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PROFILE OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS IN KERALA
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC
PROFILE OF WORKERS
IN TRADITIONAL AND MODERN INDUSTRIES

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to the Cochin University of Science and Technology
for the award of the Degree of
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under the Faculty of Social Sciences

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the thesis "Profile of Industrial Workers in Kerala - A Comparative Study of the Socio-economic Profile of Workers in Traditional and Modern Industries" is the record of bona fide research carried out by Shri. George Zachariah under my supervision. The thesis is worth submitting for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics.

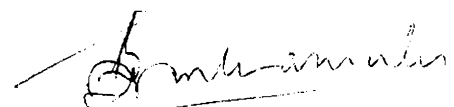
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the record of bona fide research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr.K.K.George, Professor, School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science and Technology. I further declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title of recognition.

Cochin-682 022,
15th October, 1990.



George Zachariah.

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C O N T E N T S

<u>CHAPTER</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
	CONTENTS	
	LIST OF TABLES	
I	INTRODUCTION	1 - 36
II	SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND	37 - 74
III	WORKER IN THE JOB MARKET	75 - 91
IV	ECONOMIC STATUS AND BEHAVIOUR	92 - 133
V	WORK, COMPENSATION AND SATISFACTION	134 - 154
VI	WORKER AND HIS UNION	155 - 185
VII	SOCIAL RELATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES	186 - 222
VIII	FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS	223 - 238
	APPENDIX (QUESTIONNAIRE)	
	SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
2.1	Rural-Urban Background	.. 46
2.2	District of Origin	.. 51
2.3	Level of Education of Workers	.. 55
2.4	Level of Education of Parents	.. 57
2.5	Education of the First Brother	.. 59
2.6	Comparative Levels of Spouses' Education	.. 60
2.7	Occupation of Close Relatives	.. 63
2.8	Religious Composition	.. 68
2.9	Caste-Composition-Workers	.. 71
3.1	Distribution of Workers According to Waiting Period for the First Job	.. 76
3.2	Waiting Period for the First Job - A Comparison of Workers in the Sample and the Work Force in Kerala	.. 77
3.3	Distribution of workers who Changed Jobs - by Reasons for Change	.. 79

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
3.4.	Distribution of Workers According to Sources of Vacancy Information	.. 81
3.5	Distribution of Workers According to the Source of Help Received in Getting the Job	.. 86
3.6	Distribution of Workers in FACT According to the Number of Relatives Employed	.. 89
3.7	Number of Relatives of the TS Workers Employed in the Coir Industry	.. 90
4.1	Average Monthly Salary and Income	.. 93
4.2	Distribution of workers According to Size-Class of Monthly Salary	.. 94
4.3	Expenditure on Select Items in the TS Household as Percentage of Expenditure in the MS Household.	.. 96
4.4	Monthly Expenditure on Selected Quality Food - Average Amounts and Number of Families Consuming	.. 99
4.5	Distribution of Workers by Types of Fuels Used	.. 101

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
4.6	Floor Area of the MS and TS Houses	.. 104
4.7	Ownership of Land by Size-Class	.. 109
4.8	Source of Land Owned	.. 110
4.9	Distribution of Workers According to the Value of Assets Other than Land	.. 113
4.10	Number of Workers having Financial Assets and the Average Value of Assets	.. 116
4.11	Relative Importance of Different Types of Financial Assets in Terms of Total Value	.. 118
4.12	Distribution of Workers According to Ownership of Vehicles	.. 120
4.13	Ownership of Consumer Durables	.. 122
4.14	Distribution of Workers According to Amount of Liabilities	.. 126
4.15	Number of Workers Taking Loans from Different Sources and the Average Liability per Reporting Worker	.. 127
4.16	Distribution of Workers According to the Purpose of Loans	.. 130

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
5.1	Distribution of Workers According to Their Ranking of the Different Rewards from Job - Sector-wise	.. 136
5.2	Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Working Conditions	.. 138
5.3	Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Work-Load	.. 139
5.4	Distribution of Workers According to Their 'Satisfaction' Over Wages, Provident Fund, Bonus and ESI	.. 144
5.5	Distribution of Workers in HNL and FACT According to Their Satisfaction About Different Types of Compensation	.. 146
5.6	Distribution of Workers According to Their Opinion about Job Security Sector-wise	.. 148
5.7	Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Retirement Benefits	.. 150
5.8	Distribution of Workers in HNL and FACT According to Their Views on Welfare Facilities	.. 154

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
6.1	Distribution of Workers According to the Reasons Given for Joining the Particular Union	.. 159
6.2	Ranking of Important Trade Union Functions	.. 162(a)
6.3	Participation in Trade Union Actions	.. 165
6.4	Workers' Participation in Different Types of Strikes	.. 167
6.5	Nature of Factors Prompting Participation in Trade Union Actions	.. 170
6.6	Political Affiliation of Unions	.. 172
6.7	Desirability of Union Affiliation with Political Parties - Workers' Views	.. 175
6.8	Number of Workers Changing Unions	.. 178
6.9	The Major Reasons for Changing Unions	.. 179
6.10	Rating of Union Performance	.. 181
6.11	Workers' Opinion on the Honesty and Integrity of Trade Union Leaders	.. 182
6.12	Whether Trade Union Decisions are Taken in the Best Interest of Workers	.. 184

<u>Table No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
7.1	Workers' Opinion About Their Area of Residence	.. 187
7.2	Occupation of Close Friends	.. 194
7.3	Ratio of Workers to the Friends of the Same Caste/Community	.. 196
7.4	Type of Jobs Preferred for Children - by Number of Workers - Sector-wise	.. 197
7.5	Expectation about Children's Education - by Number of Workers - Sector-wise	.. 199
7.6	Membership in Political Parties	.. 213
7.7	Sympathisers of Political Parties	.. 215
7.8	Workers Supporting Different Political Parties	.. 216
7.9	Workers Voted for the Major Fronts - General Election - 1987	.. 219
7.10	Workers' Voting Behaviour - Election to Local Bodies - 1988	.. 220

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The growth of modern industrial working class in Kerala took place almost simultaneously with its growth elsewhere in India. But as industrialisation in the state did not keep pace with industrialisation in other states,¹ the growth of

1. While the contribution of the secondary sector to the Net Domestic Product at constant prices in India increased from 23 per cent in 1980-81 to 27.3 per cent in 1987-88, its corresponding share in Kerala declined from 22.1 per cent to 19.6 per cent during the same period. The per capita income from the registered manufacturing sector of Kerala was Rs.193.4 in 1984-85, as against Rs.252.7 for all-India. Estimates of per capita income from the entire secondary sector also show that Kerala (Rs.430/-) is lagging behind the all-India average (Rs.549/-). See (1) Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, Trivandrum, 1988 & 1989.
(2) Dholakia, Ravindra, H., "Regional aspects of industrialisation in India", Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, 1989, Vol. XXIV, No. 46, November 18.

this class lagged behind in Kerala.² Despite their limited number and smaller proportion in the total work force, the industrial workers of Kerala had demonstrated a high degree of trade union³ and political consciousness in the past.

2. Subrahmanian and Mohanan Pillai estimated that between 1960-1961 and 1978-79, annual compound growth rate of industrial employment was only 3.18 in Kerala as against 3.94 for all-India. Subrahmanian, K.K. and Mohanan Pillai, P., "Kerala's Industrial Backwardness: An Exploration of Alternative Hypothesis" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXI, No.14, April 5, 1986. In 1970-71, 3.8 per cent of the Industrial workers of India were in Kerala. But their proportion declined to 3.1 per cent by 1986-87. See Oommen, M.A., India Today (Malayalam), Vol.I, No. 17, Aug. 23 - Sept. 7, 1990. Estimates of Rakesh Mohan, based on the data provided by Annual Survey of Industries and Labour Bureau also show that Kerala's share in industrial employment has been declining. In 1961, 4.59 per cent of the factory employment in the Census sector was in Kerala. This share declined to 3.78 per cent in 1971 and 3.56 per cent in 1981. Rakesh Mohan has further shown that Kerala's share in total employment in household industry too has declined in absolute and relative terms between 1961 and 1981. Regarding total employment in Non-household industry, the number of employees has increased between 1961 and 1981, but the state's relative share has only declined. See Mohan, Rakesh, "Industry and Urban Employment, 1961-81: A Preliminary Exploration" Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXIV, Nos. 44 & 45, November 4 - 11, 1989.
3. The number of registered unions in Kerala increased from 555 in 1951 to 6891 in 1983. At the all-India level, the number of registered unions increased from 4623 to 38954 during the same period. Thus while the number of trade unions increased by about 8 times at all-India level, the increase was by about 12 times in Kerala. In union membership, there was nearly a four-fold increase in the state, while the increase was only about two-fold at the national level. See Thampi, M.M., Impact of Trade Unionism on Industrial Development of Kerala, M.Phil Thesis, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin, 1988. It is reported that the present number of registered trade unions in Kerala is about ten thousand and they account for about one-fourth of the total number in India. See Oommen, M.A. 1990, Op.cit.

The Punnapra-Vayalar⁴ Struggle, one of the early communist inspired struggles for political change in the erstwhile princely State of Travancore,⁵ owed a good deal to the organized working class of the coir industry around Alleppey. They also launched general strikes in support of the demand for 'Responsible Government'⁶ in Travancore. Besides, for the first time in the history of the world, it was in the State of Kerala that a communist Government was voted to power through free election in 1957. The industrial working class played a major role in this. In brief, working class consciousness has

4. Punnapra-Vayalar Upheaval (October, 1946) was an armed struggle of the organized working class of Ampalapuzha and Shertallai Taluks (in Alleppey district) against the then Diwan, Sir. C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar's oppressive rule and against the unjust practices and violence let loose by the rich landlords and coir capitalists on the working class. Those who joined the violent struggle were mainly the coir workers and fishermen. Leadership to this struggle was given by the communist party and their trade unions. See Encyclopaedia (Malayalam) National Book Stall, Kottayam 1972, Vol. VIII, pp. 382, 383, 384.
5. The present State of Kerala consists of two princely states - Travancore and Cochin - and the Malabar district of Madras Presidency.
6. At the time when the declaration of India's independence appeared to be imminent, the Diwan Sir. C.P. Ramaswamy Ayyar chalked out a plan to keep the State of Travancore out of the Indian union and to form an independent Government in Travancore with an executive appointed by the Maharaja, having no responsibility to any elected legislature. It was in this context that the workers of Alleppey joined the mass movement for responsible government and showed their political consciousness. Encyclopaedia (Malayalam) National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1972, Vol. VIII, pp. 382, 383, 384 and Menon, Sreedhara, A., A Survey of Kerala History, Sahitya Pravartaka Co-operative Society Ltd., Kottayam, 1967, pp. 360 & 361.

manifested in the numerous struggles launched for gaining not only economic benefits but also for achieving political goals.

Though the industrial workers of Kerala were in the fore front of many trade union and political struggles in the past, the frequency and ardour of such struggles appear to be on the decline in the state. The decline in number of industrial disputes and the mandays lost in recent years in the state may give an indication of this trend.⁷

According to many political and trade union leaders of today, even when the workers are prepared to resort to trade union actions, it is only for bettering their own economic interests. Workers are no longer interested in class and political actions. It is felt that the communist unions are losing their influence on workers, especially in the modern sector.

Many servers have pointed out that the communist parties are losing their electoral hold on modern industrial workers. As evidence, they point out the defeat of the communist party's candidate in the last parliamentary election in the Alleppey Constituency, covering the Alleppey coir

7. The number of industrial disputes has been declining in Kerala in recent years. There were 750 industrial disputes during the six year period between 1977 and 1982. In the next six year period (1983-1988) the number of disputes has declined to 466. The number of workers affected has declined from 6,66,066 to 4,37,835 during this period. The number of mandays lost declined from 141.7 lakhs to 109.6 lakhs. See Govt. of Kerala, Department of Economics and Statistics, 'A note on changing industrial relations in Kerala', Trivandrum, February, 1987. See also Govt. of Kerala, 'Economic Review', 1989.

industry belt, which had at one time nurtured the communist movement in the state. Similarly, the Congress (I) won the parliamentary seat from the Ernakulam Constituency which covers the modern industrial belt of Kerala. The Alwaye assembly constituency covering the Alwaye-Kalamassery industrial belt housing a large number of modern industrial units was also won by a Congress (I) candidate.

Many plausible reasons are adduced for this phenomenon. The decline of the traditional industries of Kerala may be one of these reasons. The workers in these sun-set industries are no longer in a position to bargain with their employers even for economic benefits though their real wage rates are stagnating if not actually declining. They seem to be reluctant to rock the boat which is already creaking. On the other hand, the better paid organized workers in the modern sector are no longer prepared to launch political and class struggles. This appears to be due to the waning of class consciousness amongst them. One of the oft cited reasons for this phenomenon is the changing profile of the workers, resulting both from their relative affluence and their middle class socio-economic background. Their levels of consumption and assets, life styles and aspirations are often said to border that of the middle class and white collar employees. Many of these workers are said to show signs of embourgeoisement and class shifting, leading to waning of class consciousness. It is partly to examine this social phenomenon that we propose to study the profile of the industrial

workers of Kerala, belonging to two sub sectors of the factory sector - one using traditional technology and another using more modern technology. Before examining the phenomena like embourgeoisement and class shifting among the industrial workers of Kerala and their consequences, it becomes necessary to understand clearly these and other related concepts. There has been a large number of studies, both theoretical and empirical on the stratification of industrial working class; as a consequence of changing technology and growing affluence of workers. In the next section, we propose to survey the literature on these issues.

