The Impact of Education on the Social Stratification in India*

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EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

With regard to their stratification systems Western European and North American industrial societies are governed by an open class ideology. Differences in power, prestige, income, and wealth are not denied by this ideology, but are viewed as rewards of individual achievement through the channels of social mobility[1].

Since education is effectively geared to the occupation and income structure, one of the pre-conditions for social mobility is a high level of education. Faith in the openness of the class structure is therefore equivalent to a faith in the openness of the opportunity structure, more specifically the educational system.

However, the objective to equalize opportunities in education has not been realized. Empirical studies on the correlation of education and social mobility have borne out the fact that the educational system has by and large maintained social class differences[2]. The process of industrialization and the ever increasing technological advancement has led to an expansion of the educational system. The widening of educational opportunities, however, has not been accompanied by a simultaneous equalization of opportunities especially for the lower classes[3].

The reasons for this inequality are to be found in two sets of factors. The first comprises institutional-structural factors and the second operates on an ideological-cultural level. To the former belong economic factors, inaccessibility to institutions, selection-mechanisms and exclusiveness of institutions on the basis of social or ethnic criteria. The latter combines determinants ranging from the social background of teachers to the content of education, differences in the structures of speech and thought as well as aspirational levels[4].

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[1] Perucci, Robert: Education, Stratification, and Mobility, in: D. Hansen & J. E. Gerstl (eds): On Education, Sociological Perspectives, John Wiley & Sons, New York, London 1967, pp. 105–155, esp. pp. 105/6.

[2] Perrucci, Robert: op. cit., pp. 11 ff.; cf. also Havighurst, R.: Education and Social Mobility in Four Societies, in: A. H. Halsey, J. Floud, A. Anderson (eds): Education, Economy and Society, The Free Press, New York 1961, pp. 105–120.

[3] OECD: Study group in the Economics of Education: Social Objectives in Educational Planning, Paris 1967.

[4] Popitz, H.: Die Ungleichheit der Chancen im Zugang zur Höheren Schulbildung, in: Friedeburg, L. (ed): Jugend in der modernen Gesellschaft, Neue Wissenschaftliche Bibliothek 5, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Köln, Berlin, 1966 (3rd ed) pp. 392–408. Bernstein, Basil: Sozio-kulturelle Determinanten des Lernens – Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der

Taken together, they work cumulatively to the disadvantage of the lower classes and characterize the educational system as an institution of the middle class[5].

Thus we arrive at the conclusion that in the societies of Western Europe and North America, the educational system represents the decisive social mechanism for the allocation of positions of prestige and influence. Apparently, it functions as the main instrument for the maintenance of the present social structure.

As a corollary, bearing in mind that formal education represents society's official agency for secondary socialization, the analysis of the educational system should help us to identify the dominant groups as well as the system of stratification in a particular society.

However, we must be cautious before generalizing our conclusions. Our findings are derived from investigations carried out in societies where the educational system is a genuine part of the social system and has grown out of the development of society.

On the other hand, for the analysis of the educational system in a society like India's, the following factors have to be taken into consideration:

1. Modern education represents an originally imported institution.
2. This foreign institution was brought into a society with a tradition of learning and indigenous education.
3. The content of traditional education has not been oriented to occupational skills and individual achievement characteristic of modern education.
4. Traditional education has been virtually monopolized by a group ranking first on the scale of ritual purity and prestige.
5. Modern education is apparently directly linked to urbanization and industrialization. Traditional criteria of status like high caste membership are basically contrary to those of income, occupation and education, corollaries of modernization.
6. In the process of change of traditional techniques of production and consequent greater diversity and specialization of skills a higher level of education on the part of the working force is required. Traditional exclusiveness in the access to formal education should therefore increasingly be replaced by functional criteria of ability. This should lead to the greater participation of people who were formerly denied access to the means for social mobility.
7. The position of the lower classes in Western societies has been referred to. We find in India the attempt to equalize educational opportunities by providing special privileges to the "Backward Classes" through the constitution. These include in particular the "Scheduled Castes" and "Scheduled Tribes" and comprise about 1/3rd of the Indian population[6]. In this context it is worth mentioning that these privileges are to be withdrawn 20 years after the enactment of the constitution, i.e. in 1970[7]. — Meanwhile they have been extended upto 1980.

Rolle der Sprache, in: Heintz, P. (ed), Soziologie der Schule, KfZSS, Sonderheft 5 (6. ed), 1969, pp. 52–79.

[5] Lütgens, Ch.: Die Schule als Mittelklasse-Institution, in: Heintz, P. (ed): Soziologie der Schule, KfZSS, Sonderheft 5 (6. ed), 1969, pp. 22–39.

[6] Béteille, A.: The Future of the Backward Classes, in: Béteille: Castes Old and New, Asia Publ. House, London 1969, pp. 103–145.

[7] Chandidas, R.: How Close to Equality are Scheduled Castes?, in: Economic and Political Weekly IV, 24, June 14, 1969, p. 975.

An analysis of the structure and the recruitment patterns in Indian higher education should give us answers – however tentative – to the following complexes:

1. The stability and change of the social structure of a society traditionally ranked along the axis of ascribed criteria of caste membership.
2. The extent to which an originally foreign institution has been assimilated and utilized by the traditionally dominant groups.
3. The present chances of the poor and the lower castes.

RECRUITMENT PATTERNS OF INDIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Before we examine our data it must be pointed out that they are of a quite heterogeneous nature, because so far no empirical investigations have been carried out on a larger scale, with the exception of a few case studies. Nevertheless, the data available suffice to indicate trends. Our material lends itself to the classification of students on the basis of:
1. parental income, 2. parental occupation, 3. caste membership.

