SOCIAL SCIENCE GAZETTEER
Vol 21 (1) January – June 2026
September 2026: pp 3 – 20
©Author(s)

Article History
Received: 07-08-2025 **Revised: 20 – 07 – 2026** **Accepted: 20 – 07 – 2026**

Social Change and the Persistence of Structure in Contemporary India: Empirical Reflections from the Field

***Gautam Makwana & H Elizabeth**

Abstract: *This paper explores the paradox of social change and structural persistence in contemporary India by critically analysing empirical data and sociological theory. While India has witnessed rapid economic, technological, and institutional transformations, deeply embedded social structures—notably caste, patriarchy, and class hierarchies—continue to shape individual and collective experiences. Drawing on field-based observations, secondary datasets, and qualitative interviews, this study examines how these enduring structures adapt, resist, or reinforce social transitions in both rural and urban settings. The paper revisits classical sociological frameworks, including those of M. N. Srinivas and Yogendra Singh, alongside contemporary contributions, to understand how structural continuities coexist with change. It particularly interrogates domains such as caste-based discrimination, gender roles, labour migration, and access to education, highlighting the complex negotiation between tradition and modernity. By integrating theoretical insights with grounded empirical evidence, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of Indian society's evolving fabric. The findings emphasize that while material change is evident, it is often refracted through pre-*

existing social orders, thereby reproducing inequalities in modified forms. The paper concludes by discussing implications for sociological research, policy formulation, and inclusive development.

Keywords: Social Change, Structural Continuity, Indian Society, Caste and Class, Empirical Sociology, Tradition and Modernity

Introduction

Over the past few decades, economic liberalization, globalization, rapid urbanization, and technological diffusion have all had a significant impact on India's socioeconomic landscape. Consumption, mobility, communication, and employment patterns have significantly changed since market reforms began in the early 1990s. These processes have ushered in new aspirations, life chances, and forms of citizenship. Yet, paradoxically, these changes have not dismantled the deeply embedded social hierarchies of caste, class, gender, and religion. Instead, they often intersect with and even fortify these traditional structures, producing hybrid forms of continuity and change that defy simplistic narratives of modernization (Deshpande, 2003, p. 87; Jodhka, 2015, p. 14).

This paradox—of structural persistence amid socio-economic flux—raises foundational questions for Indian sociology. How do long-standing institutions such as caste or patriarchy endure, reconfigure, or reassert themselves in the face of modernizing impulses? To what extent do contemporary social changes disrupt existing hierarchies, and when do they serve to reproduce them under new guises? These questions are central to understanding the dialectic between structure and agency in contemporary India, and they compel a re-examination of both classical and emerging sociological theories on transformation.

The relationship between women's autonomy and household decision-making has been scrutinized extensively, particularly in developing nations, where it serves as a key determinant of children's educational outcomes (Chakraborty & De, 2011; Chatterjee & Dubey, 2024). Research across multiple countries has found that higher levels of maternal autonomy are strongly associated with improvements in children's literacy and numeracy (Ewerling et al., 2020). However,

limited research has examined how these dynamics interact with caste-based stratification in the Indian context, where the intersection of caste and gender plays a critical role in shaping outcomes (Chatterjee et al., 2025).

This paper seeks to critically engage with these issues by bridging theoretical frameworks and empirical insights. The primary objective is twofold. First, it revisits key sociological theories—ranging from structural-functionalism and Marxism to subaltern studies and intersectionality—that conceptualize the relationship between social change and structural persistence in the Indian context. Second, it offers an empirical investigation into how these dynamics unfold across specific domains such as caste hierarchies, gender relations, labour markets, and social mobility, drawing upon both field-based studies and secondary data from national surveys and academic research.

The central argument advanced here is that social change in India is neither linear nor universally progressive. Instead, it is uneven, contested, and deeply mediated by enduring structures of power and privilege. These structures do not merely resist change; they adapt, absorb, and sometimes even co-opt transformative currents in ways that sustain social inequalities under the veneer of development and modernity. As such, the paper contributes to ongoing debates in Indian sociology concerning the nature, direction, and contradictions of social transformation (Singh, 2000, p. 24; Shah, 2018, p. 41).

