The Nature of Study:

The present study is proposed to investigate and assess the factors which facilitate or impede occupational mobility among weaker sections. The problem of the present study arises out of the fact that in modern Indian Society with increasing tempo of industrialization, Urbanisation and secularization changes in the structural form is occurring. Traditionally, status and occupation were associated with birth and other ascriptive criteria. But the process of modernization in present time has loosen the rigid and closed stratification system.
Indian society since independence faced a lot of changes at different levels and in different periods of time. It adopted parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise as a political system so that the masses may take part in decision making bodies and share the power structure to develop a political initiative. It also initiated economic development through various developmental programmes and welfare policies to raise the standard of living of the people. As a matter of fact, social transformation is in the offing. Similarly the process of modernization started and got momentum day by day. These developments affected the social scenario to a great extent. The tradition based systems were shaken down and gradually proceeded to a new one based on universalistic traits. Caste is a traditional form of social stratification in Indian society. Each caste has its own social prestige and further associated with certain privileges and disabilities. It is an indigenous group, the membership of which is determined by birth. Each caste is traditionally associated with a particular profession which its members are supposed to pursue. Certain restrictions are also imposed on social intercourse and commensality. But the modern forces
and recent weakened the caste system some of its traits have lost ground. For instance, every one is free to have an occupation of his own choice and no occupation is now the privilege of any group or caste. The entry to an occupation is now based on individual's education, skill, ability and experience etc. The occupations are now ranked according to the modern criteria of income, power, work conditions and other privileges. This trend affected the nature of occupational structure and mobility to a great extent.

Keeping in view this perspective, the present study is conducted among the weaker sections at two different stages. At the first stage, the researcher found out the pattern of occupational mobility; and at the second stage he investigated the factors which facilitate or impeded occupational mobility. This kind of study will enable us to understand the system of emerging trends of Indian social stratification.

The concept of weaker section is identified as those persons who do not have minimum requirements of livelihood and they are unable to lead a normal life. It comprises those persons who are economically and socially backward. They work hard and earn less; they have no place in political structure; their nature of
works itself put them into the lowest social stratum; and they do not command prestige in the eyes of others.

The criteria of being weaker sections were first developed by a study group of the welfare of weaker sections on village community constituted by the Ministry of Community Development in 1960. On the basis of that Murthy¹ gave his own classification of weaker sections. Challam², in his study adopted that classification with certain modification and identified nine categories of persons as weaker sections.

The present study adopts those criteria which are most important and fundamental in the identification of weaker sections. On the basis of those criteria, a special category of weaker sections is developed. In this respect the present study, in order to operationalise the concept of weaker sections, identifies five special categories of persons which are mentioned below:

1. Ladless labours,

² K.S. Challam, Education and Weaker Sections, Inter-India Publication, New Delhi, 1988, P. 36.
2. Groups who live in backward and not adjusted to modern economic life,

3. Sections of the urban community who on account of special circumstances, are forced to engage themselves in hereditary occupations which are not very remunerative and also hazardous for health and sanitation,

4. Sections who are economically weak and socially backward irrespective of their caste or religion.

5. Unemployed persons with no viable means of livelihood and other kind of destitutes.

out of these categories of persons third and fourth are selected for the present investigation. Further to delimit the universe of the study five specific occupational groups of persons are selected for investigation. These occupational groups are Rickshaw puller, Coolie and sweeper. Apart of these three groups, peon and shopkeeper have also been picked up as the weaker section because the trend of occupational mobility was witnessed in this direction

Objectives:

The major concern of the present investigation is to assess and find out factors that facilitate or impede
occupational mobility among weaker sections. The analysis of the existing literature on this subject and the studies conducted indicate a variety of factors that, in one or the other way affect the occupational mobility. The present study concentrates on some of these factors such as education, migration, income, opportunity, structure and desire to raise one's status which influences the mobility among the weaker sections in particular and socially in general. Thus, the present study aims at achieving the following objectives:

(1) To study the socio-demographic characteristics of five occupational groups of weaker sections i.e. Rickshaw Puller, Coolie, Sweeper, Peon and Shopkeeper and to understand inter-group variations.

(2) To assess the levels of education among the weaker sections under study.

(3) To find out the role of education in facilitating occupational mobility among these occupational groups.