Any discussion on classes should start with a discussion on the origin and characteristics of the industrial working class. Rise of the modern working class is the inevitable consequence of the industrial revolution. Many characteristics of modern industrial workers distinguish them from workers of the pre-industrial revolution period. The modern worker is separated from the means of production; he sells his labour power to the owners of the means of production. In the words of Engels "the proletariat, the class of modern wage labourers, who having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live".⁸ Workers in the modern sense of the term are, the "first class" not to own tools.⁹ In this

8. Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick, Manifesto of the 'Communist Party', Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 35 quoted from 'Note by Engels to the English Edition of 1888'.

9. Kuczynski, Jurgen, The Rise of the Working Class, World University Library, London, 1967, p.10.

respect, a modern worker is different from an artisan, an owner of business and a cottage industrialist. The industrial worker is different from a household worker who not only owns tools, but also works in his own household enterprise, with the help of the members of his family. The pace of work, time of work, leisure, recreation etc. are largely determined by him. On the other hand, the modern industrial worker is forced to become an "appendage of the machine".¹⁰ The workers' lives are dependent on the running of the machine,¹¹ which is determined not by him, but by the machine owner. In a way, the modern working class is the product of the machine. "No machines would mean no working class".¹²

According to Kuczynski, another distinguishing characteristic of the modern workers is their freedom and mobility. In the centuries that preceded the industrial revolution, workers were attached to their employers either as slaves or as feudal serfs and were not free to move around. Even the workers of the centralized mills of France and Germany in the 17th and 18th centuries had to live and work in their work places like soldiers

10. "Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack that is required of him", Marx and Engels, *Ibid.*, p. 42.

11. "Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machines.....", Marx and Engels, *Ibid.*, p. 43.

12. See Kuczynski (London, 1967), *Op.cit.*, for detailed discussion.

in barracks and could leave only on festival days. According to Kuczynski, since these workers were virtually slaves or prisoners with little freedom, they cannot be considered workers in the strict sense of the term.

A separate working class identity, culture and consciousness have emerged during the course of the last two centuries of evolution of industrial working class. This identity, culture and consciousness have developed inter alia by the workers' common work role, common experience relating to machines and factory environment. As the small craftsmen from domestic industries were at first reluctant to move to the factories, the early factory workers were recruited from the "less stable and less responsible" elements in the population. According to Redford,¹³ "Displaced agricultural workers, discharged soldiers, broken tailors and cobblers, paupers and vagrants, all tried their hands in the new factories and left when the discipline grew irksome". As time passed, factory workers were recruited from artisans who had been deprived of their property and from workers in household industry. It was from these diverse ranks that the industrial proletariat of the Industrial Revolution came into being.¹⁴ The factory fused the diverse

13. Redford, A., The Economic History of England - 1760-1860, London, 1931, pp. 44ff., 56ff. Quoted by Kuczynski; Op.cit., p. 70.

14. Kuczynski; Op.cit., p. 76.

groups of men who came from different strata of society into one class.¹⁵ In India also, the first generation of industrial workers were from the lowest stratum of society and they were mostly of rural origin. Ramanujam describes the emergence of industrial labour in India in the following words. "With the import of techniques and methods of mass production from the west, a new class of industrial labour gradually emerged, although they were drawn from the villages and had their moorings in them."¹⁶ Sukomal Sen has pointed out that many of them were descendants of the artisans and handicraftsmen who were ruined as a result of the destruction of traditional handicrafts and cottage industry under colonial rule.¹⁷

Marxists define classes in terms of the relation which individuals or groups hold to the economic structure - that is to the control and use of powers of production. So under capitalism, two classes would emerge - one owning powers of production and the other divested of powers of production, but selling their labour power for a monetary reward. In the words of Lenin, "Social classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by

15. Ibid., p. 76.

16. Ramanujam, G., Indian Labour Movement, Sterling Publishers (Pvt) Ltd., New Delhi, 1986, p. 6.

17. See Sen, Sukomal, Working Class of India, K.P. Bagchi & Company, Calcutta 1979, pp. 27 & 28.

the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy".¹⁸ Though Marx had expounded the binary class system, it is to be remembered that he recognised the existence of other classes like the middle class and the lumpen proletariat. But it did not in any way, vitiate his concept of the two 'hostile classes' as he did not attach any political significance to the middle classes. According to Marx and Engels the other classes including the lower middle classes are destined to 'decay' and 'finally disappear'.

Contradictory Class Location

In the course of his analysis of classes in contemporary capitalism, Nicos Poulantzas, the French Structuralist had noted that there are some workers whose class position cannot be clearly located and they seem to occupy "Contradictory class location".¹⁹ For instance, supervisory labour sells their labour power for wages and so they should rightly be treated as workers. But by extracting maximum labour from the workers under them, they help the capitalists to extort surplus value. This function puts them in the class of capitalists. Hence their location in the production relations is 'contradictory'.

18. Lenin, V.I., "A Great Beginning", Collected Works, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 421.

19. See Poulantzas, Nicos, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, (1975).

Some of the Marxian writers themselves have admitted the difficulty in locating precisely a worker's position in the class hierarchy. To quote, Yermakova and Ratnikov, "The exploiter and the exploited "co-exist" in a petty owner. A rank-and-file manager is both the hired employee of a capitalist and the person who exercises the control functions of capitalist exploitation".²⁰

In this context, it is interesting to note that early socialist thinkers like C.D.H. Cole had also realized the difficulty in assigning a person to a particular class. According to him, "an individual can be within the sphere of more than one class at the same moment, so that he cannot be assigned wholly to one class; and there exist individuals who can hardly be assigned to any class, even in the most tentative way".²¹

New Petty Bourgeoisie

Poulantzas includes white-collar employees, technicians, supervisors and civil servants in the class of "new petty bourgeoisie", though they do not own any means of production.²² Erik Olin Wright, while interpreting Poulantzas shows "three clusters of positions within the social division of labour as occupying

20. Yermakova and Ratnikov, What are Classes and the Class Struggle? Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1986, p. 74.

21. Cole C.D.H., Studies in Class Structure, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, (1964), p. 1.

22. See Poulantzas, Nicos, 1975, Op.cit.

contradictory locations within class relations: 1) Managers and supervisors occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; 2) Certain categories of semi autonomous employees who retain relatively high levels of control over their immediate labour process, occupy a contradictory location between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie; 3) Small employers occupy a contradictory location between the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie".²³

Poulantzas includes in the working class, only the productive labour which contributes to the production of surplus product and whose surplus labour is extorted. Supervisory Labour, though productive, is excluded from the working class because, the supervising activity represents the political domination of capital over the working class. Poulantzas maintains a division between manual and mental labour and excludes the mental labour from the working class. By mental labour he means the "experts" who possess some secret knowledge. They are not included in the working class because it is through them that the working class is ideologically dominated. Unlike manual labour, mental labour is involved in the planning and direction of the production process. Erik Olin Wright, while commenting on the works of Poulantzas writes: "Experts are the direct carriers of this ideological domination; thus, like

23. Wright, Erik Olin, Class, Crisis and the State, Verso, London, 1978, pp. 62 & 63.

supervisors, they are excluded from the working class".²⁴

The rise of the 'new petty bourgeoisie' from among workers is an important phenomenon with wide ramifications. To quote Erik Olin Wright, "In the course of capitalist development, the traditional petty bourgeoisie - independent artisans, small shop keepers etc. - has steadily dwindled."²⁵ In its place, there has arisen what Poulantzas calls the "new petty bourgeoisie". Carchedi goes to the extent of calling the 'petty bourgeoisie' as a third primary class "which is economically identified as the middle class". According to him, there are important differences between this new middle class and the old middle class. "The essential features which distinguish the old from the new middle class are three."²⁶ First of all the old middle class belongs to the capitalist class (since it is the real and the legal owner) while the new middle class does not. Secondly, the old middle class performs the function of capital individually..... The new middle class, on the other hand, performs this function collectively in the double sense that this function 1) is performed both by the capitalist and by the new middle class and

24. Ibid., p. 38.

25. Ibid., p. 34.

26. Carchedi, Guglielmo, On the Economic Identification of Social Classes. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1977, pp. 88 & 89.

that, 2) within the latter, is performed by a great number of agents. Thirdly, and this is of fundamental importance, while in the old middle class, the function of capital/exploiter (or oppressor)/non-labourer elements are always dominant, in the new middle class, this is no longer so, as they are not the real owners of the means of production..... This fact, that the new middle class performs the global function of capital even without owning the means of production, and that it performs this function in conjunction with the function of the collective worker, is the basic point for an understanding of the nature of this class".

Weber's Classification of Industrial Societies.

Though Weber's interpretation of class does not differ essentially from Marx's, many writers consider that his is an alternative model of stratification of industrial societies. In Weber's view, social structure has three dimensions, the economic, the cultural and political - each relatively independent of the other. But like Marx, he too emphasises the economic aspect.

According to Weber, so many social strata exist in between the two major classes eg. small business men, professionals, officials and white collar workers. Such a stratification is based, not only on economic and political factors, but also on factors like occupation, education and styles of life. This

view of Weber has led to the formation of the novel concept of 'status group'.²⁷ Weber was of the view that while 'classes' are stratified according to their relations to the production and acquisition of goods, 'status groups' are stratified according to the principles of their consumption of goods as represented by special styles of life. Each status group according to Weber, is distinguished by the social esteem, honour or prestige it commands. Sociologists like Talcott Parsons and Wright Mills supported the Weberian approach to social stratification.

It may be noted that socialist writers like Cole had also rejected any single criterion for determining classes.²⁸ According to him, income, occupation and formal education can also be used as criteria for determining classes. Of these, he gave greater emphasis to 'occupation'.

Recognition of the importance of the intermediate strata has led to a considerable modification of the theory of binary classes by Marxian writers. In the words of Yermakova and Ratnikov,²⁹ "Every class has its own relationship to the means of production. On the basis of this distinction, we can draw the line between classes and social groups other than classes.

27. See (1) Weber, Max, Economy and Society, Part I, (Eds.) Roth, Guenther and Wittich, Claus, University of California Press, London, 1978.

(2) Szacki, Jerzy, History of Sociological Thought, Green Wood Press, West Port, Connecticut, 1979.

(3) Gerth, H.H. & Mills, Wright, C. (Eds.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (London: RKP, 1948).

28. See Cole, CDH, Op.cit., pp. 5 & 6.

29. Yermakova and Ratnikov, Op.cit., pp. 25 & 26.

The intelligentsia, for example, is not a class because it has no relationship of its own to the means of production".

Rise of Labour Aristocracy

Marx, Engels and Lenin had noted the formation of an upper crust of the working class viz. labour aristocrats who emulate the life styles of the middle class. They saw this as part of the scheme of the capitalists to create cleavages in the working class by pampering an upper section by offering higher wages and special privileges. This upper crust of the working class is more privileged and has a relatively comfortable position. They are respectable and politically moderate, but less class conscious. They are referred to as the 'labour aristocracy'.

According to Hobsbawm who had published several works on labour aristocracy and its historical evolution, in the nineteenth century when the term was first used, it was associated more with skill. He points out several characteristics of labour aristocracy.³⁰ According to him, they constituted the top stratum of the working class enjoying certain privileges. Through unions,

30. See for eg. Hobsbawm, E.J., Worlds of Labour, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1984.

they tried to retain their privileged position. They were narrow reformists who stood in the way of revolutionary movement of the working class. They were politically moderate. Labour aristocrats were generally acknowledged for their skill, economically favoured position, life styles and beliefs and their relative position in the social hierarchy. In brief, the superiority of this stratum was economic, social, political, cultural and moral i.e. all pervading. Labour aristocrats could be distinguished from other workers on account of their life styles-housing, clothing, sociability and leisure activities. They had a craze for buying status symbols. To gain 'respectability', they took great care in 'keeping the front room in tact'.

Hobsbawm pointed out that the Labour Aristocracy maintained its identity through residential segregation, pattern of inter marriages, reading habits and career expectations for children. In spite of all these distinct features, they remained 'working class'. They did not give up working for wages and so they could not permanently barricade themselves against the rest of the working class.

Zagladin³¹ also enumerated features like comfortable position, higher wages, privileged status, cultural element etc.

31. Zagladin, V.V. (Ed.) International Working Class Movement, Vol. II, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 76.

as the distinguishing marks of labour aristocracy. To quote Zagladin,³² "while it did not stake out a boundary between itself and the "middle class", the labour aristocracy attached significance to maintaining a social distance from the proletarian "lower orders" - unskilled, untrained workers - whom they treated with disdain and even despised".

Capitalist writers show the existence of this group of privileged workers with high incomes as evidence of the capitalist system's ability to protect the interest of the workers. The socialist writers, on the other hand, see it as the result of the attempts of the capitalists to create divisions among the workers by pampering a few with all sorts of privileges.