PARENTAL INCOME

In 1960, an enquiry among 6,814 graduates from 29 universities in India computed the following table regarding the average monthly income of family.

Table 1. **Distribution of graduates by average monthly income of family***

Income (in Rs.)	men (in %)	women (in %)	total (in %)
below 200	29.9	22.1	29.1
200 to 499	45.8	44.5	45.7
above 499	22.7	28.4	23.3
N. A.	1.6	5.0	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Size of sample	6,270	544	6,814

* Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training, Min. of Labour and Employment: Report on the Pattern of Graduate Employment, New Delhi 1963, p. 13, Table 3, 3.

According to this survey 69% of the Student population come from families with a monthly per capita income of more than Rs. 40., almost 25% of families with more than Rs. 100 per capita.
In order to put these figures in the proper perspective it is important to note that in India on an average the monthly per capita income in 1964/65 amounted to Rs. 29.[8], for the rural population alone to only Rs. 21.[9]. These figures are low but still conceal the very uneven distribution of the national income. A government report of

[8] Ministry of Education (1), Report of the Education Commission 1964–1966, New Delhi, 1966, p. 2.
[9] This information is based on a sample survey of 8657 rural households of the NCAER, New Delhi quoted in: D. Kantowsky: Dorfentwicklung und Dorfdemokratie in Indien, Bertelsmann Universitäts Verlag, Gütersloh 1970, p. 80.

1966 throws some light on this point: only the top 20% of the population have Rs. 35. per capita at their disposal whereas the lowest 30% have less than Rs. 15.[10].
The costs of college education in the form of high tuition fees[11] and private expenses[12] are heavy. They are not compensated by scholarships, which are not only few in number but also limited in the monetary amount. In view of this fact, it is not surprising that higher education is mostly available to the financially better-off sections of the Indian society only. This is illustrated by a remark of the education commission in 1966: "We do not advocate the immediate general abolition of fees . . . at present, when higher education is mostly being availed of by the top 5% of the population"[13].

PARENTAL OCCUPATION

The above mentioned sample survey also furnishes information on the distribution of graduates by principal family occupation.

Table 2. **Distribution of graduates by principal family occupation***

Occupation	men (in %)	women (in %)	total (in %)
agriculture	30.2	7.0	27.7
government service	19.1	30.9	20.3
other services	23.6	27.5	24.1
business	23.9	25.5	24.1
artisans	1.0	0.3	0.9
N. A.	2.2	8.6	2.9
Total	100.0	99.8	100.0
Size of sample	6,270	544	6,814

* Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training, op. cit., p. 14, Table 3, 4.

Though agricultural families account for the largest share (28%) they are underrepresented when compared with the 69.5% of the total population engaged in agriculture[14]. On the other hand, business (24%) and the services (20 & 24%) are the main feeders of the educational system. The category "artisan" is insignificantly small (1%) and one called "labourers" does not occur at all. We can infer from these data that college and university education are definitely not common among children of workers and agricultural labourers and hardly among those from rural areas. Instead, they are the field of children of white collar workers, professionals, and

[10] Ministry of Education (1), op. cit., p. 2.
[11] In 1960/61 the average annual fee per student amounted to Rs. 172.5 in Colleges for Arts and Science, to Rs. 240.5 in Colleges for Professional Education. In both types of colleges between 85% to 88% of the students paid fees. Cf. Ministry of Education (1), op. cit., p. 110.
[12] For the last form in high school (class XI) a survey on "private cost in education" calculated an amount of minimum Rs. 25 upto a maximum of Rs. 259,65 for books and stationery. Not included in this amount are the expenses for hostel-rent and boarding which particularly affect the students not residing at the place of the college. Cf. Ministry of Education (1), op. cit., p. 113; footnote p. 112.
[13] Ministry of Education (1), op. cit., pp. 112/113.
[14] Census of India 1961.

businessmen[15], i.e. of the **urbanized** groups in society, for whom education is both of obvious value as well as necessary.

CASTE – MEMBERSHIP

Traditionally, formal education in India was almost exclusively within the reach of the Brahmins, i.e. access to it was determined by a priori top-caste membership. Modern education is not only basically open to all, but additionally in India special privilegies have been given to the traditionally underprivileged groups in the form of reserved seats, free tuition and scholarships.

With regard to caste, a more detailed account is available only on the students of Fergusson College, Poona. Additional data refer to the student population of Allahabad University.

Table 3. **Distribution of students by caste**

Caste	Fergusson College* (in %)	Allahabad University** (in %)
Brahmin	56.3	42
Kshatriya	9.1	15
Kayastha	4.4	22
Trading castes	11.2	13
Artisan castes	2.4	–
Backward Classes	2.5	5
Others	14.2	3
Total	100.1	100

* Extracted from: A. Kamat / A. G. Deshmukh: Wastage in College Education, op. cit., p. 5.
** Di Bona, J.: Elite and Mass in Indian Higher Education: The case of Allahabad University, p. 147, Table III, in: Altbach, Ph. (ed.): Turmoil and Transition – Higher Education and Student Politics in India. Bombay, Lalvani Publ. House, 1968.

We infer from these data that the division of Indian society in a vast number of castes and sub-castes is apparently obsolete in the context of higher education. In particular, this is due to the fact that educational institutions serve larger areas. Accordingly, an analysis of sub-caste membership of students is irrelevant, since the position of a particular "jati" is determined by its **locally** defined importance.

