Social Mobility and Social Structure of India: Significance, Challenges and Impediments

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Abstract

In the intertwined social fabric of India, the interplay between social mobility and social structure is pivotal in understanding societal dynamics. This article submerges into the complexities of India's stratified social landscape, characterized by caste, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity, and examines how these elements influence opportunities and constraints. Despite significant economic growth, entrenched caste hierarchies and class disparities persist, impeding access to resources, power, and status. The article explores the complex challenges hindering social mobility, including poverty, educational inequities, discrimination, corruption, and unemployment. By highlighting these systemic barriers, the article

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underscores the need for comprehensive policy interventions aimed at fostering inclusivity and equitable social advancement. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that encompasses economic inclusivity, substantial investments in education and healthcare, and the eradication of systemic discrimination and corruption. This exploration provides crucial insights into the socio-economic impediments and suggests pathways to promote greater social equity in India.

Keywords: *Social Mobility, Social Structure, Social Capital, Challenges, Impediments, India*

Introduction

The interplay between social mobility[1] and social structure[2] is fundamental to understanding societal change. In India, where profound stratifications exist along lines of caste, class, gender, religion, and ethnicity, examining these concepts is particularly crucial. This analysis helps us comprehend how entrenched social hierarchies are maintained or transformed and the implications for individuals navigating these complex social landscapes.[3]

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[1] Social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups across different social positions, either upward or downward.

[2] Social structure encompasses the organized set of social arrangements that define the positions individuals occupy within society and the concomitant opportunities and constraints.

[3] Bottero, Wendy. "Social Class Structures and Social Mobility: The Background Context." In *Social Class in Later Life*, 15-32. Policy Press, 2013.

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Analyzing the relationship between social mobility and social structure in India is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it illuminates the extent of social inequality and the obstacles that different societal groups face. Secondly, it identifies the factors that facilitate or hinder social mobility, thereby informing policies aimed at development of greater social mobility and reducing systemic inequalities.

India's social structure is deeply embedded in its historical, cultural, and economic contexts. The caste system, a predominant feature in many regions of the country, epitomizes a hierarchical social order where individuals are ascribed to specific castes based on birth and ancestry. This system, historically linked to traditional occupations, manifests in a highly stratified societal framework, significantly influencing social interactions, access to resources, and socio-economic mobility.[4]

The caste system, although constitutionally abolished, persists in various forms, perpetuating social inequalities. It dictates the social status, professional opportunities, and even the social networks individuals can access. The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs),[5] officially recognized groups within this system, often find themselves marginalized, with limited access to education,

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[4] Gupta, Dipankar. *Interrogating Caste: Understanding Hierarchy and Difference in Indian Society*. Penguin Books India, 2000.
[5] The Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) are official categories used in India for groups historically disadvantaged and marginalized in socio-economic and educational contexts.

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healthcare, and employment opportunities. These categories were established under the Indian Constitution to provide special provisions and affirmative action policies to uplift these communities, addressing centuries-old discrimination and ensuring their representation and inclusion in various spheres of society. [6]

According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data[7], individuals from SCs and STs have significantly lower literacy rates and higher poverty rates compared to the general population, reflecting the deep-seated disparities rooted in the caste hierarchy.

Furthermore, class structure interplays with caste, adding another layer of complexity. Economic class divisions are pronounced, with the wealthiest 10% of the population owning approximately 77% of the national wealth, as reported by Oxfam India.[8] This economic disparity exacerbates the social immobility for lower castes and economically disadvantaged groups. Gender and religion further intersect with caste and class, creating multifaceted barriers to social mobility. Women and religious minorities, particularly Muslims, face compounded discrimination and socio-economic challenges, limiting their upward mobility.[9]

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[6]Caste Discrimination in South India: A study of NCRB data (Part II)". *Centre for Law & Policy Research*. Retrieved 17 February 2019.
[7]NSS report no. 563(68/10/4): Employment and unemployment situation among social groups in India 2011-12 (released in January 2015)
[8] Oxfam International. *India: Extreme Inequality in Numbers*. Oxfam International. Accessed July 9, 2024. https://www.oxfam.org/en/india-extreme-inequality-numbers.
[9] Mitra, Subrata. *Politics in India: Structure, Process and Policy*. Routledge, 2017.

