

OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY AMONG THE MIZOS

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, occupational mobility has emerged as a prominent field in sociological enquiry. In fact, the phenomenon of occupational mobility is intimately associated with industrial urbanism and the improved channels of transportation which have accelerated the process of migration from villages to cities, movement of people from one job to another and vertical changes in the positions of individuals and groups. Industrial urbanism has changed the demographic composition of different regions of the world, created new conditions of work, encouraged the rise of occupations, professions and job opportunities, divided society into new hierarchical groups and classes, and initiated new forms of division of labour and social differentiation. In the same way, the revolution in the channels of transportation has gradually broken the isolation of rural and tribal communities and has brought them nearer to the cities and the industrial centres of production. As a consequence, the increased rate of migration and change from lower occupations resulting in changes in the pattern of status and the notions of prestige have also been emerging.

The pace of development has been phenomenal in post Independent India. The fundamental goals of such planned development have been to transform backward colonial system into a modern

industrial one. The Five Year Plans have undertaken this challenge in their own rights and every region in the country has felt this impact effectively. It is, therefore, natural to think that the nature of occupational and professional structure has considerably changed in recent times. A sociological enquiry into the pattern and extent of such transformation, therefore, becomes quite appropriate. This study is a modest attempt to examine this problem in a developing tribal community of North Eastern India.

In sociological traditions, since the days of Comte (1798-1857), two trends representing the static and dynamic aspects of social life, have been operating. In the early part of the nineteenth century, what Comte preferred to call 'social statics and social dynamics' became an important conceptual framework again in the early quarter of the twentieth century. Almost the same ideas and notions were involved in the concepts of social control and social change. Thus occupational mobility is the part of the broader concept of social change. Society as a process is understood in terms of continuity and change. Social order is a state of equilibrium between the forces of stability and mobility. Forces of stability preserve order and maintain social solidarity, whereas, the forces of mobility bring about social change and speed up the dynamism in society.

From Plato to the present, occupation has been the common

indicator of stratification. Most studies on stratification have shown that the level of occupation is highly correlated with levels of income, prestige and power. It is commonly observed that some occupations have more respect, money and power associated with them than do others. The fact that occupations appear to be stratified along several dimensions has led many scholars to study societal stratification by studying occupational stratification. The idea of a scale of occupations arranged in the order of their prestige is one that during the last twenty five years has occupied the attention of many sociologists and social psychologists.

Therefore, the occupational structure is considered to be so important in the social system that a job can serve very largely to determine a man's general social status. His occupation has direct effects on factors like income, possessions, place of residence, associates, leisures, expenditures and in general, the kind of privileges and disadvantages that constitute his daily experiences. Furthermore, occupation is very important for the salary as it is a symbol of other goals, at least once a moderate level of income and assets is achieved. Recognition of achievement and dignity of position are sometimes more valuable than pecuniary rewards. It is perhaps not so much to say that only in a very exceptional case could an adult man be genuinely self-respecting and enjoy a respectable status in the eyes of others

if he did not earn a living in an approved occupational role. It is not only a matter of his own economic support which is involved, but also, generally speaking, his occupational status is the primary source of his income and class status of his wife and children.

Scholars working in the field of social and occupational mobility have used numerous frameworks suitable to their empirical settings and research requirements. However, the field of social mobility has mainly come to be defined in terms of the movements of individuals along a single vertical dimension of overall social status, in which a man's status is almost always assessed in terms of the occupation he pursues. A brief reference to some of these studies will help us to identify the major theoretical framework which the sociologists have taken to examine the problem.

Talking about the present problem Smelser and Lipset (1964) have found that the occupational mobility is more prevalent in the urbanized and industrialized localities. Most of the Occupational movements, according to them, in the urban centres do not contribute to changes in the occupational structure, but it involves a rearrangement of the members of the younger generation within a relatively stable structure. In the least urban and industrialized communities, most of the mobility that occurs is directly involved in the shift of the sons' occupational distribution away from that of the fathers.

They also found that the more urbanised and industrialised their place of residence, the greater was the similarity in the occupational distributions of fathers and sons. The index values, measuring the degree of non-overlapping or dissimilarity between fathers and sons, increase noticeably from the most to the least urbanised localities. The larger the proportion of fathers who were engaged in farming and related occupations, the greater the inter-generational shift in occupational status. Furthermore, each occupational category changed size in the same direction in virtually all types of community. The proportion of sons in professional, technical, clerical, and sales occupations everywhere exceeded the proportion of fathers; the proportion of sons who were proprietors of retail and service establishments was lower than the proportion of fathers in all communities except agricultural villages.

For the young men who grew up in urban communities, the direction in which they move occupationally, represents an ever greater concentration in the occupational statuses already dominant in their local environment. Industrial, commercial, and professional occupations were typical there, before the young men entered the labour force. But for the young men who grew up in rural communities, where the local occupational structure was typically agricultural, the direction in which they move occupationally represents a discontinuity with local conditions. Instead of extending the prevailing local tendency, they have disrupted it. This study has thus clarified some major aspects of occupational mobility.

Another study was undertaken by Form and Miller (1949). They distinguished the three phases of initial, trial and stable work periods from an analysis of 276 American occupational case histories. These periods enabled a profile of secure and insecure work patterns to be devised. Each of the secured patterns resulted in the stable work period, whereas work patterns associated with it rarely reaching this period. Their analysis also indicated that a secure work patterns were typical of white-collar occupations. Semi and unskilled workers displayed the greatest degree of instability and insecurity in their work lives. Moreover, they suggested that once an individual embarked upon a career at a particular occupational level, the probability was that he remained at that level. In terms of the social background effects, Form and Miller (1949) found a strong association between the present and subsequent career. Those from a white-collar background tended to remain at this level in their careers; those from a manual background either remained at that level or dropped in terms of occupational status.

