

Reproducing Inequalities: Impact of Social and Cultural Capital

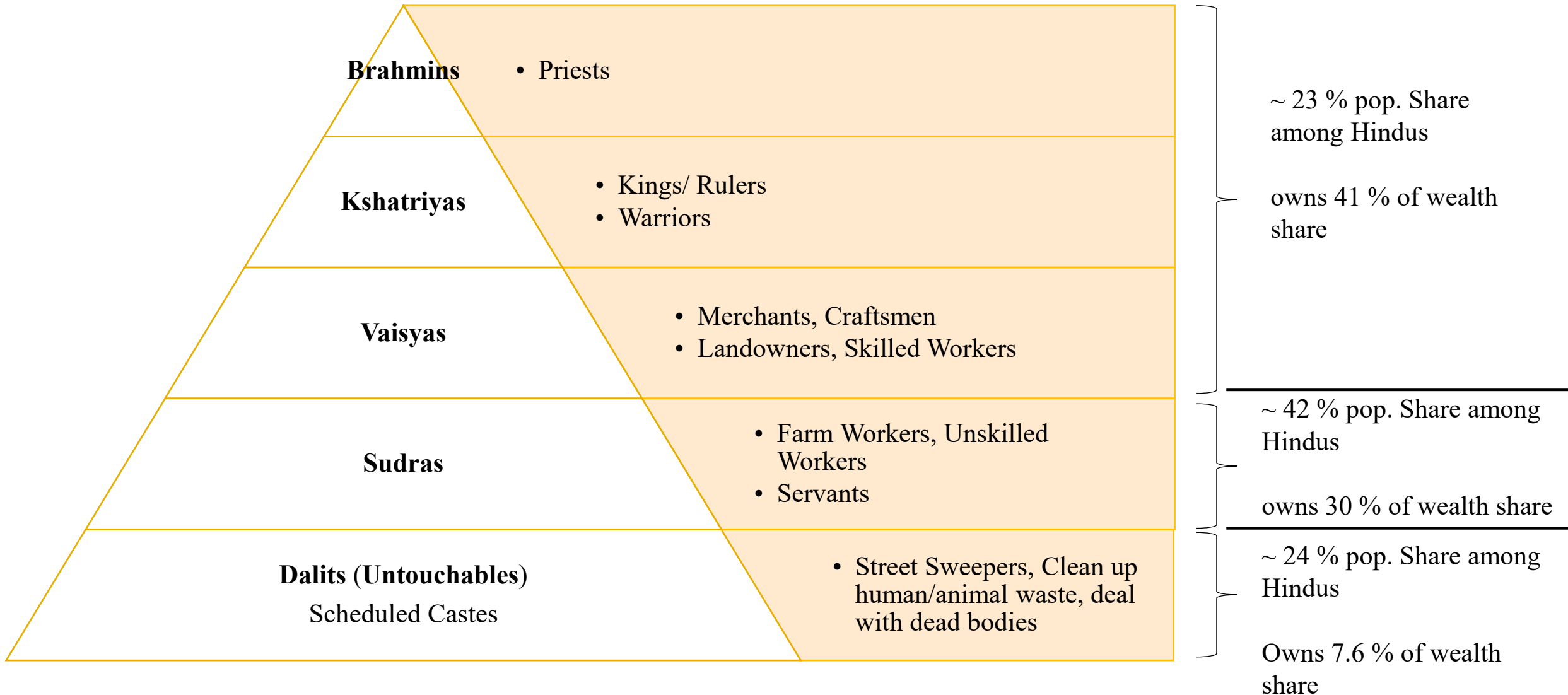
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11th South Asia Economic Policy Network Conference
9th-10th May 2023

Introduction

- Lower castes (SCs/STs) in India have had high intergenerational persistence in terms of education (Asher et al., 2020; Halder, 2020) as well as in occupation (Azam 2016; Iversen et al., 2016) as compared to the upper castes.
- Through various exclusionary ways, Scheduled Castes (Dalits) have historically been denied education. (Dreze et al., 2001)
- Even though Scheduled Castes managed to avail education, they have been denied equal opportunities to compete with the upper castes to find jobs as per their qualification. (Thorat, 2009).
- Jodhka (2019) shows that the exclusion of lower castes even happens at the interview level where interviewers look for certain social and cultural aspects.
- It has been documented before that there are various ways and factors through which social mobility of lower castes is restricted.
- Apart from economic and human capital, there are social and cultural capital which play a decisive role in development of an individual or a community which, therefore, helps in intergenerational mobility.