Regarding the traditional educational monopoly of the Brahmins we find that in modern education they still play a decisive role. In Allahabad they represent 42%, in Fergusson College, Poona even 56%. Though accounting for the most highly represented single caste, other caste groups have benefited from higher education too. These are especially the Kshatriyas, the writer caste and the trading castes.

However, even though the share of the individual caste groupings may vary, our data unambiguously show that education is still very much the prerogative of the "advanced" castes. The castes belonging to shudra-varna and the Backward Classes, in particular the Scheduled groups, have only a very small share in higher

[15] Cf. Kamat, A. / Deshmukh, A. G., Wastage in College Education, Poona, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Asia Publ. House, Bombay, 1963, p. 6: on the composition of the students of Fergusson College Poona by guardian's occupation.

education. Variations occur only in the representation of the upper caste groupings. The figures for artisan-castes (2.5%) and the Backward Classes (ca. 5%) are uniformly low.

SUMMARY

Indian students represent a highly selected group in terms of caste, occupation and income of guardians. Higher education is the reserve of the comparatively well-to-do, the urbanized and the upper castes. The general poverty of the masses and the heavy cost exclude, apart from other factors, the vast majority of the Indian people from higher education. Besides economic factors, the degree of urbanization of a group determines the enrolment figures. The above mentioned factors partly merge with caste membership. This is particularly evident for the artisan castes and the Backward Classes. They are generally land-bound castes depending on the land-owning upper caste groups. With regard to the "Other Backward Classes" and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the government's reserved seats policy has been a failure, mainly due to this dependency. Though the three groups together constitute about one third of the Indian population, our data do not suggest any significant headway in the educational advancement of these underprivileged groups. The data from Poona and Allahabad are corroborated by the figures from Benares Hindu University. In the period from 1961/62 to 1965/66, out of a total number of more than 37,000 students, only 5.4% belonged to the "Other Backward Classes", 1.5% to the Scheduled Castes and just 16 students were Tribals[16]. A study of education in rural West Bengal can provide a hint as to the general causes. They are determined by economic factors: "In those villages where these castes (the Backward Cl. — J.P.N.) are associated with agricultural labour or share-cropping they are more backward in school registration ... The study indicates that location does not much determine educational position (one village was close to Calcutta — J.P.N.) ... The crucial factor is the economic condition of the people. And economic condition in a rural society is determined by landholding and income derived from land."[17]
Our data bear out the identity of upper caste status with occupational attainment and economic well-being. Apparently the latter factor is responsible for the position of a group, dominant both in terms of ritual status along the traditional axis of purity and prestige and along the modern one of education, occupation and wealth.
So far we have established the general character of higher education as predominantly an institution of the upper and middle classes as well as the upper castes. We arrived at this conclusion on the basis of data pertaining to the recruitment pattern of the student population as compared with data refering to the total population.
In the following section we will examine the recruitment patterns institution- as well as faculty-wise. The analysis should not only yield results regarding institutional differentiation but also further indicate the correlation between education and the variables of occupation, income and caste-membership.

[16] Computed from Banaras-Hindu-University, Annual Report 1961/62 to 1965/66, Appendices XV Form A, cf. Table 11 of this paper.
[17] Chaudhuri, S. K.: Educational Progress in Rural Bengal, in: Economic and Political Weekly V, 6, Feb. 7, 1970, pp. 304/305.

DIFFERENTIATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Looking at the various branches of study in the university and comparing them with the later employment chances as expressed in financial terms we encounter substantial differences in the prospects of students of various subjects (see Table 4). The subject groups can be subsumed under the following four categories according to income levels:

Category one is composed of the three Bachelor degrees which are dominated by a majority of degree-holders earning less than Rs. 200.— per month, and from 1/5th to about 1/3rd earning up to Rs. 500.—. Arts students form the lowest rung of this hierarchy with about 1/3rd in the lowest income group.

Category two is represented by the former students of law who are equally divided among the two lower income brackets, each comprising about 1/3rd of the respondents of this group.

Table 4. **Distribution of Former Students by Monthly Earnings in First and Present Employment***

Monthly Earnings (Rs.)

Faculty/Subject group	Below 200		200 to 499		500 and above	
	First employment in %	Present employment in %	First employment in %	Present employment in %	First employment in %	Present employment in %
B. A.	79.9	65.4	6.8	20.1	0.3	1.3
B. Sc.	75.3	50.8	14.0	36.2	0.4	3.0
B. Com.	80.3	54.1	6.7	31.1	0.9	3.4
B. Sc. (Agr.)	82.4	48.9	9.9	41.2	—	1.9
LL. B.	62.2	32.8	9.0	31.1	0.2	3.1
B. Eng.	45.5	3.1	46.3	67.4	1.8	24.4
M. B. B. S.	40.7	3.7	30.6	57.8	4.5	19.4
M. A.	75.1	38.2	11.2	46.4	1.0	3.1
M. Sc.	64.9	12.6	27.2	74.1	0.8	5.5
M. Com.	74.3	39.4	15.3	44.6	0.6	4.9
All Faculties	74.5	49.8	11.6	32.8	0.6	3.9

* Extracted from: Directorate General of Employment and Training, op. cit., p. 39, Table 6, 2.

Category three consists of the holders of a Masters degree. They have definitely better chances than students of the same subject holding only a Bachelor degree. The majority is here in the income category ranging from Rs. 200–499. From about 1/2 to 3/4th of the post graduates are in this category led by the M. Sc. s. The percentage of those with an income of more than Rs. 500 is very small reaching not even 6% in any one of the groups.

Category four shows a reversed situation. Only in this group we find a substantial proportion of people earning more than Rs. 500 p.m. ranging from 1/5th in medicine up to 1/4th in engineering. On the other hand, fewer than 4% draw less than Rs. 200.