Viewing mobility in terms of changes of status as an important element in the analysis of career can be further understood with reference to the empirical research that has been conducted in different areas. The Oakland Mobility study by Lipset and Bendix (1952) has become something of a classic in the field. They report on the work

experiences of 935 people who were the chief wage-earners in their families. They found that changes in job within the same occupation were far more common than the phenomenon of changing the occupation itself. As might be expected, those individuals who did change their occupation or jobs frequently were also more likely to change their occupation more often than the less mobile. The researchers further found a correlation between occupational status and the amount of mobility experienced by an individual. Thus professional employees were the most stable, with 70 per cent of them spending around 80 per cent of their work lives in the one occupation. At the other extreme, those in unskilled occupations were the most unstable occupationally.

The Oakland Mobility Study further points out that in general the range of occupations that individuals may experience in their work lives may be quite large, but it may be restricted in certain categories. Thus the manual workers, tend to remain in manual category during their work lives and so the white-collar employees. The study, however, did find situations where the general pattern did not apply. First in the case of some individuals who predominated in manual occupations, but had experienced non-manual work also. Here the latter was mainly in small business, low level white-collar work and in sales work. The second case was those who predominated in non-manual occupations but who had spent some time in manual occupations as well.

Another study on occupational mobility was undertaken by Peil (1972) among the Ghanaian Factory Workers. There he found that many of the older men had experienced considerable occupational mobility, including both manual and non-manual jobs. Because there are unskilled, illpaid, and non-prestigious jobs among both manual and non-manual occupations, movement across this 'line' in either direction may imply upward mobility or the reverse. Relatively low requirements for most jobs mean that the workers can easily move from one occupation to another.

Sociologists have also attempted to clarify occupations according to their general standing or prestige. A careful drawn scale was prepared by North and Hatt (1947) in this connection. They asked a sample of the adult population of the United States to evaluate 90 occupations. After a careful examination of the representativeness of occupations they found that although the scale was unevenly representative of various occupations in the labour force, it was sensitive to socio-economic gradations among the occupations. Duncan and Reiss (1961) further prepared one index of socio-economic status for the 425 occupations in the detailed classification used by the U.S. Bureau and transformed the index into comparable North-Hatt prestige- scale scores.

A comparison of the prestige ratings of various occupations

in various societies reveals a general consistency of results (Inkeles and Rossi, 1956). However, there are disagreements over the interpretation of the findings. Functional theorists have suggested that occupations vary in their importance in society to society and that the more important ones tend to be scarce because they require more skill and preparation (Davis, 1948). Therefore, people in these occupations tend to be accorded more prestige, income, and social influence. Acceptance of this theory in whole or in part has led some scholars to compare changes in occupational structures of various countries and interpret occupational mobility according to local functional requirements (Lipset and Bendix, 1959).

Jackson and Crockett (1964) measured the degree of occupational mobility in the United States as revealed in the three national surveys of 1947, 1952 and 1957. Using three categories (farmers, manual, and non-manual) they found that in all three periods almost half the sons had moved out of parental occupational levels. They further concluded that one-quarter of the movement was due to structural causes and one-fifth to other causes.

There has long been a speculation on the amount of occupational mobility in different countries. Lipset and Bendix (1959) compared results of studies of the occupational origins of representative

population of the United States, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Japan. Although the methodologies of these studies were not precisely comparable, they permitted comparisons of occupational origins of farmers, manual workers and white-collar workers. All countries showed high mobility of farmers' sons into urban manual jobs and of sons of urban manual workers into white-collar occupations. The mobility in most cases was in response to changes in the occupational structure. The major differences in mobility rates of industrialising nations reflect differences in the degree and pace of industrialization.

Nations that are at the same level of economic development and are industrializing at the same pace tend to exhibit similar rates of vertical occupational mobility. However, the pace and level of industrialization do not bear a unitary relationship to the degree of closure of an occupational structure. Two nations with similar patterns of industrialization may differ in their degree of vertical mobility, because recruitment into any level may be from the adjacent levels or from all occupational levels. Even where there is no structural mobility, the degree of generational occupational circulation may be high or low.

Another important dimension in occupational mobility

studies has been education. According to Goldhamer (1968) a substantial portion relative to other variables of the variations in status is accounted for by the variations in educational level. Educational level is, of course, in considerable measure dependent upon the status level of parents. This dependence is lessened by increase in the society's investment in educational facilities and the degree to which these make educational opportunities available without respect to social origin.

Formal education prepares individuals for a particular style of life characteristic of a status group. It acts as a differentiating agency as it seeks to maintain and supply appropriately socialised individuals to each one of the strata. In each selective function, the education system tends to select students from particular socio-economic strata. The selective character of formal education operates through families according to their economic and cultural resources, and through the schools according to whether they provide an environment appropriate to the one that obtains in the family of the child.

Further it is widely recognised that formal education plays a vital role in the occupational mobility, both horizontal and vertical. In other words, it is directly related to occupational mobility and subsequent improvement in economic status, and it also forms an element in social prestige. Formal education is seen, therefore,

as a socialising agency preparing individuals for a style of life, helping individuals to overcome prejudices, and promoting values and behaviour of a more universalistic nature. Therefore, it is of importance to understand the orientation that a society gives to education in the context of promoting values and achieving new goals it has set before itself. Part of the effect of education on status-achievement is due to the correlation of education with intelligence. According to Lockwood (1962) the distribution of innate abilities among the selection, but the exact degree to which such tests measure innate or learned ability is problematic, and raises difficult problems.

According to Lands (1972:17), one of the most crucial dimensions in occupational mobility has been education. The industrial revolution in England, and industrialization in other western countries, resulted in a changing occupational structure which subsequently became more complex and differentiated. The number of non-manual and supervisory occupations increased, calling for new specialised skills. The system of formal schooling helped in the training and selection of talent and in the allocation of human resources (Lands, 1972:17). Modern industrial technology resulted in the increased demand for a well educated, adaptable and fluid, that is, geographical and occupational mobile labour force (Floud and Halsey, 1961: 1-2). It should be clearly seen that the changing occupational structure, resulting

from economic and technological changes, gave importance to education. Thus increased education would make for a situation whereby positions of high ability in the occupational sphere would be held by persons who possessed high ability in terms of various levels of educational qualifications.

