



## Research Article

# Social Mobility Among Rural Families in Contemporary India: Determinants, Challenges and Sociological Perspectives

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## Abstract

Social mobility has long been regarded as one of the most significant indicators of social transformation, reflecting the extent to which individuals and families are able to improve their socio-economic position over time. In the Indian context, rural society has experienced substantial changes during the past few decades owing to the expansion of education, diversification of occupations, urbanization, migration, technological advancement, and various government-led development initiatives. These changes have created new opportunities for upward mobility; however, the benefits have not been distributed uniformly across different social groups. Structural inequalities associated with caste, gender, land ownership, and economic status continue to shape the mobility trajectories of rural households. The present paper examines the changing patterns of social mobility among rural families in contemporary India from a sociological perspective. It seeks to understand the major factors influencing mobility and analyses how traditional social structures interact with emerging socioeconomic opportunities. The study is based on a qualitative review and analytical interpretation of secondary data obtained from government reports, census publications, national surveys, policy documents, and published scholarly literature. The discussion is guided by the theoretical contributions of Pitirim Sorokin, Max Weber, Pierre Bourdieu, and James Coleman, which provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the dynamics of social mobility in rural settings. The analysis indicates that access to higher education, occupational diversification, migration, digital connectivity, and social welfare programmes have contributed significantly to improving the socio-economic position of many rural families. Nevertheless, unequal educational opportunities, persistent caste-based disadvantages, gender disparities, and regional imbalances continue to hinder equitable mobility. The paper argues that sustainable and inclusive rural development requires policy interventions that strengthen educational access, skill development, employment opportunities, and social inclusion. By examining contemporary rural transformation through the lens of social mobility, the study contributes to the broader discourse on social change and offers insights for researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners working towards a more equitable rural society.

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**KEYWORDS:** Social Mobility, Rural Families, Rural India, Social Change, Education, Socioeconomic Development, Social Inequality.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social mobility is one of the most significant concepts in sociology because it reflects the extent to which individuals and families are able to improve their social and economic position within a stratified society. It is widely regarded as an important indicator of equality of opportunity, social justice, and inclusive development because it measures whether an individual's life chances are primarily determined by inherited social circumstances or by personal abilities, education, and achievements (Sorokin, 1959; Breen & Jonsson, 2005). In societies characterized by high social mobility, individuals have greater opportunities to transcend the limitations of their socio-economic background and achieve a higher standard of living through education, employment, entrepreneurship, and other productive activities. Conversely, limited social mobility often indicates the persistence of structural inequalities, where advantages and disadvantages are transmitted from one generation to the next. Consequently, the study of social mobility provides valuable insights into the functioning of social institutions, patterns of inequality, and the broader process of social transformation.

The concept assumes particular significance in the Indian context because the country's social structure has historically been shaped by caste hierarchy, hereditary occupations, unequal distribution of land, and differential access to education and economic resources. For centuries, rural society functioned through a relatively rigid system of social stratification in which caste identity, family background, and ownership of productive assets largely determined occupational opportunities and social status. Such structural arrangements restricted upward mobility for large sections of the population, particularly among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other socially marginalized communities (Thorat & Newman, 2010; Deshpande, 2011). Although constitutional safeguards, affirmative action policies, rural development programmes, and economic reforms have substantially expanded opportunities during the post-independence period, inequalities rooted in caste, class, gender, and regional disparities continue to influence educational attainment, occupational mobility, and income distribution (Desai & Vanneman, 2015). Therefore, examining social mobility among rural families provides an important lens for understanding the changing nature of inequality and social transformation in contemporary India.

The past three decades have witnessed profound socio-economic changes in rural India. Economic liberalization, globalization, technological advancement, demographic transition, expansion of education, and increasing integration between rural and urban economies have significantly transformed traditional rural livelihoods. Agriculture, although still an important source of employment, is no longer the sole basis of rural livelihoods. Rural households increasingly participate in non-farm employment, small-scale enterprises, government services, manufacturing, transportation, construction, and service-sector occupations, thereby diversifying their income sources and reducing dependence on traditional caste-based occupations (Himanshu et al., 2013; World Bank, 2022). Simultaneously, improvements in rural infrastructure, road connectivity, banking facilities, digital

communication, and market integration have expanded opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship, and access to public services, contributing to changing patterns of social mobility (NITI Aayog, 2023).

