



The Impact of Higher Education on Social Mobility

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Abstract: Higher education has an effect on how people move around in society. This means it can help people get jobs and have more money. The people who wrote this article looked at a lot of information and data to see how education affects peoples' lives. They found out that going to college or university can really help people improve their situation and even stop being poor.

Higher education is very important for mobility. It can help people get out of poverty. There are still a lot of problems that make it hard for some people to get a good education. These problems are especially bad for people who are already treated unfairly.

The article says that the people, in charge of education and the government need to work to make sure everyone has an equal chance to get a good education. This will help people move up in society and make things fairer. Higher education can really help with mobility. It can help people have lives.

Key-words: Higher Education, Social Mobility, Socio-economic Status, Occupational Mobility, Educational Attainment, Inequality.

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1. Introduction

Higher education is very important for people who want to improve their status. This article looks at how higher education affects mobility. It explores the connection between education, socioeconomic status and job opportunities. By studying existing research and data this article shows that higher education may be a tool for social mobility. It helps people improve their status and break the cycle of poverty.

However the article also highlights the barriers that prevent people from accessing quality education. These barriers affect marginalized and groups the most. The findings suggest that policymakers and educators must work together to create an inclusive and equitable higher education system. This system should promote mobility and reduce inequality.

Higher education has long been seen as a chauffeur of social mobility. It gives people the knowledge, skills and credentials they need to boost their status and life chances. The

correlation between education and social mobility is composite. Education can help individuals advance. It also reflects broader societal inequalities. As the global economy becomes more knowledge-based and competitive the importance of education in shaping social mobility has never been more pronounced.

2. Significance of the Topic

The topic of education and social mobility is significant for several reasons:

- i. It helps us understand inequality and how education can perpetuate or alleviate it.
- ii. Research on this topic can inform education policy and reform efforts creating inclusive and equitable higher education systems.
- iii. Higher education plays an impactful role in promoting economic development & understanding its impact on social mobility can help policymakers and educators create more effective strategies for economic growth.

3. Objectives of the Topic

The objectives of exploring this topic are:

- i. To analyze the relation between higher education and social mobility.
- ii. We need to identify the barriers and inequalities that limit access to quality education particularly for marginalized and disadvantaged groups.
- iii. We must understand the impact of education on social mobility including its potential to promote individual advancement and alleviate social inequality.
- iv. The findings of this research can inform education policy and practice highlighting strategies for promoting social mobility through higher education.

4. Literature Review

The relation between higher education and social mobility has been extensively studied in the literature.

➤ 4.1. Some key findings are mention below:

- The Role of Higher Education in Promoting Social Mobility
 - i. Human Capital Theory: Higher education is seen as a key investment in human capital, enhancing individuals' productivity and earning potential (Becker, 1964).
 - ii. Social Mobility: Studies have shown that higher education can promote social mobility by providing individuals with opportunities to boost their socioeconomic status (Halsey, 1995).
- Barriers to Access and Success

- i. Socioeconomic Background: Research has highlighted the persistent barriers to access and success in higher education faced by individuals from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds (Reay, 2001).
 - ii. Inequality: The literature also emphasizes the role of inequality in limiting opportunities for social mobility, with certain groups facing systemic barriers to accessing quality education (Trow, 1972).
- The Impact of Higher Education on Social Mobility
- i. Occupational Mobility: Evidence suggests that higher education can enhance occupational mobility; enabling individuals to access remunerate paying jobs and boost their socioeconomic status (Grubb, 2002).
 - ii. Earnings Premium: Research has also highlighted the earnings premium associated with higher education; with discrete with higher levels of education tend to earn more than those with lower levels of education (Psacharopoulos, 2006).
- Resent Review of Literature
- i. Brazil Younger Cohorts 2025: In cohorts born after educational expansion, mobility prospects for the highly educated are not significantly better than for those with lower education. The impact of a credential diminishes as the system expands - the "positionality of education".
 - ii. Scotland 2025: Post-1992 universities widen access but have lower retention. Research-intensive universities have high retention but limited access. There is an inverse correlation between recruiting disadvantaged students and retention.
 - iii. Torche (2011) found that in the US, educational expansion contributed to intergenerational mobility because the association between parental class and destination is weaker among the highly educated. This "compositional effect" means more people getting degrees reduces the overall link between origin and destination.
 - iv. Benabou, Kramarz, and Prost (2015) developed an intergenerational model of a two-tier higher education system. They found that a wider gap in per-student expenditure and quality between "elite" and "standard" universities reduces social mobility. A larger quality gap reinforces family background at the expense of personal ability.
 - v. Using UK administrative data linked to tax records, Crawford et al. (2016) showed that attending university significantly increases the probability of moving from the bottom to top income quintile by age 30. Higher education was found to be a key policy lever for mobility.
- 4.2 After the Review of Literature, we can say that-
- Higher education is seen as an investment in intellectual capital or expertise enhancing individual's productivity and earning potential.
 - Higher education can promote mobility by providing individuals with opportunities to boost their socioeconomic status.
 - Persistent barriers to access and success in education face individuals from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Inequality limits opportunities for mobility with certain groups facing systemic barriers to accessing quality education.
- Higher education can enhance mobility enabling individuals to access better-paying jobs and boost their socioeconomic status.
- There is an earnings premium associated with education, with solo, with higher levels of education tend to earn more than those with lower levels of education.