The length of schooling became again a strong determinant of higher occupational achievement. For example, Bendix and Lipset (1959) in a study of social mobility in an industrial society, showed that majority of those who had been to college for a year or more found it easier to obtain professional and technical occupations. According to Anderson, a large amount of empirical research (centres, 1949; Glass and Hall, 1954) has shown that in a complex industrial society with increasing specialisation and job automation etc. those children born in the lower strata who do receive an education comparable to that of upper class children, experience greatly enhanced chances of upward mobility (Anderson, 1961: 165)

However, this conceived relationship between education and mobility came under extreme criticism especially during the fifties and early sixties of this century. The differential educational opportunities availed of by children of different social classes called for a study of the various sociological processes which enervate the relationship between education and mobility. The school and cultural circumstances

affecting the education of the child came to be emphasised. Family size (Nisbet, 1961); language (Burnstein, 1961); family motivation (Kahl, 1961) and the cultural climate of the peer group (Coleman, 1961), came to be studied in the context of explaining the relationship between education, performance and attainment (Floud and Halsey, 1961).

Again, the role of social background is highlighted by Jackson and Marsden (1966) who analysed the important role played by the neighbourhood, father's education, occupation and social networks on the education of the child. They emphasised the need for viewing schools and not isolated from economic, social, cultural and psychological factors.

Frazer (1959) related school performance to four types of home background factors : cultural (parental education), material and economic (income and overcrowding), motivation (e.g. parental attitudes and encouragement). The Growther Report of 1959 further indicated that the chances of children of professional and managerial parents continuing education of seventeen years or beyond were twenty five times as many as those of unskilled workers (Morrish, 1972:132).

The relationship between education and occupation of parents, which forms part of the social background is again confirmed

by the Robbins Report which demonstrates that "the association with parental occupation is, if anything, still close where higher education is concerned" (Morrish, 1972:132). Coleman (1961) in his study of educational opportunity revealed that the influence of the social and family background is an important factor in explaining the poor performance of poor and black children. Thus, it was seen that social, cultural and economic factors play an important part in influencing growth and expansion among different social classes.

Of late some scholars have tried to examine the question of occupational structure and mobility in terms of the development of an economy.

Colin Clark (1940) in his book 'The Conditions of Economic Progress' argues that there is a close relationship between development of an economy on the one hand, and occupational structure on the other; and economic progress is generally associated with certain distinct, necessary and predictable changes in occupational structure. He writes: "A high average level of real income per head is always associated with a high proportion of the working population engaged in tertiary industries . . . low real income per head is always associated with a low proportion of the working population engaged in tertiary production and a high percentage in primary production."



A.G.B. Fisher (1945) also reached the same conclusion:

"We may say that in every progressive economy, there has been a steady shift of employment and investment from the essential 'primary activities' to secondary activities of all kinds and to a still greater extent into tertiary production."

An examination in this connection reveals that high per capita income is inversely correlated with the proportion of active population engaged in agriculture. The advanced countries like the U.S.A., U.K., Australia, Canada, West Germany and France with a low proportion of active population dependent on agriculture in 1970 reveal a higher per capita income with higher rate of occupational mobility. As against it, underdeveloped countries like India and Pakistan with a higher proportion of active population in agriculture have very low per capita income associated with low rate of occupational mobility.

Colin Clark has further observed that during the process of economic development there is a general tendency for tertiary industries to expand more rapidly than the secondary industries. In U.S.A., Germany and Japan the increase in the tertiary sector is greater than the increase in secondary sector. In the case of Britain and Sweden, the increase in the secondary sector is greater than the increase in tertiary sector. It is thus evident that the nature of occupa-

tional mobility is directly associated with pace of development of an economy. These studies have attempted to suggest three major dimensions in the stages of economic development which are as follows.

- (a) In the first stage of economic development the proportion of the total working force engaged in agricultural and allied occupations decline appreciably but the absolute numbers engaged in these occupations continue to rise.
- (b) It is only in the second stage of economic development when an economy is very well advanced that there is a decline in the absolute numbers engaged in agriculture.
- (c) During the process of economic development, the increase in the tertiary sector is more than that in the secondary sector but the difference between the increase in the two sectors may not be very wide.

The study of occupational mobility in India is relatively a new field of enquiry. The traditional association of caste and occupation, low pace of industrialization and limited urban growth have always restricted occupational mobility. However, the situation has comparatively changed recently and we find changes taking place in the structure and nature of numerous occupations both in rural and urban areas. Consequently, the social scientists in general and sociologists in particular have initiated studies to examine this phenomena in different

parts of the country. Some of these studies have been reviewed here to highlight the major trends in this regard.

Dubey (1975) in his study on 'Social Mobility Among the Professions' revealed some aspects of occupational mobility in the city of Gorakhpur. On the comparative figures of the generation of grandfather and father the study testifies that the traditional elites, big agriculturists, landlords and businessmen have constantly shown a decrease in mobility in the generation of the fathers. The mobility among the two generations in the study reveals that the move was from manual and traditional non-manual occupations to white-collar jobs. As a matter of fact, in the generation of the grandfather a gradual shift from the traditional occupations started.

The analysis of the 'career mobility' in this study further shows that out of the total number of respondents, 49.33 per cent have joined their present jobs after working in some other jobs, while 50.66 per cent have come to their present jobs straightway.

Some of the major conclusions of Dubey's study reveal that the salaried professionals (officials, engineers, medical doctors and University teachers) are more likely to shift their jobs than the free professionals (doctors having private practice and lawyers). Men

who have received liberal education are more likely to change their occupations than those who have received technical or professional training. Further, people belonging to lower occupations such as clerical or white-collar or lower class have improved their lot by joining different occupations but in no case a reverse process, or downward trend of mobility has been found among the professionals under investigation. As regards the comparative rate of mobility, upward mobility of the sons of the working class fathers was definitely much lower (1.66 per cent) but the mobility of the sons of the manual fathers was higher (24 per cent) than in many countries and the mobility of the sons of the middle class and white-collar fathers was the highest (52.6 per cent) among all studies under comparison.