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Challenges and Impediments to Social Mobility in India

Trapped in Poverty: Understanding the Barriers to Social Mobility in India

Poverty is one of the most significant impediments to social mobility in India. The percentage of the population of India living under poverty varies based on different metrics and sources. As of 2021, the poverty rate at $2.15 a day (2017 PPP) was 12.92% of the population. [10]Other estimates suggest that as of 2023, there were still significant numbers living below the poverty line, although official updates have not been made since 2011 when 21.9% of the population was classified as poor. Recently, it has been reported that extreme poverty (less than $1.90 a day) is now below 3% of the population.[11]

Access to education is limited, particularly for marginalized groups such as girls and children from low-income families[12]. India has one of the highest rates of out-of-school children in the world, with girls more likely to be out of school than boys. According to a UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report, India

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[10]Per-capita Monthly Household Consumption Expenditure more than doubled during 2011-12 to 2022-23". Press Information Bureau, India. Retrieved 10 May 2024.

[11]United Nations Development Programme. *National Multidimensional Poverty Index: A Progress Review 2023*. 2023. Accessed from https://www.undp.org/india/publications/national-multidimensional-poverty-index-progress-review-2023.

[12] Times of India. (2016, July 15). *At 47 million, India has the most adolescent school dropouts*. Retrieved from https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/at-47-million-india-has-the-most-adolescent-school-dropouts/articleshow/53219039.cms

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had over 1 million out-of-school children.[13] Another study by UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report found that India has 47 million adolescent school dropouts, the highest in the world[14].

Education, a critical determinant of social mobility, remains inaccessible to many, particularly disadvantaged groups. The disparity in access to quality education is stark, with rural areas and marginalized communities facing significant educational deficits. Data from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2020 indicates that only 73% of children in rural areas aged 14-18 were enrolled in school, highlighting the educational inequities that impede social advancement.[15]

The private education sector in India has been growing in recent years, which has both positive and negative implications for social mobility. On one hand, private schools provide better-quality education than public schools and opportunities for upward mobility for students who attend them. However, private schools are mostly expensive and inaccessible to students from low-income families,

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[13]United Nations. "India Has Over 1 Million Children Out of School: UN." *Economic Times*, June 27, 2014. Accessed from https://m.economictimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-has-over-1-million-children-out-of-school-un/articleshow/37304459.cms.

[14] UNESCO. *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report 2020*. 2020. Accessed from https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/global-education-monitoring-gem-report-2020

[15] ASER Centre. *Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2020: Wave 1*. 2020. Accessed from ASER Centre.

perpetuating inequalities in education and limiting opportunities for upward mobility for these students.[16] Another challenge facing education in India is the mismatch between the skills taught in schools and the needs of the job market. Many students graduate from school without the skills necessary to succeed in the job market, limiting their opportunities for upward mobility. This issue is particularly acute in industries such as technology, where there is a significant shortage of skilled workers in India.

Poor health outcomes due to inadequate access to healthcare further impede social mobility. Families living in poverty are not able to afford medical treatment, leading to chronic illnesses that affect their ability to work and earn a stable income. The World Bank's analysis indicates that health inequities are a significant factor in perpetuating poverty in India.[17]

Families in poverty face prohibitively high medical expenses that they cannot afford. When healthcare costs consume a significant portion of household income, it leaves less money for other essential needs such as education, nutrition, and housing. This financial strain push families deeper into poverty. According to the World Bank, out-of-

[16] Bhattacharya, U. "Mediating Inequalities: Exploring English-Medium Instruction in a Suburban Indian Village School." In *Language Planning for Medium of Instruction in Asia*, 174-194. Routledge, 2015.

[17] World Bank. "India's Health Crisis: High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure and Limited Coverage." April 16, 2020. Accessed from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/04/16/indias-health-crisis-high-out-of-pocket-expenditure-and-limited-coverage.

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pocket healthcare expenses in India account for a substantial part of total health expenditures, placing a heavy burden on impoverished households.[18]

Many low-income families face catastrophic health expenditures, defined as healthcare costs exceeding a significant portion of their income. This term typically applies when out-of-pocket health spending surpasses 40% of household income after essential expenses [19]. Such expenditures lead to a vicious cycle of debt and poverty, as families might need to sell assets or take high-interest loans to pay for medical treatments. This debt cycle further limits their ability to invest in future opportunities, perpetuating poverty across generations.

