

**Social Mobility among Teachers: A Study Based on the Teachers of The Assam  
Kaziranga University, Jorhat, Assam.**

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*Social Stratification and Social Mobility goes hand-in-hand. Especially, in a country like India, where the population is divided into hierarchies based on various factors such as class, class, occupation etc. this interrelationship between social stratification and mobility is even more complex and intriguing. What makes this even more complex and intriguing is the fact that the factors responsible for stratification often crisscrosses each other and this has been fueled by the tremendous changes occurring in Indian society today under the influence of globalization and modernization. In this backdrop this study has attempted to make a critical enquiry into the trend of socio-economic mobility among the teachers of the Assam Kaziranga University, Jorhat, Assam.*

**Key Words:** *Social Stratification, Social Mobility, Kaziranga University, Teachers.*

## **Introduction**

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, and groups from one social position to another. Mobility stands for a change, movement and shift in form of a place or from one position to another. Social mobility is an indication of social progress and social change. It also implies that people or individual occupying a social position, move to another position or status. As a result of social mobility the society marches ahead and individuals make progress.

By social mobility Sorokin (1927) means:

*Any transition of an individual or social objective or value, anything that has been created or modified by human activities from one social position to another.*

According to Young and Mack (1972: 207) *social mobility is "movement within the social structure. When a person leaves a job paying \$5,000 a year to accept one in which he will earn \$8,000, he has altered his position in the class structure. He has been socially mobile. Since one's class status is determined originally by the class status of his parents, when one achieves a different amount of education from that of his parents, or moves into a different occupational stratum, or adopts a different style of life, he has been socially mobile"*.

From the definitions given above by social mobility we understand the movement of an individual from one social position to another or from one occupation to another. The definition

given by Young and Mack highlights the importance of education in receiving a social mobility vis - a - vis different life style.

The concept social mobility bears much significance in sociology due to number of reasons. First, in Indian context the society which was closed because of the existence of caste system the question of mobility was absent. The status of an individual in the caste based society was ascribed i.e. the status acquired by an individual by birth could not be changed throughout his life time. As such many people's hopes to aspire for higher status and life style remain as dream. But on the other hand in the class society which is an 'open one' an individual belonging to lower or middle class may climb up in the class hierarchy by his merit and excellence. It may be mentioned here that education enables one to raise his status. As matters stand today, education, urbanization, industrialization, development of transport and communication system have weakened some of the stabilized system like caste system in India. Now an individual belonging to lower caste can attain higher status in society by acquiring education. As such education may be conceived of as mobility multiplier. Education not only provides an individual higher status in society but also shows an individual the different avenues for social mobility. In this case we may talk about especially occupational mobility. There are some people who do not find comfort in the occupation he/she holds in an organisation. The reasons for changing occupation are many. Some people change occupation for increasing social status, some for higher income and some for job security. Social mobility is associated with individual's life style. It is a fact that the life style of people belonging to upper strata is different from that of lower or middle. As such the people belonging to lower or middle strata of society aspire to follow the life style of the upper society. In order to enjoy the life style of the people belonging to upper strata of society they resort to hard work and strive to acquire higher education. The concept "social mobility" thus may be viewed as a motivating factor to achieve high status in society by making himself/herself eligible for attaining the same.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study will be as follows:

- To examine the socio – economic background of the teachers of the Assam Kaziranga University.
- To study the types of mobility of the teachers of the Assam Kaziranga University.
- To probe into the inter - generational mobility of the teachers of the Assam Kaziranga University..
- To investigate the factors related to social – mobility among the teaching staff of the Assam Kaziranga University.