PREFERRED SUBJECTS

In our sample covering students from 29 Indian universities, 25% of the respondents preferred different
faculties from those actually offered for their first degree course.

Table 5. **Distribution of graduates by preference of subject***

Subject	Percentage of graduates
B. A.	3.7
B. Sc.	21.1
B. Com.	3.2
B. Sc. (Agr.)	2.4
LL. B.	1.4
B. T.	0.6
B. Eng.	36.5
M. B. B. S.	27.1
B. Vet. Sc.	0.1
Other subjects	2.1
Not available	1.8
Total	100.0
Size of sample	1,701

* Source: Directorate General of Employment and Training, op. cit., p. 23, Table 4, 2.

With a negligible number of other choices the three subjects, B. Eng., M. B./B. S., and B. Sc., alone combine maximum preference of almost 85% of the sample. It is significant that precisely these courses offer the best and highest financial rewards, as our previous data have shown. This fact leads us to conclude that at least for a certain section of the Indian society the often quoted thinking in terms of prestige does not hold good collectively. The prospective financial rewards are the most important factor influencing choice of subjects.

DIFFERENTIATION THROUGH EXAMINATIONS

A look at the examination results of the students of various subjects seems to reflect and justify the above described hierarchy of preferences and income levels.
An analysis of the examination results of the students of Benares-Hindu-University in the years 1961/62 to 1965/66 yields the following distribution according to class obtained.

Table 6. **Distribution of I, II, III class — Examination results in different Faculties***

Faculty/Subject group	Class I no.	Class II no.	Class III no.	Total no.	Class I in %	Class II in %	Class III in %
P. U. C.-Arts	45	353	148	546	8	65	27
B. A.	78	989	2,434	3,501	2	28	70
P. U. C.-Science	296	766	94	1,156	26	66	8
B. Sc.	132	530	328	990	13	54	33
B. Engineering	716	955	—	1,671	43	57	—
Pre-Medicine	111	152	—	263	42	58	—
Total	1,378	3,745	3,004	8,127	17	46	37

* Computed from: Annual Report Benaras-Hindu-University 1961/62 to 1965/66. Appendices "Examination Results".

The top of this pyramid of achievement is formed by the students of medicine and engineering with not a single III class and more than 40% I class results. In the middle are the students of science with 2/3rd I and II class results taken together. By far the worst students in terms of achievement are found in arts subjects. In Benares more than 2/3rd of them are III class students.

The reason for this difference in performance can not be attributed to differences in higher standards required for particular subjects. An enquiry into marks obtained in the secondary-school-examinations of students in different faculties points to quite the same situation.

Table 7. **Distribution of Graduates by class secured at School-Leaving-Exam***

Faculty	No.	I in %	II in %	III in %	N-A. in %
B. A.	956	15.2	49.3	30.4	5.1
B. Sc.	934	32.3	47.0	14.8	5.9
B. Com.	840	13.2	47.6	33.0	6.2
LL. B.	519	16.6	49.5	26.0	7.9
B. Eng.	403	61.8	28.0	3.0	7.2
M. B. / B. S.	285	39.6	43.6	11.9	4.9

* Extracted from: Directorate General of Employment and Training, op. cit., p. 22, Table 4, 1.

The differences in examination results are genuine differences in performance[18]. The better type of students go for science, the best ones opt for medicine and engineering, especially technology, while the vast majority of the students of the humanities **remain** in arts.

SUMMARY

The system of higher education in India is hierarchically structured.

1. In terms of performance the best students are found in the professional subjects medicine and engineering. The worst examination results are encountered in arts with the science students somewhere in between.
2. In terms of future earnings the hierarchy in performance is matched by a hierarchy of income levels. Graduates of medicine and engineering draw the highest incomes while those of arts can neither expect satisfactory earnings nor any substantial improvement after an initially low pay.
   In general, it can be said that the higher the educational level within a subject the higher the future income.
3. On the level of perception it is observed that students generally prefer science and professional subjects to arts and law. Apparently, students have a clear-cut appraisal of the subjects and their individual choices are guided by financial considerations and not by prestige, unless money goes with prestige.

[18] Cf. also the Secondary-School-Leaving-Examinations and the results of the Pre-University-Courses of the students of B-H-U. Banaras-Hindu-University, op. cit. Appendices VII.

4. The hierarchy in income levels is apparently justified on the basis of students' performance. Our data indicate that the better students are also rewarded financially.

ACADEMIC SELECTION vs SOCIAL SELECTION

However, an enquiry into the recruitment patterns of students of the different faculties shows that the academic selection as expressed in examination results also represents a **disguised social selection.**

INCOME vs ACADEMIC SELECTION

The study of Fergusson College tabulates the parental income of students in arts and science separately. It arrives at the general conclusion that the guardian's income of arts students amounts to only 78% of the parental earnings of science students (Rs. 234.5 p.m. as against Rs. 298)[19]. In detail, the Fergusson College data show the following distribution for arts and science students separately:

Table 8. **Distribution of male students by guardian's income***

Annual income Rs.	Arts		Science		Total		Select. Index	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	Arts	Science
below 1,000	45	17.7	135	9.1	180	10.4	1.70	0.88
1,000–2,000	79	31.0	393	26.6	472	27.2	1.14	0.98
2,000–3,000	40	15.7	318	21.5	358	20.6	0.76	1.04
3,000–5,000	38	14.9	253	17.1	291	16.8	0.89	1.02
5,000–10,000	30	11.8	214	14.5	244	14.1	0.84	1.03
above 10,000	10	3.9	113	7.6	123	7.1	0.55	1.07
blank	13	5.1	55	3.7	68	3.9	1.31	0.95
Total	255	100.1	1,481	100.1	1,736	100.1		

* Calculated from: Kamat/Deshmukh: op. cit., p. 7, Table 1, 6.