Among the various determinants of social mobility, education has emerged as the most influential instrument of socio-economic transformation. The rapid expansion of primary, secondary, and higher education, along with reservation policies, scholarships, vocational training programmes, and improved institutional access, has enabled many young people from disadvantaged rural backgrounds to pursue occupations beyond traditional hereditary roles. Education not only enhances knowledge and professional skills but also contributes to the development of cultural capital, social confidence, aspirations, and employability, thereby facilitating upward mobility across generations (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Sen, 1999). The implementation of the National Education Policy (2020), with its emphasis on equitable access, multidisciplinary education, skill development, digital learning, and employability, has further strengthened the role of education as a catalyst for rural transformation (Government of India, 2020). Nevertheless, inequalities in educational quality, digital infrastructure, language proficiency, and institutional resources continue to create disparities in educational outcomes between different regions and social groups.

Occupational diversification has further accelerated the process of rural social mobility. Increasing mechanization of agriculture, changing labour market demands, and expansion of rural-urban economic linkages have encouraged many rural youths to seek employment in government services, private enterprises, self-employment, information technology-enabled services, retail businesses, and professional occupations. These occupational transitions have contributed to improvements in household income, consumption patterns, educational investment, housing conditions, and overall quality of life, thereby promoting intergenerational mobility (Himanshu et al., 2013; Kone et al., 2018; World Bank, 2022). The gradual shift from subsistence agriculture to diversified livelihood strategies has also weakened, although not entirely eliminated, the traditional association between caste and occupation.

Migration has become another important pathway through which rural families pursue social mobility. Seasonal as well as long-term migration to urban centres has enabled households to diversify their livelihoods, reduce vulnerability to agricultural uncertainties, and accumulate financial resources that can be invested in education, healthcare, housing, and productive assets. Remittances generated through migration have significantly improved the socio-economic conditions of many rural families and have created opportunities for the younger generation to access higher education and skilled occupations (Kone et al., 2018). However, migration does not produce uniform benefits, as its outcomes remain strongly influenced by educational qualifications, financial resources, social networks, gender, and regional characteristics.

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has added a new dimension to rural transformation. Government initiatives such as Digital India, Skill India, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and various entrepreneurship and financial inclusion

programmes have expanded access to digital banking, online education, e-governance services, telemedicine, and employment opportunities. Increased internet connectivity and smartphone penetration have enabled rural households to participate more effectively in the knowledge economy and access information that was previously unavailable (World Bank, 2022; NITI Aayog, 2023; International Telecommunication Union, 2023). Despite these achievements, substantial digital inequalities continue to exist, particularly among economically disadvantaged households, women, and geographically remote communities, thereby limiting the transformative potential of digital technologies.

Although these developments have created new opportunities for socio-economic advancement, evidence consistently indicates that social mobility in rural India remains uneven. Structural inequalities associated with caste, gender, land ownership, parental education, and household wealth continue to shape educational attainment, occupational opportunities, income generation, and access to institutional resources (Thorat & Newman, 2010; Deshpande, 2011; Desai & Vanneman, 2015). Rural women, members of marginalized communities, and landless households often encounter multiple barriers that restrict their participation in education, skilled employment, entrepreneurship, and decision-making processes. Consequently, economic growth and educational expansion have not translated uniformly into equal opportunities for all sections of rural society.

Recent empirical research has further broadened the understanding of rural social mobility by emphasizing the significance of spatial, institutional, and contextual factors. Contemporary studies increasingly argue that mobility is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by the quality of village institutions, public infrastructure, educational facilities, and local governance. Using nationally representative survey data, Sen (2024) demonstrated that village prosperity, educational infrastructure, public amenities, and geographical location significantly influence intergenerational occupational mobility. Individuals residing in villages with better educational institutions and economic opportunities were found to have substantially greater prospects of upward occupational mobility than those living in relatively underdeveloped regions (Sen, 2024). These findings indicate that social mobility is shaped by the broader institutional environment in which families live rather than by household characteristics alone.

