

Educational Growth and Mobility in Occupational Status: An Inter-Temporal Study

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ABSTRACT

Education, more than developing a person, it brings down the degree of inequality among them in more than one way, provided there is equal opportunity to everyone to pursue education upto the higher level. This is the reason for the intervention of the government in the provision of education, not only at the school level, but also at the higher level. the objectives of paper are to examine the levels of education of males and females, residing in the rural and urban areas and also among the different social groups; to study the nature and pattern of employment and the earnings of these sub-groups; and to probe the employment mobility of the workers in the rural and areas across the time period.

It is concluded that India has made commendable strides in literacy and education, efforts must now focus on reducing inequalities—gender, social, and regional—and ensuring that higher education is both accessible and affordable for all. Targeted interventions, innovative programs, and community-driven initiatives can pave the way for truly inclusive and equitable educational development. India's employment landscape shows promising diversification, yet disparities in gender, sectoral reliance, and urban-rural opportunities remain. A targeted approach combining skill development, infrastructure enhancement, and inclusive employment policies can pave the way for equitable and sustainable workforce growth. These efforts will not only promote financial independence but also contribute to overall economic development.

Key Words: education, employment, gender, region, mobility

I INTRODUCTION

Education is the harbinger of social and economic development of not only the country, but also and more significantly of the individuals. More than the development of the persons, it in fact brings down the degree of inequality among them in more than one way, provided there is equal opportunity to everyone to pursue education upto the higher level. This is the reason for the intervention of the government in the provision of education, not only at the school level, but also at the higher level. In India, as education is in the shared list between the Central and the State Governments, the latter take part in a proactive manner in improving the level of education of the people in their States. This indicates a possibility of people moving up in the ladder of acquiring education to a higher level as the generations go by. A child normally acquires a better and higher education than her parents and even more than her grandparents. This mobility in the attainment of education among the generations of households also has its significant impact on the status of occupation of the individuals. When this growth path spreads among all segments of the population, it tends to bring down the level of personal inequality among them in a remarkable manner.

II LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the theoretical debate about the role of education in development and economic growth has focused upon whether education is productive in an economic sense. There is much evidence that levels of schooling amongst the population are highly correlated with levels of economic development. But, whether the former has helped cause the latter, or whether causality runs from income growth to educational expansion, remains open to debate (Demery, 1996). Human Capital Theory asserts that education creates skills which facilitate higher levels of productivity amongst those who possess them in comparison with those who do not. Education, then, is costly but it brings associated benefits which can be compared with its costs in much the same way as happens with any investment project (Becker, 1973). Human capital theorists use proxy evidence of various kinds to support the above assertions. Using the 'normal' assumptions of competitive labour and goods markets, it follows that those with higher levels of education seem to have, on average, higher levels of productivity (Mason, 1994). The earnings by age of the more educated not only start at a higher level, but increase more rapidly to a peak - which happens later in life - than is the case with the earnings profiles of the less educated (World Bank, 1995). Much of the above debate is set against the backdrop of the formal economy - a world in which people are hired into an occupational hierarchy and progress within it according to their skills and abilities. An extremely important context, however, for a discussion of poverty is that part of production which takes place outside the formal sector, much of which is characterised by self employment in rural and peri-urban areas (Lee, 1996). There has therefore been much interest in examining the extent to which education affects production patterns in those activities. The earnings of the self-employed, including those in urban and informal sector activities, are higher for the educated than for the uneducated (Colclough, 1996).

According to Christiaensen et al (2002), inequality stems from differences in the quantum of individual's efforts, which is endogenous and the prearranged situations which are exogenous to the individual. As the latter is beyond the realm of any person, the former can be the deciding factor that can give incentives to the people to work hard and grow in life. Hence, intergenerational mobility is a marker of the opportunity for a generation to move beyond its social origins.

As Becker (1973) indicates education plays a vital role in fostering social progress through four interconnected purposes: Humanistic Development aims to cultivate individual and collective virtues, emphasizing the value of knowledge, humanities, responsibility, and environmental preservation; Civic Engagement that enhances democratic participation by teaching civic principles and encouraging collaboration and community service, shaping informed and responsible citizens; Economic Productivity, by imparting intellectual and practical skills, education improves individual living standards and societal wealth through both specialized and broad competencies.

Mincer (1974) asserts that the concept of "human capital" emphasizes education's role as a factor of production. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that investing in education results in higher income for individuals and boosts national economic development. Measuring education's rates of return helps determine its economic value for individuals and societies,

guiding education policy priorities. This approach, applied by institutions like the World Bank since the 1990s, evaluates returns from different educational levels—primary, secondary, or higher education—to optimize investments.

