CHAPTER -4

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4.1. Introduction

Kerala, one of the federal states of India, is a region known for its high level of achievements in education, healthcare, and social life despite low per capita income. The single most revolutionary development of this age, the IT revolution, is credited with ushering in the concept of current spaces into the public imagination. It was hoped that Kerala, with its high literacy, would provide a good percentage of IT workforce, if the education system was honed accordingly. Sensing the potential for employment in IT Sector, Kerala has made huge investment in public, private and combined sectors to develop IT industry in the state.

4.2. Statement of the Problem

The IT profession is a new glamorous field of employment which gained popularity in modern times. The IT sector is growing very fast and offers immense employment opportunities. The IT professionals mostly spend their time behind computers and engage in dynamic problem solving activities. Their job is different from those of industrial or service sectors. They have certain behavioral and expectation patterns, and they are subjected to the most rigorous selection and training procedures. Because of the peculiar nature of work, they have to face certain problems which affect their personal and family life. In this context a study of IT professionals is significant. The present study is intended to analyze the current socio-economic situation of IT professionals working in Kerala.
4.3. **Significance of the Problem**

IT professionals in Kerala are numbered among those with glamorous job and high salary. Yet, unlike other profession, they face various social problems. While they hold good status in the society and have strong economic background, their social and work environments are positioned below ordinary. While, human relations of the IT professionals are becoming weak, family and social problems are on the rise. Therefore, a significant study on the ‘socio-economic background of IT professionals’ is very essential.

4.4. **Objectives.**

Main objective of the study was to analyse socio economic background of IT professionals. Specific objectives are,

1. To analyze Nature of the work and working conditions
2. To understand Job specific qualification, skill and training requirements.
3. To find out Job stress and its impact on the quality of social and family life.
4. To study Occupational health problems and risks.
5. To understand Extent by which the work affects the family and marital life.
6. To analyze the problem of women IT professionals.

4.5. **Hypothesis**

1. IT professionals have little time to spend with their family members.
2. IT professionals have severe health risks and problems.
3. IT profession changes the attitude and perspective of one’s life.
4. The quality of family environment is poor where both partners are working in IT Sector.
5. IT women professionals face various socio-economic problems.
6. IT professionals face problems in their work.
4.6. Concepts

4.6.1. IT Professionals

According to Tony Rich, “An IT professional is a person engaged in a prestigious white collar occupation that requires extensive formal education and earns a living in information technology”. In this study IT professionals means all those professionals who are working at various levels in TECHNOLOGICAL PARKS, Thiruvananthapuram and INFOPARK, Kochi.

4.6.2. IT Sector

UNESCO defines IT as “Scientific technological and engineering disciplines and management techniques used in information handling and processing, their interaction with man and machine and associated social, economic and cultural matters”. In this study IT means all the day today affairs related to IT and based on IT sector”.

4.7. Universe and Sample

The universe of the study constitutes all the IT professionals working in different companies functioning in TECHNOLOGICAL PARKS, Thiruvananthapuram and INFOPARK, Kochi. From the universe 150 representative samples from each of the above said IT Parks has been selected using simple random sampling procedure.

4.8. Types of Data Collected

This study is based on the primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through observation and questionnaires. Printed questionnaires were made and distributed to all the IT professionals in TECHNOLOGICAL PARKS and INFOPARK. Various group discussions and personal meeting with IT professionals were also employed for collecting the primary data. Secondary data were collected from books, periodicals, journals, newspapers, NASCOM and internet.
4.9. **Research Design**

This research followed the ‘descriptive’ research design.

4.10. **Pilot Study**

At the beginning of research program, a pilot study was conducted by contacting 20 IT professionals in TECHNOPARK. Through this exercise it is established that there was enough scope for a sociological study among IT professionals and IT sector in general. This study helped to determine that IT professionals in Kerala encounter various socio-economic problems. The objective of the pilot study was to ascertain the scope for conducting a research, determining the tools and techniques of data collection, and collecting adequate data for framing questionnaires.

4.11. **Tools Employed for Data Collection**

The main data collection tools adopted for the study were observation and questionnaire. Questionnaires were prepared with a view to obtain the personal information, family data and living conditions, nature of work, working conditions, job and health problems, problems of women etc. Both closed and open questions were used in the questionnaire. Many problems were encountered during data collection. The respondents did not bother to ensure their full participation in the data collection. Though over 1000 questionnaires distributed, only over 500 were responded, among which many of them were with incomplete data. The completed 300 questionnaires among the 500 received, constitute the foot of this research.

4.12. **Pre-Test**

A Pre-Test was conducted with the help of a questionnaire. Five (5) IT professionals were selected for the Pre-Test. This was done to find out whether the
questions were simple enough for the prospective respondents and the data collected using the questionnaire was reliable and valid. Based on the conclusion made from the study some questions were modified, some were added and some were omitted to ensure that the questionnaire would serve the purpose.