Theoretical Framework

The interplay between continuity and change has long constituted a central theme in Indian sociological inquiry. Foundational thinkers such as M. N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont, and Yogendra Singh have offered distinct paradigms for interpreting the durability of social structures amidst transformative processes.

M. N. Srinivas (1962, p. 124) introduced the seminal concepts of Sanskritization and Westernization to elucidate the pathways of social mobility and cultural change within the caste system. Sanskritization, according to Srinivas, entailed a process whereby lower castes adopted the ritualistic and lifestyle practices of dominant upper castes in an attempt to elevate their social status. While this process allowed

for symbolic mobility within the caste hierarchy, it often left the structural underpinnings of caste inequality intact. Thus, change was accommodated without subverting the hierarchy itself—a pattern that exemplifies structural persistence beneath cultural transformation.

In contrast, Louis Dumont (1980, p. 54), in Homo Hierarchicus, foregrounded the ideological resilience of caste, positing that caste endured not only as a set of social practices but as a deeply ingrained value system embedded in Indian worldviews. For Dumont, hierarchy was not an aberration but a foundational organizing principle of Indian society. His structuralist approach emphasized the coherence and internal logic of caste, thereby complicating any assumptions of its dissolution under the influence of modernization.

Yogendra Singh (2000, p. 42) critiqued the limitations of both Srinivas and Dumont, particularly their insufficient engagement with the dialectical nature of Indian modernity. He proposed a dialectical framework of tradition and modernity, where social change was neither a linear transition from the traditional to the modern nor a mere reproduction of static structures. Instead, Singh introduced the idea of structural articulation—a mode of transformation in which traditional institutions selectively assimilate modern elements, thereby producing hybrid formations that retain hierarchical logic even while appearing to modernize.

By analysing the micro-level changes taking place within kinship, religious, and familial institutions, Susan Visvanathan (2001, p. 67) further enhanced this discussion. Her ethnographic research showed that rather than obvious ruptures, social change in India often takes the form of syncretic or hybrid forms. The ability of traditional institutions to change and adapt in response to changing socioeconomic circumstances, rather than their inherent immutability, is what ensures their survival.

Together, these theoretical contributions underscore a key sociological insight: the relationship between structure and change in India is marked by negotiation, contestation, and synthesis. Structures do not passively persist; they actively shape the trajectory of change. Thus, rather than treating change and continuity as dichotomous, Indian

sociology encourages an analysis that recognizes their mutual constitution (Jodhka, 2012, p. 39; Baviskar & Ray, 2011, p. 1

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative, interpretive methodology rooted in the traditions of critical sociology and grounded theory. Recognizing the complexity and heterogeneity of Indian society, the research draws upon a triangulated set of sources to analyse the empirical manifestations of social change and structural endurance. The use of multiple data types—conceptual literature, statistical surveys, and ethnographic case studies—allows for a multi-layered, context-sensitive understanding of the processes under examination.

Primary data for this study is derived from secondary analysis of large-scale national datasets, including the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) rounds. These datasets offer demographic and socio-economic insights into caste, class, gender, education, health, labour participation, and mobility patterns across states and social groups.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) provides a nationally representative dataset covering 636,699 households across all states and union territories of India (International Institute for Population Sciences & ICF, 2021). Recent analyses of this data have examined the complex relationship between women's autonomy and children's educational outcomes, revealing how caste-based social stratification moderates this association (Chatterjee et al., 2025). Chatterjee and colleagues (2025) demonstrated that maternal autonomy positively influences school enrolment, with financial autonomy showing the strongest effect; however, the benefits are significantly lower for children from marginalized caste groups (Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes).

In addition, the study incorporates field-based empirical accounts and ethnographic case studies reported in peer-reviewed sociological research over the last two decades. These qualitative insights offer micro-level understandings of lived experiences and institutional dynamics that are often obscured in macro-statistical data. Key case studies include:

1. Urban slum settlements in Delhi, focusing on informal labour and inter-caste urban stratification (Bhan, 2009);
2. Dalit communities in rural Tamil Nadu, examining caste violence, land rights, and assertions of dignity (Kapadia, 2014);
3. Gujarat's female labour force participation, addressing both gendered mobility restrictions and economic changes (Raveendran & Vanek, 2020);
4. Migration networks in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, exploring regional disparities, kinship-driven migration, and remittance economies (Tumbe, 2012).