While India has implemented various public health programs aimed at improving healthcare access for the poor, challenges remain in terms of reach, quality, and sustainability. For example, the National Health Mission (NHM) and the Ayushman Bharat scheme aim to provide affordable healthcare to economically disadvantaged populations [20]. However, issues such as insufficient funding, lack of

[18] Sriram, S., and M. Albadrani. "Impoverishing Effects of Out-of-Pocket Healthcare Expenditures in India." *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* 11, no. 11 (2022): 7120-7128. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_590_22.

[19] "Effect of Health Insurance Program for the Poor on Out-of-Pocket Inpatient Care Cost in India: Evidence from a Nationally Representative Cross-Sectional Survey." *BMC Health Services Research* 20, no. 1 (2020): Article 839. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-020-05692-7.

[20] Oxfam India. *India Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story*. 2021. Accessed from

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healthcare infrastructure, and inequitable distribution of services hinder their effectiveness.

The Discrimination Dilemma

In the past few years there have been several notable incidents of caste-based discrimination in India. One of the prominent cases involved the Supreme Court of India's directive to the University Grants Commission (UGC) to detail the measures it has implemented to prevent caste-based discrimination on educational campuses.[21] This directive stemmed from a plea by the mothers of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadvi, who both tragically died by suicide due to alleged caste-based discrimination at their respective educational institutions. Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD scholar at Hyderabad Central University, ended his life in January 2016, while Payal Tadvi, a tribal student at TN Topiwala National Medical College, Mumbai, took her life in May 2019. [22] The Supreme Court emphasized the necessity for the UGC to take concrete steps to ensure a non-discriminatory environment in higher educational institutions, highlighting the

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https://www.oxfamindia.org/knowledgehub/workingpaper/india-inequality-report-2021-india%E2%80%99s-unequal-healthcare-story.

[21]Clarion India. "UGC Mandates Report on Caste-Based Discrimination in Universities." *Clarion India*, May 29, 2024. Accessed July 9, 2024. https://clarionindia.net/ugc-mandates-report-on-caste-based-discrimination-in-universities.

[22] LSE South Asia Blog. "Caste and Higher Education: The Rohith Vemula Case." February 15, 2016. Accessed July 9, 2024. https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2016/02/15/caste-and-higher-education-the-rohith-vemula-case/.

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ongoing challenges and urgency in addressing caste-based biases on campuses.[23]

Another significant case involves allegations of caste discrimination within the Indian prison system. A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Supreme Court, alleging widespread caste-based discrimination against prisoners from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).[24] This PIL points to systemic issues within the criminal justice system, reflecting broader societal prejudices that extend into institutional practices. The Supreme Court has sought responses from the Centre and state governments regarding these allegations, aiming to address and mitigate such discriminatory practices.[25]

Such incidents of discrimination based on caste, class, gender, and religion further entrenches social immobility. The caste system continues to impose severe constraints on upward mobility for lower castes, while gender discrimination limits opportunities for women, particularly in rural and conservative areas. Religious minorities, especially Muslims, also face systemic biases that restrict their social and economic opportunities. According to the National Sample

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[23] "SC issues notice to Centre, states on PIL alleging caste discrimination in jails." Hindustan Times, 7 July 2023. Link
[24] Shantha, Sukanya. "Supreme Court Issues Notice on PIL Filed by Sukanya Shantha." *The Wire*, 2024. Accessed July 9, 2024. https://thewire.in/caste/supreme-court-issues-notice-on-prison-caste-discrimination-pil-filed-by-sukanya-shantha.
[25] "Specify steps taken to end caste discrimination on campuses': SC to UGC." The New Indian Express, 7 July 2023. Link

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Survey (NSS) 2017-18, Muslim households had the lowest average per capita income among all religious groups, reflecting the economic marginalization faced by this community.[26]

Moreover, discrimination against women, minorities, and people with disabilities is also a significant challenge in India. Women, for example, face significant barriers to social mobility due to social norms and cultural attitudes that limit their access to education and job opportunities. Women are also more likely to be victims of violence and abuse, which limits their opportunities for upward mobility and perpetuate the cycle of poverty.[27]

