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Centrality of Occupation for Social Mobility

Somayaji Ganesha, *Reader in Sociology, Goa University, Taleigao Plateau, Goa - 403 206,* *recognises occupational dimension as a key determinant in social mobility which is also evident in the studies conducted both in India and in the West. It can yield deeper insights when the overall sociocultural matrix is taken into consideration. Giving significance to the dimension of occupation in mobility it helps in the understanding of the nature of contemporary mobile societies in terms of the systemic aspects of stratification on the one hand, and aspects of social transformation on the other. The issue is whether the occupational structures allow (or disallow) occupational deviations across and within generations. The paper attempts to reiterate the necessity of taking into consideration the social context of mobility. The author holds that the studies in the area have categorised social reality into unequally positioned layers, which have been correlated with occupations. Movement from one occupation to the other represents mobility from one layer to the other. However, occupational composition is not the only indicator of the nature and quality of social relationships.*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary world is marked by various types of mobilities. In fact, the widespread prevalence of mobilities and their role in shaping the individual personalities and social structures may tempt one to consider contemporary world as mobile world and contemporary sociological enterprise as mobile sociology.[1]

Among various types of mobilities, several aspects of social mobility remained topics for sociological studies ever since the work of Sorokin (1927). Interested in knowing the patterns of inequality and overall characteristics of societies as marked by relative fluidity or rigidity, such studies have made invaluable contributions to the field of sociology of stratification and mobility.

In most such studies occupation is an important variable to recognise and measure various types of social mobility. The societies have been compared and contrasted on the basis of the nature of the occupational structures. An important question raised has been: whether the occupational structures allow or limit occupational deviations across

and within generations. The insights have been used to categorise and differentiate societies as modern or traditional, open or closed, north or south, and developed or developing.

The aim of this paper is neither to repudiate their premises and conclusions nor to pursue their line of arguments. Taking from them the clue that occupational dimension is central to mobility, it postulates that a social historical study of the making of that dimension in specific social contexts helps knowing the nature of contemporary mobile societies not only in terms of stratification, but also in terms of various other mobility aspects of society and culture such as social transformation, occupational diversification, migration and sociocultural reorganisation. Specifically, an attempt is made to reiterate the necessity of considering the social context in which mobility occurs in any study of mobility.

After identifying occupational change as a measure of mobility the paper overviews some studies on social mobility, in the West and in India, and discerns their allusion to occupational dimension. In the subsequent discussion, the paper comments on the centrality of mobility for human life and occupation for mobility. Citing the cases of a few occupational categories, the paper points to several dimensions that the occupationally informed mobility research can consider, along with or apart from that of stratification.

OCCUPATION, MOBILITY AND STRATIFICATION

The Linkage

Occupation is a socially desired activity and it is ubiquitous in nature. Although in general it denotes everything that keeps a person occupied, in this essay it is referred to as "a set of activities centred on an economic role and usually associated with earning a living —for example, a trade or profession. As a specialisation of an individual's function in society, it is an important factor defining a person's prestige, class, position, and style of life" (Scott, 1988: 280).

Sociologically, the occupations are social roles and occupational groups and groupings are the status categories. Ideally, in the context of contemporary occupational structures, an individual need not be stationary in one type of occupational role; he encounters many occupational options throughout his work career. This is so evident in the case of India, which has emerged as an occupational society.[2] This scene of plurality of occupational alternatives gives rise to certain sociological questions to be answered. They may be grouped under two classes, one pertaining to the realm of individual mobility, and the other concerning the process of occupational transformation. Some questions

of the former classification are: Why does an individual choose one occupation rather than another? What makes him move out of father's occupation? What are the constraints placed upon individuals in this choice process? Why movement within an occupation and what comprises an occupational career (Dunkerly, 1975: 2)? Some questions of the latter classification are: how to account for the formation of new occupational categories, and what the aspects of continuities from the old occupational categories are? how the possibility/impossibility of selection and movement within an occupational structure are linked to larger processes of social transformation.