The most potent role in accelerating the process of mobility has been played by modern education. In this connection, Dubey concluded that the extent of illiteracy has continued to decline from the generation of grandfather to fathers generation. Thus, the inter-generational educational mobility was the most effective single variable in the degree of occupational mobility.

The study on 'Inter-generational Occupational Mobility in Begumpet residential locality in Andhra Pradesh' by Vidyavathi (1980) shows the pattern of change in vocational affiliation between generations of sons, fathers and grandfathers (paternal). This study

reveals that 63 per cent of the respondents improved their position continuously over the three generations while only 5 per cent have shown a decline. Those respondents who moved up moved into higher groups than their fathers and grandfathers. Regarding those going down the scale it should be remembered that the part of this downward movement is natural because the sons have to start in lower positions than their fathers even in the same occupation in the beginning. A part of it is also due to the fact that, while in most cases the fathers have reached the highest position in their careers, the sons were still at earlier stages in their careers. The percentage of those going up was large compared to those going down. Only 2 per cent remained in the same categories over the three generations. In the present generation the tempo of change seems to have quickened and this is reflected in the shift from agriculture to industrial occupations. This is more so in areas where industries are located.

Shyam Lal (1981) studied patterns of occupational mobility among the Bhangi caste in Jodhpur city. Primarily the Bhangis have been performing night soil work. The findings show that there is evidence of change taking place from traditional to non-traditional occupations among the Bhangis. Reservation of seats in Government services, growth of education, the inspiration of getting high social status in his own society, growth of the city, political awareness and leadership of late Shri Ram Sarvate are some of the reasons of these shifts.

Occupational changes have, however, taken place only in negligible manner. The only significant difference is that they do non-manual work slightly more than their ancestors did. Caste and occupation are thus still correlated in case of Bhangis caste.

In a study on migration and occupational mobility in a village in Nellore District of Andhra Pradesh Ch. Uma Mohan (1980) shows that of the 27 migrants 23 have experienced upward occupational mobility by switching over from their fathers' traditional occupations. The present occupations of these migrants earn them better income and status than their fathers and they also offer them better prospects for future development. Such prospects are not available to these migrants in their native village if they choose to remain there. Only one migrant has experienced downward mobility. He has neither educational qualifications, an important pre-requisite for entry into the modern occupational structure, nor requisite class background as his father is only a marginal farmer. His father's marginal land holdings did not enable him to continue as cultivator and hence he had to move down to choose a manual work which is more secure than a mere agricultural labour. These migrants have experienced horizontal mobility.

The mobility with reference to the migrants' caste status shows that all the Harijans have experienced upward mobility. As the Harijans both in terms of their jati (Caste) and traditional occupa-

tional status are at the bottom of status pyramid, any small improvement will appear as upward mobility. But in reality, the positions occupied by the Harijans migrants are lower than the others. The same situation prevails in the case of lower caste migrants also. Of the five lower caste migrants, three have experienced upward mobility and one horizontal mobility. Though their educational levels are comparatively low, their caste status has helped them to gain entry into the modern occupational structure and thus gain upward occupational mobility. Of the eleven middle caste migrants, ten have experienced upward occupational mobility and one horizontal mobility. Their higher educational qualifications and migration have helped them to achieve upward occupational mobility than their caste and class status.

Study

Thus, Mohan's ^A highlights some specific points which may be presented as: (a) migration from rural areas leads to occupational mobility, (b) though migration plays a significant role in determining occupational mobility, the direction of occupational mobility is determined by a combination of factors like education, caste and class, (c) achievement of higher educational qualifications associated with migration from rural areas will by and large lead to upward occupational mobility and (d) the role of caste and class factors associated with migration in determining upward occupational mobility is only secondary in importance.

In a full length study Deb (1975) has attempted to examine not only the nature of mobility in occupation but has clarified issues involved in its prestige as well. His study shows that the workers (farm and factory) had higher level of aspiration than the farmers, whereas the level of satisfaction was higher in the case of the former than the latter. This, therefore, becomes an indication that higher level of aspiration is associated with less work satisfaction and the level of aspiration is inversely related with the remunerative potentialities of the occupation.

In view of the fact that the workers have higher level of aspiration but at the same time low level of work satisfaction, it is assumed that these people would be more occupationally mobile than the others. His study further reveals that though the rate of both intra and inter-generational occupational mobility rate was higher among the factory workers than in any other category. On the other hand, inter-generational mobility rate was highest among the agricultural labourers, followed by the factory workers. The low rate of intra-generational mobility in the farm community can be attributed to the fact that the occupational opportunities are few and very limited. Persons in business and white-collar occupations continue in the same occupation because of the job security as well as the economic and social status they provide to individuals. Movement in this group is further curtailed

by limited personal resources such as investment, capital and education.

Deb concluded that the caste system is losing its grip on the society and the people have started moving from their hereditary occupations to economically sound occupations, with the exception of those engaged in farming. Also the frame of reference of the rural people in relation to status of various occupations has undergone a considerable change. Rather than laying emphasis on the ascribed status, people have now begun to emphasis²achieved status.

The studies on occupational mobility reviewed so far clearly reveal different manners in which mobility in occupations occur and the forces which shape them. It is evident that numerous frameworks have been used to analyse the different aspects of occupational mobility. Our preference is for the framework which tries to correlate the occupational mobility with the pace of economic development.

For a long time India has maintained the age-old traditional occupational patterns. These occupations have been specific and hierarchical in nature. They are mainly caste-bound occupations and are non-competitive in character. India too, in the past, afforded for a long time sufficient quantity of land to the individuals which was

used for homestead as well as for agricultural purposes. Due to variegated occupational patterns, which were inter-dependent and inextricably interlaced in their social settings, there was very little scope for one to encroach upon the fields of others, thereby causing any sort of interactional tension. So inter-relationship among the various groups of people was more or less smooth and harmonious.