Many Communists believe that under imperialism, the bourgeoisie of the developed capitalist countries bribe the upper layers of the proletariat by using some of the profit which it obtains by plundering colonies and economically dependent countries and by establishing high monopoly prices.³³ To Francois Billoux,³⁴ a French Communist party leader, "There has always existed a privileged fraction of the working-class which the bourgeoisie corrupts through particular privileges aimed at detaching it

32. Ibid., p. 79.

33. See Yarmakova & Ratnikov, Op.cit.

34. Billoux, Francois, quoted by Mallet, Serge, The New Working Class, Spokesman Books, Nottingham, 1975, p. 75.

from the rest of the class. This worker's aristocracy, whose existence Lenin had already underlined, has always been susceptible to reformism".

Embourgeoisement of Workers

Another variant of the thesis of labour aristocracy is the embourgeoisement thesis. Sometimes, the two terms are used synonymously though the former concept was originally used to describe some sections of the 19th century British working class. It has been noticed that as wages increase, a section of the working class tries to emulate the middle class in consumption habits, life styles etc. Their tendency to emulate the life styles of the bourgeoisie is described as embourgeoisement tendency. With affluence, it is not only the life styles of the workers that undergo change, but also their attitudes, aspirations and consciousness. Empirical studies have been made about 'labour embourgeoisement' in countries like England. Goldthorpe and associates for instance, studied the Luton workers to test the embourgeoisement thesis. Though they found no evidence to prove the thesis, they found that there is a "process of convergence in certain particular respects, in the normative orientation of some sections of the working class and some white collar groups".³⁵

Coming to the studies conducted in India, a study on the industrial workers of Bombay found that the wage gains "have

35. Goldthorpe, John H. et.al., The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1969, p.26.

produced a new, growing and relatively affluent class of blue collar workers in Bombay who have all the aspirations of their middle class bosses".³⁶ There are companies in Bombay where the last grade servants get more salary than the post graduate laboratory chemists in the same company. This situation is brought about by the bargaining power of the strong trade unions. As a result, the workers' consumption habits, life styles and attitudes have changed.

Uma Ramaswamy³⁷ maintains that the Coimbatore workers whom she studied show embourgeoisement tendency. Mark Holmstrom pointed out the wide gap which exists in the wage levels of 'organized' and 'unorganized' sector workers in Bangalore. According to him "well-paid workers aspire to a middle-class life style; a more expensive education for their children;
.....".³⁸ However, he adds, with certain qualifications "that organized and unorganized sector workers do not think themselves and act as separate classes. There is no clear boundary between the two social worlds".³⁹

Classes, Class Consciousness and Class Conflicts

According to Marx and Engels, "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into

36. Badwar, Inderjit and Midha, Tania, "The High Wage - Island", India Today, Delhi, March 31, 1987.

37. See Ramaswamy, Uma, Work, Union and Community, Oxford University Press, London, 1983.

38. Holmstrom, Mark, Industry and Inequality, Cambridge, 1984, p. 316.

39. Ibid., p. 322.

two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat".⁴⁰ Marx has explained the circumstances in which the workers become class conscious. The capitalist social structure is based on the pursuit of profit without regard to human welfare. So the capitalist class would become wealthier and more powerful with the progress of industrialization. At the same time, the working class would grow in size and suffer increasing poverty. In the pursuit of profit, capitalists adopt methods which degrade labour to the level of an 'appendage of a machine' and turn work into a 'hated toil'. This experience of misery makes the workers class conscious and they become aware of their common interests, in opposition to the interests of capitalists and determined to improve their lot in life. Engels⁴¹ found that class consciousness among the American proletarians was the result of their common discontent with miserable social condition. According to E.P. Thompson,⁴² the working class presence, was felt in British political life when the working people "came to feel an identity of interests as between themselves, and as against their rulers and employers". To Wilensky,⁴³ a man is said to be class

40. Marx & Engels, Op.cit., p. 36.

41. Engels, F.: The conditions of the Working Class in England, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 17.

42. See Thompson, E.P.: The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin Book Ltd, Harmondsworth, 1963.

43. Wilensky, Harold, J., "Class, Class Consciousness and American Workers" in the "Vista of American Labour", William Haber (Ed) Voice of America Forum Lectures, 1966, p. 15.

conscious in the Marxian sense when he is (1) rationally aware of his own class interests and identifies with them; (2) aware of other class interests and rejects them as illegitimate; and (3) aware of and ready to use collective political means to realise his class interests.

Concepts like 'new petty bourgeoisie' and 'contradictory class location' suggest that there are some sections of the modern working class whose loyalty is not entirely to their class. The class position of some of them is ambiguous and therefore their class interests also remain ambiguous. According to Roger Penn,⁴⁴ "Revolutionary class consciousness or radicalism is pervasive only when the working class is homogeneous. However, this homogeneity is fragmented when a skilled labour aristocracy develops within the working class".

According to many authors, the antagonistic class positions visualized by Marx does not hold good in several countries today. For instance, Harold J. Wilensky⁴⁵ who has examined the changes which have occurred in the working class consciousness over time holds the view that in the U.S.A. and other rich countries, a clearly defined working class no longer exists. The behaviour and attitudes said to be rooted in class are instead more a matter of race, religion, ethnic origin, education, age etc.

44. Penn, Roger, Skilled Workers in the Class-Structure, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, p. 8.

45. Wilensky, Harold, J.: Op.cit. p. 13

To Wilensky, as America has grown richer, the Marxian class consciousness is fading into memory. "Today, some of the sit down strikers - or their sons - peacefully negotiate contracts with employers, serve on community welfare council boards, run for municipal office and live a modestly comfortable middle class life".⁴⁶ The spontaneous protest movements of yesterday have given way to the 'business unions' of today. American labour today has limited goals: better wages, shorter hours and improved conditions of employment.

According to Wilensky, American labour has become conservative. Its class consciousness is much less compared to that of European labour. Its leaders have become integrated to the power and status structure of a 'private enterprise economy and pressure group polity'. The workers get a fair deal and their work has become more skilled and less manual. There are immense variations in interest and attitude within the ranks of the management and labour. So there no longer exists the condition of labour pitched against capital. The social classes in America are slowly merging; the standards of living of the upper working and lower middle classes are becoming similar.⁴⁷

Studies about social stratifications have discovered the phenomenon of people shifting their class position.⁴⁸

46, Ibid., p. 17.

47. Ibid., p. 43.

48. See Pelling, Henry; American Labour, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1960.

The phenomenon of 'class shifting' as a result of labour mobility has been observed in all countries, but it is more visible in U.S.A. According to Pelling, in America one's class position is not permanent; one moves away from his class in course of time. In fact, Pelling goes to the extent of saying that there is no longer a 'working class' in America, but only 'Americans at work'.⁴⁹ As the general standard of living improved, so the wage-earner slowly lost his identity as a consumer of cheap, sub-standard products. With his family, he enjoyed more fully than ever the opportunities of easier living which could be derived from the ownership of automobiles, television, washing machines and refrigerators. He followed the middle class habit of moving to the suburbs to obtain improved housing. With more time for leisure activities, he and his family began to spend more money on pastimes and on travel..... The standard was set by the ever-growing middle-income groups, among whom so many of the wage-earners had found a place".⁵⁰ According to Pelling, the final permanent characteristic of American labour..... is its lack of class consciousness".⁵¹

Technological Changes and Differentiation in the Working Class

The developments in technology have contributed a good deal to the stratification of the industrial working class. This has happened in many ways. Firstly, despite drudgery and monotony, industrial work is no longer 'the hated toil' it used

49. See Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 184.

51. Ibid., p. 184.

to be. Working conditions in the modern factories are much better than what are available to the work force in the unorganised sectors. This is particularly true of the workers in developing countries with their dualism in development. Secondly, technological progress has led to higher labour productivity which coupled with strong unionisation has boosted the wage levels in many industries. The income and consumption levels of workers in many industries are much higher than those of many sections of population. The levels and pattern of consumption particularly that of consumer goods and entertainment goods are more or less the same as that of middle class. Bargaining power of trade unions and their political influence have led to better working and living conditions. Presence of strong trade unions has made industrial employment a "Citadel of security" for the millions of unemployed and underemployed around.

Better working conditions, the relative affluence and security of tenure have attracted entrants from middle classes to the industrial work force. As recent studies have shown, the modern industrial workers come from higher castes and classes. The technological changes that have been incorporated in industries call for more educated and better skilled workers. Given the unequal opportunities for education, higher classes and castes have got an inherent advantage in getting industrial employment. In addition to the relative affluence, this new

background of workers also must have contributed to the emergence of new strata in the working class.

In India, as elsewhere in the world, early industrial workers came from less stable backgrounds. They were pushed and not pulled into industrial work. The factors that pushed them into industrial employment were both economic and cultural. But today, many recent studies have revealed that compared to general population, modern industrial workers especially in less developed countries form 'a select group of superior quality'. The "social selectivity"⁵² of the industrial labourers was established by Vaid on the basis of his study of the workers in Kota, Rajasthan. He found the factory workers to be of superior social quality as compared to the general work force of both Kota and Rajasthan. The factory workers, according to Vaid,⁵³ are younger in age, more literate, better educated, less rural in their background, mostly immigrants, and had smaller (size) families and higher per capita income.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to assess the changes that have been taking place in the socio-economic profile of

52. For an exposition of the concept of "social selectivity" see Vaid, K.N., The New Worker, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968, pp. 45-46 and 131.

53. Ibid., p. 49.

organized industrial workers of Kerala in the context of the changes that have been taking place in the state's industrial structure. With this object in view, the study seeks to find out the similarities and differences in the profile of workers belonging to two segments of factory sector industries in Kerala viz., modern and traditional segments. It also seeks to examine the factors leading to the differences in profile, if any, and their consequences. As noted earlier, the profile of workers may be influenced both by external societal factors and by internal factors like the difference in industrial structure and the technologies used. It is proposed to assess the relative importance of these two groups of factors. In drawing up the profile, we seek to find out whether the workers belonging to the organised sector of industry in Kerala particularly the more modern sector have begun to form a 'select group' in the Kerala society and the total work force. Wherever possible, it is proposed to compare the profile of the Kerala workers with those of workers in other states of India. As an incidental objective, it is also proposed to find out to the extent possible, whether trends towards labour embourgeoisement and class shifting have begun to set in among the industrial workers of Kerala, particularly among the workers in the modern industries as a result of their relative affluence and their middle class socio-economic background. Besides, the study seeks to find out whether there is any difference in the class consciousness of

workers belonging to these two segments of organized industry, arising from the differences in their economic status and social background.

With these objectives in view, it is proposed to collect specific information on the following aspects of workers' profile:

1. Workers' socio-economic background - rural-urban origin, religion and caste, occupation of parents and close relatives, property holdings of family, levels of education of worker and his family.
2. Occupational aspects - eg. entry influences, past experience, waiting period for jobs, job changes, years of service in the unit, wages, other perquisites, working conditions etc.
3. Economic aspects - levels and sources of their income, levels and patterns of expenditure, living conditions, life styles, savings, assets, and liabilities.
4. Sociological variables like attitudes to work, technology, employers and trade unions, aspirations and consciousness including class consciousness pattern of residence, social world etc.

Methodology and Data Collection

For our study, we have selected 90 workers each from the traditional and modern sectors. These workers belong to seven units drawn from three industries. Industries are classified into modern and traditional on the basis of technologies

used as measured by their capital intensity and fixed capital per worker.⁵⁴ Our classification based on capital intensity corresponds to the generally accepted popular classification. Two units were selected to represent the modern sector; one of them is a fertilizer unit, (The Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Ltd., Udyogamandal) started in the pre-independence period and the other a recently started one (The Hindustan Newsprints Ltd., Mevelloor, Kottayam). The technology used in the former unit, though modern is not the latest available. The latter unit making newsprint uses highly automated production technology involving both mechanical and chemical processes. Five coir manufacturing units from Alleppey have been selected to represent the traditional sector. Though coir industry belongs largely to the household sector, the units selected by us belong to the factory sector in the industry. This was done deliberately in order to eliminate the influences on the profile of workers arising out of the differences in the organization of production.

Among the many traditional industries in Kerala, coir industry has been selected for many reasons. Firstly, it has a

54. Our choice of the industrial units to represent the MS and TS was based on the twin criteria - capital intensity and fixed capital per worker. Our computations based on the A.S.I. data (Annual Survey of Industries: Summary results for Factory Sector 1982-83) show that fixed capital per worker in paper industry (including newsprint) is Rs.3,01,186/-. In chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides, FC per worker is Rs. 1,35,044/-. Capital intensity is calculated by dividing fixed capital by productive capital. On that basis, capital intensity in paper industry is found to be 372 and in chemical industry it is 133. But in coir and coir products, FC per worker is Rs.17,631/- only. Capital intensity is as low as 13.4.

long history of existence. Secondly, the coir workers are relatively better organized among the workers in traditional industries. They have been in the forefront of the trade union movement and communist-led political struggles in Kerala, exhibiting a high degree of class consciousness. Thirdly, except for cashew industry, this is one traditional industry, where one gets many units in the factory sector, though using only traditional technology.⁵⁵ Fourthly, the districts of Ernakulam and Kottayam where our modern sector units are located do not have any well-organized traditional industries, especially in the factory sector. The district which is contiguous to both Ernakulam and Kottayam districts and where traditional industry in the organized sector is concentrated is Alleppey. This contiguity eliminates, to a great extent, regional influences on worker profiles.