The questions of the former class are generally answered by sociologists by relating mobility to stratification. While attempting to understand the nature of stratification, they use occupation as a central variable in status determination and upward occupational mobility as crucial experience for status enhancement. May be, because of the overwhelming interest shown by the researchers to measure mobility and know the nature of societal stratification, the questions of the latter category have not been given proper attention. The real experiences of the mobile men and women as occupants of multiple occupational roles at different points in their own life history and also in the history of their respective regions did not receive much attention. It is possible to elucidate such an orientation by noting the way in which mobility is understood.

Mobility is understood in terms of social or status mobility which, in turn, is considered to be closely related to social inequality. From this it follows that the understanding of the social mobility problems of a group requires to have a knowledge of inequalities prevailing in the society and the prevalent pattern of social stratification (Shivaprasad, 1987: 39). Normally, social mobility is thought of as a movement between social classes. And, operationalising class in terms of occupation, what is actually measured is the movement between broad groupings of occupations. Social mobility has been studied with reference to occupational mobility. However, there is a scope here for scholarly endeavours to proceed further and attempt answering questions raised in the second category. They are questions aimed at understanding mobility as a product of occupational transformation and employment processes in specific historical and social milieu (Payne, 1987: ix). Before examining some representative studies of this type let us overview some sociological works on mobility and be familiar with the alluded centrality of occupational dimension for mobility.

The occupational dimension of social stratification and mobility are examined in great detail by Sorokin in his classic work on *Social Mobility* (1927). Among the various dimensions of mobility the occupational dimension has been considered extensively while commenting on the

features of stratification and mobility in modern societies (Quoted in Payne, 1987).

Apart from estimating types and nature of mobility in terms of occupational dimension, Sorokin speaks of the consequences, both functional and dysfunctional. His conclusions in this regard specify the aftermath of occupational mobility for the mobile society as a whole: the high degree of mental strain, psychological problems, cynicism, social isolation and loneliness.

Several succeeding mobility studies, using occupational change as an index, indicate that the relative fluidity found in the industrial societies result in technological progress, high standard of living, greater equality of opportunity, reduced kinship, higher rates of migration, differential fertility, stable democracy and high rates of occupational mobility (Blau and Duncan, 1967; Glass, 1954; Lipset and Benedict, 1964). In these and other such studies, mobility measured through occupational change remained an indicator of the nature of the system of stratification. The making of that sub-system in the marco historical context of the whole system or the multiple responses of the individuals and groups to the challenges posed by history had not been seriously considered.

Problem of Contextualisation

We can identify here two studies, one by Richardson (1977) and the other by Payne (1987) that invite our attention to the relevance of the social context in making sense of the mobility experiences of the people. While concentrating on the consequences of social mobility as indicated by occupational mobility, Richardson (1977) attempts to answer the question: What happens to the social-psychology of mobile men in the course of their participation in the process of class formation?

Richardson has identified the historical specific conditions of occupational and social mobility. The data collected by him are historically specific and involve men who were born in the depression years and during the World War II. In his view, the men born in post-War years are likely to have very different aspirations for mobility and perspectives about mobility than those who were born in the 1920s or 1930s. The recognition of the significance of changing conditions, and attitudes and values is the strength of Richardson's work (1977: 288).

Richardson (1977: 27) puts to test Sorokin's thesis that mobility is also 'dissociative,' diminishing intimacy and increasing psycho-social isolation and loneliness. He recognises that considerable body of research in the United States has sought to document empirically the dysfunctional aspects of mobility. But all these are only small advances

because they are scanty and impressionistic. The main reason for this is the insufficient attention being paid to the context in which mobility occurs and to the different kinds of mobility people are likely to experience. "Thus structures, institutions, and ideologies all may be expected to have an effect not only on what happens to people who are mobile but also on their perceptions and difficulties of mobility and on the kinds of mobility experiences which are possible" (*Ibid.*: 28). Recognising the dearth of such studies, Richardson embarks upon one.

