Consumers buying fish at the model Besant Nagar fish market

PART A

FISH CONSUMPTION:

FINDINGS OF QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

1. THE SAMPLE

The research was carried out from 12.7.91 to 3.8.91 using the methodology already outlined in Section II. The following sections (1.1 to 1.3) describe and classify the sample by several different variables and indicate the incidence of consumption of high protein foods by income and occupational groupings.

1.1 *Classification of households in Madras city*

Respondents were asked about their regular consumption of fish and fish products as well as of chicken, mutton, eggs, milk etc. On the basis of their answers they were classified as: -

(i) Households consuming fish and fish products and other non-vegetarian food items.

(ii) Households consuming non-vegetarian food items, but not consuming fish.

(iii) Vegetarian households consuming milk and eggs only.

It was found that of the households in the Madras Urban Agglomeration, 91 per cent are non-vegetarian consuming fish, 2 per cent are non-vegetarian, not consuming fish, and 7 per cent are vegetarian consuming only milk and eggs. However, analysis by income indicates an increase in

vegetarians with income, with 17 per cent and 26 per cent of them being among those in the Rs 2001-4000 and over Rs 4000 income groups respectively (see Figure 2).

Analysis of households by the age of the housewife indicates an increase in consumption of fish in the lower age group. This, together with the fact that about 23 per cent of Brahmin households, traditionally strIctly vegetarian, consume fish, could possibly suggest an increasing tendency to eat fish/meat etc. even in traditionally vegetarian households (see Figure 3).

Analysis by location indicates a marginally higher incidence of consumption of fish and fewer vegetarians in central Madras (see Figure 4).

The vegetarians are more amongst teachers! professors (34 per cent) and officers/executives (20 per cent) (see Figure *5).*

* Readers wishing to obtain additional information or data not presented in the figures/tables in Part A of this report may obtain them by applying to the Post-Harvest Fisheries Project, Bay of Bengal Programme Office, 91 St. Mary's Road, Abhiramapuram, Madras 600 018.

Fig 2. Classification of households in Madras city : By income *(%)*

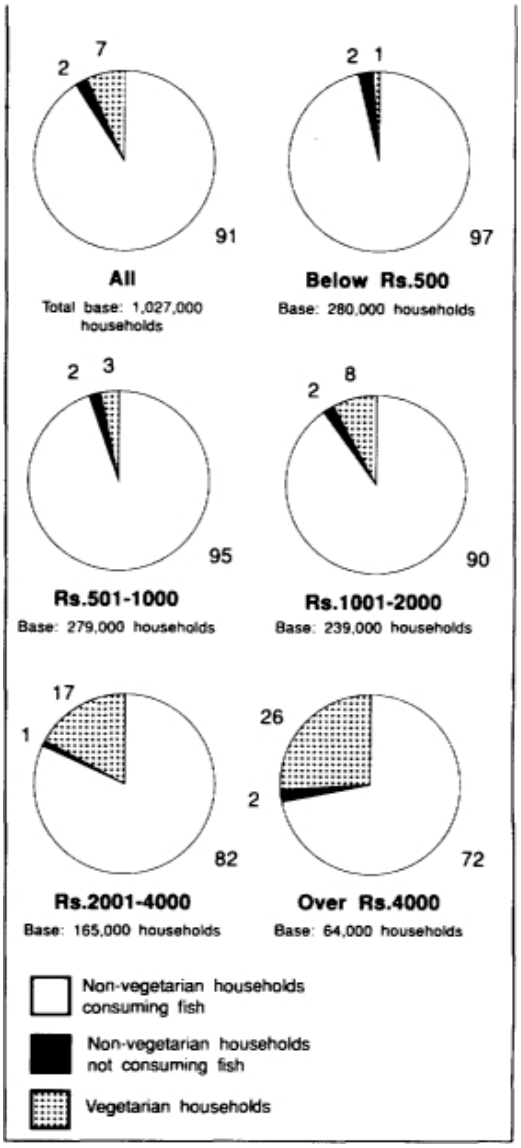


Fig **3. Classification of households** in **Madras** city : **By age of housewife** *(%)*

