

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AND ANOMIE: MERTON REEXAMINED

In the preceding two chapters, we have tried to ascertain the alternative life-chances of the workers suddenly faced with a personal economic failure. We have already observed that an unpromising labour market, a hope of returning to their previous jobs, the general poverty, and an increasing cost of living, were some of the common factors which jeopardised their very chance of survival. In spite of the fact that, prior to the closure, the respondents enjoyed similar job status and belonged to a common socio-economic stratum, their unemployment and reemployment experiences varied considerably.

The general picture that emerged was one of their poor financial background and low earnings which rendered the respondents vulnerable to any adverse situation. Hence, the sudden stoppage of their wages affected their lives in various ways. It led to far - reaching consequences for their economic, social, psychological and political lives. As regards the economic aspect of the after-closure behaviour of the respondents, we reached the conclusion that most of them were mainly in a state of 'disguised unemployment'. Due to the absence of any potential for upward and lateral job-mobility, they were reduced to inferior occupations like rickshaw pulling, daily

wage manual labour, vending, etc.

A theoretical interpretation of the after-closure role-behaviour of our respondents, covering their economic, social, psychological and political conditions, could be based upon Merton's thesis of 'Anomie'. In his famous paper, "Social Structure and Anomie"¹, Merton explains what kind of responses individuals may give if they fail in or withdraw from achieving their life goals. This failure or withdrawal, according to Merton, is "... due to a breakdown in the cultural structure, occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between the cultural norms and goals and the socially structured capacities of members of the group to act in accordance with them."²

Cultural goals, according to Merton, provide a frame of reference for the aspirations of individuals in a society while institutional norms regulate and restrict their behaviour in fulfilling these goals. When an imbalance occurs between the cultural goals and the institutional means, anomic behaviour is the consequence. Further, he considers what kind of responses individuals may emit if they are unable to achieve these cultural goals. Here, Merton presents his familiar

1. See, Merton, R.K. - Social Theory and Social Structure (1968: enlarged edition), especially chapters VI & VII.

2. Ibid, p. 216.

Paradigm of Anomie which posits five modes of individual adaptation: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion.³

These categories of adaptation are reproduced below. In the following table (+) signifies "acceptance", (-) signifies "rejection", and (+) signifies "rejection of prevailing values and substitution of new values".

TABLE 8.1

Typology of the Modes of Individual Adaptation.⁴

Modes of Adaptation	Cultural Goals	Institutional Means
I Conformity	+	+
II Innovation	+	-
III Ritualism	-	+
IV Retreatism	-	-
V Rebellion	<u>+</u>	<u>+</u>

In this typology, conformists are those who are satisfied with both the cultural goals and the accepted means of

3. Ibid, p.194.

4. Ibid, p.194.

attaining them. Innovators are those who strive for the cultural goals but find the existing means inadequate and therefore turn to new ones. White-collar criminals, scientific radicals, and hard-core criminals belong to this category. Ritualists see no charm in the cultural goals but prefer to stick to the institutional norms. Bureaucratic virtuosos and apathetic industrial workers belong to this category. Retreatists are those who simply surrender both the life goals and the institutional means. Vagabonds and alcoholics fall in this category. Finally the rebels are those who seek to replace both the existing goals and norms by the new-ones.

Merton, thus, explains deviant behaviour strictly in terms of its relationship with the individuals' acts and not with their personalities. He defines deviant behaviour as that which violates institutionalised expectations, that is, expectations which are shared and recognised as legitimate within a social system.⁵ Hence, the relationship of an act to the existing institutional norms is apparently the main focus of his thesis.

Further Research on Anomie:

Further research on 'anomie' by scholars like Srole

5. See, his article in his edited work - Sociology Today (1959), pp. 462-63.

and others mainly deals with the subjective aspect, that is, the attitudinal level of 'anomic behaviour'.⁶ Subjective indicators like high status aspirations and perceived opportunities to attain life goals, etc., are used and their relationship with various independent variables like education, occupation, age, status and participation in formal and informal organisations is examined. Thus, various efforts have been made to examine Merton's proposition that 'differential access to economic success goals combined with a generally uniform expectation for economic success will result in anomie among those persons with the least opportunity to achieve such success'.⁷

These researches were based on the information collected from a cross-section of sample of individuals belonging

6. See for example, Brode, Leo - "Social Integration and Certain corollaries: An Exploratory Study", American Sociological Review (henceforth ASR), V.21, Dec. 1956, pp. 709-716; Roberts, Alan H. & Milton Rokeach - "Anomie, Authoritarianism, and Prejudice - A Replication", American Journal of Sociology (henceforth AJS), Vol. LXI, Jan. 1956, pp. 355-58; Meier, Dorothy E. & Wendell Bell - "Anomie and Differential Access to the Achievement of Life Goals" ASR , No.2 V. 24, April 1959, pp 189-201; Mizuchi, E.H. - "Social Structure and Anomie in a Small City", ASR, No.5, V.25, Oct. 1960, pp.645-654; and Rushing, William A. - "Class, Culture, and Social Structure And Anomie", AJS No.5, V.76, March, 1971, pp.857-72.

7. Merton, op. cit., p.228.

to different strata of society. The individual's status on the one hand, and his alienation from life activities on the other, were investigated to see if the differences in status and thus an individual's access to the existing institutional means, determine his orientation to anomie. To measure the 'alienation', usually a five-item Srole's scale of 'anomie'⁸ was used to assess the attitudinal level of respondents. Individual's status in the social setting was evaluated by a number of independent variables like: occupation, education, income, age, class-identification, participation in various formal and informal organisations and so on. The relationship between 'anomie' and 'social status' was then sought to be interpreted within the Mertonian framework.

While researchers like Bell & Meier, Srole, and Mizruchi support this line of inquiry, Robert and Rokeach question it. Employing income rather than education as a measure of status, they came to the conclusion that the relationship between income and anomie was negligible when education was held constant.⁹ It is relevant to mention here that most of the above mentioned scholars mainly measure 'alienation' considering it as the subjective counter part of the Merton's concept of 'anomie'. As Clinard remarks: such

8. See, Srole, op. cit., pp.709-716.

9. See, Roberts & Rokeach, op. cit., pp.355-358.

sociologists have come to use the term 'alienation' to refer in part, to the subjective aspect of what Merton called "anomie".¹⁰

The studies mentioned above cover only one part of the Merton's thesis on 'anomie', that is, its relationship with the class- differentials. However, his paradigm of anomie is analysable in two parts as follows:

- (i) his proposition that the combination of high aspirations and inadequate opportunity occurs with substantially different frequency in various social strata, groups and communities and in turn, these differentials are related to differing rates of deviant behaviour, and that
- (ii) these rates of deviant behaviour of various kinds could be identified in his typology of the modes of adaptations.

Most of the research carried so far mainly examines the first issue. To our knowledge, any empirical validation of the paradigm itself does not appear to have been tried. Attempts have however been made to modify the paradigm. The suggested modifications are mainly based on the logic of

10. See, Clinard, Marshall E. (Ed.) in - Anomie And Deviant Behavior (1964), p.37.

classification. Their existence in reality has yet to be empirically verified.¹¹

Themes of Anomie in the Present Investigation:

From this discussion of the Merton's concept of anomie, we now turn to the situation faced by our respondents. Originating from the same lower socio-cultural-economic strata of Indian society and placed under almost similar life conditions, our respondents more or less belonged to a single status category. Consequently, a cross-cultural analysis of their deviant acts - in relation to the differentials of a class-situation is inapplicable to the present study. This chapter, hence, analyses only the second part of Merton's

-
11. These modifications are of two types (1) inclusion of a number of logical categories missing in the paradigm due to the misinterpretation of signs by Merton, or, their exclusion, and (2) extension of the paradigm by breaking the two dichotomous categories, namely cultural goals and institutional means, into some more meaningful categories. In this regard, see: Eldridge, J.E.T.(1971), op. cit., p.122; Pank, Hanary - "Merton Revised: A New Classification for Deviant Behaviour" ASR, No.5, V.31, Oct. 1966, pp. 693-97; Dubin, Robert - "Deviant Behaviour and Social Structure - Continuities in Social Theory", ASR , No.2, V.24, April 1959, pp. 147-64; Cloward, Richard A. - "Illegitimate Means, Anomie and Deviant Behaviour", ASR, No.2, V.24, April 1959, pp. 164-74; Clinard, Marshall B., op. cit., ; and Parsons, Talcott - The Social System (1951), pp. 256-57.

paradigm of anomie. It examines the after-closure behaviour of our respondents in terms of the modes of individual adaptations. To do this, we have attempted:

- (1) to examine Merton's contention that anomie is an inherent property of the socio-cultural systems - in the context of the social-structural position of our respondents;
- (2) to identify the respondents into various modes of adaptation - based on their role-behaviours; and
- (3) to explicate the various factors underlying the different modes of adaptation of the respondents.