Our sample of workers was picked up from the 'worker category' given in the factory registers. The list excludes supervisors and the office employees. In the modern sector, forty five workers each were selected from the two units, using random number table. In the traditional sector, our sample was drawn from five coir factories. It became necessary to cover more units in the traditional sector, because the number of workers

55. Though there are many factories in the cashew industry, it was not selected as its work force is dominated by women workers. But most of our respondents in the modern sector are male workers. Therefore, with a view to eliminating gender based bias in worker profile, this industry was not selected.

is very small, not even a hundred in most of the coir factories. In order to eliminate the influences that may arise from factors like general changes taking place over time in society and economy, an equal number of young, middle aged and elderly workers were included in our sample. For this purpose, separate lists of workers belonging to the different age groups were prepared and samples drawn from the lists.

The workers so selected were interviewed personally at the factory premises. Though pre-tested, structured schedules were used, the meetings with the workers were utilised for holding personal discussions going beyond the structured questionnaire. These discussions helped in getting valuable insights into workers' attitudes, aspirations, beliefs and opinions on many relevant issues. Wherever necessary and possible, the data obtained from schedules were cross-checked with those available from company records. Secondary data have been used to relate the profile of industrial workers studied by us with the socio-economic profile of the general population and total work force. For making comparisons with workers of other states, previous studies conducted on the profile of workers elsewhere have been relied on.

Scope and Limitations

The small number of industries and small sample of workers selected by us may appear to be a major limitation of this study. However, this is not a serious limitation as the focus of our

study is on the differences in worker profile resulting from the differences in industrial structure.

The methodology used is the comparative static methodology. We have not sought to bring out changes taking place over time in the worker profile due to factors external and internal to their organisation.

Wherever possible, we have compared the profile of our sample of workers with the profile of workers elsewhere drawn by various authors in various studies. These studies have been conducted at different time periods and comparability to that extent is limited.

We have collected information on a large number of socio-political variables like workers' attitudes, opinions, beliefs, aspirations and consciousness. Information obtained on these aspects is based on the workers' own perception. It is not based on quantitative data. This method is usually employed by sociologists. Since our study is inter-disciplinary in nature, use of this methodology was found to be necessary.

Relevance of the Study

As may be seen from our earlier discussion, there is a large number of studies on the changing profile of workers in different countries as a consequence of the changes in industrial structure. Such studies cover aspects like changing socio-economic background of workers, changes in the levels and pattern

of their consumption, particularly of consumer durables, changes in the quantum and pattern of assets owned and changes in styles of living and aspirations. They also deal with the impact of the changing profile of workers on their class position and class consciousness.

Studies about the changes in profile of industrial workers in India and their causes and consequences are few. In Kerala, only one study has so far been conducted on the profile of industrial workers, though industrial working class emerged in the state almost concurrently with its emergence in other parts of India.⁵⁶

Most of the studies in India are not inter-disciplinary. They are either sociological, anthropological or historical. Besides, most of the studies are on the profile of workers in a particular industry or in a particular region. Some of these studies deal with only particular aspects like workers' background. Our study, on the other hand focuses attention on comparing the profile of workers in two groups of industries, one using modern technology and another using traditional technology. The purpose of making this comparison is to find out the impact of the technology factor on the workers' profile.

56. The above study by Surendranath & Ramachandran Nair, about the profile of workers, was completed a decade ago. It covered a sample of all the workers of Trivandrum district belonging to both organised and unorganised sectors. See Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, A study on the Socio-economic profile of the Industrial Workers in Trivandrum District, Trivandrum, 1978 (unpublished).

Though workers in the organised sector of industry constitute comparatively a small proportion of the total work force and population in a less developed country, their influence on the economy, society and polity may possibly be disproportionate to their number. Since they are better organised, they are more articulate and effective in a 'pressure group polity'. As noted earlier, in the modern history of Kerala, the industrial working class has played an important role, though the proportion of population belonging to this class is lower than that of the country as a whole. Hence, a study of the changes taking place in this significant group in society and the causes and consequences of such changes will have great relevance in explaining some of the socio-political changes which are observable in the Kerala society today. Such a study is all the more relevant because, such studies, with the exception of the one noted earlier have not been made of workers in Kerala.

Plan of the Study

This study is divided into eight chapters. Chapter I, the present chapter, spells out the objectives, scope, methodology, limitations and relevance of the study. It also gives a review of literature.

Chapter II deals with the socio-economic background of our sample of workers. The following aspects of the worker's background are looked into:

(1) Rural-Urban background. (2) State of origin. (3) Religion and caste. (4) Occupational background of parents and near relatives. (5) The educational level of workers, parents, spouses and siblings. This chapter also reviews the literature on the background of workers.

Chapter III examines how structured the job market is. It discusses the influences determining the workers' entry into their present jobs and how these influences contribute to the differences in profile. This chapter will have sections on sources of vacancy information, role of influence in recruitment, restrictive recruitment practices, waiting period for getting job, job changes etc.

Chapter IV deals with the workers' economic status and behaviour. The following aspects are discussed:

(1) Levels and sources of income. (2) Levels and pattern of consumption. (3) Living conditions. (4) Life style. (5) Levels and composition of savings, assets and liabilities.

Chapter V deals with the worker's views on his work, working and living conditions, compensation, welfare facilities etc. The focus of this chapter is on the workers' satisfaction over wages, provident fund, bonus, ESI, retirement benefits, job security and promotion prospects.

Chapter VI deals with the workers' relationship with trade unions. Union membership, participation in union actions, expectations from unions, reasons for joining and leaving unions

political affiliation of unions etc. are examined in detail. The workers' assessment of the performance of their unions and union leadership is also given here.

Chapter VII deals with the workers' pattern of residence, their social relationships, political involvement, aspirations and social perspectives. Aspirations regarding children's education and occupation, circle of friends, links with native place etc. are analysed in detail. Class consciousness and attitudes towards various social classes and issues are also analysed.

Chapter VIII. In this concluding chapter, the salient features of worker profile found in both the modern sector and the traditional sector are brought out. Both the similarities and differences found in the profile of the workers are highlighted.

The chapter raises certain issues relating to the workers' class position and class shifting. The 'labour embourgeoisement' hypothesis is also discussed in the Kerala context.

CHAPTER II

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

In the previous chapter, we have made a passing reference to the low and unstable socio-economic background of early industrial workers in European countries, as also in India. Many of the workers were pushed to and not pulled into industrial employment. The push factors were social, economic and cultural.¹ But the recent studies of modern industrial workers show that the pull factors too have started exerting their strong influences. The relative affluence and security provided by organised industry in the background of massive unemployment and underemployment in unorganised industry and agriculture, have made industrial employment in organised industry doubly attractive. This is more so in a state like Kerala with the highest unemployment rates² and the lowest land-man ratio.³ Consequently, it is

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1. See Sharma, G.K., Labour Movement in India, (Third Edition), Sterling Publishers (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1971 and Morris, M.D., The Emergence of an Industrial Labour force in India, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1965.
 2. Mounting unemployment, coupled with persisting underemployment, is the most serious socio-economic problem of Kerala. The total number of registered work-seekers was 30.7 lakhs in 1989 in Kerala, of which about 61 per cent was educated (S.S.L.C. and above). In fact, Kerala which has only about 3.6 per cent of the total population accounts for about 10 per cent of the job seekers in the country. See Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review, 1989, Trivandrum, 1990, pp. 12 & 135.
 3. Average area of land owned per household in Kerala is 0.36 cents as against 1.28 cents for all India. See Government of India, Department of Statistics, National Sample Survey, 37th round.

quite likely that a large number of persons from the traditional middle class, especially from its lower end, are joining the working class. It is also possible that the middle class background of these workers with their middle class values, attitudes and aspirations, together with their relative affluence can lead to the emergence of embourgeoisement trends among them. It is in this context that we propose to examine the socio-economic background of workers in our sample. Before proceeding to do this, it is proposed to survey for the sake of comparison, the background of industrial workers in other parts of India, in the past and present.

There is a general consensus among earlier writers regarding the origin and background of Indian industrial workers. According to Sharma,⁴ the early migrants to the industrial centres were not independent farmers, but socially and economically disabled groups. In the last two decades of the 19th century, there was large scale migration of the villagers to the cities in search of factory jobs, necessitated by the then prevailing famine conditions. They returned to their villages, whenever they could get work there. Thus the factory workers in India continued "to ebb and flow from village to city and from city to village".⁵

4. Sharma, G.K., Op.cit., p. 11.

5. Ibid., p. 12.

Buchanan⁶ reported in 1934 that, as in most other industrial countries, it has been the lowest and most unfortunate class of people who have provided labour for the Indian factories. Most of them belonged to the agricultural villages and to low castes. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the vast majority of the workers in the Bombay Cotton Mills were landless labourers and sub-marginal peasants, pushed out of their villages.⁷ Fragmentation of land, harshness of the caste system and the decline of handicrafts were the major push factors. According to Ramaswamy and Uma Ramaswamy,⁸ early industrial workers in India took to factory labour not because of any special attraction towards industrial occupation, but because they were pushed out of the village by a variety of circumstances. The attachment of the village folk to land was so deep that only those who had no land, or with infertile land, left the villages in search of industrial jobs.

6. Buchanan, D.H., The Development of Capitalist Enterprises in India, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., London, 1966, p. 294.

7. See Gadgil, D.R., The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times, 1860-1939, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1971, pp. 82 & 83.

8. Ramaswamy, E.A. and Ramaswamy, Uma, Industry and Labour Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1981, p. 5.

According to Prakasam,⁹ the landless agricultural labourers were the first to join the coir manufactory set up in Alleppey by James Darragh in 1859. Those who joined the cashew factories of Central Travancore were mostly Harijans. Jaiprakash Raghavaiah¹⁰ has pointed out that the early recruits to the tile factories, weaving mills and printing presses in Malabar started by the Basel Mission, were converts from the depressed castes and classes. The recent study made by Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair¹¹ too has revealed that the background of the industrial workers of Trivandrum district is predominantly rural.

The above findings seem to lend support to the 'cultural inadequacy' concept developed by anthropologists like Slotkin¹² and tested empirically by Vaid¹³ in Kota. Vaid's study revealed that a large number of industrial workers in Kota were those who found their traditional culture inadequate.¹⁴ A large number of Harijans, who were pushed out of the traditional culture,

9. Prakasam, R. (Ed.); History of Trade Union Movement in Kerala (Malayalam), Prabath Book House, Trivandrum, 1979, p.8.

10. Raghavaiah, Jaiprakash, Basel Mission Industries in Malabar and South Canara (1834-1914), Gian Publishing House, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 22, 27, 30 & 41.

11. See Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

12. Slotkin, J.S., From Field to Factory, University of Chicago, Illinois, 1960.

13. See Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., pp. 46 & 47.

14. For a discussion on the 'Cultural inadequacy' concept see Slotkin, J.S., Op.cit., pp. 12, 33, 34, 35 & 97. See also Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., pp. 46, 47 & 131.

migrated in search of employment in factories. As for the more modern workers, education has tended to disorganise the traditional culture. The educated people could easily reject the traditional culture and seek achievement oriented industrial environment.

Several studies have been made in India in recent times about the more modern industrial workers. Baldev Raj Sharma¹⁵ has summarised the findings of most of these recent studies on 'the Indian Industrial Worker'. According to Sharma,¹⁶ the picture of the new industrial worker that emerges out of these studies is that of a young, urban, educated, upper caste Hindu, with previous industrial experience. An examination of the different variables like the background, education and caste shows that compared to the general population, the factory workers in India today form 'a select group of superior quality'

Coming to some of these individual studies, Baldev Raj Sharma's¹⁸ study of the workers in an Automobile Plant

15. See Sharma, B.R., "The Industrial Worker: Some Myths and Realities", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. V, No.27, May 30, 1970.

16. Ibid.

17. See for example, Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., pp. 45, 46 & 49.

18. Sharma, Baldev Raj, 1974, Op.cit.

in Bombay (1965) showed that only 47 per cent of the workers were of rural origin. Goyal¹⁹ (1968) found that only 52 per cent of the workers in Textiles, Chemicals and Engineering industries in Gujarat were of rural origin. Sharma²⁰ (1969) found that only 27 per cent of the workers in the Aircraft factory of Bangalore had rural background. K.N. Vaid²¹ found that even in the less industrialized centre of Rajasthan, where more workers with rural background could be expected, 45 per cent hailed from the urban centres.

The rise in the proportion of urban labour among the factory workers may be due to several reasons. The trend of urbanization observed in the country can be one reason. The new industries which come into existence make use of sophisticated technology. So, demand is more for a new generation of workers who can handle the complicated machinery of a modern plant. Only the urban centres, with facilities for technical training and industrial experience can meet such a demand. It is found that most of the modern industrial workers have some previous work experience in urban occupations.²² Forty four to sixty eight per cent had worked in industrial or

19. Goyal, R.C., A Labour Market Survey of Ahmedbad - Baroda Region, Quoted by Sharma, B.R., 1970, Op.cit.

20. Sharma Baldev Raj, (1970), Op.cit.

21. Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., p. 52.

