

# INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY OF WOMEN

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## Abstract

The “glass ceiling effect” comes to mind whenever growth of women is studied. But the fact is that a majority of the world’s poor are women (Oxam.org). Even though social mobility is the same for men and women, however in real life many unique situations are faced by women-like pregnancy, childbirth, child-raising, care of family and unpaid house work etc which profoundly effects their social mobility. Such situations greatly limit their opportunities. Women spend most of their day doing unpaid work at home, farm, etc limiting their ability to earn money and come out of poverty.

The government has launched many incentives to uplift the economic viability of women. The society and families have welcomed and encouraged female education. Women are more and more supported , and accepted when they go out of their homes to work. Thus now is the most opportune moment to study the social mobility of women.

## Keywords

Social Mobility, Intergenerational Mobility, Educational Level, Property and Wealth Luxuries, Pay, Job Status, Vertical Mobility and Lateral Mobility.

## 1. Introduction

Social Mobility can be understood as the movement of individuals (women in our case) or a group (women in general) from one social stratum to another.

Related to the concept of mobility are the concepts of ascribed status (acquired at birth) and achieved status (earned during one’s lifetime). Even though social mobility is the same for men and women, however in real life, many situations are faced by women which are different in nature and unique to them alone. Traditionally women experience the single most pronounced social mobility (event) is after their marriage. A woman enters the status of her husband and his family after her wedding. This is the most accepted social mobility of women. This phenomenon is all pervasive and can be seen every where from cities to villages, high flying society to poorest of the poor across all castes, religions since ancient times the world over.

This research paper aims to identify identifies the reasons and influencing factors behind the social mobility of women. This paper explores the characteristics of social mobility, the opportunities and challenges faced by socially mobile woman.

## 2. Review of Literature

Social Mobility can be understood as the movement of individuals (women in our case) or a group (women in general) from one social stratum to another.

Related to the concept of mobility are the concepts of ascribed status (acquired at birth) and achieved status (Lindon , (1936)). Ascribed statuses are those acquired at birth (of race, caste and sex); where as achieved status are those earned and preserved during one’s life time, over which one has control. It is in this category that social mobility occurs. The fourth status ascribed at birth is social class, but it is alterable in the sense that one can move up or down the class holder (vertical mobility) or remain in where he or she is born (horizontal mobility) (Lindon, (1936)).

Many researchers in the west have focussed intergenerational mobility of father’s and sons where correlations between the incomes of fathers and sons were done to predict mobility. Similar studies were done by Miller (1960); Bell (1968), Mallik (1979), Solon (1999), Black and Devereux (2011) also fall in the above category.

Azam (2015) further reports of few studies which examine intragenerational transmission between fathers and daughters DiPrete and Grunsky (1990); Chadwick and Solon (2002), Olivetti and Paserman (2015) Dauli et al (2010). Studies done in India have also focused on intergenerational mobility as reported by Azam. Jalan and Murugai (2008) have used National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of 1992-93 and 1998-99 to study the educational mobility for both men and women in the age groups of 15-19. IHDS-2005 was used by Maitra and Sharma (2009) who studied families to see the effect of parent’s education (both parents) on years of education of children.

Chaudhary & Sinha(2018) found that about 56 percent of daughters have experienced upward intergenerational educational mobility for all in India; this proportion is as high as 70 percent for urban areas and about 49 percent for rural areas. In rural areas about 49 percent of women are employed while for urban areas this proportion is as low as 23 percent only. (Chaudhary and Sinha (2018)). Emran and Shilpi (2018) found that parental education predicted less than 20 percent variance in child’s

education and the decline has increased over time. In case of the relationship of parental education with that of women the (relationship) was even more weak. Urban women were more accepted in the labour market, Munshi & Rosenzweig (2006) (as reported by Emran and Shilpi) found that lower caste urban woman had more freedom in occupational choices as compared to sons who followed in their father's footsteps. Thus, sons had horizontal mobility as they maintained father's status. Whereas urban lower caste women went to english medium schools and got the call centre jobs thus upward mobility.

Verenkar and Singhal (2017) found that the education levels of her in-laws and her husband had little association with her freedoms, however, woman living with their in-laws are less likely to enjoy agency freedoms.