Similarly, recent evidence suggests that intergenerational educational mobility remains strongly associated with parental education and socio-economic background despite considerable improvements in educational access. An analysis by Kishan and Rajverma (2024) reported that educational inequalities continue to persist across different socio-economic groups, indicating that educational expansion alone may not be sufficient to eliminate inherited disadvantages. The study highlights the continuing influence of family resources, educational aspirations, and institutional inequalities in determining educational achievement and subsequent occupational opportunities (Kishan & Raj Verma, 2024).

Urbanization has also emerged as an important factor reshaping rural social structures. Expanding rural-urban linkages have

altered occupational aspirations, labour markets, family structures, and livelihood strategies across rural India. Recent research demonstrates that increasing interaction between rural and urban economies has accelerated occupational diversification, facilitated income growth, and transformed class relations within rural communities (Nijman et al., 2025). At the same time, Dyson and Jeffrey (2025) argue that aspirations for education, entrepreneurship, and employment are socially embedded and negotiated within local cultural norms, family expectations, and institutional arrangements. Their findings suggest that mobility is not merely an economic phenomenon but also a socially and culturally constructed process influenced by identity, community relationships, and institutional opportunities.

The continuing relevance of traditional institutions has also received renewed scholarly attention. Contrary to the assumption that modernization automatically weakens traditional social structures, recent evidence indicates that village institutions may either facilitate or constrain social mobility depending upon patterns of local governance, social cohesion, public investment, and access to collective resources. Iversen et al. (2026) demonstrate that villages characterized by inclusive institutions and stronger public infrastructure tend to exhibit higher levels of educational and occupational mobility, whereas exclusionary institutional arrangements reinforce existing inequalities and limit opportunities for disadvantaged communities (Iversen et al., 2026). These findings underscore the importance of understanding rural mobility within its broader institutional and community context.

From a theoretical perspective, social mobility cannot be understood solely through changes in income or occupation. Sorokin's theory of social mobility provides the conceptual foundation for analyzing movements within systems of social stratification, while Weber's concept of life chances explains how unequal access to economic resources, education, and social status shapes opportunities for advancement (Sorokin, 1959; Weber, 1978). Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital further argues that educational success and occupational achievement depend not only upon economic resources but also upon family culture, socialization, language, and social networks (Bourdieu, 1986). Similarly, Coleman's concept of social capital emphasizes that trust, family relationships, and community participation facilitate educational achievement and occupational success (Coleman, 1988). Sen's Capability Approach complements these perspectives by arguing that development should be assessed in terms of people's capabilities and freedoms rather than income alone (Sen, 1999). Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complex interaction between structural factors, institutional support, and individual agency in shaping social mobility among rural families.

Although an extensive body of literature exists on rural development, education, migration, poverty, caste, and occupational change, relatively few studies have examined these dimensions within an integrated sociological framework of social mobility. Much of the existing research focuses on a single determinant—such as education, occupation, or

income—while comparatively limited attention has been paid to the interaction between educational attainment, occupational diversification, migration, social capital, institutional support, digital inclusion, village-level characteristics, and persistent structural inequalities. Furthermore, the rapidly changing socio-economic landscape of rural India, characterized by technological advancement, expanding rural–urban linkages, and new policy initiatives, necessitates a fresh sociological analysis that incorporates recent empirical evidence and contemporary theoretical perspectives (Sen, 2024; Nijman et al., 2025; Iversen et al., 2026).

Against this background, the present study seeks to examine social mobility among rural families in contemporary India by analyzing the multidimensional factors influencing intergenerational mobility. Specifically, the study investigates the role of education, occupational diversification, migration, social capital, institutional support, and structural inequalities in shaping socio-economic advancement among rural households. By integrating classical sociological theories with recent empirical research, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of rural transformation and its implications for social justice, inclusive development, and equality of opportunity in contemporary India. It is expected that the findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, educators, and development practitioners seeking to promote equitable and sustainable social mobility in rural society.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social mobility has long occupied a central position in sociological research because it reflects the extent to which societies provide equal opportunities for individuals to improve their socio-economic status. Drawing upon Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and Coleman's concept of social capital, scholars demonstrated that parental education, family environment, and community networks significantly affect educational outcomes and long-term mobility (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988). Early twenty-first-century research largely focused on measuring intergenerational mobility through education, occupation, and income while examining the persistence of structural inequalities. Comparative studies demonstrated that although economic growth often expands opportunities, inherited family characteristics continue to exert considerable influence on educational achievement and occupational attainment (Breen & Jonsson, 2005).