5. Analysis of the Literature Review

The literature review highlights the relation between higher education and social mobility. While higher education can promote mobility there are persistent barriers and inequalities that limit surfeit to quality education. Legislator and educators must work together to create inclusive and equitable higher education systems that promote social mobility and reduce imbalance. The impact of education on social mobility is significant. In India for example graduate unemployment is high with 11 million out of 63 million graduates' unemployed as of 2023. 7% of unemployed graduates secure permanent salaried employment within a year. However higher education can promote mobility by enhancing occupational mobility and earning potential. Social mobility can have reaching effects on individuals, communities and the broader society. It drives participation contributing to GDP growth and bridges gaps between socio-economic groups promoting fairness and equal opportunities. Social mobility enhances opportunities for marginalized communities boosting confidence and self-esteem and fosters inclusivity and diversity leading to a harmonious society. To improve mobility through higher education we need to increase access to education particularly for marginalized groups. We must integrate training and industry-relevant skills into the curriculum. Improving the quality of education including infrastructure, faculty and curriculum relevance is also crucial. We can leverage platforms to reach a wider audience and collaborate with industries for internships, placements and research. Mentorship programs can guide students from backgrounds. Policy implications include increasing funding for scholarships and financial aid for marginalized groups. We need to improve access to education by expanding distance learning options and establishing more regional centers and satellite campuses. By working policymakers and educators can create a more inclusive and unbiased higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality. Higher education is the key to unlocking mobility and it is up to us to make it more accessible and effective for all. Higher education and social mobility are closely linked. Higher education can help people improve their status and break the cycle of poverty. However there are barriers that prevent people from accessing quality education. We must work together to fostering equity and unbiased higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality. This is the way to secure that higher education fulfills its potential as a driver of social mobility. The importance of the education in promoting social mobility cannot be overstated. This is the key to unlocking the potential of individuals and

societies. By speculation in education we can create a more unbiased and just society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Higher education is not a personal investment; it is a societal investment that can have far-reaching benefits. In conclusion higher education is critical for mobility. It provides lone with the knowledge, expertise and credentials they need to boost their status and life chances. However there are barriers that prevent people from accessing quality education. We must work together to create an inclusive and equitable higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality. This is the way to assure that higher education fulfills its potential as a driver of social mobility.

Higher education and social mobility are issues that require a comprehensive approach. We need to consider the factors that affect access to education including socioeconomic status, geographic location and prior educational attainment. By understanding these factors we can create interventions that address the unique requirements of different groups. The correspondence between education and social mobility is not just about individual advancement; it is also about societal progress. When individuals have access to premium education they are more likely to contribute to their communities and societies in ways. This in turn can lead to growth, social cohesion and improved health and wellbeing. Higher education credentials provide access to professional and non-manual occupations, thus promoting mobility. Elite institutions act as gatekeepers, reproducing advantage at the top. When degrees become common, labor markets shift and the signaling value of credentials declines. Higher education remains a powerful, but conditional, pathway to social mobility. It promotes mobility when access is equitable, quality differences are small, and labor markets reward credentials. However, institutional stratification, cultural barriers, and credential inflation can limit or reverse its equalizing potential. Future research and policy must address the entire pipeline from school to work.

In the end higher education is a tool for social mobility. It has the potential to transform lives and societies. However it requires a commitment to creating an inclusive and unbiased higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality. This is a challenge that we must all take seriously as the future of our societies depends on it. Higher education is the key to unlocking mobility. It provides individuals with the knowledge, expertise and credentials they need to boost their status and life chances. However there are barriers that prevent people from accessing quality education. We must work together to create an inclusive and unbiased higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality.