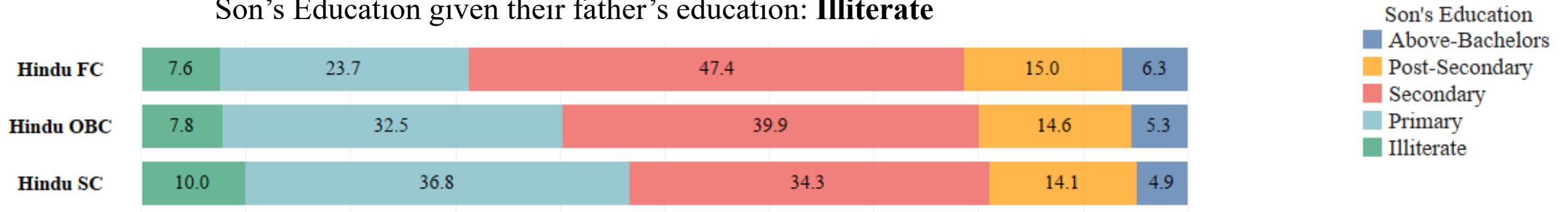
Caste System in India



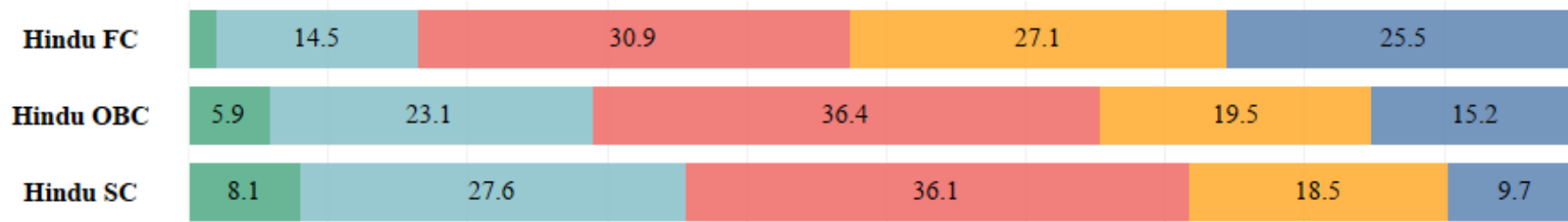
Source: Pop: IHDS 2011-12; Wealth: SPPU-JNU-IIDS joint report 2018

Education: Intergenerational Mobility

Son's Education given their father's education: **Illiterate**



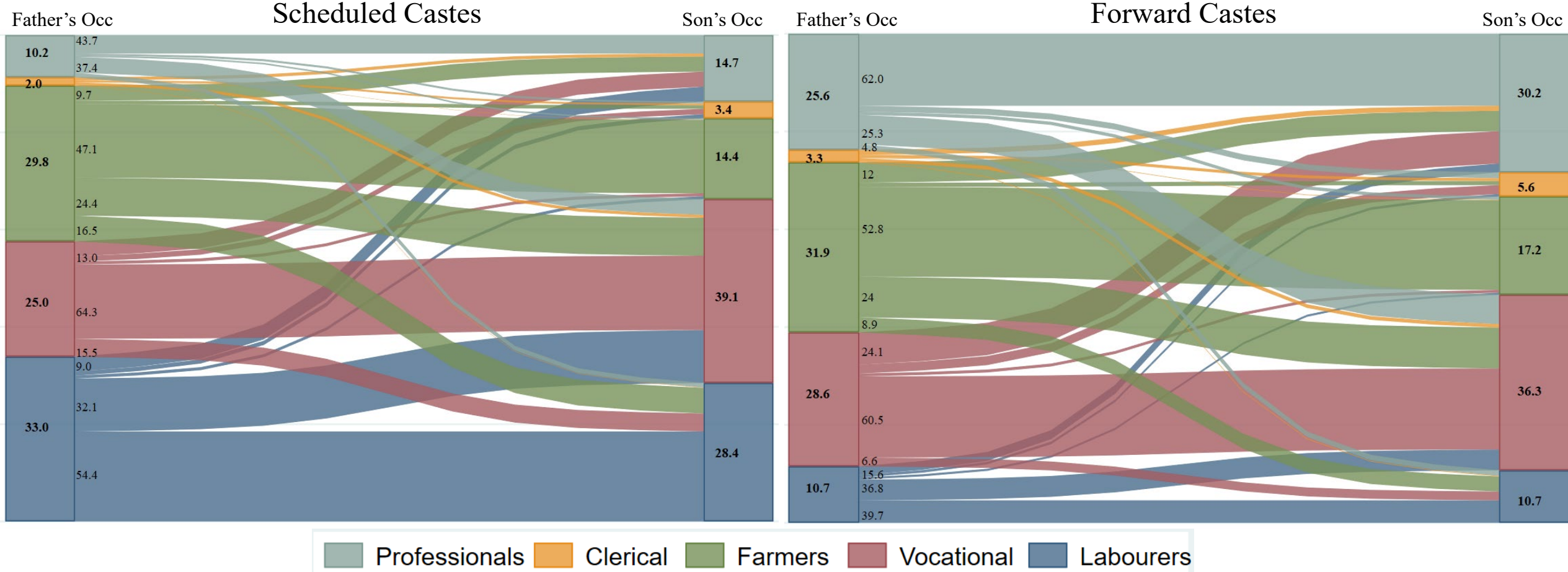
Son's Education given their father's education: **Bachelors and above**



