INTER-GENERATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY

The main purpose of this Chapter is to understand the nature and extent of the inter-generational occupational mobility among the Mizos. It is proposed to examine whether there is any significant change in the occupations of the respondents from those of their fathers and grandfathers. Studies of inter-generational occupational mobility have attempted to examine numerous basic issues involved in the patterns of occupational mobility. It will be appropriate to highlight some of these formulations before we come to our own data in this regard.

The most significant aspect of inter-generational mobility is the rate of occupational inheritance. It focuses directly on the extent to which children inherit the occupational level of their parents. Form (1968), for example, has indicated that from one-half to two-thirds of the American males in the labour force are in the same occupational categories as their fathers or at immediately at the adjacent levels. As a matter of fact, the degree of occupational inheritance is an indicator of the openness of stratification system. It is in this sense that the rate of occupational inheritance in the United States implies a relatively open system. The major conclusion drawn from this study is that as the mobility decreases, class lines are hardened.
The importance of the stratification position of the family has thus been emphasised for setting the occupational mobility patterns of the children. It is a very known fact that children of manual workers normally ignored job planning at the school. They received less and poorer vocational guidance than children of white-collar workers. Consequently, they take any work offer to them and more haphazardly from one job to another. Naturally, children of white-collar workers are thus more likely to plan their careers because they received better guidance in the school and utilised the information occupational contacts that their families and friends have. In this sense, they live in a different occupational structure.

The forms of social mobility are also determined by features of social structure. Smelser and Lipset (1966) have talked among other things about ascription-achievement dimensions of social structure. Societies differ considerably in the degree to which individuals are assigned occupational, religious, political and other roles on the basis of status ascribed at birth. The basis of ascription may be kinship, age, sex, ethnicity or territorial location. The degree to which this criteria dominate the society emphasises ascription. On the other hand, when roles of individuals rest on some behavioural performance the society emphasises achievement. Thus, in this context Smelser and Lipset have hypothesised the implications of ascription-achievement
for the forms of social mobility in this way. If ascription is formally institutionalised, mobility tends to be collective; if achievement, mobility tends to be individual. While the caste system in India is a good example of stratification system at the ascriptive extreme, American society possesses a stratification system at the achievement extreme. It is possible for us to formulate a tentative proposition within this framework of ascription-achievement orientation. As society will move from ascribed stratification system to achieved stratification system the mobility in occupation will increase in the same proportion. What is happening in India today is a good pointer to this kind of trend.

However, the situation existing in most of the tribal communities in India is substantially different from the non-tribal India. Tribal societies are not a stratified in terms of caste hierarchy as is the case with other communities. It does not mean that certain principles of ascription have been completely absent from these communities. For example, the elementary forms of division of labour in terms of age, sex and kinship have been traditionally existing in these little communities. The nature of economy and the level of technology allowed these communities in their earlier level of development to function smoothly within this kind of social milieu. Moreover, there was no direct association between the occupation and birth. In other words, occupation was not sanctioned by any ritual obligations. Naturally, when we talk of social
mobility in terms of ascription-achievement model it does not adequately cover the type of situation which we find in contemporary tribal societies in India. This is a crucial issue which will be taken into account when we shall come to the discussion of our own data.

Another important dimension of social mobility in general, and occupational mobility in particular, is its relationship with the level of economic development in any country. It has already been briefly indicated that occupational structure is directly associated with the pace of development. It has been suggested by several studies that nations which are at the same level of economic development and are industrialising at the same pace tend to show similar rates of vertical occupational mobility. However, the degree and pace of industrialisation do not indicate one to one relationship to an occupational structure. Two nations, for example, with similar pattern of industrialisation may differ in their degrees of vertical mobility, because recruitment into any level may be from adjacent level or from all occupational levels. Even where there is no structural mobility the degree of generational occupational circulation may be high or low.

It is in this context that the mobility from rural to urban areas has been the most obvious phenomenon in almost all countries of the world. Similarly, all countries showed high mobility of farmers' sons into urban manual jobs and of sons of urban manual workers into white-
collar occupations. Most of this mobility was in response to changes in the occupational structure.

This dimension of occupational mobility is quite appropriate to understand the situation prevalent in the different parts of India. The increasing pace of industrialisation has resulted in diversification of occupations and corresponding change in its structure. Agriculture no doubt, continues to be the most important source of livelihood for the majority of Indians. But numerous occupational opportunities have been created outside agriculture because of the expansion of industrial sectors. Naturally, a shift from the traditional to modern occupations is witnessed in almost every parts of the country. Our attempt will be to examine the inter-generational mobility in this perspective as well.