(4) To study the extent of migration that takes place among these occupational groups.
(5) To find out the impact of migration on occupational mobility among weaker sections.

(6) To study the economic status of the above mentioned weaker sections.

(7) To find out the role of economic status of population under study in facilitating the occupational mobility.

(8) To study the opportunity structure that exists in the society as perceived by the weaker sections.

(9) To find out the role of opportunity structure in changing occupational status of the population under study.

(10) To assess how far five occupational groups of weaker sections are desirous to change their occupational status.

(11) To find out the level of aspiration to change one's status that affects the occupational mobility of five occupational groups of weaker sections.

Hypothesis:

It is proposed to test the following set of hypothesis:
1. No major variation lies among the five occupational groups in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics.

2.1 The levels of education among the weaker sections is generally low.

2.2 The level of education among Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies, Sweepers is low as compared to Peons and Shopkeepers.

2.3 The perception of five occupational groups of weaker sections about education is favourable. They consider it helpful in developing certain abilities as well as changing their condition.

2.4 There is positive relation between education and occupational mobility. If the level of education is higher the upward occupational mobility will also be higher.

3.1 Most of the Rickshaw Pullers and Coolies are migrants, while most of the Sweepers, Peons and Shopkeepers are the inhabitants of Malda town.

3.2 Majority of the migrants came to Malda town from outside the province.

3.3 Majority of the population under study belongs to urban area.

3.4 Most of the Rickshaw Pullers and Coolies have rural background while majority of Sweepers, Peons and Shopkeepers have urban background.
3.5 Most of the migrants came to Malda town due to their poverty.

3.6 Migration have positive relation with upward occupational mobility. Those who migrated also raised their occupational status.

4.1 The income of Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies and Sweepers is less than that of Peons and Shopkeepers.

4.2 The income of Shopkeepers is highest among all the occupational groups.

4.3 The family income of Rickshaw Pullers and Coolies is less than family income of Peons and Shopkeepers.

4.4 The family of Sweepers is more than Rickshaw Pullers and Coolies and less than Peons and Shopkeepers.

4.5 Those economic status is higher is more mobile than those economic status is low.

5.1 Most of the respondents feel that it is very difficult to get job in their locality.

5.2 The majority of the respondents perceive that they do not have adequate opportunity to adopt profitable occupations.
5.3 Inadequate opportunity structure impede occupational mobility.

6.1 Most of the respondents want to change their occupations because what they earn from their present occupations is not sufficient for the proper maintenance of their family.

6.2 The majority of the respondents work hard to pursue some other profitable occupations but they could not succeed.

6.3 Desire to raise status facilitates upward occupational mobility.

The Universe:

Malda town is the universe of the present study. According to 1981 census, the total population of Malda district was 2031871; its urban population was 97,196 which is 4.78 percent of the total population. The total population of Malda town itself was 79,010 that is 81.28 percent of the total urban population of the district. The maximum and minimum temperatures of the town are 44.0°C and 8.6°C respectively. According to climatological information, the average annual

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rainfall is 1683.5 mm. Overall, the climate is moderate. This town is linked with the railway and roads which provide sound transportation and communication facility. This town also have navigable river. It is linked with Mohananda river which also makes the transportation facility easier. The three most important commodities which are exported are Mango, silk and rice. Apart of these, some other important commodities are also manufactured, such as Mango processing, weaving cloth and brass utensils etc. Most of the people are engaged on these or related industries. These provide a lot of in migration of population because of pull factor.

Population under Study:

The survey data of the proposed study intend to throw light on several unknown characteristics of five occupational groups of Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies, Sweepers, Peons and Shopkeepers who constitute the weaker sections of Malda town of West Bengal. These sections of population reside in Sadar Hospital area, Baluchar, Shahapur, Jhaljhalia, Rathbari, Fulbari, Bashbari, Mangalbari, Pirojpur, Mahesmati respectively.
Sampling Plan:

The universe of the present study is the weaker section of the town of West Bengal. Malda is an important town of West Bengal where a considerable number of population belong to weaker sections. The researcher tried to know and assess the factors that facilitate or impede occupational mobility among weaker sections. He selected the town as a universe of the present study due to several reasons. First, he had already conducted a survey on weaker sections of Malda town to find out the extent and degree of occupational mobility among them during the course of M. Phil degree. Thus he has adequate knowledge of the field and have good rapport with the population under study. Second, the researcher himself belongs to the demographic structure of the town as well as its culture and language. He is well acquainted with the localities where mostly weaker sections reside and he is also well acquainted with the important persons of different groups of weaker sections. Further, it is more convenient and economical to the researcher to collect data from Malda town.