Richardson used occupational index to measure the upward or downward mobility and concluded that upward occupational mobility had involved an economic development for most of those experiencing it. However, in his view, improving economically is not the same thing as social mobility. The upwardly mobile had experienced only a limited change in life style and pattern of association. The upwardly mobile are no more isolated, no more prone to 'status insecurity,' prejudice and anomie than others in the sample. In contemporary Britain conditions causing such tensions like status rigidity, and inadequate preparation for mobility are either missing or less relevant than in the past.

One of the critiques of the conventional mobility studies that use occupational index as central measure of mobility discussed earlier comes from Payne (1987). After a critical revision of the perspectives on mobility he recognises that the current place of mobility in the sociological lexicon is because of the connection between mobility and stratification. Paradoxically, the very strength of the connection has narrowed the relation of mobility to other sociological problems. He laments (p.14):

> This has resulted in a failure to realise the potential of mobility analysis to contribute to a wide range of sociological debate. It has also hampered the development of a proper understanding of the relationship between class and mobility itself. Central to this is the way in which mobility researchers have on the whole neglected the social context in which mobility occurs and the way in which *class mobility* is in fact based in *occupational mobility*. We can't account for class mobility unless we first examine the occupational dimension.

According to this approach mobility is grounded in the local economic, social and historical conditions of the society in which it occurs. As mobility constitutes comparison of the father's and the son's occupational statuses, an explanation of mobility involves an explanation of the way in which individuals are given jobs.

This, in turn, raises questions about the industrial and occupational structure, about labour markets, about job choice and qualifications, about labour migration: that is, about the various processes by which workers enter a system of employment which has an objective reality

pre- and post-existing the individual, and which constrains his or her freedom of action (Payne, 1987: 15).

Thus, the overall approach of Payne's study represents a shift in emphasis from conventional stratificational theory to other aspects of sociology of work and labour requirements of mobile societies. In his view, mobility is not only about stratification. A look into social and historical context of occupational dimension suggests how mobility research can contribute to wider social theoretical debates.

Accordingly, Payne examines the evolution of occupational structures, seeks an explanation of why new occupations are created and what the members of such occupations do in the production process. He analyses the occupational functions which lies at the core of arguments over boundaries between the capitalist and the new middle classes on the one hand, and the new middle classes and the class of manual labourer on the other (Payne, 1987: x).

Payne regards three main themes from the theory of industrial society as relevant to mobility research. The first is the idea of sectoral shift of employment from primary production and manufacture into service industries. This facilitates the creation of new types of occupations and reduces the level of employment in old occupations. Second, the mobility rates increase in response to occupational transition. Finally, certain assumptions about mobility processes can be explicated by using the idea of labour markets and their segmentation. Similarly the mobility rates are proposed as possible means of identifying labour market boundaries. Payne explains the effect of occupational transition with the help of both Marxist and post-industrial society theories of social change (Payne, 1987: xi). After considering Glass's findings on rates of mobility as inaccurate, Payne draws on national mobility studies carried out in the 1970s to advocate the high level of social fluidity in contemporary Britain (*Ibid.*: xiii). His work is significant for several reasons. Criticising and deviating from conventional mobility research, he attempts to disentangle it from the clutches of statistics and stratification. In his own words (pp.148-9):

> It is not enough simply to describe rates of movements or to discuss them purely in terms of class structures. It is necessary to free discussion of mobility from its prison of stratification. Once that is done, by recognising the occupational dimension, then a wider repertoire of sociological theories can be brought to bear, in order to *explain* why mobility happens.

This overview recognises that in any mobility study the occupational dimension need to be considered seriously. And mobility studies from occupational sociological parlance should look into social transformation, migration, occupational transition, entrepreneurial growth, monetisation, rise of new middle classes, consumption, and the like.