A systematic understanding of inter-generational occupational mobility involves some serious methodological problems. Some studies as already indicated in the preceding Chapters have attempted to solve this problem by formulating of upward and downward trends of mobility and by measuring the relative status and prestige value of occupations. The present enquiry has been an exploratory one will not go into the details of sophisticated technique adopted in the analysis. It will merely attempt to compare the subject's occupation with that
of his father and grandfather. However, instead of talking about a specific occupations the study will classify numerous occupations under four categories. These categories will also be presented in order of their functional value and social importance. It is expected that such a classification will help us to show the upward and downward trend in inter-generational mobility. Lipset and Bendix (1959) have also provided the similar model of occupational ranking. But we have modified this to suit our condition.

Based on certain basic attributes we have classified occupations in the present study under the following four categories.

1. **Manual Occupations**: It includes agriculture, handicrafts, blacksmithy, carpentry, weaving, and knitting.

2. **Non-Manual Occupations**: Business, trade, village chiefs, contractors and church workers have been kept under this category.

3. **White-collar Occupations**: In this category we have included clerical and other lower government services, teaching, military service, and service in private firms.

4. **Professional Occupations**: Legal and medical, engineering and technical, administrative service and managerial jobs are included in this category.

These categories have been formulated before hand on the
basis of general understanding of the functional values of these occupations and professions. Such a classification may be controversial sometimes but a researcher in any enquiry may have to take certain decisions arbitrarily keeping in view the research strategy at hand. It is in this context that these four categories have accordingly been ranked in the same manner. In other words, manual, non-manual, white-collar and professional occupations or occupational categories have been ranked from least prestigious to the most prestigious ones. Thus, the mobility from manual to non-manual or non-manual to white-collar will be treated as a case of upward mobility and the reverse as the case of downward mobility. This formulation will thus help us to examine the changing status of our subjects in the context of changing occupational affiliations.

To clarify these occupational categories still further we may explain these groups in these terms. The occupations in the professional group require some specialisation and formal training, skill and education. The occupations in this group are concerned with decision making, planning, and implementation and thus call for definite level of formal education. White-collar occupations are essentially non-manual occupations whose prerequisite is also some level of formal education. Occupations which require less skill, talent and specialization and education are included in Non-manual occupations. Occupations which require very low
level of education and in some cases are essentially less skilled and technical in nature are classified as Manual occupations.

The analysis of inter-generational mobility will try to compare the occupations which the subject followed at the time of study with the major occupations which he reported for his father and grandfather. Since this study is located in a tribal community such kind of analysis is considered adequate to assess the occupational mobility between the generations. To acquire some more depth in the enquiry the study has identified two major variables, namely, achieved status (Gazetted and Non-Gazetted) and residential background (Rural and Urban) for the present.

**Rates of Mobility among three Generations**

The inter-generational occupational mobility between the generations of grandfather, father and son have been presented in Table 4:1. It is evident that a great deal of occupational mobility or changes have taken place between the three generations.

Table 4:1 shows that out of the total 400 grandfathers, 71.75 per cent were engaged in manual occupations, while the figure among the fathers is only 43.00 per cent. It is further significant to note that if the occupations of the three generations are compared with each other it is obvious that none of the sons was engaged in manual occupations.
TABLE 4:1
Inter-Generational Occupational Mobility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>N=400</th>
<th>Occupational categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>71.75</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>17.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures indicate percentage.
In non-manual occupations, more or less the same trend is evident. Here, 18.75 per cent grandfathers were engaged in non-manual occupations whereas this figure came down just to 17.50 per cent in the father's generation. However, our table reveals that none of the sons was engaged in non-manual jobs.

So far as the white collar occupations are concerned, our data further show that only 8.25 and 32.75 per cent grandfathers and fathers were engaged in the same as against 41.75 per cent in the subjects' generation. It is quite fascinating to see that the percentage of persons engaged in white-collar occupations has increased substantially from the generation of the grandfather to the father and son.