The Selectivity Index (SI) indicates that the crucial income range is around Rs. 2,000 per annum. The lower the income the higher the representation of students in arts – who do not have any favourable prospects as has been demonstrated before. On the other hand, in the categories above Rs. 2,000 p.a., the Selectivity Index is throughout negative for arts. A Selectivity Index of 1.00 indicates equal representation, less than 1.00 underrepresentation, above 1.00 overrepresentation. Keeping in mind that the students of science have better future chances and that the students of medicine and engineering are recruited from among this group, the importance of guardian's income as a decisive factor in selection to different subjects is outstanding. This last point is substantiated in a survey of Kerala University students. "There is clear evidence ... that admission to professional colleges is generally sought only by such students as are financially better off than those in the other types of study."[20]

[19] Kamat, A. / Deshmukh, A. G.: op. cit., calculated from Table 1.6, p. 7.
[20] Ministry of Education (2), Survey of Living Conditions of University Students – a report, New Delhi, 1961, p. 10.

In view of these findings the apparently purely academic selection in examinations seems questionable.

OCCUPATION vs ACADEMIC SELECTION

With regard to guardian's occupation our data indicate here too a differential representation in the various subjects among the already highly selected university population.

Table 9. **Distribution of male students by guardian's occupation***
(Fergusson College)

Occupation	Arts		Science		Total		Selec. Index	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	Arts	Science
Service (above Rs. 3,000 p. a.)	13	5.1	138	9.3	151	8.7	0.59	1.07
Service (below Rs. 3,000 p. a.)	46	18.1	207	14.0	253	14.6	1.24	0.96
Business (above Rs. 3,000 p. a.)	21	8.2	126	8.5	147	8.5	0.97	1.00
Business (below Rs. 3,000 p. a.)	17	6.7	109	7.4	126	7.3	0.92	1.01
Professional	30	11.8	251	16.9	281	16.2	0.73	1.04
Teacher	12	4.7	86	5.8	98	5.7	0.82	1.02
Landlord	12	4.7	32	2.2	44	2.5	1.88	0.88
Farmer (below Rs. 5,000 p. a.)	26	10.2	116	7.8	142	8.2	1.24	0.95
Pensioner	12	4.7	109	7.4	121	7.0	0.67	1.06
Priest, Goldsmith, Peon, etc.	8	3.1	23	1.6	31	1.8	1.72	0.89
Blank	58	22.8	284	19.2	342	19.6	1.16	0.98
Total	255	100.1	1,481	100.1	1,736	100.1		

* Calculated from: A. Kamat / A. G. Deshmukh: op. cit., p. 6, Table 1, 5.

The data show for arts an overrepresentation ranging from almost 88% for landlords to about 25% in the lower services.

On the other hand, underrepresented in arts are business, teachers, professionals, pensioners and the higher services.

Data from Allahabad University support these findings. While agriculture (55.2%) dominates in arts and "labourers" occur in arts subjects only (0.8%), among science students the services (45.6%), the professionals (14%) and business (15,8%) have a disproportionately large share[21].

This evidence suggests that **rurality** determines the enrolment in arts as much as comparative **urban poverty.** For the rural upper class landlord the step into the differently structured urban society and modern education is marked by the enrolment in arts. (Cf. the high Selectivity Index for the Landlord in Allahabad reaching 1.32 for arts, while the S. I. is as low as 0.59 for science and 0.52 for

[21] Andersen, W. / Alok Pant: Student Politics at Allahabad University-I, in: Economic and Political Weekly V, 23, June 6, 1970, p. 914.

commerce.) The less well off farmer opts for arts too, even though to a smaller extent. Almost on the same level as the farmer are the lower services, while the Indices for priest, peon and 'sonar' are much closer to the landlord.
The share of business families, teachers, professions, pensioners and higher ranking services in arts is decreasing in this order. The service-holders with 40% underrepresentation constitute the occupational group most successful in their resistance to arts. Since an enrolment in the humanities is always possible, one can interpret the comparatively large underrepresentation in the arts faculty by certain groups only as an indicator that for them arts represents only the last resort (after attempts to be admitted to science, medicine or engineering have failed) rather than a genuine means for mobility.

CASTE vs ACADEMIC SELECTION

The data on caste membership yield the following information for arts and science students in each group separately.

Table 10. **Distribution of male students by caste***
(Fergusson College)

Community/Caste	Arts		Science		Total		Selec. Index	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	Arts	Science
Brahmin	124	48.7	794	53.6	918	52.9	0.92	1.01
Maratha	46	18.1	121	8.2	167	9.6	1.88	0.85
Kayastha	11	4.3	48	3.2	59	3.4	1.27	0.94
Jain, Marwadi	22	8.6	199	13.4	221	12.7	0.68	1.06
Lingayat, Wani, Sonar	21	8.2	136	9.2	157	9.1	0.90	1.01
Mali, Sutar, Kumbhar, etc.	10	3.9	36	2.4	46	2.7	1.44	0.89
Backward-classes (incl. sched. castes, sched. tribes)	6	2.4	44	3.0	50	2.9	0.83	1.04
Sindhi, Punjabi, Sikh	4	1.6	55	3.7	59	3.4	0.47	1.09
Christians, Parsees, Muslims	8	3.1	31	2.1	39	2.2	1.41	0.96
Others	3	1.2	17	1.1	20	1.2	—	—
Total	255	100.1	1,481	99.9	1,736	100.1		

* Calculated from: A. Kamat / A. G. Deshmukh: op. cit., p. 5, Table 1, 4.

