

Inter and Intra Occupational Differences in Income and Level of Living

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While there is no dispute regarding the presence of some degree of economic inequality in every society, in our society there is a considerable amount of inequality among people with the same or comparable skills. This inequality is much more important than the inequality among people of unequal levels of skill. This is the first of a series of articles reporting the results of a research project aimed at analysing the inter- and intra-occupational differences in income and standard of living.

I Introduction

THIS is the first instalment of a series of articles we intend to write reporting the results of a research project we have undertaken with the purpose of analysing the inter- and intra-occupational differences in income and standard of living. These are based on data collected through a sample survey covering people of various occupation groups employed in organisations located in the Calcutta municipal corporation area. The basic inspiration behind the project is the idea that some important aspects of income inequality have so far been grossly overlooked by our country's researchers. Many studies have been made on income inequality, consumption inequality and also on the unequal distribution of landholdings. While the studies on consumption inequality have been based mainly on the National Sample Survey data, those on income inequality use various indirect methods in the absence of any body of data relating to personal income.¹ More importantly, almost all of these studies have been made on the basis of data which are aggregated over all kinds of occupations, the only division recognised being that between the rural and the urban sectors. This significantly limits the usefulness of these studies.

There should not be any dispute regarding the presence of some degree of economic inequality in every society. It is natural that higher qualification and skill would be associated with higher income. But in our society, there is a considerable amount of inequality among people with same or comparable skills and, in our judgment, this aspect of inequality is much more important than the inequality among people of unequal levels of skill. It is to form an idea about this aspect of economic inequality that we have decided to focus our attention on the disparities in income among members of the same occupation groups and also on the disparities in the incomes enjoyed by people of different occupation groups.

Income disparity among different

members of the same occupation group is, up to a certain level, legitimate even though they might be doing the same kind of work. Thus, it is understandable that people with more years of service should earn more, other things being equal. However, in our country, quite often, the disparity within the same occupation group is much greater than what might be regarded as legitimate. Similarly, people in different occupation groups might have different skills and differences in income, up to a certain level, are justified. But the differentials in earnings in the different occupations do not seem to be proportional to the differences in the skills. Two persons belonging to two different occupations might have the same educational and cultural background and might have invested the same number of years in skill formation; yet their earnings are often found to be very different. Noticeable differences also arise in the earnings of workers of com-

parable qualities for their being employed by different kinds of employers. In other words, much of the income inequality in our country is totally arbitrary. It is this arbitrariness of income inequality in our country that we have tried to capture through our surveys.

The arbitrariness in the disparities in the wage or salary levels gets compounded by the arbitrary distribution of various allowances, fringe benefits and consumption loans given to employees by different employers and this too we have tried to capture.

It should be clear by now that our interest is in that part of income inequality that would require to be eliminated if there has to be any kind of rationality in the income distribution to be ensured by an income policy.

Inequality in the level of living of different families with the same cultural and educa-

TABLE IA: SALARY INCOME

Category of Employees	Gross Salary		Salary Net of Income and Professional Taxes		
	Last Month (Rs)	Last Year* (Rs)	Last Month (Rs)	Last Year (Rs)	Index
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Banks					
(a) Managers	5199.20 (3702.33- 9419.00)	63293.59 (37395.41- 118028.00)	4679.80 (2989.50- 8839.00)	55405.31 (36046.02- 87778.00)	1.83
(b) Office assistants	2708.19 (1524.15- 4895.80)	33254.49 (17271.50- 65789.60)	2397.97 (1506.15- 3761.29)	30114.58 (17055.50- 52365.46)	1.00
LIC					
(a) Managers	4989.91 (4373.62- 5929.34)	57273.49 (50130.24- 69400.00)	4682.98 (3983.37- 5877.86)	53137.35 (43485.68- 66481.16)	1.59
(b) Development officers	3787.49 (2177.07- 5036.40)	91905.09 (48194.00- 155995.92)	3133.74 (2088.80- 4279.20)	82608.09 (43500.00- 144445.92)	2.47
(c) Office assistants	3290.62 (1660.80- 4376.00)	34405.17 (17839.60- 45029.80)	3160.62 (1648.80- 4215.00)	33312.33 (17695.60- 42760.40)	1.00

Notes: * Including annual bonus.

In this and all the subsequent tables the Index is defined by the ratio of the amount spent on an item by managers/development officers to the amount spent by the office workers in the same organisation. The figures in brackets indicate ranges.

tional background is given rise to only partly by inter-occupation and intra-occupation differences in incomes and perquisites. Differences in demographic characteristics is another powerful contributory factor. A family with more dependents, for example, would have a lower standard of living than another with the same earnings but with fewer dependents. Yet another question that we have had in our mind is the extent to which life style (as reflected by consumption habits) of people depend on their income and the extent to which it is determined by cultural factors. All these considerations have been kept in view while designing our survey.

