This flow of inclusive growth factors helps to increase absolute education mobility. People below the poverty level get a boost under intragenerational mobility. Reducing socio-economic barriers and rising social status help increase absolute mobility. Education is essential for inclusive growth. Stagewise, different politics put additional barriers to overall growth. Every state should have equality in subject and syllabus levels so that teachers can teach equally to the students. The government should provide equality in infrastructure, including in remote villages. The mode of giving education has changed for a good reason, like through the internet, audiovisual, interactive video sessions, and project-based learning. Critical thinking, including lifelong learning, is of utmost importance. Health and mental health are essential to focus on leading career and decision-making processes.

We need equal quality of education across the board. Examination paper evaluation differences between the urban and rural sectors create the false impression that rural areas are behind urban areas. Educators and policymakers can fill this gap. The gap between academics and industry needs to be identified. Academics and industry can empower the next generation.

4. Conclusion:

People are our asset but not our liability. Many countries like the USA, the UK, Australia, Singapore, and Finland have already adopted spatial literacy programs to ensure every student can develop spatial skills for future success. However, in India, we follow the traditional teaching process. It is becoming increasingly important to close this educational gap to guarantee that our students are equipped with this knowledge. Spatial literacy involves mental rotation, spatial visualization, and understanding spatial relationships. Introducing virtual reality will fill the gap between teaching skills in urban and rural areas. National Education Policy 2020 recommends using tools like AR and VR to teach, but implementation remains a challenge. Educators, policymakers, and stakeholders must take spatial learning seriously and ensure students can develop these skills and augment social mobility.

5. Limitations

This study has a few limitations.

1. We could not conduct a field survey to test the impact of five government schemes related to health, education, skill development, working opportunities, infrastructure, and technology access.
2. Our study is limited to interviews of a section of people who represent a section of society.
3. Considering India's 1.4 billion population, multilingualism, and cultural differences, the sample size is very small for representation.
4. This study says that social mobility is the key to inclusive growth. However, we do not have in-depth data on the different determinants of social mobility, and hence, analysis of intergenerational mobility within a time frame/locality is missing.
5. Here, we have taken the opportunity to use interview and convenience sampling methods.

The convenience sampling method has limitations, such as sampling bias, selection bias, inability to generalize data, difficulty breaking down results into demographic data, positivity bias, and low external validity.

Here, we could not conduct quantitative analysis or use a mixed method to justify the arguments with mathematical relations.

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