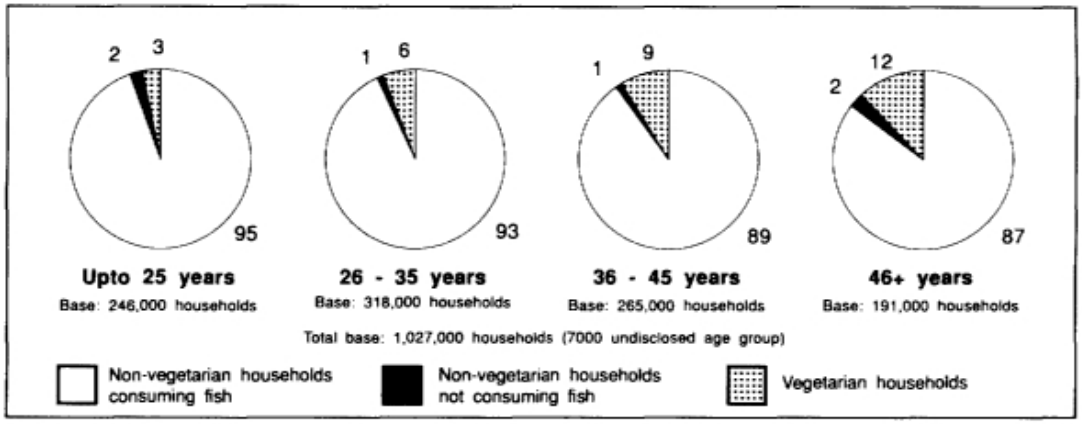


Fig 4. Classification of households in Madras city : By location *(%)*

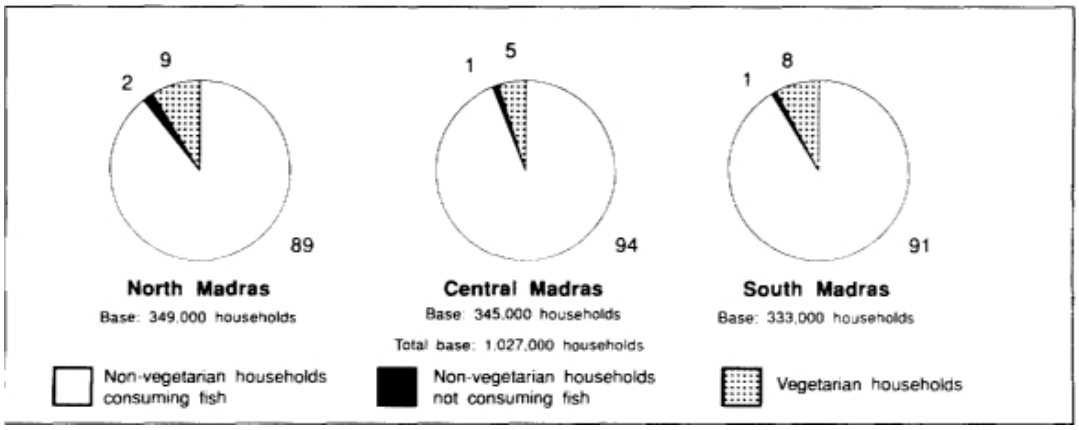
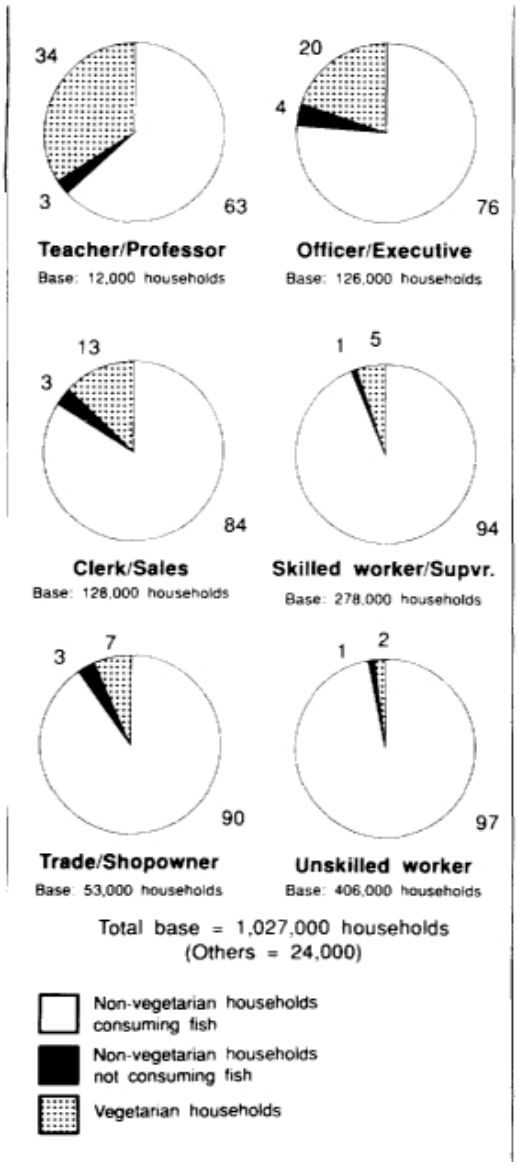


