

A Brief Inquiry of Intergenerational Mobility among the White-Collar Workforce in Mizoram

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between socioeconomic background, educational credentials, and occupational trajectories across generations among white-collar workers in Mizoram. Focusing on directly appointed Group A (Gazetted) officers with less than twenty years of service, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, primarily using original, first-hand data. It investigates whether educational achievement drives social stratification in environments with limited upward mobility prospects. The paper explores intergenerational dynamics between parental socioeconomic position, academic achievement, and offspring's educational attainment and adult social standing. Additionally, it examines disparities in social mobility opportunities between individuals of urban and rural origins. Findings indicate that educational attainment significantly influences social status transformation, but parental educational level has no discernible impact on offspring's academic outcomes. Occupational mobility is lower than educational mobility, with many individuals entering the same occupation as their parents. Urban origins have better opportunities than rural origins, highlighting persistent disparities in social mobility. The paper provides insights into the complex relationships between socioeconomic background, education, and occupation in Mizoram, with implications for policy and practice aimed at promoting social mobility and reducing inequality.

Introduction

Throughout the ages, a pronounced socioeconomic dichotomy has persisted, demarcating a stark contrast between affluent and impoverished segments of society. People are grouped into different hierarchical social categories depending on their socioeconomic status and those who possess the same status are placed in a group called social class (Britannica, 2024). The 19th century saw the development of diverse social class theories, courtesy of a cohort of influential thinkers comprising Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Saint-Simon, and Marx, whose works spanned political philosophy, social theory, and economic analysis. According to these theories, social

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class is comprised of the wealthy upper class which possesses significant wealth and property and better access to opportunities, and the lower class, which lacks access to opportunities, possesses fewer properties, and is dependent on wages. Despite the ongoing conflict between social classes for a classless society theorized by Karl Marx, society still exhibits a clear divide between the haves and the have-nots. To this day, the upper class maintains a profound impact on economic policy formulation, concurrently securing exclusive educational opportunities and advantageous economic positions that facilitate the intergenerational transmission of their wealth and social standing. By contrast, the lower class is distinguished by persistent socioeconomic deprivation, characterized by inadequate living standards, limited educational attainment, and constrained economic prospects, resulting in a cycle of entrenched disadvantage that spans multiple generations.

However, the development of society and the establishment of a welfare state have created many opportunities for individuals, particularly for those who are less privileged. This has facilitated the upward trajectory of individuals from disadvantaged socioeconomic positions to more privileged ones, a process termed social stratification mobility, whereby persons transition from lower to higher rungs of the social hierarchy. Consequently, social mobility can be succinctly defined as a transformation in an individual's socioeconomic position, entailing a shift in their relative standing within the social hierarchy. An individual or a group may move up or down across the social strata in terms of property, income, or status. If an individual from a family who belongs to a particular income group pursues an occupation in the same skill and income group, this indicates that there is a lower rate of social mobility. However, if an individual can pursue an occupation independent of his or her existent socioeconomic background, it brings inclusivity to society and promotes equality of opportunity. Thus, this element can play a significant role in enhancing the overall propensity for social mobility, a trend corroborated by the research of Kalsi and Kapoor (2021).

Conceptual Framework

Pritirim Sorokin, a prominent sociologist and political activist of Russian-American origin, pioneered the concept of social mobility in his groundbreaking work "Social and Cultural Mobility." He posits that societal structures exist on a spectrum, wherein no society exhibits absolute fluidity, as exemplified by the class system, nor absolute rigidity, as typified by the Indian caste system.

Social mobility refers to the temporal trajectory of social entities, encompassing individuals, families, or kinship groups, as they transition between disparate positions within a society's stratification framework (Muller & Pollak, 2015). Mobility experienced at different stages of life can be of various types. The diverse forms of social mobility operate autonomously, yet may exhibit intersections or concomitance. Horizontal mobility means the movement between classes at the hierarchical level. In this type of movement, an individual may change his occupation by changing geographical area or organizational level without changing his social standing. In contrast, vertical mobility

denotes an individual's transition between distinct social strata, characterized by either ascending (upward) or descending (downward) movements. This type of movement involves a change in one's social standing with respect to occupation, politics or religion.

The analysis of social mobility can be bifurcated into two temporal dimensions: intragenerational and intergenerational. Intragenerational mobility encompasses the changes in an individual's social position that occur within their lifetime, resulting from the accretion of experiences and events. In contrast, intergenerational mobility pertains to the variation in socioeconomic standing between an individual and their family of origin, characterized by an ascending or descending trajectory. For example, a progeny from a farming background may experience upward mobility by securing employment in the government or corporate sector, thereby achieving enhanced economic prospects.

The notion of social mobility is inextricably linked to the principle of egalitarian opportunity, predicated on the idea that although individuals may not attain identical outcomes, they should nonetheless possess equivalent access to opportunities for advancement. In societies characterized by limited social mobility, an individual's life chances and outcomes are heavily influenced by their familial background and socioeconomic heritage. In contrast, societies exhibiting high social mobility are characterized by a decoupling of individual outcomes from familial antecedents, wherein one's life chances are independent of his family of origin. As a result, the promotion of equal opportunities is vital for enhancing social mobility and economic productivity, enabling the effective allocation and utilization of human capital.