II The Survey Design

The data needed for the study have been collected through a sample survey covering workers in a number of selected occupation groups employed by agencies located in the Calcutta municipal corporation area. We have restricted the survey to only a few selected groups and employing agencies. The geographical area also has been kept limited. These restrictions have been imposed upon us by our concern for controlling the quality of our data. Any survey attempting to cover many occupation groups or a wider geographical area would call for a large-scale survey and an army of investigators. While such surveys are unavoidable for making estimates of macro magnitudes, they are not suitable, in our judgment, for the kind of research we have in mind.

We have already surveyed two occupation groups, namely, supervisory and clerical office workers in a number of employing agencies, e.g., banks, the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), central government service, West Bengal state government service, the organised private sector and the unorganised private sector. We also propose to take up in the future two other occupations, e.g., teachers in schools and colleges and medical practitioners. The reasons for choosing the particular occupation groups

TABLE 1B: SOME ANCILLARY RECEIPTS

Category of Employees	Percentage of Annual Gross Salary		
	Bonus	Voluntary Deductions	Repayment of Loans and Advances
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Banks			
(a) Managers	0.00	0.71	32.10
(b) Office assistants	6.50	1.45	15.91
LIC			
(a) Managers	0.00	8.89	20.98
(b) Development officers	32.66	7.91	10.14
(c) Office assistants	8.21	10.39	18.39

TABLE 2: FAMILY COMPOSITION

Category of Employees	Respondents	Family Size	Consumer Units Per Family*	Earners Per Family	Female Earners	Earning Wives
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Banks						
(a) Managers	12	4.83	3.86	1.17	0	—
(b) Office assistants	12	4.83	4.15	1.58	3	—
LIC						
(a) Managers	12	4.00	3.45	1.08	1	1
(b) Development officers	12	5.42	4.59	2.42	1	—
(c) Office assistants	12	4.75	4.10	1.92	3	—

Note: * See note 3 for explanation of "consumer unit".

TABLE 3: FAMILY INCOME*

Category of Employees	Gross Annual Family Income (Rs)	Gross Family Income Per Consumer Unit		Percentage of Family Income Contributed by Other Family Members (5)
		Amount (Rs)	Index	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Banks				
(a) Managers	61365.22 (36046.02-91394.37)	15667.71 (8237.51-23835.45)	1.56	8.92 (0.00-48.77)
(b) Office assistants	41577.49 (17055.50-81003.20)	10014.65 (3704.49-19568.34)	1.00	23.00 (0.00-70.66)
LIC				
(a) Managers	57247.92 (49341.40-70407.94)	16573.58 (13251.60-27396.09)	1.40	4.37 (0.00-30.00)
(b) Development officers	119391.59 (46227.00-194630.00)	26030.14 (11032.26-41403.08)	2.20	25.81 (0.00-54.26)
(c) Office assistants	48470.33 (32306.47-74616.90)	11831.65 (8433.06-26744.41)	1.00	29.92 (0.00-65.88)

Note: * Family income is defined as gross salary of respondent - (income tax + professional tax) + income from other sources of respondent + gross income of other family members.

TABLE 4: LIVING ACCOMMODATION

Category of Employees	Percentage of Families Living in			Per Capita Floor Space		Rental Per Month	
	Office Quarters	Rented House	Own House	Sq Ft	Index	Rented House (Actual)	Own House (Estimated)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(Rs) (7)	(Rs) (8)
Banks							
(a) Managers	8.33	33.33	58.33	237.58	1.15	617.50 (500.00-820.00)	1007.14 (800.00-1500.00)
(b) Office assistants	—	33.33	66.67	206.14	1.00	272.50 (300.00-1500.00)	943.75 (55.00-490.00)
LIC							
(a) Managers	8.33	33.33	58.33	242.01	1.48	531.25 (175.00-900.00)	1438.33 (300.00-2500.00)
(b) Development Officers	16.67	58.33	25.00	172.78	1.06	718.57 (200.00-1200.00)	1583.33 (600.00-2000.00)
(c) Office Assistants	8.33	25.00	66.67	162.79	1.00	251.67 (150.00-450.00)	718.75 (100.00-2000.00)

and employers mentioned above are two-fold. On the one hand, we have been interested in studying such occupation groups and employing agencies as have received less attention than some others in the past from investigators and researchers. On the other hand, we kept in view the relative difficulty and ease of obtaining information through the methods of random sampling and interviewing respondents.