These case studies serve as empirical anchors that ground theoretical debates in the socio-material realities of everyday life. By situating structural themes within specific local contexts, the paper demonstrates how macro-level processes of modernization interact with—and are refracted through—social institutions such as caste, kinship, labour, and gender.

Finally, all empirical findings are interpreted through the lens of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks to ensure conceptual coherence and analytical depth. This integrative approach allows the research to move beyond mere description and towards a critical interrogation of the mechanisms through which change is mediated by structure, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of contemporary Indian society.

Empirical Evidence and Analysis

The empirical evidence drawn from national surveys, field-based studies, and longitudinal research reveals the persistence of entrenched social structures—particularly caste, gender, class, and spatial inequalities—within the broader landscape of socio-economic transformation in India. While signs of progress are evident, structural impediments continue to mediate and constrain the direction and depth of change.

- **Caste**

Despite constitutional abolition and the institutionalization of affirmative action policies since the 1950s, caste continues to operate as a powerful axis of exclusion and privilege. Multiple empirical

studies confirm that caste-based disparities remain deeply embedded in access to education, employment, housing, and dignity. Desai and Dubey (2011, p. 45), drawing on data from the India Human Development Survey (IHDS), demonstrate that upper-caste groups remain disproportionately represented in elite academic and professional institutions, while Scheduled Castes (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) continue to face systemic barriers to upward mobility.

Contemporary research on caste and economic outcomes has revealed significant gaps in income aspirations and expectations. Sarkara, Chakravorty, and Lyonette (2025) analysed data from a large-scale skill-training program for rural youth in India and found that trainees from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe backgrounds have significantly lower income aspirations than trainees from privileged castes. Specifically, participants from disadvantaged caste groups expect to earn 23% less and aspire to earn 22% less after training completion compared to participants from Other Castes (Sarkara et al., 2025, p. 28). These disparities persist even after accounting for background characteristics, including pre-training personality traits and non-cognitive skills.

Moreover, even among socially mobile Dalit individuals, caste-based stigma persists, often expressed through subtler mechanisms such as name-based discrimination, residential segregation, and everyday exclusion (Jodhka, 2015, p. 88). In urban spaces, caste boundaries are maintained through practices of informal discrimination in rental markets and workplace interactions, which dilute the emancipatory potential of educational and economic gains.

Analysis of NFHS-5 data reveals that caste-based disparities moderate the association between maternal autonomy and children's educational outcomes. Chatterjee et al. (2025) found that the positive effect of maternal autonomy on school enrolment is significantly lower for children from marginalized caste groups, suggesting that the intersection of caste and gender operates to compound disadvantage. This pattern supports what has been termed the "double jeopardy" hypothesis (Sarkara et al., 2025, p. 24), wherein overlapping social identities compound disadvantage and shape individuals' economic outlooks and perceived future opportunities.

Caste endogamy remains the norm across most regions, with only a negligible proportion of marriages occurring across caste boundaries, indicating that the intimate sphere continues to reproduce caste hierarchies even amidst changing public roles.

- **Gender**

The landscape of gender relations in India reflects a similar duality of formal advancement and structural constraint. There has been a discernible increase in female participation in education and employment over recent decades. However, these gains are unevenly distributed and often accompanied by patriarchal resistance in both private and public domains. Bhattacharyya (2016, p. 370) highlights a paradoxical rise in gender-based violence, including domestic violence and public harassment, even as women's literacy and workforce participation grow.

Kabeer (2011, p. 362) notes that women employed in the informal economy—particularly those from marginalized castes or religious minorities—often encounter exploitative conditions marked by low wages, lack of job security, and dependence on male intermediaries. In such settings, women's "empowerment" is mediated through familial and community structures that limit autonomy.