22. For a detailed discussion see Sharma, B.R., (1970), Op.cit.

mechanical jobs. In fact, only 14 per cent had worked in agricultural occupations. Very often, the managements insist on prior industrial experience. So it is likely that before getting settled in some large factory, the workers try their chances in several small and medium industrial establishments.²³

The early industrial workers were generally, illiterates. As against this, the proportion of illiterates in the studies under discussion does not exceed 32 per cent, while in some cases it is no more than 10 per cent. Between 68 and 94 per cent of the workers interviewed could read and write and had attended some primary classes. This contrasts with the illiteracy rates among total population which was 70.5 per cent in 1971 and 63.9 per cent in 1981.²⁴

Another generally held view is that most of the Indian industrial workers are either non-Hindus or are belonging to the lower castes in Hindu society. But the recent studies mentioned above point out that 69 to 92 per cent of the workers are Hindus and 44 to 77 per cent of them belong to upper castes. One possible reason for this may be that modern industries, using advanced technologies, require workers who have good education and sound technical training. Such categories of employables

23. Ibid.

24. Census of India-1981, Series-10, Kerala, Paper 3 of 1981.

are generally found among the upper castes. Moreover, industrial work today is fairly well paid and hence keenly sought-after. Upper caste Hindus, no longer, consider industrial work as unclean or degrading. In fact, the use of modern technology in most of the industries today, satisfies the status-consciousness of many. The decline in job opportunities in the Government service following the Governments' Reservation policy also must have pushed the upper castes into industrial employment.

Rural-Urban Origin

In the light of the above discussion on the changing background of industrial workers elsewhere in the country, we now propose to examine the socio-economic background of workers in our sample. Usually discussions on the background of industrial workers begin with an examination of their rural-urban origin. The economists seek to study this aspect partly to find out whether spread effects of industrialisation are reaching out to the rural areas. Further rural-urban background of workers can also indicate the push and pull factors that lead to horizontal mobility of workers. To the sociologist, the migration of rural people to industry denotes not only spatial mobility but also occupational and inter-generational mobility. To the social anthropologist,

the migration of workers from their traditional rural moorings may indicate their cultural inadequacy in the rural areas. Industrial sociologists and psychologists study the workers' rural-urban background to find out the differences in their response to industrial ethos.

Though following the traditional pattern, we too are making an analysis of the rural-urban background of workers in our sample, the limitation of such a study in Kerala is to be borne in mind. Due to the peculiar settlement pattern in the state, it is not possible to draw any clear cut line of demarcation between urban and rural areas. What is found is a rural-urban continuum.²⁵ Many of the infrastructural facilities found mostly in the urban areas elsewhere in India are found throughout the state of Kerala.²⁶ Such facilities include means of transport and communications, educational institutions, technical training centres, hospitals etc. The

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25. According to Moni Nag, "In some rural areas of Kerala, the density of population is so high and the net-work of road system is so extensive that the boundary between rural and urban loses much of its meaning". See Nag, Moni, "Impact of Social and Economic Development on Mortality: Comparative Study of Kerala and West Bengal", Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, May 1983.
26. In the physical quality of life, Kerala has made significant achievements and there is not much rural-urban difference in this respect. For details, see Oommen, M.A., "Union-State Financial Relations-Raising Issues based on the Experience of Kerala" (mimeo), Institute for Management in Government, Trivandrum, 1987. See also Oommen, M.A., 'One step forward, Two steps backward', Mathrubhumi Daily, Kozhikode, June 23, 1990.

living styles too are not much different in the rural and urban areas. Besides, the social, cultural and economic links between residents of rural and urban areas continue to be strong, partly due to the small geographical size of the state.

The rural-urban background of our sample of workers is given in Table 2.1.

Table - 2.1: Rural-Urban Background

Units/Sectors	Number of workers	
	Rural	Urban
Hindustan Newsprint Limited (HNL)	40 (88.8)	5 (11.1)
Fertilizers and Chemicals Travancore Limited (FACT)	23 (51.1)	22 (48.8)
Total Modern Sector (MS)	63 (70.0)	27 (30.0)
Traditional Sector (TS)	43 (47.7)	47 (52.2)
Grand Total	106 (58.8)	74 (41.1)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

Source: Survey data.

The Table shows that 41 per cent of our sample of workers is of urban origin. As the proportion of urban population in Kerala is only 19 per cent, it may appear, that industrial employment in the state is tilted heavily in favour of urban population.

Normally, one would expect that more workers in traditional industries will have rural background. As was noted earlier, this was the pattern found elsewhere in India till the 1950s. But our analysis of workers' background in the MS and TS shows exactly the opposite picture. While 70 per cent of the workers in the MS belong to rural areas, only 48 per cent of their counterparts in the traditional sector are of rural origin. This peculiar phenomenon has arisen partly due to the location of the units studied. For historical reasons, most of the coir factories are located in and around the Alleppey town. As against, both the MS factories are located in rural areas.²⁷

As will be seen in detail in the next chapter, entry influences, to some extent, have helped the local labour. For instance, local labour with experience in the cottage units get priority in recruitment to the coir factories. Besides, vacancy information is passed on through "word of mouth" and

27. FACT is located at Eloor, in the Alwaye - Ernakulam industrial belt. It was only in 1990 that Eloor became part of a municipality. Therefore, till recently it was technically a rural area, being in a Panchayat.

most of the workers get appointment by "direct approach". vacancies in the MS factories covered in the present study which are public sector units, are notified through newspaper advertisements/Employment Exchanges. Facilities for general and technical education are available even in the villages of Kerala. The job seekers from villages thus get a fair chance for getting selected to the modern factories. Besides, several workers employed in these factories particularly HNL had got the jobs because of the special consideration shown to those who were evicted when land was acquired for the construction or expansion of the factories.

State of Origin

Growing opportunities of industrial employment have in the past triggered off mass migration of workers even across the countries. For instance, at the beginning of the 19th century, Irish workers migrated in large numbers to England to work in the new factories. In India, jute industry attracted workers from across the borders of West Bengal. Migration from the Konkan region supplied the workers for the textile industry in Bombay.

Several recent studies on modern industrial workers in other parts of India show that a sizeable proportion of

workers come from other states. B.R. Sharma's²⁸ study of an automobile plant in Bombay (1965) had found that one-third of the workers in the plant belong to other states. Vaid's²⁹ Kota (1964) study showed that 41 per cent of the workers belong to other states. Twenty seven per cent of the workers in the different factories of Bangalore studied by Mark Holmstrom³⁰ (1971) were found to belong to other states.

An analysis of the state of origin of our sample of workers however shows that almost all the workers in our sample belong to Kerala. Only 3 workers out of our sample of 180 are immigrants and all of them are in one unit viz. HNL. Even among the three, only one came to Kerala as a job-seeker in the conventional sense of the term. Two of them had already connections with Kerala. One worker who belongs to the neighbouring Tamil Nadu had close connections with Kerala since his father was a timber merchant at Punalur (Kerala). Another worker who belongs to Bihar had come to the HNL site as a welder with the construction contractor. He had previous experience as welder in the oil refineries of Guwahati and Barouni. The third one who had come from Andhra Pradesh is perhaps the only exception; but he had necessary experience in a rayon factory.

28. Sharma, B.R., 1974, Op.cit.

29. Vaid, K.N., Op.cit.

30. Holmstrom, Mark, South Indian Factory Workers, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

The position revealed is not the result of any deliberate attempt to keep away workers from other states. The State of Kerala with its chronic problem of educated unemployment has been an exporter of manpower. The migration which takes place from Kerala to other states in India and to other parts of the world in search of jobs has no parallel in any other state. So it is only natural that among the job seekers in the local factories, Keralites are in the forefront.

Districts of Origin

Industrial units covered by our study do not have in their rolls workers from some districts of the state, though the state is quite small. All the workers in the coir factories belong to Alleppey, the district where the factories are located. Our sample in FACT does not find representatives from seven out of the 14 districts. Our sample of HNL workers does not have people from four districts. In our total MS sample we could find nobody from the four districts of Idukki, Palghat, Wynad and Kasaragod.

Except for Calicut, districts of Malabar region have not been getting their due share of industrial employment in the sample of companies studied by us. Though workers from more districts are found in the modern sector, local labour constitute the majority. Home districts of the respondents are shown in Table 2.2.

Table - 2.2: District of Origin

Units/Sectors	Number of workers											Other states	Total No.
	TVM	QLN	PTA	ALP	KTM	EKM	TCR	MPM	KZD	CNR			
HNL	1	5	2	3	15	9	4	1	1	1	1	3	45
FACT	1	0	1	2	3	31	3	0	4	0	0	0	45
Total HS	2	5	3	5	18	40	7	1	5	1	1	3	90
Total IS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	2	5	3	95	16	40	7	1	5	1	3	3	180

Note: Districts of Kerala represented in our sample are given below:

TVM: Trivandrum, QLN: Quilon, PTA: Pathanamthitta, ALP: Alleppey, KTM: Kottayam,
 EKM: Ernakulam, TCR: Trichur, MPM: Malappuram, KZD: Kozhikode, CNR: Cannanore.
 The Table excludes the other Districts viz. Idukki, Palghat, Wynaad and Kasaragod
 which do not have representation in our sample.

Source: Survey data.

Out of our sample of 45 workers in FACT, 31 (68.8 per cent) belong to Ernakulam district, the district where FACT is located. In the HNL, the share of the district where the factory is located is lower (33.3 per cent). Taking these two factories together, we find that 64.4 per cent of the workers in the modern sector belong to the two districts, Ernakulam and Kottayam, where these factories are located. If the neighbouring Alleppey and Trichur districts are added, it can be seen that 78 per cent of the MS workers belong to these four districts.

These findings are in a way surprising, as despite pressures of unemployment in all parts of the state, industrial employment, even in public sector undertakings, is available largely for people from the same or contiguous districts. This is again surprising as labour in Kerala had shown much geographical mobility, not only across the state's boundaries but also across the country's borders. In a way these findings are disturbing too, as they imply that the spread effects of huge central public sector investment through industrial employment do not go beyond a few neighbouring districts.

There are many reasons for this predominance of locals in industrial employment. Some of the criteria of recruitment and restrictive practices favour the job seekers from the same or neighbouring localities. When land is acquired for the setting up or expansion of a factory, several families are evicted

from there. Members of these families get a preference in recruitment. Some workers in our sample in HNL had secured job on the basis of such claim. In FACT also, whenever expansion took place, the evictees got preference in recruitment. Unequal access to information and the role of influence in recruitment too play a role in bringing about this situation. These aspects will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The virtual monopoly of local labour in the coir factories of Alleppey can be explained in terms of the nature of the industry, its historical background, the low wage levels and the recruitment practices followed by these factories. Coir industry in Alleppey has a long history. In addition to the several factories using handlooms and powerlooms, many household units function in the coastal belt in and around Alleppey. As noted earlier, the factories always prefer workers who have some experience in the processing of coir and production of coir products. Naturally those who have worked in the household units get preference in the recruitment to the factories. Besides, as all the units we have covered in the survey are in the private sector, their method of recruitment is not based on any norm fixed by public authorities as will be seen in the next chapter.

Education

According to Slotkin and Vaid, the industrial workers

constitute a socially selective group. It means that they are superior to the other sections of the population around in respect of background variables like literacy and education. Almost all recent studies on industrial workers have supported this view. Our study also confirms these findings. The level of literacy among industrial workers found in our study is much higher than that of the total population of Kerala. Our sample shows that 98.3 per cent of the industrial workers are literate as against 70.4 per cent for the total population.³¹ As the general literacy level is very high in Kerala, the difference that exists in this respect between the workers and the total population is not as pronounced as elsewhere.

Only three workers are found to be illiterates out of our sample of 180; one in the MS and two in the TS. The only illiterate worker found in one of the MS units had joined about 40 years ago and he is due to retire shortly. In the TS also, the illiterate workers found are the elderly.

In the levels of education, however, marked differences are seen between the workers in the MS and the TS, as may be seen from Table 2.3.

31. See Census of India, 1981.

See also Government of Kerala, Department of Economics and Statistics, Statistics for Planning, 1988, Trivandrum, 1988.

Table - 2.3: Level of Education of Workers

Sector	Number of workers						Total	
	Pre-Degree	Degree	Post-graduate	Professional course	Industrial training certificate	Engineering diploma		Lower* levels
MS	4	9	1	1	26	2	47	90
TS	1	0	0	0	1	0	38	90

*: Education upto high school level is treated as lower levels of education. In the MS 47 workers belong to this category. Break up of their levels of education is as follows:
 Illiterate 1, Just literate 1. Lower Primary 9, Upper primary 10, High School 26. In the TS 88 workers are of this category.

Illiterate 2, Just literate 4, Lower primary 35, Upper primary 16, High School 31.

Source: Survey data.

Forty eight per cent of the MS workers are educated either in a college or in an industrial training institute or in a polytechnic. The corresponding figure in the TS is only 2.2 per cent. One-seventh of the MS workers are either science graduates/post graduates or engineering graduates/diploma holders. Most of them are direct recruits. There are some who have improved their qualifications after joining the factory. The higher level of education of the MS worker is likely to get reflected in his life style, consciousness, aspirations, union behaviour and political involvement.

The educational background of the parents and near relatives of the workers in our sample also indicate the superiority of the MS workers' socio-economic background. Levels of education of parents is brought out in Table 2.4.

Eighteen fathers of the MS workers have studied upto high school, one upto pre-degree. Five upto degree level and one upto polytechnic. One has a degree in law. In sharp contrast, only six fathers of the TS workers have studied upto high school and nobody has gone beyond that level. Just literates are only 10 in the MS while they are 36 in the TS. The number of illiterate fathers however, is the same in both sectors (six).