In the present paper we report some findings pertaining to the differentials among office workers of banks and the LIC. We have subdivided each of these workers into two occupation groups, namely, managerial staff and office assistants. For the LIC we have also considered development officers separately as they represent a category with certain features distinctly different from the others. In the next paper we propose to present the results for the central and state government employees and in the third we shall examine the differentials between the large/corporate and small/non-corporate private organisations. In the subsequent papers we want to focus on the inter-occupational differences in respect of each of the aspects like service conditions, fringe benefits and level of living across all the employer types considered. Finally, intra-occupational differences for each occupation covered in the survey will be analysed in depth.

For the selection of bank and LIC employees a two-stage sampling procedure was followed. For banks, 8 banks/branches located within the Calcutta municipal corporation area were selected in the first stage by simple random sampling without replacement (SRSWOR) from a list² of banks/branches. For the LIC, a list of different branches was first obtained from the head office and then 8 branches were selected in the same manner. For selection of workers is the second stage, lists of workers were prepared from the selected banks/branches and also from the LIC branches. These lists were prepared separately for the managerial staff and the assistants. Some basic information like designation, year of joining the organisation, present basic pay, etc. were collected at the time of preparation of the lists. These lists were then consolidated categorywise for banks and LIC separately. We thus had two consolidated lists for banks—one for managerial staff and the other for assistants. For the LIC we however had three lists, the third one being that of development officers. We wanted to cover in our survey workers having different lengths of service in their respective organisations. Therefore, while preparing the category-wise consolidated lists, the workers were arranged according to their date of joining the particular organisation. These lists were then used to draw sample of workers, half-sample wise, by the circular systematic sampling method. The particular arrangement of workers in the lists and the sampling method followed ensured that our sample consisted of workers of different

TABLE 5A: PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Category of Employees	Expenditure (Per Annum)			Total	Index
	For Going to Office/School, etc (Rs)	For Going to Other Places (Rs)	Amount (Rs)		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
Banks					
(a) Managers	1900.13 (720.00- 4440.00)	1170.00 (180.00- 3900.00)	3070.13 (1056.00- 6240.00)		1.13
(b) Office assistants	1530.00 (0.00- 3732.00)	1185.00 (240.00- 3000.00)	2715.00 (636.00- 4860.00)		1.00
LIC					
(a) Managers	1448.66 (0.00- 6000.00)	1047.75 (240.00- 2460.00)	2496.41 (240.00- 7500.00)		1.13
(b) Development Officers	3713.80 (0.00- 12396.00)	1787.00 (0.00- 12636.00)	5500.80 (0.00- 0.00)		2.50
(c) Office assistants	1451.60 (660.00- 2754.00)	748.06 (96.00- 2700.00)	2199.66 (780.00- 5910.00)		1.00

TABLE 5B: EDUCATION

Category of Employee	Expenditure Per Family Per Annum		Percentage of Educational Expenses		
	Amount (Rs)	Index	Tuition and Other Fees	Books and Stationary	Private Coaching
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Banks					
(a) Managers	2242.04 (0.00-9116.00)	2.03	10.33	26.34	63.34
(b) Office assistants	1103.29 (0.00- 4404.00)	1.00	22.00	27.40	50.61
LIC					
(a) Managers	5993.00 (825.00- 14720.00)	3.36	31.34	21.57	47.37
(b) Development officers	2791.75 (0.00- 7698.00)	1.56	14.59	32.43	52.98
(c) Office assistants	1779.87 (0.00- 4946.00)	1.00	24.18	27.73	48.08

TABLE 5C: MEDICAL

Items	Category of Employees				
	Banks		LIC		
	Managers	Office Assistants	Managers	Development Officers	Office Assistants
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1) Expenditure per family per annum					
(a) Amount (Rs)	1878.33 (700.00- 5500.00)	1540.22 (190.00- 6250.00)	851.61 (156.00- 1800.00)	1504.99 (0.00- 6200.00)	4639.22 (0.00- 18990.00)
(b) Index	1.22	1.00	0.18	0.32	1.00
(2) Percentage of expenditure reimbursed	132.21 (22.06- 1000.00)	30.02 (5.60- 184.21)	48.75 (0.00- 90.91)	0.00	9.96 (1.84- 250.00)
(3) Employees reimbursed (per cent)	100	100	58.33	0.00	109.09

levels of seniority in the respective organisations. The number of workers selected for each occupation in the two organisations was 12 divided into two half-samples of 6 each. The sampling design was so constructed as to have the same multiplier for all the workers within a category. In other words, the design was self-weighting which implied that for computation of simple proportions, averages, etc, for any category no weighting was necessary.