Source: Author's Calculation from appended PLFS 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20
The educational attainment is for sons born between 1986-1995

- Upward Mobility is comparatively higher among Forward Castes as compared to Scheduled Castes.
- Downward mobility to lowest educational level is also very high for Scheduled Castes as compared to the Forward Castes.

Occupation: Intergenerational Mobility



Source: Author's Calculation from appended PLFS 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20
 The occupations are taken for the sons' birth cohort of 1986-95

Both educational and occupational mobility show stickiness at the lower levels for Scheduled Castes whereas stickiness at the highest level for Forward Castes.

Research Questions

- For centuries, Forward Castes have had monopoly over education and occupation by excluding lower castes through various mechanisms.
- Explicit segregation and discrimination has been vastly reported. But factors apart from economic capital, that impacts the social status of people in different caste groups are social and cultural capital, which also has a significant role in reproducing the caste hierarchy.

Research Questions:

- 1.) Is cultural and social capital unequally distributed according to caste groups?
- 2.) Does cultural and social capital impact individual's educational and occupational attainment?

Social Capital

- Social Capital can be referred to the features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions. It is an investment and use of embedded resources in social relations for expected returns.
- For my research, social capital is defined as the strength of individual's or household's social network or community.
- The powerful connections of upper castes help in maintaining the political and social superiority over the lower castes through intimidation and violence.
- But even normal connections help in achieving certain goals. Caste based social networks are important determinants of employment in India.
- Caste networks can be used as a means to reduce transaction costs and promote economic development.
- But at the same time, caste-based economic networks reinforce socio-economic hierarchies and generate new forms of exclusion.

Cultural Capital

- Bourdieu (1990) defines cultural capital as – “Cultural capital represents investments on the part of the dominant class in reproducing a set of symbols and meanings, which can be misrecognized and internalized by the dominant class as their own”
- Cultural capital as a form of capital do produce returns in the form of educational credentials and ultimately, occupational success thus helping in social mobility.
- Two potential ways in which cultural capital helps:
 1. Participation in high-culture activities or symbolic presentation in ways to distinguish themselves from other, in order to showcase their elite status.

Example: In case of Caste: wearing a sacred thread, or a pattern on a forehead, performing rituals which is extremely exclusionary or other material objects which signifies high status of Brahmins and Forward Castes.

2. Participation in cultural activities leads to the development of knowledge or skills, which in turn enable pupils to succeed at school.

Data and Methodology

- IHDS-I (2004-05) and IHDS-II (2011-12) panel data.
- The panel is formed for those people who were enrolled in an educational institution in the first round of IHDS (2004-05) and had completed their education by 2011-12 round.
- The fathers and mothers of these individuals were paired along with their individual characteristics so that the impact of previous generation can be analysed.
- Also, it is assumed that cultural capital and social capital have a lag effect on outcomes of an individual, which is why the dependent variable in the analysis is taken from the second round (2011-12) and the explanatory variables are taken from the first round (2004-05).

