There are numberless other village and even town crafts that need public support, if they are to live and thus maintain the thousands of poor artisans depending upon them for their daily bread. Every ounce of work in this direction tells. Every hour given to this work means the sustenance of some deserving workers.


CHAPTER - VII

PROFILE OF WORKERS IN VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

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CHAPTER VII
PROFILE OF WORKERS IN VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

7.1 Introduction

Workers are those who produce or transform goods or provide services for their own consumption and for that of others.\(^1\) As far as an industry is concerned, its work force is an important factor in determining the productivity of the unit. Therefore in the present study an attempt is made to analyse the profile of the workers on the basis of the data collected through field work conducted in Thiruvananthapuram and Kottayam Districts.

Specific information collected on the following aspects of worker's profile form the basis of analysis in the present chapter

1. Workers' socio-economic background, religion, occupation of parents, property, holdings of family, levels of education of workers and his family.

ii. Occupational aspects like past experience, job change, wages, pre-requisites, working conditions, etc.

iii. Economic aspects such as source of income, living conditions, savings, assets and life style.

iv. Sociological factors like worker's attitude to employee, trade unions, social life, technology in production etc.

An analysis of the profile of workers, on the basis of data collected through field survey in Thiruvananthapuram and Kottayam districts are given below.

7.2 Age

Progress of any industry depends to a large extent on the composition of the workforce engaged in it and village industries sector is no exception. It is a well accepted fact that, productivity depends on efficiency which in turn is related to factors such as age, gender, health etc. of the workforce. It is observed from the field study that, 50% of the workers in khadi and village industries are from the age group of 21-30 years. 20.6% are in 31-40 years; and 12% belong to the age group of 41-50 years. The workers reaching 50 years and above are only 3%. Hence it is obvious that youth participation is comparatively higher in village industries. The study reveals that the average age of worker in khadi and village industries is 24 years. Figure 7.1. shows the age-wise distribution of workers in the selected khadi and village industrial units.

7.3 Gender

An analysis on the gender-wise distribution of workers reveal that unlike modern manufacturing industries, the majority
FIGURE 7.1
Age-wise Distribution of Workers in Village Industries
59 percent) of the workers in khadi and village industries are female.

Female domination in village industries is due to its special characteristics like less bodily exersion and hard work, more leisure and nearness to home. Apart from this, women consider village industry as a source of personal income that supplement their family income. It is reported that, because of the substantial contribution to the family income, their status has also risen in the family, as well as in the society. Another factor which helps to enhance the position of women in the society is that, the village industrial units are not like ordinary factories, but resemble large family units. The behaviour pattern of the management as well as fellow workers is guided by the norms of high morality. On the other hand, to male workers, village industries are less remunerative. According to Indian culture, in the financial affairs of the family, men are more responsible than women. This compels men to go elsewhere in search of more remunerative work, leaving the less remunerative village industries.

Many of the male workers informed that less remuneration is an important factor for their loss of interest to work in village industry. The case of a worker was taken for the study. A worker started his work in a paper unit seven years ago. He joined the unit at the age of 21. During that time he earned Rs.75/- per month from this work. At that time he was living with
his parents and therefore he had not much family responsibilities. Therefore he contributed a part from his personal income to the family and the rest of his earning was utilised for personal use. However 2 years ago he got married and during the last year he has shifted to a separate house along with his wife and child. He said that, though his earning from paper unit has increased to Rs.300/- per month this amount is not sufficient for him to look after his family. Therefore now he is in search of a more remunerative job.

However the case of female workers is different from the male. A women at the age of 19 years started her work in a match unit 6 months ago. Now she is earning Rs.125/- per month. She said that she is contributing Rs.80/- per month to the family income and the rest is used for her personal need. Her parents are happy as her contribution to the family income helps to improve the living conditions of the family.

Age-wise distribution of male-female workers as shown in table 7.1. reveals that the majority of the youth are female. It can be noticed that the percentage of male workers are increasing with the increase of age and all the workers above the age of 50 are male.
Table - 7.1.

Age-wise Distribution of Male – Female Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male %</td>
<td>Female %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is because the young female are unmarried and they consider village industry as an opportunity to work. However young men are capable of doing hard labour and therefore they seek for more remunerative jobs.