Research on female labour force participation in urban India reveals how social status considerations shape women's work decisions. Recent studies show that the relationship between female labour force participation and familial social status depends on the kinds of jobs women can access (Sharma, 2025). Indicators of social status—household wealth, education, and caste—are all positively correlated with female participation in well-paying, high-skilled occupations, and negatively correlated with female participation in low and medium-skilled occupations (Sharma, 2025). This reflects the persistence of traditional norms whereby female seclusion and non-participation in the labour force signal familial social status, particularly among landed upper-caste groups (Chen, 1995; Srinivas, 1977).

Naidu and Rao (2024) interrogated class as a labour process that intersects with caste and gender using the first ever national time use survey conducted in India in 2019. Their Marxist-feminist analysis

revealed that there exist intra-household gendered differences in class locations, calling to question theoretical frameworks that assign a cohesive class location to all household members. They found that both men and women engage in reproductive labour in addition to other forms of labour, which varies by caste categories, underscoring the importance of an expanded conception of work that includes reproductive labour (Naidu & Rao, 2024).

Sarkara et al. (2025) found that female participants in skill-training programs have significantly lower aspirations and expectations than their male counterparts, with female participants expecting to earn 11% less and aspiring to earn 14% less than male participants (p. 28). Exploring the intersection of caste and gender, they found that disadvantages are cumulative: SC/ST women face the lowest aspiration and expectation levels across all groups, confirming the "double jeopardy" hypothesis.

In Gujarat, ethnographic studies of rural self-help groups reveal that women's participation in microfinance schemes does not automatically translate into household decision-making power and often reinforces their roles as financial contributors without challenging gendered hierarchies (Rao, 2001, p. 58). As Chakravarti (2003, p. 581) argues, caste and gender are co-constitutive systems of domination, wherein Dalit women occupy a structurally disadvantaged location marked by intersectional subordination.

- **Class and Labour**

India's post-liberalization growth has generated a burgeoning middle class and new patterns of consumption. However, these developments have been accompanied by increasing labour market fragmentation and precarity. Fernandes (2006, p. 129) observes that the so-called "new middle class" is primarily defined by consumer behaviour rather than equitable access to rights, security, or quality education. The expansion of the service sector and gig economy has created employment opportunities, but most workers remain in informal, unprotected arrangements.

Recent analysis of NSSO data indicates that a significant proportion of women workers are employed in the informal sector, highlighting their economic vulnerability (National Statistical Office, 2023;

Raveendran & Vanek, 2020). Despite policy initiatives such as "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" and the "Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana," women's workforce participation remains low, and sociocultural norms continue to restrict mobility and decision-making (National Statistical Office, 2023). These limitations have direct implications for maternal autonomy, particularly among marginalized women who face both gender-based and caste-based restrictions.

Bhattacharya (2021, p. 14) documents that urban informal workers experience frequent job transitions, income volatility, and lack of social security, rendering them vulnerable despite their centrality to the urban economy. Furthermore, occupational mobility remains bounded by caste-based occupational niches, where certain communities continue to dominate or be confined to specific sectors, reinforcing historical stratifications (Béteille, 1992, p. 174).

Thus, economic liberalization has not dismantled class hierarchies but instead restructured them, generating new inequalities that intersect with older forms of exclusion. Labour remains a site of dispossession and unequal bargaining power, particularly for marginalized communities.

- **Migration and Urbanization**

Internal migration and urbanization are often heralded as vehicles for social mobility and integration. However, empirical studies suggest that migration frequently results in the re-territorialization of rural hierarchies within urban settings. Roy and Tumbe (2018, p. 58) show that while migration may provide access to income and new opportunities, migrants—particularly those from Dalit, Adivasi, or Muslim backgrounds—are typically relegated to informal settlements with poor access to basic services such as sanitation, healthcare, and education.

Reddy's (2020, p. 7) longitudinal study of educational and occupational trajectories reveals that educational mobility does not necessarily lead to occupational mobility. The disjuncture between credentials and opportunity is especially stark for individuals from historically marginalized communities, suggesting the persistence of systemic gatekeeping in urban labour markets and professional networks.