Research on social mobility has encompassed its intersections with various socio-economic indicators, including economic resources, health outcomes, and educational attainment. A plethora of research has demonstrated an inverse correlation between social mobility and economic disparity, while the relationship with health status appears to be more nuanced, yielding inconsistent findings across various investigations. Among the various dimensions, education is frequently identified as a paramount determinant of social mobility, exerting a more profound impact than parental occupational status on offspring's socio-economic outcomes. In their seminal work, "The American Occupational Structure" (1967), Blau and Duncan posited that educational attainment serves as the primary predictor of individuals' occupational trajectories and constitutes the crucial mediating factor between socio-economic origins and ultimately attained positions. Thus, education can be viewed as a pure investment where individuals continue to invest until the additional personal benefit equals the extra cost (Behrman et al., 1998).

Social Mobility across Generations in OECD Nations

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a multilateral entity comprising 38 member countries, established in 1961 to foster economic growth and global commerce. As a premier international forum, its member nations profess a shared dedication to democratic principles and market-oriented economies. A seminal

study published in 2010 by Orsetta Causa and Åsa Johansson examined the prevailing dynamics of intergenerational social mobility within the OECD countries, shedding light on recent patterns and trajectories. Causa and Johansson's research endeavors to furnish standardized estimates of intergenerational wage and educational mobility across OECD nations by examining two pivotal concepts:

- a. The impact of familial antecedents on the remuneration and educational attainment of diverse adult cohorts in 14 European OECD countries, operationalized through the educational credentials of parents.
- b. The effect of parental background on the cognitive accomplishments of 15-year-old students in 30 OECD countries, gauged by a composite indicator of socio-economic standing.

This paper drew upon two primary sources of individual-level data: firstly, the 2005 Eurostat Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC) poverty module, which provided insights into wage and educational mobility; and secondly, the 2006 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey, which examined the impact of parental background on adolescent cognitive performance. From this, it is evident that the availability of comprehensive data enables in-depth research in more advanced countries. To capture the nuances of intergenerational social mobility, a suite of indicators is utilized, encompassing wage rigidity, educational attainment persistence across secondary and post-secondary levels, and additional pertinent metrics, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of social mobility dynamics. Further, wage mobility or stability is captured by a summary index of wage persistence, while educational trajectory or persistence is assessed through consolidated indicators of persistence in upper-secondary and tertiary educational levels.

The findings reveal a robust and statistically significant association between parental socio-economic status and the educational attainment and labor market outcomes of their offspring, a pattern consistently observed virtually across all countries under examination. The key results on intergenerational mobility trajectories suggest that a pronounced rigidity in social mobility is evident in countries like the United Kingdom, Italy, the United States, and France, whereas Australia, Canada, and the Nordic countries display a more fluid mobility landscape. This mobility is quantified by examining the intergenerational earnings correlation, which assesses the relationship between parental income and their offspring's subsequent earnings. In the majority of OECD nations, the cognitive abilities of students are significantly affected by the collective socio-economic background of their peers' parents within the same educational institution. Additionally, individuals from families with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to pursue and attain tertiary education. Meanwhile, individuals from less educated families face a disproportionate probability of academic underachievement.

Thus, the indicators reveal a nuanced pattern, wherein certain countries exhibit greater rigidity in wage mobility compared to educational mobility, while in contrast, others display a converse trajectory characterized by relatively higher fluidity in wage mobility

and more substantial persistence in educational attainment. In certain instances, a substantial premium is associated with attaining tertiary education for individuals from highly educated families, concurrently with a relatively modest penalty for those from less advantaged backgrounds. In the meantime, the opposite holds in other countries, with a negligible premium for the former and a pronounced penalty for the latter. Lastly, this paper underscores the pivotal influence of policy interventions in education and early childhood care on the variance in intergenerational social mobility across nations, suggesting that targeted public policies can significantly impact social mobility trajectories.

Intergenerational Social Mobility in India

Since studying intergenerational social mobility requires detailed data on parents and children's outcomes, measuring mobility is quite challenging, especially on a national scale. Notably, the extant literature, particularly in the Indian context, exhibits a significant gender bias, as it predominantly focuses on the intergenerational mobility outcomes of paternal-son dyads, neglecting the experiences and trajectories of women and daughters.

In the scholarly article "Social Mobility in India: Determinants and Recommendations for Change" (Chapman, 2020), the author presents empirical evidence on the dynamics of intergenerational income and occupational mobility in India, shedding light on the relative movements of individuals across socio-economic strata. Additionally, the study proposes a set of policy interventions and strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing social mobility in the Indian context, thereby informing evidence-based initiatives for promoting greater socio-economic fluidity.

The key factors influencing social mobility in India include the caste system, migration trends, education, religion, gender, and location. A study published in the *Journal of Human Resources* in 2013 by Chapman reveals that offspring from the lowest quintile of household income confront substantial barriers to upward mobility, with limited prospects of ascending to the highest quintile. Conversely, the research finds that a majority – exceeding 50% – of children born to parents in the top income quintile tend to perpetuate their advantageous socio-economic position, remaining in the highest quintile. Furthermore, using intergenerational wage elasticities to measure mobility, the study observed that the mean income elasticity in the country is 0.49, higher than the international mean of 0.35 for high-income countries. This result suggests a stronger link between parents' and children's incomes, indicating lower mobility.