I Anomie and the Socio-cultural Position of the Respondents:

According to Merton, the prevailing cultural goals comprise a frame of aspirational reference for individual members of a society. In his own words: "They are the things worth-striving for".¹² To attain these life goals there exist institutional norms which regulate and control the acceptable modes of human behaviour. Merton does not give an explicit definition of cultural goals.¹³ He however defines cultural structure as: ".... that organized set of normative values governing behaviour which is common to members of a designated

12. Merton, op. cit., p.187.

13. As, Dubin comments: "Both of us (Merton and the author himself) avoid explicit definition of cultural goals", op. cit., p. 147-64.

society or group."¹⁴ The other element, social structure consists of: "...organized set of social relationships in which members of the society or group are variously implicated."¹⁵ Thus, Merton defines institutional means as legitimate behaviour. He further notes that, "In all instances, the choice of expedients for striving toward cultural goals is limited by institutionalized means"¹⁶ Hence, for him, 'certain social forces (Merton does not spell out these forces) exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct.'¹⁷ The resultant deviant behaviour is mainly due to, "conflict between cultural goals and the availability of using institutional means- whatever the character of the goals - which produces a strain toward anomic"¹⁸

Elaborating his argument further, Merton writes:

"There may develop a very heavy, at times a virtually exclusive, stress upon the value of particular goals, involving comparatively little concern with the institutionally prescribed means of striving toward these goals. The limiting case of this type is reached when the range of alternative

14. Merton, op. cit., p. 216.

15. Ibid, p.216.

16. Ibid, p.187.

17. Ibid, p. 186.

18. Ibid, p.220

procedures is governed only by technical rather than by institutional norms. Any and all procedures which promise attainment of the all important goal would be permitted in this hypothetical polar case. This constitutes one type of malintegrated culture. A second polar type is found in groups where activities originally conceived as instrumental are transmitted into self-contained practices, lacking further objectives. The original purposes are forgotten and close adherence to institutionally prescribed conduct becomes a matter of ritual".¹⁹

The above lines suggest that certain individuals turn up deviants because they replace cultural goals or institutional norms by instrumental goals or means, or, they sacrifice one at the cost of the other. What could be such known or unknown forces compelling individuals to deviate from conforming practices? Merton partially answers the question when he describes the case of American society. He selected 'monetary success' for illustrative analysis on the assumption that it has been firmly entrenched in American culture.²⁰ Consequently, the main cause for anomie prevailing in the American society, according to Merton, is the great emphasis on pecuniary success for all and a social structure which limits the practical recourse to approved means.²¹

Thus, analysing the concept of 'anomic' in the context

19. Ibid, pp. 187-88.

20. Ibid, p. 221.

21. Ibid, p. 203.

of American culture, Merton makes the following observations:

- (1) American society being an open society, provides equal life chances to each individual.
- (2) Being an open society and due to the universal character of success goals, individuals belonging to different groups or strata, have similar life goals.
- (3) Anomie is an inherent property of socio-cultural system and exists due to dissociation between cultural goals and institutional norms.

Cultural Goals in the Indian Situation:

Merton's assumption of the uniformity of cultural goals, has been challenged by a number of scholars. As, Rushing observes: ".....some critics claim the theory (of anomie) is invalid because goals and aspirations of lower class groups are lower than those of middle and upper class groups."²² Our contention is that the assumption of the uniformity of cultural goals may or may not hold true in an open society like America but it is not true in a developing country like India.

There exist two distinct groups of "haves" and "havenots"

22. Quoted by William A. Rushing in - "Class, Culture, and Social Structure and Anomie", op. cit., pp.857-72.

in India who not only occupy differential social status but also possess different life goals and aspirations. The upper income group comprising of 10 to 12 percent of the total population not only consumes as much as 35 percent of the produce of urban market but also predominantly accepts Western values as their life aspirations. This group is followed by the 20 percent or so of the upper-middle class and the middle income group gentry who, as compared to the top strata, is relatively disadvantaged economically but is exposed to the same western values as internalised by the top strata. Both the above groups comprising about 30 percent of the total Indian population, could be considered as aspiring for similar cultural goals.²³

Completely different from the above two groups exists the vast mass of poor Indian population who not only lives below the poverty line but also retains its traditional cultural values. In spite of the fact that a part of this population is engaged in factory jobs in cities, its standard of living does not differ much from its rural counterpart. A small section of the relatively highly paid workers in the organised sector employed by the large and successful industrial concerns are excluded from the purview here.

23. See, References No.8 and 9 of Chapter I.

Majority of these low income urban workers maintain ties with their kith and kin in the villages. Their perception of the economic culture is still largely based upon the traditional Hindu philosophy of 'Karma' which discourages the aspirations for wealth.²⁴ The overall result is that while the rich and educated Indians are exposed to modern competitive culture and aspire for material gains, the majority of the population (including our respondents) still adhere to traditional Hindu culture. Therefore, not only in their real life but also in their attitudes our respondents never thought beyond their "felt needs".²⁵ Since decades,

24. Vikas Mishra, in his well-know work - Hinduism and Economic Growth (1962), p.202, observes: "As regards the influence of the law of "Karma", to take material advantage as an ideal, presupposes an interest in the present rather than in the next life. The knowledge that the course of life has already been determined by past actions and that only scope is for bettering one's next life, would in most people generate no incentive (and, indeed would generate a disincentive) to better material conditions".
25. The workmen of these closed mills mainly originated from the lower strata of the rural population, whose 'felt needs', according to Moore, always laid low. In his own words: "For the lower strata of the rural population, an overwhelming majority in India as a whole, the restriction of wants and ambitions, the acceptance of what seems to us an extraordinarily cramped horizon and the continuing wary skepticism about "outsiders" constitute realistic and sensible reactions to prevailing conditions". Barrington Moore, Jr. - Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (1973), p. 403.

to struggle for a need-based minimum wage, has been their main activity.

A direct contrast is provided by the aspirations and life goals of the employers of our respondents. It was the mill-owners aspirations for instrumental goals that deprived the respondents of their means of livelihood. The owners of both these closed mills put before themselves the pecuniary success as their main life- aim. In search of quick gains, they indulged in activities like gross misuse of funds, evasion of taxes and excise duties, mis-utilisation of loans, appropriation of workers' welfare funds and so on. When compared with the aspirations and life aims of their employees, the employers obviously had different life goals.

Merton's proposition that those individuals or groups of individuals become deviant who replace cultural goals or means by instrumental goals or means, or, they sacrifice one at the cost of the other, is not borne out in the context of socio-cultural and economic situation of our respondents.

The grim situation of economic deprivation faced by our respondents due to their sudden loss of jobs, was not the consequence of their acts and deeds. It was the situation where, for no fault of their own, they were deprived of their means of survival. The closure of the mills was not due to the workers' conflict with the management, nor, was this a

situation where workers aspired for any inordinate increase in their wages. On the contrary, here was the situation where their 'fate-makers' (the employers) had been engaging in deviant activities - which in turn resulted in the withdrawal of the existing institutional means of the respondents.²⁶

These facts hence lead to a conclusion that, in the present context, there was no replacement of legitimate goals by the respondents for some instrumental goals. Nor did these workers, prior to their sudden loss of job, follow any illegitimate means. Merton's proposition hence appears to be untenable with reference to the socio-cultural situation of our respondents.

-
26. We also collected data pertaining to the causes leading to the closures of both the mills. We found that the most dominant cause for these closures was their 'financial liquidation'. And this happened primarily because of the fraudulent practices of the owners/financiers of the mills. Squandering of mill-funds and non-reinvestment of surplus, were the most basic causes for the ailing financial condition of both the mills. This general tendency of the owners to misutilise the mills' resources coupled with the then operating adverse market forces like input shortage and glut in the market finally led to the collapse of both the mills.

Due to the limited scope of the present study, we have excluded a detailed discussion about the causes for the failure of both the mills. For a detailed discussion see, Sharma, R.N. - "Towards A Theoretical Framework of 'Industrial Sickness'", a paper contributed to the XIII-All India Sociological Conference, Chandigarh (Dec. 26 - 28, 1976).