Psacharopoulos (1992) views that access to basic education has expanded significantly in regions like the Middle East, with growing demand for secondary and higher education. Educating girls and women stands out as a highly effective investment for developing countries, yielding benefits like improved family health, better child mortality rates, and enhanced educational outcomes for future generations.

According to Emran et al, (2015), countries in the Middle East are increasingly participating in global markets, with success relying on the quality of their human capital. Competitiveness demands universal education, advanced problem-solving skills, and world-class professional expertise.

The equitable distribution of education is essential, as unequal access negatively impacts per capita income. Proper management of human capital distribution enhances its positive effects, while failure to do so reduces its economic benefits. Moreover, education's impact on growth depends on open and competitive markets, where skills and knowledge can be effectively utilized (Sianesi and Reenen 2003).

In the 1960s, the "human investment revolution in economic thought" emerged, highlighting education's role in economic growth. Seminal studies by Schultz (1961) and Denison (1962) demonstrated education's contribution to unexplained growth residuals in western economies. Research also examined the impact of education on earnings and estimated private rates of return (Becker, 1964; Mincer, 1974).

In the views of Behrman (1990), educational provisions significantly influence a country's economic output, exports, and its ability to adopt foreign technologies. Different levels of education contribute uniquely to productivity and growth: For instance, Primary and Secondary Education improves workers' productivity (rural and urban), fosters health, and enhances basic skills; Secondary (including vocational) Education builds specialized skills and managerial capacity; and Tertiary Education advances scientific development, facilitates technology adaptation, and supports institutional growth in governance, law, and finance.

Empirical evidence links increased earnings to additional education, with primary education yielding the highest returns compared to secondary and tertiary levels. Overall, education plays a crucial role in both individual income and broader economic development (Birdsall, 1995).

In agriculture, education enhances productivity among farmers adopting modern technologies (Jamison and Moock, 1994).

In industry, education contributes to technological capability and innovation. In Sri Lanka's clothing and engineering industries, higher skill and education levels among workers and entrepreneurs were linked to faster rates of technical change within firms (Deraniyagala, 1995).

According to Lucas (1998), while education cannot single-handedly transform an economy, it plays a crucial role in shaping other key factors, such as investment and policy-making. In this context, the objectives of paper are:

- ✧ to examine the levels of education of males and females, residing in the rural and urban areas and also among the different social groups;
- ✧ to study the nature and pattern of employment and the earnings of these sub-groups; and
- ✧ to probe the employment mobility of the workers in the rural and areas across the time period.

This is analysed with the help of data taken from the reports of National Sample Survey Organisation, pertaining to the 71st Round (2014) published in 2015 is the latest report in the case of education, for employment and wage data, the 68th Round of the NSSO (2011-12) published in 2013 is the latest available report and International Institute for Population Sciences and ICF. 2024, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5).

III EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AT THE MACRO LEVEL

Table – 1 presents the data regarding the area and gender-wise educational levels in India.

Observations for Rural Areas:

Decline in 'Not Literate' Levels: Both RM (Rural Male) and RF (Rural Female) groups show a steady decrease in percentages of individuals classified as "Not Literate" from 1993-94 to 2021. This indicates an overall improvement in literacy rates.

Increase in 'Secondary and Above' Education: There's a noticeable rise in the percentage of both RM and RF completing secondary education or higher. For RM, it increased from 9.9% in 1993-94 to 47.8% in 2021. Similarly, RF saw growth from 3.5% to 36.7%.

Key Insights

Gender Disparity: In every category, RF percentages remain lower than RM percentages, though the gap narrows over time.

Education Shift: A significant movement from lower literacy levels to secondary and above reflects an overall improvement in educational access and attainment.

Observations for Urban Areas:

Decline in 'Not Literate' Levels: Both UM and UF experienced significant declines in the "Not Literate" category from 1993-94 to 2021. For UM, it dropped from 24.1% to 7.8%, and for UF, from 38.4% to 17.4%. This highlights improved access to education in urban areas.

Rise in 'Secondary and Above' Education: Education attainment in this category increased considerably. UM rose from 28.2% in 1993-94 to 63.7% in 2021, while UF grew from 18.8% to 53.0%. This indicates a steady push towards higher education for both genders.