The Indian scenario presents a unique backdrop for examining occupational mobility, given the persistent intersections between caste identity and professional engagement, with certain occupations remaining deeply entrenched in the country's caste-based social stratification. Azam (2015) compared the occupational mobility between the 1945-54 cohort and the 1975-84 cohort. He noted a pronounced tendency for offspring to replicate their fathers' occupational choices, indicative of a pervasive pattern of

intergenerational occupational persistence, which reveals the prevalence of low social mobility. As such, only a few children could move from lower occupations (farming, unskilled) to higher occupations (white-collar, skilled/semi-skilled). Additionally, an inter-cohort comparison indicates that the 1975-1984 birth cohort exhibits enhanced mobility outcomes compared to the 1945-1954 cohort, signifying a generational improvement in socio-economic mobility trajectories.

In light of the entrenched correlations between caste identity and occupational engagement in India, Majumdar (2010) investigated to assess the degree of intergenerational mobility in educational and occupational attainments among various social groups, aiming to uncover the underlying factors contributing to the perpetuation of socio-economic inequalities. Notwithstanding the upward socio-economic trajectory of contemporary generations relative to their predecessors, Majumdar's research reveals that the educational and occupational stratification system continues to exhibit a pronounced bias towards the privileged castes, perpetuating entrenched social inequalities. The phenomenon of upward mobility exhibits a notable caste-based dichotomy, wherein the upper castes experience more pronounced advancements, while the socio-economic prospects of individuals from excluded castes remain disproportionately shaped by parental factors, highlighting the persistence of caste-based disparities in social mobility. Furthermore, his research reveals that a significant proportion of occupational transitions occur within expansive occupational categories rather than involving upward shifts from lower to higher-status professions. This phenomenon suggests that occupational mobility lags behind educational mobility, potentially indicative of discriminatory practices within the labor market.

Azam & Bhatt (2015) conducted an in-depth examination of the intergenerational dynamics of educational attainment in India, focusing on the father-son relationship, and charted the trajectory of educational persistence across diverse castes and states for birth cohorts spanning 1940 to 1985. They observed a discernible downward trajectory in the strength of association between paternal and filial educational attainment, indicating a weakening of intergenerational educational persistence. Further, a study concentrated on women was conducted by Akanksha & Singh (2018). The researchers observed a positive correlation between upward intergenerational mobility and overall health outcomes among women, with those mirroring their mothers' educational trajectories exhibiting enhanced health prospects. Additionally, the study revealed significant disparities in health outcomes across geographic and religious dimensions, with rural women and Muslim women facing reduced likelihoods of optimal health relative to their urban and non-Muslim counterparts.

Therefore, to increase social mobility in India, Chapman (2020) suggests various recommendations to improve equality of opportunity. There has to be an increase in labour migration for efficient allocation of talent across regions, states, and industries. Given the pivotal role of education in mediating the intergenerational transmission of socioeconomic status, the nation must augment its allocations toward ensuring high-quality, affordable, and accessible early childhood educational opportunities.

Review of Literature

The multidimensional nature of social mobility lends itself to various subfields of inquiry, encompassing investigations into the intricate relationships between income inequality and bidirectional social mobility (Amaral et al., 2019; Heckman & Landersø, 2021), examinations of the causal links between enhanced social mobility and health inequality (Boyle et al., 2009; Präg & Gugushvili, 2021), and analyzing how education may strengthen social inequalities and reduce social mobility (Plewis & Bartley, 2014, Magnani & Zhu, 2015, Xie et al., 2022).

Amaral et al. (2019) examined the temporal dynamics between income inequality and intergenerational mobility across countries, including the United States, Canada, and eight European nations. Their findings revealed a pronounced inverse correlation between income inequality and mobility, wherein countries exhibiting elevated levels of inequality tended to exhibit diminished mobility prospects. Furthermore, the study discerned a more robust association between intergenerational income elasticities and the Gini coefficient, which underscored the notion that inequality's detrimental effects on mobility are more pronounced than variations across the income distribution. Heckman and Landersø's (2021) comparative study juxtaposed the United States and Denmark, elucidating the intricate relationship between social mobility and income inequality. Their findings revealed that Denmark's more equitable income distribution and enhanced intergenerational income mobility relative to the United States can be attributed to comprehensive social policies. The study found that, among recent cohorts, intergenerational educational mobility demonstrates equivalent levels in both the United States and Denmark. Furthermore, the estimated intergenerational elasticities of lifetime well-being, derived from income measures spanning an individual's entire lifespan, surpass those obtained from income assessments limited to a narrow age range, underscoring the importance of considering long-term economic outcomes.

Utilizing data from the 1971 and 1991 Censuses in England and Wales, Boyle et al. (2009) examined the relationship between health and social mobility. Their findings indicated a significant expansion of the health gap associated with deprivation between 1971 and 1991, as reflected in the differential health outcomes observed across various socio-economic classes over the two decades. Präg and Gugushvili (2021) undertook a distinctive study, employing a cross-sectional analysis of representative German survey data to investigate the effects of both subjective and objective social mobility on various health and wellbeing outcomes. The researchers found that the impact of both subjective and objective social mobility on health outcomes is relatively modest, with effect sizes ranging from approximately one-sixth to one-fifth of a standard deviation. In a follow-up investigation, Gugushvili and Präg (2021) examined the nexus between social mobility and health in a unique Russian cohort, navigating the transition to a market-oriented society. Utilizing Priv Mort survey data, their research demonstrated a robust link between subjective intergenerational mobility perceptions and health outcomes, supporting earlier research. The analysis revealed a nuanced pattern, wherein perceived downward mobility exhibited a stronger association with physical health, while upward mobility to mental well-being.