Mothers of the MS workers are also better educated than their counterparts in the TS. Eleven mothers of the

Table - 2.4: Level of Education of Parents

Sector	Number of parents										
	Illiterate	Just literate	Primary school	High school	Pre-Degree	Degree	Post-graduate	Professional degree	Industrial Training certificate/Diploma	Others	Don't know
MS	6(16)	10(9)	46(49)	18(11)	1(1)	5(0)	0(0)	1(0)	1(0)	1(2)*	1(2)
TS	6(31)	36(25)	40(30)	6(3)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	2(1)

Figures in brackets indicate the level of mothers' education.

*: Teachers Training Certificate.

Source: Survey data.

MS workers have studied upto high school and one upto pre-degree. Two have taken Teachers Training Certificates. But in the TS, only three mothers have studied upto high school and nobody has gone beyond that stage. Sixteen mothers in the MS are illiterates, but the number of illiterate mothers in the TS is 31. Just literates are only 9 in the MS while they are 25 in the TS. Forty nine mothers of the MS workers have primary education against 30 mothers of the TS workers. Differences in the educational achievements of the parents persist in the present generation also. Brothers of the MS workers are more educated than the brothers of the TS workers. This can be seen from Table 2.5.

Seventy eight workers in the MS and 79 workers in the TS have brothers. Out of the 78 first brothers of the MS worker 26 have got different levels of college or technical education. But in the TS, only 3 brothers have gone beyond the school level. (Pre-degree 1, Degree 1 & Post-graduate 1). As far as the number of brothers who stopped with high school education is concerned, there is not much difference between the MS & TS workers (MS 27, TS 31). But more than 50 per cent of the first brothers in the TS have got only primary education as against 35 per cent of brothers in the MS, who limited their education at primary level.

As can be expected, disparities observed in the educational levels of workers, their parents and siblings can be

Table - 2.5: Education of the First Brother

Sector	Number of brothers							Total No.			
	Illiterate	Literate	Primary	High School	Pre-Degree	Degree	Post-graduate				
								Professional Degree	Industrial Training Diploma	Engineering	
MS	1	1	23	27	9	8	1	1	6	1	78
TS	2	2	41	31	1	1	1	0	0	0	79

Source: Survey data.

observed in the education of their spouses also.

Seventy two MS workers and 73 TS workers in our sample are married. But in the TS, we have detailed information only about 71 spouses. In both categories, more than 50 per cent of workers' spouses have the same education. Only 19 per cent of the spouses of the MS workers and 15 per cent of spouses of the TS workers are less educated than the workers. What is significant is that about 30 per cent of spouses have better education. Details are given in Table 2.6.

Table - 2.6: Comparative Levels of Spouses' Education

Sector	Number of Spouses			Total
	Same	Lower	Higher	
MS	37 (51.3)	14 (19.4)	21 (29.1)	72
TS	38 (53.5)	11 (15.4)	22 (30.9)	71

Figures in brackets indicate percentages to total.

Source: Survey data.

In the MS, there are cases of workers with only primary or vocational education, (I.T.I. Certificate) or Pre-degree education marrying graduate girls. There are also cases of I.T.I. trained hands marrying T.T.C. holders, graduates and matriculates marrying professional degree-holders and trained graduates respectively. In the TS also, this tendency of workers to marry better educated girls has been observed. There is half a dozen cases in the TS, of workers with primary education having married women with high school education.

As most of the workers in our sample are men,³² it can be said that the factory workers' wives have relatively good education. Most of them have the same education as that of the workers and a few have higher education. This fact is very significant from many angles. We have noted earlier that in the case of workers' parents, fathers have superior education than mothers. The trends noted in the levels of education of husbands and wives in the two successive generations indicate the advancement in women's education achieved in Kerala in the recent past. Secondly, the fact that most of the factory workers get wives with the same or

32. Our sample of the MS workers consists only of male workers because in the MS units which we have covered, there are only male members in the "worker category". Of course women are also employed, but only in the offices of the factories. In the coir factories surveyed, there are women workers also. But as their number is small, our sample contains only about half a dozen female workers.

even higher education can also indicate that there is social status associated with the factory job, even in the TS. The fact that wives of at least some of the MS workers are degree holders or are with professional qualifications indicates the higher status and prestige attached to the industrial employment in modern sector. This is quite natural as industrial occupation offers security, regular income and other perquisites, in a society where there is high degree of unemployment prevailing. The occupational status of workers' spouses in the MS confirms this finding. Of the 12 MS workers' wives who are employed seven are teachers and five white collar (non-supervisory) employees. One of the wives is a doctor in Homoeopathy. Yet another runs a big shop. As against, five out of the six employed spouses in the TS are agricultural labourers. One is a nursery school teacher (in Anganvadi).

Occupational Background

An analysis of the occupations of workers' fathers and uncles in the MS and TS shows that the workers in the two sectors are drawn from two different classes. The respondents in the MS come mainly from the lower middle class, while their counterparts in the TS come from the labour class. The Table presents the occupational background of our respondents in the two sectors. The Table shows that about 25 per cent of fathers of the MS

Table - 2.7: Occupation of Close Relations
(Number)

Occupation	Father		Paternal Uncle		Maternal Uncle		Brother	
	MS	TS	MS	TS	MS	TS	MS	TS
Farming	23	1	27	3	22	8	10	1
Trading	12	4	9	14	10	7	11	5
Agricultural Labour	4	18	2	9	2	3	--	4
Casual Labour	1	7	1	3	4	4	--	8
Factory work (Non-Supervisory)	5	37	6	19	4	12	14	28
Factory work (Technical/Supervisory)	6	3	-	-	2	4	9	--
White collar work	13	7	8	1	15	6	16	10
Teacher	7	-	3	1	4	1	3	1
Self-Employed	11	10	11	9	13	15	7	12

Source: Survey data.

workers are farmers, while only one per cent of fathers of the TS workers are farmers. Twenty two per cent of the MS workers' fathers are white collar workers or teachers. But only about eight per cent of the TS workers' fathers are in white collar employment. Thus nearly half of the MS workers come from the class of peasant proprietors or white collar employees who are usually included in the middle class. Only about five per cent of the fathers of the MS workers are agricultural labourers or casual labourers. About 44 per cent of workers' fathers are factory workers (mainly in coir factories). But only 12 per cent of the MS workers' fathers are factory workers. Another major occupation observed in the case of fathers of the MS workers is trading.

As will be discussed in detail in chapter 4, land ownership is almost universal in the case of the workers of Kerala. But, in the size of land owned, there is difference between the two sectors. The size of holdings is small in the case of the TS workers. There are only six workers in the TS who own more than 50 cents of land. On the other hand, forty one of the MS workers own more than 50 cents. Twenty eight MS workers own more than one acre of land.

The fact that about 30 per cent of the TS workers occupy either 'Kudikidappu'³³ or 'purambokku'³⁴ land also indicates the lower class from which they have come. From the data presented above, it can be seen that, relatively speaking, the MS workers come from the lower rungs of the propertied class, while the TS workers come from the class of workers, whose major source of income is its wage labour. Forty four per cent of our TS respondents are second generation workers. There are third generation factory workers also in the TS. On the other hand, only 12 per cent of the MS workers are second generation workers.

The differences in the class background of workers in the two sectors continue to the present generation also, as revealed by the data relating to the occupation of the first brothers of the workers. There are no agricultural or casual labourers among the brothers of the MS workers. But 13 per cent of the brothers of the TS workers belongs to this category.

33. Kudikidappu means homestead in other people's land. The landless agricultural labourers used to live in a hut put up in a small piece of land offered by the landlord. Their right in land was confined to a hutment and one or two cents of land on which it was put up. The Land Reforms Act in Kerala gave ownership right in land to Kudikidappukars at the rate of three cents in any city or major municipality or five cents in any other municipality or ten cents in a panchayat area.

See Government of Kerala, Land Reforms Act, 1963, and Land Reforms Survey Report, 1966-67.

See also Oommen, M.A., A Study on Land Reforms in Kerala; Oxford & IBH Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1975.

34. Purambokku means unassessed lands which are the property of the Government. Such land is usually reserved for public purposes or for the communal use of villagers. Eg. roads, streets, lanes, pathways, bridges, beds and banks of rivers, markets, burial grounds etc. See Government of Kerala, The Land Conservancy Act 1957 and Act 8 of 1958.

Many brothers (31 per cent) of the TS workers are non-supervisory factory workers (mostly in coir factories). But only 15.5 per cent of the brothers of the MS workers belong to this category. Only one TS worker's brother (1.25 per cent) is found to be engaged in farming. On the other hand, ten brothers (11 per cent) of the MS workers are farmers. Ten brothers of the TS workers and 16 brothers of the MS workers are in white collar employment. Nine brothers of the MS workers are factory employees - in technical or supervisory cadre. But there is none in this category among the brothers of the TS workers. Some of the brothers of both the MS and TS workers are merchants (MS 11, TS 5).

If the inter-generational occupational changes are observed, one may find that the TS workers retain more or less their original position. The MS workers on the other hand have slid down from the peasant proprietor or white collar background to the position of wage-labour. In the land-scarce State of Kerala, with increasing sub-division and fragmentation of holdings taking place, it is no longer possible to eke out a comfortable living from land. Moreover, the problem of unemployment is acute in the state. Therefore, the MS worker, in spite of his fairly superior background values his factory job very much. In fact, it is his factory job which provides him a reasonably comfortable living and helps him to retain his economic and consequently social position. No doubt, there has been inter-generational skidding taking place. But its impact is much less as the skidding is less

visible since it is taking place away from one's own traditional rural society.

Religions and Castes

According to Mark Holmstrom, "The first categories, the people themselves use to distinguish other peoples' social origins, are the traditional ones: caste, and other kinds of 'community'."³⁵ The religion and caste-wise analysis of industrial workers, thus assumes importance. As noted earlier, one of the generally held views about the Indian industrial workers was that most of them were either non-Hindus or Hindus belonging to the lower rungs in the caste hierarchy. Recent studies of modern industrial workers have negated this oft held view. Our study also tends to disprove this view.

The Table given below (Table 2.8) shows the religious composition of our sample of workers.

Hindus constitute the majority in the Kerala population and that is more than reflected in the religious composition of industrial workers. Sixty two per cent of the industrial workers in our sample are Hindus. In Kerala's population, only 58 per cent are Hindus.³⁶ Christians constitute 20.6 per cent of Kerala population, but their share in the factory employment is higher: 32.8 per cent. Their representation is higher in the TS than in the MS. Muslims' share in factory employment

35. Holmstrom, Mark, 1976, Op.cit., p. 30.

36. See Census of India 1981, Series - 10, Kerala, Paper I of 1985, pp. 5 & 6.

Table - 2.8: Religious Composition

Sector	Hindus		Christians		Muslims		Total	
	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age
MS	58	64.4	26	28.9	6	6.7	90	100
TS	54	60.0	33	36.7	3	3.3	90	100
Total	112	62.2	59	32.8	9	5.0	180	100

Source: Survey data.

is very low. Though they constitute 21 per cent of the population, only 5 per cent in our sample belong to the Muslim community.

Our findings conform to Mark Holmstrom's³⁷ findings about Bangalore workers' religious composition. In the industrial labour of Bangalore, Hindus and Christians are over-represented and Muslims under-represented. A study conducted at the Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone has also shown the same trend.³⁸ Among the workers who are mostly women, Hindus constitute 85.1 per cent, Christians, 13.8 per cent and Muslims only 1.1 per cent.

Muslims in Kerala are educationally more backward. But that does not seem to be the only reason for their poor share in factory employment, because even in the TS, where much education is not needed, they are poorly represented (3 per cent).³⁹ Another possible reason may be the pattern of their

37. Holmstrom, Mark, 1976, Op.cit., p. 30.

38. See Sharma, R.N. & Sengupta, Chandan, Women Employment at SEEPZ, Bombay, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, 1984.

39. The share of Muslims in coir sector employment in the Nineteen twenties was 12 per cent. See Thomas Isaac: "From Caste Consciousness to Class Consciousness: Alleppey Coir workers during Inter-war period": Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XX, No. 4, Jan. 26, 1985, PE 6.

settlement in the state. Their concentration in certain regions, especially of Malabar, might have hindered exposure to job opportunities elsewhere. But this does not appear to be the real reason as is borne out by the proportion of Muslims in the factory labour force and in the population of the districts where the concerned factories are located. It is only in the HNL that the proportion of Muslim workers corresponds to the proportion of the Muslim community in the District's population.

In the early days of industrialisation in India as also in Kerala, it was the lower castes who constituted the workforce. This was due to both economic and cultural reasons. But today, the situation has changed as may be seen from Table 2.9. Thirty out of the fifty eight Hindu workers belong to the Nair community. They are the largest community in our MS sample. The large proportion of this community in Kerala population and their educationally advanced status make their dominance in the MS, quite natural. But in the coir factories they form only 13 per cent of the Hindu workers. Brahmins, the most forward community however, has only a token representation in the labour force. Only one Brahmin worker each is found in our TS and MS work force. While 44 per cent of coir factory workers are Ezhavas, only 16 per cent of the MS workers come from Ezhava community.