Fig 5. Classification of households in Madras city By occupation of main earner *(%)*



1.2 *Incidence of consumption of some high protein items*

MI selected housewives were asked whether or not the following items were consumed in their households: Milk, eggs, chicken, mutton, fish and fish products, and other meat.

The incidence of consumption of fish products and eggs is found to be the highest, 91 per cent across all income groups — (see Figure 6 overleaf). The incidence of consumption of fish is much higher in the lowest income group (98 per cent) than in the Rs 4.001+ group (72 per cent). This is not surprising, as the proportion of vegetarians in the upper income group is much higher than in (he lower income group. However, in the upper income group. the incidence of consumption of mutton is as high as that of fish/fish products (72 per cent).

The high incidence of consumption of fish products in the lower income group indicates the availability of fish to suit the budget of the consumer. The high incidence of consumption of eggs is only to be expected as it is a "low cost per unit" item that can be easily procured at any time.

While the overall incidence of consumption of milk is only 76 per cent, its consumption is almost universal in households with incomes over Rs 2,000. But it is only 50 per cent in

households with an income below Rs 500. This is again not surprising, as regular consumption of milk would nican incurring a certain fixed expense every month. It would, therefore, seem more economical for this to buy small units of milk/tea from the nearest teashop as and when the need is felt (see Figures 6 and 7.

Fig 6. **Incidence of consumption of some high protein food products : By income (%)**