The survey aimed at collecting a whole variety of information about the sampled workers relating to their salaries, all kinds of allowances, various perquisites or fringe benefits and various loans and advances provided by the employers. This information was collected from the pay-slips or pay-bills of the workers. As mentioned earlier, we also wanted to examine, in addition to income differentials, variations in the levels of living of the families of these workers and the survey was designed accordingly. For this, a number of indicators were chosen the like of which have not been considered in other studies of level of living. These indicators provide interesting insight into the pattern of expenditure of families living in a very big urban city and having different levels of income. Since the level of living is more a reflection of family income rather than individual income, we have also collected information on the subsidiary income of the respondent as well as earnings of other members of the family.

III Results

Service Conditions

Given that the LIC and most of the banks are nationalised enterprises it is only to be expected that there should be a lot of uniformity in the service conditions of the comparable cadres. There are, however, all the same many differences which is what interests us. Judging by the average gross salaries received, managers are better paid in the banks than in the LIC and the reverse is true for office workers (Table 1A). The differences are however not very large and gets further reduced after taxation. The dispersion is however much higher in the banking service than in the LIC for both the categories, managers and office workers. Differences in the averages become important as soon as one comes to all the different non-salary components of employees' benefits. Thus, there are enormous differences in the matter of bonus (Table 1B). For office workers the incidence of bonus in the two organisations is comparable. However, LIC managers do not seem to get any bonus at all, whereas development officers receive bonus which amount to no less than 50 per cent of their gross salary which is what makes their earnings so much higher than those of managers of both the LIC and banks. This is a conspicuous example of built-in structured and planned in-

TABLE 5D: HOLIDAY TOUR

(1)	Category of Employees				
	Managers (2)	Office Assistants (3)	Managers (4)	Development Officers (5)	Office Assistants (6)
(1) Expenditure per family (Rs)	8421.67 (2000.00- 16000.00)	2026.83 (0.00- 6000.00)	4040.83 (0.00- 9200.00)	5529.17 (0.00- 30000.00)	2435.83 (0.00- 12200.00)
(2) Index	4.16	1.00	1.66	2.27	1.00
(3) Percentage of expenditure reimbursed	49.93 (6.67- 100.00)	31.64 (0.00- 100.00)	44.26 (0.00- 100.00)	5.12 (26.67- 38.00)	31.26 (0.00- 160.00)
(4) Percentage of families making at least one holiday trip	100	58	92	75	58
(5) No of holiday trips per reporting family	3.17	1.85	1.90	1.88	2.28
(6) Percentage of expenses on travel to total family income	7	10	2	5	4
(7) Avg duration of holiday trips (days)	7.76	9.00	12.15	13.35	9.93
(8) Percentage of families getting reimbursement for holiday tour at least once	100	85	81	22	71

Note: The reference period for all the items of expenditure, excepting that for Srl No 6, is 'last 4 years' and that for Srl No 6 is 'last year'.

TABLE 6: DURABLES

Items	Percentage of Families Possessing Durables by Category of Employees				
	Banks		LIC		
(1)	Managers (2)	Office Assistants (3)	Managers (4)	Development Officers (5)	Office Assistants (6)
(1) Television					
A Colour	41.7	25.0	16.7	33.3	8.3
B Black and White	50.0	41.7	83.3	50.0	75.0
(2) VCR	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(3) Refrigerator	58.3	33.3	75.0	66.7	16.7
(4) Taperecorder	58.3	25.0	50.0	41.7	25.0
(5) Two-in-one	25.0	25.0	8.3	33.3	8.3
(6) Motor-car	0.0	0.0	33.3	41.7	0.0
(7) Scooter	0.0	8.3	8.3	41.7	16.7
(8) Invertor	16.7	0.0	8.3	0.0	8.3
(9) Generator	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
(10) Telephone	16.7	16.7	33.3	58.3	8.3
(11) Camera	58.3	66.7	75.0	50.0	33.3
No of consumer durables (out of 21)* possessed per family	6.3	5.0	7.8	7.5	4.9
Avg value of durables possessed per family (Rs)	13693.33	9912.25	33515.17	48818.25	9301.58

* 21 items of consumer durables are as follows: radio, TV (colour), TV (black and white), VCR, refrigerator, tape-recorder, two-in-one, record player, gas stove, water filter, bicycle, motorcycle, motor car, scooter, invertor, emergency light, generator, telephone, camera, slide projector and sofa set.

equality. The almost double income received by Development Officers is hardly justifiable by any considerations of the work they do. Overtime payments, however, appear to be insignificant in both the organisations. Both the occupation categories, managers and office workers, in both the organisations benefit from provisions of various voluntary deductions under various savings schemes which provide for attractive interest rates and income tax saving devices. It is seen from Table 1B that these benefits are enjoyed in a rather egalitarian fashion by all categories of workers in the two organisations. These employers are however not particularly

generous in providing residential quarters (Table 4). In the matter of house rent allowances LIC managers seem to benefit the most—they receive as allowance double of what they pay as rent. In the matter of medical reimbursement the banks turn out to be a better employer than the LIC (Table 5C). The same is true of subsidising holiday travel (Table 5D).