Numerous studies have investigated the intricate relationship between education and social mobility. Plewis and Bartley (2014) conducted a seminal study in the United Kingdom, examining the intergenerational dynamics of social class mobility and its implications for educational stratification. Specifically, their research probed the association between parents' intra-generational social class mobility and their offspring's subsequent educational attainment, utilizing advanced statistical models in STATA. The study drew upon robust datasets, including the UK Office for National Statistics Longitudinal Study and the British Cohort Study 1970. The researchers observed a distinctive pattern wherein children of upwardly mobile parents tend to achieve higher educational qualifications in their origin social class and relatively lower qualifications in their destination social class than their peers. In contrast, children of downwardly mobile parents display a reversed pattern. Magnani and Zhu (2015) undertook a comprehensive study examining the impact of parental education on children's educational outcomes in urban China, utilizing data from the 1990 and 2000 Chinese Population Censuses. Employing Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation, the researchers quantified the marginal effects of parental education on offspring's educational attainment. The study's findings suggest that the pronounced persistence of educational attainment across generations hinders equal opportunities in children's academic outcomes and future labor market prospects.

Furthermore, Xie et al. (2021) conducted a comprehensive study examining long-term trends in social mobility in the Republic of China, operationalized through two distinct metrics: intergenerational occupational mobility and intergenerational educational mobility. Despite relative stability compared to trends in the United States, the study revealed a decline in occupational and educational mobility over time. Notably, mobility patterns exhibited significant gender disparities, with earlier cohorts of women and those from rural origins facing particular disadvantages. This decline is attributed to the market forces unleashed by China's economic reforms, initiated in 1978, which affect social mobility trajectories.

Objectives and Methodology

This study aims to investigate the intergenerational transmission of socio-economic status and educational attainment, specifically examining the impact of parental socio-economic status and educational background on their children's socio-economic outcomes and academic achievements. Secondly, this study seeks to explore potential disparities in opportunities and outcomes between white-collar workers from urban and rural origins, focusing on understanding whether the geographic location of upbringing influences socioeconomic mobility and educational attainment.

The present study makes use of both primary and secondary data. A snowball sampling is used to select a representative sample of individuals among the Group A officers in Mizoram. The study only focused on the officers directly recruited and who had completed less than twenty years of service. Primary data have been collected through personal interviews using structured questionnaires which are formed using Google

forms. Since most newly appointed officers are usually posted in different districts outside of Aizawl (the capital city of Mizoram), conducting personal interviews is not feasible. In these cases, the questionnaires are sent to the respondents either through WhatsApp or via electronic mail (e-mail). This process has been used more frequently in collecting the primary data for this study. As such, a total of 173 samples have been collected. The study also utilizes secondary data from documents and research papers published by the government, various researchers, or organizations. However, the present study primarily relies on primary data, which are analyzed and presented using descriptive statistical methods. The data analysis employs cross-tabulation and non-parametric tests, including the Chi-square test of independence, to examine the relationships and associations within the dataset.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Economic Status of Respondents and Their Parents

The demographic profile of the 173 respondents, as presented in Table 1, exhibits a gender composition of 53.8% male (n=93) and 46.2% female (n=80) participants. The age distribution of the respondents reveals a range from under 25 to 46 years and above, with identical proportions (4.6%) at both ends of the spectrum. The data further indicate that 19.7% of respondents were aged 26-30, while 23.7% fell within the 31-35 age category. Notably, the 36-40 age group constituted the largest proportion, 26%, of the sample, followed by 21.4% in the 41-45 age bracket.

Table 1 reveals the age and gender distribution of the respondents, with 4 males and 4 females under 25 years old. The 26-30 age group comprises of 21 males and 13 females, while the 31-35 age range comprises 23 males and 18 females. The largest age cohort, 36-40 years, has 22 males and 23 females, followed by 18 males and 19 females in the 41-45 age range. Additionally, 5 males and 3 females are above 46 years old. Notably, the youngest participant is a 21-year-old female from the Administrative sector, while the oldest participant is a 52-year-old female from the same sector.

An examination of Table 2 indicates that the respondents' educational background is predominantly characterized by postgraduate education, with 47.4% attaining this level, followed by 23.7% who have completed undergraduate studies. Additionally, 50 respondents, i.e., 28.9 percent, have completed higher studies and obtained Master of Philosophy (M. Phil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Bachelor of Education (B. Ed), National Eligibility Test (NET), Bachelor of Law (LLB), Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS), and Post Graduate Diploma in Information Technology (PGDIT). These respondents are mostly working in the Education and Judiciary categories.

Table 3 displays the educational background of the respondents' parents, providing insight into the familial academic profile. An examination of the respondents' mothers' educational background shows that 5.2% of mothers have no formal education, while 4.6% have attained a Primary level of educational attainment. 12.1 percent are under

the category “Under Matric”, while 17.3 percent have completed education till the 12th Standard. A large proportion, i.e., 30.1 percent are Matriculate, 17.9 percent have completed graduation and 4 percent studied up to Post Graduation. Furthermore, 2.9 percent of the mothers have completed higher studies and, 5.8 percent are literate but do not receive formal education like the others.

