CHAPTER V

WORKFORCE AND OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

An important economics aspect of a country's population relates to the size and structure of its workforce and occupational distribution. A study of the workforce and occupational structure throws light on the number of productive persons, productive structure and the development level of economy. As such an understanding of these aspects are essential in order to ensure effective manpower planning.

WORKFORCE

The size of labour force is of great importance for the level of economic activity. The workforce participation rate in a country i.e., proportion of working population to total population, depends upon such factors as age and sex composition, attitude to work and availability of work. All these factors differ in different countries and may differ even within the same country in different periods.

The definition of 'worker' kept on changing at every census until 1981. The census of 1981 carries forward the tradition of the census 1971 in making the definition of 'workers' rigorous and more meaningful and has classified the workers into 'main worker' and 'marginal workers.' Main workers are those who have worked in some economic activity over a period of six months or 183 days or more in a year.

In 1991 census, work was defined as participating in any economically productive activity. In this context, work-force can be defined as a number of total main works in term of percentage out of the total population.
The workforce of Mizoram in 1971 census was 45.61 percent. The table 5.1 showed the declining trends in 1981 census with 41.73 percent. The decline in 1981 census was not due to the depletion of working populations, but was on account of change in conceptual definition of workers. The workforce in 1991 census was 42.29 which was slightly higher than that of 1981 census. The proportion of main worker to total population in Mizoram is high as compared to the all India level.

Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of main worker to total population.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>45.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>41.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>42.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of India 1991, series 17 of Mizoram, paper 1 of supplement provisional population totals p.21.

It is evident from the table that the work participation rate of female is high in Mizoram as compared to India as a whole. In case of male participation rate Mizoram has maintained almost the all India rate. The female participation rate in Mizoram is much higher than the all India rate of 16.42 percent. In Mizoram, female workers play an important role in jhum cultivation and they participate in farming activities right from sowing of seeds to harvesting of crops and also in the marketing of farm produce.
Table 5.2

Percentage of total workers, main workers and marginal workers to total population.

1981-91

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>percentage of total population</th>
<th>Total workers</th>
<th>Main workers</th>
<th>Marginal workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>45.44</td>
<td>49.36</td>
<td>41.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52.54</td>
<td>54.37</td>
<td>50.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37.74</td>
<td>43.74</td>
<td>31.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of India 1991 series 17 Mizoram paper 1
of supplement provision population total p.23.
OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE.

All occupations are broadly divided into three groups: (i) Primary or Agricultural sector, (ii) Secondary sector, (iii) Tertiary sector. In the primary sector are included cultivation and other occupations allied to agriculture, like animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry. In the secondary sector large and small manufacturing units, construction etc are included. The tertiary or service sector included trade, transportation, communication, banking etc. By occupational structure we mean the distribution of a country's population according to different occupations viz, primary, secondary and tertiary activities.

There is a close relationship between development of an economy on the one hand and occupational structure on the other. According to Colin Clark, "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."

The distribution of workforce into different occupations can be regarded as an important indication of economic development. In the developing countries a bulk of labour force is engaged in agriculture. The case of developed countries is totally different. A very large proportion of workforce over 65 to 70 per cent finds work in the service sectors.

The occupational structure of Mizoram is like that of underdeveloped economy. A substantial portion of workforce is engaged in agriculture and a very small percentage is found engaged in industry and service sectors. Cultivators constitute about 60.89 percent of total main workers. Agricultural labourers account for 3.73%
of the working population where, household industrial workers constitutes only 1.25 percent of the total main workers in 1991. The occupational structure at present and its change in it since 1971 are depicted in the table.

Table 5.3

Percentage of main worker in different occupation to main worker for Mizoram and India 1971–1991.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Cultivators</td>
<td>83.53</td>
<td>43.08</td>
<td>70.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labourer</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>26.69</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Industry</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other workers</td>
<td>15.75</td>
<td>26.06</td>
<td>26.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is well known that with development, the proportion of workforce engaged in agriculture decline and that in industry and service activities rises. The Mizoram's occupational structure showed that the proportions of cultivation has declined significantly since 1971. In 1971 the proportions of cultivators were as much as 83.53 percent and the corresponding figure has declined to 60.89 percent in 1991. The decline in the percentage of cultivators has been much more accentuated in the case of Mizoram compared with the national level. The population of workers other than agriculture increases from 16.10 per cent in 1971 to 35.38 percent in 1991.

**TABLE 5.4**

Percentage of male and female workers in different occupations to total main workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons</td>
<td>70.64</td>
<td>60.89</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>26.03</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>61.38</td>
<td>52.59</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>25.21</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>86.31</td>
<td>73.85</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census of India 1991 series 17 Mizoram
The two main findings of the 1991 census are: firstly under the categories of cultivators, the percentage of female is higher than the percentage of male (see table 5.4); secondly the proportion of female under the categories of other worker has shown a faster growth than males.

It is argued that the transference of workers from agriculture will raise productivity per worker. Since productivity per head in industry and service is generally higher than in agriculture such transference of workers from low to high productive sector will result in higher productivity per head. Besides, there will be diversification in economic activity. The need for changes in occupational structure in Mizoram is felt since economic progress is generally associated with certain distinct necessary and predictable changes in occupational structure. There is an urgent need for economic development in the state (Mizoram) which will ultimately bring a change in occupational structure from agriculture to Industrial sector. The process is to be completed within the shortest possible time to absorb the surplus from agriculture to the industry and other services by transference workers from agriculture.