During this period, sociological research increasingly challenged the assumption that modernization automatically produces greater equality. Instead, scholars argued that mobility depends upon the interaction between economic development, educational expansion, institutional quality, and social stratification. In developing countries, particularly India, caste, class, gender, and regional inequalities continued to shape access to education, employment, and productive resources despite improvements in economic performance (Thorat & Newman, 2010). At the same time, sociologists continued to emphasize that structural inequalities remained deeply embedded within rural society. Research on caste discrimination demonstrated that marginalized communities

continued to experience barriers in education, labour markets, and asset ownership despite constitutional safeguards and affirmative action policies (Deshpande, 2011). Gender-based inequalities similarly limited women's educational attainment, labour force participation, property ownership, and decision-making power, thereby restricting their mobility opportunities. Empirical studies demonstrated that the expansion of government employment, private-sector jobs, entrepreneurship, and service-sector occupations enabled many rural youths to pursue livelihoods beyond agriculture. Nevertheless, occupational diversification remained uneven because access to skilled employment depended largely upon educational qualifications, technical skills, financial resources, and social networks (Himanshu et al., 2013).

Large-scale household surveys further highlighted the importance of education in transforming rural socio-economic structures. Evidence from the India Human Development Survey revealed considerable improvements in school enrolment, educational attainment, and occupational diversification, although inequalities associated with caste, household wealth, and parental education remained substantial (Desai & Vanneman, 2015).

Another significant area of research focused on migration as a mechanism of rural mobility. Studies consistently reported that seasonal and permanent migration diversified household income, reduced dependence on agriculture, and facilitated investments in children's education, healthcare, housing, and productive assets. Migration therefore emerged as an important pathway for intergenerational socio-economic advancement, although its benefits varied according to education, destination, occupation, and access to social networks (Kone et al., 2018).

Recent scholarship has considerably broadened the understanding of rural social mobility by incorporating institutional, spatial, technological, and cultural dimensions. Rather than viewing mobility exclusively through income or occupation, contemporary researchers increasingly examine the interaction between educational opportunities, village characteristics, governance, infrastructure, social capital, and digital inclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted Government initiatives promoting financial inclusion, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and skill development have improved access to public services and labour markets for many rural households. Nevertheless, unequal internet connectivity, technological literacy, and digital infrastructure continue to create disparities between different regions and socio-economic groups (World Bank, 2022; International Telecommunication Union, 2023; NITI Aayog, 2023).

Recent empirical studies have also emphasized the importance of village-level characteristics in determining intergenerational mobility. Using nationally representative survey data, Sen (2024) found that educational infrastructure, public amenities, village prosperity, and geographical accessibility significantly influence occupational mobility across generations.

Similarly, Kishan and Raj Verma (2024) demonstrated that educational mobility in India remains nonlinear and strongly associated with family socio-economic background, indicating

that educational expansion has not entirely eliminated inherited inequalities. Nijman et al. (2025) argued that expanding rural–urban linkages have transformed livelihood strategies, class relations, and patterns of mobility across rural India. These structural changes have reduced dependence on agriculture while creating new forms of employment and entrepreneurship. Recent qualitative research further demonstrates that mobility is socially and culturally embedded rather than solely determined by economic growth. Dyson and Jeffrey (2025) argued that educational aspirations, occupational choices, and entrepreneurial decisions are shaped by family expectations, local institutions, community norms, and social identities. Consequently, mobility should be understood as an interaction between individual agency and institutional opportunities rather than merely a consequence of market expansion.

