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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY: THE CRITICAL ROLE OF HIGH SCHOOL YEARS



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nopoor
Enhancing Knowledge for
Renewed Policies against Poverty



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Social Mobility

- What factors that account for differences in upward social mobility for individuals from different social backgrounds?
 - Ability (merit), family background, or just good luck?
 - Can higher education facilitate individuals to attain educational or occupational levels higher than their parents?
- * OR could higher education equalise the chances of individuals from different social backgrounds to attain favourable occupational positions?



Retrospective Survey

- Normally, sons compared with fathers or parents to assess intergenerational mobility.
- * There are several studies of this kind for India, including mine with nationally representative secondary data.
- This study provides evidence on interpersonal mobility.
- Compares individuals with relatively similar starting positions and assesses their relative trajectories (both education and occupation) after about 12 years since leaving high school.



Role of Social Identity

- Social identity – i.e. *circumstances at birth* (caste, parental background) – factors that individuals have no control over, matter.
- Years of education, occupation, salary – all of these outcomes are to a large extent determined by social background.
- Role of Ability: even within individuals who have similar ability, social identity matters, i.e. their trajectories differ.

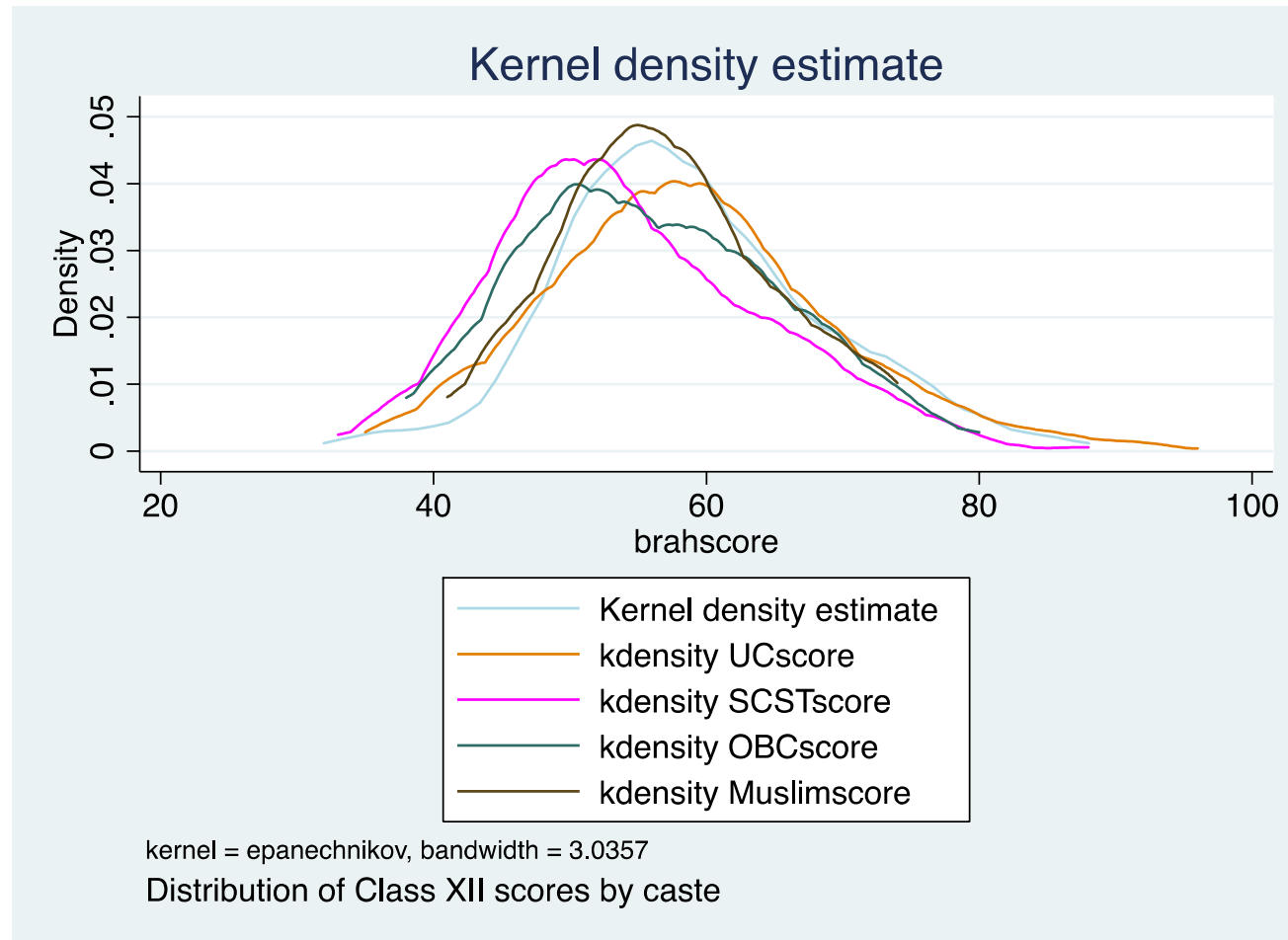


Pathways

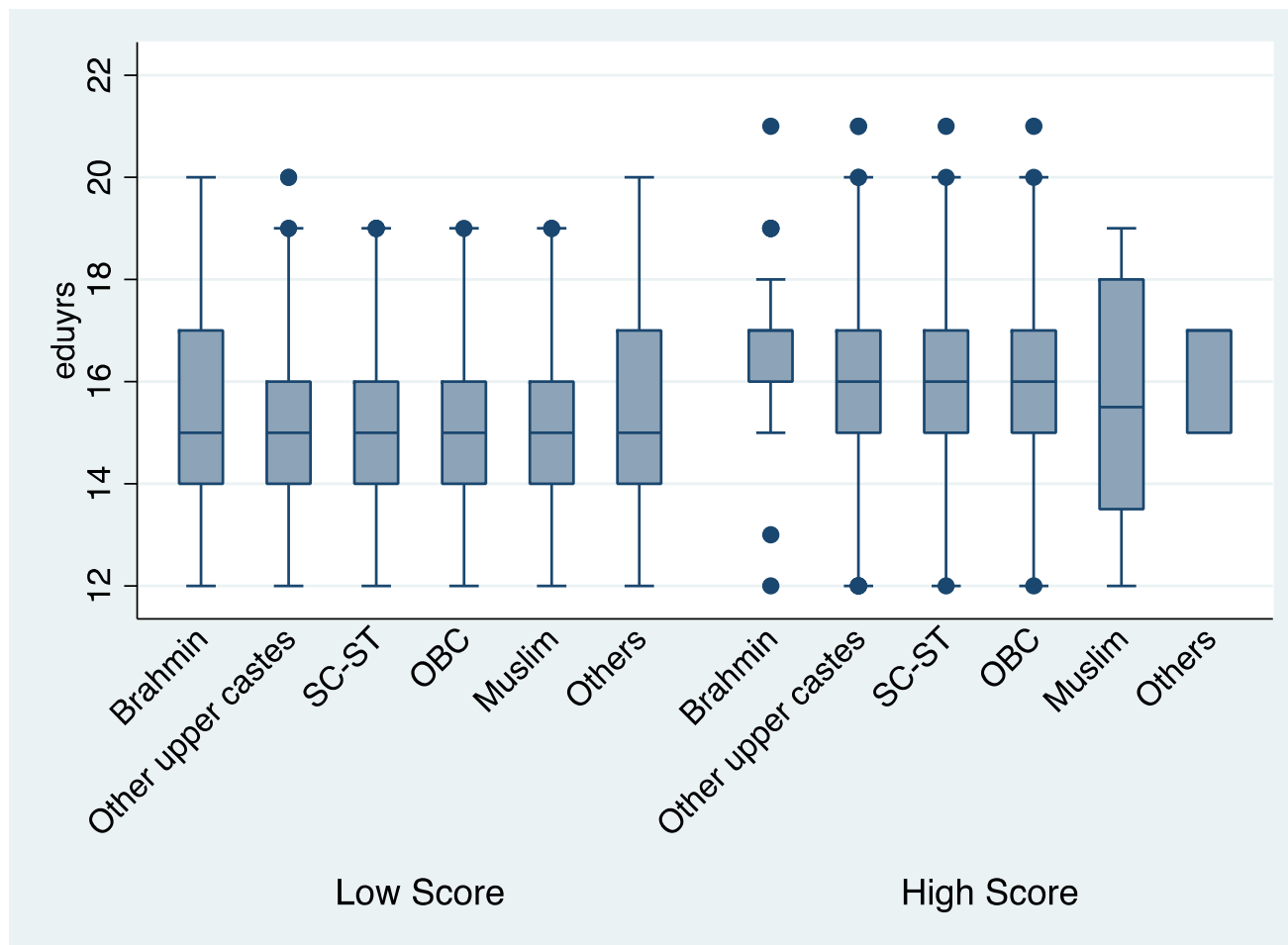
- Nationally representative secondary data sets find gaps between caste groups in terms of the outcome variables.
- There is less clarity on the pathways that cause these differences.
- This study throws light on one important pathway, which has not been discussed because of lack of data.
- Scores in the school-leaving final exam, subjects taken, whether had mathematics, affect later life outcomes.



Distribution of Class XII Scores



Years of Education and Class XII Scores



Caste or Class?

- Given the high degree of overlap between caste and class, it is not clear if the results (i.e. divergent trajectories) reflect class differences or caste differences.
- The study compares poor Brahmins (at the top of the social hierarchy) and poor Dalits (lowest caste) and finds that the former have a higher probability of getting good jobs, i.e. better paying and higher ranked jobs.
- College education (i.e. those who study beyond high school and complete higher degrees) pays a labour market premium but differentially.



Critical Role of High School of Years

Policy implications

- The current policy focus in India is towards the two ends of the education spectrum: either basic literacy, primary school enrolment, OR higher education which is when caste-based quotas are implemented.
- The middle-level – high school years – is relatively neglected.
- Performance in end-of-school Class XII exams has lasting effects.
- Remedial interventions: special focus on Mathematics and English.