7.4 Marriage

There is a noticeable difference in the marital status of male – female workers. Table 7.2. shows the marital status of male-female workers.
Table - 7.2.

Marital Status of Male - Female Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more unmarried respondents among the female group than among the male group. 75% of the female are unmarried while 83% of the male are married. It is further observed that the workers especially the female workers after their marriage tend to move from the village industries either in search of more remunerative employment or due to family reasons. It is to be noted that the workers permanently engaged in village industries are either the traditional artisans who feel that it is difficult to leave their traditional occupation or those youths who do not get an employment elsewhere.

7.5 Religion

In Kerala Hindus constitute the majority, i.e., 58% of the population. Christians constitute only 20.6 percent. This trend is also reflected among the workers in village industries. 64 percent
of the workers in the sample are Hindus and 36 percent are Christians. Though Muslims constitute 21 percent of the Kerala population, none of them represent the selected sample. Table 7.3. shows the religious composition of workers in village industries.

Table - 7.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious group</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the possible reasons for the absence of Muslims in the sample may be their settlement in the state. Their concentration in certain regions, especially of Malabar, might have hindered exposure to job opportunities elsewhere.

Though Hindus constitute the majority of the workforce in the sample, most of them are lower caste Hindus. Eleven out of sixty three workers belong to Nair community. Most of the Christians who represented the sample also belong to the Catholic community.

7.6 Education

Almost all recent studies including the present study on industrial workers have informed that the industrial workers are
superior to other sections of population in respect of background variables like literacy and education. The rate of literacy among the workers in village industries is higher than that of the total population of Kerala. The sample shows that 96 percent of the workers are literate. The state having 90.54% literacy has qualified to be considered as having achieved 100% literacy. Among workers selected for the study 4 female workers belonging to the higher age group were found to be illiterate. The educational level of workers is brought out in table 7.4.

Table - 7.4.

Educational Level of Workers in Village Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Illiterate</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College/ Polytechnic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18 (43)</td>
<td>21 (50)</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>42 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4 (7)</td>
<td>17 (28)</td>
<td>30 (50)</td>
<td>9 (15)</td>
<td>60 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>35 (34)</td>
<td>51 (50)</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
<td>102 (100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% in brackets.

50 percent of the workers have completed high school education and 12 percent of the workers are educated either in a college or in a polytechnic. The two workers having polytechnic diploma are men and are engaged in a carpentry unit. The workers having college education informed that they aspired to get a 'white
cholar job'. However the poor educational achievements and the economic condition of their family forced them to join in village industry.

The educational background of the parents of the workers was also studied. Considering the respective figures given in Table 7.5., majority of them had their school education whereas 39% of them belong to illiterate group. Coming to the educational level of the maternal side, they are less literate than the paternal side.

Table - 7.5.

Educational Level of Parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illiterate</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Predegree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.7 Economic Condition

Having seen some of the social conditions, it is better to have a glimpse of the economic conditions of workers in village industries. The economic condition was studied in two levels viz, personal level and family level.

7.7.1 Personal Income

With regard to personal income it is observed that the main
source of income for the majority of workers in village industries is their wage. However there exists some disparities with regard to the income level of these workers. A major reason for such difference in wages may be the piece rate system of payment which is very common in village industries. The distribution of workers on the basis of wage is presented in Table 7.6.

Table - 7.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage group in Rupees</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 200</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 - 300</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 - 400</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 - 500</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 600</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is found that the average monthly wage of a worker is only Rs. 190/-. The minimum wage of a worker in this sector is only Rs. 95/- per month and the maximum is Rs. 600/- per month. Out of 102 workers 4 workers get wages less than Rs. 100/- per month and all of them are of recent recruits in village industry. Workers getting more than Rs. 500/- per month are senior male
workers. Considering the present cost of living and price index it is a very low income for a person to make both ends meet.

The income level of seasonal workers is also noted during the study. In the case of a worker in khandasari making his work is only seasonal. However during the season the whole family will be engaged in production. His family consists of 7 members including his mother, wife and four children. During the production time the whole family earns Rs. 3000/- as profit. But this will not help him to look after the family needs throughout the year. Therefore, during the off seasons he and his wife worked as hired labourers.