In course of time, the spread of western education and employment opportunities available to the people in new types of jobs without reference to caste have all dealt a serious blow to the existing social and economic life of the people. One of the major changes that the new system of education introduced was a gradual disassociation of occupation from caste. While occupations in the traditional caste system were rated in terms of ritual purity and pollution, they are today rated to some extent in terms of income they produce.

The western type of education has also made possible the upward mobility of individuals and groups in the framework of Westernization. Individuals get their children educated in public schools, follow modern occupations which are more remunerative and adopt a Westernised style of life. The most revolutionary consequence of education and urbanization is the entry of women into the middle class occupations. In short, modern education, has among other things,

given rise to numerous occupations in India.

An enquiry into the direction of change in India will reveal that the processes of change which started in the form of modern university education, new pattern of administration, rise of factories and industrialisation, growth of new urban centres, drastic change in the ownership of land, improved means of transport and communication, reform movements and wave of nationalism, at the different phases of the nineteenth century, have now reached a more concrete and conspicuous stage. The accumulated effect of the forces of change has resulted in the growth of administrative urban centres and industrial metropolis, emergence of industrial jobs, modern occupations and professions. Further we find gradual decline in the hold of traditional elites (princes, landlords, aristocratic families etc.) and they are being replaced by new business, political, military, administrative and professional elites. Moreover, the new constitutional set-up of India provides equal opportunities to all irrespective of caste, creed or sex. It has offered opportunity for achievement, competition and upward mobility.

There used to be a closed affinity between the old family occupations, agricultural system and rural setting. But with the growth of the new administrative and industrial occupations, urban trends have spread into the remote villages, and have vastly affected the

attitudes and aspirations of the people. People like to move into the cities in order to give better education to their children. They like the modern means of entertainment and new style of dress and aspire for a higher standard of living. Thus the growth of urbanization has accelerated the pace of occupational mobility especially since independence. The nature and dynamics of this change is so fascinating that one immediately gets interested in issues involved in this process of change.

The occupational structure of India reflects clearly the backwardness of Indian economy. Over the last 80 years the proportion of working population engaged in the primary sector, i.e. agriculture and allied activities has not fallen below 72 per cent. This is really significant, since as is generally believed a large percentage of population dependent on agriculture is a clear indication of the prevalence of large-scale disguised unemployment.

However, as a result of planned economic development, there is bound to be a considerable increase in employment opportunities. Rapid progress is taking place in expanding irrigation, power, basic industries, transport and other services; and there will, therefore, be new avenues for employment, which will further encourage mobility in occupations.

The problems of North Eastern India in general, and Mizoram

in particular are substantially different from the rest of the country. Constitutionally, when the Government of India Act, 1953 was passed, the areas inhabited by tribals were treated as Excluded Areas, thereby introducing little administration in these areas. The same position in a little different form was continued under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution in 1950 which is still in force in most of the areas, though for administrative purposes the North Eastern areas have been now divided into five states and two Union Territories. No doubt the rest of the country has made impressive progress, but Mizoram is still far behind even in building up of the requisite infrastructure. The planned development has been attempted more effectively since it became a Union Territory in 1972. However, a comprehensive development programme which has been carried out since 1972 have already started bringing about significant changes in the occupational pattern among the Mizos. As increasingly higher proportion of investments are made in secondary and tertiary sectors; it should become possible to divert, in stages, an increasing proportion of population to non-agricultural sectors which would consequently create occupational diversification and mobility among them.

The whole question of occupational mobility among the Mizos is thus necessarily associated with the pace of development. Now the basic theoretical issue before us is the nature of the path

of development adopted in Mizoram in recent past. It is obvious that the capitalist path adopted elsewhere in the country has also been brought to this region. Naturally, the processes of change and transformation taking place elsewhere are also evident in Mizoram. Theoretically, it can be hypothesised that the society where new capitalist forces will intervene in the developmental process, they will face substantial change in occupational structure leading to fast occupational mobility. Our experiences elsewhere suggest so. Thus, the study proposed here tries to examine the increasing occupational mobility in this broad theoretical perspective.

CONCEPTS

Occupational Mobility

Occupational mobility is the movement of people from one status category to another. A shift in working population from agriculture and allied occupations to industry and tertiary activities is a widespread phenomenon in almost all the developing countries. Such change in occupational structure when the working population shifts from one area to another and from one generation to the other is taken as occupational mobility. Thus, shifting of people from rural areas to urban areas and giving up of the traditional profession and taking up new ones are some of the examples of occupational mobility.

Sarokin (1964) distinguished between horizontal mobility and vertical mobility, the former signifying a change in function and the latter a change in rank. Thus the position of an individual in any social system may be described by his rank in a hierarchical scheme of relationships, his functions as a participant in group life and his location in space and time. It is apparent then that a significant occupational change may be a promotion or demotion, a change in place of work and an alteration in function. Let us now analyse two basic types of occupational mobility in some more detail.

Vertical Occupational Mobility

Vertical occupational mobility according to Caplow (1964) is a movement of the individual upward or downward, with a gain or loss in social rank. This may occur in several different ways -

1. The simplest kind of vertical mobility is a change of occupation which involves a change in social position, as when a waiter becomes a businessman, or an unsuccessful accountant goes to work in a factory.
2. A different form of mobility involves promotion or demotion within an occupational group, as when a naval officer receives command of a ship, or a locomotive fireman becomes an engineer.

3. *Another form of vertical mobility within the occupational group is incidental to aging. Each occupational level displays certain characteristic career curves; and in addition, the mere accumulation of seniority represents a significant change in status.*
4. *A fourth type of vertical mobility is the change in occupational assignment from one generation to another, usually studied as the correlation between the occupations of fathers and sons.*

There is still another kind of vertical mobility which involves the ascent or descent of an entire occupational group - the increasing dignity of nurses or the diminishing prestige of midwives may serve equally well as examples. This is a phenomenon of primary importance but is more conveniently considered as an aspect of occupational change.