It would be wrong to assume that, what our respondents suffered, was without parallel, or, mainly confined to Indian society. More numerous instances could be found - especially in laissez faire economies where sudden economic death of firms leaves a large number of workers redundant. The fact that a large part of such redundant workers find it lucky to get alternative jobs, and therefore, to escape from economic sufferings, does not suggest a complete absence of a situation similar to that faced by our respondents. Many Western studies cast light on this fact.²⁷

Says Eldridge:

"A more than usually clear example of community breakdown as a product of specific change in the industrial sphere, is located in Cottrell's American study: Death by Dieselisation: A Case Study in the Reaction to Technological Change. Caliente had been built as a service point for steam engines. The advent of the diesel engine meant that the community was no longer necessary for the railroad company. This meant in practice that the community simply shrivelled up....."

And what Cottrell is emphasizing is the fact that communities are necessarily dependent upon

27. As emphasized in the introductory chapter of this report, many Western scholars have challenged the assumption of equilibrium in labour market in capitalistic countries. Mukherjee, for example, writes: "In the event the assumption that full employment would absorb all available labour has turned out to be false. And by their hiring-and-firing policy employers have demonstrated the falsity of the homogeneity assumption. Op. cit., p.34.

outside groups or interests which may subordinate the interests of the local community to wider economic interests. Virtue is penalized rather than revealed. The citizens discover that market forces determine their destiny. Here, then, one encounters a persuasive sense of injustice and demoralization the marks of anomie - as the community succumbs to technological change which it neither invented nor could control."²⁸

The above illustration differs from our case only in that, while in the Cottrell - study, a technological change deprived the community of its livelihood, our respondents starved due to the irresponsible behaviour of their employers. The consequences, however, were similar in both the cases. In spite of the fact, that, the economic activity in U.S.A. - soon after the depression of 1930s, is the main referent of Merton's study, one wonders how he ignores the single most important outcome of that economic depression, i.e., the mass dismissal of factory workers due to the closure of hundreds of industrial units. Merton himself frequently describes the craze for monetary success as the main source of deviant acts. Then, why does he ignore the possibility that deviant acts of some individuals, in turn, may engender anomie in those whose destiny is controlled by the former? The answer could perhaps be given in the words of Gouldner that "..... it is

28. See, Eldridge, J.E.T. - Sociology and Industrial Life (Part II). London, Michael. Joseph Ltd., 1971, p.100-101.

thus the characteristic of functionalist analysis of deviance that it centres around the acceptance and the non-acceptance of culturally prescribed means and ends."²⁹ That acceptance or non-acceptance itself may be the result of the social consequences beyond the control of individuals who turn into deviants, is ignored by Merton.

II. Identification of Respondents According to their Modes of Adaptation:

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Merton introduces the paradigm of anomie to classify various acts of individuals. What kind of responses individuals may emit if they surrender or fail to achieve their cultural goals, is the central theme of the paradigm. For Merton it is not only essential to know the degree of anomie but also to ascertain the distribution of individuals among various modes of adaptation.

"Thus as it is in point to identify the source of differing degrees of anomie in different sectors of society, so it is in point to examine the varying adaptations to anomie and the forces making for one rather than another type of adaptation."³⁰

29. For an interesting discussion on Functional School, see, Gouldner, Alvin W. - The coming Crisis of Western Sociology (1971) (Indian Edition), p.427.

30. Merton, op. cit., p.230.

In what follows, we discuss the class-basis of the modes of adaptation and the respondents' placement into various adaptive categories.

Class-basis of the Modes of Adaptation:

While making an attempt to test the empirical validity of the Merton's categories of adaptation, a number of empirical issues arise. An important proposition that Merton makes is that individual's access to institutional means varies and is limited by a class structure. Therefore, individuals belonging to different social strata display different forms of deviant behaviour. Does it imply that individuals belonging to similar social groups or category would follow a similar form of deviant behaviour? And therefore, could we say that our respondents who faced similar life chances, once deprived of the existing institutional means, would also follow a similar mode of adaptation? If not, then what makes the individuals who, though put in a similar class situation, display different types of deviance? What then, will be the trend of distribution of individuals into various categories of adaptation?

Merton does not give direct answers to these questions. However, here and there, based on the conventional values and norms associated with American culture, he tries to explain 'class-identity' of individual adaptations. For example,

regarding the role of lower and lower-middle class Americans,

Merton observes:

"If we should expect lower class Americans to exhibit Adaptation II - "innovation" - to the frustrations enjoined by the prevailing emphasis on large cultural goals and the fact of small social opportunities, we should expect lower-middle class Americans to be heavily represented among those making Adaptation III, "ritualism". For it is in the lower middle class that parents typically exert continuous pressure upon children to abide by the moral mandates of the society, and where the social climb upward is less likely to meet with success than among the upper middle class. The strong disciplining for conformity with mores reduces the likelihood of Adaptation II and promotes the likelihood of Adaptation III. The severe training leads many to carry a heavy burden of anxiety. The socialization patterns of the lower middle class thus promote the very character structure most predisposed toward ritualism, and it is in this stratum, accordingly, that the adaptive pattern III should most often occur.³¹

Thus, ritualism according to Merton is mainly the property of the lower-middle class.

Regarding the Adaptation II, "innovation", though Merton admits that white-collar crime- a form of the Adaptation II, is quite frequent in the top economic strata, nevertheless, he also states that the greatest pressures toward deviation are exerted upon the lower strata.³²

31. Op. cit., p.205

32. Op. cit., p. 196-198.

Which class is more sympathetic toward the Adaptation IV "retreatism", is not explicit in Merton's writings. From his illustrations, however, it appears that retreatists may cross class-boundaries. For example, about working class, he writes: "Further evidence of this mode of response is found among workers who develop a state of psychic passivity in response to some discernible extent of anomie."³³

He also reminds us about Durkheim's conception of "anomie of prosperity" where sudden disruptions in economic activities, lead individuals to withdraw from social life.³⁴ Other examples of retreatism given by Merton are of widowed, psychotics, pariahs, out-casts, vagrants, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug-addicts who may belong to lower as well as upper strata of a society.³⁵

In spite of Merton's claim that the adaptation "retreatism" may cross class-boundaries, the fact that persons from lower class may tend more to choose this mode of adaptation, cannot be ignored. Thus, Eldridge remarks that the ranks of the long term unemployed exemplify many such cases.³⁶ Also, it is everybody's guess that the categories of individuals

33. Op. cit., p.241-242.

34. Op. cit., P. 242.

35. Op. cit., p.207.

36. See, Eldridge, op. cit., p.128.

like vagrants, outcasts, tramps, etc., identified by Merton as retreatists, largely belong to the lower strata of society. Thus taking an overall view, it can be said that "retreatism" though may cross class- boundaries, is mainly a property of lower class.

Regarding the Adaptation- V "rebellion" Merton observes that the rising class is more prone toward this category. In his own words:

"Yet, as has so often been noted, it is typically members of a rising class rather than the most depressed strata who organize the resentful and the rebellious into a revolutionary group.³⁷

To summarise the discussion on the class- basis of the modes of adaptation, we observe that no explicit indicators are available to reflect any definite trend. However, it appears that the extent of internalisation of cultural values associated with the life- chances of a particular segment of society, mainly guide the tendency to follow a particular form of deviance. As, Cloward remarks: "Values in other words, exercise a canalizing influence, limiting the choice of deviant adaptations for persons variously distributed throughout the social system."³⁸ Further research

37. Ibid, p.211.

38. Cloward, op. cit., pp. 164-74.

is necessary for reaching definite conclusions in this context. However, based on the above facts, if we arrange various modes of adaptation by their class basis, we get a classification as shown in Table 8.2.

TABLE 8.2

Class Basis of the Modes of Adaptation

Mode of Adaptation	Social Identification	
	Lower class	Upper class
Innovation	++	+
Ritualism	+	+
Retreatism	++	+
Rebellion	-	+

Here, (++) signifies a higher frequency, (+) a lower frequency and (-) stands for relative absence of a particular mode.

The above distribution shows that except for the category "rebellion", the individuals from the lower strata are prone to all the deviant forms. These conclusions are derived from the observations on American society. Whether they also apply to other societies, remains to be explored. Thus, belonging to the lower strata of Indian society, our respondents should also show a higher tendency for innovation,

and retreatism and negligible tendency for rebellious acts. We try to examine in the forthcoming pages the validity of these hypotheses.