In Malda town, weaker section generally consists of
different groups. They live in different localities of the town and pursue different jobs. They are the persons who are economically weak and socially backward. As they belong to the lower social stratum, they are scattered over the whole town and divided into numerous occupational groups. The researcher, first traced and found out the major occupational groups that constitute weaker sections in Malda town. The researcher for this purpose, surveyed the area and traced the major occupational groups that fall under the category of weaker sections. They are as follows:

1. Peon/Office boy,
2. Barber,
3. Washerman,
4. Cobbler,
5. Sweeper,
6. Rickshaw Puller,
7. Coolie,
8. Hawker,
9. Small Shopkeepers and other unspecified occupational groups.

Further the researcher located the area where the people of such occupational groups as mentioned above
mostly reside. The areas, where weaker sections mostly reside are present in table 3.1.

**Table 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Occupational Groups</th>
<th>Areas where the weaker sections reside</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Barber</td>
<td>Rathbari, Baludhar, JhalJhalia and Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Washerman</td>
<td>Baluchar, Near Rathbari Area, Shahapur, Jhaljhalia and Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peon/Office Boy</td>
<td>Scattered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Cobbler</td>
<td>Fulbari, Bashbari and Rathbari Area,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sweeper</td>
<td>Pirojpur and Sadar Hospital Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rickshaw Puller</td>
<td>Fulbari, Bashbari, Mangalbari, Mahesmati, Rathbari &amp; Jhaljhalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Coolie</td>
<td>Baluchar, Jhaljhalia &amp; Rathbari Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Hawker</td>
<td>Jhaljhalia, Mangalgari, and Rathbari and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Small Shopkeepers &amp; Other Unspecified Occupational Groups</td>
<td>Scattered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above information enabled the researcher to locate 10 areas or localities where the members of weaker sections generally reside. The researcher for his convenience also made a survey to get the population size of weaker sections from each of the locality as no such census data was readily available. The ten localities and their approximate population size are given in table 3.2

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Localities of Weaker Sections</th>
<th>No. of Weaker Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sadar Hospital Area</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Baluchar</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sahapur</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Jhaljhalia</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rathbari</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Fulbari</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bashbari</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Mangalbari</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pirojpur</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mahesmati</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select the population under study and administer the research tool. On the first stage it was proposed to select ten (10) areas or localities mentioned above where mostly persons belonging to weaker sections reside. At the second stage it was proposed to select 30 households from each locality to compute the total number of sample (i.e. 300). But during the investigation, the researcher came to know that most of the people selected show no mobility. As the present study is related with the factors that affect occupational mobility, it is necessary that he (researcher) must select those persons who are mobile, otherwise the very purpose of the research will be defeated. Keeping this perspective in view, the researcher decided to select 700 households from each area or locality mentioned above on the basis of random sampling procedure. Thus the investigator prepared a list of 700 households from ten residential areas.

At the third stage generally the head of the family was selected for the administration of research tool. According to the sampling plan as stated above, the researcher selected 700 households and as such 700
respondents for investigation. As most of the respondents showed no mobility, therefore, their names were dropped from the final list. However, the number of households selected, number of households dropped and number of persons finally selected are presented in table 3.3.

The data presented in table 3.3 show that 55.57 percent respondents had no mobility out of 700 households, so 389 households had to be dropped and 44.43 percent i.e. 311 were round to be mobile and eligible for being selected for the purpose of present investigation. As it was earlier decided to select 300 samples from the universe on economic and time consideration, the researcher dropped 11 households to be equal to 300. It will further facilitate the analysis of the data as the sample is in rounded figure. For this purpose, the investigator prepared a list of 311 households and out of that every twenty eight households were dropped to make the exclusion of 11 households systematic.