4.13. Variables

Two types of variables are there viz., independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables used for this study, are age, sex, caste, education and income. The dependent variables are membership in social networks, time spend with social networks, time spend for leisure, membership in local club, type of savings Job satisfaction, health problems etc.

4.14. Analysis of Data

For the purpose of data analysis, collected data was classified and tabulated manually. Then the data was analyzed on the basis of relationship between selected dependent and independent variables relevant to the problem. Then the statistical test was applied and a report was prepared.

4.15. Case Study

Five case studies were conducted. The cases were selected three (3) from TECHNOPARK and two (2) from INFOPARK. The objective of case study was to support the findings of the empirical study.

4.16. Theoretical Frame Work

A classical theory which explains the emergence of modernity is a German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies. He gave the concept of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. Here tradition is Gemeinschaft and modernity is Gesellschaft. According to Tonnies, the meaning of Gemeinschaft is community and for Gesellschaft, it is society. Our
society has passed from tradition to modernity that is from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft through a rationalizing process on tradition and calculation. Gemeinschaft was the world of close, emotional, face to face ties, attachments to place, ascribed social status and homogeneous and regulated community. ie. It is traditional society. Gesellschaft is characterized by urbanism, industrial life, mobility, heterogeneity and impersonality .In a way, this is precisely a modern society.

Somewhat similar explanation of modernity is given by Emile Durkheim, in his book division of labour in society in the year 1893. He discussed about the evolution of society from mechanical Solidarity to organic solidarity. Traditional society is characterized by mechanical solidarity. Here the individual is fully subordinate to his group and society, community resources are owned collectively, beliefs and sentiments are held in common and they followed repressive laws. Where as modern society is characterized by organic solidarity. Modernity is characterized by specialization, elaborate social stratification, individuality and contractual relations .Durkheim’s view is also true as far as Indian society is concerned.

Both Tonnies and Durkheim viewed that rationalization of society is the key determination of modernization. Among IT professional also we witnessed rationalization.

Then Talcott Parsons also distinguished tradition and modernity on the value orientation in his contribution, pattern variables. According to Parsons there is distinction between particularism and universalism, ascription and achievements.

We have already seen that IT professionals are undergoing work related stress. This is one of the great challenges to the health of working people and the healthiness of their work organization. According to Robert K. Merton, this stress to a certain extent is due to role set .Merton emphasized that ,rather than as a person assuming one role and one status ,they have a status set in social structure that has attached to it a whole set of expected behavior . Each status involves not a single associated role, but an array of
roles. This Merton termed as role set. Role set for Merton is the complement of role relations help in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular status. For eg. The status of IT professionals had its distinctive role set in which are found in pupils, supervisors, managers, professional association etc.

Simmel essays pointed to the nature of network size on interaction and to the likelihood of interaction in ramified, loosely–knit net works rather than groups Castells believed: The information revolution, which began from silicon valley, in California in 1970s, with unprecedented speed, created change in the info sphere of natural and cultural info sphere, and man’s spiritual info sphere. Information technology, and communication provided, possibility of net work society, which people get, in the form of fresh, new identities, and offers new definition from human. Studies have shown that social net works have an important role in social movements, employment, and dynamics of fashion, temporary social interests, forming to features individuals and the rate of disease.

Let us look into Ulrich Beck’s theory of risk society. Beck argues that the risk which is inherent in modern society would contribute towards the formation of a global risk society. In a modern society, there is technological change. And technology produces new forms of risk and we are constantly required to respond and adjust to these changes. The risk society, he argues is not limited to environmental and health risks alone, it includes a whole series of interrelated changes within contemporary social life such as shifting employment patterns, heightened job insecurity, declining influence of traditional family patterns and democratization of personal relations.

The modernity which is found in the present world is called new modernity by Beck. It essentially gives birth to a risk society. The risk in the new society is produced by sources of wealth. The new modernity has enabled the individual to take his own decisions without any reference to his class or caste considerations. In this new modernity the social relations and institutions have to be individually chosen. In fact in this new modern society, social ties and connections have to be established, maintained and renewed by individual themselves.
The present society is characterized by drastic technological changes. The changes and developments in the field of information technology resulted in the emergence of a new group of workers called IT Professionals. They are engaged in a profession which is packed with various risks related to health, family life, social life and personal life as well. The IT professionals never stick to one employer. They always look to cash the opportunities available in the competing world. Their job demands updating of technology, a spirit of competition and many other external factors sue to contemporary national and international changes. These all create a sense of insecurity in job and future life. The IT professionals prefer nuclear families which is free from the restrictions made by traditions and kins. In their family both spouses are employed and enjoy equal status. Their work enables them to earn high salary and they take decisions based on their personal choices.

In India, the IT industry is an emerging field of employment. The number of people stepping into IT profession is increasing day by day. Their job is different from industrial or service sector workers. The problems they encounter are very important because without satisfactory solution to their problems, no progress can be achieved. So it is very essential to understand them and find suitable solution for their problems.