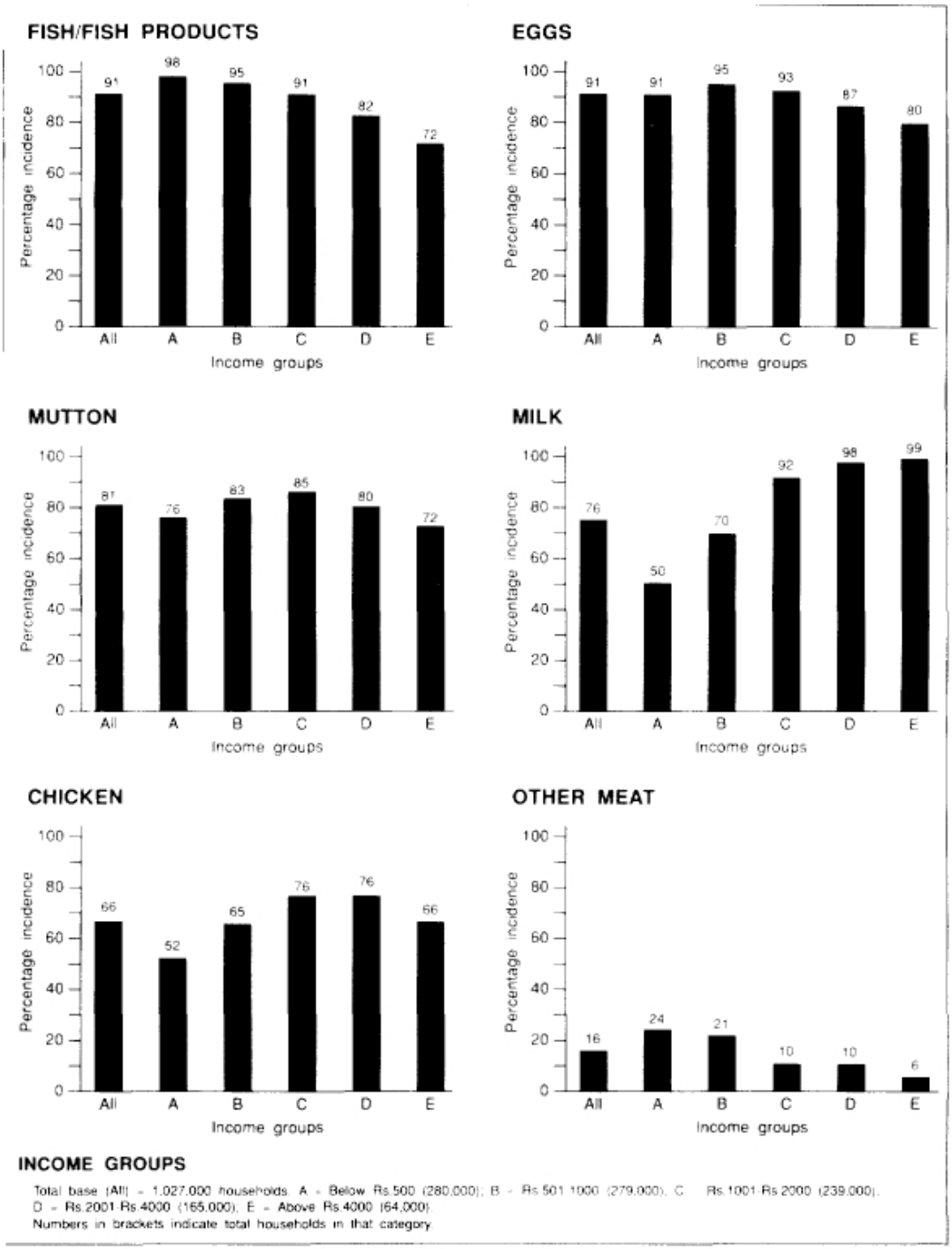
