INTRODUCTION
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The concept of Quality of Life has been discussed throughout the history of mankind. As history ran its course it imbued this concept with various meanings and gradually different streams of thoughts have left their influence on it. At the beginning of civilization when people used to live in small communities and traded by barter and face to face interactions were common, an individual's needs and aspirations were limited. Consequently, Quality of Life was a fairly simple concept. But as civilizations advanced, the complexity of trade and interaction increased, social life was transformed and Quality of Life became an increasingly complex issue. In modern times quest for improvement in the Quality of Life assumed prominence across the globe. It assumed different connotations and adopted different approaches to understand it.

Conceptually, Quality of Life is a perceptual - attitudinal phenomenon having multi-dimensional character. C.A. Mallmann (1978) defined it "as a concept, emanating at the individual level, but determined by the dynamic interactions between an individual, his/ her society, and his/ her habit". Szalai (1980) refined it further and proposed that Quality of Life should be treated as an all inclusive notion of life and living conditions which encompass the environment and the culture prevailing in a given society. It depends on the inherited past, internalised culture acquired by an individual or group of people and various other social factors. However, at the operational level it deals with the "grade of goodness, excellence or satisfaction" of an individual in his/ her overall life.

In general, it deals with the manifestations of life, the material and social conditions forming the environment and the experience of the individuals embedded as they are in their various socio-cultural ethos. Thus, Quality of Life has to do with the living conditions of people, their social and physical environment, their internalised values and culture in a given social context, their aspirations, needs, opportunities and various other social factors, which go into describing their overall life experience. Apart
from satisfying different vital needs, as well as seek happiness in respective family, work, social life, people aspires to fulfil many transcendental aspects of life, like personal development, recreation, spiritual level or self realization etc.

The topic of *Quality of Life* has many causes and effects. One of the many direct impacts of *Quality of Life* has been in the area of people's aspirations for material possessions which is served by the Marketing discipline. It has long been a belief that Marketing has an effect on *Quality of Life* by delivering material well-being. Individuals quest for improvement in the quality of their lives through material goods has a long history beginning the West in the 15th and 16th century in America (Belk 1982). Marketing makes the effect on the *Quality of Life* of human being by facilitating the acquisition and possession of goods and services. (Albee, 1977, Yankelovich 1981). It is believed that the economic prosperity of the Western Society is maintained through the invention of new products/services and specially, by creating or adopting innovations in the area of marketing. (Arndt 1978; Bellany 1976; Lazar 1987; Reynolds and Berksdale 1978; Yankolovich 1981). To quote Day (1978), "the higher standard of living in the Western Societies is a direct consequence of their advancement in the area of marketing".

It is generally believed that a great deal of personal satisfaction comes from the acquisition and possession of material wealth. Sirgy (1991) felt “material possessions enable us to define who we are, how we are different from others, and what we have achieved”. Some possessions like our clothing, housing, transportation etc. represent "tangible" symbols of our values, career success and personality. Acquisition is often a means of demonstrating one's status, group affiliation, or life style. People seek, express, confirm, and ascertain a sense of being through what they have. (Belk 1988; Day 1987; Dholakia and Levy 1987; Levy 1959,1964; Sirgy 1982; Tuan 1980, Zaltman and Wallendorf 1979).
Rassuli & Hollandes (1986) describe "materialism as a mind-set ... an interest in getting and spending". People externally show their achievements in life or attainment of higher status through consumption or acquisition of different items. Belk (1984) observed, "consumers attaches a great deal of importance to their worldly possession". In order to reveal the underlying purchase motives and characteristics of the market, around the 1960s researchers grouped the consumers in terms of their personality, attitude, interest and opinions. They termed it as the "Psychographic Segmentation" of the market profile.

Possession of goods and services, is concerned with the collection of objects maintained by an individual, such as her or his residential accommodation or apartment, cars, clothing, appliances, savings, investment etc. Levy (1959, 1964) was of the opinion that marketing is successful in emphasising that possession have both functional value (for example, a car to move around) and symbolic value (a car indicates that the owner is someone successful or someone with much disposable income. Material possessions are important to human being for their social meanings (Zaltman and Wallendorf 1976).

A person's "self" is a reflection of things with which he/she interacts. Sirgy (1982) added that, "material possessions are reflection of self concept of the buyer". Likewise, Cooper (1974); Duncan (1968) commented that "consumers are careful to achieve congruence between their self image and the image of the product they possess". It is thus believed that an individual's overall satisfaction with life will be influenced by his/her material possession or acquisition. The degree of satisfaction with possession influence how satisfied the individual is with life in general.

However, critics are of the opinion that marketing is responding primarily to the material needs of the affluent, accessible, and urban consumer, while neglecting the poor, inaccessible, and necessity-oriented masses (Dholakia, 1986). Critics cite the problems created by marketing in developing countries. For instance, Chetley, 1979 said, "unconstrained promotion in markets where there exist inadequate sanitation, lack of
economic resources, a poor understanding of hygiene, and high rates of illiteracy and thus, making their safe preparation and use virtually impossible". Firat (1986) suggested that marketing technology should be transported to developing countries although his findings did not clearly indicate whether marketing could solve or contribute to the problems of people.

Quality of Life research in Marketing is however still in its initial stage of development. The relationship was first examined in a descriptive study by Hamburger (1974). Subsequent researchers (Day 1978, 1987; Andreasen, 1978, Reynolds and Barksdale, 1978) examined the conceptual and methodological issues pertaining to marketing and Quality of Life. Studies conducted by Cundiff (1986) and Thorelli (1986) found a positive relationship between sustainable economic growth and satisfaction of the need of man — the consumer. Results of a study done by Gilley and Graham (1988) found that the impact of marketing on the Quality of Life in developing countries is becoming significant if one considers larger span of time.

The issue of Quality of Life resolves around the twin principle of (i) what constitutes man's happiness/contentment and (ii) how to measure the same. Numerous studies have been carried out in the Western Societies about "Quality of Life" (Andrews and Withner 1976; Belk 1982, 1988; Campbell 1976, 1978; Karke 1983, Liu, 1976; Shin and Johnson 1978; Smith 1973; Szalai 1980; Wilson 1967). But published evidence of research on this theme in India is scarce. (except a study by Mukherjee 1975).

This dissertation traces the different connotations used to operationalise the concept. That is to say, develop a typology of different schools of thought that will reveal the underlying shifts in the perspectives of studying "Quality of Life". For example, in the beginning "Quality of Life" research dealt mostly with different economic indicators from the point of view of the "welfare" of the society, but subsequently evolved many non-economic criterion, specially in the domain of social and psychological field and adopted different viewpoints from the individuals' subjective or perceptual level.
Also ascertain at the individual level the overall life satisfaction achieved as well as satisfaction with other domains such as Work Life, Family Life, Social Life, Recreation or Personal Development, Spiritual Life. This kind of satisfaction will probably depend on the age, occupation, income, and in general, social and economic status. Moreover, assess the Quality of Life at the macro level defined by satisfaction with civic amenities, infrastructural development, the local / central government administration.

The present study especially aims at exploring the effect of material possessions on Quality of Life achieved. The study will empirically find out the kind of material possessions achieved and aspired for by people belonging to different socio-economic stratum in a metropolitan city like Calcutta. Moreover, examines whether materialistic aspirations and overall life satisfaction vary with age, income, education, occupation or not.