Selection of Test Indicators:

The general controversy about subjectivity vs objectivity while explaining a social phenomenon, was also faced by us while carrying out this test. Merton's stand in this regard is quite clear. He considers the concept of anomie as an objective condition of group life and emphasises the behavioural part of human action. Thus, he considers anomie as the property of social and cultural structure and not that of personality. In his own words:

".... we here define deviant behavior in terms of the relationship of action to institutionalized expectations, and not in terms of its relationship to personality structure... therefore, the pathology of personality is not, as such a subject matter for the sociology of deviant behavior".³⁹

Confining ourselves to Merton's approach, once we succeed in identifying the nature of deviant acts, it will not be difficult to distribute the respondents into various categories of adaptation. Thus, for example, during his lay-off period to carry his living, the rickshaw pulling by a

39. See, Merton in: Sociology Today , op. cit., pp.462-63.

respondent will be considered to be a ritualistic act as the respondent had surrendered his cultural goals though he stuck to the existing institutional norms. Similarly, a respondent who earned money by theft or "rahajani" (holdup) will be called an innovator. Also, those respondents from Atherton mill who took part in the "Jail Bharo Andolan" (Go-to-Jail Movement) could be considered to demonstrate rebellious activities.

Doing such an exercise, we faced two main problems. First, that categories like "rebellion" and "innovation" were more manifested in the attitudes of many respondents rather in their actual behaviour. Thus, for example, some respondents hated their union leaders as well as political leaders, wished to kill their employers and, if the mills did not restart soon, swore to take recourse to criminal activities like dacoity and robbery. However, in reality, they were engaged in doing some inferior works to make out a living.

Another problem was faced because of the difficulty in collecting information on "innovation". Due to then existing state of emergency in the country, it became extremely difficult to collect information on illegitimate or criminal activities (if any) of our respondents.

In the beginning, we had prepared an interview guide

(see, Appendix No. A) which included question-items on the category "innovation". During the survey, it was found that most of the respondents refused to answer these questions or expressed their ignorance about any such information. We then, tried to collect the information from the neighbours of respondents or from the corner shops in the locality concerned but did not succeed. We also contacted the area police stations in this regard but to no avail. Consequently, the category "innovation" was dropped from the main test of the paradigm. Instead, whatever information on the innovative acts of our respondents, we could collect, is reported in the forthcoming pages, when we discuss in detail the individual adaptations.

To deal with the first problem, that is, the observed difference between the subjective motivation and the actual role-behaviour of our respondents, we had to include both attitudinal and role behavioural tests. In order to ascertain their anomic state, to depend upon the respondents' behavioral acts only, appeared to be an incomplete exercise. However, while going for both objective and subjective tests of the anomic state of our respondents, we adhered to Merton's view that ".... the psychological concept is nevertheless a counterpart of the sociological concept of anomie, and not a substitute for it."⁴⁰

40. Merton, op. cit., p.216.

To measure anomie as subjectively experienced by our respondents, we looked up Srole's scale - considered by many as a standardised measure of anomie. Srole's scale which is mainly an attitudinal measure, can be administered only to assess the degree of anomie. The scale uses the inferential and not the observational data. The items included in the scale represent ".... individual's generalized pervasive sense of 'self-to-others distance' and 'self-to-others belongingness' at one extreme compared with 'self-to-others distance' and self-to-others alienation' at the other pole of the continuum."⁴¹ Or, as Merton puts it, "In part, the scale incorporates items referring to the individual's perception of his social environment, in part, to his perception of his own place within that environment."⁴² Srole uses the following five items to measure anomie:

- (1) There's little use writing to public officials because often they are not really interested in the problems of the average man.
- (2) Now-a-days, a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.

41. See, Mizruchi, *op. cit.*, pp. 645-54.

42. Merton, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

- (3) In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.
- (4) Its hardly fair to bring children into the world with the way things look for the future.
- (5) These days, a person does'nt really know whom he can count on.⁴³

The utility of Srole's scale for our study was limited. There were two reasons for this. First, it was not our purpose to measure the degree of anomie and to relate it to various class or status-groups. As mentioned earlier, our respondents belonged to the same strata of society and therefore were not eligible for testing this hypothesis. Secondly, we found Srole's items defective- atleast while measuring the mode "innovation". Though the test for this category was latter dropped, while conducting a pilot survey, we came across a situation where reliability of Srole's question- items became doubtful. To elaborate, during the closure, a respondent had

43. See, Srole, op. cit., pp.709-16. These items have also been explained by Merton. According to him, "The five items comprising this preliminary scale refer to (1) the perception that community - leaders are indifferent to one's needs; (2) the perception that little can be accomplished in the society which is seen as basically unpredictable and lacking order; (3) the perception that life-goals are receding rather than being realized; (4) a sense of futility and (5) the conviction that one can not count on personal associates for social and psychological support!" See, Merton,

joined a gang of thieves which used to steal motor spare-parts and goods from the Kanpur railway-yard. As alleged by the respondent, the gang had the protection of a police inspector. This respondent not only received a sizable income-sometimes more than Rs.100 a month, but also succeeded in stopping his 'Ahata'-owner from threatening him to vacate his 'Ahata'. When we asked him to respond to the Srole's items, it was observed that he scored even less than those who succeeded in getting some alternative jobs.

If we analyse the response of this worker in its proper perspective, we will find that his response was not an exception. For example, those racketeers and white collar criminals who multiply wealth through innovatory acts, if asked to respond to Srole's items, will hardly be identified as anomic. Similarly, the owners of the closed mills who are millionaires, if interviewed, may show anxiety because of the bankruptcy of their mills. Whether they will also score high on the Srole's scale, is doubtful.

What appeared to us was that Srole's scale mainly measured the feeling of frustration and despair - and not the normlessness. As also observed by Rushing:

"As others have noted, however, this (Srole's scale) appears not to be a measure of normlessness so much as a measure of despair (e.g., Mier and Bell,

1959), and as such may approximate a measure of "retreatism" more than a measure of normlessness."⁴⁴

Consequently, we used Srole's scale to measure one category of adaptation namely "retreatism". To identify other modes of adaptation: "ritualism" and "rebellion", we devised our own tests comprising a number of statements.⁴⁵ The issues relating to the reliability and the validity of this scale have been discussed in chapter II. From the total scores of various respondents, median values for each adaptive mode were calculated. Those who scored above the median-value for a particular mode of adaptation, were identified as showing a trend toward that adaptation. However, in case of "conformity", no separate test was devised but those who showed no response to any of the deviant categories, were considered as conformists. Based upon this test, we have tried to outline the attitudinal state of the laidoff workers. This we call the "Attitudinal Test". Also, according to their actual-role-behaviour, we distribute the respondents into various modes of adaptation. This we call the "Objective Test". The findings are reported in the following pages.

Results of the Attitudinal Test:

In terms of their attitudinal orientation, the respond-

44. See, Rushing, op. cit., pp. 857-72.

45. For the details of the statements, see Appendix-A.

ents were identified into various categories of adaptation as follows:

TABLE 8.3

Respondents' Modes of Adaptation According to their Attitudinal States.

Mode of adaptation	Frequency	Mode of adaptation	Frequency
Conformity	6(2.4)*	Ritualism+ Retreatism	36(14.4)
Ritualism	39(15.6)	Rebellion +Retreatism	7(2.8)
Retreatism	65(26.0)	Rebellion +Retreatism +Ritualism	11(4.4)
Rebellion	67(26.8)	No response	19(7.6)

N = 250 (100)

* Figures in the parentheses are percentages.

According to the above table, there were 177 respondents (71 percent of the total sample) who displayed specific modes of adaptation. The lowest percentage (2.4) was that of conformists, followed by ritualists (15.6 percent). Retreatists and rebels were almost equal in number (about 26 percent).

There were 54 respondents (21.6 percent in the total sample) who did not follow any pure category. Their attitude reflected mixed orientations. Among these mixed categories,

the highest percentage (14.4) was of those who showed both ritualistic and retreatistic attitudes. They were followed by 7(2.8 percent) who appeared to show both rebellious and retreatistic tendencies. There were 11(4.4 percent) such respondents who showed an orientation toward all kinds of deviant acts - except "innovation". For example, many of them cursed the existing economic system, wanted to change everything - if given a chance, but silently waited for the reopening of their mills.

