

Meaning of Social Mobility

People are always keen to change their status and attain a higher one. A person belonging to lower strata of society on the availability of favourable conditions may move up in the status scale. But the opposite is also equally possible. People belonging to the higher strata may for some reason degrade and come down to the lower level. The movement of people in the status scale maybe referred to as social mobility.

Definitions of Social Mobility

- **Scott** - “Social mobility refers to “the movement of an individual or group from one social class or social stratum to another”.
- **Wallace and Wallace** - “Social mobility is the movement of a person or persons from one social status to another”.

Types of Social Mobility

1. **Vertical Social Mobility** – It is the movement of the individual from one status to the other. It involves a complete change in occupation, status, class, power. It also involves a higher or a lower position from which the individual had began.

There are various forms of vertical social mobility. Some of them have been discussed below.

- a. **Upward Mobility** – It indicates a rise or increase in the status of the individual from his earlier position. It refers to the movement from lower to higher occurs from position. Ascending mobility means the entry of i.e., within persons from lower strata and prestige to higher status and prestige groups. For example, if a person is born in a family of a sweeper and after acquiring must learn the cultural behaviors of officers. This requires the individual trying for upward social mobility to learn the following.

- (i) Ability to behave and work according to upper class people.
- (ii) Language, style and their dress pattern.
- (iii) He must live in that area of city where upper class people live.
- (iv) He must also develop the ability to participate in social functions organized by them.

Another examples of upward social mobility are promotion of a lecturer to readership and promotion of a minister of state to minister of cabinet rank etc

- b. **Downward Mobility** – This type of mobility may also be referred to as social failure. The position of the person descends or lowers as compared to the previous position. Downward or Descending mobility means going down of a person from higher position prestige and status to lower ones. It may occur due to political changes, Economic depression and crests of

character etc. This type of mobility is caused due to following two factors. (i) The first factor; is lack of initiative and efforts on the part of the people. Due to lethargy, rich and prosperous people have faced deseeding social mobility. (ii) The second factor which leads to downward vertical social mobility is social change. Downward mobility occurs in government and private services and is generally the outcome of some sort of inefficiency or acts of criminal tendencies.

- c. Inter-generational Social Mobility – It means the change in the status of the family from one generation to the other.
 - d. Intra-generational Social Mobility – This occurs when a person experiences mobility within the same life-span.
 - e. structural mobility - when the society or social structure changes as whole, not individually, it is called structural social mobility. It refers to mobility that is brought about by changes in stratification hierarchy itself. It is a vertical movement of a specific group, class or occupation relative to others in the stratification system. It is a type of forced mobility for it takes place because of the structural changes and not because of individual attempts. For example historical circumstances or labor market changes may lead to the rise or decline of an occupational group within the social hierarchy.
2. Horizontal Social Mobility – This type of mobility is a change in position without any change in status. It is the movement from one position to another within the same social status.

Education as a factor of Social Mobility

Education is one of the most crucial factors for upward social mobility. As the society has become industrialised there is a great demand for employees. Education helps in making the individuals more productive and at the same time increases their skills as well. With the required qualifications people aspire for occupations. In most of the cases they get the job and as consequence it leads to the development in their social status. This in turn leads to social mobility.

There are other factors of social mobility as well. They are: occupation, income, migration, industrialisation, motivation, economy, modernisation, etc. all these collectively or individually brings change in the social status or position of an individual.

Factors Affecting Social Mobility-

Economic Prosperity -There are three main groups; in the society known as poor, middle and rich. There are various differences in their standard of living, Rich people are respected very much in the society due to their riches.

Therefore, every individual in the society is trying his best to earn money and to improve upon his position so as to enter into the category of rich people.

Structure of Society- Social structure of society influences the social mobility. The societies of the world can be divided into two groups closed societies and open societies. Closed societies are caste ridden (as in India) and the status of a person is determined by his being born in a particular caste. Therefore, in such a society chances of mobility are very less because such society remains within the bonds of caste and heredity. Fore example, A person born in a family of Brahmins, may be poor. of bad character, will enjoy the status of Brahmin due to his birth; in a Brahmin family. But in an open society equality of opportunities are provided which encourage more social mobility due to the capabilities and educational achievement of the individuals.

Level of Aspiration and Achievement - Social mobility is directly proportional to the aspirations of the people. If, the people are more aspirants, we will find more social mobility in that society.

Demographic Structure- Social mobility is closely related with diffusion of population. Its size and density. Birth rate and migration of village folks towards towns and cities are closely connected to social mobility.

Education- Social mobility is promoted through development. Propagation and spread of education. The people who receive more and more education achieve higher and higher social status.

Occupational Prestige- All the occupations in the society do not get the same respect. Some professions carry higher prestige in comparison to other professions. For example. I.A.S. officers and Doctors are considered to be better than the Engineers, Lawyers and Teachers. Administration In a democratic society grater opportunities are provided for social mobility in comparison with other types of administrative societies, Democratic administration promotes social mobility to be great extent.