Both the organisations pay their employees a large variety of loans and advances at highly subsidised interest rates and on extremely easy repayment conditions. These and other fringe benefits will be dealt with in detail in a later paper in the series. Here

we mention only some of our interesting findings.

Festival advances and flood advances are of course available to all workers and they are taken by most of them, whether really required or not, for their being interest free. Provident fund loans are also extremely popular, for their being available at very low rates of interest. This latter loan is usually restricted to certain purposes, like marriages in the family. But it is well known that there is hardly any check and loans are taken from this source for all kinds of purposes. House-building loans are also extremely common. What is perhaps not so well known to the public is that banks provide to their employees loans for the purchase of furniture. While loans for buying cars and two-wheelers are also all too common, it came as a shock to us to discover on what fantastically generous terms loans are given to LIC branch managers for the purchase of cars.⁴ The details about the terms and conditions of such facilities will be discussed in our subsequent paper mentioned earlier.

One of the service conditions which vary a great deal among employers and which in some cases can mean quite a lot of extra benefits to the employees is the one relating to travelling allowances for going out of station. However, the banking and the LIC services do not offer much scope for that. In our sample none of the respondents travelled on duty. As such, this is a matter on which we can make no comparison.

Family Income and Composition

The level of living of a family does not depend on the income of a particular member that might have been included in our sample. That obviously depends also upon the composition of the family in terms

TABLE 7: SAREES

Category of Employees (1)	Female Members Per Family (2)	Sarees Per Adult Female*	
		Below Rs 100 (3)	Rs 100 and Above (4)
Banks			
(a) Managers	1.9 (1-4)	8.5 (3.33-30.00)	14.10 (3.00-41.00)
(b) Office assistants	2.2 (1-3)	9.3 (4-20)	9.8 (3.67-25.00)
LIC			
(a) Managers	1.7 (1-3)	10.10 (0-25)	16.6 (3.33-37.50)
(b) Development Officers	2.0 (1-4)	9.9 (0-25)	28.8 (5.00-41.50)
(c) Office assistants	1.7 (1-3)	11.1 (4-20)	9.3 (0.00-20.00)

* The averages understate the extravagance in the matter of sarees on two counts. The first is that the elderly women, especially widows possess very few sarees. Secondly respondents tended to leave out of account old sarees as well as cheap ones costing less than Rs 100 per piece. It may be remembered in passing that we found in another survey on the conditions of the very poor village families that the average number of sarees per adult female was less than 2. That is poor women do not even have a second sari to wear when washing the first one.

TABLE 8: SOME SELECTED NON-FOOD ITEMS OF CONSUMPTION

Category of Employees (1)	Monthly Expenses (Rs) Per Family							
	Books (2)	Newspapers and Periodicals (3)	Art Objects (4)	Cinema, Theatres, etc (5)	Games (6)	Photography (7)	Cigarettes (8)	Drinks* (9)
Banks								
(a) Managers	18.21 (0.00- 83.33)	43.83 (8.33- 75.00)	0.69 (0.00- 8.33)	18.68 (0.00- 41.67)	3.47 (0.00- 20.83)	16.74 (0.00- 54.17)	29.86 (0.00- 150.00)	0.00
(b) Office assistants	16.38 (0.00- 75.00)	46.04 (12.00- 100.00)	3.82 (0.00- 45.83)	15.08 (0.00- 41.67)	2.78 (0.00- 25.00)	21.63 (0.00- 83.33)	70.28 (0.00- 310.00)	0.00
LIC								
(a) Managers	9.55 (0.00- 25.00)	67.92 (33.00- 115.00)	1.04 (0.00- 12.50)	15.53 (0.00- 50.00)	4.37 (0.00- 20.83)	12.01 (0.00- 50.00)	49.17 (0.00- 200.00)	0.00
(b) Development officers	8.75 (0.00- 30.00)	73.94 (36.00- 250.00)	9.72 (0.00- 83.33)	21.91 (0.00- 100.00)	4.86 (0.00- 33.33)	27.95 (0.00- 100.00)	144.58 (0.00- 750.00)	6.94 (0.00- 83.35)
(c) Office assistants	10.52 (0.00- 25.00)	35.63 (4.58- 71.67)	2.60 (0.00- 12.50)	14.58 (0.00- 70.00)	3.93 (0.00- 20.83)	12.41 (0.00- 54.17)	53.68 (0.00- 225.00)	0.00