There were as many as 19(7.6 percent of the total sample) respondents who refused to reply. Many of them responded to one part of the test but refused to respond to the other. For example, many of them refused to answer questions related to government, workers' movement, etc. Due to the existing state of 'emergency', this was not totally unexpected.

At this stage, the question arises as to how to interpret these mixed categories. Should we consider that the emergence of these mixed categories may be due to some faulty responses from the subjects and therefore such categories should be dropped from the test? Or, do these categories suggest that at the attitudinal level, an individual may reflect a tendency toward more than one mode of adaptation? Or, does it reflect a transitional state of mind due to

their moving from one mode of adaptation to another? In this regard, Merton himself observed that 'individuals caught up in these contradictions (in the cultural and social structure) can and do move from one type of adaptation to another!⁴⁶

A final answer to the above questions could only be given by carrying out further research in the field. However, the fact that a number of respondents showed a strong tendency toward more than one mode of adaptation, suggests that atleast at the attitudinal level one may simultaneously reflect the preference for more than one mode of adaptation. And therefore, our findings about mixed categories could not be discarded as merely faulty responses of the subjects. The findings also suggest that at the perceptual level, individuals belonging to the same social strata, may reflect more than one form of adaptation. Hence we could conclude that, belonging to the same social class and put in the same labour market, the laid-off workers displayed more than one mode of adaptation at their attitudinal level.

Results of the Objective Test:

For Merton, various modes of adaptation are various

46. See, Merton, R.K. - "Social Conformity, Deviation, and Opportunity Structures: A Comment on the Contributions of Dubin and Cloward", ASR V. 24, No.2, April, 1959, pp. 147-164.

forms of role-behaviour of individuals in a definite social situation. That is, various adaptations are the ways of acting and not psychological determinants. Hence, based upon their role-behaviour, a categorisation of our respondents- according to their modes of adaptation, becomes an important part of the present exercise. In the 'objective test' adaptation-wise distribution of the respondents is discussed below.

Conformity: There were only three respondents (out of a total of 250) who saw no change in their present status. All of them were self employed-engaged in petty retailing, cycle-repairing and running a tea shop. They had considered the closure as inevitable and accepted the changed situation without any significant reaction. In Merton's paradigm, they could be identified as conformists.

Ritualism: Majority of those 145 (58 percent) respondents , who succeeded in getting some reemployment, were engaged in inferior jobs. Their jobs were inadequately paid. Though in their initial phase of job search they had moved from mill to mill, very soon they realised that the current saturation in the labour-market offered no chance for such jobs. Consequently, most of them had accepted the reality and took to whatever jobs- that were available. Thus, they limited their aspirations and to somehow feed their families. became their major concern. In realising this, they mostly stuck to the existing legitimate

means how-so-ever adequate or inadequate they may be. Hence, this was the situation where cultural goals were subordinated but the existing institutional norms were retained.

Out of these 145 reemployed respondents, 3 were identified as conformists, 2 were involved in some innovatory acts while 9 showed a tendency toward retreatism. Therefore, we could say that the remaining 131 out of a total of 145 reemployed respondents, displayed ritualism. There were also those 83 respondents (30.12 percent of the total sample) who tried but could not succeed in getting a new job. Many of them, even after 10 to 12 months of the closure, were in continuous search for a job. Three of them, left with no alternative means, were involved in some innovatory acts. In spite of the fact that the remaining 80 respondents had failed in getting reemployment, they still stuck to the existing norms. Majority of them depended upon borrowings and help from their kith and kin. Since they had not lost their hopes of making some alternative arrangement for their livelihood and accordingly strove for that, they could also be identified as ritualists.

Retreatism: There were 22 (9 percent in the total sample) such respondents who remained without jobs and also did not search for any. They preferred to sit idle and wait for the reopening of their mills. Some of them (6 out of 22) were skilled workers who due to the fear of losing their previous

jobs - if accepted new ones, and also to demonstrate their 'loyalty' to their former employers, preferred to wait. One of these 22 respondents showed inclination to both retreatistic and ritualistic categories.

Majority of these workers (16 out of 22) were above 50 years of age and preferred their retirements instead of searching for some alternative job. If we accept the premise that "..... this mode of response (retreatism) is found among workers who develop a state of psychic passivity in response to some discernible extent of anomie,"⁴⁷ we can easily identify these respondents as retreatists.

Though these 22 respondents, by their acts, could be called retreatists, by the degree of their economic deprivation, they could be separated into two distinct categories. Thus, the majority of those skilled workers who moved toward retreatism, were financially betteroff than the remaining ones. Some of them, at the time of the closure, had bank-balances. Also, enjoying better status among other workers, they found little difficulty in getting money or loans. Entirely different from them, was the condition of those non-skilled workers who sat idle due to their old age or prolonged illness. They were both physically and mentally worn off.

47. Quoted in Merton (1968), op. cit., p.242.

They appeared to lose all zest for life, and therefore, were true retreatists as compared to those idle but economically secure skilled- workers.

During the survey, we had also come across 21 (out of total 250) respondents who frequently starved and were in a state of destitution. Eight of them were those who tried but could not get a job and remained unemployed throughout the closure. One respondent did not search for any job while nine others held some jobs but for a very short duration. Their income from these jobs was almost negligible. There were three more respondents who held jobs for hardly a month and therefore practically remained unemployed. Lack of any financial resources, failure to get an alternative source of livelihood, prolonged illness and old age, etc, were some of the main factors responsible for their state of destitution. They hardly found any motivation in the life. They cursed everybody. They were the true retreatists in Merton's terminology.

Earlier, we had identified those 80 respondents as ritualists, who remained unemployed. This figure also includes the above mentioned 8 respondents who were in a state of destitution. One more respondent who, during the closure, remained idle is also identified as common in both the retreatistic and ritualistic categories. Thus, we came across 9 such respond-

ents who, by their acts, appeared to belong to both ritualistic and retreatistic categories.

Rebellion: To ascertain rebellious acts of our respondents, we recall certain events that mostly occurred in the early period of the closure. In January 1976, 44 workers from Atherton mill were arrested under D.I.R. while launching a "Jail Bharo Andolan" ('go to Jail' movement). The movement was started to pressurise the government for a take-over of their mill. Out of these 44 workers, 2 were included in our sample. In addition to these two, there were 25 others from Atherton mill who claimed to have actively participated in various union- activities. Three of them told us they had met a number of political leaders and ministers for resolving the issue of their mill.

In the case of Laxmi Ratan mill, as discussed in the earlier chapters, the workers hardly participated in any trade- union activity. The result was that Laxmi Ratan workers were not as politically conscious as those of the Atherton mill. Soon after the present closure, some local union leaders tried to mobilise these workers but without significant results. During the emergency two trade unions of Kanpur namely the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) and All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) - affiliated to the Congress and Communist Party (CPI) respectively, emerged as the sole

links with the government. The workers of Laxmi Ratan mill, instead of fighting for a restarting of their mill, preferred to leave everything to these trade-unions.

Another factor that kept Laxmi Ratan workers politically inactive, was their strong belief that Central or State governments would not dare to take-over this mill. The reason for this belief was the strong political connections of one of the owners of this mill. Even many trade unionists of Kanpur remained doubtful, till the date of its take-over, that the government would take over this mill.

The over all result was that no significant rebellious activities were noticed amongst Laxmi Ratan workers. However, their union leaders (mainly belonging to Laxmi Ratan Majdoor Panchayat) repeatedly claimed to have approached various State and Central ministers for representing the workers' case. Similarly, a few workers also told about their involvement in such 'political' activities. At this stage, the question arises whether representations by workers and their leaders to the political leaders and other governmental authorities, could be considered as "rebellious acts"? Based on the Merton's definition of "rebellion" that, "it is the adaptation that leads men outside the environing social structure to envisage and seek to bring into being a new, that is to say, a greatly modified social structure"⁴⁸, the answer will be in

48. Ibid, p.209.

the negative.

Inspite of the fact that due to then existing 'emergency' most of these respondents were handicapped in organising any workers' movement, they were strongly in favour of the transfer of ownership from their previous employers to the government. Their strong desire to bring about this change and their union-activities though inadequate in degree, surely reflected their attitudinal sympathy toward this mode of adaptation. In the total sample, there were 39 (15.6 percent) such respondents who could be identified as rebels. Out of these, 27 were from Atherton mill and 12 from Laxmi Ratan mill. "Rebellion", by itself as a mode of adaptation did not exist as a distinct category. In the early period of closure, some of the respondents could have worked whole-heartedly for bringing about a change in the ownership pattern of their mills; however, by the time we conducted this survey, most of them were exhausted due to the uncertainty about the takeover of their mills by the government. The result was that the workers left their fate in the hands of the influential trade-unionists and silently waited for the outcome. At the time of interviews, some of them were doing new jobs while others had completely withdrawn from any mill-activity and remained idle.