Though the income from village industries is low it will help to earn a personal income. In addition to this monthly wage, in some units seasonal allowance is also given. To the low income group workers this seasonal allowance is an addition to their poor income. As their monthly income is hardly enough to sustain their daily needs, they require financial assistance during festival seasons. The study shows that 44% of the workers draw seasonal allowance during festival seasons. However, the majority (56%) of the workers are not getting seasonal allowance or similar financial assistance at any time of the year.

7.7.2 Family Income

The living condition of the worker and his family does not depend exclusively on the workers' wage, but also on family income.
Table 7.7. presents the distribution of workers on the basis of their family income.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income group in Rupees</th>
<th>Number of worker</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 500</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 1000</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 - 1500</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - 2000</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 2500</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average family income of the worker per month is calculated as Rs. 537/-.
18.6% belong to the income group of less than Rs.500/- per month. Only 7 persons have the family income of Rs. 2,000/- – 2,500/- per month. The study indicates that the percapita income of the workers is Rs. 2,156/- which is less than the percapital income of the state. The percapital income of Kerala is Rs. 3,451/-.²

FIGURE 7.2
Size of the Family of Workers in Selected Village Industrial Units
7.7.3 **Size of the Family**

In determining the socio-economic condition of an individual, the size of his family is an important measure. In the present study, the average size of the family is 5 members, which is less than the size of the Kerala family (Rural - 5.24 and Urban - 5.67). This is because of the peculiar nature of the samples - Kottayam and Thiruvananthapuram, which are socially and economically developed districts in Kerala. Figure 7.2 shows the family size of workers in selected village industries.

7.7.4 **Ownership of land**

Land is an important asset in the asset portfolio of households in India. The Debt and Investment Survey of Reserve Bank of India shows that the value of land as a proportion of the value of total asset of the household in Kerala was 66.2 percent. In this respect, the state ranked second among the Indian states, the first being Punjab - 66.3 percent. The average value of land owned by a household in Kerala was Rs. 54,674/- which was second to Punjab where the value of land per household on an average was Rs. 56,496/-. In the present study, land is owned by all the workers but the size of the holding varies. The minimum land holding is 3 cents and the maximum is 27 cents. The average land

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3. Government of India, Department of Statistics.

4. Reserve Bank of India, All India Debt and Investment Survey, Bombay, 1987, p.117.
holdings among the workers is 9 cents, which is less than the state average. The majority of these workers had received land either as their spouse’s share or as ‘Kudikidappu’. Only three workers had purchased land having a size of 3–5 cents. Table 7.8 categorises the workers on the basis of size of the land holdings.

Table - 7.8.
Distribution of Workers on the Basis of Size of Land Holdings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings in cents</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 15</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.7.5 Building

Though all the workers have their own houses, the nature of the house vary. 35 percent of the workers live in thatched houses while 65% live under tiled roofs. Table 7.9. distribute workers on the basis of type of house in which they live.
Table - 7.9.

Distribution of Workers on the Basis of Type of House

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of house</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thatched</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiled</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>102</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rural housing pattern in Kerala consists of more thatched and tiled houses than concrete houses.

7.8 Savings and Liabilities

Despite the low rate of wages and earnings, the workers show an interest in saving a part of their earnings for the future. It is noticed that 50 workers are having savings, while 52 workers have no savings at all. Their desire to save remain unfulfilled as their wages are not sufficient even to meet their daily needs.

The workers having savings deposit their money mainly into chit funds. 29 workers are subscribers to chit funds, 14 workers are depositing in post office and 7 workers in bank accounts.

It is observed that usually the woman workers deposit their money to chit funds. The majority of them are unmarried girls. The highest amount deposited by them is Rs. 25/- per month. According to the rules of the chit funds after 2 years they get...
Rs. 450/-. Their idea behind this saving is to purchase gold ornaments. But as the value of gold is increasing day after day their desire remain unfulfilled.

However two married women said that they are saving money for the higher education of her son. He passed pre-degree examination and her interest is to send him to I.T.I. For that she deposits Rs. 25/- to the chit fund. The other women is saving her income for the marriage of her daughter. She has been working in a weaving unit during the last 15 years. From her monthly income she is depositing Rs. 50/- in the post office saving scheme. Now there is Rs. 6,000/- on her account. She informed that her work in weaving industry helps her to earn something for family needs.