Table:1. The impact of higher education on social mobility in India

Indicator	Description	Statistics
Graduate Unemployment	Unemployment rate among graduates (20-29 years)	11 million out of 63 million graduates (2023)
Job Absorption	Percentage of graduates securing permanent salaried employment	7% within a year
Social Mobility	Decline in caste and gender based occupational segregation	Significant decline but disparities persist
Education Quality	Expansion of higher institution	1,644 (pre-liberalization) to 70,000 (2023)
Finance Barriers	Access to higher education for marginalized	7% of SC/ST youth are graduates (2023)

- Between 2004 and 2023, India added 5 million graduates annually, but only 2.8 million found employment.
- Graduate unemployment remains high, with 40% of graduates up to age 25 unemployed.
- Social mobility is hindered by disparities in access to quality education and financial barriers ^{1 2}.

Table:2 Education Institutions and Enrollment

Year	No of Universities	No of Colleges	No of Standalone Institutions	Total
2015-2016	799	3 9071	119 23	5 1793
2016-2017	864	4 0026	116 69	5 2559
2017-2018	903	3 9050	10 011	4 9964
2018-2019	993	3 9931	10 725	5 1649
2019-2020	104 3	4 2343	117 79	5 5165

Table:3 Registered Unemployed (In Lakhs)

Year	Registered Employed	Placement Provided	Remained Unemployment
2016	59.6	4.1	55.5
2017	39.5	4.2	35.3
2018	38.3	4.0	34.3
2019	34.5	3.7	30.8
2020	20.7	3.1	17.6

- Graduate Unemployment: 11 million out of 63 million graduates (20-29 years) were unemployed as of 2023.
- Job Absorption: Only 7% of unemployed graduates secure permanent salaried employment within a year.
- Employment Growth: 5 million graduates added annually, but only 2.8 million found employment (2004-2023).
- Salary Premium: Graduates earn ₹9,000 more monthly than non-graduates, down from ₹12,000 in 2011-12.
- Gender Gap: Women graduates earn nearly the same as men (₹18,829 vs ₹19,573), but face higher unemployment (39.3% vs 20% for men).

6. Impact of Social Mobility:

The impact & enhance of education on social mobility is significant. It can drive participation contributing to GDP growth and bridge gaps between socio-economic groups promoting fairness and equal opportunities. Higher education can enhance opportunities for marginalized communities boosting confidence and self-esteem and foster inclusivity and diversity leading to a harmonious society.

7. Strategies to Improve Social Mobility through Higher Education:

To improve mobility through higher education we need to increase access to education particularly for marginalized groups. We must integrate training and industry-relevant skills into the curriculum. Improving the quality of education including infrastructure, faculty and curriculum relevance is also crucial.

8. Policy implications:

Policy implications include increasing funding for scholarships and financial aid for marginalized groups. We need to improve access, to education by expanding distance learning options and establishing more regional centers and satellite campuses. By working policymakers and educators can create a more inclusive and unbiased higher education system that promotes social mobility and reduces inequality.

Higher education and social mobility are closely linked. Higher education can help people improve their status and break the cycle of poverty. However,

- 8.1 Improve Things:

- i. Help teachers get better. Have good classrooms.
- ii. Encourage people to think of ideas and try new things.

- 8.2 Work With Companies:

- i. Work to give students internships, training and jobs.
- ii. Help students learn the skills they need.

- 8.3 Help Groups:

- i. Make sure students from poor areas and women have the same chances as everyone else.
- ii. Give them someone to look up to and guide them on their career path.

9. Conclusion:

In the end college is a deal for people in India who want to get ahead in life. It can help them overcome the problems they face because of where they come from.. To make this happen we need to work hard to make sure everyone has the same chances. We need to make sure the colleges are good and that we are working with companies to help students. If we do this we can make college a fairer place for everyone. This will help India become a country for everyone.

When we look at what people have written about college and getting ahead in life we see that it is very important to understand how they are connected. Teachers and policymakers need to work to make college a fairer place for everyone. College can help people get jobs and earn more money, which can help them get ahead in life. There are still many problems that make it hard for some people to go to college especially those who are poor or come from certain groups.

- 9.1 Important Points

- i. College Helps People Get Ahead: College can help people get jobs and earn more money, which can help them get ahead in life and be more equal.
- ii. Problems Getting Into College: Where people come from and how much money they have can make it hard for them to go to college which makes it harder for them to get ahead.
- iii. Make College Fairer: Teachers and policymakers need to work to make college a fairer place for everyone so that everyone has the same chances.

• 9.2 What to do next

- i. Change the Rules: We can change the rules to make it easier for people to go to college and get ahead in life.
- ii. Help Specific Groups: We can help people who're poor or come from certain groups to make sure they have the same chances as everyone else.
- iii. Do Research: We need to learn more, about how college helps people get ahead in life so that we can make good decisions.

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