Innovation: As discussed previously, due to certain unavoidable constraints, we had to drop the attitudinal test for

"innovation". However, we tried to collect some indirect information about the possibility of such activities among the respondents. For this, we contacted locality- leaders, union- leaders and heads of various police- stations. No reliable information could be obtained based upon which we could say that some unemployed workers were involved in illegal activities. For example, almost all the police officers of the concerned police- stations denied any such illegal activities by the workers of the closed mills. The following factors, however, should be noted in this context:

- (1) due to the general fear of D.I.R. and M.I.S.A., the respondents might have refrained from such activities,
- (2) the concerned police officers, in order to claim 'the complete control' on law and order situation, might have furnished erroneous information,
- (3) if crimes or other illegitimate acts were carried by our respondents in the localities or places- outside the jurisdiction of the Kanpur city- police and also in case these acts were detected by the police of those areas, their reporting might have also been done at those police stations. Since, we covered only some selected police stations of Kanpur, the information given by them could be incomplete.

In the case of locality- leaders and union leaders, we could only say that whatever information they gave us, was

based on their conjectures. They made statements like: "One worker told me that so-and-so of our department had been involved in such activities"; "I heard that some of the laid-off workers of these mills who reside in our colony have been some criminals"; "If starving workers will not do such activities then who will do"?; and so on.

Obviously such information was mostly based on hearsay and needed verification before being considered authentic. This was not possible for us owing to the limitations of time and resources.

Based on the available facts we came across only five instances of innovatory acts. A brief mention of their activities is given. One respondent was involved in pickpocketing and "rahajani" (hold ups). Another had joined a gang which was involved in theft of motor spare-parts and railway property. One respondent of Laxmi Ratan mill was found to earn money by selling withdrawal forms for PF-refund (which were available free of charge from the PF-office). He also got some commission while helping a worker to withdraw his money. In another case, a Laxmi Ratan worker was alleged to have received money indirectly from the owner for mobilising workers in the latter's favour. The last case was that of a respondent who appeared to get some money by allowing his wife to have illicit sexual relations with others.

The above facts suggest that the information available on "innovation" was incomplete and inadequate. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that innovatory acts were not as frequent among our respondents as visualised by Merton. Even acts like gambling, 'darha' (betting), purchase of lottery tickets, etc., were not significantly reported. As most of the respondents had no regular income, whatever little money from borrowings, PF-refund, reemployment etc., they got, was mostly spent on food. Though, most of the workers found it very difficult to avoid starvation, they did not lose their hopes of returning to their former jobs. Here, we recall our dialogue with a respondent whom we asked: "whether the plight of unemployment had led some workers to become alcoholics or drug addicts? His prompt reply was: "Oh yes, we are addicts not of alcohol - but of hunger".

Our experiences suggest that as there exist differentials in access to legitimate means so is the case with the availability of illegitimate means. Only those individuals, who in their past might have some direct or indirect links with some criminal gangs or such other sources of innovatory acts, were more likely to follow such activities. For example, in the case of that respondent who allowed his wife to have illicit sexual relations, it was alleged by many of his neighbours that, even prior to the closure, his wife's character was doubtful. Therefore, we agree with Cloward's remarks:

".... the notion that innovating behaviour may result from unfulfilled aspirations and imperfect socialization with respect to conventional norms implies that illegitimate means are freely available as if the individual, having decided that "you can't make it legitimately", then simply turns to illegitimate means which are readily at hand whatever his position in the social structure. However these means may not be available"⁴⁹

The information pertaining to the various adaptive categories as discussed above may be summarised in a tabular form as below:

TABLE 8.4

Distribution of Respondents by their Modes of Adaptation (Objective Test)

Mode of Adaptation*	Frequency
Conformity	3(1.20)**
Ritualism	200(80.00)
Retreatism	33(13.20)
Ritualism + Retreatism	9(3.60)
Ritualism + Innovation	2(0.80)
Retreatism + Innovation	3(1.20)
Total	(100)
Number of cases	250

* The adaptive category "rebellion" was not found to occur as a distinct behavioural response. It was seen to be distributed among other modes of

adaptation. When we interviewed these respondents, their enthusiasm toward "rebellion" as compared to the early phase of their unemployment, was subdued. By their behaviourally overt acts, they appeared to appropriately belong to other categories. The "rebellion" is hence not shown in the table as a category.

**Figures in the parentheses are percentages.

The table shows that the highest percentage (80 per cent) of the respondents comprised of ritualists. About 13 percent were identified as retreatists while 1.2 percent appeared to be conformists. The remaining respondents (5.6 percent of the total sample) showed mixed forms of adaptation. Thus, 9 (3.6 percent) respondents showed both ritualistic and retreatistic orientation, while, 3 (1.2 percent) respondents were characterized by "retreatism" and "innovation". There were 2 (0.8 percent) respondents who appeared to be both ritualists and innovators.

"Rebellion" did not appear as an independent category. Respondents showing an orientation toward "rebellion" also displayed other forms of deviance. What in reality we observed was that, in the early stage of the closure, most of ~~such~~ individuals were actively participating in rebellious acts. However, as the closure lengthened the morale of these workers gradually weakened. The result was that the early state of active militancy was slowly reduced to only a verbal resentment against the government and the mill owners. The urgency of making a

living and the uncertainty about the reopening of their mills, led the respondents toward "ritualism" and "retreatism".

An overwhelming number (80 percent) of the respondents had turned toward "ritualism". The dominance of this pattern may be due to the common feeling that the closure was only a passing phase and sooner or later they would return to their previous jobs. This common hope coupled with the non-availability of comparable jobs in a highly competitive and saturated labour market, turned the majority of our respondents ritualistic - an overt behaviour which is institutionally permitted.

A Comparison of the Two Tests:

To compare Attitudinal Test with Objective Test, will be a meaningful exercise. Looking at Tables (8.3 and 8.4) we find that, while in actual behaviour, more than three-fourth of the respondents appeared to be ritualistic, at their attitudinal level only 15.6 percent of the respondents showed this tendency. On the contrary, while almost an equal number of respondents (about 26 percent in the total sample) reflected a mental tendency toward retreatism and rebellion seperately, in the actual behaviour their percentage was about half. Also, in actual behaviour, "rebellion" mode did not exist in a seperate form but was associated with other categories. This was not, however, the case at the attitudinal level, where "rebellion" existed as an independent and significant category.

As regards the mixed categories, the combination of "ritualism" and "retreatism" was found to be frequent both at the attitudinal and the actual levels of role-behaviour of respondents. However, the frequencies at the two levels differed. Thus while 19 percent of the respondents showed a mental tendency toward both "ritualism" and "retreatism", there were only 3.6 percent of the respondents who actually showed a behavioural combination of these categories. As regards their psychological perception, two more significant observations were made. First, there was a large number of respondents (27 percent in the total sample) who showed rebellious attitude while, in actual practice, this form of adaptation did not exist as an independent category. Secondly, at their attitudinal level, we came across 11 (4.4 percent) such respondents who appeared to reflect all sorts of deviant behaviour (except "innovation"). This category was absent in the Objective Test. As regards "conformity", there were only a few who appeared to follow this category. Though, those who showed this adaptative orientation, were twice as much (2.4 percent in the total sample) as those (1.2 percent) who actually practised it.

The above findings suggest that both in their orientation as well as in their acts, some respondents - though small in number, followed a combination of more than one forms of adaptation. Therefore, this 'mixed category' cannot merely be

discarded as a consequence of a faulty administration of the above tests. Merton's proposition that 'individuals caught up in these contradictions (in the cultural and social structure) can and do move from one type of adaptation to another', only partially explains these mixed categories. The observed cases of some respondents who, in their early stage of unemployment, showed rebellious activities and later turned into ritualists, are illustrative of the mixed responses.