Table - 2.9: Caste Composition-Workers

Sector	Brahmin		Nair		Ezhava		Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes		Others		Total	
	Number	Percent-	Number	Percent-	Number	Percent-	Number	Percent-	Number	Percent-	Number	Percent-
	tage		tage		tage		tage		tage		tage	
MS	1	1.1	30	33.3	14	15.5	3	3.3	10	11.1	58	64.4
TS	1	1.1	7	7.7	44	48.8	0	0	2	2.2	54	60.0
Total	2	1.1	37	20.5	58	32.2	3	1.6	12	6.6	112	62.2

Note: Hindus, Christians and Muslims are the major religious groups in Kerala. Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are some of the sub-castes of Hinduism in the state. Brahmins and Nairs are traditionally considered as the forward castes, Ezhavas occupy a middle position and scheduled castes like Pulayas, Parayas and tribal people occupy the lowest position in the caste hierarchy.

Source: Survey data.

Coir⁴⁰ has traditionally been a sector dominated by the Ezhavas. In the early stages of coir industry, the workers who joined were from backward classes. During that period, Ezhavas were considered to be a lower caste and they joined the coir factories. The informal channels of vacancy information which prevail and the influence exerted by the existing workers in recruitment might have led to the continuance of Ezhava domination of coir sector employment. Rise of coir capitalists from the Ezhava community also might have contributed to this. Most of the Christians who are represented in the industrial work force of the TS also belong to the backward Latin Catholic community. These findings are in conformity with the findings of an earlier study about the Alleppey coir workers of the beginning of this century. According to this study,⁴¹ "the Industrial Census of 1921, revealed that the Savarna castes who constituted nearly 20 per cent of the population of Travancore were virtually absent in the work force. The number of Nairs, the most numerous of the Savarna castes and constituting more than 17 per cent of the total population, was only less than one per cent of the coir work force. The bulk of the work force (65 per cent) came from the Ezhava caste, even though their share in the total population was less than 17 per cent. The caste-occupations of the Ezhavas, it should be remembered, were activities related to coconut cultivation and the processing of its various products.

40. Ibid., PE 6.

41. Ibid., PE 6.

Muslims constituted nearly 12 per cent of the work force and the Christians nearly 19 per cent".

What emerges from our analysis is the dominance of forward communities in the MS work force and the dominance of backward communities in the TS work force. However, the most backward castes - the scheduled castes do not find a place even in the TS work force. Surprisingly, their token presence is found only in the MS sample. Though, according to the 1981 census, Scheduled Castes and Tribes constitute 11 per cent of Kerala's population, only three workers in our sample belong to Scheduled Castes and Tribes.⁴² This situation seems to have its historical roots. At the time when the Ezhavas joined the coir factories, Pulayas, Parayas and other Scheduled Castes joined the agricultural labour force. The present position of Scheduled Castes too is a continuation of the situation which prevailed in the coir factories of Alleppey at the beginning of this century. According to Thomas Isaac, "There were hardly any worker from the Paraya, Pulaya and such other agricultural labour out-castes. Perhaps it may have been partly due to the extensive land reclamation and labour intensive commercial paddy cultivation in the adjacent Kuttanad region which virtually tied them to the land".⁴³

42. Census of India, 1981.

43. Ibid.

Their position as the most depressed castes in Kerala's caste hierarchy, in fact as outcastes, also might have inhibited their entry into coir factories in the past. The general lack of education and technical training required for employment in modern factories may be preventing their entry into the MS today, despite the schemes for reservation and special recruitment. The lack of access to job information and the role played by 'influence' in getting recruitment may be the other reasons.

CHAPTER III

WORKER IN THE JOB MARKET

It was seen in the last chapter that the imperfections of the job market have determined to some extent, the socio-economic background from which the workers get recruited. The unequal access to job information, restrictive recruitment practices, role of influence etc. have conferred unequal advantages to locals and persons who had some prior connections with the companies. The nature of the job market affects the profile of workers in other ways too. For instance, a worker who had got his job through influence, as a favour from the management is unlikely to be very militant. Again, a worker who had to wait for long to get a job is unlikely to risk the loss of his job.

Data regarding the waiting period to get the first job show that the TS workers had to wait for longer periods. While, on an average, a worker in the MS is found to have waited for a year and a half to get his first job in a factory, his counterpart in the TS waited for almost three years. Details about the waiting period is given in Table 3.1.

Fifty seven per cent of the workers in the MS had found a job within one year of their entering the job market. But only

Table - 3.1: Distribution of Workers According to Waiting Period for the First Job

	Upto one year	Between 1-2 yrs.	Between 2-5 yrs.	More than 5 yrs.	Total	Average waiting period (months)
HNL	24	11	8	2	45	18
FACT	27	10	4	4	45	17
Total MS	51	21	12	6	90	18
Total TS	39	15	15	21	90	34
Grand Total	90	36	27	27	180	26

Source: Survey data.

43 per cent of the TS workers got job within the first one year of their entry into the job market. Twenty three per cent of the MS respondents got appointment during the second year, while only 17 per cent of the TS workers could get work during the same period. Seventeen per cent of the TS workers had to wait for more than two years as against only 13.3 per cent of the MS workers. In fact, 23.3 per cent of the TS workers had

to wait for more than five years compared to 6.7 per cent of the MS workers.

A comparison of our findings with that of a recent survey by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala¹ shows that waiting period for our sample of industrial workers is lower than that of the whole work force in the state. This is true of even our TS workers. The following Table gives a comparative picture of the waiting period exceeding two years.

Table - 3.2: Waiting Period for the First Job - A Comparison of Workers in the Sample and the Work Force in Kerala

Particulars of work force	(In Percentages)	
	Waiting Period	
	2-5 years	Over 5 years
MS Respondents	13	7
TS Respondents	17	23
Entire Respondents (MS & TS)	15	15
Kerala work force	41	21

Source: Survey data.

1. Government of Kerala, Department of Economics & Statistics, Report of the Survey on Unemployment in Kerala, Trivandrum, 1987. See also Prakash, B.A., "Unemployment in Kerala; An analysis of Economic Causes", Working Paper No.231, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1989, pp. 10 & 11.

The gravity of the unemployment problem in the state comes out of the fact that more than one-fifth of the work force in the state has a waiting period of more than 5 years. In the case of another 41 per cent of the work force, the waiting period ranged between two to five years. Compared to the total work force, workers even in our TS sample are lucky.

One reason for the difference between the two sectors in the waiting period is that qualifications/training received by the MS worker makes him employable in different factories. But the TS worker is not qualified professionally. That the occupational mobility of the TS workers is limited may be seen from the data on job changes of our respondents in the MS and the TS. The data indicate that there are marked differences in the job opportunities available to the two categories of workers. The MS workers are relatively quick to get a job and also quick to change job. But in the TS, the workers do not get job easily and so they stick on to the job, once they get one.

Seventy two per cent of the TS workers have never changed their jobs while in the MS such workers constitute only 40 per cent. While twenty nine per cent of the MS workers have changed job once, in the TS only 14 per cent belong to this category. Twelve per cent of the MS workers have changed their job more than three times. But the corresponding figure

Table - 3.3: Distribution of Workers who Changed Jobs-by Reasons for Change

Unit/Sector	Reasons							
	For se- cure job pay	Family better reasons	Poor work- ing condit- ions	Pollut- ion	Too much work pline	Irksome disci- pline	Lacked promot- ion pros- pects	No Job satis- faction
HNL	10	12	18	5	2	0	1	1
FACT	17	4	3	1	0	1	0	0
MS	27	16	21	6	2	1	1	1
TS	20	8	1	1	1	0	0	0
MS & TS	47	24	22	7	3	1	1	1

Source: Survey data.

in the TS is only 8 per cent.

An analysis of the reasons given by respondents for leaving their previous jobs gives interesting insight into the workers' expectations about their jobs. In the case of the MS as well as the TS workers, the foremost consideration is job security. The next important reason given by the TS respondents is better pay. 'Family Reason' is the second important reason given by the MS workers. Their desire to be nearer home, to look after their family property, to lead a settled life, to give good education to their children - are all reflected in this. 'Better pay' comes only third to the MS workers. In both the sectors, other reasons find only a negligible place. (See Table 3.3).

According to Sharma,² "The lack of utilisation of formal channels like newspapers and Employment Exchange may partly reflect the lack of development of a structured labour market in the country". To find out how structured the labour market in Kerala is, we sought information on how our respondents obtained news on job vacancies. Their answers are given in Table 3.4.

The Table shows that formal channels like Employment Exchanges and Newspaper advertisements had played only a limited

2. Sharma, B.R., Delhi, 1974, Op.cit., p. 21.

Table - 3.4: Distribution of Workers According to Sources of Vacancy Information

Units/Sectors	Family relations	Other personal contacts	Friends and Neighbours	Employment change	Advertising	Direct approach	Gate Notice	Others
HNL	2	3	1	2	36	2	0	6
FACT	15	5	8	2	19	4	3	5
MS (1+2)	17	8	9	4	55	6	3	11
TS	16	3	11	0	0	62	0	3
MS & TS(3+4)	33	11	20	4	55	68	3	14

Source: Survey data.

role in reaching information on job opportunities to our sample of workers. Only one third of the workers got information through these channels. There were considerable differences in this regard between the TS and MS. In the TS, nobody got information through these channels. Even in the MS, these formal channels provided information only to two thirds of our respondents. Within the MS itself, there was considerable variation. While 84 per cent of the workers in HNL got information through these formal channels, only less than half the workers in FACT got the information through these channels. Between these two formal channels, Employment Exchange was a very insignificant channel of information. Even in the MS only 4.4 per cent of workers got vacancy information through Employment Exchanges. Sixty one per cent of workers in the MS (80 per cent in HNL and 42 per cent in FACT) responded to newspaper advertisements.

Difference between the MS workers and the TS workers in this regard can be partly explained in terms of the ownership of companies. The MS companies in our sample are in the public sector and the TS companies in the private sector. But the reason for the low share of formal channels for the vacancy information in the FACT has to be sought elsewhere. One possible reason is historical. FACT is an old unit and many of our respondents from this company were recruited many years back. The improvements in the labour market, if any

which took place in later years are not reflected in their response to our question in this regard. The old age of the company and the larger pool of past and present employees increase the scope of informal channels for vacancy information.

Among the informal sources of information, the most important source for the TS worker was the direct approach. For the MS, family and relations, friends and neighbours and other personal contacts were the important informal sources of information. For FACT, family and relations furnished vacancy information to as many as 15 respondents. This was only one less than in the TS. The reliance on informal channels is not something peculiar to Kerala. Seventy per cent of Vaid's³ Kota respondents admitted that they came to know about vacancy from friends and relatives. A recent study⁴ (1984) of workers in Pune industrial belt has shown that "information and access to industrial jobs is still mainly through word of mouth".

In the highly competitive labour markets, those who get permanent employment form a lucky minority. Mark Holmstrom's following comment about the factory workers of Bangalore is applicable to the industrial workers of Kerala also. "They tend to see factory work as a citadel of security and relative prosperity, which it is: it offers regular work and promotion and

3. Vaid, K.N., Bombay, 1967, Op.cit., p. 74.

4. Kher, Manik, Profile of Industrial Workers, The Times Research Foundation, Pune, 1984, p. 29.

predictable rewards, as against the chaos and terrifying dangers of life outside. For everyone inside the citadel, there is a regiment outside trying to scale the walls".⁵ Referring to the situation in Coimbatore, Uma Ramaswamy said, "A secure mill job is the most coveted employment".⁶ The MS workers in Kerala get 'security and relative prosperity' from their factory jobs. But it seems that the TS workers get only 'security', but no 'prosperity'. But even this is attractive enough.

Efforts to scale the walls are likely to be much more intense in Kerala in view of the more acute unemployment problem that exists in the state.⁷ It is likely that means, fair and foul, will be used to secure entry into industrial jobs. Thirty one per cent of respondents in the MS believed that they got their jobs because of influence. The percentage

5. See Holmstrom, Mark, 1976, Op.cit., p. 137.

6. Ramaswamy, Uma, Delhi, 1983, Op.cit., p. 18.

7. See Government of Kerala, State Planning Board, Economic Review 1988, Trivandrum, 1989, p. 10.
See also Economic Review, 1989, Trivandrum, 1990, pp. 12 & 135.

of workers admitting the role of influence is still higher (46 per cent) in the TS. We have tried to identify the extraneous factors which help the aspirants "to scale the walls" to get the coveted industrial employment. The following Table gives the details. Factory employees, friends, relatives, trade union leaders - all extend their help for securing factory job.

Role of personal contacts, direct approach and other influences in getting vacancy information and placement is quite common elsewhere. Seventy per cent of the respondents in the Trivandrum study⁸ said that they got jobs directly through their own efforts. Twenty per cent got help from friends and relatives. The proportion is higher because the sample includes workers in the unorganised sector like the coir and handloom units, workshops, tailoring shops, printing units and plantations. About three fifths of Sharma's respondents⁹ in a Bombay factory said that they had known some employee of the factory, before getting employment. The same was the case with two-thirds of Lambert's¹⁰ Pune respondents. Holmstrom¹¹ found that in the public sector units of Bangalore covered by his study, 18 per cent of the respondents had applied

8. Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit., p. 8.

9. Sharma, B.R., Delhi, 1974, Op.cit., p. 21.

10. Lambert, Richard, D., Workers, Factories and Social Change in India, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963.