Among the fathers of the respondents, 3.5 percent are illiterate while 2.3 percent have completed Primary level of education. 5.2 percent are under the category “Under Matric”, 15 percent are Matriculate, and 13.9 percent have completed education till the 12th Standard. Furthermore, 42.2 percent have completed graduation while 12.1 percent studied up to post graduation. 1.7 percent have completed higher studies and, 4.0 percent are literate but do not receive formal education like the others.

To examine the relationship between respondents’ educational attainment and their fathers’ educational levels, cross-tabulation and Chi-square tests were utilized. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4, which displays the association between respondents’ academic qualifications and their fathers’, while Table 5 reports the corresponding Chi-square test results. Since most existing literature excluded women in the mobility analysis, the current study mainly analyzes the relationship between the respondents and their fathers. However, mothers’ conditions are also analyzed in some cases. Further, the levels of education attained by fathers are grouped into three categories: lower (including kindergarten to matriculate), intermediate (including post-matric level), and higher (comprising graduation and above). The educational levels achieved by the respondents were grouped into three categories: graduation, post-graduation, and higher studies.

According to Table 5, the Pearson Chi-square test yielded an asymptotic significance level (two-sided) of 0.689, surpassing the standard significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the analysis reveals no significant correlation between the respondents’ educational attainment and their fathers’ educational backgrounds. Among fathers who completed only the lower levels of education, 23.1 percent have children who graduated, 51.9 percent have children who completed up to post-graduation, and 25 percent have children who pursue higher studies. Meanwhile, among 24 fathers who have attained education up to intermediate level, 33.3 percent have children with Bachelor’s degrees, 37.5 percent have children with Master’s degrees, and 29.2 percent have children who have completed higher studies. Furthermore, among fathers who completed graduation and higher studies, 21.6 percent have children who have completed graduation, 47.4 percent have children who have completed post-graduation, and 30.9 percent have children who have completed higher studies. The data shows that nearly half of the fathers (43.9%, i.e., the sum of fathers who completed lower and intermediate levels) have children who attained a higher level of education than themselves. Thus, there is a high educational mobility. The higher levels of education completed by the respondents compared to their parents can be the outcome of motivation by their parents and the absence of opportunities, other than education, for improving one’s socio-economic status in the state. The comparative analysis of fathers’ upbringing conditions and respondents’

educational attainment reveals a significant advancement, as most respondents have secured a Bachelor's degree or higher, indicating enhanced educational accessibility.

Table 6 displays the occupational distribution of the respondents' parents, revealing that 34.1% of mothers are employed in the public sector, whereas 10.4% are engaged in entrepreneurial pursuits. The majority of them, 46.2 percent are engaged in home making activities, 8.1 percent are farmers, and 2 mothers are working in Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and in the Corporate sector, each accounting for 0.6 percent. At the same time, among the fathers of the respondents, the majority, a total of 115 fathers, i.e., 66.5 percent, are Government Servants, followed by 34 fathers, i.e., 19.7 percent, who are Self-employed. Furthermore, 15 fathers, i.e., 8.7 percent are Farmers, 3.5 percent are working in NGO and, 1.7 percent are working in the Corporate sector. Similar to the results obtained by Azam (2013), occupational mobility is low, which means that most of the respondents (children) stayed in the same occupation as their fathers.

Building upon the occupational data presented in Table 6, Table 7 provides a further breakdown of the hierarchical levels within the government sector for parents employed in this domain. Among the Government servant mothers, nearly half of the total, i.e., 44.1 percent are categorized under Group B level, while 33.9 percent are classified as Group A officers. Only 16.9 percent are Group C workers and 5.1 percent are Group D workers. At the same time, among the Government servant fathers, the majority of them, accounting up to 34.1 percent are classified as Group A officers, followed by 42 fathers, i.e., 23.7 percent who are classified under Group B level. The smaller proportion of the fathers, i.e., 5.2 percent are categorized as Group C workers and, only 5 fathers, i.e., 2.9 percent as Group D workers. Based on this analysis, it has been observed that respondents whose fathers work in higher group levels also tend to work in higher group levels. This result indicates low occupational mobility among the participant officers and their parents, most working in Group A or B in the government sector.

Further, an analysis that examines the association between the designations held by the respondents and their educational qualifications is presented as follows. Table 8 presents the study of the association conducted using cross-tabulation, and Table 9 presents the corresponding Chi-square test.

The results of the Chi-square test presented in Table 9 indicate a statistically significant association between respondents' educational qualifications and designations, as evidenced by the Asymptotic significance values for Pearson Chi-Square ($p < 0.005$), Likelihood Ratio ($p < 0.005$), and Linear-by-Linear Association ($p = 0.041$). These findings suggest a strong correlation between educational attainment and occupational status among the respondents.

As depicted in Table 8, the respondents' designations are categorized into three groups: Administrative, Education, and Technical. The Administrative category encompasses respondents employed in various services, including the Mizoram Civil Service (MCS), Mizoram Planning, Economics and Statistical Service (MPES), Mizoram Police

Service (MPS), Mizoram Finance and Accounts Service (MFAS), Mizoram Information Service (MIS), and Mizoram Judicial Service (MJS), as well as officers holding positions in diverse administrative departments. The Education category includes Lecturers and Professors working in several colleges and Mizoram University, while the Technical category includes Engineers, Architects, Scientists, and Medical Officers.