Occupation, Mobility and Stratification in India

The Western scholars' conceptualisations of their societies and also their concerns of knowing the nature of their systems of stratification in terms of trends and patterns have guided the mobility research in India to a great extent. Like in the West, the occupational change has been used as a central measure.

Some descriptions of the nature of social stratification are found in the occupational mobility researches of Jain (1969), Nijhawan (1969), Phillips (1990) and Sovani and Pradhan (1955). These are similar in certain respects. Firstly, all of them make extensive use of empirical data in measuring the trend and pattern of occupational mobility. Secondly, all of them use occupation as an important variable indicative of social status. And after examining the nature of intergenerational occupational mobility they attempt answering some questions related to the system of social stratification. For example: Do persons with particular social origins have greater opportunity in gaining admission to certain occupations? Or, does the system offer equal chances of seeking entrance to various occupations irrespective of their social origins? Which are the occupational classes from which persons could move over to other classes with greater ease compared to others? Is the movement disproportionately concentrated in a few occupational classes or distributed uniformly over all classes? Which occupational classes offer greater opportunities to persons with other social origins? Do some occupational classes have over representation of persons of certain origins and under representation of others?

Some typical conclusions are:

- The overall inference is that the system does not offer equal occupational opportunities to sons of all origins (Nijhawan, 1969).
- Occupational mobility leads only to changes in class position without any change in one's position in the caste system and thus reflects the prevalence of rigidity of Indian social system (Sharma, 1968).
- The data had shown a higher rate of movement between the subject's and his father's generations than between the subject's father's and his grandfather's generation (Jain, 1969).
- Gross mobility rate in the society as a whole was quite high. In the overall analysis it was found that no structural change had taken place in the society (Phillips, 1990).
- The occupational structure was not so much determined by the caste system and the economic functions of caste have often been over emphasised. However, the caste still influences the mobility process with education and other variables. On the whole a lot of change has been brought about by upward mobility in recent decades (Dube, 1975).

- Even 'modern' occupations show a tendency to become hereditary (Jorapur,1979)

Beyond Stratification

Indian society is experiencing occupational transition. New and open occupations proliferate as a result of economic development in general and development of human resources and skills in particular. Modernisation is visible in the occupational sphere. Eisenstadt (1969: 6-7) has described its course as follows:

> In the first stage of modernisation the occupational structure might have been relatively uncomplicated and composed mostly of different manual occupations, unskilled and skilled, a small number of 'middle class occupations' such as trade and manufacture and of some of the more traditional professions such as the ecclesiastical (religious), military, legal, and medical one, including a much smaller proportion of population. Later, with continual economic development, each of these categories became divided into many sub-categories. In addition, many new groups and categories—welfare, service, scientific, technological, managerial— emerged and increased.

Modern occupational structure offers multiple job opportunities; individuals taking up these jobs experience mobility. Sociologists have been sensitive to this and there are many studies documenting these experiences.[3] They are the studies of modern occupations and professions. Even these studies by and large are influenced by the debates in stratification theory. As noted by Singh (1986: 69) such studies examined the formation of caste-class nexus. Caste represented the tradition and class represented modernity and their nexus reflected the interplay of tradition and the modern. Is it not possible to extend our mobility discourse beyond the domain of stratification, say for example, the domains of mobility and social movements or mobility and gender? Some studies of the mobility experiences of certain occupational categories have inadvertently proceeded beyond the domain of stratification and commented on the changing social and mental make-up and the hopes and aspirations of the occupational holders.

Directed changes in independent India aspire to establish an egalitarian society. Many governmental policies have been framed and programmes have been implemented to ensure occupational and social mobility for those who have been performing menial jobs. What are the responses of these traditional occupational holders to the changing milieu? As far back as 1968, in a comparative study of three scheduled communities in two villages in West Bengal, Bhowmick notes considerable occupational change on account of the planned welfare programme. There are many similar studies that attempt to link occupational change and mobility to social change and identify factors favouring or hindering

it (Indukumari, 1988; Parmar, 1978; Patwardhan, 1967; Rao, 1989; Shivaram, 1990).