Marathas (SI 1.88), the artisan castes (SI 1.44) and the Kayasthas (SI 1.27) are the caste groups heavily concentrated in arts. The Brahmins take a medium position with a slight bias in favour of science followed by Lingayats (SI 0.90), Backward Classes (SI 0.83) and lastly the trading communities with the smallest proportionate share in arts (SI 0.68).
While the significant overrepresentation of Marathas remains to be explained, the situation of the artisan castes confirms our previous findings. Their high wastage rate (43%) and their low achievement index (SI 0.64) for I. plus II. class results points to the fact that these castes are apparently newcomers to education[22]. Obviously,

[22] Cf. Kamat/Deshmukh: op. cit., pp. 80 and 114/5.

the enrolment in college as such already signifies an upward step on the social ladder of status for this group.

As regards the Kayasthas, it seems more appropriate to explain their concentration in arts in terms of their traditional caste occupation as scribes. Their wastage rate of 17%, which is the lowest of all caste groups in our sample, as well as the high number of girl students from this caste (SI 2.2; in Fergusson College, they constitute 9.6% against only 3.4% men) are cases in point[23].

That the business community does not opt for arts has to be explained in a similar way. Even today a large percentage from these castes is found in business. If the data on occupation can give us any hint of the caste composition, the self-recruitment of business is very great[24]. In Allahabad University the Selectivity Index of business families in commerce courses is as high as SI 2.76[25].

The Backward Classes in Fergusson College are relatively underrepresented in arts subjects, a fact which does not coincide with other more detailed figures. However, since the number of students of this group is rather small and includes also Scheduled Castes and Tribes we will examine the data pertaining to Benares-Hindu-University in greater detail instead.

Table 11a. **Share of 'Backward-Class' Students in each College/Faculty compared to total number of students***
(Benares-Hindu-University)

College/Faculty	Total no. of Students	Backw. Classes		Other Backw. Cl.		Sched. Castes		Sched. Tribes
		no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	no.
Sanskrit	1,335	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
C H C (Arts)	7,448	938	12.6	647	8.7	289	3.9	2
C H C (K)	2,389	208	8.7	199	8.3	7	0.3	2
Science	7,455	347	4.7	301	4.0	45	0.6	1
Women College	2,255	21	0.9	18	0.8	3	0.1	
Indology	719	5	0.7	5	0.7			
Law	1,137	214	18.8	161	14.1	53	4.7	
Technology	1,604	37	2.3	26	1.6	10	0.6	1
Mining & Met.	1,990	204	10.3	189	9.5	15	0.8	
Engineering	5,660	217	3.8	163	2.9	44	0.8	10
Agriculture	1,844	241	13.1	189	10.3	52	2.8	
Music	1,120	35	3.1	17	1.5	18	1.6	
Teacher Training	605	26	4.3	23	3.8	3	0.5	
Medicine	1,304	58	4.5	58	4.5			
Library SC.	191	20	10.5	20	10.5			
Total	37,056	2,571	6.9	2,016	5.4	539	1.5	16

* Computed from: Annual Reports Benares-Hindu-University 1961/62 to 1965/66, Appendices XV, Form A.

Table 11a shows the substantial underrepresentation of students belonging to the "Backward Classes", amounting to only 6.9% of the total student population within a period of 5 years. The break-down of these aggregate data into the sub-groups:

[23] Kamat/Deshmukh: op. cit., cf. p. 5, Table 1,4.
[24] Chhibbar, Y. P.: From Caste to Class – a study of the Indian Middle Classes, Associated Publ. House, New Delhi 1968, cf. Table V-2, "Occupational Structure of Caste in 1955".
[25] Cf. Andersen/Pant: op. cit., p. 14.

Table 11b. **Distribution of 'Backward Class' Students by College/Faculty compared to total students population***

College/Faculty	Total Stud. pop. %	Backward Classes in %	Other Backw. Cl. in %	Sched. Castes in %	Sched. Tribes no.
Sanskrit	3.6	—	—	—	—
C H C (Arts)	20.1	36.5	32.2	53.6	2
C H C (K)	6.4	8.1	9.9	1.3	2
Science	20.1	13.5	14.9	8.3	1
Women College	6.1	0.8	0.9	0.6	—
Indology	1.9	0.2	0.2	—	—
Law	3.1	8.3	8.0	9.8	—
Technology	4.3	1.4	1.3	1.9	1
Mining & Met.	5.4	7.9	9.4	2.8	—
Engineering	15.3	8.4	8.1	8.2	10
Agriculture	5.0	9.4	9.4	9.7	—
Teacher Training	1.6	1.0	1.1	0.6	—
Music	3.0	1.4	0.8	3.3	—
Medicine	3.5	2.3	2.9	—	—
Library SC.	0.5	0.8	1.0	—	—
Total	99.9	100.0	100.1	100.1	16

* Computed from: Annual Reports Benares-Hindu-University 1961/2 to 1965/6, Appendices XV, Form A.

'Other Backward Classes', 'Scheduled Castes' and 'Scheduled Tribes' points to significant differences among these groups. Among them, the 'Other Backward Classes' which are defined in **'economic terms'** have relatively benefited from higher education as compared to the 'Sched. Castes' and 'Sched. Tribes'. If these data from Benares are indicative, they seem to suggest that it is Scheduled **Caste** status that decisively prevents this group from an educational break-through rather than the economic condition only, which is equally poor for all three groups. As far as the Scheduled Tribes are concerned, their situation is altogether different. Their representation in U. P. is negligible, a fact which might mainly account for the small number of tribal students at Benares. Apart and in addition to the small number of students from the 'Backward Classes', Table 11b illustrates that their distribution in the various colleges is more or less one-sidedly skewed in favour of the less favourable subjects, arts and law.