According to Sarokin vertical mobility occurs when a person changes one social status to another. For example, if all of a sudden a person becomes rich due to the will of distant relations of his own, it shall be known as vertical occupational mobility. Vertical occupational mobility is, therefore, meant as 'the relations involved in a transition of an individual from one social stratum to another'.

Horizontal Occupational Mobility

Horizontal occupational mobility to Caplow (1964) is a

change in function, including both the technical and the social functions which arise from group membership. Horizontal mobility occurs where there is a change of occupation or job within an occupation that does not entail a change in status. There are specific kinds of horizontal mobility -

1. Horizontal occupational mobility of the simplest type involves a change in employment within the same occupation, as when a general practitioner becomes a medical specialist, or a manager may move from production to sales of the same company. In these cases, mobility takes place but there is a possibility that no change in status is involved.
2. There may also be horizontal occupational mobility when a change in occupation involves new and different activities. The punch-press operator who becomes a lineman or the toymaker who undertakes to sell insurance are examples.
3. Again, the succession of generations introduces a distinct category of horizontal mobility, in which comparisons must be made between parents and children, rather than between successive states of individual career.

The other dimension of occupational mobility is sometimes denoted as spatial mobility, and includes two quite different things: the mobility involved in migration from place to place, and the mobility involved in the performance of work which is not attached to a single

work site. The former is treated under the heading of migration which is, strictly speaking, a change of residence and need not necessarily involve any change of occupation. But it is closely associated with occupational shifts of one kind or another. The principal directions of migration are the more or less continuous movements from rural areas towards the city, from areas of stable population toward centers of industrial or commercial opportunity, from more densely settled countries toward less densely settled countries, from the centre of cities to their suburbs.

There is another type of spatial mobility which must be considered among the salient characteristics of any occupation, that is the amount of travel and the changes in residence or in workplace which are entailed by the occupation itself. All high-status and many low-status occupations are also relatively mobile in this sense and there are a number of callings which are marked by an extreme degree of spatial detachment, such as diplomats, dance-band musicians, the railroad workers (Caplow, 1964).

In the light of the previous discussion, we may further observe three related but somewhat different phenomena that are also included in occupational mobility. The first reference is to a process of changing residential locations, though such mobility ordinarily emphasizes changes in relative social standing. The other two referents

of mobility also focus on status changes but differ in their points of comparison. These two types of occupational mobility are: intra-generational and inter-generational occupational mobility.

Intra-Generational Occupational Mobility

Intra-generational Mobility increases in a dynamic economy (Form, 1968). It may be measured in the space of individual's work life. According to Abrahams-on (1969) intra-generational occupational mobility contrasts the social positions of the same individual at two different periods in his life.

Research on occupational mobility within the life span of a single worker reveals that the majority of workers do not experience orderly and regularly upward occupational movement. Most mobility according to Form (1968) takes place within the first ten years of work life, and the workers generally find their regular niche at this time. In the study of intra-generational occupational mobility, therefore, one position or one point of individual's career is compared with another, and the main emphasis has been on the study of occupational changes in the life of the same individual. The intra-generational occupational mobility has been measured by the changes of job or occupation an individual has made during his life time, that is, between his first job and the subsequent ones till the time of the interview.

Inter-Generational Occupational Mobility

Inter-generational occupational mobility, compares the status of grown up children to that of their parents. Studies on inter-generational occupational mobility report the relationship between occupations of fathers and sons, that is, the occupation which the son followed at the time of interview was compared with the major occupation which the sons reported for his father, and the mobility between the generations was assessed accordingly. This is the most prolific area of research for sociologists as is evident from numerous studies which have been conducted on inter-generational occupational mobility.

Thus four major areas have been identified to differentiate type of occupational mobility. They are: vertical occupational mobility, horizontal occupational mobility, intra-generational occupational mobility and the inter-generational occupational mobility.

Occupational Prestige

It is commonly observed that some occupations have more respect, money and power associated with them than do others. The fact that occupations appear to be stratified along several dimensions has led many scholars to study societal stratification by studying occupational stratification. The idea of a scale of occupations arranged in

the order of their prestige is one that during the last twenty five years has occupied the attention of many sociologists and social psychologists.

Certain types of occupation thus have almost always composed of the upper layers of social groups while other occupational groups have almost always been at the bottom. In fact, the principal occupational classes are not situated horizontally on the social level but they are superimposed upon one another.

The concept of occupational prestige assumes that the society consists of strata arranged in the form of hierarchy, and there are sharp breaks between such strata. The use of prestige scales thus shows the existence of different ranking universe, that is, universe not forming part of a common continuum (Hall and Jones, 1950).

Over the past many years, there have been numerous studies in which people have been asked to rank some selected occupations in a hierarchical order. Such types of studies are referred to as the study of occupational prestige in sociological literature.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Scope and Objectives

The present enquiry is an attempt to study the patterns

of occupational mobility among the Mizo Government employees of Aizawl town. The Mizos belong to a very enterprising tribal community and they are now one of the most literate groups in India. Of late, their contact with the outside world has resulted in a considerable change in their day-to-day life. The occupational diversification and educational advancement among them were the natural consequences of such a contact. The geographical isolation and ecological condition, traditional social institutions and age-old economic organizations could not stop them from facing numerous challenges of the time. The process of transformation was further accelerated by the spread of Christianity which exerted powerful influence on the traditional life of the people. Hence, an exploratory study of the nature and extent of occupational mobility among the Mizos is expected to be an interesting study in the overall context of social change.

The advancement of modern science and technology did not reach Mizoram as it did to other parts of India but its influence was being felt from time to time. The growing urbanization, better transport and communication, and various other developmental measures have changed the face of the area. Consequently, the people have started disregarding their tradition and culture. In the context of such changes we are motivated to examine how the traditional occupations are surviving in the changed situation. Another dimension of the present

study is the question regarding the emerging pattern of occupational structure.