In professional occupations as well, we find similar trend in occupational shifting among the three generations. It is evident that only 1.25 per cent grandfathers were engaged in professional occupations, while the number of fathers and sons entering into these occupations are 6.75 and 58.25 per cent. Thus, it is evident that the percentage of persons engaged in professional occupations has been substantially increasing from the generation of the grandfather, to the father and the son.

A detailed account of occupational movements from the earlier generations to the succeeding ones reveals that quite a large
number of the fathers and sons have experienced upward occupational mobility by switching over from their traditional occupations to modern occupations. It may be hypothesised that the modern jobs of the subjects earn them better income and status than their fathers and grandfathers. They also offer them better prospects for future development and livelihood. Such prospects and facilities can not be gained by following their forefathers' traditional occupations and thus can not experience upward trend of occupational movement. Moreover, majority of the subjects as indicated earlier, have the requisite educational and professional qualifications for entry into the modern occupational structure. Thus, the present enquiry clearly testifies that the number of persons engaged in their forefathers' occupations has considerably declined from one generation to the other. The number of persons in the case of white-collar, professional and non-manual occupations has increased remarkably in recent past. In the three generations the move has thus been from manual and traditional non-manual occupations to white-collar and professional occupations.

The reasons for such upward occupational mobility among the Mizons are not difficult to ascertain. Our general experience, in the first place, suggests that agriculture and other manual occupations, the primary source of livelihood for the Mizons earlier, can no longer continue to be so. Hence they have to look for new available occupations.
Secondly, we have already seen how the Mizos have advanced educationally during the last fifty years. Increased educational standard has not only motivated them to go for new non-manual, white-collar and professional jobs and occupations but they are also qualified for them.

Further, industrialisation and numerous economic development measures initiated by the government have tremendously transformed the living condition of the people. The individuals in our times are now free to pursue any occupation he liked provided he is having the pre-requisite qualification, training and skills. This is a crucial factor which has raised their social status based on achievement instead of birth and ascription. With the emergence of new occupations and professions as a result of new administration and economic development people now take up new occupations and professions in a large number. Thus, increase in job opportunities and facilities provided by the government, changes in the educational systems and growing aspirations of the people are some of the vital factors which have contributed to the change in the occupational structure in Mizoram today.

Comparison Between Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Groups

In general occupational hierarchy in government jobs, Gazetted and Non-Gazetted employees constitute a well-defined divisions. Our hypotheses have been that since they belonged to two different levels
in the administrative hierarchy they might also represent two different categories of social grouping from the point of view of background. It was further hypothesised that the rate of mobility between these two groups might also vary. Now our attempt will be to examine rates of mobility among our respondents belonging to these categories.

There is no significant difference between the grandfathers of gazetted and non-gazetted respondents as majority of them were engaged in manual and non-manual occupations (Table 4:2). If we talk specifically then contrary to our expectation, more grandfathers of our non-gazetted respondents were engaged in occupations other than manual as compared to the gazetted group. But the difference between these two groups becomes more evident when we come to examine the generation of the fathers. In other words, there has been more mobility among the forefathers of gazetted group. For example, while only 37.50 per cent fathers of gazetted respondents were engaged in manual occupations this percentage was 48.50 in case of non-gazetted group. Similarly, the number of fathers of gazetted employees who were engaged in white-collar and professional jobs taken together was 42.50 per cent but this figure was just 36.50 per cent in case of non-gazetted employees.

The qualitative difference is evident when we come to examine the situation in the subjects' generation. Most of our gazetted respondents
### TABLE 4:2

Inter-Generational Occupational Mobility among Gazetted and Non-Gazetted Employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Respondents with Number</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Occupational categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gazetted 200</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>76.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>67.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Gazetted 200</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>48.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures Indicate Percentages.
were in professional category whereas most of our non-gazetted respondents were in white-collar jobs. It is not surprising because non-gazetted employees are mainly working as clerks, teachers and other government organisations. So there is a difference in the subjects' generation between the gazetted and non-gazetted groups but in absolute terms there is upward occupational mobility within the groups. In other words, in both these groups there has been upward shift from manual to non-manual, to white-collar and professional occupations.

Comparison Between Rural and Urban Groups

In discussing the role played by the residential background on the individual's choice of occupation, it is normally appropriate to distinguish the polar types of rural and urban communities. It is a well established fact that the aspirations of individuals in these two polar extremes vary considerably due to varying opportunities for employment that present themselves. In the urban situation, there are more possibilities for a wider range of occupations from which the individual can choose. In other words, it is easier for the individual to become acquainted with these possibilities in the urban setting than it is in the rural one. The above reflections indicate the relationship between individuals' residential background and that of occupational mobility.