### **Significance of the study**

The study of social mobility provides us scope to understand the socio- psychological aspects of human life. As in society the individuals are holding different social status according to

education, occupation and income, so, there is a hierarchy in regard to social status. Higher the education, occupational rank and income of an individual the corresponding degree of status will be higher in the society. The individuals in the society whose status is low generally aspire to climb up the status ladder in order to enjoy the life style of the upper strata. This kind of mental attitude motivates an individual to pursue knowledge and skill that are required to attain higher status in society. In present day society which is a consumerist society there has been much competition among the individuals of the society to attain the desired objects. Thus, we can say that social mobility is the product of competition. The significance of the present study is that it enables us to know the kind of mobility that has been taking place among the teachers of the Assam Kaziranga University. The study is based on primary data, analysis of which allows us to examine the current trend of social and economic mobility among the employees of the Kaziranga University. It also let us examine the trend of intra-state, geographical mobility in the university and the factors responsible for the same.

### **Field of the Study**

The Assam Kaziranga University constitutes the field of study for this study. The University is located in Jorhat which is also known as the Knowledge City of Assam. The University was established under the Assam Private University Act No XII of 2007 under section 2(f) of UGC Act 1956, with a vision of becoming a world class University, offering state-of-the-art education and research relevant to market needs. The University has been promoted by the Trust under the banner of North Eastern Knowledge Foundation (NEKF) and was founded in the year 2012 by the Khetan Industrial group, Jorhat, Assam.

The University has a total area of about 50 acres and possesses great infrastructural facilities. The University currently has five schools i.e. School of Engineering and Technology, School of Computing Sciences, School of Basic Sciences, School of Business and School of Social Sciences. The University has approximately 1500 students.

### **Methodology**

Adoption of proper research methodology is very important for any research. In view of this, the researcher has been very careful while selecting the methodology and collecting data for this study. In the study both descriptive and exploratory research designs have been applied. Further, both primary and secondary data has been collected for the study. The primary data for the study has been collected with the help of Interview Schedule. On the other hand, the secondary data was collected primarily from the official records maintained by human resource department of the Assam Kaziranga University and also from books, journals and internet sources as well. 68 respondents have been selected for the study using simple random sampling method from a total of 80 Faculty members working in the University.

### **Analysis and Findings**

Out of 68 respondents selected for this study, 80.88% were male and 19.12 % were female. With

regard to marital status of the respondents it was found that 55.88% were married, 41.18% were unmarried and 1.47% were found to be widows and same percentage were found to be widowers. The respondents hailing from rural background were found to be 30.88% whereas 69.12% were found from urban background.

As many as 77.94 % of the respondents were found to belong to general caste, 1.47% were from MOBC, 16.18% were from OBC, 2.94% were from SC and 1.47% were from ST categories. With regard to religion of the respondents 92.65% were found to belong to Hinduism, 5.88% to Islam and 1.47 % to Christianity.

Education is an important individual attribute of the respondents. The data obtained in this study reflect that 26.47 % respondents are Ph.D. degree holders, 7.35% respondents are M. Phil degree holders and the rest 66.18% respondents are post-graduate degree holders.

In order to understand the type of mobility of the respondents we asked them whether they have joined this university from teaching profession or from non-teaching profession. With regard to this query it was found that 51.47 % respondents joined this university from teaching profession i.e. prior to joining this institution they served in some other academic institutions as teachers or faculty members. On further inquiry we could come to know that some of them were serving in colleges on contractual basis. The study also reflected that as many as 29.41 % of the respondents were found to join this university from non – teaching profession (i.e. prior to the joining in the Assam Kaziranga University they served as executives in private enterprises and financial institutions). Also it is noted here that for 19.12% of the respondents, their job in the University was the first job for them.

In this study the researcher also aimed to know from the respondents about their designations at the time of joining in this university and it was gathered that as many as 73.53% respondents joined as Assistant Professor, 5.88% joined as Associate Professor and 5.88% joined as Professor. With regard to the remaining 15% of the respondents we could come to know that these respondents, before joining the teaching profession had served in the administration of this university with additional responsibility of teaching.