Furthermore, discrimination against religious minorities is a significant and pervasive issue in India, affecting various aspects of their daily lives and opportunities for advancement. These communities, which include Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and others, often face systemic and institutionalized discrimination in critical areas such as education, employment, and housing. This discrimination manifests in numerous ways, from subtle biases to overt acts of exclusion and violence. In the field of education, religious minorities frequently encounter barriers to accessing quality education. These barriers include biased admission policies,

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[26] National Sample Survey Office. *Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India: Health*. Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India, 2019. Accessed from https://mospi.gov.in.
[27] Rew, M., G. Gangoli, and A. K. Gill. "Violence Between Female In-Laws in India." *Journal of International Women's Studies* 14, no. 1 (2013): 147-160.

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inadequate representation in educational institutions, and discriminatory practices by educators and administrators. Such obstacles hinder the academic progress of minority students, limiting their chances to pursue higher education and secure well-paying jobs.[28]

In India, employment discrimination is another major challenge faced by religious minorities. Many individuals from these communities report experiencing bias during the hiring process, being passed over for promotions, and receiving lower wages compared to their counterparts from majority religious groups.[29] This systemic bias restricts their economic opportunities and contributes to the persistence of poverty and economic instability within these communities.

Housing discrimination further exacerbates the marginalization of religious minorities.[30] Many members of these communities struggle to find adequate and affordable housing due to discriminatory practices by landlords and housing authorities. They are confined to

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[28]Vaid, D. "Caste in Contemporary India: Flexibility and Persistence." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014): 391-410.

[29] Louis, P. "Reflections - Religious Discrimination in India." *SJESJesuits Global*, March 1, 2022. Accessed July 9, 2024. https://www.sjesjesuits.global/sj-reflections/religious-discrimination-in-india/.

[30] Mishra, V. K., and K. Khan. "Determinants of Discrimination in Access to Housing for Marginalised Social Groups in India." *Journal of Social Inclusion Studies* 9, no. 1 (2023): 7-26. https://doi.org/10.1177/23944811231169194.

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segregated neighborhoods with limited access to essential services and infrastructure, reinforcing social and economic disparities.[31]

These forms of discrimination collectively limit the opportunities for upward mobility among religious minorities, perpetuating a cycle of social inequality. The marginalization of these communities not only affects their individual and collective well-being but also undermines social cohesion and harmony in the broader society. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive policy measures, public awareness campaigns, and robust legal frameworks to protect the rights of religious minorities and ensure equal opportunities for all citizens.

The Trap of Unemployment

The lack of job opportunities in India is a result of a combination of factors, including a slow-growing economy, a mismatch between the skills demanded by employers and those possessed by workers, and a regulatory environment that is unfriendly to business. While the country has made progress in recent years in improving its business environment and attracting foreign investment, there is still much work to be done to create a more dynamic and inclusive economy.[32]

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[31] Nath, Nikhil, Vikas Ahuja, and Ashok Satish. "Group Discrimination in Labour Market: Focus on Caste and Religious Discrimination in India." *South Asian Law & Economics Review* 7 (2023): 223-235.
[32] Kumar, Gaurav, and Subham Borbora. "Institutional Environment Differences and Their Application for Entrepreneurship Development in India." *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies* 11, no. 2 (2019): 177-199.

One of the key challenges in addressing the lack of job opportunities is the large number of young people entering the job market each year. According to the available data, India's youth unemployment rate in 2020 was significantly higher than 10.8%. Various sources indicate that the youth unemployment rate in India has been above 20%. For example, the youth unemployment rate was 24.59% in 2020 according to Macrotrends and 23.22% in 2022 according to Statista. This is a major concern, as high levels of youth unemployment led to social unrest and political instability. [33]

One of the primary factors contributing to unemployment in India is the disconnect between the education system and the job market's requirements[34]. Many educational institutions continue to follow outdated curricula that do not align with the skills needed in the modern workforce. As a result, graduates find themselves ill-prepared for the available job opportunities, leading to high rates of educated unemployment. This situation is exacerbated by rapid technological advancements and shifting industry needs, which demand new skills that the traditional education system fails to provide.[35]

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[33] Maury, R. V., M. Tihic, A. Pritchard, A. McKelvie, and L. Euto. *2021 National Survey of Military-Affiliated Entrepreneurs*. 2022.