* Only one respondent admitted spending any money on drinks. Since the use of drinks both for pleasure and as a part of hospitality seems to have become extremely widespread, the average expenditure per family on drinks shown in the table might be an underestimate. In such a case, our estimate is revealing of the Bengali middle class prudency and hypocrisy with respect to drinks and is a reflection of their guilt-ridden attitude towards it.

of other earning members, students and other non-working and non-earning members. Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in this respect among the five groups that we are considering. The figures for the average number of earners per family suggest that most of our sample families are nuclear families—as a matter of fact, in the 60 families considered only 4 may be regarded as joint. Also remarkable is the extremely low incidence of female working members; working wives are even less important. Among our respondents there were only 4 women. This extremely low participation by women members of the families, unless it is a result of large sampling errors, has probably the following interesting sociological significance. In the Bengalee middle class, to which almost all our respondents belong, women take up employment only out of economic necessity and not out of any desire for economic independence or out of attaching any value to having their own independent identity.

Table 3 presents some figures relating to the connection between the income of the family as a whole and that of the respondent. The only interesting thing worth commenting upon here is that the burden of sending remittances to family members living elsewhere seems to be significant only for the clerical category.

The remarkable fact is that the incidence of having a subsidiary source of income seems to be almost absent in our sample of managers and clerks. Only one office assistant engages in private tuition. None of the remaining 59 respondents reported any second occupation.

We are not presenting the details regarding the occupations of remaining family members. The only point worth mentioning is that the families of development officers distinguish themselves from others in having more members engaged in business rather than white collar jobs. This is perhaps understandable, given that the development officers' own work is itself more like that of businessmen (selling policies) than that of ordinary office workers.

The other receipts which go to make the family income include house rent, rent on land dividends, etc. There is a great deal of variation in this respect from case to case, and there is no pattern which can be identified.

Level of Living

(a) Intra-Occupation Differences—Managers: We shall first consider the occupation group of managers in which we include the development officers of the LIC. We have seen before that the development officers have by far more of income than the managers of banks and the LIC. We have also seen that the family income per unit is also very much higher for that category. Despite that there is no consistent pattern of differences in the consumption of the different items among the three categories. The development officers actually enjoy less of

living space than the other two managerial cadres. But they pay higher rentals, suggesting that they live in more expensive residential areas (Table 4). In terms of enjoying office quarters or of living in own houses they are not significantly better off. Development officers and their family members spend much more for transport—both for going to their places of work or study as well as for other purposes. They, however, spend less on children's education. In the matter of consumer durables, however, there are remarkable differences not only between the development officers and managers but also between LIC managers and bank managers (Table 6). So far as expenses on ceremonials during the last five

years and *puja* purchases are concerned, the development officers again surpass the managers though among the managers the differences do not appear to be significant in view of the large within group variations (Table 11). Coming to individual items, the LIC management cadre seems to be much better off in the matter of owning motor cars and other two-wheelers as well as telephones. Part of that is dependent upon the differences in the duties that they have to perform—LIC officers have to travel more, and use the telephone more because of their having to deal with geographically dispersed individual customers. Bank managers, however, enjoy much more of holiday travel and this is readily explained by refund conditions

TABLE 9: SOME SELECTED FOOD ITEMS OF CONSUMPTION

Items	Category of Employees				
	Banks		LIC		
	Managers	Office Assistants	Managers	Development Officers	Office Assistants
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Fish					
(a) No of days consumed per month	23.4 (8-30)	22.3 (8-30)	21.5 (12-30)	19.7 (0-30)	15.0 (4-30)
(b) Quantity consumed per day (kg)	0.37 (0.2-0.6)	0.39 (0.15-0.70)	0.41 (0.25-0.60)	0.34 (0.00-0.60)	0.47 (0.25-1.25)
(c) Expenditure per month					
(i) Amount (Rs)	329.58 (32.00-720.00)	227.92 (96.00-400.00)	282.65 (178.00-466.00)	364.50 (0.00-720.00)	234.98 (25.00-780.00)
(ii) Index	1.45	1.00	1.20	1.55	1.00
Meat					
(a) No of days consumed per month	3.3 (0-4)	2.3 (0-4)	5.9 (2-13)	4.4 (0-20)	2.8 (0-8)
(b) Quantity consumed per day (kg)	0.58 (0.00-1.50)	0.56 (0.00-1.50)	0.65 (0.50-1.00)	0.79 (0.00-2.00)	0.58 (0.00-1.50)
(c) Expenditure per month					
(i) Amount (Rs)	74.58 (0.00-250.00)	46.08 (0.00-120.00)	148.14 (40.00-342.00)	135.33 (0.00-400.00)	79.25 (0.00-320.00)
(ii) Index	1.62	1.00	1.87	1.71	1.00
Egg					
(a) No of days consumed per month	17.6 (0-30)	13.3 (0-30)	25.5 (9-30)	15.5 (0-30)	13.8 (0-30)
(b) Quantity consumed per day (No)	3.1 (0-6)	4.2 (0-8)	2.8 (2-4.5)	2.7 (0-7)	3.3 (0-8)
(c) Expenditure per month					
(i) Amount (Rs)	58.6 (0.00-150.00)	32.42 (0.00-150.00)	66.67 (30.00-120.00)	47.58 (0.00-120.00)	41.59 (0.00-90.00)
(ii) Index	1.81	1.00	1.60	1.14	1.00
Milk					
(a) No of days consumed per month	30	30	30	30	30
(b) Quantity consumed per day (lt)	1.43 (1.0-2.5)	0.62 (0.5-1.0)	1.16 (1.0-1.5)	1.54 (1.0-3.0)	1.13 (0.5-2.0)
(c) Expenditure per month					
(i) Amount (Rs)	180.88 (46.50-440.00)	86.06 (43.45-242.00)	144.96 (81.00-187.50)	201.25 (94.50-399.00)	151.33 (64.50-300.00)
(ii) Index	2.10	1.00	0.96	1.33	1.00