Occupational mobility is related to alterations in the division of labour and to the supporting sanctions for attracting or forcing people
to enter into new occupational roles. In India, occupational mobility is found to be greatest in urban areas. However, on closer examination of numerous studies one finds that a part of the movement can be attributed to geographical mobility as well. This change in occupation can occur from one generation to another (that is, inter-generational occupational mobility). Our main hypotheses are - Does upward or downward occupational mobility related to the residential background of our respondents (Rural and Urban) and how far the rate of mobility between these two categories has been spectacular in the present enquiry?. Does residential background alone accounted for the direction of occupational mobility? Finally, if not, what other determinants are associated with it in determining the direction of inter-generational occupational mobility? Keeping in view these basic issues, the present enquiry will attempt to highlight rates of inter-generational mobility among our respondents belonging to the rural and urban groups.

Our basic data on inter-generational occupational mobility between the rural and urban categories have been presented in Table 4:3. It is interestingly evident that there is no significant inter-group variation between the grandfathers of our rural and urban respondents since the overwhelming majority of them were found in manual and non-manual occupations. However, it is significant to highlight that comparatively a higher percentage of grandfathers of our urban members


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types Respondents with number</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Occupational Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural 246</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>75.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>62.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban 154</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>63.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>30.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figure indicate percentage.
had taken up numerous occupations and professions other than manual
as compared to the rural category. However, the difference is much
more spectacular among the two groups when we examine the generation
of the father. While a comparatively higher percentage of 62.60 per
cent fathers of our rural respondents were engaged in manual jobs this
figure among the fathers of urban group was only 30.52 per cent. This
further shows the fact that there has been a faster rate of mobility
among the forefathers of urban category as compared to our rural group.

It is further fascinating to note that the number of fathers
of rural members engaged in modern jobs and occupations, such as,
white-collar and professional taken together constitutes 20.74 per cent
whereas this figure has been tremendously increased to 54.54 per cent
in case of the urban respondents.

Another significant inter-group difference between the rural
and urban categories may possibly be further highlighted by examining
this problem in the generation of our respondents themselves. It is
noteworthy to point out that in case of white-collar occupations, we
have more of rural members, that is, 43.90 per cent, while this number
is just 38.31 per cent in case of urban respondents. On the other, the
number of persons engaged in professional jobs among our rural respondents
is only 56.10 per cent whereas we find a marginal increase to 61.69
per cent in case of urban members.
A close examination of Table 4:3 indicates that a comparatively higher number of persons belonging to the three generations of our rural group were engaged in manual and non-manual occupations as compared to the same generations of urban category. On the contrary, the number of persons belonging to our rural community engaged in white-collar and professional occupations within the three generations has remarkably decreased but this number has alarmingly increased among the members of our urban category. Our data thus support the normal experience that the urban people are more enlightened and motivated to go for new modern occupations and professions than that of the rural stocks.

An attempt has further been made to clarify the trend in this connection with the help of statistical analysis of the present data, the details of which can be found in Appendix I.

Moreover, our data suggest that the rate of mobility is more prevalent in the urbanized and industrialized locality. Further we may safely say that at the rural-agricultural extreme, mobility consists primarily of moves from a wholesale departure from agriculture and unattractive occupations and a corresponding recruitment into industrial, clerical, and other modern jobs and occupations. Moreover, the high rate of inter-generational mobility in the present study is also directly involved in the shifts of the sons' occupational distribution away from that of the
forefathers. In the present enquiry on comparisons between the occupa-
tional mobility in three generations of the two groups of rural and urban
respondents a remarkable upward occupational shift from manual to
non-manual, to white-collar and professional occupations has been signi-
ficantly found.

Thus the rate of inter-generational mobility as is evident
from the foregoing analysis is not only very high, but also suggests
significant changes that are taking place in the occupational opportunities
available to them now. In other words, it throws numerous crucial issues
for discussion in this connection.