Indian sociologists have attempted to study this problem in different parts of the country with numerous perspectives. However, we do not have any significant enquiry on the changing pattern of occupational mobility in the underdeveloped areas like the North Eastern India. The present enquiry is, therefore, a modest attempt to bridge this gap.

How do the traditional occupations survive? What has been the nature of change in these occupations? What is the emerging occupational pattern in urban areas of Mizoram? Is there any significant difference between the generations so far the occupational choice is concerned? These are some of the crucial questions which one would like to raise in the context of the present enquiry. Within this broad framework, some of the specific objectives are:

- i) to explore the emerging pattern of occupational mobility in the area;
- ii) to examine the patterns of inter and intra-generational occupational mobility;
- iii) to enquire into the attitudes and aspirations of the people towards the present and previous occupations;

- iv) to study the nature of occupational ranking as provided by the people, and finally,
- v) to ascertain if there is any variation in the patterns of occupational mobility because of the difference in residential background and achieved status of the respondents.

Sampling Procedure

Sample for the present study consists of 400 permanent Mizo Government employees selected through regular interval method out of a list of Mizos engaged in Government services in Aizawl town. Every alternate person in the list constituted our sample till we got our required number. In view of the above procedures, the sample taken appears to be quite appropriate and representative since the universe is comparatively homogeneous in respect of certain characteristics.

Out of the 400 employees 200 each belong to the Gazetted and Non-Gazetted categories. Similarly, while 246 were born in rural areas and the other 154 came from urban background.

Sources of Data

Keeping in view the nature of the present enquiry, the study is mainly based on primary data which were collected through an interview schedule administered personally by the researcher. The secondary data were collected from Government Reports, Journals,

Census Reports, District Gazetteers, Reports of the various Commissions of enquiry and other relevant sources.

Chapterization

The dissertation is divided into seven Chapters. The concept and types of occupational mobility, review of some selected studies, objectives and research strategy are discussed in Chapter I. In Chapter II we have discussed the general characteristics of the Mizo society and its traditional social, economic and political organisations, the complexities of the situation-political, social and economic and the changes in the traditional organisations brought about by new forces. Then in Chapter III we have highlighted the socio-economic background of our respondents and their existing occupational patterns. The nature and extent of inter-generational occupational mobility is presented in Chapter IV. Here comparisons of the generations of grandfather, father and respondents are examined. A discussion of the intra-generational occupational mobility is brought out in Chapter V. Chapter VI has projected the image of occupations. Here the previous and present occupations of our respondents and their assessments, occupational satisfaction, aspirations, preferences and occupational ranking are briefly highlighted. The conclusions of the present study are lastly presented in Chapter VII where an over-view of the present enquiry is discussed.

CONCLUSION

We propose to recapitulate the main findings of the present study which have been analysed elaborately in the preceding chapters. In the first chapter we have examined the various frameworks which have been used in the study of occupational mobility along with the numerous concepts associated with it. In the subsequent chapters an attempt has been made to answer those questions which are normally involved in the nature and extent of such a mobility. It has been done with the help of a systematic interview of 400 Government employees posted at Aizawl in the North East Indian Union Territory of Mizoram. Our major findings are summarised below.

In the initial discussion we have reviewed several studies in the area of occupational mobility and keeping the major perspectives in view we have identified a suitable analytical framework for understanding the occupational scenario in Mizoram. Our preference has been for the framework which attempts to correlate the rates of occupational mobility with the pace of economic development of the region. Thus the whole question of occupational mobility among the Mizos is necessarily interconnected with the pace of development obtaining in the region. In view of this our

theoretical proposition is that the society where new capitalist forces will intervene in the developmental processes it will face substantial change in occupational structure leading to fast occupational mobility. It is in this framework that our study has examined the problem under investigation.

In the second chapter we have presented an account of the Mizo society, its geographical and ecological settings, traditional socio-economic organisations, and numerous other related issues. The contemporary situation has also been discussed particularly since the formation of Union Territory of Mizoram in 1972. Two major factors - the role of Christianity and a very high rate of literacy have been specially highlighted in the context of Mizo social life.

The social background of our respondents have been discussed in Chapter III with a special emphasis on their occupational patterns. We have concentrated our attention mainly on migration patterns, education standards and occupational profile to highlight the social background of these respondents. This study is substantially different from numerous studies conducted in other parts of the country so far the religious background of the respondents is concerned because all our respondents are Christians. Educationally,

their standard is very high which reflects a very high rate of literacy in Mizoram. In fact, (the extent of literacy and educational attainment has continued to rise from the generation of the grandfathers, to the fathers and self.) Similarly, most of our respondents belong to very high income groups. A good number of our respondents are earning a monthly income of rupees three thousand and more. Our enquiry, in fact, suggests that the permanent urban dwellers and high officials have better economic prospects and avenues than the members of lower Government employees and members of the rural background. This statement no doubt looks simplistic and naive but it acquires a significant meaning when seen in the context of Mizo tribal socio-economic structure. The latter has been free from any elaborate class division till recently, but in the wake of numerous socio-economic changes a tendency to concentrate the economic forces and the opportunities in the urban areas have already given rise to sharp class divisions in terms of economic power. It is no doubt going to transform the entire Mizo society from the point of view of social status, economic dominance and political control.

Chapter IV explores the nature and extent of inter-generational occupational mobility. In attempting to understand this problem we have examined with the help of data from four hundred

respondents whether there is any significant change in the occupations of the respondents from those of their grandfathers and fathers. Numerous occupations and professions in which our respondents are involved have been classified into four categories to show the upward and downward trends in inter-generational mobility. Based on certain basic attributes the classification includes manual, non-manual, white-collar and professional occupations. To acquire some more depth in the enquiry we have identified two major variables namely, achieved status (Gazetted and Non-Gazetted) residential background (Rural and Urban) for analysis of data.