being much better in the banking service. In the matter of eating, too, there is no consistent pattern. Development officers as well as LIC managers spend more on meat than bank managers but the same cannot be said of fish, eggs and milk. As to expenditure on cultural matters, the less said the better. Officers earning between fifty thousand and a lakh per year spend not even ten rupees per month on books (Table 8). The ranking of gross family income of these three management cadres has a correlation of 1 only with a single item of consumption, namely, the number of costly sarees per adult female (Table 7), which justifies our presumption of this being one of the most crucial indicators of family affluence. All in all, however, the interesting conclusion is that despite income differences these three categories belonging to the occupation group of managers reveal more or less the same consumption pattern.

One matter in which development officers' relative affluence gets reflected very sharply is that of whole-time servants. They seem to go in for many more of such servants and pay them much more than all others. Though in the treatment of part-time servants, they are as miserly as people of the other categories (Table 10). This extremely low rate of payments to servants is the only thing of interest in our findings relating to servants. It is somewhat disturbing to note that servants and maid servants not residing with the family receive, roughly speaking, a wage of rupee one per hour which can be compared with the hourly earnings of their employers. As regards non-monetary payments, very with the hourly earnings of their employers. As regards non-monetary payments, very high proportions of non-resident servants do not get some clothing and some tiffin but they can hardly compensate for the extremely low wage levels.

(b) Intra-Occupation Differences— Assistants: The office assistants in the two organisations reveal once again the same uniformity in living standards despite the fact of the LIC workers being better paid. Going through individual items one sees inequalities in both directions. Thus LIC workers spend more on education, medicine and holiday and this is not explained by refund conditions which are worse for them (Tables 5A-5D). As to durables, there is no uniform pattern about the individual items, whereas in terms of total value or the number of objects possessed there are no significant differences (Table 6). On certain other items (e.g., transport other than that for going to the place of work, books and periodicals, photography, cigarettes and expenses on ceremonials) bank clerks spend more than LIC clerks. In the food group, LIC clerks do spend more on meat, egg and milk but the significance of that gets

nullified by the fact of there being no differences in the expenditures on fish, the single most important item in the Bengali diet.

(c) Inter-Occupation Differences— Managers and Assistants: Office workers being less well paid than managers (including development officers), it is only to be expected that their living standards should be lower. The interesting thing in our findings is that the differences is much less than what might be expected from the income differences. In all the tables we have provided for each item an index defined by the ratio of the amount spent on an item by managers to the amount spent by office workers in the same organisation. As may be seen, in most cases this differential is less than the differential between the earnings of the respondent as well as their family incomes. In the case of durables the difference is quite sharp. Also sharp is the difference

TABLE 11: CEREMONIAL EXPENDITURE

Category of Employees	Expenses on Ceremonials (during Last 5 Years) Per Family (Rs)	Puja Purchases (Last Year)	
		For Own Family (Rs)	For Making Gifts (Rs)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Banks			
(a) Managers	14666.67 (0.00-56,500.00)	1446.67 (550.00-3500.00)	1383.33 (250.00-2000.00)
(b) Office assistants	18595.83 (0.00-95,000.00)	1297.92 (0.00-2900.00)	942.08 (200.00-2600.00)
LIC			
(a) Managers	11337.50 (0.00-83,000.00)	1779.17 (0.00-2650.00)	1216.67 (0.00-4000.00)
(b) Development officers	39700.00 (0.00-1,57,800.00)	2635.42 (1200.00-6500.00)	1400.00 (0.00-3500.00)
(c) Office assistants	25925.00 (0.00-208750.00)	1311.38 (0.00-3000.00)	1075.00 (0.00-7000.00)

