Fact Sheet on Working Paper: "Intergenerational Mobility in India: Estimates from New Methods and Administrative Data,"
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This working paper documents trends in upward mobility based on educational attainment in India from the 1950s to the present. This is a working paper, has not been refereed, and will be revised before publication.

Upward mobility is a measure of equality of opportunity, which describes the extent to which individuals born at the bottom of the socioeconomic distribution can move up in the distribution. We define upward mobility as the average education rank of a son who is born to a father in the bottom half of the education distribution. Education is a proxy for living standards, and the best available proxy for measurement of mobility in India, due to limitations in income data.

We find three primary results:
1. Upward mobility has not changed much from the 1950s birth cohorts to the 1980s birth cohorts. Men born into families at the bottom of the distribution are just as likely to stay at the bottom of the distribution today as they were in the 1950s.
2. Upward mobility has risen substantially for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Upward mobility has fallen substantially for Muslims. Upward mobility has remained high for the rest of the population (Forward Castes, Other Backward Castes (OBCs), and others). Muslims are now the least upwardly mobile group in India.
3. There is substantial geographic variation in upward mobility. The paper examines these geographic patterns and their correlates.

The most recent figures and detailed discussion can be found in the paper at this link.

We encourage readers to be aware of the following details:
1. The study measures people's ability to move to a higher *rank*. In terms of both living standards and educational outcomes, life has been getting a lot better on average for all social groups in India.
2. The most recent National Sample Survey data suggest that on average Muslims have living standards (wages, consumption, income) that are between those of Forward / Others and Scheduled Castes. Our study does not claim that Muslims are the worst-off group in India.
3. We study long run trends and all the data for our study are from 2012. This is the most recent data available for this kind of study. Our trends therefore do not reflect the policies of any specific government and, due to timing, certainly not the current one.
4. Our measures come from data on fathers and sons, due to data limitations. Measuring mobility for women is also important, and we have work in progress on the subject.
5. Due to data limitations, we had to pool OBCs and Forward Castes (along with Christians, Jains and Sikhs, who make up only 6% of the population). The pooled OBC/Forward/Others group has mobility that is constant on average. We have not looked at OBCs and Forward Castes separately.
6. The paper is descriptive and does not attribute the results to specific factors or policies.