Gradual Changes in Middle Education: The percentage of people with "Middle" education remained relatively stable, with a slight increase initially and modest changes later.

Steady Decline in 'Literate up to Primary': This category saw consistent reductions over time, reflecting a shift from primary education to higher education levels.

Table – 1 Area and Gender-wise General Educational Levels in India, 1993-94 to 2021

Year	Levels of Education							
	Not Literate		Literate upto Primary		Middle		Secondary and Above	
	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF
1993-94	45.5	67.9	33.7	23.0	10.9	5.6	9.9	3.5
1999-00	41.2	61.5	34.2	26.0	12.6	7.5	12.0	5.0
2004-05	36.4	55.0	36.1	29.3	14.0	8.9	13.5	6.8
2009-10	29.4	46.7	35.7	31.8	16.0	11.1	18.9	10.4
2014	24.2	45.7	24.0	20.9	20.1	14.2	31.7	19.2
2018	22.2	41.2	21.2	20.4	19.8	14.4	36.8	24.3
2021	16.4	33.2	18.7	16.5	17.1	13.6	47.8	36.7
	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF
1993-94	24.1	38.4	33.2	31.0	14.5	11.8	28.2	18.8
1999-00	21.6	34.3	30.9	29.9	15.6	13.2	31.9	22.6
2004-05	19.5	30.7	30.0	29.4	16.0	14.4	34.5	25.5
2009-10	16.4	26.4	27.4	27.0	15.0	13.6	41.2	33.0
2014	10.1	21.8	16.9	17.8	16.9	14.9	56.1	45.5
2018	8.8	19.3	13.5	15.9	14.6	13.4	62.1	51.4
2021	7.8	17.4	13.0	13.4	14.1	13.2	63.7	53.0

Note: Figures in percentage. RM – Rural Male; RF – Rural Female; UM – Urban Male; UF – Urban Female.

Source: Government of India, (2020), “Key Indicators of Social Consumption in India - Education”, 75th Round, National Sample Survey Organization, New Delhi and International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2024, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21: India: Volume 1, Mumbai: IIPS.

Main Insights:

Gender Gap: Although UF consistently shows lower percentages than UM across all levels, the gap narrows over time, especially in higher education attainment.

Urban Advancement: The data reflects significant progress in urban education, with marked improvements in literacy rates and higher education levels.

The differences in the levels of education among the different social groups are examined on the basis of the data shown in Table – 2.

Major Observations:

Gender Disparity: Across all social groups and education levels, females (RF/UF) generally have lower percentages compared to males (RM/UM). However, this gap seems to narrow slightly by 2021 compared to 2014.

Literacy Improvement: The "Not Literate" category shows a significant decrease from 2014 to 2021 across all groups. For example, in the "ST" group, the percentage of not-literate males dropped from 35.8% (2014) to 24.4% (2021).

Higher Education Growth: The percentages in higher education categories such as "Graduate & Above" and "Diploma/Certificate" have increased slightly across most groups from 2014 to 2021. For example, in the "Others" group, males in "Graduate & Above" rose from 7.2% (2014) to 8.2% (2021).

Table – 2 Area and Gender-wise Levels of Education among the Social Groups in India, 2014 and 2021

Social Group	Levels of Education - 2014													
	Not Literate		Upto Primary		Middle		Secondary		Hr. Sec		Diploma/Certificate		Graduate & Above	
	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF
ST	35.8	58.3	26.4	21.7	18.3	10.3	11.1	5.7	5.7	2.7	0.6	0.3	2.2	0.9
SC	33.1	58.1	27.6	20.2	19.7	11.6	10.9	6.3	5.4	2.6	0.5	0.2	2.7	1.1
OBC	25.3	51.4	25.2	20.8	21.3	13.5	15.0	8.1	8.0	4.0	1.1	0.4	4.1	1.8
Others	17.4	36.6	23.1	25.2	20.9	16.3	18.6	11.2	11.2	6.7	1.3	0.5	7.2	3.5
All	26.0	49.8	25.3	22.0	20.5	13.5	14.7	8.2	8.0	4.2	1.0	0.4	4.5	2.0
	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF
ST	12.7	31.3	17.6	16.7	19.3	15.3	18.2	14.7	14.3	11.1	2.6	1.0	15.3	9.8
SC	18.4	36.4	22.4	20.7	20.1	14.5	15.9	12.3	11.0	8.0	1.8	0.8	10.3	7.2