Another significant contribution has been made by Iversen et al. (2026), who examined the influence of traditional village institutions on intergenerational mobility. Villages characterized by inclusive governance and stronger educational infrastructure exhibited significantly higher levels of occupational mobility than those with exclusionary institutional arrangements (Iversen et al., 2026).

Collectively, recent studies indicate that social mobility in rural India is increasingly shaped by interactions between educational opportunities, institutional quality, technological development, migration, social capital, and local governance. Contemporary research therefore supports a multidimensional understanding of mobility that extends beyond conventional measures of income or occupation.

The literature demonstrates a clear evolution in the understanding of social mobility. Early research primarily viewed mobility through economic indicators such as occupation and income, whereas contemporary studies increasingly adopt multidimensional perspectives incorporating education, social capital, institutional quality, governance, migration, and digital inclusion.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

The present study adopts a qualitative review-based research design using a systematic narrative review approach to examine the determinants and patterns of social mobility among rural families in contemporary India. The study synthesizes theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence from published literature to understand how education, occupation, migration, caste, gender, institutional support, and digital inclusion influence intergenerational social mobility. This approach enables a critical synthesis of existing research, identifies emerging trends and knowledge gaps, and provides a comprehensive understanding of rural social mobility in the Indian context.

#### Sources of Data

The study is based exclusively on secondary data obtained from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, government publications, and reports of national and international organizations published between 2000 and 2026. Relevant literature was

collected from major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, JSTOR, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis Online, and SAGE Journals. Government reports and policy documents from the Government of India, NITI Aayog, and international organizations such as the World Bank and ITU were also consulted to ensure up-to-date review of rural social mobility.

#### Data Analysis

The collected literature was analyzed using the **thematic content analysis** method. The selected studies were carefully read and grouped into major themes related to social mobility among rural families. These themes included educational mobility, occupational diversification, migration and urbanization, caste and gender inequalities, social capital, institutional support, digital inclusion, village-level determinants, and contemporary rural transformation. The findings from different studies were then compared and critically examined to identify common patterns, similarities, differences, and emerging trends. Finally, the results were interpreted with reference to the sociological perspectives of **Sorokin, Weber, Bourdieu, Coleman, and Sen** to develop a comprehensive understanding of social mobility in rural India.

### 4. DISCUSSION

The present review highlights that social mobility among rural families in India has changed considerably over the last two decades. Earlier studies mainly assessed mobility in terms of occupation and income, whereas recent research views it as a multidimensional process influenced by education, migration, social capital, institutional support, digital inclusion, and local governance (Breen & Jonsson, 2005; Sen, 2024). This shift suggests that social mobility is no longer determined solely by economic growth but also by the opportunities created through social institutions and public policies.

Among all the factors examined, education emerges as the most significant driver of upward social mobility. Expansion of educational facilities, reservation policies, scholarships, and skill development programmes has improved access to higher education and better employment opportunities for many rural youth (Desai & Vanneman, 2015; Government of India, 2020). However, the review also indicates that educational opportunities are not equally available to all. Family income, parental education, caste, and the quality of educational institutions continue to influence academic achievement and occupational outcomes (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Kishan & Rajverma, 2024). Therefore, although education provides an important pathway for upward mobility, its benefits remain unevenly distributed across different social groups.

The findings further show that occupational diversification has become an important feature of rural transformation. Increasing participation in non-farm employment, government services, small businesses, manufacturing, and the service sector has reduced dependence on agriculture and created new opportunities for income generation (Himanshu et al., 2013; World Bank, 2022). Nevertheless, access to these occupations largely depends on educational qualifications, technical skills, and financial resources. As a result, occupational diversification

has contributed to social mobility, but its benefits are more visible among families with better educational and economic backgrounds.

Another important finding is the growing role of migration in improving the socio-economic status of rural households. Migration to urban areas enables families to diversify their sources of income and invest in education, healthcare, housing, and other productive assets (Kone et al., 2018). At the same time, migration does not guarantee upward mobility for every household. The success of migration largely depends on factors such as educational attainment, skills, access to formal employment, and social networks. Therefore, migration should be considered an important facilitator of mobility rather than a universal solution to rural poverty and inequality.