There were instances where a number of workers wanted to teach a 'lesson' to their employers and political leaders but the fear of D.I.R. and MISA constrained them to be mere spectators. This fact, supports Cloward's observations that, like legitimate means, illegitimate means are also not readily available to everyone. An individual may be willing to adopt wrong means to earn money but there exist constraints in the availability of illegitimate means. And therefore, the emergence of the above 'mixed categories' of adaptations could be justified in Merton's paradigm of anomie only after modifying the original model on the lines suggested by Cloward:

"Apart from both socially patterned pressures, which give rise to deviance, and from values, which determine choices of adaptations, a further variable should be taken into account: namely, differentials in availability of illegitimate means"⁵⁰

50. Op. cit., pp. 164-76.

A major inference that we derive from the Objective Test, is that the majority of the respondents appeared to follow "ritualism". If we agree with Merton that 'the role behaviour of ritualists is not generally considered deviant'⁵¹, our observations suggest that the majority of these respondents remained essentially 'non-deviants' when faced with the situation of their loss of jobs and income. They had limited their aspirations to somehow feed their children. To achieve this, they mostly adhered to institutional norms. Many of them were mentally disturbed and showed strong tendency toward "retreatism" or "rebellion". However, in reality, they had taken to inferior occupations and silently waited for the government to take-over their mills. Thus, submissive by acts while alienated in their attitudes, was the main response pattern of our respondents.

III. Variables Associated with Different Modes of Adaptation:

Our last concern in this chapter is to ascertain the various factors that led the respondents to choose a specific mode of adaptation. For example, what made a worker prone to "ritualism" rather to "retreatism"? Or, by age, skill level, caste, etc., who preferred to adopt "rebellion" and not "ritualism"? We here try to deal with these questions.

51. See, Merton (1968), op. cit., pp. 238-241.

The relationship between independent variables and the modes of adaptation, is examined for both Attitudinal and Objective Tests. The exercise in the case of Objective Test, covers only three modes of adaptation, namely, "ritualism", "retreatism" and "rebellion". Mixed categories showing trend toward more than one form of adaptation, are excluded from this exercise. Further, the reasons for excluding "conformity" and "innovation" were that while "conformity" appeared as an exceptional category - adopted only by 3 respondents, in case of "innovation" no reliable information was available.

The independent variables selected for examining their relationship with the modes of adaptation were of two types: the personal characteristics like age, caste, religion and education, and other factors affecting the role behaviour of our respondents during their unemployment period. In case of Objective Test, distribution of respondents into various forms of adaptation by their personal characteristics and other associated factors is given in Table 8.5 as follows:

TABLE 8.5

Respondents' Modes of Adaptation (in Objective Test) according to their Personal Characteristics and Associated Factors
(in percent)

Sl.No.	Variables	Modes of Adaptation			Distribution in the original sample
		Ritualism	Retreatism	Rebellion*	
1. Mill Worked at					
	Laxmi Ratan	59.00	36.36	30.77	58.00
	Atherton West	41.00	63.64	69.23	42.00
		<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
		N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250
2. Age (years)					
	Below 30	14.50	3.03	12.82	13.60
	30 - 40	35.00	9.09	53.85	31.60
	40 - 50	29.50	21.21	30.77	28.40
	Above 50	21.00	66.66	2.56	26.40
		<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
		N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250
3. Religion					
	Hindu	77.00	66.67	79.49	75.10
	Moslem	23.00	33.33	20.51	24.90
		<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
		N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 249

* The fact that the total frequencies in the middle three columns of Table 8.5, exceed 250, is due to the inclusion of the category "rebellion" which did not exist as an independent category but was noted along with the other two categories (i.e. "ritualism" and "retreatism").

4. Caste (Hindus)

Upper castes	26.62	57.69	70.00	30.00
Lower Castes	73.38	42.31	30.00	70.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 134	N = 22	N = 31	N = 187

5. Education

Illiterate	41.00	42.42	28.21	44.40
5 Yrs.at school	35.50	30.30	46.15	32.80
8 Yrs.at school	16.50	21.21	20.51	16.00
More than 8 years at school	7.00	6.06	5.13	6.80
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250

6. Skill level

Non-skilled	89.5	72.73	89.74	88.40
Skilled	10.5	27.27	10.26	11.60
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250

7. Job Nature

Permanent	80.00	93.94	76.92	82.8
Subsistute	12.00	6.06	20.51	9.2
Temporary	8.00	-	2.56	8.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250

8. Family Expenditure(during closure)
(Rs.)

Below 100	33.50	93.94	35.90	49.79
100 - 200	56.00	6.06	56.41	32.93
200 - 300	10.50	-	7.69	13.58
Above 300	-	-	-	3.71
	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
	N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 243

9. Reemployment

Reemployed	65.5	-	53.85	58.00
Never Employed	34.5	100.00	46.15	42.00
	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
	N = 200	N = 33	N = 39	N = 250

A similar table was prepared for Attitudinal Test:

TABLE 8.6

Respondents' Modes of Adaptation (in the Attitudinal Test)
according to their Personal Characteristics and Associated
Factors

Sl.No. Variable	<u>Modes of Adaptation</u>			Distribution in the origi- nal sample
	Ritualism	Retreatism	Rebe- llion	

1. Mill worked at

Laxmi Ratan	56.41	53.85	38.81	58.00
Atherton West	43.59	46.15	61.19	42.00
	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>	<u>(100)</u>
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

2. Age (years)

Below 30	7.69	9.23	16.42	13.60
30 - 40	23.08	35.38	40.30	31.60
40 - 50	33.33	32.31	25.37	28.40
Above 50	35.90	23.08	17.91	26.40
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

3. Religion

Hindu	66.67	70.77	77.61	75.10
Moslem	33.33	29.23	22.39	24.90
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 249

4. Caste

Upper castes	26.92	21.74	34.62	30.00
Lower castes	73.08	78.26	65.38	70.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 26	N = 46	N = 52	N = 187

5. Education

Illiterate	51.28	58.46	25.37	44.40
5 Yrs. at school	30.77	26.15	38.81	32.80
8 Yrs. at school	12.82	10.77	28.36	16.00
More than 8 years at school	5.13	4.62	7.46	6.80
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

6. Skill level

Non-skilled	94.87	93.85	97.01	88.40
Skilled	5.13	6.15	2.99	11.60
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

7. Job Nature

Permanent	80.4	78.8	84.4	82.8
Subsistute	10.8	10.8	8.4	9.2
Temporary	8.8	10.4	7.2	8.0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

8. Family Expenditure
(during the closure)
(Rs.)

Below 100	10.26	81.54	41.79	49.79
100 - 200	33.33	16.92	50.75	32.93
200 - 300	56.41	1.54	5.97	13.58
Above 300	-	-	1.49	3.71
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 243

9. Reemployment

Employed	87.18	13.85	64.18	58.00
Never employed	12.82	86.15	35.82	42.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
	N = 39	N = 65	N = 67	N = 250

In order to examine any meaningful relationship between the independent variables and the modes of adaptation, we compare the frequency distribution in the original sample with those in the objective and the attitudinal tests respectively. These frequencies were converted into percentages to give comparable figures. Percentages in the original sample were considered as expected percentages while the percentages observed in the tests were taken as observed percentages. Chi-square values were then calculated to examine if the distribution of respondents corresponding to a particular variable differed in a mode of adaptation when compared to the distribution in the original sample.⁵² This exercise was repeated for both Attitudinal and Objective Tests. A significant deviation from the original frequency distribution, thus, suggested a relationship between the variable and the mode of adaptation for which the relationship was examined. Only those chi-squares which were found significant, that is, which established a relationship, are included in Table 8.7.

The table suggests that variables like age, caste, skill level, mill worked at (prior to the closure), family expenditure (during the closure) and reemployment were some

52. Chi-squares calculated from these percentages were multiplied by $N/100$ (N = Number of frequencies) in order to adjust to the actual frequencies.

TABLE 8.7

Significant Chi-square values between the Modes of Adaptation and the Independent Variables.

