SYNOPSIS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS: A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY OF PROFESSION

INTRODUCTION:

Mankind has entered the information age from an industrial age that prevailed till a few years ago. This sort of change is expected to have a profound impact on the way we live, earn money and deal with warfares it would, therefore, be useful to examine the nature of information and the information technology that is at the root of future opportunities competition and challenges. Information has been there since the beginning. Information technology was also there. But, it is higher generation computer and its wider applications that have made information technology so profound and powerful in the contemporary society.

Revolution in technology has always played a key role in the transformation of society. Its impacts are unaccountable. It is becoming increasingly clear that the growth of computing and communication technology is exceeding our understanding of its economic and social consequences. Various research studies revealed how information technology has affected our society. Futurology as focused its attention in portraying the type of society in which modern men has to exist.

Information technology has engulfed almost all the institutions and organizational sectors of the society. It has come to affect primary institution like the family and secondary institutions like multinational companies all over the world. Information technology has not only affected the institutional network of society but also affected the micro levels. Social relationships are redefined in the context of new information technology that is overseen to us today. For ex. Internet, Multi Media Services etc. have opened up new vistas and channels of
relationships. For example, recently number of articles based on survey has revealed how SMS has exposed extra marital relationships resulting in litigation and divorce. On the other hand, it has changed the life styles of people in different ways. It has also become the part and parcel of daily life in sectors like factories, shipping, banking, business, education, entertainment, science and so on. One more implication of it is on work place and on the workers in the IT companies. More precisely IT has generated a unique kind of job opportunities. Many young graduates from engineering and such field are choosing their careers in IT. Some have engulfed information technology as their profession. This sort of influence enables us to study the information technology profession in depth. The professions are related to IT are fast becoming main streams of vocational opportunities in India.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA:

As is well known by now, India's IT sectors took off in the early 1980's with the establishment of offshore development centers. Relatively common English speaking engineering and technical graduates were employed at centers in Bangalore and Chennai. Then Hyderabad and now in the suburbs of New Delhi. Ever since the liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1991 the Indian government has relentlessly promoted the IT sector as the harbinger of nation's economic growth. Even though the country possesses only 3.7 million computers, it houses a large number of software professionals.

India is being emerging as a global player in the field of Information Technology (IT) as one of the largest generators and exporters of software in the world. The Indian IT industry revenue in the software sector has grown more than ten fold from US $ 50 million in 1988-99 to US $ 5.7 billion in 1999-2000. As a
result, India has been acknowledged all over the world as an important destiny for the growth and development of the IT industry.

In order to provide a concerted and focused approach to develop this sector further, the government of India set up the Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) in October 1999 as a nodal institutional mechanism for facilitating all the initiatives in the central government. The state governments, academia and the private sector for all round growth of IT. Accordingly, the ministry has proposed target implementation of a comprehensive action plan to make India an IT super power by the end of this decade while achieving target of $ 50 billion in software exports by 2008.

To make India a global power in information technology by the year 2008 is the new IT vision, which translates thus, the creation of wealth, employment generation and IT led economic and social growth.

The various initiatives taken towards this goal are:

- A wide array of policy measures has been taken to provide a vibrant and enabling environment for the growth of IT.
- National Task Force on IT and software development was set up by Prime Ministers office in 1998 May.
- An advisory committee for the ministry comprising professionals of Indian IT industry was set up in January 2000. E-commerce - IT act was developed.
- The semiconductor integrated circuits layout design bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1999.
- Strengthening the communication infrastructure through developing Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).
• Internet bandwidth requirement for Internet is estimated to be 4 GBPS by 2001 and 15 GBPS by 2008.

• The MIT set up a National venture fund for the software and IT industry with a corpus of Rs. 100 crore in association with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and IDBI aimed at providing venture fund to start up software professionals and IT units in the small scale sector in 1999.

• The MIT has initiated the E-governance.

• To promote IT enabled services in all sectors of society.

• It is planned to increase (PC) Personal Computers in India from the present level of 3.43 per thousand to 20 per thousand by 2008.

• Promotion of HRD is being achieved through implementation of National Center for Software Technology (NLST), and IIT.

• The center has released Rs. 208.28 lakhs during 2000-200 I for IT courts infrastructure.

By examining the historical growth and development of information technology we can infer that IT has become an interesting profession and has engulfed by the young graduates of engineering like BCA, MCA and M.Sc. computers, etc. Their life standard, income, social statuses have increased and besides it has become highly dynamic, since they lie in the top class of the social occupational ladder. Hence, the present study is necessary to understand the structure and dynamics of the IT professionals in Indian society.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The proposed study of IT professionals is an important study aspect in sociology of profession because Information Technology is the new emerging
profession sector with much complexity in India and is affecting the life of common people. Hence, many research works have been undertaken to understand the impact of IT on society in different ways. But, much of these studies have taken place in developed countries like USA, UK, Japan and so on. Some of such studies are done by Erik Brynjolfson in 1996 - "The contribution of Information Technology to common welfare". Another publication by the same author is - "How do Information Technology and work place organizations effect labor demand", which was published in 1997 attempts to understand the impact of IT on labour market. "Michael Detouzos" in 1997 published "How the New World of IT will change our lives". In such way many studies have been taken to understand the impact of IT. But, as is compared to Indian context the studies are scanty on IT profession though it is one of the powerful emerging sectors of IT in the world. After September 11, 2001 incident in USA the IT profession was hard hit. There was a serious crisis during which lakhs and lakhs of job opportunities were either terminated or step down causing great psychological stress and downward mobility in IT profession. Thus, my proposed study would help to extract the in-depth impact of IT on professionalism in the perspective of sociology of profession. There appears that a sociological study of IT profession in a comparative context has not been undertaken in Indian context. Thus, the present study is a humble effort to fill in this research gap.