Legal and Political Factors- Many of the legal and political restrictions have been removed after independence. Untouchability has become a sin. Every one has seen provided political equality and equality of educational opportunities etc. Any member of the society can visit temples/gurudwaras etc. By these changes in the legal and political restrictions, mobility takes place from the lower group to the higher group.

Intelligence Factor - In the modern industrialized society. The inherited positions have become less and less because the person occupying the position cannot always give the same position to his son or daughter. Thus, there are changes in the social positions held from one generation to another generation and, thus, making the people mobile.

Education and Social Mobility- Education is a very potent means of encouraging social mobility in the Indian society. It has multidirectional influence in promoting social mobility. Education plays such an important role in following ways. 1. Education is the need of every person because on it depends proper development of man. It is education that reveals the latent qualities and potentiates of man and enables him to understand „Self and the environment surrounding him. 2. Education sharpens the intellect, widens the vision, helps in the wholesome and balanced development of man and above all it leads to social, economic and political development of a nation. 3. Both the streams of education i.e. formal and Non-formal play a great role in bringing about social mobility. 4. Formal education is directly and causally related to social mobility. This relationship is generally understood to be one in which formal education itself is a cause or one of the cause of vertical social mobility. 5. Education is directly related to occupational mobility and the subsequent improvement in economic status and on the other hand, it forms an element of social change. Persons with higher education and better employment are respected more in the society. 6. It is a purpose of education to develop within the individual such motivation as will make him to work hard for the improvement of his social position. 7. Higher education helps in gaining higher income and, thus, education is an important means for upward social mobility. 8. A change in occupation is considered to be the best single indicator of social mobility. The reason for it is that occupational status is closely correlated with educational status. Income, style of life and the other determinants of class status.

9. Education helps students belonging to lower strata of the society to go up in the social scale and attain a high social position in the society. 10. Education helps in preparing one-self employment, which is an important aspect of social uplift meant. 11. The popularity of education among women has considerably altered the social status of women. It has helped in raising their social position, status and achievement of high social prestige; which indicates upward social mobility of the women. Medium of instruction in educational system can play a great role in bringing about mobility among the people of the society. One of the effects of adopting a regional language as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges is that it hinders spatial mobility

of students and teachers which is related to both horizontal and vertical social mobility. The teachers belonging to the lower case , by joining this noble profession of teaching. Help in upward social mobility. Teachers engaged in research work innovations and imparting higher education help ;in breaking the barriers of caste and are respected by the students community for their help ,guidance and scholarly taste and talent and promote intergenerational social mobility. Education is a means to achieve higher social status and position in society . Hence, all students try to obtain more and more education to gain higher and higher social status without education. Achievement of higher status or social, mobility is not possible

College and universities play an important part in the social mobility of students. Not only the formal system of education but the non-formal system of education also acts as an important channel of social mobility. This system helps individuals who were devoid of the opportunities of education at a proper age to educate themselves. There are various ways of facilitating social mobility , such as political power, marriage, family affiliations and education, But the most sought after is education which is readily available to more people as educational facilities are expanded all over the world. Education is regarded as the channel of mobility as it is: High educational achievement is the aspiration of people . Few would question about a person's integrity when high academic qualification. Education has high relationship with income and occupation. The higher the educational level, the more prestigious the occupation, leading to higher annual This turn is associated with property , prestige, and Formal education is closely linked to upward social mobility and in this aspect, schools play an important role in sorting out individuals into their prospective levels, This is done through the system of examinations, supervision and promotions, Thus, education can assist the movement of persons into the top positions in society or elite mobility . Hence , formal education has become a prerequisite for many established professions such as doctors, lawyers, accountants, teachers, engineers and so forth. How does education enhance social mobility? First, education plays the role of a mechanism whereby social class positions are maintained across generations. A person from a higher social class is more likely to have be better educated which will enable him or her to maintain social class position. Second , education acts as a mechanism for social mobility. In this case, access to education is the key in determining the extent of mobility an individual can aspire in society. However, this is only possible if everyone gets an equal education; thus providing an avenue for mobility among the disadvantaged. For this group of people , education serves to

move upwards or to reduce the likelihood of downward mobility. Education has a functional value as well as a symbolic value. What is meant by functional value? Education is said to have a functional value when a person attends university to study education and upon graduation becomes a teacher. Or a person who studies pharmacy and becomes a pharmacist. Here education has a functional value. What is meant by symbolic value? You could have a situation where a person who graduates with a degree in engineering but chooses not to work. Instead he uses the degree as a symbol of status. Similarly, an uneducated man works hard and earns money to send his daughter to study in a private college. When his daughter graduates and gets a good job, the daughter's education is seen as a symbol of value. In the United States, after 1900, parents were convinced that educating their children would open opportunities for better jobs and salaries. Schools and higher education institutions began developing and designing programmes to meet the needs of the market. Student enrolment in technical and engineering courses increased because there were more job opportunities in factories and industries. In short, stress was on the functional value of education. Great Britain and Australia also stressed on the functional value of education in the 1940s with emphasis on educating children at the secondary and tertiary levels. Prior to this, societies in these countries believed that people could be successful in politics, business, and public service even without formal education.