TABLE 10: DOMESTIC SERVANTS

Category of Employees	Families Having		Servants (No)			Working Hours Per Day of Non-Resident Servants	Monthly Wage (Rs)		Non-Resident Servants Getting		
	Domestic Servants (No)	More Than One Domestic Servant (No)	Resident	Non-Resident	Total		Resident	Non-Resident	Meals (Per Cent)	Tiffin (Per Cent)	Clothes (Per Cent)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Banks											
(a) Managers	12	4	4	12	16	2.21 (1.0-1.5)	52.50 (40.00-60.00)	72.72 (30.00-125.00)	8	75	75
(b) Office assistants	10	0	2	8	10	1.56 (1.0-4.0)	60.00 (40.00-80.00)	50.63 (30.00-80.00)	0	63	75
LIC											
(a) Managers	12	3	0	16	16	2.88 (1.0-9.0)	0	65.63 (27.50-200.00)	25	88	81
(b) Development officers	12	5	6	12	18	2.63 (0.5-4.0)	136.67 (50.00-200.00)	64.58 (40.00-180.00)	25	75	83
(c) Office assistants	9	1	1	9	10	1.80 (0.1-3.0)	50.00	62.44 (10.00-100.00)	33	56	89

in the expenditures on holiday and education. In most of the cases including expenditures on sarees and fish there is difference though not very significant. As to accommodation, office workers seem to be better off than managers in the matter of living in their own houses. As to space occupied or the quality of occupation as reflected by the rental, office workers are expectedly worse off than managers in the banks but surprisingly not in the LIC.

Level of Living and Level of Income

The most important lesson that is given to us by our findings relating to levels of living presented above is the extremely weak correlation between income level and standard of living. This rather striking result, based on comparison of averages, is strongly corroborated by a disaggregated analysis of the relation between different items of expenditure by individual families and the corresponding total family incomes that we carried out separately for each of the five categories considered here. We are not presenting detailed figures from that disaggregated analysis, but we may report the rather staggering fact that for most of the items of expenditure the dependence on total family income is practically nil. For each category the spread of salary income and per capita family income is far from negligible, as seen from the ranges presented in Tables 1A and 3. Yet, the expenditures on different items suggests in most cases a correlation of zero. This weak relation between the level of living and the level of income is, in our judgment, of far-reaching sociological significance. It is an index of the social homogeneity of the families that we are considering, giving rise to common values, aspirations and life style. It appears that beyond a critical level of income, consumption expenditure is not so much dependent on income as on other factors like taste, culture, customs, habits and so on. We intend to explore and examine such a hypothesis further when we carry out in-depth analysis of the intra-group differences in income and level of living.

Notes

[The survey has been taken up as a plan project at the Indian Statistical Institute. N Bhattacharya was a member of the project team at the time of formulation of the project and during the initial phases of planning and designing of the survey. The field work as well as the processing of the data was done by S Chakraborty, S Mondal, K Jana, I Sen and S Ghosh. We are thankful to all of them.]

1 Data on personal income are hard to find in India. While there are understandable reasons for the non-availability of such information, it looks very much important now that attention should be focused on this matter if any income policy is to be formulated in the near future on the basis of an objective assessment of the existing situation.

Information available from the National Accounts Statistics do provide estimates of

the level of per capita income of the people in our country over years. But such estimates are obtained at national and state levels using different estimation methods for different sectors under various assumptions to get around the problem of data gaps. More importantly, however, such estimates of per capita national income provide only the average level and do not give any indication about the distribution of income. In fact, in the absence of any information on the distribution it is not possible to make any assessment about the achievements in the five-year plans towards realisation of the stated objective of reduction of inequality in the distribution of income.

- 2 The list of banks/branches available in the compendium of code numbers allotted to banks/branches/sub-member branches in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, 1986, was used for this purpose.
- 3 The concept of consumer unit is as follows. The Indian Council of Medical Research has

laid down certain norms for the calorie consumption for persons of different age, sex categories. For adult males it is 2,800 units. The norm figures for adult females and children of different ages are lower. We have counted 2,800 as 1 consumer unit. We have given weights to different members of a family by taking the ratio of the normative requirement for each member to the figure 2,800. By totalling these ratios we have arrived at a number for each family which we call the number of 'Consumer Units' in the family.

- 4 To give an idea, we may mention here that the LIC branch managers are given an interest-free advance up to the full purchase price of a car recoverable in 120 instalments; but more than 80 per cent of the instalment is repaid in the form of a conveyance allowance. The insurance premium and road-tax are also borne by the corporation. In addition, a substantial mileage allowance is paid every month. Repair and maintenance expenses are also liberally reimbursed.

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