

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF IT PROFESSIONALS IN KERALA

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Abstract: IT sector has brought about drastic changes in the Indian job market. It offers immense career opportunities to a large number of young people. Since employment in IT sector is often considered as much prestigious and highly remunerative, the socio-economic profile of professionals is worth considering. In this article, an attempt has been made to analyze the socio-economic background of IT professionals in Thiruvananthapuram district. For this analysis, the researcher collected relevant information from 300 IT professionals working in Thiruvananthapuram district with the help of a structured interview schedule. The study revealed many facts which are contrary to the popular believes. This study brought out the fact that majority of IT professionals belong to a very young age group of 20-30 and most of them are from rural areas. Even though, majority of them are highly qualified, they are found in all categories of work in the job hierarchy and they are working on contract basis. This study also pointed out that almost half of the professionals are getting only a meagre monthly salary.

Keywords: IT Professionals, socio-economic background, Public and private sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

IT sector is often seen as a sun rise sector in the Indian economy. The growth potential of this sector is enormous, so is the potential to contribute to India's growing employment woes. Information Technology (IT) industry in India has played a key role in putting India on the global map. The industry has played a significant role in transforming India's image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs. Thus IT industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy. Kerala is a pioneer in software services in India and the state views IT as a potential sector that can make immense contributions to the economy. Kerala is trying to attract more investments to the IT sector and thereby provide more employment opportunities to the educated people in the State. Kerala is known for high social development disproportionate to its GDP growth.

The State is characterized by low capital formation, limited prospects of the manufacturing sector, high unemployment, poor performance by agricultural and traditional sectors and the uncertainties faced by expatriate employment in the Gulf. Preference of educated youth in Kerala towards white collar jobs is a major factor which promoted IT sector in Kerala and the state has always been at the vanguard in the field of Information Technology. It has been recognized as the core competency sector in terms of its contributions to SDP, exports, foreign exchange earnings, revenue and employment generation. IT sector has immense potential for generating employment without exerting much pressure on land and the environment. Hence, it has been considered as an ideal industry for Kerala and conscious efforts have been undertaken to promote IT sector within Kerala. Employment in IT sector is often considered as very prestigious and highly remunerative. In this context the present paper examines the socio-economic background of IT professionals in Kerala.

2. DATA SOURCE AND METHOD

For a detailed analysis of the socio-economic profile of IT professionals, relevant data were collected from 300 professionals working in both public and private IT firms in Thiruvananthapuram district. Thiruvananthapuram is one of the major IT hubs in India and contributes 80% of Kerala's Software exports. For identifying the respondents, method of Snow ball sampling was employed. Snow ball sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which when we get one

respondent, the respondent gives information about other respondents and it progresses as a chain. The process was done until interview was conducted among 150 employees from public sector and 150 employees from private sector. Majority of the respondents belonging to the public sector are working in institutions like Keltron, C DIT, Kerala State IT Mission, Information Kerala Mission and respondents belonging to private sector are working in various IT firms in and around Techno Park, Thiruvananthapuram. Relevant information were collected by using a structured interview schedule. For analyzing primary data simple statistical tools such as averages and percentages were used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of the socio-economic background of the IT professionals enable us to understand how much they receive support from family and how much they struggled to come into their present position.

Gender- wise Classification of the IT Employees:

In IT sector, as the emphasis is on intellectual rather than physical resources, it is considered to be non-discriminating. and there is equal opportunity for men and women.

Table 1: Gender- wise Classification of the IT Professionals

Gender	Public	Private	Total
Male	68 (45.30)	97 (64.70)	165 (55.00)
Female	82 (54.70)	53 (35.30)	135 (45.00)
Total	150	150	300

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

Table 1 shows that out of the 300 professionals surveyed for the study, men outnumber women. Men form 55 percent of the sample whereas women form 45 per cent of the sample. But, there are differences between the gender composition in public and private firms. In public firms, women are greater than men and vice versa in private firms.

Age wise Classification of Professionals:

Age has supreme importance in identifying an individual's ability to perform various tasks of life. The age of the IT professionals is important as it reflects the capacity to work. A peculiar feature of IT industry has been employment of a labour force from relatively younger age group.