Thus three hundred (300) households were finally selected from ten (10) localities or residential areas of the town. After that one person particularly head of the family was selected for the administration of
interview schedule. The selection of three hundred (300) samples of the weaker sections of Malda town of West Bengal was made out of the population spread over the whole town and thus was the representative of the universe. The respondents thus selected belonged to

Table 3.3
Households selected, dropped and number of respondents finally selected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Households selected</th>
<th>Households dropped</th>
<th>Number of respondents finally selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sadar Hospital Area</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchara</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahapur</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhaljhalia</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathbari</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulbari</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashbari</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalbari</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirojpur</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahesmati</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>700</strong></td>
<td><strong>389</strong></td>
<td><strong>311</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(55.57%)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>(44.43%)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
different occupational groups.

The data relating to the distribution of respondents into occupations are presented in table 3.4. According to the table the respondents belonged to the five occupational groups are Rickshaw Puller, Coolie, Sweeper, Peon and Small Shopkeeper. Each occupational group is represented by sixty (60) respondents.

**Table 3.4**

Distribution of respondents in terms of occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Groups</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rickshaw Pullers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolie</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeper</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peon</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Shopkeeper</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>300</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher chosen the occupational groups of Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies, Sweepers, Peons and Small Shopkeepers as weaker sections for the administration of research tool because these are the groups among which poverty reigns from generation to generation. The researcher also feels that the economic condition of peons and shopkeepers is not equally bad as it is in case of Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies and Sweepers. But the researcher came to know from his another study which he conducted for his M.Phil degree that most of the respondents' brothers pursued the occupations of Shopkeepers and a few of them have taken up the jobs in offices, hotels and restaurants and tea stalls as Peon/Office Boy, attendant and waiter respectively, while the respondents pursued the occupations of Rickshaw Pullers, Coolies and Sweepers. As such the intra-generational upward occupational mobility was found among the weaker sections. It is understood from the above mobility pattern that the occupational groups of shopkeeper and peon (if not in all the cases) also originally belonged to weaker sections. The above mobility picture led the researcher to know its factors which facilitated upward occupational mobility.
Keeping this perspective in view, the occupational
groups of Rickshaw Puller, Coolie, Sweeper, Peon and
Shopkeeper are chosen for the present study.

List of Variables Under Study:

Socio-demographic traits, size and type of family,
education, income and family income, perception about
role and utility of education, migration, reasons for
migration, respondents' perception of opportunity
structure and respondents' desire to raise status.

The Construction of Interview Schedule:

The major tool for collecting data for the present
study was procoded interview schedule which included
questions pertaining to the following areas:

1. Socio-demographic Characteristics: Socio-demographic
   characteristics of the respondents, such as age, sex, marital status, religion, caste,
   rural urban background, size and type of family, education income, family income.

2. Perception about education: Respondents' levels of education, their perception about the role
and utility of education in their life with particular reference to the achievement of success and status.

3. **Migration**: The degree and level of migration of the respondents, the place from where migration takes place, the reasons for which respondents migrate from their native place. Similarly, the levels of migration of respondents' fathers, the place from where the respondents' fathers were migrated and the reason for which they migrated.

4. **Economic Status**: The levels of income and economic status of respondents as well as the utilization of economic resources for pursuing better occupations.

5. **Perception of Opportunity Structure**: Respondents' perception about the adequacy of opportunity structure that exists at the places of their work.

6. **Desire to Raise One's Status**: Respondents' desire to raise their occupational status, the attempt which they make and the measures which they adopt to change their occupations, the extent which they can go to change their occupational status.
Case History:

Some representative case history also been prepared in order to supplement the findings of statistical analysis. Sometimes statistical analysis fails to reveal the reality. The investigator was quite conscious about the limitations of quantitative method. Keeping this perspective in view some case histories were prepared to verify the genuineness of the findings.

Concepts Used:

In the present study following concepts have been used for the guidance of present investigation:

(1) **Weaker Sections**: Weaker sections referred to those persons who are economically weak and socially backward; they work hard and earn less and have no means to lead their lives as a human being; they work hard under the sunshine and rain to earn their daily bread and their nature of works itself put them into the lower social stratum.

In order to specify the concept and make it operational, two categories of persons, out of the classification
made by Murthy\textsuperscript{4} and modified and adopted by Challam\textsuperscript{5} are taken up in the present study. They are as follows:

1. Sections of the urban community who are on account of special circumstances are forced to engage themselves in hereditary occupations which are not remunerative and which are hazardous for health and sanitation.