In the Administrative category, 60.7% of the respondents are post-graduates, 25.8% are graduates, and 13.5% have completed higher studies. The respondents holding a degree in higher studies are highly concentrated in the Education category, comprising 63%. The remaining portions, i.e., 35.2% and 1.9%, have completed post-graduation and graduation levels, respectively. Further, among those working in the Technical category, 56.7% are graduates, 30% are post-graduates, and 13.3% have completed higher studies. Accordingly, there is a higher concentration of graduates in the Technical category, post-graduates in the Administrative category, and those who completed higher studies in the Education category. This finding indicates that the educational requirements for the various categories exhibit significant variability.

Disparity in Opportunities Between Rural and Urban Origins

Table 10 presents the residential area of the respondents during most of their childhood and teenage years. Out of 173 respondents, more than half of them hailed from the urban area. Accordingly, 127 respondents spent most of their childhood and teenage years in the urban areas, comprising up to 73.4 percent of the total. The remaining proportion, i.e., 26.6 percent came from the rural areas.

Table 11 displays the distribution of respondents' educational backgrounds across various schooling levels, including Primary, Middle, Secondary, and Higher Secondary. An analysis of the Primary level data reveals a notable disparity in school attendance patterns: 33.5% of respondents attended Public institutions, whereas a majority of 55.5% opted for Private schools, leaving 11% who attended Deficit schools. The data indicates that Private schools were the predominant choice at the Middle School level, with 57.8% of respondents attending these institutions. In contrast, only 28.9% and 13.3% of respondents attended Public and Deficit schools, respectively. Similarly, at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels, Public institutions were attended by 35.3% of respondents, while Private schools accounted for 40.5%. Additionally, a notable minority of 24.3% of respondents attended Deficit schools.

A comparative analysis of school attendance patterns across various educational levels reveals a notable trend. Although the proportion of respondents attending Private schools at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels is lower than that at the Primary and Middle School levels, it remains higher than the corresponding proportions for Public and Deficit schools. This result suggests that a majority of respondents, exceeding half, had the advantage of accessing Private schools across multiple educational levels.

The survey inquired about respondents' experiences regarding educational pursuits beyond Mizoram's borders, specifically whether they had attended schools, colleges, or coaching classes in other regions. Table 12 displays their responses to this question. Out of 173 respondents, 78 percent were able to pursue studies in schools, colleges, or coaching classes outside Mizoram, while 22 percent did not pursue the same. This result suggests that most respondents came from a well-off socio-economic background. Further, those who have the chance of exposure outside of Mizoram have higher opportunities to occupy higher positions in the government sector. This indicates a disparity in educational standards, with other states demonstrating a superior standard of education compared to Mizoram.

The data presented in Table 13 indicates a strong association between school type and residential location of respondents during formative years. Across various educational levels, a consistent pattern emerges: a significantly higher proportion of urban residents attended Private schools, whereas a comparatively lower proportion of rural residents had access to such institutions. Accordingly, at the Primary level, among the 96 (out of 173) respondents who pursued an education in Private schools, 87.5 percent were residents of the urban area and only 12.5 percent were from rural areas.

Similarly, at the Middle school level, out of 100 respondents who pursued education in Private schools, 87 percent were urban residents, while 13 percent were from rural areas. A similar trend is observed at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels despite a decrease in Private school attendance. Specifically, urban residents comprise a substantial majority (85.7%) of Private school attendees, while rural residents represent a smaller fraction (14.3%) at these educational levels. Since most respondents attended Private schools at different levels of education, the quality and facilities provided in these schools were more advanced than those of Public schools. This observation suggests that urban respondents had better access to advanced education than their rural counterparts.

An analysis was performed to examine the association between the residential area where the respondents spent their childhood and teenage years and their pursuance of studies in schools, colleges, or coaching classes outside Mizoram. The analysis utilized cross-tabulation to facilitate data presentation in Table 14, with the corresponding Chi-Square test outcomes displayed in Table 15 to provide inferential statistical insights.

The Chi-Square test results, presented in Table 15, reveal a statistically significant association between the residential area and the likelihood of pursuing education outside Mizoram, with a significance value of 0.007, which falls below the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating a strong association. According to the data in Table 14, a substantial proportion of urban residents (83.5%), specifically 106 out of 127 respondents, have had the privilege of accessing educational opportunities beyond Mizoram's borders. Meanwhile, only 21 respondents, comprising 16.5 percent, did not attend the same. At the same time, among the residents of rural areas, 29 respondents, i.e., 63 percent, have completed any of the mentioned educational levels outside

Mizoram. At the same time, 17 respondents, i.e., 37 percent did not attend the same. Therefore, the percentage of respondents growing up in the urban areas who pursued studies in schools, colleges, or coaching academies outside Mizoram is greater than their counterparts growing up in the rural areas who attended the same.

A further examination of the association between respondents' childhood and teenage residential areas and their current designations is conducted through cross-tabulation and Chi-Square analysis. The resulting cross-tabulation matrix, presented in Table 16, is subsequently subjected to Chi-Square testing, with the corresponding outcomes displayed in Table 17.

For the analysis, the respondents' designations are categorized into three types: Administrative, Education, and Technical. The residential areas are urban and rural. According to Table 17, the Chi-Square test yields an Asymptotic significance level of 0.034 for the Pearson Chi-Square statistic, surpassing the conventional significance criterion of 0.05, thereby confirming the existence of a statistically significant relationship.