Thus, while cities are often seen as engines of transformation, they are equally sites of structural reproduction, where spatial segregation, informalization, and social exclusion shape the migrant experience.

Discussion

The empirical data presented above underscores a central sociological insight: social change in India is deeply mediated by enduring structures of caste, gender, class, and spatial inequality. The persistence of these structures does not imply social stasis; rather, it reflects their capacity to adapt, absorb, and reconfigure themselves within changing socio-economic conditions. This structural resilience ensures that while certain forms of mobility and empowerment become possible, they are often partial, constrained, and contingent.

For instance, the simultaneous presence of digital literacy and manual scavenging, or the coexistence of Dalit students in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) with caste-based hostel segregation and discrimination, exemplifies the layered contradictions of contemporary Indian modernity. These juxtapositions challenge any linear narrative of progress and point instead to what Singh (2000, p. 95) termed a "reconfiguration" rather than a rupture in the social fabric.

The intersectional analysis presented in this study reveals the complex ways in which multiple axes of inequality operate together. Research on labour market aspirations demonstrates that SC/ST women face the lowest aspiration and expectation levels across all groups, supporting the "double jeopardy" hypothesis (Sarkara et al., 2025, p. 28). Similarly, the NFHS-5 data analysis reveals that the benefits of maternal autonomy for children's education are significantly lower for marginalized caste groups, highlighting how caste-based disparities moderate the positive effects of women's empowerment (Chatterjee et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the selective inclusion of marginalized groups—such as women in self-help groups, Dalits in education, or migrants in informal labour—often occurs under terms that reproduce broader hierarchies of control. As Shah (2006, p. 72) argues, such inclusion frequently lacks the transformative thrust necessary to dismantle

systemic inequalities. Instead, it represents accommodation without empowerment.

The analysis of female labour force participation in urban India reveals an additional layer of complexity. In rural contexts, where landed upper-caste women traditionally did not perform wage work, female labour force non-participation signals social status (Sharma, 2025; Chen, 1995). In urban India, however, this relationship depends on the kinds of jobs women can access. High-skilled occupations accrue social respect rather than signal financial need, and women of high social status have greater access to these positions through social networks and higher college graduation rates (Sharma, 2025). This suggests that while structural inequalities persist, their manifestations are shaped by the specific institutional and economic contexts in which they operate.

Thus, the Indian experience of modernity is best understood as a negotiated modernity—one in which the old and the new cohabit in complex and often contradictory ways. Policy interventions must go beyond token inclusion or welfare provisioning to address the structural logics that underpin inequality. This entails rethinking development from the vantage point of social justice and institutional reform, where transformation is not merely economic but also moral, political, and epistemic.

For policy, these findings suggest several implications. First, affirmative action policies must move beyond educational access to address workplace discrimination, housing segregation, and social dignity. Second, women's empowerment programs must recognize that economic participation alone does not ensure autonomy; interventions must address household decision-making structures and care work distribution. Third, labour market policies must address informalization and provide social security for workers in gig and informal economies. Fourth, urban development policies must recognize migration as a structural process and ensure access to housing, education, and healthcare for migrant populations

Conclusion

This paper has examined the complex and uneven nature of social change in contemporary India, emphasizing that such change is deeply

mediated by resilient structures of caste, gender, class, and space. Through the integration of classical and contemporary sociological theories with field-based and secondary empirical data, it has been argued that while visible transformations have occurred—particularly in domains such as education, mobility, labour, and urbanization—these shifts remain constrained by enduring hierarchies that adapt rather than dissolve under the pressures of modernity.

Caste continues to structure access to material and symbolic resources; gender inequalities persist despite rising female participation in education and work; class mobility remains uneven and is often bounded by caste and informal labour regimes. Urbanization and migration, rather than offering a clean break from traditional constraints, often result in the spatial reconstitution of exclusion. These dynamics point to the non-linear, negotiated nature of change, which is best understood not as a rupture with the past but as a reconfiguration of power and privilege within new institutional, economic, and technological contexts.