2. Sections who are economically weak and socially backward irrespective of their castes, creeds and religions.

for the purpose of operationalization as well as for the administration of research tool, the five occupational groups i.e. Rickshaw Puller, Coolie, Sweeper, Peon and small Shopkeeper are selected for investigation.

2. \textbf{Occupational Mobility:} The term occupational mobility refers to the process by which individual moves from one occupation to another of differential

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{4} O.K., Murthy, Op.Cit., PP. 13-14.
\item\textsuperscript{5} K.S., Challam, Op.Cit., P. 39.
\end{itemize}
prestige. This occupational movement may be upward or downward. Occupational mobility is one of the most important element of social mobility. As such occupational and social mobility are very much interrelated, in the sense, social mobility deals with the overall mobility of person or a group or a family of which occupational mobility is one of the most important dimension of it.

The researcher did not feel to discuss about occupational mobility and its various dimensions and aspects in great detail and also did not present enough statistical data about occupational mobility pattern among weaker sections. Because the researcher already conducted on empirical study on occupational mobility among weaker sections of Malda town for his M.Phil degree. But for the guideline of the present investigation, an overall occupational mobility pattern among weaker sections is presented in table 1.1 in the introductory chapter.

3. Upward and Downward Occupational Mobility: In the context of occupational mobility pattern observed in the five segments of population, treiman's² prestige score scale was adopted to measure the upward and

downward occupational mobility. In this regard respondents' occupations were compared with that of their fathers' and sons' occupations. The occupational comparison was made across three generations i.e. respondents, respondents' fathers and respondents' sons. While making such comparison each occupation was given particular prestige score on the basis of Treiman's OPPSSRIS (Occupational Prestige Score Scale Relevant to Indian Situation) scale and on the basis of this comparison, the upward and downward mobility have been computed.

4. First Generational and Second Generational Occupational Mobility: The first generational mobility refers to the occupational change between respondents' fathers and respondents themselves. It indicates that the occupational shift took place between respondents' fathers and the respondents themselves. It means that the occupational mobility took place across these two generations. Such occupational shift may be upward or downward. Similarly, second generational mobility refers to the occupational movement between respondents themselves and their sons. It indicates that the

7. Ibid.
occupational mobility took place across respondents and their sons generations. But in case of inter-generational occupational mobility, the occupations followed by respondents' fathers, respondents themselves and respondents' sons are entirely different. It indicates that in each generation some new occupations have been adopted. It further indicates that mobility in both the generations (i.e. first generation and second generation) have taken place.

5. **Migration**: Migration is a movement of an individual or a group of individuals from one place to another or one population to another. Migration may take place at two levels i.e. international and national level. This national level of migration also called internal migration. Migration has many consequences such as (a) the individual who migrates; (b) the population in which the migrant live; and (c) the population in which the migrant enters. The study of these factors is important to understand the consequences of migration on society. The present study assessed that how migration affects occupational mobility among weaker sections.
6. **Opportunity Structure:** The term opportunity structure refers to the avenues, facilities and prospects of a particular place which influence the personality development process of an individual or individuals. Such opportunity structure differs from place to place and one nation to another. The opportunity structure plays an important role in facilitating the occupational mobility among all sections of people irrespective of their castes, creeds, religions and all sorts of barriers in the society. In the present study an attempt was made to know the degree of influence of it on occupational mobility among weaker sections.

**Presentation of Data:**

The data collected through the administration of the interview schedule have been statistically analysed and presented in tabular form. In the tables, the frequencies and their corresponding percentaged have been given. Case histories have also been cited to highlight the main features of the study.

**Analysis of Data:**

The data on the basis of tables and statistical inferences have been analysed. The characteristics
of the data and the direction to which they lead have been given in respective chapters. While interpreting data impressionistic and subjective interpretation have been avoided. Only factual analysis and the conclusion arising out of that have been presented. The first generational occupational mobility is measured through the comparison of occupations across two generations i.e. respondents' fathers and the respondents themselves. Similarly, second generational occupational mobility is measured through the comparison of occupations across respondents and their (respondents) sons' generations. The inter-generational mobility is measured through the comparison of occupations across three generations i.e. respondents' fathers, respondents themselves and the respondents' sons. To measure the upward and downward occupational shift each occupation is given particular prestige score on the basis of Treiman's Prestige Score Scale and as such the direction of mobility pattern is assessed. The $X^2$ test has been also used wherever necessary.

8. Ibid.