CHAPTER VII
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-gene­ rational 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 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.