Regarding the 'Other Backward Classes' we find that 2½ times more students from this group study law. Furthermore, more than 1½ times are enrolled in arts, whereas science (SI 0.83), engineering subjects (SI 0.75), and medicine (SI 0.83) indicate a consistent and substantial underrepresentation.

Bearing in mind that the number of students from Scheduled Castes in Benares-Hindu-University amounted to 518, i.e. 1.5% of the admissions within a period of 5 years (although they constitute 21% of the total population of Uttar Pradesh[26]), the biased distribution of the Backward Classes is even more pronounced for the "Untouchables". In law their Selectivity Index reaches 3.2 and in arts it comes to 2.7. As can be expected, their representation in engineering (SI 0.52), science (SI 0.41), and medicine is the lowest of all the various groups under consideration.

[26] Census of India, Paper No. 1, 1962; quoted in Link, 2. June 1968, p. 20.

During the whole five-year period not a single Scheduled Caste student was admitted in medicine[27].

SUMMARY

The analysis of examination results above pointed to a hierarchy of faculties on the basis of performance. However, it was subsequently shown that the apparently purely examination-oriented results include a social screening.

In order to make allowance for the different total numbers among arts and science students a Selectivity Index (SI) was computed. This Index, projecting an equal division of the total number of students among the different faculties of our sample, provided a criterion for the evaluation of the differential representation in arts and science **within each group.**

Keeping in mind that the student population represents a highly selected group vis-a-vis the whole population, a further differentiation within higher education and within the same occupational, income, and caste category could be detected.

Unfortunately, our material does not provide detailed cross-information correlating for each particular case two variables while the third one is kept constant. (e.g. the occupational and income distribution among the Brahmins of our sample). Nevertheless, certain inferences about arts students as compared with those in sciene subjects focussing on general socio-economic characteristics as well the distribution of the individual caste, income and occupation categories in both subject groups could be made.

It was found that a larger number of students from the lower income brackets are enrolled in arts. (48.7% upto Rs. 2,000 p.a. as against 35.7% in science.) With regard to the higher income categories the situation was just reversed. In addition, it could be established that with the exception of the two lowest ones, in all the other higher income categories the larger percentage has gone for science, i.e. not only absolutely but also relatively the students of arts are the poorer ones.

The examination of our data on occupation indicated not only the absolute dominance of the urban upper and middle class occupations consisting of the professions, business (pensioner), teachers and the services which constitute 67.9% in our sample as against only 1.8% of the lower class occupation and 10.7% farmers and landslords. The Selectivity Index pointed also to decisive differences within the various occupational groups. The analysis of the occupations with a larger representation in arts than in science, namely landlords, farmers, the lower services and the peon, goldsmith-group (6.1% in arts vis-a-vis 25.6% in science) points out that **rurality** and **relative urban poverty** are the main reasons for an underrepresentation in science on the part of these groups. For them enrolment in arts represents the most important as well as the most difficult step in their educational and social advancement into or within the **urban** social hierarchy.

[27] These data from Banaras are basically corroborated by the data from other institutions. The generally heavy underrepresentation of the 'Scheduled Castes' is clear from the evidence for Fergusson College and Allahabad University and also for the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (cf. the following paragraphs). As far as the one-sided admission to the different colleges is concerned, W. Andersen / Pant, op. cit. report for Allahabad, that 81% of the Scheduled Caste-students were enrolled in arts.

On the other side, the financially better-off groups, particularly those occupying high positions in the urban society like professionals and the higher services are largely oriented away from arts to science, medicine and engineering.

Notwithstanding the dominant position of the Brahmins (52.9%), Marathas (9.6%) and the trading communities (12.7%) totaling 75% in our sample the relation of caste membership to enrolment in arts or science brought out important intra-caste differences.

As far as the Backward Classes, and especially the Scheduled Castes are concerned, we had to face not only their overall strong underrepresentation. The evidence illustrated that among the three groups to which the government's 'reserved seats policy' applies, the 'Other Backward Classes' have not only a comparatively larger representation than the other two, but their distribution in the various subjects indicates also that for a few of them a limited chance for social climbing has been opened up.

On the other hand, the situation of the Scheduled Castes has not changed much. Not only is their overall share negligible (1.5% at Benares), but their concentration in precisely those subjects (arts and law) which do not offer good future prospects leads us to conclude that educational expansion has not played any important role either for the absolute economic and social position of the Scheduled Castes or for the relative position of the fortunate few among them.

The persistence of traditional occupations associated with their respective castes provided a partial explanation for the preference for particular faculties on the part of the Kayasthas and the trading communities. However, as far as the Kayasthas are concerned, the limited value of such an explanation becomes apparent in view of the other findings regarding occupation and income differentiation. While the tradition of education among the writer-caste can explain their generally high enrolment rate (cf. Allahabad 22% and the high enrolment rate among girl students from this caste), their admission rate in arts is due to other causes. An adherence to traditional vocational patterns entails for the Kayasthas employment in the lower white collar services. For this occupational group, no other single factor is as important for their enrolment in arts rather than science as their relative poor **economic** condition, as our data on the relation between occupation and education have clearly shown.

