

ASPIRATION LEVELS AMONG WORKERS IN FIVE FACTORIES IN INDIA

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ONE of the hoariest clichés about India and the East in general is the presumed fatalism and acceptance of the status quo among its people. While this picture of passivity has certainly been exaggerated, nevertheless in the villages where 80 per cent of India's people live, a near-static society has not produced a marked optimism in the peasant when he considers his life chances. One effect of the factory with its graded system of upward mobility and the predominance of achieved over ascribed status is supposed to be the breakdown of this fatalism and the general raising of aspirations. The present paper indicates the extent to which the workers in five factories in a medium size city in India aspire to become supervisors and it explores the variables which distinguish those who aspire from those who do not.

The information in this paper is based upon a survey¹ of the job histories of 821 factory workers in the five privately owned factories in Poona² which employ more than one hundred workers. A stratified random sample was drawn from each company's rolls. It included from each factory 5 to 25 clerks, all supervisors, and from 100 to 150 other workers herein referred to as labourers. The sample and total work force of each factory is given in Table I.

Table 1: TOTAL WORK FORCE AND SAMPLE SIZE IN EACH FACTORY

Occupation	Textiles		Paper		Engines		Biscuits		Rubber	
	Total No.	Sample No.	Total No.	Sample No.	Total No.	Sample No.	Total No.	Sample No.	Total No.	Sample No.
Labourers	2173	158	536	111	539	103	129	98	473	102
Supervisors	84	84	38	38	22	22	12	12	13	13
Clerks	85	9	29	5	53	25	18	18	45	23
Total	2342	251	603	154	614	150	159	128	531	138

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² This excludes the large ordnance plants in nearby Kirkee which are owned and operated by the Ministry of Defence of the Government of India, and the State Transport Workshop in Dapodi which does repairs and some manufacturing for the Maharashtra State motor transport system.