OBC	12.0	28.1	19.0	18.9	19.7	16.4	19.7	15.6	12.5	10.1	3.0	1.5	14.0	9.3
Others	6.3	15.2	11.3	14.5	14.6	14.6	20.5	17.3	16.0	15.2	3.1	1.3	28.1	21.9
All	10.4	23.6	15.9	17.2	17.5	15.3	19.5	15.9	13.9	12.1	2.9	1.3	19.8	14.7
Social Group	Levels of Education – 2021													
	Not Literate		Upto Primary		Middle		Secondary		Hr. Sec		Diploma/ Certificate		Graduate & Above	
	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF	RM	RF
ST	24.4	41.2	19.9	16.4	18.5	13.0	10.2	7.9	6.1	4.0	0.4	0.1	3.0	1.2
SC	22.0	39.1	18.7	13.7	18.3	13.6	12.4	8.9	7.9	5.3	0.6	0.3	4.0	1.8
OBC	18.3	35.8	17.9	13.7	18.4	13.6	14.0	10.5	9.5	6.0	0.6	0.3	4.7	2.5
Others	12.4	25.5	16.1	12.5	17.5	15.8	16.8	13.2	12.8	8.7	0.8	0.5	8.2	4.5
All	18.5	35.0	17.9	13.7	18.2	14.0	13.8	10.4	9.4	6.2	0.6	0.3	5.1	2.6
	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF	UM	UF
ST	8.7	20.4	12.8	12.1	15.2	14.4	17.3	14.6	13.1	11.9	1.8	1.2	14.6	9.6
SC	11.6	24.7	16.5	15.7	16.7	14.4	15.6	13.0	13.0	10.2	1.3	0.7	10.2	6.4
OBC	8.9	19.5	14.6	14.0	15.5	14.2	17.4	15.4	14.2	12.5	1.5	0.6	12.8	9.8
Others	5.0	11.4	10.5	12.0	12.0	12.1	16.9	16.3	15.9	14.4	1.7	1.0	22.1	17.5
All	7.8	17.2	13.2	13.4	14.3	13.4	17.0	15.4	14.7	12.9	1.6	0.6	16.1	12.3

Note: Figures in percentage.

Source: Government of India, (2015), “Employment and Unemployment Situation among Social Groups in India”, NSS 71st Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, New Delhi, p. 29; and Government of India, (2020), “Household Social Consumption on Education in India” NSS 75th Round, National Sample Survey Organisation, New Delhi, pp. A112-A116.

Social Group Disparities: "Others" group consistently has higher education attainment levels across all categories compared to SC, ST, and OBC groups. For instance, in 2021, 8.2% of males from "Others" had attained a Graduate & Above level, compared to just 3.0% in "ST".

Primary and Secondary Education: There is a noticeable reduction in individuals stopping at the "Upto Primary" category, reflecting progress in education beyond the primary level. However, many still seem to fall short of higher secondary or graduate education.

The overall conclusion from the table is that India has seen notable improvements in literacy and education levels between 2014 and 2021, with progress across all social groups and both

genders. However, significant disparities still persist based on gender, social group, and education level:

Literacy Gains: The percentage of individuals who are "Not Literate" has decreased substantially across all groups, indicating strides in basic education access.

Gender Gap: While women have made progress, they continue to lag behind men at all education levels, particularly in higher education and advanced qualifications.

Social Inequality: Marginalized groups such as Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC) show lower levels of education attainment compared to Other Backward Classes (OBC) and the "Others" category (non-marginalized groups). The "Others" group consistently outperforms other groups in accessing and achieving higher education levels.

Stalling Beyond Secondary Education: Many individuals from underprivileged groups struggle to advance beyond secondary or higher secondary levels, which limits access to higher education opportunities and professional qualifications.

IV NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT IN INDIA AND ITS MOBILITY

The nature of employment in which the workers are engaged differs as it includes self-employed (SE), regular employed (RE) and casual labour (CL). Table – 3 presents the area-wise and gender-wise nature of employment in India since 1993-94.