Data and Methodology

Variables used in analysis

- **Cultural Capital**

Father's education (No. of Years), Mother's education (No. of Years)

Access to TV, Radio, Newspaper, News

Can parents converse in English

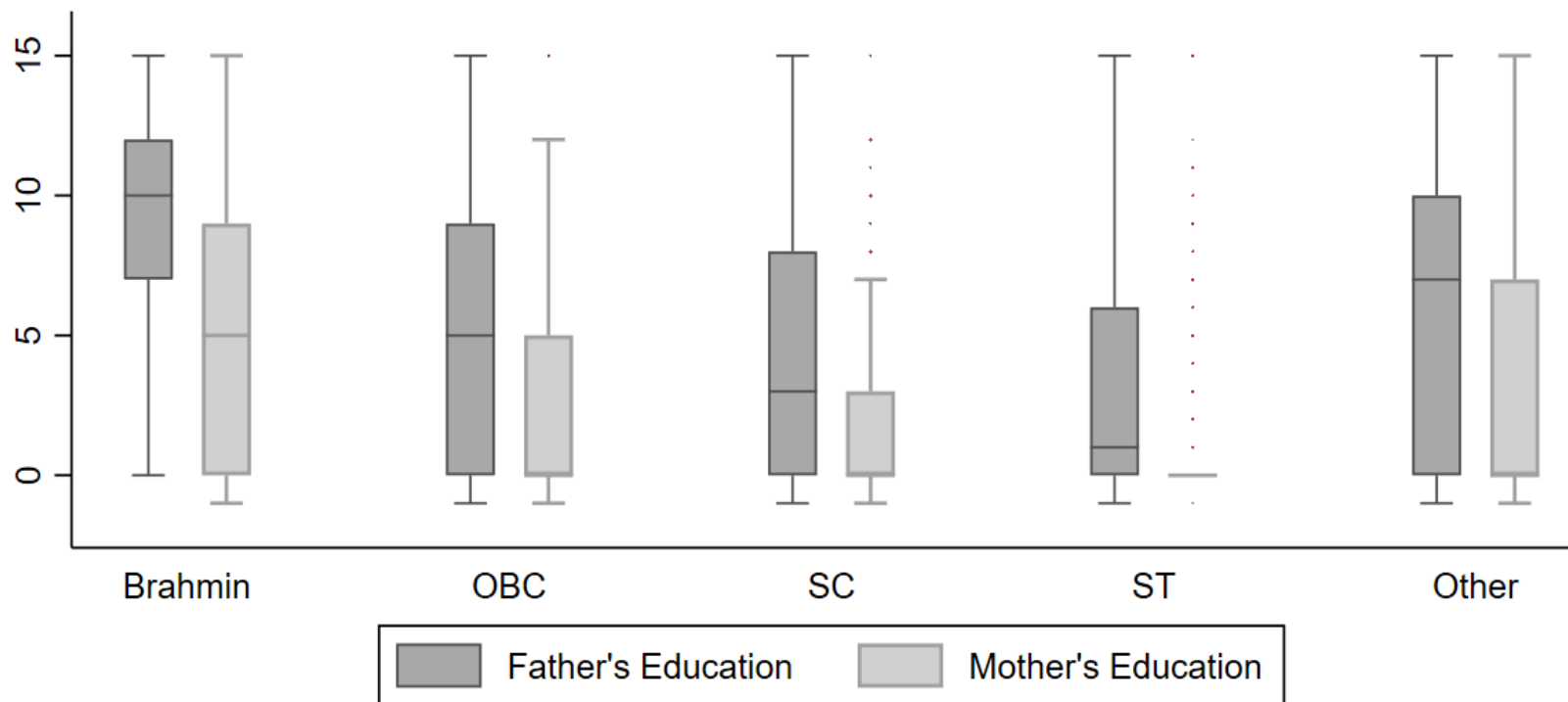
Consumption Expenditure on Vacations and Entertainment

- **Social Capital**

No. of Strong Networks, within same caste and outside caste: The IHDS survey provides information about household's acquaintance with doctors, teachers/principals, government officers, politicians, Police inspector etc. These are considered here as strong networks as they are people with power and authority.

No. of Strong Networks, within same caste and outside caste: Whereas acquaintance with people holding positions apart from senior most posts on these fields are also reported such as any health workers, government employees, other police, school workers, political party workers. These are considered as weak networks.