The study also looks into the inter – generational mobility of the respondents. In this regard, enquiry from the respondents was mainly made on two aspects i.e. education and occupation of their grandfathers and fathers.

The study as such reflects the educational and occupational background of the respondents' grandfathers. From the collected information 16.18 % were found to be graduates, 8.82 % were higher secondary passed, 14.71 % were matriculates, 51.47 % had acquired education up to the primary level, 4.41 % were found to be under matriculation level and rest 4.41 % of the respondents' grandfathers were found to be MBBS degree holders. As far as occupation is concerned 50% of the respondents' grandfathers were engaged in agriculture; 10.29% were engaged in business; 11.76 % in teaching; 1.47 % were engaged as priest and 1.47 % were engaged in medical profession.

Further the study also enquired regarding the education of the fathers of the respondents. It was observed that 4.41 % of the respondents' fathers were Ph.D. degree holders, 14.71% were found to be post - graduates, 44.12% were found to be graduates, 16.18% had acquired education up to higher secondary level, 11.76 % had studied up to matriculation, 1.47% had studied up to primary level, 1.47 % were found to be MBBS degree holders and 2.94% were advocates and engineers.

As far as occupation of the fathers of the respondents is concerned, it was found that 63.24% were engaged in service, 19.12% were engaged in teaching, 1.47% were in farming, 14.71% in business and rest 1.47 % were doctors.

From the above, it is derived that while 51.47 % of the grandfathers of the respondents had studied up to primary level, then only 1.47 % of the fathers of the respondents were found to have studied up to primary level. In the respondents' generation all were found post graduate degree holders and out of the total respondents 7.35% are M.Phil. degree holders and 26.47 % are Ph.D. degree holders. The data reveal increasing trend of acquiring higher education from the grandfathers' generation to the respondents' generation. Inter-generational mobility in regard to occupation from grandfathers' generation to the respondents' generation is also quite significant. The study reveals that while 50% of the respondents' grandfathers' occupation was agriculture then in respondents' fathers' generation only 1.47 % were found to engage in agriculture. It is also interesting that in respondents' grandfathers' generation while nobody was found to engage in government service, 63.4% respondents' fathers' occupation was government service. Thus there has been occupational mobility from grandfathers' generation to the respondents' generation. It is noticed that agriculture was the dominant occupation of the respondents' grandfathers, government service was the major occupation of the respondents' fathers' generation.

The study reveals that as only 51.47 % of the respondents were engaged in teaching profession prior to their joining the Assam Kaziranga University. This reflects the horizontal aspect of mobility among the teaching staff coming from other places to this university. Among the respondents, only 29.41% of respondents found to attain upward vertical mobility since they were moved from non-teaching to teaching position with higher pay and status.

The study also shows geographical mobility among teaching staff in the Assam Kaziranga University as 20.59 % of the respondents belong to different states of India, other than Assam. Among these respondents 28.57 % were hailed from rural area and rest 71.43 % of the respondents hailed from urban areas. Again, of these respondents 71.43 % had teaching experience and the rest belonged to non-teaching professions prior to their joining in the Kaziranga University.

The respondents were asked to furnish the reasons of their movement to the Assam Kaziranga University from other institutions. With regard to this query we could come to know that home place (10.29%), dissatisfaction in earlier jobs (16.18%), good salary in the new job in Kaziranga University (14.71%), opportunity to work in a higher educational institution as well as a better

environment (58.82%) were the factors for which the respondents moved to the Assam Kaziranga University.

### **Concluding Remarks**

From the above discussion it is derived that in case of 51.47 % of the respondents, horizontal mobility took place while 29.41 % of the respondents had upward vertical mobility. As many as in 20.59% respondents' case geographical mobility took place. The reasons of mobility; whether horizontal or vertical, were found to be primarily contractual service in previous institution/ drawing less salary, dissatisfaction in earlier jobs, good salary in current organisation, opportunity to work at the University level and better environment.

### **Reference :**

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