RESEARCH PROBLEM OF THE STUDY:

The proposed research problem attempts to study in depth IT profession from sociology of profession perspective. Further, by analyzing the different aspects of IT profession. We wish to identify the unique essential elements that are part of this profession and the socio-cultural factors, which are differing when, compared to other profession. The present study not only attempts to study IT profession but also examines the intergenerational mobility and its relationship
with various other important social groups. Further, it is intended to study the impact of both downward and upward social mobility of IT professional.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY:

The present study is set out with the following research objectives as below:

- The study attempts to trace the growth of IT profession in India in general and Bangalore in particular.
- To portray and analyze the socio-economic profile of IT professionals.
- To assess and analyze the intergenerational mobility of IT professionals.
- To analyze the problems of IT professionals and study the impact of stress and strains generated while executing the professional responsibilities.
- To assess and analyze the socio-psychological impact of downward and upward mobility in the profession.
- To examine the impact of income, prestige and power generated out of profession on family, relations, kinship network. Investment expenditure structure and other social institutions like religion, culture etc.

Thus, the present research work has been done and explained in the form of thesis which contains seven chapters.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of the thesis comprises introductory part of the research problem. It explains about the Indian society, its socio-economic structure, the caste system and the interlinked occupation system wherein which it focuses on the emerging trends of the occupation. IT professions have emerged in Indian occupation structure and has high interesting recognition in the society. Along
with the profession the problems are also emerged in a very bad manner hence, researches on these problems are focused. The chapter also explains in detail about the beginning and development of Information Technology in India and Karnataka in particular. The Chapter contains review of literature of the research problem and the statement of the problem. It ends with a conclusion and suitable references.

CHAPTER II: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The second chapter of the thesis covers the research methodology in detail. It contains and explains about the objectives of the proposed research study. The methodology of the investigation explains about the research design, theoretical framework and perspectives, operational definitions, hypothesis, universe of the study, sampling techniques, data collection, scaling techniques, data processing and presentation, importance of the study. The chapter would end by the conclusion and the references.

CHAPTER III: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

The third chapter of the thesis is basically structured and explained on the basis of the primary data of the research investigation. It contains and explains about the life styles, educational indicators, professional skills, income indicators of the IT professionals. The chapter also includes material world and the social life of IT professionals. Thus, it sums up with the conclusion and references.

CHAPTER IV: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

The fourth chapter of the thesis entitled "socio – psychological problems of Information Technology professionals." as the research work based on field work survey of IT professionals in Bangalore Information Technology companies. The
chapter explains the problems of the I T problems faced by them during work place and at home. It highlights problems like psychological, physical, marital, health and socio-psychological problems. At the end of the chapter it includes conclusion part and the references.

CHAPTER V : INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY AND IMPACT OF DOWNWARD AND UPWARD MOBILITY.

The movement between generations is called as intergenerational mobility, where as movement within a generation is called as intra-generational mobility. This particular chapter explains about the intergenerational mobility of the I T professionals. It also mentions the upward and downward mobility of the profession. It even contains mobility in the profession process. As usual at the end of the chapter conclusion and the reference section will be there.

CHAPTER VI : SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND I T PROFESSION.

The sixth chapter of the thesis demonstrates the social structure and the IT profession. The chapter attempts to explain the basic characteristics of the social structure concerned to profession. It explains how the IT professionals maintain their family relationships, there kinship network. It explains even their investment and expenditure structure out of their income; it clearly clarifies the prestige and powers enjoyed by the IT professionals which are based upon the field work data. Religion and cultural aspects are studies explained in the chapter concerned to I T professionals. At the end of the chapter conclusion and reference section is included.

CHAPTER VII : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

In this chapter an attempt is made to summarize the presentations given in the earlier chapters. The major findings of the research work in relation to the objectives set in are given. We have enumerated the policy suggestions concerned
with healthy growth of IT profession based on present study. The important findings of the study are as follows.

The Bangalore has provided a big platform for tremendous growth of IT industry. The various factors like support of knowledge, component through premier institutions, suitable climatic conditions, culturally, socially, vibrant committed human resources and many other factors like existence of IT giants like Infosys and Wipro here contributed for the growth of IT in Bangalore. The study has revealed that due to high degree of upward mobility through intergenerational mobility as well as intergenerational mobility. The IT professionals as well as their families encounter various socio–psychological, familial and cultural crisis. The lack of in-house counselling as well as free counselling is compounding already over stressed IT professionals. 76% of the IT professionals were studied (N: 300) are facing a pure pressure like stress and strain. Social crisis like divorce, lack of marital understanding, balance between work and home environment are the physical strains causing great set back on the mental and physical health of IT professionals. The positive side of IT professionals is towards growth of secular attitude towards marriage. More and more IT professionals are opting for inter-caste marriage (36%, N: 300).

The study highlights the need of supporting the IT professionals with social support and community in the family. Much more studies like this will bring the socio-culture dynamics for the IT professionals.