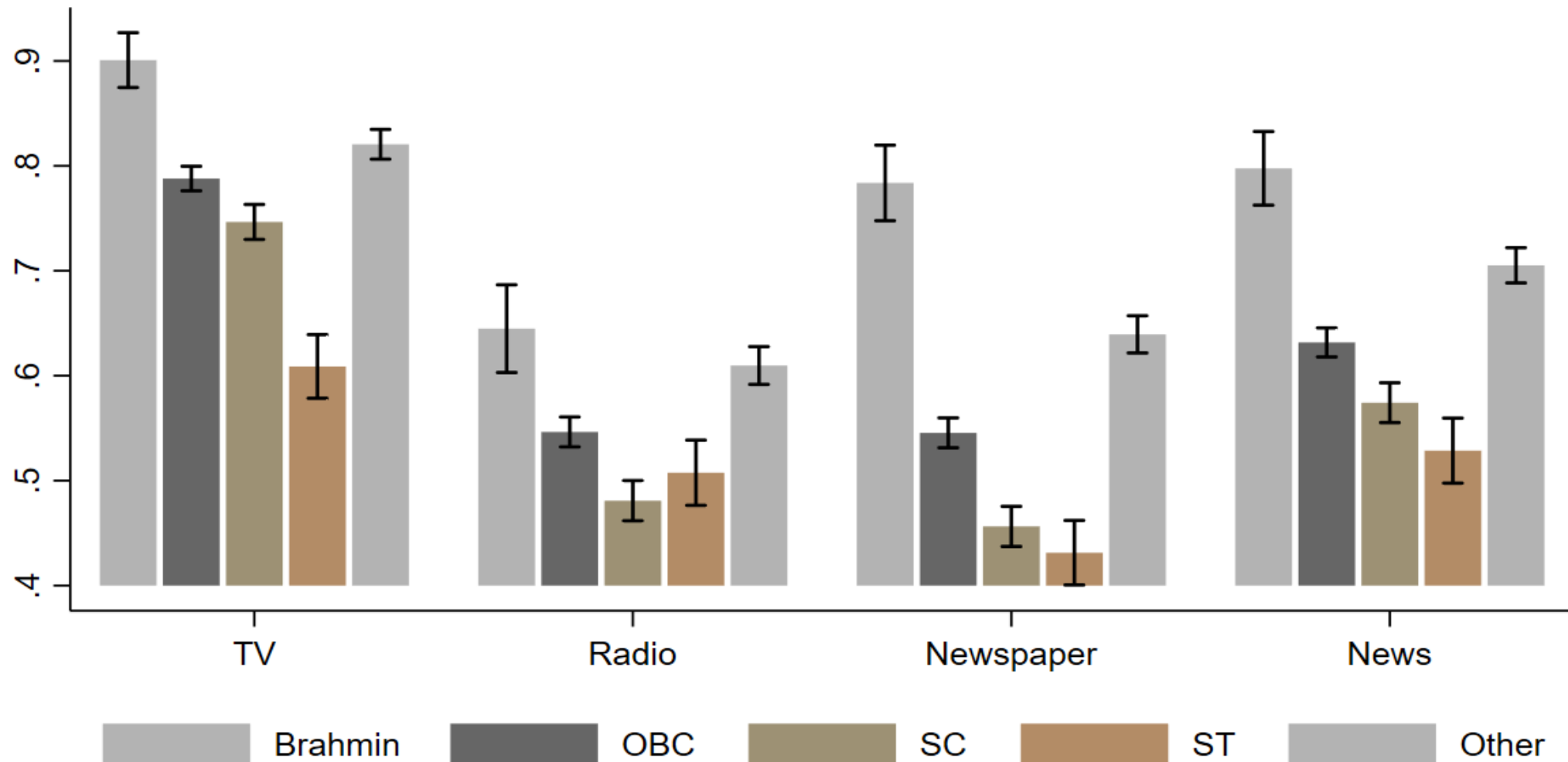
Parents' Education, by caste groups



Proportion of households where both parents can converse in English

Can Parents converse in English?	Brahmins	Others	OBC	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
No	0.66	0.81	0.88	0.88	0.90
Yes, a little	0.31	0.17	0.11	0.12	0.09
Yes, fluently	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.01