As the income of the workers is not sufficient to make both ends meet they resort to other sources including banks, money lenders, friends and relatives for borrowing.

A few cases of workers having liabilities were also observed during the study. Case.1 is a man working in the village oil unit. For the construction of his house in 1990 he borrowed Rs. 5,000/- from the bank on gold loan. The interest of the loan is 18%. So he has to remit Rs. 900/- as interest in a year. Though two years have passed he was not able to remit either the amount or the interest. This is because his income from the job is only Rs. 500/- and this amount is not sufficient to meet the family needs itself.
Case 2 is a female worker in the pottery unit. She is a widow and she has 3 children. The elder one is a daughter and the younger ones are boys. For the marriage of her daughter this pot making women borrowed Rs. 3,000/- from her brother, who is also a pot maker and residing nearby. She borrowed the money 5 years ago. During the last year, her brother asked her to give back the money for the marriage of his daughter. But she is unable to pay the amount as her earnings is not sufficient to meet the expenses of her family. This resulted in the estrangement of their relationship. As the demand for pottery items decreased due to the availability of more durable steel and aluminium utensils, the production has decreased and therefore her earning from the job has been decreased. Due to the less remunerative nature of this industry she decided to educate her boys. But the financial crisis forced her to discontinue their education. Now they are inefficient for their traditional job and are searching for other jobs.

7.9 Occupational Pattern

There are certain miscellaneous factors also studied in the context of problems and prospects of workers in village industries. The study tried to find out to what extend the intergenerational mobility in occupation takes place in village industries, ie; to what extend the workers in village industries take up the present occupation as tradition bound or tradition free. In this context it is found that 35% of workers followed the work of their parents with
FIGURE 7.3

Sources of Vacancy Information in Village Industrial Units

Scale: 2 Cms. = 10 workers.

**Source of Information**

- Parents: 60
- Friends: 36
- Personal enquiry: 6
regard to their occupational patterns of choice. 65% had taken up the present occupation merely as a source of earning. This shows the acute nature of unemployment in rural sector which compels the people to take up the available occupation irrespective of the fact, whether it is tradition free or tradition bound, whether they have keen interest or not, whether it is sufficiently rewarding or not.

It was further studied how they had come to know about the job opportunity in village industries. The data suggests that the formal channels like advertisement, newspaper etc. had very limited scope in giving information on job opportunities in village industries. As the target groups are generally the local people they have direct accessibility to the employer. Among the informal sources of information, the most important are parents, friends, and other personal contacts. 94 percent of the workers got information through the informal channels. Six percent of the workers got employment through their personal enquiries. Figure 7.3 indicates the distribution of workers on the basis of source of vacancy information.

The method of entry into the village industry is of direct method. Educational qualifications are not a must for entry into the village industries. 65 percent of the workers acquired the skill of production, after their entry into the village industries sector, because they are not traditional workers.
It is observed that 84 percent of the nontraditional workers changed their previous job due to various reasons. They informed that their foremost consideration is job security. Next consideration is given to better pay. 62 percent of them informed that they changed their previous job due to hard labour and rigorous working conditions.

In the case of 16 percent of non-traditional workers this is their first opportunity to enter into a work. Table 7.10. indicates the distribution of workers on the basis of reason to change their previous job.

Table - 7.10.
Distribution of Workers on the Basis of Reason to Change Their Previous Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason to change previous job.</th>
<th>Number of non-traditional workers who changed their job.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less remuneration</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard labour/rigorous nature of work.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.10 Training:

As a part of the development programmes for khadi and village industries, the government has organised various training programmes to train the rural folk. However in the present study only 23.5 percent workers had such training after their entry into the village industry. 76.5 percent of the workers had got no opportunity for any training.

7.11 Nature of Employment:

There are mainly three types of labour in village industries sector, viz., full-time, part-time and seasonal. In the present study the majority (93.1 percent) of the workers are full-time workers. 4.9 percent are part-time, and 2 percent are seasonal labourers. It can be pointed out that, the majority of the part-time and seasonal labourers are men. Village industries such as palm-gur, khandasari, beekeeping, cane and bamboo etc. provide employment seasonally. Non-availability of raw materials in some other cases also results in breakage of employment. Therefore, the workers engaged in these industries are forced to work in other fields.