So far we have mainly concentrated in our discussion on the differences between students in arts and science. The previous results, suggesting that the best type of student is found in medicine and engineering, that they can expect the highest incomes, and that these subjects attract the greatest number of individual choices, is highlighted in a survey of professional institutions.

This investigation demonstrates the social exclusiveness of these institutions. Besides, it indicates that the social segregation between students of arts, science, medicine and engineering does not represent the final selection mechanism in university education. On the contrary, it proves the pervasive differentiating character in Indian higher education not only among different faculties but also within one particular faculty. At the top of the educational hierarchy there are the Indian Institutes of Technology with only 1/8th of their students coming from rural areas, with a heavy concentration of service holders, an insignificant percentage of agricultural families and finally a share of almost 60% of students whose parents'

Table 12. **Socio-Economic Conditions of Students admitted to Professional Institutions in 1965***

	Institutes of Technology in %	Regional Eng. Colleges in %	Eng. Colleges in %	Medical Colleges in %
I. Residence				
Students from				
Rural Areas	12.8	41.2	34.1	31.8
Urban Areas	87.2	58.8	65.9	68.2
II. Occupation of Parents				
Professional	7.2	10.9	8.7	17.1
Service	61.2	37.3	34.6	32.9
Business	20.1	17.7	21.2	17.9
Agriculturist	4.3	23.9	22.4	21.4
Others	7.2	10.2	13.1	10.7
III. Income of Parents				
Less than Rs. 150 p. m.	6.9	32.9	38.7	30.8
Between Rs. 151–300 p. m.	13.8	25.6	29.1	23.5
Between Rs. 301–500	20.6	23.8	19.6	19.6
Over Rs. 500	58.7	17.7	12.6	26.1
Total no. of students	2,574 (100)	2,425 (100)	15,144 (100)	6,118 (100)
Total no. of Institutions in the sample	5	7	48	45

* Extracted from: Ministry of Education: Report of the Education Commission 1964–1966, New Delhi, 1966, p. 119.

monthly income exceeds Rs. 500. The data for the Indian Institute of Technology, in New Delhi[28] also furnishes information on the caste composition of the students of these institutes. The only caste groups that count are the Brahmins with 22% and the trading castes with 63%. In view of the fact that technology draws students from a very limited number of groups who have the best prospects for the highest paid jobs and occupations of influence, it appears irrefutable that the degree of **self-recruitment** of the influential groups is very large. The material further leads to the conclusion that at least on this highest level of the educational pyramid the hard core of selection among this most urbanized group is determined by economic criteria.

Conclusion

The impact of education on social stratification in India has been proved to be limited. The traditionally excluded groups of the poor and the lower castes have largely remained outside the orbit of higher education. This finding holds good as much for the land-bound groups as for the new urban lower classes. With special

[28] Rajagopalan, C. / Singh, J.: The Indian Institutes of Technology – Do they Contribute to Social Mobility?, in: Economic and Political Weekly III, 1968, April 6, 1968, Table 3 p. 566.

reference to the 1/3rd of the Indian population consisting of 'Other Backward Classes', the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, it has to be stated that, while the former have somewhat improved chances (compared to their previous situation), the Scheduled Castes' and the Scheduled Tribes' representation in higher education can only be described as **"tokenism".**

The enquiry throws some light on the transformation process the Indian society is undergoing. In particular the rural rich are trying to catch up and to acquire the symbols and prerequisites for a high status in the urban society which is implicitely considered superior to the traditional order. The college of arts represents the crucial field where the newcomers to education meet. However, while for the land-owning group the study of arts represents an adaptation process to this new society amounting to horizontal mobility, the admission to arts means for the members of the lower class the first step in their vertical mobility within one and the same status hierarchy. As far as the future prospects of these "candidates for further mobility" is concerned, our data clearly favour the land-based group by pointing out that in the end economic criteria are decisive. While new groups of rural origin and the middle class are increasingly entering higher education, the highly urbanized groups are striving for enrolment in other more rewarding as well as more exclusive subjects.

The rigidly structured traditional Indian society asserts itself in the educational system. Instead of equalizing opportunities it has been functionally assimilated into the Indian context. Though it serves the purpose of providing the necessary knowledge and training required in an industrial society, it has not had any substantial effect on the traditional stratification system. The most important differentiating features of the students in the best educational institutions lie in their socio-economic background rather than in caste-membership. This condition, which is favourable to the urban upper classes has, however, only meant a relative change in the social composition of the dominant group, since the upper castes collectively are identical with the upper classes. "The traditional English system... has allowed good education... to be largely reserved for those who have the capacity to pay the necessary fees... A somewhat similar system was transplanted in India by British administrators and we have clung to it so long because it happened to be in tune with the traditional hierarchical structure of our society..."[29]

Based on empirical investigations in Western European and North American societies, at the outset a hypothesis was formulated stating that an analysis of the educational system provides a key for an understanding of the society under investigation as well as for an identification of the dominant groups. The material presented in this paper apparently fully supports the hypothesis, even though further and more homogeneous data are required for a full validation.

Nevertheless, while H. Gould's[30] or B. Singh's[31] survey of the recruitment patterns of the upper class-groups in Lucknow (which are similar to our results) will always remain case studies, the approach to the stratification system through the analysis of the educational system is not only more comprehensive but also more stringent.

[29] Ministry of Education (1), op. cit., p. 11.

[30] Gould, H. A.: The adaptive functions of Caste in Contemporary Indian Society, in: Asian Survey III, 9, Sept. 1963.

[31] Singh, B.: Elites of Uttar Pradesh, their communication patterns, Lucknow: Lucknow University, Institute of Sociology and Human Relations, 1961.