Table 2: Age wise Classification of Professionals

Age Group	Public	Private	Total
20-30	59 (39.33)	126 (84.00)	185 (61.67)
30-40	74 (49.33)	22 (14.67)	96 (32.00)
40-50	11 (7.34)	2 (1.33)	13 (4.33)
Above 50	6 (4.00)	0 (0.00)	6 (2.00)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

The age- wise classification of professionals (Table 2) reveals that most of the professionals are in the age group of 20 to 30 years. In public IT firms, the highest percentages of professionals are from the age group of 30 to 40 years but in private sector, majority of the sample (84 percent) is in the age group of 20-30 years. This means that young and fresh professionals are employed in private sector as compared to the public sector. Most of the respondents belong to the age group of 20-40. The study reveals that the young people are engaged in IT sector.

Distribution of IT Professionals by Religion and Social Group:**Table 3: Religion wise Distribution of IT Professionals**

Religion	Nature of Firm		Total
	Public	Private	
Hindu	111 (74.00)	97 (64.67)	208 (69.34)
Christian	22 (14.67)	30 (20.00)	52 (17.33)
Muslim	17 (11.33)	22 (14.67)	39 (13.00)
Others (specify)	0 (0)	1 (0.66)	1 (0.33)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

As Table 3 shows, almost 70 percent of the professionals are Hindus. While Christians form 17.33 percent and Muslims form 13 percent of the sample. Representation of Christians and Muslims is higher in private sector than in public sector.

Social Group Categorization:**Table 4: Caste wise Classification of the sample**

Social Group	Nature of Firm		Total
	Public	Private	
General	65 (43.34)	70 (46.67)	135 (45.00)
OBC	68 (45.33)	69 (46.00)	137 (45.67)
SC/ST	17 (11.33)	11 (7.33)	28 (9.33)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Table 4 shows the caste wise classification of professionals. It shows that the highest proportion (almost 46 percent) of the respondents belong to the category of other backward categories. This study propounds the idea that majority of IT professionals are from the forward caste and the members from Backward and other caste groups are an extremely small percentage of the surveyed population.

Rural-Urban Background of Respondents:**Table 5: Distribution of IT Professionals by Rural Urban Background**

Nature of Company	Place of Residence		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Public	87 (58)	63 (42)	150 (100)
Private	78 (52)	72 (48)	150 (100)
Total	165 (55)	135 (45)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

As per the Table 5, people who are from rural areas are greater than in the urban areas. Almost 55 percent of the total respondents are from rural areas. This is true for both public and private firms. Results of the present study show that

both in public and private sectors, more professionals are from rural areas and this shows that there is no digital divide in Kerala. People, from both rural and urban areas work in IT sector.

Educational Status of Father:

The educational level of the family can also be good indicator regarding the general socio-economic status of the family.

Table 6: Father's Education

Father's Education	Nature of Ownership		Total
	Public	Private	
Below SSLC	4 (2.67)	6 (4.00)	10 (3.33)
SSLC	90 (60.00)	60 (40.00)	150 (50.00)
PDC	9 (6.00)	16 (10.66)	25 (8.33)
Diploma/ITI	6 (4.00)	12 (8.00)	18 (6.00)
BA/B.Sc/B.Com	35 (23.33)	48 (32.00)	83 (27.67)
MA/MSc/MCom	5 (3.33)	4 (2.67)	9 (3.00)
BTech/ BHMS	1 (0.67)	4 (2.67)	5 (1.67)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentage

As shown in Table 6, nearly 50% of the respondents opined that their father's educational qualification is SSLC. Only 28% opined that the educational qualification of their fathers were undergraduate level. Almost 36 percent respondents' fathers are Government employees. In Public sector, the corresponding figure is 31 percent and in private sector, it is 40 percent. Of the total 30 percent of respondents' fathers were business men. 21.33 percent in Public sector IT professionals opined that their parents were casual labourers. But in private sector, it is only 8 percent in private sector. Father's profession is marked as "farmer" by 7.33 percent in Public and 6.67 percent in private sector.