<u>Attitudinal Test</u>		<u>Objective Test</u>	
Relationship between	Value of Chi sq.	Relationship between	Value of Chi sq.
<u>1. Ritualism and</u>		<u>1. Ritualism and</u>	
(a) Family Expenditure	$X^2=236.02$ df = 3 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.92	(a) Family Expenditure	$X^2=24.95$ df = 3 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.32
<hr/>		<hr/>	
(b) Reemployment	$X^2= 48$ df = 1 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.74	<u>2. Retreatism and</u>	
<hr/>		(a) Age	$X^2= 19.55$ df = 3 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.62
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<u>2. Retreatism and</u>		(b) Caste	$X^2= 8.06$ df = 1 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.45
(a) Family Expenditure	$X^2= 22.39$ df = 3 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.5	<hr/>	
<hr/>		(c) Family Expenditure	$X^2= 16.74$ df = 3 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.58
(b) Reemployment	$X^2= 40.9$ df = 1 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.61	<hr/>	
<hr/>		(d) Reemployment	$X^2= 37.88$ df = 1 $P < 0.01$ C = 0.73
<hr/>		<hr/>	

2. Rebellion and

(a) Mill worked at $X^2 = 5.53$
 $df = 1$
 $P < 0.02$
 $C = 0.27$

3. Rebellion and

(a) Mill worked at $X^2 = 6.69$
 $df = 1$
 $P < 0.01$
 $C = 0.39$

(b) Caste $X^2 = 19.25$
 $df = 1$
 $P < 0.01$
 $C = 0.53$

of the factors showing causal relationship with various forms of adaptation. Among them, family expenditure and reemployment were two such variables that occurred in various adaptations as well as in both the tests. On the other hand, age appeared only once. In both the tests, family expenditure showed a relationship with "ritualism". Thus, those who were capable of spending relatively more on their families (during the closure) appeared to be more ritualistic. As, the reemployment was the main source of livelihood, it was expected that this variable should also show relationship with "ritualism". In the case of the Attitudinal Test, it was found true while the relationship was absent in the case of the Objective Test. It may appear a bit surprising due to the fact that in the Objective Test, out of those 200 respondents who adopted "ritualism"

as many as 131 (65.5 percent) were those who were reemployed. This unexpected observation was due to the presence of those 9 (34.5 percent) unemployed respondents who, inspite of their prolonged unemployment, showed ritualistic mode of behaviour. These respondents, though unemployed, succeeded in getting some monetary help from other sources like their relatives, refund of their PF, borrowings, etc. Moreover, they had not lost their hopes and during the survey were found to be continuously searching for some job. Hence, it was due to the inclusion of this category of respondents that in the Objective Test, the reemployment appeared to show no relationship with "ritualism".

In the Objective Test, as many as four variables appeared to be associated with "retreatism". These variables were: age, caste, family expenditure and reemployment. In the case of the Attitudinal Test, only the last two variables were related to "retreatism". Thus, those who were unable to get some alternative job and consequently spent less on their families, moved toward this mode of adaptation. And this was true both as regards their perception and acts. However, in the Objective Test, we have also observed that those who were old or belonged to the upper castes, were more inclined toward "retreatism".

The fact that the aged respondents were at a loss, as

regards their reemployment chances, made them more vulnerable to adverse situations and consequently more likely to get alienated from social life. However, the fact that a large number of the upper caste respondents preferred to sit idle and wait for the reopening of their mills, easily suggests their preference for "retreatism". We came across many upper caste Hindus who, due to their relatively better financial background, could afford to wait in idleness. A number of them throughout the closure depended upon their kith and kin.

In the case of the Attitudinal Test, caste showed no relationship with "retreatism". It may be due to the fact that many lower caste respondents (including lower class Moslems), though reemployed, were hardly able to make a living. Their job was irregular and inadequately paid. Therefore, though sticking to the existing institutional norms, their economic deprivation filled them with frustration and despair - with the result that, along with the upper- caste Hindus, they also scored high on the attitudinal scale of "retreatism". This fact also suggests that Srole's scale of anomie is more a measure of feeling of alienation and despair than a measure of the actual role behaviour of individuals.

As mentioned earlier, in our Objective Test, we did not find "rebellion" as an independent category. However, in their attitude, many respondents showed strong tendencies

toward this adaptation. That such a tendency was more common among Atherton Workers, is supported by both the tests. As revealed earlier, the past history of this mill suggests a stronger politicisation of its workers. For many years, the mill had been an arena for both the managements and the union leaders of the city to test their strengths. It will not be an exaggeration to say that it was due to the unending efforts of Atherton workers and their leaders, that the Central Government took over both the mills. Consequently, this strong political awareness observed amongst the Atherton workers, was not surprising.

One more factor in the Objective Test that appeared to be related with "rebellion" was caste. During the survey it was observed that many upper caste respondents preferred to sit idle throughout the closure than accept inferior jobs - the only kind available in the labour market. This state of idleness associated with their relatively better literacy level and their past record of involvement in union-activities, made them verbally hostile. Some of them, in the early phase of the closure, had tried hard to mobilise the workers for an organised movement against the mill owners. Such an activism gradually gave way to despondency as the closure period lengthened and the state of 'emergency' precluded the possibilities of a drawn out workers' struggle.

The Inadequacy of the Merton's Schema:

After doing this exercise, an important question arises: what is the utility of Merton's paradigm of anomie in understanding the 'after-closure' experiences of the laidoff workers? The answer that emerges from the analysis, suggests that the paradigm is largely unhelpful in the present situation. The following points bring out its inadequacy as an explanatory framework:

I. The situation (American society) that was the source of Merton's hypotheses, differed from the present situation. Our respondents mostly originated from the same, i.e., low socio-economic strata of Indian society and were placed under almost similar life conditions. They, hence, belonged to a similar status-stratum and their life goals were different from those of the upper strata of Indian society. It was observed that the cultural goals of 'wealth', 'power' and 'success' are not universally shared by different socio-economic strata of Indian society. Indian upper, upper-middle and middle classes display the competitive striving for wealth, position and professional success whereas the aspirational level of the low socio-economic stratum, to which our respondents belonged, is characterised mainly by a continuous struggle for the 'felt needs' of life. Therefore, the assumption of the universality of cultural goals made by Merton does not hold true in the present case.

II. Merton posits that the individuals caught in socio-cultural 'constraints' adopt patterned anomic behaviour because of their origin from different status-groups and thence having differential access to the existing institutional means. It thus implies that our respondents belonging to the same status-group and facing the same situation of economic deprivation, should also adopt a single mode of adaptation. This however did not occur and it was observed that their 'after-closure' experiences, attitudes and responses varied. This creates doubt about the validity of Merton's above proposition.

III. Merton's contention that only those individuals become anomic who, either replace cultural goals/institutional means by some instrumental goals/means, or, sacrifice one at the cost of the other, was not borne out in the context of the situation faced by the laidoff workers. On the contrary, here was a situation where, for no fault of their own, the respondents were deprived of their institutional means of survival. It was a situation where their 'fate-makers' (the employers) had been engaged in the deviant activities themselves and which in turn resulted in the withdrawal of the existing institutional means of livelihood of the workers. Therefore, the social pressures turning an individual into a deviant, may not necessarily emanate from the individual himself because he accepts or rejects the existing cultural goals or institutional means.

They may operate due to some external factors - beyond the control and choice of individuals.

IV. As regards the relevance of the modes of adaptation to understand the alternative role-behaviour of the unemployed workers, it was found that, though belonging to the same social strata and put in a similar anomic situation, our respondents followed different modes of adaptation. Here again, if Merton is to be followed, our respondents should have shown a higher tendency toward "innovation" and "retreatism". According to Merton, these are the characteristic properties of the lower-classes primarily. It was however observed that more than two-thirds of the respondents had moved toward "ritualism" and the remaining ones followed "retreatism" and some mixed categories of adaptation. "Innovation" was observed hardly in two percent cases. Our observations tend to support Cloward's argument that, like legitimate means, the availability of illegitimate means is also limited in a society.

V. In accordance with Merton's views the attitudinal test of anomic behaviour was considered to be a subjective 'counterpart' of the actual overt anomic behaviour of the respondents. It was hence expected that the results of the attitudinal test would show a broad empirical convergence with the results of the objective test of anomic. On the contrary, the two tests yielded quite divergent results. Retreatists and rebellious

in their subjective attitudes while ritualists in their overt behaviour, was the main response-pattern of a majority of workers. If we agree with Merton that the ritualists are not really deviants, then a majority of the laidoff workers (80 percent) remained essentially 'non-deviants', when faced with the sudden withdrawal of their existing institutional means of livelihood. Most of them were mentally disturbed and showed strong tendencies toward "retreatism" and "rebellion". In practice however they had taken to inferior and poorly paid occupations - the only kind available in the Kanpur labour market.

The 'after-closure' role-behaviour of the laidoff workers may be seen to be better explained by Mrs. Robinson's concept of 'disguised unemployment'. Though it was possible to distribute the respondents into various modes of adaptation, the model hardly explained the prevalent situation. Lack of fit between the model and the empirical situation led to the emergence of 'mixed categories' of adaptation for which no provision exists in the Merton schema. At best his paradigm served as an inadequate classificatory and descriptive device devoid of meaningful insights into the dynamics of a complex problem situation.