Though the majority of the workers expressed their willingness to work more than 8 hours in village industry at present only
41 workers have the facility for the same. As the nature of wage payment is on piece rate there is no doubt that the over-time work will enable them to earn more. 43 workers are working for 8 hours, while 18 workers are working less than 8 hours. Figure 7.4 presents distribution of workers on the basis of working hours.

7.12 Job Satisfaction:

The job satisfaction of a worker is the level of satisfaction which he derives through his work in a particular sector. The levels of satisfaction of workers determine, to a large extent, their attitudes towards work, management and trade unions. From an analysis of the respondents' opinion about their work satisfaction, it was found that 33 percent workers are fully satisfied and 59 percent are somewhat satisfied. Few cases were noticed where they have no satisfaction at all.

There are various factors which determine the job satisfaction. They are better pay, job security, job status, welfare facilities, human relations in workplace etc. It is observed that the workers give utmost importance to job security. Many of the respondents informed that they changed their previous job due to lack of job security. It was noticed that due to non-availability of raw materials, piling up of finished stock etc., most of the village industries find it very difficult to offer work to the employees throughout the year. During the slack season the
FIGURE 7.4

Distribution of Workers in Village Industries on the Basis of Working Hours
workers are generally retrenched. This type of insecurity in job creates dissatisfaction among the workers.

Next to job security, importance is given to remuneration. It is observed that the average remuneration of a worker in village industries comes about Rs. 190/- per month. Workers find it very difficult to live with such a low income and gradually they lose their interest on village industries. 94 percent workers expressed dissatisfaction for the present rate or remuneration. Apart from monthly wages the workers' expectations regarding their working conditions and other needs are not implemented properly. It was seen that only 44 percent receive some kind of allowances during festival season. Lack of proper welfare measures aggravate the dissatisfaction increase the number of discontented workers in this sector.

Job status is an important factor in the realisation of job satisfaction. According to 61% of the workers, the perception of society on their job is satisfactory, but 39% have complained about the perception of the society towards their job. They are not getting as much recognition and respect as their counterparts in the organised Industries in our society. At present, except in the case of workers in khadi sector, it is felt that, welfare measures in the village industries are generally inadequate.

Human relationship in workplace is a major factor in determining the job satisfaction of a worker. In the present study 98 workers
informed that their relationship with the employer is cordial. It is found that in these units, interference of the employer in the routine functioning of the unit is minimum. Four workers reported that they are not fully satisfied with the employer. On the other hand, it is observed that, the workers in village industries maintain a cordial and healthy relationship among them.

7.13 Trade Union:

Trade Unions are organisations of workers, who joined together for the purpose of taking collective action when their interests are threatened. The trade union in which a worker joins and the extent to which he gets himself involved in union activities etc. determine the worker’s profile to a great extent. The trade unions can play a political role in the present setup and can work to promote class consciousness and solidarity among the workers.

However, the study reveals that, in khadi and village industries sector, the trade unionism is not as strong as in the other industrial sectors in Kerala. Out of 102 workers selected for the study, only 14 workers are members in labour unions. It is found that these unions are not affiliated to any political party. It is observed that, the majority of the workers involved in trade union activities are from khadi sector.

7.14 Conclusion

Thus the profile of workers suggests that the socio-economic
and cultural factors have an immense role in the life and work of village industrial workers. Kerala is one of the socially, economically and educationally developed states in India. In this context, it is pertinent to note that, what prompted the workers to select village industries as their occupation is not their original interest but their inability in obtaining an alternative employment to earn their livelihood. It is further observed that as the income of the workers is low and they find it difficult to sustain their life, which in turn creates social, economic and psychological distress. Another fact noticed in the present study is that due to the less remunerative nature of village industries, the traditional workers are trying to divert their younger generation to other occupations. It is feared that such a move will result in the gradual abatement of traditional industries and hence it is high time to recognise and revitalise the village industries so as to make it a choice rather than a chance.