An examination of Table 16 reveals that the Administrative category, comprising 51.4% of the total respondents, exhibits a significant urban-rural dichotomy, with 80.9% of respondents hailing from urban areas and 19.1% from rural counterparts. In contrast, the Education category, representing 31.2% of the total, displays a slightly more balanced distribution, with 61.1% of respondents originating from urban areas and 38.9% from rural areas. Furthermore, the Technical category, constituting 17.3% of the total, exhibits a pronounced urban bias, with 73.3% of respondents from urban areas and 26.7% from rural areas. Overall, 73.4 percent of the respondents working in different categories were of urban origin, while 26.6 percent were of rural origin. This data indicates that more than half of the white-collar workers in various Government departments have an urban background.

Limitations and Suggestions

The present study aims to examine the white-collar workers in Mizoram, focusing on Group A officers directly recruited and joining since 2010, requiring a substantial investment of time and effort in identifying the eligible officers. It is challenging to locate and contact eligible officers due to their postings in different parts of Mizoram, leading to a smaller sample size. Further, the lack of comprehensive data regarding social mobility in the study area, Mizoram, as well as in India, acts as a hindrance to conducting in-depth research. Researchers in this field would greatly benefit if the government could provide a list of officers and their designations, facilitating the identification and collection of desired research samples.

The study reveals that a greater number of Group A officers who took part in the survey were educated at private schools or institutions. This result suggests that students who attended private schools at different levels, such as primary, middle, secondary,

and higher secondary, have a greater likelihood of attaining higher positions in the government sector. Additionally, it implies that private institutions excel in providing quality education compared to public schools. Consequently, the government is compelled to formulate and enact policies for augmenting and guaranteeing the provision of superior educational resources and infrastructure within public schools, given their pivotal role in serving a substantial segment of the state's populace. This would improve the chances of students from rural areas and those with a low socio-economic background to secure higher positions in the government sector.

Further, more than half of the current Group A officers in Mizoram have pursued their studies at schools, colleges, or coaching academies outside the state. This finding implies that the educational standards prevalent in other regions of the country may be comparatively superior to those in Mizoram, indicating a potential disparity in the quality of education. Therefore, a concerted effort to upgrade the educational landscape in Mizoram is essential. This endeavor will unlock the transformative power of education, thereby facilitating increased social mobility and contributing to a more meritocratic society. This study also indicates that only a few respondents attended skill or value enhancement courses before securing their jobs, and these respondents are the ones who studied outside Mizoram. Attending such programs and courses can help individuals pursue further studies and adapt quickly to a new working environment. Hence, acknowledging the complementary role of these courses and programs in augmenting conventional educational pathways is vital.

Conclusion

The analytical findings indicate a lack of statistically significant correlation between paternal educational attainment and that of their offspring (the respondents). Nevertheless, a notable trend emerges, wherein most respondents surpassed their fathers' academic levels, exemplifying a pronounced upward educational mobility. Additionally, most officers came from affluent socio-economic backgrounds, indicated by their possessions of material wealth like lands and buildings before they started their career as Group A officers. Another supporting factor is the large proportion of respondents who pursued their studies in schools, colleges, or coaching academies outside Mizoram.

Another remarkable observation revealed by this study is that most children (i.e., the respondents) stayed in the same occupation as their fathers. This result demonstrates a low mobility in occupation as the respondent's occupation is strongly related to their fathers. As such, occupational mobility is lower than educational mobility among white-collar workers. Research findings indicate that nearly half of the participants are the youngest among their siblings, with a smaller portion being either the eldest or in the middle position. According to this observation, younger siblings are more likely to pursue higher education than older siblings. As a result, a relatively low percentage of respondents have siblings employed as Group A officers. The study also indicates unequal opportunities between respondents from urban and rural backgrounds, with a higher number of respondents pursuing education at private schools and outside Mizoram originating from urban areas.

In conclusion, this paper has yielded profound understandings regarding the interplay between familial background, educational achievement, and social mobility among white-collar professionals in Mizoram, thereby contributing meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge. There is a low intergenerational social mobility among the officers since most came from affluent socio-economic backgrounds with parents working in higher positions in the government sector despite a few exceptions. Since this study mainly focuses on education as the only dimension to determine social mobility and on directly recruited Group A officers, the significance may be limited. Therefore, more efforts should be made to conduct more studies relating to social mobility to delve into the impact of wider dimensions.

Table 1. Gender-Wise and Age Group-Wise Distribution of Respondents

		Male	Female	No. of Respondents	Percent
Age Groups	Under 25	4	4	8	4.6
	26-30	21	13	34	19.7
	31-35	23	18	41	23.7
	36-40	22	23	45	26.0
	41-45	18	19	37	21.4
	46 and older	5	3	8	4.6
Number of Respondents		93	80	173	100
Percent		53.8	46.2	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2. Educational Qualification of Respondents

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	Percent
Graduate	41	23.7
Post Graduate	82	47.4
Higher studies (PhD, MBBS)	50	28.9
Total	173	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3. Educational Qualification of Parents of Respondents

Educational level	Mothers	Percent	Fathers	Percent
Illiterate	9	5.2	6	3.5
Primary Level	8	4.6	4	2.3
Under Matric	21	12.1	9	5.2
Matric	52	30.1	26	15.0
Post Matric	30	17.3	24	13.9
Graduate	31	17.9	73	42.2
Post Graduate	7	4.0	21	12.1
Higher studies (PhD, MBBS)	5	2.9	3	1.7
Others	10	5.8	7	4.0
Total	173	100.0	173	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4. Association of Educational Qualification of Respondents & Fathers