It is traditionally believed that before the Industrial Revolution
occupations were smoothly transferred from father to son. But since
then each individual has the opportunity of selecting his own job in
the light of his own inclination. Now a parallel is broadly found in contem-
porary Mizo society. Upto the grandfathers' generation the people had
a very limited choice so far the occupation was concerned. They were
shifting cultivators and still living in remote jungles or forests facing
numerous hardships. Naturally, one can say that the grandfathers were
living in the entirely different socio-economic environment. They had
very limited opportunities in the selection of jobs not only because they
did not want to go for new jobs, but in fact they were not available.
Even when they were available, majority of the people were not qualified to go for such jobs. In this context, therefore, we see that education has played a very significant role in the mobility of the people.

It is evident from our data as in the case of numerous other studies that those who have received technical and higher education have better chances of coming from families with high professional fathers than those who received liberal and little education. In other words, the educated high professional fathers mainly belonged to our gazetted category, offered better incentives and provided more encouragement to their sons to become high professional employees. It may be because of this fact that quite a considerable number of our gazetted respondents from urban group are entering into high professional jobs and occupations.

In this connection, therefore, the educational attainment of fathers is of great significance. The sons of fathers who had received professional and technical education have invariably gone for the high professional occupations. On the other hand, those coming from the families where fathers were either less educated or had received only liberal education preferred to join such occupations as teaching and lower government jobs.

On the basis of their Oakland Study, Lipset and Bendix (1955)
have arrived at a similar conclusion. According to them the evidence indicates that educational attainment is a major determinant of career pattern... The nature of this link may be shown by a summary of the most relevant findings. They are -

(i) Behind differences in educational attainment lies the fact that children from low status families do not have as much chance to stay in schools as those from high status families; and

(ii) If an individual comes from a working class family, he will typically receive little education or vocational advice, while he attends school, his job plans for the future will be vague and when he leaves school, he is likely to take the first available job which he can find.

Thus our present data highlight some major trends in the pattern of occupational mobility today.

In the first place, the number of persons engaged in agriculture, handicrafts, blacksmithy and other manual occupations has considerably declined from one generation to the other. Consequently, from the generation of grandfather to father the tendency was to move from manual to non-manual and marginally to white-collar occupations. Similarly, 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 more significant in case of our rural respondents. At this level of development in Mizoram, this tendency may continue for quite some time. Increasing availability of jobs because of several political and economic reasons will attract local people to these new occupations. It is, therefore, expected that the tendency of upward mobility in occupation will exist in Mizo society for some time.

Thirdly, it has already been indicated on several occasions that the Mizo is a highly literate group for quite some time now. The high rate of literacy is reflected in the level of professional and higher education as well. Naturally, increasing level of higher education has motivated people to go for modern occupations and professions. In turn, it has lessened interest in rural agricultural based occupations. Moreover, agriculture has never been a profitable and dependable sources of livelihood in this part of the country. The increased pressure on land due to growing population has created further problem for the people. Therefore, it is but natural that people are going for the urban and modern occupations in a large number. This has been the major reason for a large-scale migration from rural areas.
Fourthly, since Independence, job opportunities have been created by the government under different schemes. The present Union Territory of Mizoram was just a district in a composite State of Assam. The area, therefore, always suffered because of the apathetic attitudes of the then Assam Government. The region also faced several famines and droughts causing severe hardships to the people. It is in this background that numerous political movements were started in this area. As we have already indicated, the then Lushai Hills District of Assam became a Union territory in 1972 with a special constitutional provisions for a separate Assembly. As a result of this political and administrative development numerous opportunities were provided by the government which substantially changed the occupational scenario in Mizoram for the first time. What is being emphasised is that numerous measures for the socio-economic development of Mizoram have contributed towards the patterns of occupational change in the area.

Finally, we must reflect briefly on the question of occupational inheritance. As is well known to the sociologists of India, caste occupation has been a social reality since time immemorial. Naturally, a son always inherited his father’s occupation. Even in the class societies, this question of occupational inheritance has been a common phenomenon. A long history of industrial development and urbanisation in most of these countries have provided a definite direction in the occupational choice and
careers of individuals. Thus, either in the caste extreme or class extreme, we have some amount of rigidity in occupational choice. But our 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 notions of occupational inheritance per se. Therefore, they have not been compelled to go for their fathers' occupations. On the other hand, the modern determining factors of skill and training are yet to take a definite shape in this area. Under the situation, it may not be possible for a gazetted officer to make his son a gazetted officer so easily. The point which is being highlighted is that the occupational structure in Mizoram is still in a transitional stage and, therefore, people are more free to go for any type of jobs according to their own inclination unlike the other regions of the country where such freedom is no longer there.