Educational Status of Mother:

Table 7: Mother's Education

Mother's Education	Nature of Ownership		Total
	Public	Private	
Below SSLC	5 (3.33)	4 (2.68)	9 (3.00)
SSLC	92 (61.34)	88 (58.66)	180 (60.00)
PDC	13 (8.67)	22 (14.66)	35 (11.67)
Diploma/ITI	2 (1.33)	2 (1.33)	4 (1.33)
Deg	32 (21.33)	31 (20.67)	63 (21.00)
	6	3	9

MA/MSc/MCom	(4.00)	(2.00)	(3.00)
BTech /MTech/MCA/BHMS	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

Table 7 reveals that mother's educational level of almost 60 percent of respondents is SSLC. In the case of public sector, mother's educational level of 61.33 percent of professionals is SSLC while for the private sector, it is 58.66 percent. The graduate level constitutes almost equal proportion in both types of firms (21 percent). While 4 percent of professionals in Public sector have their mothers educated up to post graduation, but in Private sector, it is only 2 percent. The other categories are almost irrelevant to consider for analysis. Majority of the professionals (82.33%) marked their mother's profession as House Wife. The corresponding figure in public sector is 84 percent and in private sector, it is 80 percent.

Educational Qualifications of IT Professionals:

The educational attainment of the IT professionals both in Public and private sector is examined in Table 8

Table 8: Educational Qualification of Professionals

Educational Qualifications	Public	Private	Total
Diploma/ITI	23 (15.34)	6 (4.00)	29 (9.66)
BA/B Sc/B Com	28 (18.67)	18 (12.00)	46 (15.34)
B Tech	46 (30.67)	64 (42.67)	110 (36.67)
MA/ M Sc/ M Com	6 (4.00)	20 (13.33)	26 (8.67)
MBA	10 (6.66)	12 (8.00)	22 (7.33)
MCA/M Sc Computer Science	32 (21.33)	13 (8.67)	45 (15.00)
M Tech/Additional Qualification	5 (3.33)	17 (11.33)	22 (7.33)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

An examination of the educational qualifications of the professionals in public and private sector undertakings shows that IT professionals have different educational backgrounds. Highest percentage (36.67 percent) of people are B Tech degree holders. Table 8 depicts that the percentage of MCA/ MSc Computer Science holders are comparatively low in Private sector (8.67 percent) than in the Public (21.33 percent). In this sample, 15.34 percent of IT professionals in public were Diploma holders while in private sector the corresponding figure is only 4 percent. Compared to public sector, professionals in private sector hold additional qualifications.

Monthly Income of the Professionals:

Income is a very important factor which determines the socio economic status of an individual and the income profile is examined in the following Table 9

Table 9: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Income Level	Public	Private	Total
Less than 20000	85 (56.66)	60 (40.00)	145 (48.34)
20001-40000	46 (30.67)	66 (44.00)	112 (37.33)
40001-60000	12 (8.00)	16 (11.00)	28 (9.33)
60001-80000	4 (2.67)	1 (0.67)	5 (1.67)
80001-100000	2 (1.33)	4 (2.50)	6 (2.00)
Above 100000	1 (0.67)	3 (1.83)	4 (1.33)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

Monthly income of professionals exhibits that highest (48 percent) have less than 20,000 level of income. In public sector, 56 percent of professionals come in the range of less than 20,000 and nearly 87 percent have less than 40,000 level of income. But in private sector, 44 percent of professionals have income between 20,000-40,000 and 84 percent have less than 40,000. In public sector nearly 87 percent and in private sector nearly 84 percent of the persons received the income below 40000 rupees per month. As the study shows high income groups are quite rare in both sectors. Only 0.67 percent in public firms and 1.83 percent in private firms are getting more than 100000 per month. This shows the truth that IT profession in Kerala is not as lucrative as it seems.