[34] Padmini, I. "Education vs Employability: The Need to Bridge the Skills Gap Among the Engineering and Management Graduates in Andhra Pradesh." *International Journal of Management and Business Studies* 2, no. 3 (2012): 90-94.

[35] Kochhar, Kalpana, Utsav Kumar, Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, and Ioannis Tokatlidis. "India's Pattern of Development: What Happened, What Follows?" *Journal of Monetary Economics* 53, no. 5 (2006): 981-1019.

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A large proportion of India's workforce is employed in the informal sector, characterized by low wages, job insecurity, and lack of benefits. While the informal economy provides employment for millions, it often does not offer the stability and growth opportunities found in the formal sector. The prevalence of informal employment creates a trap where workers remain in low-paying jobs without the possibility of advancement, further entrenching poverty and inequality. Additionally, the informal sector's dominance makes it difficult for policymakers to implement effective employment strategies and social protection measures.

India's social safety nets are inadequate to support the unemployed population. The absence of comprehensive unemployment benefits and limited access to social security means that individuals who lose their jobs face significant financial hardships. This lack of support discourages risk-taking and entrepreneurial activities, as people are wary of the consequences of potential failure. Furthermore, the absence of robust social safety nets forces many to accept precarious employment conditions, perpetuating the cycle of underemployment and poverty.

India's large and growing population[36] adds another layer of complexity to the unemployment issue. The country has one of the

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[36] Anand, Rahul, and Parul Khera. *Macroeconomic Impact of Product and Labor Market Reforms on Informality and Unemployment in India*. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2016.

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world's youngest populations, with millions of young people entering the labor market each year. While this demographic could be a potential asset, it becomes a liability when the economy cannot generate enough jobs to absorb the new entrants. This demographic pressure exacerbates unemployment and underemployment, particularly among the youth, leading to increased social unrest and dissatisfaction.[37]

Economic slowdowns and structural issues within various industries also contribute to unemployment in India. Economic downturns lead to job losses and reduced hiring across sectors, while structural changes in industries, such as the shift from manufacturing to services, can displace workers. The lack of effective retraining programs and support for workers transitioning between sectors further aggravates the problem, trapping individuals in unemployment or underemployment.

Corruption as the Roadblock to Social Mobility in India

Corruption is a significant impediment to social mobility in India. It is a widespread problem that affects all aspects of society, including politics, business, and public services. It has been identified as one of the main reasons for the lack of development in the country and is a major hindrance to foreign investment, job creation, and poverty

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[37] Saini, N., D. Kaur, and S. A. Mir. "Youth Unemployment in India: A Multifaceted and Tenacious Challenge." *Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences*, 2023, 3637-3643.

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reduction. Corruption in India is deeply ingrained in the political and economic structures of the country, and it is often seen as an acceptable way of doing business.

This has resulted in a lack of accountability and transparency in government and public institutions, making it difficult to promote social mobility and ensure equal opportunities for all. Corruption has also led to a lack of investment in public services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. This has left many people without access to basic services and has limited their ability to improve their economic prospects.[38]

Recently, in one high-profile case, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has been under scrutiny by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for alleged money laundering related to illegal mining activities. The ED has conducted multiple raids on the residences of Soren's close associates, including his press advisor, Abhishek Prasad.[39]

The investigation aims to uncover financial irregularities and the illicit flow of funds. Soren, however, has dismissed these actions as politically motivated attempts to destabilize his government. Despite being summoned several times by the ED, he has publicly criticized the agency for what he describes as an orchestrated media trial.[40]

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[38] Afridi, Farzana. *Governance and Public Service Delivery in India*. 2017.
[39] Naqvi, S. *The Saffron Storm: From Vajpayee to Modi*. New Delhi: Penguin Random House India Private Limited, 2024.
[40] Varanasi, J. "Varanasi Court Allows Hindus to Pray in Gyanvapi Area." *Policy* 22 (2021).