			Respondents' Educational Qualification			
			Graduate	Post Graduate	Higher Studies	Total
Fathers' Educational Qualification	Lower	Count	12	27	13	52
		Percent	23.1%	51.9%	25%	100%
	Intermediate	Count	8	9	7	24
		Percent	33.3%	37.5%	29.2%	100%
	Higher	Count	21	46	30	97
		Percent	21.6%	47.4%	30.9%	100%
Total		Count	41	82	50	173
		Percent	23.7%	47.4%	28.9%	100%

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests for Table 4

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.253a	4	.689
Likelihood Ratio	2.194	4	.700
Linear-by-Linear Association	.443	1	.506
N of Valid Cases	173		
Note: a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.69.			

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 6. Occupation of the Respondents' Parents

Occupation	Number of Mothers	Percent	Number of Fathers	Percent
Government servant	59	34.1	115	66.5
Self-employed	18	10.4	34	19.7
Housewife	80	46.2	-	-
Farmer	14	8.1	15	8.7
NGO worker	1	0.6	6	3.5
Corporate employee	1	0.6	3	1.7
Total	173	100	173	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 7. Group Level for Parents who are Government Servants

Group Level	Number of Mothers	Percent	Number of Fathers	Percent
Group A	20	33.9	59	51.3
Group B	26	44.1	42	36.5
Group C	10	16.9	9	7.8
Group D	3	5.1	5	4.3
Total	59	100	115	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 8. Association of Respondents' Designation and Educational Qualification

			Educational qualification			Total
			Graduate	Post-Graduate	Higher Studies	
Designation	Administrative	Count	23	54	12	89
		Percent	25.8%	60.7%	13.5%	100.0%
	Education	Count	1	19	34	54
		Percent	1.9%	35.2%	63.0%	100.0%
	Technical	Count	17	9	4	30
		Percent	56.7%	30.0%	13.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	41	82	50	173
		Percent	23.7%	47.4%	28.9%	100.0%

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests for Table 8

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.244a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	64.094	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.165	1	.041
N of Valid Cases	173		

Note: a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.11.

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 10. Residential Area During Childhood & Teenage Years

Residential area	Number of Respondents	Percent
Urban	127	73.4
Rural	46	26.6
Total	173	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 11. Types of School Attended by Respondents

		Educational level					
		Primary	Percent	Middle	Percent	Secondary & Higher secondary	Percent
Types of school	Public	58	33.5	50	28.9	61	35.3
	Private	96	55.5	100	57.8	70	40.5
	Deficit	19	11	23	13.3	42	24.3
	Total	173	100	173	100	173	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 12. Pursuance of Studies Outside Mizoram

Response	Number of Respondents	Percent
Yes	135	78
No	38	22
Total	173	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 13. Association of Types of School Attended by Respondents & Residential Area

Educational Level		Types of School		Residential Area		Total
				Urban	Rural	
Primary	Public	Count	29	29	58	
		Percent	50%	50%	100%	
	Private	Count	84	12	96	
		Percent	87.5%	12.5%	100%	
	Deficit	Count	14	5	19	
		Percent	73.7%	26.3%	100%	
Middle	Public	Count	23	27	50	
		Percent	46%	54%	100%	
	Private	Count	87	13	100	
		Percent	87%	13%	100%	
	Deficit	Count	17	6	23	
		Percent	74%	26%	100%	
Secondary & Higher Secondary	Public	Count	34	27	61	
		Percent	55.70%	44.30%	100%	
	Private	Count	60	10	70	
		Percent	85.70%	14.30%	100%	
	Deficit	Count	33	9	42	
		Percent	78.60%	21.40%	100%	
Total		Count	127	46	173	
		Percent	73.40%	26.60%	100%	

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 14. Association of Respondents' Residential Area & Pursuance of Studies Outside Mizoram

			Pursuance of studies outside Mizoram		Total
			Yes	No	
Residential Area	Urban	Count	106	21	127
		Percent	83.5%	16.5%	100%
	Rural	Count	29	17	46
		Percent	63%	37%	100%
Total		Count	135	58	173
		Percent	78%	22%	100%

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 15. Chi-Square Test for Table 14

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.216a	1	.004		
Continuity Correction ^b	7.068	1	.008		
Likelihood Ratio	7.651	1	.006		
Fisher's Exact Test				.007	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.168	1	.004		
N of Valid Cases	173				
Note: a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.10.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 16. Association of Respondents' Designation and Residential Area

		Residential Area		Total	
		Urban	Rural		
Designation	Administrative	Count	72	17	89
		Percent	80.9%	19.1%	100.0%
	Education	Count	33	21	54
		Percent	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
	Technical	Count	22	8	30
		Percent	73.3%	26.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	127	46	173
		Percent	73.4%	26.6%	100.0%

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Table 17. Chi-Square Tests for Table 16

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.742a	2	.034
Likelihood Ratio	6.607	2	.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	.643	1	.422
N of Valid Cases	173		
Note: a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.98.			

Source: Authors' calculation from primary survey data

Author Contribution

LRK conceived the idea of study. LRK led the analysis of the paper's first draft. TC conducted primary survey, data tabulation and manuscript writing. Both authors approved this preliminary manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Primary data sources and tabulation is also available at 10.6084/m9.figshare.26462893.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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