Swaminathan et. al (2011) found that fewer woman than men are home owners and on an average, their homes are of lower value than men's homes.

Lahoti et al (2016) found that very few adult women were land owners and those who did inherit mainly did on the death of their spouse. Evidence shows that property in the name of woman is empowering having a transformative effect on their lives.

Emran and Shilpi(2015) compared the 1992-93 and 2005-06 NFHS data to see if the children (16-27 year old). Education was correlated to the educational level of their parents. They found that the relationship was weakening over time. Azam and Bhatt (2015) also found such a trend, but also found no weakening in the correlation between father-son educational attainments. However information on daughters and mothers throws light on the actualizing capability passed on intergenerationally by the mothers to her children.

This study aims to compare the social mobility of mother and daughter who face similar challenges pertaining to social mobility – like marriage, child-bearing and unpaid work. They also face similar controls faced as brides & daughter-in-laws, in their husband home. No decision is ever taken post marriage where their well-being happiness, wishes growth or dreams are kept in mind; such a bleak situation is never faced by men. So this study aims to compare daughters with their mothers to study intergenerational social mobility.

### **3. Objectives of this Study**

The main objectives of this study are

- I. To Study the concept of inter-generational mobility of women.
- II. To compare the social mobility of daughters with their mothers.

### **4. Research Methodology**

A Dipstick survey methodology was used in this study where 27 women were interviewed. Their age was noted down. The vehicle their family owned was also noted down as indicator of wealth index (as was used in NFHS 2015-16)

### **5. Social Mobility**

Social mobility is the movement of an individual or a group from one social stratum to another. In this research the perceived individual mobility of daughters in comparison of their mothers is studied. The intergenerational social mobility of women is studied.

### **6. Intergenerational Mobility**

Intergenerational mobility is studied by perceived comparisons as reported by the daughters with her mother, across various dimensions. Such as education, property ownership (natal, self), wealth and property comparisons, ownership of luxury comparisons, who pays EMI's, is mother working, does self work, pay comparisons and job comparisons were made.

Intergenerational mobility was measured by perceived comparisons with own mother as to who has more wealth, property, luxuries, pay, job status, or is more educated, or who is working, or in whose name is own house. There is one question which has no comparisons to mother but has reference to self only – who pays the EMI's. It reflects sharing of economic responsibility.

### **7. Results**

The main findings of this study are shown below.

**Table 1. Showing the results for five dimensions of intergenerational dimensions of social mobility.**

<b>Intragenerational Dimensions of Social Mobility</b>	<b>Self more than mother</b>	<b>Mother more than self</b>	<b>Equal</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Education</b>	24	-	3	-
<b>Property and Wealth</b>	22	2	3	
<b>Luxury</b>	22	2	3	
<b>Pay</b>	23	2		2
<b>Job Status</b>	23	2	-	2

As can be seen from Table No 1 the whole sample reports upward mobility across all five dimensions.

**Table 2. Showing the ownership details of natal or own home and rent lease.**

Natal House Ownership n=27				Own House ownership or Rent Lease in Husband's name n = 27			
Father	Mother	Joint	Others	Husband	Woman	Joint	Rent
14	1	10	2	10	1	6	10

From the table no. 2 we find that there is an intergenerational similarity as only one woman had ownership right in the natal home. Out of 27 woman respondents 24 lived in homes owned by men. On further scrutiny of the data it was found that the Mother had a job and paid the EMIs thus she owned the natal house in her name. Most homes were either in the name of Father (14) or Husband (10) name. But we also find that 10, and 6 houses were owned jointly. On further scrutiny of the data, it was found that, all the 16 jointly owned homes were either natal homes (10) or own house (6) of women who were between 25 years to 40 years of age. Not a single joint ownership was reported by women who were between 40 years to 55 years of age.

Other findings of this data show that all the women who owned cars (10) lived in own home, whereas most of the motorbike (6 out of 7) owners lived in rented homes, whereas their parents had their own home. It was also reported that the women respondents who owned cycles, half of them (5) lived in own homes and half of them (5) lived in rented homes where as their parents owned own homes. More light can be thrown on this finding when we collate results related to EMI's and age.