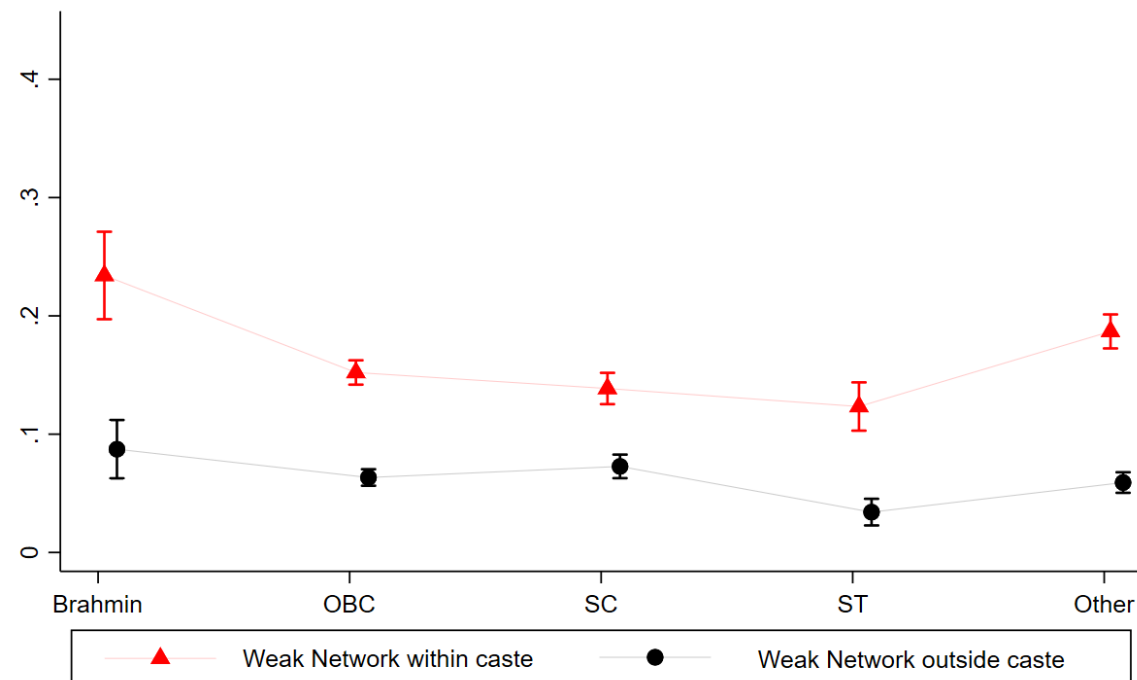
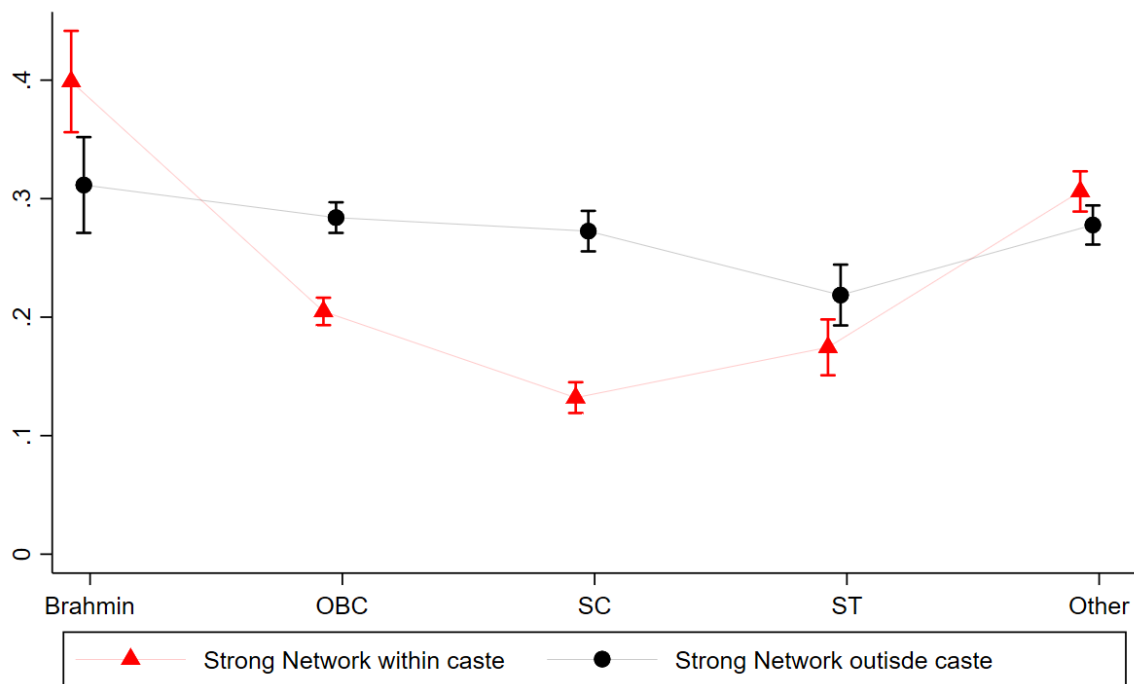
Proportion of households accessing Mass Media, by caste