Among them Parmar's study is notable for its analytical sophistication in linking occupational change with socio-historical processes and thereby recognising the region-specific and historical-specific nature of occupational mobility. While inquiring into occupational change among Mahyavanshis, a Scheduled Caste of Surat city, Parmar found that traditionally they were known as Dheds and were doing unclean activities and their status was degraded (Parmar, 1978: 229). The occupational change was possible due to certain sociocultural and historical reasons. One very important factor was their social contacts with the Europeans, the Parsis, and the Muslims. From 1613 AD onwards Europeans of various nationalities arrived at Surat initially for business and later established factories. They required the services of cooks, butlers and house servants. Other caste Hindus were not ready to render these services. The Mahyavanshis were essentially a serving caste taking non-vegetarian food, toddy and liquor. They knew how to cook non-vegetarian food. They filled in the gap without there being any resistance from other groups. They could also join the domestic service of Europeans because even the lower caste *savarnas* did not like to serve the Europeans as their domestic servants for various socio-religious considerations and restrictions. The introduction of railways and steam-factories in Surat further accelerated job opportunities for them (*Ibid.*: 236).

What appears very interesting sociologically is the occupational change assuming the character of occupational mobility movement. The Mahyavanshis passed resolution in their caste councils that no caste members should either carry garbage or do any other type of low occupation. Their leaders launched collective efforts to change their caste name from *Dhed* to *Mahyavanshi,* or name reiterating their Rajput origin (Parmar, 1978: 237). In this study thus the concentration on the making of the occupational dimension could take Paramar to an altogether different arena of mobility research along with that of stratification, i.e., occupational mobility as central to social movement.

Many studies on rural India have subscribed to the view that consequent upon development, industrialisation and occupational diversification there has been an increase in the number of people who dissociate themselves from traditional roles (Deb, 1975; Freeman, 1974; Mehra *et al*, 1985; Sarkar, 1973; Sharma, 1971). What are the implications of occupational mobility for the traditional, economic and social organisation of the village society? Is tradition totally replaced by the modern? Sharma (1971: 176-7) opines:

> No such caste group which performed important function in the village economy has completely ceased to do so. Some members, rather enough members, have been left behind to keep the old system going. Bhangis, Chamars, Nais, Khatis, Lohars, Dhobis all are still meeting their caste obligations on the same old *jajmani* system. The fact that some of their members have moved on to new occupations has not so far affected the basic village structure.

The inference is that occupational differentiation and mobility cannot totally alter the fundamental basis of social stratification and differentiation. On the contrary, traditional social differentiation affects the process of occupational choice/entry and mobility (Gist, 1954; Sharma, 1971; Shivaram, 1990). The modernisation of the occupational structure by itself does not liquidate the influence of traditional institutions. How to account for this mobility within the occupational structure? Let us look into some aspects of transition experienced by a few occupational categories.

In the traditional Indian occupational structure, side by side with agriculture, there flourished a number of caste-based occupational categories. Following Mohanti (1993: 172) they may be classified into agro-based, need-based, and prestige-economy-based crafts. The first category is related directly to the agricultural economy; for example, carpentry and blacksmithy and they come under *jajmani* relations. The second category consisted of crafts like weaving, pottery and leather work catering to the essential day to day needs of the people which do not come fully under the *jajmani* nexus. The third category of crafts, such as the brass and bell metal craft and gold and silver smithy, are wealth- and prestige-based and are beyond the purview of the *jajmani* system. All these pre-industrial technological groupings are experiencing a situation of pressure in the context of urbanisation and industrialisation. "In certain cases, the magnitude of the problem is so alarming that the craftsmen are suffocated in the struggle for survival" (*Ibid.*: 172). However, this is not the experience of all craftsmen at all the time. In British India, as observed by Sharma in his study of the *Chamar* artisans, "in spite of ruination of craftsmen and the handicraft industry due to industrialisation the specific kind of artisans and industry could survive and grow in the society" (1986: 137). This is due to the British rulers in India showing interest in turning India into a raw material producing land and making the population to depend on local artisans for various goods and services. Another important factor which added to the above experience refers to the perpetuation of traditional social structures, institutions and relationships.