Recent empirical research confirms that the relationship between women's autonomy and educational outcomes is moderated by caste-based disparities, with benefits significantly lower for children from marginalized groups (Chatterjee et al., 2025). Similarly, the labour market aspirations of disadvantaged groups—particularly SC/ST women—are systematically lower than those of their privileged counterparts, reflecting the cumulative effect of multiple axes of inequality (Sarkara et al., 2025). The analysis of female labour force participation in urban India reveals that social status considerations continue to shape women's work decisions, with high-skilled occupations offering a pathway that respects social standing while enabling economic participation (Sharma, 2025).

A key implication of this analysis is that Indian sociology must transcend rigid binaries such as tradition versus modernity, or continuity versus change. Instead, it must engage with the hybrid and liminal spaces where old and new forms co-exist, conflict, and coalesce. These zones of negotiation—where mobile Dalits face everyday casteism, where self-help group women remain excluded from household decision-making, or where migrants construct urban

livelihoods within informal settlements—are emblematic of India's social paradoxes.

Future research must adopt intersectional, comparative, and longitudinal approaches to more fully capture the evolving nature of inequality and transformation. In particular, emerging areas such as digital labour platforms, environmental justice movements, agrarian transitions, and youth aspirations in post-liberalization India offer fertile ground for sociological engagement. Equally important is the need for methodologies that foreground voice, resistance, and subaltern agency, moving beyond elite narratives of development to centre those most affected by structural constraints.

Ultimately, the challenge lies not merely in documenting change but in interrogating its terms, limits, and consequences, thereby contributing to a more critical and transformative understanding of Indian society.

Future research should explore emerging domains such as digital labour platforms, where new forms of work are shaped by old inequalities; environmental justice movements, where caste and class intersect with ecological vulnerability; and youth aspirations in post-liberalization India, where the tension between traditional expectations and modern opportunities is particularly acute.

References:

Baviskar, A., & Ray, R. (2011). Elite and everyman: The cultural politics of the Indian middle classes. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203155835

Béteille, A. (1992). Society and politics in India: Essays in a comparative perspective. Oxford University Press.

Bhan, G. (2009). "This is no longer the city I once knew": Evictions, the urban poor and the right to the city in millennial Delhi. Environment and Urbanization, 21(1), 127–142. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247809103009

Bhattacharya, R. (2021). Indian urban workers' labour market transitions: Evidence from panel data. arXiv preprint. arXiv:2110.05482. https://arxiv.org/abs/2110.05482

Bhattacharyya, R. (2016). How gendered is gender-based violence? Gender, Place & Culture, 23(3), 367–384. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2015.1011079

Chakraborty, L., & De, P. (2011). Women's autonomy and child nutrition in India. Economic and Political Weekly, 46(22), 55–62.

Chakravarti, U. (2003). Gendering caste through a feminist lens. Economic and Political Weekly, 38(4), 579–584. https://www.epw.in/journal/2003/04/special-articles/gendering-caste-through-feminist-lens.html

Chatterjee, P., Ghosh, S., & Chakraborty, L. (2025). Maternal autonomy, caste system, and children's school enrollment in India. Family Relations. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.70065

Chatterjee, S., & Dubey, A. (2024). Women's empowerment and child nutritional outcomes in India. Social Indicators Research, 172(2), 345–368. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-024-03312-5

Chen, M. A. (1995). A matter of survival: Women's right to work in India and Bangladesh. In M. A. Chen (Ed.), The women, gender and development reader (pp. 142–158). Zed Books.

Desai, S., & Dubey, A. (2011). Caste in 21st century India: Competing narratives. Economic and Political Weekly, 46(11), 40–49. https://www.epw.in/journal/2011/11/special-articles/caste-21st-century-india.html

Deshpande, S. (2003). Contemporary India: A sociological view. Viking.

Dumont, L. (1980). Homo hierarchicus: The caste system and its implications (Rev. ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Ewerling, F., Lynch, J. W., & Barros, A. J. D. (2020). Women's empowerment and child development in 26 African countries. BMJ Global Health, 5(4), e002138. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2020-002138

Fernandes, L. (2006). India's new middle class: Democratic politics in an era of economic reform. University of Minnesota Press.