Table – 3 Area-wise and Gender-wise Nature of Employment in India, 1993-94 to 2021-22

Year	Gender	Rural				Urban			
		SE	RE	CL	Total	SE	RE	CL	Total
1993-94	Male	57.7	8.5	33.8	100.0	41.7	42.0	16.3	100.0
	Female	58.6	2.7	38.7	100.0	45.8	28.4	25.8	100.0
1999-2000	Male	55.0	8.8	36.2	100.0	41.5	41.7	16.8	100.0
	Female	57.3	3.1	39.6	100.0	45.3	33.3	21.4	100.0
2004-05	Male	58.1	9.0	32.9	100.0	44.8	40.6	14.6	100.0
	Female	63.7	3.7	32.6	100.0	47.7	35.6	16.7	100.0
2009-10	Male	53.5	8.5	38.0	100.0	41.1	41.9	17.0	100.0
	Female	55.7	4.4	39.9	100.0	41.1	39.3	19.6	100.0
2011-12	Male	54.5	10.0	35.5	100.0	41.7	43.4	14.9	100.0
	Female	59.3	5.6	35.1	100.0	42.8	42.8	14.4	100.0
2017-18	Male	57.8	14.0	28.2	100.0	39.2	45.7	15.1	100.0

	Female	57.7	10.5	31.8	100.0	34.7	52.1	13.1	100.0
2021-22	Male	59.4	15.8	24.8	100.0	39.8	46.8	13.4	100.0
	Female	73.5	7.8	18.7	100.0	42.3	49.4	8.3	100.0

Note: Figures in percentages.

SE – Self Employed; RE – Regular Employed; CL – Casual Labour. Employment data available only upto 2021-22.

Source: Govt. of India, Employment and Unemployment reports of NSSO, various reports.

Major Observations:

Rural Employment Patterns: Self-Employed dominates the rural employment category for both males and females across all years. For example: In 1993-94, 57.7% of rural males and 58.6% of rural females were self-employed. By 2021-22, this rises to 59.4% for rural males and dramatically increases to 73.5% for rural females. Casual Labor consistently constitutes the second-largest category in rural areas, though declining slightly over time, especially for females.

Urban Employment Patterns: Regular Employment emerges as the most significant employment type in urban areas, especially for males. For example: In 1993-94, 42.0% of urban males were in regular employment, rising steadily to 46.8% in 2021-22. For urban females, while regular employment also increases (from 28.4% in 1993-94 to 49.4% in 2021-22), self-employment remains substantial.

Gender Disparity: Rural areas show a widening gender gap, with females increasingly relying on self-employment and having lower participation in regular employment compared to males. In urban areas, females make notable strides in regular employment by 2021-22 but still lag behind males slightly.

Shift Over Time: Across both rural and urban areas, casual labor sees a marked decline over the years, particularly for females. For example: In urban areas, casual labor for females drops from 25.8% in 1993-94 to just 8.3% in 2021-22. Overall, the data suggests that while there has been progress in employment diversity, especially in urban areas, rural females are becoming increasingly self-reliant through self-employment, likely due to limited access to regular employment opportunities.

Employment Mobility: Rural male workers have moved from SE to RE in a significant manner and their involvement in CL has remarkably come down in the given time period. Rural females have moved out from CL to RE and SE in a considerable way. Urban males have reduced their participation in SE and CL over the time and moved in to RE and urban females too have moved in a similar manner.

The domestic product of the sectors and their respective shares change over time, as the share of primary sector comes down, it is replaced by secondary and tertiary sector in different proportions, which is termed as sectoral shifts. These shifts in the domestic products also lead

to corresponding shifts in the employment rate among both males and females and in both rural and urban areas. However, the rate of change in domestic product will differ from that of the rate of change in employment. Table – 4 presents the area-wise and gender-wise sectoral employment in India since 1993-94.

Key Observations:

Rural Workforce Trends: Primary Sector:

The primary sector (e.g., agriculture) has consistently dominated rural employment, especially for females. However, there is a steady decline in male and female participation over time, indicating diversification of rural employment. For example: Rural males in the primary sector dropped from 74.8% in 1993-94 to 49.7% in 2023-24. For rural females, participation decreased from 86.6% in 1993-94 to 76.9% in 2023-24, though they remain heavily reliant on this sector.

Secondary Sector: Employment in the secondary sector (e.g., manufacturing, construction) has increased for both genders, reflecting growing industrialization. Rural males in secondary employment rose from 10.5% in 1993-94 to 25.6% in 2023-24. Rural females saw a smaller increase, rising from 7.9% in 1993-94 to 12.4% in 2023-24.

Tertiary Sector: Rural male participation in the tertiary sector (e.g., services) has grown from 14.7% in 1993-94 to 24.7% in 2023-24. For rural females, participation remains low but shows slight improvement, rising from 5.6% to 10.7% in the same period.