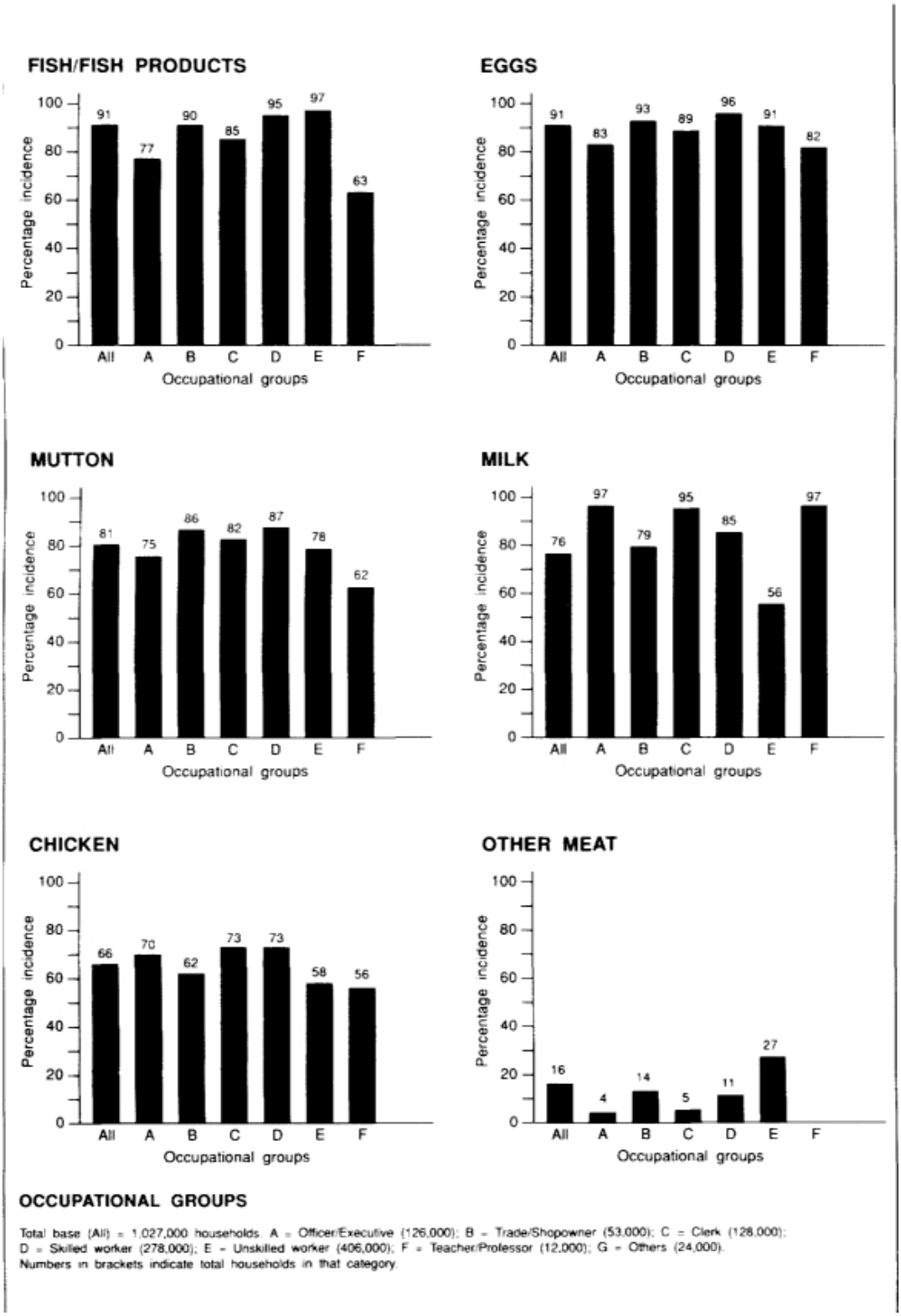