The review also confirms that structural inequalities continue to influence mobility opportunities despite significant economic and educational progress. Caste, gender, land ownership, and regional disparities remain major barriers to equal access to quality education, employment, financial resources, and public services (Thorat & Newman, 2010; Deshpande, 2011). These findings indicate that modernization has created new opportunities but has not completely removed the influence of traditional social hierarchies. Consequently, inclusive development requires targeted policies that address these structural inequalities.

Recent studies emphasize the importance of village-level institutions and infrastructure in shaping mobility outcomes. Access to quality schools, transportation, electricity, healthcare, digital connectivity, and effective local governance creates an enabling environment for educational and occupational advancement (Sen, 2024; Iversen et al., 2026). Villages with better public infrastructure and stronger institutional support generally provide greater opportunities for upward mobility than geographically isolated and economically disadvantaged villages. This suggests that community-level development is as important as individual effort in promoting social mobility.

Another important aspect emerging from the literature is the role of digital inclusion in contemporary rural development. Government initiatives promoting digital literacy, online education, digital banking, and e-governance have increased access to information and employment opportunities for rural households (NITI Aayog, 2023; International Telecommunication Union, 2023). However, the review also identifies a persistent digital divide between rural and urban areas and among different socio-economic groups. Limited internet connectivity, lack of digital skills, and affordability issues continue to restrict the benefits of digital transformation for many rural families.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings indicate that no single sociological theory can fully explain social mobility in rural India. Sorokin's theory helps explain movement between social strata, Weber's concept of life chances highlights unequal access to opportunities, Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of cultural and social capital, Coleman explains the role of family and community networks, and Sen's Capability Approach focuses on expanding people's freedoms and opportunities (Sorokin, 1959; Weber, 1978; Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Sen, 1999). Together, these perspectives provide a

comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interaction between structural conditions and individual agency in shaping mobility outcomes.

Overall, the findings of the present review suggest that social mobility among rural families in contemporary India is influenced by multiple interconnected factors rather than a single determinant. Education, occupational diversification, migration, institutional support, digital inclusion, and social capital have expanded opportunities for upward mobility, while caste, gender, poverty, and regional disparities continue to create significant barriers (Sen, 2024; Nijman et al., 2025; Iversen et al., 2026). Therefore, future policies should focus not only on economic growth but also on improving the quality of education, strengthening rural infrastructure, promoting digital inclusion, ensuring equitable access to institutional resources, and reducing social inequalities. Such an integrated approach would contribute to more inclusive and sustainable social mobility among rural families in India.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The present review highlights that social mobility among rural families in contemporary India is shaped by a complex interaction of educational, economic, social, and institutional factors. Although rural India has experienced significant socio-economic transformation over the past two decades, opportunities for upward mobility remain unevenly distributed across different social groups and regions. The review indicates that education continues to be the most important driver of intergenerational mobility, while occupational diversification, migration, digital inclusion, and improved institutional support have further expanded opportunities for socio-economic advancement. However, persistent inequalities related to caste, gender, family background, and regional disparities continue to limit the mobility prospects of many rural households.

The synthesis of existing literature also demonstrates that no single sociological theory adequately explains the changing dynamics of rural social mobility. Rather, the perspectives of Sorokin, Weber, Bourdieu, Coleman, and Sen collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how structural inequalities, social capital, institutional arrangements, and individual capabilities interact to shape mobility outcomes. By integrating these theoretical perspectives with recent empirical evidence, the present review offers a holistic understanding of rural social mobility in contemporary India.

The study further suggests that sustainable social mobility cannot be achieved through economic growth alone. Improving the quality of rural education, strengthening local institutions, expanding digital infrastructure, promoting non-farm employment, and ensuring equitable access to development opportunities are essential for reducing social inequalities and enhancing upward mobility. Future research should adopt longitudinal and region-specific approaches to examine how emerging factors such as digital transformation, climate change, and changing labour markets continue to influence mobility patterns among rural families.

Overall, this review contributes to the sociological understanding of rural transformation by demonstrating that social mobility is a multidimensional process influenced by

both structural conditions and individual capabilities. Creating an inclusive rural society will require policies that expand opportunities while addressing the persistent barriers that continue to constrain equitable social mobility.

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