Social Groups and Social Capital

Proportion of households with different kinds of Networks, by caste

Type of Networks	Brahmins	OBC	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Others
Strong Networks within Jati	0.40	0.20	0.13	0.17	0.31
Strong Networks outside Jati	0.31	0.28	0.27	0.22	0.28
Weak Networks within Jati	0.23	0.15	0.14	0.12	0.19
Weak Networks Outside Jati	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.06



Effect of Cultural and Social Capital on Education

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Child's Education	Child's Education	Child's Education
Female	-0.316***	-0.268***	-0.257***
Father's Education (No. of Years)	0.172***	0.107***	0.103***
Mother's Education (No. of Years)	0.141***	0.100***	0.0933***
TV		0.354***	0.325***
Radio		0.222**	0.214**
Newspaper		1.109***	1.058***
News		0.254***	0.253***
Cons. Exp. on Vacations and Entertainment		0.444**	0.328*
Can parents converse in English (Base: No)			
Yes, a little		0.443**	0.397*
Yes, fluently		1.424***	1.312***
No. of Strong Networks within same Jati			0.349***
No. of Strong Networks outside Jati			0.158**
No. of Weak Networks within same Jati			0.173*
No. of Weak Networks outside Jati			0.0537
Caste Groups (Base: Brahmins)			
OBC	-0.644***	-0.371	-0.343
Scheduled Castes	-1.125***	-0.810***	-0.773***
Scheduled Tribes	-1.126***	-0.844***	-0.813***
Others	-0.371*	-0.219	-0.208
Constant	10.80***	9.721***	9.561***
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mean Y	9.65	9.65	9.65
Observations	9159	7876	7876
Adjusted R-Square	0.345	0.348	0.351

Effect of Social Capital on Occupation

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Manual Labourer	Business	Professional
Child Education (Post-Secondary)	0.275***	1.576***	3.087***
Female	0.126***	0.178***	0.310***
Father's Occupation (Manual labourer)	2.615***		
Mother's Occupation (Manual labourer)	2.939***		
Father's Occupation (Business)		5.611***	
Mother's Occupation (Business)		2.663***	
Father's occupation (Professional)			2.209***
Mother's Occupation (Professional)			2.182***
No. of Strong Networks within Jati	0.788***	1.054	1.138**
No. of Strong Networks outside Jati	0.982	1.003	1.042
No. of Weak Networks within Jati	0.836**	1.182*	1.043
No. of Weak Networks outside Jati	1.011	0.917	1.108
Caste Groups (Base: Brahmins)			
OBC	2.037***	1.197	0.651***
Scheduled Castes	3.515***	0.655*	0.581***
Scheduled Tribes	3.327***	0.600	0.432***
Others	1.604*	1.174	0.676**
N	11499	11538	11622
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes
State Dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes

Conclusion

Intergenerational persistence: Both Educational and Occupational outcomes seem to be highly dependent on the previous generation. High stickiness at lowest level of education and occupation for Scheduled Castes whereas high stickiness at highest level for upper castes indicates the role of caste.

Caste and Cultural Capital: All the indicators of cultural and social capital seem to be highly unequally distributed and skewed in the favor of Brahmins and Upper Castes.

Caste and Social Capital: Higher proportion of Brahmins and Forward Castes have all kinds of networks as compared to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Significance of Cultural Capital in Educational Attainment: All individual proxy variables for cultural capital have significant and positive association with educational attainment.

Significance of Social Capital in Occupational Attainment: Bonding (Caste) Networks seem to have significant role in getting out of lowest occupation (Manual Labourers) as well as attaining the highest level of occupation (Professional). Bridging networks in terms of caste does not seem to have any significant impact on the occupational attainment. Also, strong connections seem to be more helpful in better occupational outcomes.