Fig **7. Incidence of consumption of some high protein food products By main earner's occupation** *(%)*



1.3 *Profile of the sample and fish consuming households*

Figures 8 to 13 provide a profile of the sample as well as of those households among them that consume fish. Over half the housewives were below 35. had some schooling and were not working. Most of the main earners had some education and were workers, skilled or unskilled. Over three-quarters of those interviewed were non-Brahmin households and the average household had more than five members.

Fig 8. **Age of the housewife (% in each age group)**

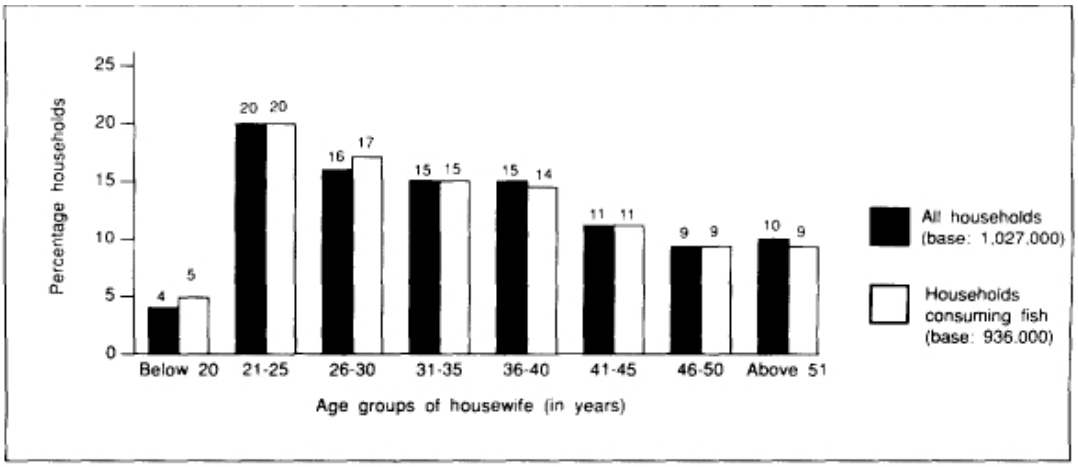


Fig 9. Education of housewife and main earner (%)