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Another case involved Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a pivotal program aimed at enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment. However, its implementation has been severely hampered by corruption. Funds earmarked for wages and materials are frequently misappropriated by officials and contractors. This misallocation prevents the intended beneficiaries—primarily the rural poor—from accessing employment opportunities that could improve their economic status. The diversion of resources from those who need them most perpetuates poverty and inhibits social mobility.[41]

Similarly, the Adarsh Housing Society scam in Mumbai involved top politicians, bureaucrats, and military officials who illegally acquired apartments meant for war widows and heroes of the Kargil conflict. This scandal highlights how corruption in housing schemes prevents marginalized groups from accessing affordable housing, which is a critical component of social mobility. When housing opportunities are co-opted by those in power, it deprives the most vulnerable populations of a stable and secure living environment necessary for economic and social advancement.[42]

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[41]Das, T. K. "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as Social Safety Net: Analysis of Public Works in Odisha, India." *Review of Economic Perspectives – Národohospodářský Obzor* 16, no. 4 (2016): 337-360. https://doi.org/10.1515/revecp-2016-0019.
[42]Khapre, Shubhangi. "Why Adarsh Demolition Order Has Congress Crumbling." *Indian Express*, April 29, 2016.

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Likewise, the coal allocation scam, one of India's largest corruption scandals, involved the illicit allocation of coal blocks to private companies without a transparent bidding process. This resulted in a substantial loss of public resources and revenue, which has long-term implications for economic growth and development. The misallocation of such significant resources impedes national progress, which is essential for improving social mobility across different strata of society. Economic stagnation due to corruption restricts the creation of new opportunities, further entrenching social inequalities.[43]

These cases illustrate how corruption in various sectors—rural employment, education, housing, resource allocation, and political funding—hinders social mobility by denying access to essential services and opportunities. Corruption misallocates resources, perpetuates poverty, and maintains social inequalities by favoring the powerful over the needy.

To address these challenges, India requires robust legal frameworks, vigilant enforcement of anti-corruption laws, and active civic engagement to hold officials accountable. Initiatives like the Right to Information Act (RTI) and digital platforms for government services are steps in the right direction, but their effective implementation is

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[43] Srivastava, Shuchi, and Rachita Prasad. "Coalgate Verdict: Worst Fears of Power Companies Come True." *The Economic Times*, September 25, 2014.

crucial for fostering an environment where social mobility is achievable for all.[44]

Conclusion

In conclusion, the issue of social mobility in India is intricate and deeply intertwined with the country's social structures, including poverty, education, discrimination, lack of job opportunities, and corruption. These interconnected factors have perpetuated a highly unequal society where upward mobility is frequently challenging, if not unattainable, for many individuals and communities.

Addressing these challenges necessitates a comprehensive and collaborative effort from all sectors of society, including the government, civil society organizations, and the private sector. A critical area of focus is poverty alleviation. Efforts to reduce poverty must be prioritized to ensure that all individuals have access to fundamental necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. This requires the effective implementation of social safety nets, including cash transfer programs and social pensions, to provide a basic income for those in need.

Education is another pivotal factor in enhancing social mobility. It is imperative to ensure that quality education is accessible to all, irrespective of economic background. Education policies must aim to

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[44] Bounabat, B. (2023). *Development and Promotion of the Right to Information in National Frameworks: Policy Guidelines*. UNESCO Publishing.

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reduce disparities in educational outcomes across different socioeconomic groups. This can be achieved through increased funding for education and improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Furthermore, addressing discrimination, particularly caste-based discrimination, is essential for improving social mobility. Promoting social inclusion and acceptance, alongside enforcing anti-discrimination laws and policies, can mitigate these issues. Affirmative action policies may also be necessary to ensure marginalized groups have equitable access to education and employment opportunities.

Another significant challenge is the scarcity of job opportunities in India. Policies promoting private sector investment and job creation are crucial. Additionally, expanding skills training and education opportunities aligned with labor market needs can ensure individuals possess the qualifications in demand, thereby enhancing their employment prospects and career advancement.

Corruption remains a substantial barrier to social mobility in India, eroding trust in government institutions and stifling economic growth. Tackling corruption requires a holistic approach encompassing both preventive and enforcement measures. This includes strengthening anti-corruption laws and institutions, increasing transparency and accountability in government operations, and fostering a culture of integrity and ethics.

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Enhancing social mobility in India is vital for fostering a more equitable and just society. Although significant challenges persist, numerous dedicated individuals and organizations are committed to addressing these issues. By collaboratively implementing a multifaceted approach that addresses poverty, education, discrimination, job opportunities, and corruption, India could strive towards a more prosperous and inclusive society for all its citizens.

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