However, considerable change is observable since independence. The leather workers who were carrying out tanning and shoe-making activities in the village setting found themselves displaced due to changing relations within the structure and economy (Sharma, 1986: 42-3). To

alter the situation, successive governments did make certain efforts by providing employment opportunities to artisan groups belonging to scheduled communities. At the same time, some private companies like Bata have been introduced. Preparing shoes on a large scale in factory situation provided avenues for mobility for leather workers studied by Sharma. Of course, the mobility is not without consequences. One very important area where change has been observed is family. Even if family network provided opportunities for migration and recruitment, the leather workers in urban centres prefer to stay in nuclear families (*Ibid.*: 149). Secondly, the work in the factory system of production has enabled their children to go to schools and acquire education to certain levels (*Ibid.*: 152). Thirdly, the findings of the study have questioned the ritual basis of untouchability. The usual notion is that the people who do the dirtiest and most unclean tasks are untouchables. They are, therefore, ritually impure. With industrialisation, mainly the marketing of leather goods and, to a lesser extent even the preparation of leather goods are carried away by caste Hindus. These trends show that more economic than ritual considerations define and redefine the meaning of untouchability in the Indian context (*Ibid.* : 155). Fourthly, industrialisation has ensured shoe-making the status of a full-fledged occupation. It involves the use of machines from the lowest level of technology to the highest level. Together with this, change has taken place in the work organisation also. Earlier, a workman worked with his simple tools either individually or with the help of his family labour and produced goods only for the local market. Introduction of capitalism in this area has brought in its wake its own problems of alienation, chaos and conflict resulting in unionism (*Ibid.*: 160). The overall examination at intergenerational level suggests that the present day shoe-makers are many a time better off than their older generations (*Ibid.*: 162).

With regard to certain other need-based craft groups like that of potters abandonment of traditional occupation became a more relevant alternative than sticking to it (Sarkar, 1973). Their low socioeconomic and educational level made them to be satisfied with such jobs as that of peons and office attendants.

Thus the responses of different groupings to the challenge of socioeconomic transformation vary. The Kansari artisan group associated with prestige and economy-based crafts studied by Mohanti (1993) are relatively less disturbed by the process of industrialisation. They earn their livelihood primarily through brass and bell-metal work. Through this they maintain their age-old metal craft tradition (*Ibid.*: 1). The real artisans are less mobile geographically while the traders among them are mobile (*Ibid.*: 164). The peculiarity of their skill and the cultural need they meet are responsible for the continuation of their traditional occupations even in the midst of scientific and technological innovations.

Parikh *et al* (1991) provide an occupational sociological analysis of the women weavers, their belonging in the caste and community, their hopes and aspirations and their life and space where these women are born and will die. Concerned with women's occupation at the backdrop of governmental policies for the development of the sector, the study comes out with certain interesting observations about the relationship between occupation and changing aspects of social reality.

Women have taken the step of actually taking up weaving only recently. Traditionally, weaving and sitting at the loom has been a man's role. The role of women is to prepare the yarn, help in dyeing the yarn, and perform all the steps that finally put the yarn on the loom for the weaver to start weaving (Parikh *et al,* 1991: 8). The situation changed with India opening aspirations beyond caste and occupational boundaries with its new horizons in industrial growth and opportunities. Many young men-weavers have opted to leave their village community to venture into far and near urban settings to enter new occupations and new lifestyle. Women, on the other hand, who have their moorings at home and their participation in weaving by providing assistance, actually started to sit on the loom. Weaving became a role additional to other traditional roles. Through weaving they would earn a supplementary income (*Ibid.*: 9). While examining their hopes, aspirations and life space has been observed (*Ibid.: 9-10)*:

> These women have been squarely caught in taking the role of continuity of tradition, preservers of value, stabilisers of the family and at the same time aspiring for a wider horizon for their children...They hope their children would be bank peons and clerks or they see them as mechanics or drivers of cars of big officers, and some even hope their children would become owners of taxis or shops. For their daughters they hope for marriage with government employer and a life away from weaving and rural setting.

