

SOCIAL MOBILITY AS A FORCE ENSURING THE SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY

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In recent decades, the concept of social mobility has gained prominence in the discourse surrounding gender equality, empowerment, and inclusive development. Social mobility, broadly defined as the movement of individuals or groups within a social hierarchy, reflects both personal effort and structural opportunities. For women, especially those in patriarchal or resource-constrained societies, social mobility represents a gateway to active participation in public life, professional advancement, and decision-making processes.

Social mobility plays a critical role in empowering women to become active and influential participants in all spheres of social life. It represents not only the ability of individuals to change their social status through education, employment, and leadership but also reflects the openness and inclusiveness of the society itself. For women, especially those from marginalized or traditional communities, upward social mobility often marks a transformative shift—from being passive recipients of social roles to becoming agents of change. Increased access to education, legal protection, and economic opportunities contributes to enhanced self-confidence, decision-making power, and visibility in public life. However, persistent gender norms, unequal access to resources, and systemic barriers continue to limit many women's social advancement. Therefore, promoting social mobility through targeted policies, inclusive institutions, and cultural transformation is essential for ensuring that women can fully exercise their rights and responsibilities as active members of society. In this sense, social mobility is not merely an economic indicator but a multidimensional process that shapes the very foundation of gender equality and democratic development.¹

Social mobility involves vertical (upward or downward) and horizontal movement in societal roles. For women, vertical mobility—rising from lower socioeconomic status to leadership or professional roles—can be significantly transformative. Horizontal mobility, such as moving across sectors or roles, also expands women's visibility and influence. Women's social mobility is influenced by multiple factors: access to education, economic independence, political representation, and supportive legal frameworks.

When women experience upward mobility, their engagement in societal development increases proportionally. Access to quality education, for example, enables women to participate in skilled labor markets, while financial independence empowers them to make autonomous life choices. Political and civic engagement also grows when women are

¹ Payne, G., & Abbott, P. (2005). *The social mobility of women: Beyond male mobility models*. Routledge.

recognized as capable contributors to governance and policy. As more women reach positions of influence, they inspire others, creating a multiplying effect across generations.

Despite significant progress, structural and cultural barriers continue to hinder women's social mobility. Gender-based discrimination in employment, unequal pay, lack of access to leadership roles, and entrenched stereotypes all contribute to the underrepresentation of women in higher social strata. In many communities, traditional gender norms still restrict women's roles to the domestic sphere, limiting their public visibility and engagement.

To ensure that social mobility becomes a real and accessible force for all women, systemic interventions are necessary. Governments must enforce gender-equal laws, invest in female education, support women's entrepreneurship, and promote inclusive hiring practices. Institutional support, such as childcare services, flexible work policies, and anti-discrimination regulations, can alleviate some of the structural constraints that disproportionately affect women.

Digital technologies offer new platforms for social mobility. Online education, remote work, and digital entrepreneurship enable women—especially those in rural or conservative environments—to access resources, build skills, and participate in economic life without physical constraints. However, the digital divide and unequal access to technology must also be addressed to ensure equal opportunities.²

Social mobility should not be viewed solely as an economic phenomenon. For women, it is a multidimensional process that contributes to identity, empowerment, and agency. When women ascend socially, they influence institutions, change norms, and contribute to more equitable societies. It also promotes intergenerational progress, as educated and empowered women are more likely to invest in the development and education of their children.

Social mobility is a powerful mechanism for activating women's roles in society. By creating pathways for education, employment, and leadership, it not only transforms individual lives but also drives systemic change. Ensuring equitable social mobility requires the dismantling of structural barriers, investment in inclusive policies, and promotion of cultural shifts that support women's full participation in public life. In this way, social mobility becomes not only a goal but a necessary foundation for sustainable development and gender justice.

REFERENCES

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2. Luke, N. (2019). *Gender and social mobility: Exploring gender attitudes and women's labour force participation* (No. 2019/108). WIDER Working Paper.

² Luke, N. (2019). *Gender and social mobility: Exploring gender attitudes and women's labour force participation* (No. 2019/108). WIDER Working Paper.