Table – 4 Area-wise and Gender-wise Sectoral Employment in India, 1993-94 to 2023-24

Sector	Year	Rural		Urban	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Primary	1993-94	74.8	86.6	10.3	25.3
	1999-00	72.0	85.7	7.5	18.1
	2004-05	67.1	83.6	7.0	18.3
	2009-10	63.6	79.7	6.7	14.2
	2011-12	59.4	74.9	5.6	10.9
	2018-19	53.6	71.3	5.3	9.0
	2023-24	49.7	76.9	5.2	12.4
Secondary	1993-94	10.5	7.9	31.6	28.5
	1999-00	12.0	8.7	31.9	29.0
	2004-05	14.9	9.9	33.5	32.2
	2009-10	18.5	12.7	33.9	33.0

	2011-12	22.0	16.7	35.3	34.0
	2018-19	23.1	15.2	34.1	28.8
	2023-24	25.6	12.4	32.5	27.1
Tertiary	1993-94	14.7	5.6	58.0	46.3
	1999-00	16.1	5.8	60.8	52.9
	2004-05	18.0	6.6	59.5	49.5
	2009-10	17.8	7.6	59.3	52.8
	2011-12	18.7	8.3	59.1	55.1
	2018-19	23.3	13.5	60.6	62.2
	2023-24	24.7	10.7	62.3	60.5

Note: Figures in percentages.

Source: Govt. of India, Employment and Unemployment reports of NSSO, various reports.

Urban Workforce Trends: Primary Sector: Urban workforce reliance on the primary sector is minimal and continues to decline. For example: Urban males dropped from 10.3% in 1993-94 to 5.2% in 2023-24. Urban females decreased from 25.3% to 12.4% over the same period.

Secondary Sector: Participation in the secondary sector remains stable for urban males and females, peaking around 33-35% in earlier years but declining slightly in recent years. For example: Urban males fell from 33.9% in 2009-10 to 32.5% in 2023-24. Urban females similarly dropped from 33.0% to 27.1%.

Tertiary Sector: The tertiary sector dominates urban employment, reflecting the shift towards a service-based economy. Urban male participation grew slightly from 58.0% in 1993-94 to 62.3% in 2023-24. Urban females saw significant growth from 46.3% in 1993-94 to 60.5% in 2023-24, overtaking secondary sector employment.

V CONCLUSION

The data on educational attainment at the macro level illustrates steady progress in literacy rates and access to higher education across India, spanning rural and urban areas, social groups, and genders. To address the challenges and disparities identified in the analysis, the following policy measures can be considered:

Promote Inclusive Education:

- Increase funding and resources for schools in rural areas and marginalized communities to ensure equitable access to education.
- Set up community learning centres and mobile schools to reach remote regions.

Target Gender Inequality:

- Implement gender-specific scholarship programs and incentives for families to encourage female education.
- Create mentorship and vocational programs focused on empowering girls and women through education.

Support for Marginalized Groups:

- Offer free or subsidized education to SC, ST, and other marginalized groups.
- Provide specialized coaching and financial aid to help these groups access higher education.

Improve Urban-Rural Education Parity:

- Bridge the gap by improving transportation and digital infrastructure to connect rural students with urban educational opportunities.

The data reflects employment diversification, indicating progress in industrialization and services while reducing dependence on agriculture. To address the challenges highlighted, the following policy measures can be implemented:

Empower Rural Workforce:

- Introduce skill development programs tailored for rural areas, focusing on manufacturing, construction, and services.
- Encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment through microfinance schemes and subsidies for rural females.
- Enhance rural infrastructure (transport, internet) to connect rural workers to urban opportunities.

Promote Secondary and Tertiary Employment:

- Invest in industrial clusters and service centers in rural areas to create employment opportunities beyond the primary sector.
- Encourage private sector partnerships to expand the reach of secondary and tertiary employment opportunities.

Focus on Casual Labor Decline:

- Offer social protection schemes for casual laborers, including health insurance and minimum wage policies.
- Encourage transition from casual labor to regular employment through skill enhancement programs.

Final Remarks

While India has made commendable strides in literacy and education, efforts must now focus on reducing inequalities—gender, social, and regional—and ensuring that higher education is

both accessible and affordable for all. Targeted interventions, innovative programs, and community-driven initiatives can pave the way for truly inclusive and equitable educational development.

India's employment landscape shows promising diversification, yet disparities in gender, sectoral reliance, and urban-rural opportunities remain. A targeted approach combining skill development, infrastructure enhancement, and inclusive employment policies can pave the way for equitable and sustainable workforce growth. These efforts will not only promote financial independence but also contribute to overall economic development.

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