These findings are affirmative of the centrality of mobility for life. The driving forces of mobility are found in several expressions of occupational life: occupational continuity, occupational aspirations, and occupational change.

CONCLUSION

Sociologists have been sensitive to the phenomenon of mobility throughout and they have conceptualised it as the overall promotion or demotion that individuals and groups experience within broad contours of a given hierarchy. As evident from the above overview the stratificational dimension of social mobility had been continually engaging the sociologists. First of all they categorised social reality into unequally positioned layers. These layers have been roughly correlated with certain occupa-

tions. And movement from one occupation to the other represented mobility from one layer to the other.

The measurement of the movements across the layers serves our purpose as long as we are curious to know whether our system is open or close, traditional or modern, partially open or partially close, and so on. They are also valid if our objectives are to comment on the caste-class nexus and finding the presence or absence of the perpetuation of hierarchy and inequality. The studies overviewed, even those concerned with knowing the nature of stratification, are useful in one very important respect. That is, they apprise us of the centrality of mobility for life even in respect of stratification which is largely an institutional mechanism for 'continuity.'

Nevertheless, we need to recall here a significant argument forwarded by Desai (1981: 127-30) in his review of Sovani and Pradhan's (1955) study of occupational mobility in Pune. Expressing his reservations about using the classification of occupations as skilled, unskilled or highly skilled in the Indian context, he argues that if we consider increase in the highly skilled jobs as the indicator of mobility then as the consequence of urbanisation even the cobblers, carpenters, barbers, workers in the cotton mill and fitters, wire-men, goldsmiths, tailors and such other persons are to be included in the same category. Can we consider the class mobility that is taking place among these occupational holders as an indicator also of overall social mobility? Certainly not, for occupational composition is not the sole indicator of the nature and quality of the social relationships. "Social change, though related to economic change, is distinct from it" (Desai, 1981: 130). And, also, economy is not independent of other institutions and processes.

Considering the multiple dimensions of social reality of which mobility is a part and also plurality of the content and context of mobility, the analytical consideration of occupation as central to social mobility can yield deeper insights only if the overall socio-cultural matrix is taken into account as the main stage. Among the various studies over-viewed here, a few have been sensitive to the happenings on this stage. Paramar's study of Mahyavansis (1978), Mohanti's study of the Kansari artisan group (1993), Parikh and others' study of the occupation of the women weavers (1991) are a few to mention.

NOTES

An earlier draft of this paper was presented in the RC-18, Occupations and Professions of XXVI All India Sociological Conference held at Thiruvananthapuram during 29-31 December 2000.

1. While outlining some categories relevant to developing sociology as a 'discipline' in the new century, John Urry (2000: 185) argues for a sociology concerned with the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information, and wastes. Such a sociology should deal with the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities.

2. Based on the role played by ascription and achievement in the entry/allocation of occupations to their individual members, Form (1968: 245-54) distinguishes between "status societies" and "occupational societies."

3. The increasing diversity of occupations and the process of professionalisation became the focuses of many studies. Study of doctors (Madan, 1971); doctors and nurses (Oommen, 1978); and teachers (Bhoite, 1987; Hiremath, 1983; Malavika, 1970; Ruhela, 1969; Shah, 1969) reveal the nature of recruitment, role-structure, role-playing and commitment to the new roles of doctors and teachers and career pattern. The interest in occupations also led scholars to study other professional classes and business entrepreneurs. For example, studies of the culture of entrepreneurs (Nandy, 1973) and their recruitment and background (Bandopadhyaya, 1997; Panini, 1977; Saberwal, 1976).

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