**Table-3 Showing Intergenerational female Labour force participation (LFPR)**

n=27		n=27	
Mothers not employed	Employed Mothers	Employed Women	Not Employed Women
18	9	24	3

From the Table no 3 we find that there is much higher participation of women in the labour force. The data shows a quantum jump in the female labour force participation intergenerationally. In the mother's generation we find that 18 out of 27 mothers were not employed and only 9 were employed. But the daughters reversed the trend to almost more than doubling 24 out of 27 women are employed. Only 3 out of 27 are not employed.

On further looking into the data of the 3 women who are not working, 2 report horizontal mobility along the educational, wealth and property and luxury dimensions and 1 woman reports downward mobility on wealth and property and luxury dimensions.

**Table 4. Showing the pattern of EMI payment across age range and type of vehicle owned.**

Age range	EMI Paid By 25*								
	Husband			Woman			Joint		
	Cycle	M.Bike	Car	Cycle	M.Bike	Car	Cycle	M.Bike	Car
25-40		2					4*	5	5
40-55	4*		5						

From the Table no. 4 we find that all the motorbike owners are paying EMIs. They also belong to the 25 yrs to 40 yrs age range. They are probably in the early part of their career and in the process of buying their homes. Joint EMI payments made by this group shows small steps taken by woman in sharing of economic responsibilities. Joint EMI payments (given by women and Husbands) is done exclusively in the 25yrs to 40 yrs age range. Women do not single handedly pay EMIs. Sole EMI payments are done by Husbands alone and especially in the 40 to 55 years group, however 2 instances were also found in the 25 years to 40 years group.

- One individual in each cell did not take any loan so this question was not applicable. Thus the n=25.

## **8. Discussion**

This study reported upward mobility of woman across all dimensions of intergenerational mobility. The 1992-93 NHFS reports that India has seen cohort differences in female literacy, which suggests that there has been improvement in female literacy over time. For example, 17 percent of women of age 50 and over are literate, the literacy rate for females almost doubles to 33 percent for the ges of 40-44, and steadily increases to 48 percent for the ages 20-24 and 64 percent for the ages 10-14. The NFHS-4 2016 reports 68 percent of women are literate now. So subsequent generation is more literate than the previous one. Similar trend was found in the result of this study, where majority of the woman report higher educational level that their mothers.

Choudhary and Sinha (2018) have also found similar results. This is the direct result of the society and families welcoming and encouraging female education.

Almost all woman report upward employment (job) mobility barring only 3. Such upwardly mobile women also report upward mobility in job status and upward mobility in pay. When both spouses work and are upwardly mobile paywise and job status wise, their disposable income increases. This leads to an exponential growth in property, wealth and luxuries. Thus these women report upward mobility across all the intergenerational dimensions of social mobility. Thus female education and female employment are decisive for upward mobility of women.

The quantum jump in the female labour force participation (LFPR) is due to the greater acceptance of women going out to work and pursuing careers.

Property symbolized by home is largely still owned by fathers and husbands. Similar trends was found by Lahoti et al (2016). They found that only 3.9 percent percent of women are land owners and also reported that only 6.5 percent of woman in these house holds owned houses, mainly inherited on the death of their spouses. But now in the age range of 25-40 years, homes jointly owned by both husbands and wife, with joint EMI payments are indicating a more equal participation in ownership is emerging. The NFHS (2016-17) used the type of vehicle owned as a part of wealth index in its survey. In this study type of vehicle was able to differentiate between different social statuses to some extent. Such as all the car owners, had bought and were living in their own homes. All the motorbike owners lived in the rented homes and all were in the 25-40 years age range, and in the process of buying their own homes. Thus type of vehicle owned can be a good indicator of wealth index on its own, as it can differentiate between different social classes.

## **9. Conclusion**

This research paper has identified female education, female employment, and pay as the influencing factors behind the upward social mobility of women. Intergenerational upward social mobility across the dimensions of wealth and property, luxury, joint ownership of home, or equal participation in economic growth is fuelled by the higher education, higher job status and higher pay. There is a change in how the society is encouraging , facilitating and accepting attempts of upward social mobility of women., New avenues have opened to encourage this change in the mind set.

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