(An account of occupational movement from the earlier generation to the succeeding ones reveals that a large number of fathers and sons have experienced upward occupational mobility by switching over from their traditional occupations to modern occupations and professions. A number of persons in the case of non-manual, white-collar and professional occupations have remarkably increased in the recent past. In the three generations the move has thus been from manual and traditional non-manual occupations to white-collar and professional occupations.)

A comparison between the Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees from the point of view of inter-generational mobility

suggests no difference in the grandfather generation but a substantial difference in the generations of father and son. Thus, most of our gazetted respondents were in professional category whereas most of our non-gazetted respondents were in white-collar jobs. However, in both these groups there has been upward shift from manual to non-manual to white-collar and professional jobs. A similar trend is evident in case of our rural and urban respondents.

On the whole (the study suggests that from the generation of grandfather to father the tendency was to move from manual to non-manual and marginally to white-collar occupations.) (But now the tendency has been to move from non-manual to white-collar and then to professional jobs in the generations of fathers and sons.) (The rate of this mobility has been most significant in the subjects' generation as compared to the earlier generations) which is quite obvious. Secondly, in all such cases we find upward mobility. This is, however, more significant in case of our rural respondents. Thirdly, the Mizo being a highly literate group has naturally gone for higher level of professional training and hence a high rate of mobility. Fourthly, as a result of recent political and administrative developments in Mizoram several new opportunities have been provided by the Government. Consequently, a substantial change has taken place in the occupational structure in

the region. Finally, both in caste and class extremes we find some amount of rigidity in occupational choice. But the present study points to a very interesting situation which is obtaining in Mizoram. The Mizo society has not been a stratified society in the strict sense of the term. In other words, the Mizos have no notion of occupational inheritance *per se*. Therefore, they have not been compelled to go for their fathers' occupations. The point which has been emphasised is that the occupational structure in Mizoram is still in a transitional stage and therefore, people are more or less free to go for any type of job according to their own choice unlike the other regions of the country where such freedom is no longer there.

We have discussed intra-generational occupational mobility in Chapter V, where the main emphasis has been on understanding of occupational changes in the life of the same individual. The study indicates that a high rate of intra-generational mobility has occurred in the earlier stages of our respondents' careers. Most of the respondents have shifted from their jobs frequently. This shows not only the availability of jobs in the region but also the enterprising nature of the community. It seems that they are always ready to take risk which is involved in occupational shift.

Our Chapter on 'Image of Occupations' includes several

important aspects of occupational experiences and aspirations. It has examined the respondents' assessment of the previous and present jobs, levels of occupational satisfaction and aspirations, and has concluded with a detailed analysis of occupational preferences and prestige.

So far as the assessment of their own occupations is concerned quite a significant number of them think that the hours of work, general conditions and social prestige in the present jobs are good and satisfactory. They do not want to accept that the social prestige of the jobs in which they are presently engaged is inferior or even unsatisfactory. Consequently, the overwhelming majority of our respondents do not want to change their occupations. But an interesting thing is that they have been changing their occupations frequently within their limited range. This shows the mobility orientation of the people which is going to affect the future change in the group under review. In this context one significant point must be mentioned here. Normally, it is said that the tribal people do not want to shift from their homeland in search of new occupations and therefore, stick to their traditional occupations. The present study contests this kind of analysis. Like any other communities the Mizos now evaluate any occupation primarily in terms of adequate salary and income. To be able to reside in

one's own village and other primordial facilities which people used to talk about seem to give them rather little satisfaction in the choice of an occupation now. This is a remarkable change which requires our specific attention because it influences the mobility orientation in a society.

Coming to the preferences for their children's occupation we find that a substantial number of our respondents have preferred modern professions like medical, engineering, civil service, business, and so on. However, they have also talked about church service which is unique in this case. It has been analysed in greater details why jobs associated with church organizations have been preferred by our respondents. But the main emphasis has been on modern occupations and professions which is quite natural at the present level of development in Mizoram. In other words, we can safely conclude that with the increase in education and professional training people would not go for occupations like agriculture and other unskilled manual jobs.

In the last section, we have tried to discuss the question of occupational prestige which has been a very popular enquiry among occupational sociologists. On the basis of a list of thirteen occupations we asked the respondents to rank them in preferential

order. It very clearly suggests that our respondents are quite clear in their minds about the importance or otherwise of different occupations. They can differentiate occupations on the basis of social prestige and monetary gains which are two important dimensions in occupational prestige. Thus for most of them church service is the most prestigious occupation so far as social prestige is concerned but from the point of view of profit it is contract. Similarly, business receives the second position in money-wise ranking but this position is captured by civil service in prestige-wise ranking. However, the medical profession has been assigned the same rank in both these rankings. The most interesting trend is with regard to teaching. While it has the fourth position in prestige-wise ranking it goes to the tenth position in money-wise ranking. What we have emphasised is that our respondents are very clear about the issues involved in the ranking of modern occupations.

Another interesting trend which appears from the present enquiry is that teaching and defence services which occupied very high rank among the Mizos earlier no longer continue to be so now. In our data they have received the fourth and twelfth ranks respectively. Thus, the study highlights not only a change in the occupational structure of the region but also a transformation in the subjective perception of the people. Moreover, the changes

in the occupational structure also affect the prestige of occupation in the community. The introduction of monetary economy and changing habits of the people have led them to a different outlook suitable for modern social living. In fact, the relative functional importance of an occupation varies from time to time according to changes in the structure and function of the social system. In the present enquiry, occupations and professions, the functional utility of which has been properly recognised and understood get more significant position than those which are yet to be realised. It is, therefore, possible that certain occupations might be over-rated at some point of time but under-rated at the other.

The present study is only a modest venture in understanding the occupational structure and mobility in Mizoram. A further enquiry at the micro empirical level with more rigorous methodological strategy would undoubtedly deepen our understanding further about the nature and extent of occupational mobility in the region.