Details of Saving:

Table 10: Savings of Respondents

Saving	Nature of Firm		Total
	Public	Private	
Yes	90 (59.73)	61 (40.67)	151 (50.33)
No	60 (40.27)	89 (59.33)	149 (49.67)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

The Table 10 shows that only half of the respondents have savings. It is also evident that the habit of saving is more among the professionals of Public sector than in the Private sector. Almost 60 percent of professionals in Public sector opined that they have saving habit while 60 percent of professionals in Private sector do not have any type of saving. The study revealed that even though IT professionals are earning at a very young age, they have a tendency to spend their income rather than saving a portion of it. Saving habit is higher among IT professionals employed in the public sector in comparison with their counterparts in the private sector. Savings are of various forms ranging from cash in hand to cash deposits, gold, land, bonds and shares etc. The study reveals that the highest proportion (24.5 percent) of IT professionals prefer fixed deposit and 21 percent of them prefer post office savings. Out of the total sample, in public sector, 25 percent have post office saving, while 22 percent preferred fixed deposit. Of the different types of saving, majority of employees in private sector (27.1 percent) preferred fixed deposit while 20.9 percent of them gave second priority to equity, debentures and share. At the same time, only 8 percent of the professionals in public sector preferred equity and shares.

The results indicated that the professionals in private sector take risk in their investment. 12 percent of professionals in private sector also gave choice to mutual funds and while in public, it was 6 percent only. But in the case of bond and jewellery, the selection of choice of public sector professionals is noticeable. Professionals in both Public and private sector equally prefer real estate as another type of savings.

The reasons for no saving vary from employee to employee and the major reason is the high cost of living. Almost 60 percent of the respondents are of the opinion that high cost of living as the major reason for no saving. In public sector, 67 percent of professionals viewed high cost of living as the major reason for the absence of saving while the corresponding figure in the private sector is 54 percent. During the interview, some of the respondents opined that due to the monthly repayment of loans, they cannot save from their monthly income. Peculiar feature of IT sector in comparison with other sectors is that professionals are young ranging 20-30 years of age and they are not much aware of need for saving and they spent major portion of their income for changing mobiles, vehicles etc.

Financial Liability:

Here an attempt has been done to examine the financial liability of the respondents. Table 11 explains the financial liability of professionals in both IT Public and Private sectors.

Table 11: Financial Liability

Financial Liability	Public	Private	Total
Yes	63 (42.00)	66 (44.00)	129 (43.00)
No	87 (58.00)	84 (56.00)	171 (57.00)
Total	150 (100)	150 (100)	300 (100)

Source: Sample Survey, 2016

Note: Figures in brackets show percentages

The Table11 illustrates that 57 percent of the IT professionals do not have any kind of financial liability. This revealed the fact that even though, majority of professionals in both public and private sectors have no financial liability.

4. CONCLUSION

Socio-economic study of IT Professionals brought out the fact that in IT sector, majority of the employees were male and majority of IT professionals belonged to very young age group of 20-30. A significant proportion of them are single. In terms of religion, majority of professionals are Hindus followed by Christians and Muslims. It is quite interesting to note that majority of the respondents were from backward communities. While 46 percent of them belong to the social group of Other Backward Communities, Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes constituted 9 percent. It was also found that majority of them had rural background. Educational background of IT professionals showed that majority of the employees was from aided schools with English Medium background. Educational qualification of the respondents showed that majority of them is highly qualified people who have either Engineering or Computer Science background. Another observation is that qualified IT professionals are found in all categories of work in the job hierarchy. In the analysis of educational background of the parents of IT professionals, it could be seen that 50 percent of the fathers have educational background up to SSLC and while 27.67 percent have graduation. In the case of their occupation, majority of the fathers were from business and Government service background and mothers were house wives. The present study revealed that almost half of the IT professionals are getting less than Rs. 20,000 per month. Almost 85 percent of the respondents obtained income Rs.40, 000 per month. In the case of method of recruitment, most of the professionals were recruited through campus interviews followed by advertisement. A huge majority of employees were appointed on contract basis and only a meagerpercent of them were working on permanent basis. Majority of IT professionals fell within the category of 1-5 years of experience followed by employees having less than one year of experience. Similarly it was found that only half of the professionals have saving habit. High cost of living was found to be the major reason for the absence of saving. It was also found that factors like low saving, lack of promotion and bad working conditions are the major reasons which prompt IT professionals to change their job frequently. Majority of employees depended on fixed

deposits and post office deposits for their savings. It was also noted that private sector IT employees were also interested in shares and equity for their investment. The period of investment for most of the professionals was above eight years.

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