Gupta, D. (2000). Interrogating caste: Understanding hierarchy and difference in Indian society. Penguin Books.

International Institute for Population Sciences & ICF. (2021). National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21: India report. IIPS.

Jodhka, S. S. (2012). Caste and politics: From inequality to humiliation. In M. Mohanty (Ed.), Caste, class and capital (pp. 37–56). Routledge.

Jodhka, S. S. (2015). Caste in contemporary India (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315689470

Kabeer, N. (2011). Between affiliation and autonomy: Navigating pathways of women's empowerment. Development and Change, 42(2), 357–388. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01703

Kapadia, K. (2014). Caste, class and governance in a Tamil Nadu village. In S. P. Punalekar (Ed.), Caste, class and social justice in India (pp. 98–121). Rawat Publications.

Naidu, S., & Rao, S. (2024). Revisiting class: A feminist political economy analysis of the Indian Time Use Survey. Journal of Agrarian Change. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1111/joac.12597

National Statistical Office. (2023). Women and men in India 2022. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

Pandey, R. (1983). Continuity and change in the caste system in rural India. Social Change, 13(3), 3–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/004908578301300302

Rao, A. (Ed.). (2001). Gender and caste: Issues in contemporary Indian feminism. Kali for Women.

Raveendran, G., & Vanek, J. (2020). Measuring women's labour force participation in India: An analysis of NSSO and NFHS data. WIEGO. https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/file/Raveendran-Vanek_India-Data_final_0.pdf

Reddy, V. V. (2020). Patterns of social mobility across social groups in India: Evidence from longitudinal data. arXiv preprint. arXiv:2005.06771. https://arxiv.org/abs/2005.06771

Roy, A., & Tumbe, C. (2018). Migration: Change and continuity in India. Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics, 30(1), 55–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/0260107917727025

Sarkara, S., Chakravorty, B., & Lyonette, C. (2025). Caste, gender and intersectionality in labour market aspirations: Evidence from a skill-training programme in India. Journal of Development Studies, 61(1), 22–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2025.2570943

Shah, G. (2006). Social movements in India: A review of literature (2nd ed., Vol. 3). SAGE Publications.

Shah, G. (2018). Social change and social structure in India. Rawat Publications.

Sharma, R. (2025). Social status and women's work in urban India: A closer look at occupations. Women's Studies International Forum, 113, 103154. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2025.103154

Singh, Y. (2000). Culture change in India: Identity and globalization. Rawat Publications.

Srinivas, M. N. (1962). Caste in modern India and other essays. Asia Publishing House.

Srinivas, M. N. (1977). The changing position of Indian women. Man, 12(2), 221–238.

Tumbe, C. (2012). Migration and modern India: A review of patterns, policies and practices. Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 55(4), 639–660.

Visvanathan, S. (2001). Theoretical perspectives on Indian society. Oxford University Press.

Contribution of Authors: The authors had full access to all data and information used in this research study. They independently conceptualized and designed the study, conducted a thorough review of relevant literature,

and led the discussion. The authors alone are responsible for the content of the final manuscript, which they have studied and approved in its entirety.

Funding: No external funding is received for this study.

Declaration of Interest: The author declares no competing interests.

Ethics Approval: This review is based on secondary data from published sources; ethics approval is not required. If any primary data were used in supplementary research, appropriate institutional ethical clearance was obtained.

Consent to Participate: Not applicable. This study did not involve direct participation of human subjects.

Data Availability: All data used in this study are derived from publicly available peer-reviewed journals, academic dissertations, and government reports, as cited in the References. No new datasets were generated or analysed during the course of this research.

***Gautam Makwana** Corresponding Author is Social Scientist & IEC Member, Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Institute of National Importance (INI), Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, Jamnagar, Gujarat, India

Email: gautam_makwana@hotmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2749-1367

Professor H Elizabeth is Professor of Social Work at School of Social Sciences, Department of Social Work, Mizoram University (A Central University), Aizawl, Mizoram, India

E Mail: lizahatzaw@gmail.com,

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5321-9223