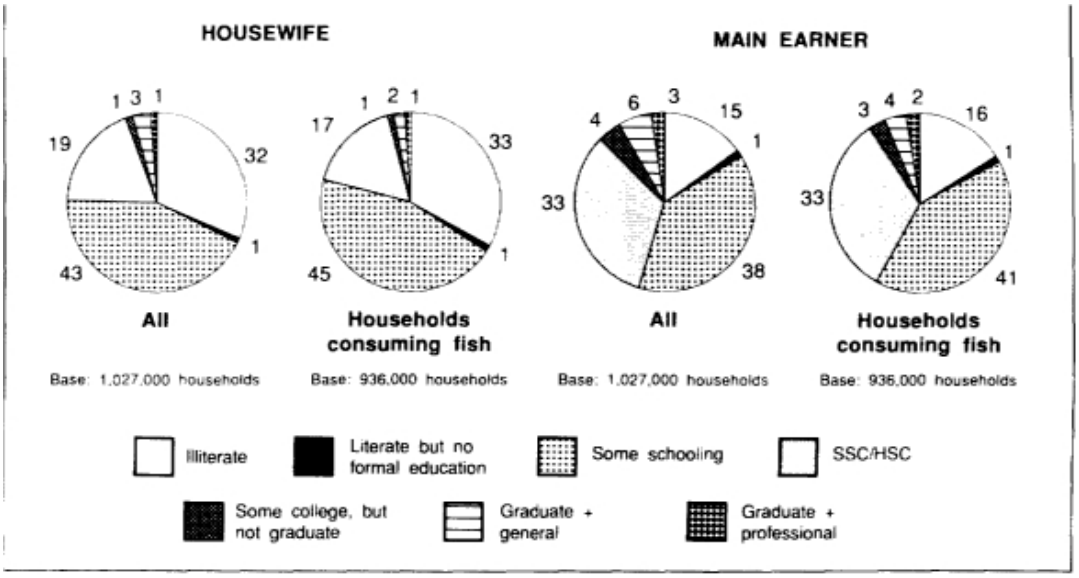


Fig 10. Occupation of main earner *(%)*

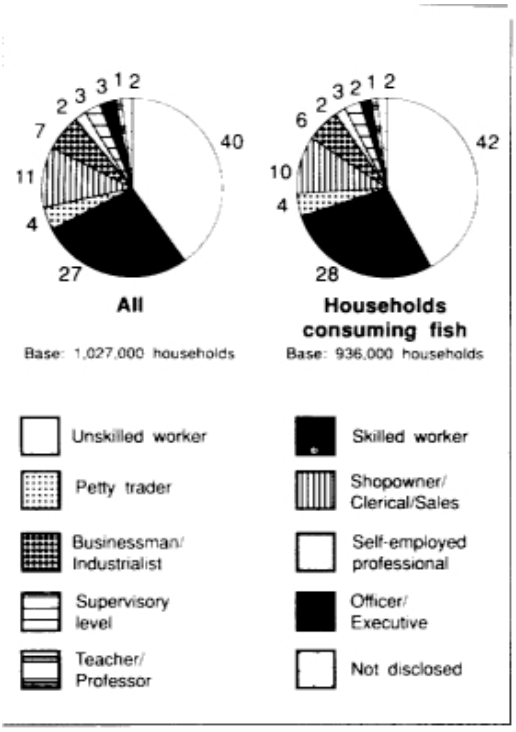


Fig 11. Working status of housewife *(%)*

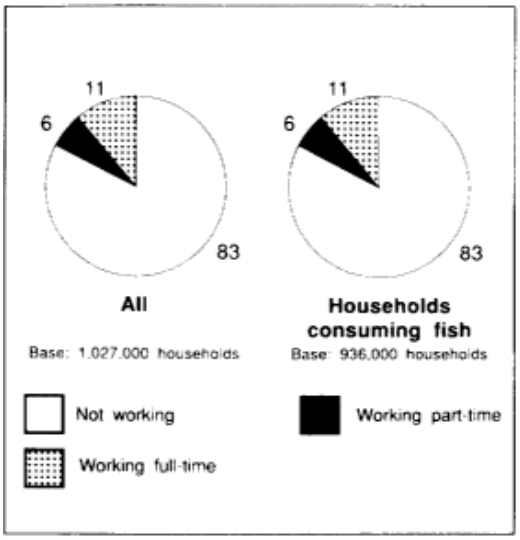


Fig 12. Total family members (%)

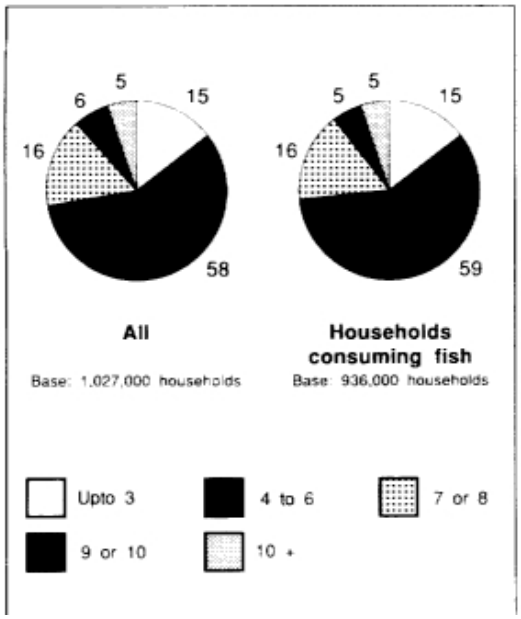
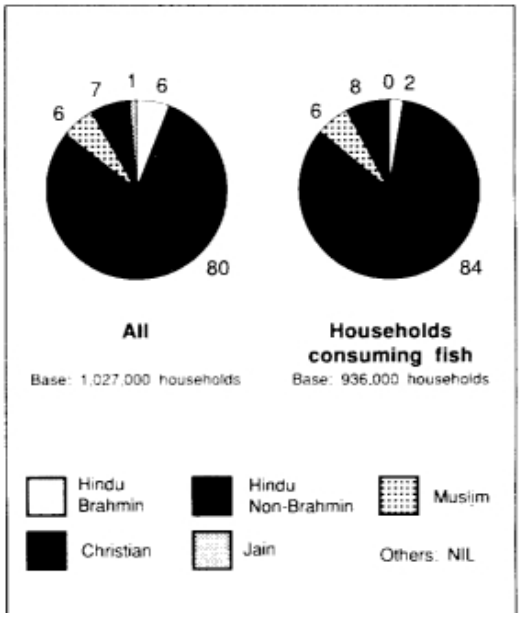



Fig **13. Religion (%)**