11. Holmstrom, Mark, 1976, Op.cit., p. 43.

Table - 3.5: Distribution of Workers According to the Source of Help Received in Getting the Job

(In Percentages)

Sector	Relatives	Politi- cians	Trade Unions	Employees of the factory	Friends	Others.
MS	20.0	--	2.2	12.2	1.1	2.2
TS	23.3	2.2	4.4	15.5	8.8	5.5

Source: Survey data.

through some officers, workers, worker-relatives or influential outsiders like politicians, businessmen or officials. A larger proportion (41 per cent) of Holmstrom's private sector respondents in Bangalore had also applied in the same manner. A recent study¹² made by Manik Kher in the Pune Industrial Belt had also shown that 50 per cent of the respondents had obtained their jobs through a friend or relative. A subsequent study¹³ in the same region had found that 30 per cent of workers obtained their jobs through "influence", 8 per cent through Industrial Training Institutions and only 2 per cent through Employment Exchange. According to Vaid,¹⁴ "contact with those who matter in the company" helped 40 per cent of respondents in Kota in getting their present job. Uma Ramaswamy¹⁵ was supporting this view when she said "Jobs are so scarce that it is practically impossible to get one without powerful contacts and influence Getting a job has become so difficult that the workers have used their bargaining strength to demand that their children be given priority in the matter of recruitment".

The number of workers' close relatives employed in the same factory can corroborate the part played by 'influence' or 'connections' in recruitment. It is possible that some of those who get appointment on 'merit' just happen to be relatives.

12. Kher, Manik, Pune, 1984, Op.cit., p.29.

13. Chaturvedi, Abha, Workers World, The Times Research, Research Foundation, Pune, 1987.

14. Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., p. 66.

In a few cases, dependents of those who die in harness may get work, in the normal course. Even allowing a margin for such possibilities, the rest of the cases, which too are considerable in number, require some explanation.

In one of the MS units (HNL) which was started in the early 80s, the number of relatives employed is fairly small - 2 brothers, 1 sister, 1 uncle, 1 brother-in-law and 1 mother-in-law. Proportionate to the sample size, these relatives employed form only about 15.5 per cent. But this proportion is very high in the other MS unit (FACT) which was started over four decades ago. In our sample of 45 workers from this unit, thirty five (77.7 per cent) have or had close relatives employed there. (About 5 such relatives have retired and two have expired). Besides, the parents of two are closely connected with the factory as regular suppliers of certain items on contract. Details can be seen in Table 3.6.

The number of relatives of our TS respondents employed in the coir factories is much larger than the number of our FACT respondents' relatives employed there. In fact, they exceed the size of the sample itself. On an average, every worker has 1.3 relatives employed (or retired) in the coir factories. It is true that the relatives are not working in the same factories in all the cases examined. But in many cases they work in the same factory. The list given below

Table - 3.6: Distribution of Workers in FACT According to the Number of Relatives Employed.

Nature of relationship	Number of workers
Father	6
Brother	13
Uncles	3
Sons	5
Other relatives	8

Total	35
	=====

Source: Survey data.

gives details about the number employed and the relationship. Some coir factory workers are third generation workers. We had come across even four generations of relatives of the respondents - grand parents, parents, respondent and siblings and sons. Thus, to many, coir factory work has become a traditional, family occupation.

Table - 3.7: Number of Relatives of the TS Workers Employed in the Coir Industry

Nature of relationship	Number
Father	29
Mother	3
Grand father (Paternal & Maternal)	12
Uncles (Paternal & Maternal)	37
Brother	26
Sister	1
Brother-in-law	7
Son	2
Total	117

Source: Survey data.

One method of entry into the regular factory job is by first working as a casual/temporary or contract labourer. In fact, 28.8 per cent of our sample in the MS and 64.4 per cent in the TS had worked first in the above capacities. We could come across certain ways in which those with the right contacts could be inducted into the factory jobs. For instance, one or two vacancies arise for the post of supplier in the canteen or

gardener. In view of the urgency for making immediate appointment, a gate notice, is exhibited. The factory employees are the first to know about this. Then their friends or relatives apply for the post. Access to information is the first advantage here. Number of applicants in this situation is likely to be limited. After a few years of service in the canteen or garden, which enables them to cultivate good contacts, they are absorbed in the regular service of the factory. Access to inside information through employees can be of much help to the job seekers in other ways too. Employees know what are the different types of tests conducted for making selection to the various posts. Those who get prior information about the type of test can practise for the test and thus get a better chance.

Influence helps not only the job seekers who exert such influence, but also the managements which succumb to them. According to Uma Ramaswamy,¹⁶ "mill jobs have become regular plums to be distributed by the mill owners, managers and trade union leaders". Mark Holmstrom¹⁷ was also subscribing to this view when he said, "managements have an interest in appointing men whose relatives or friends will vouch for them (and in putting employees under an obligation". The 'influence' used in the selection process keeps both the recruits and the sponsors under obligation to the management. Such an atmosphere of obligation created acts, to some extent, as a check on workers' militancy.

16. Ramaswamy, Uma, Op.cit., p. 18.

17. Holmstrom, Mark, Cambridge, 1976, Op.cit., p. 44.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC STATUS AND BEHAVIOUR

Many studies in India and abroad have shown that the economic position of industrial workers today compares favourably with that of the general population. The relative affluence of workers, it is argued, has enabled them to adopt a middle class life style. This in turn is believed to have made an impact on their attitudes and aspirations. In this chapter, it is proposed to examine the levels and pattern of the income, expenditure, savings, investments and liabilities of the workers in our sample. Table 4.1 shows the average monthly salary, and average monthly income of the workers in the two sectors.

In the levels of income, there exists considerable disparity between the workers in the modern and traditional sectors. The average monthly salary of a MS worker is Rs.1622/- and his monthly income Rs.2275/-. In sharp contrast, a TS worker's average monthly salary is only Rs.559/-¹ and his monthly

1. These figures are those reported by the workers. It appears that there is some under-statement in these figures. In the coir factories, wages are paid on piece rate. The workers get wages only for the days actually worked. So their wages vary from week to week. Hence, it was found necessary to cross check the factory registers, for getting the correct figures. Registers of two major factories (having two units each) from where 90 per cent of our TS sample is drawn show that the average monthly wage was Rs.600/- in the first factory and Rs.667/- in the second factory.

Table - 4.1: Average Monthly Salary and Income

(Amount in Rupees)

Unit/Sector	Average monthly salary	Average monthly income	Salary as percentage of income
HNL	1450	1996	72.6
FACT	1794	2554	70.2
MS (1+2)	1622	2275	71.2
TS	559	662	84.5
MS + TS (3+4)	1090	1468	74.2

Source: Survey data.

income Rs.662/-. A TS worker's salary constitutes only 34 per cent of the salary of a MS worker. When the total family income is taken into account, it is found that the TS worker's income is only 29 per cent that of the MS worker. Data presented according to class intervals in Table 4.2 give a clearer picture of income disparities in the two sectors.

Out of our sample of 90 in the TS, two workers get salaries of less than Rs.300/- a month. The salaries of 45 workers are in the range of Rs.300/- - Rs.500/-. Another 43

Table - 4.2: Distribution of Workers According to Size-
Class of Monthly Salary

Size-class (Rs.)	Units/Sectors				
	HNL	FACT	Total MS	Total TS	Total MS & TS
Less than 300	0	0	0	2	2
300-500	0	0	0	45	45
500-1000	0	3	3	43	46
1000-1500	32	6	38	0	38
1500-2000	13	28	41	0	41
2000-3000	0	8	8	0	8
Total No.	45	45	90	90	180

Source: Survey data.

workers get between Rs.500/- and Rs.1000/-. Nobody in the TS gets more than Rs.1000/- a month. While more than 50 per cent of workers in the TS earn less than Rs.500/- a month, every worker in the MS earns more than that. Only three workers in the MS earn less than Rs.1000/- (all of them are recent recruits and they

get Rs.990/- each. This is the maximum which the most experienced and senior most worker in the TS can hope to get). Thirty eight workers earn between Rs.1000/- and Rs.1,500/- and 41 workers between Rs.1,500/- and Rs.2,000/-. Eight workers earn between Rs.2,000/- and Rs.3,000/-.²

The salaries of most of the MS workers are comparable to those of white collar employees in Government Service. It may be noted that the above figures are exclusive of bonus and overtime allowances. They are also exclusive of the monetary values of many perquisites which are available to the MS workers.

Dependency Burden

The well-being of the worker and his family does not depend exclusively on the workers' salary. It depends on factors like the size of the households, the number of earning and non-earning members etc. The average size of a MS household (5.16) is slightly lower than that of a TS household (5.98).

2. A comparison of salaries of the MS workers with those of the Pune workers reported in a recently published study shows that wages of the Kerala workers in the MS are almost in the same range as that of the Pune workers. See Chaturvedi, Abha, 1987; Op.cit., p. 18.

It is also slightly lower than the size of an average Kerala household (Rural 5.24 and Urban 5.67).³ The household size of a TS worker is slightly higher than the state average.

Expenditure Levels and Pattern

The gulf that exists between the two sectors in the matter of consumption is revealed in Table 4.3. These disparities are understandable in view of the wide disparities in income.

Table - 4.3: Expenditure on Select Items in the TS Household as Percentage of Expenditure in the MS Household

Items	Percentage
Food	75.7
Clothing	36.0
Smoking	53.7
Liquor	30.8
Children's education	50.7
Medical care	39.6
Non-food (Total)	37.2

Source: Survey data.

3. See Government of India, Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Sarveksnana, Vol.XI, No.2, Issue No.33, Oct. 1987, Delhi, P.S - 9 & P.S - 135.
The dependency ratio of the worker households of Bangalore estimated by Mark Holmstrom is less than what is found in the present study. In the Bangalore workers' households, there were only two non-workers to each earning worker.

Apart from the difference in the levels of expenditure, there is considerable difference in the pattern of expenditure between households in the TS and the MS. Out of the total monthly budget, the MS worker spends 70 per cent on food whereas the TS worker spends more than 80 per cent. This trend indicates a pattern which approximates to the Engel's law of consumption.⁴

Among the major non-food items, while the MS worker spends 12 per cent on clothing, the TS worker spends only 6.5 per cent. The proportion of income spent by the MS workers on children's education and medical care is higher than that of the TS workers.

Contrary to popular impression neither group of workers spends a high percentage of their incomes on drinking and smoking. Only twenty five MS workers (28 per cent) and 40 TS workers (44 per cent) consume liquor. In terms of amount, the MS worker spends a slightly higher proportion on liquor. Majority of workers in the TS prefers toddy while the preference of most of the workers in the MS is for foreign liquor. However, arrack is not generally liked by either group. But arrack users are more among the MS workers. Forty four MS workers (50 per cent)

4. "Engel's law states that the share of food in total expenditure is inversely related to the household's income (or some other measure of its total resources). This implies that the income elasticity of food expenditure is less than one". This law was expounded by Ernst Engel, (1821-1896).

and 56 TS workers (62 per cent) are found to be smokers. The proportion spent on smoking is almost the same in both sectors. In terms of the number of consumers, smoking and drinking are more wide-spread among the TS workers. Lower levels of education and the lack of alternative forms of entertainment, perhaps, may be the reason for this.

Expenditure on Items of Quality Food

As income increases, like other sections of society, the workers spend more on quality food. This is brought out in Table 4.4 which gives the monthly average expenditure on some selected items of quality food and the number of families consuming the same.

Out of our sample of 90 workers in the MS, 65 workers buy milk, 13 buy ghee, 69 buy meat, 16 buy chicken, and 42 buy eggs. For every item of quality food mentioned above, the number of consumers are less in the TS. The monthly expenditure of the TS workers on these items is considerably less than in the MS. To give a few examples, expenditure in the MS household on Milk is Rs.143, on meat Rs.42/- and on fish Rs.110/-. Expenditure on these items in the TS is Rs.65/-, Rs.25/- and Rs.68/- respectively. Ghee and chicken are two very costly items in Kerala and they are almost totally absent in the budget of the TS households.

Keralites' general liking for fish is reflected in the workers' consumption pattern also. It is the single item

Table - 4.4: Monthly Expenditure on Selected Quality Food-Average
Amounts and Number of Families Consuming

	Milk	Ghee	Meat	Chicken	Egg	Fish
MS	143 (65)	23 (13)	42 (69)	43 (16)	29 (42)	110 (80)
TS	65 (46)	5 (1)	25 (57)	0 (0)	11 (15)	68 (88)

Number of Consuming families of each item given in brackets.

Source: Survey data.

in the list of our 'quality food' items which the maximum number of families consume. In fact, the number of households consuming fish is more in the TS than in the MS. This is because it is one quality food item which is relatively cheap. Besides, it is available at every door step every day. As a small quantity of some varieties of fish can be bought for Rs.2/- or 3/-, most of the people can afford it. But the case of meat is different. Beef costs about Rs.16/kg. and mutton about Rs.35/- to 40/kg. and one cannot buy less than $\frac{1}{2}$ kg. normally. So for each purchase, one has to set apart a bigger amount. That seems to be one of the reasons why the number of consumers is less. However there does not seem to be any religious stigma against beef eating in Kerala even among Hindus.

It is the affluent sections and those who are exposed to modern living styles who generally buy tinned/packed beverages and food items (eg. squash, jam, horlicks, boost). The disparity between the MS and TS workers noted in the consumption of these items is very large. As may be expected, most of the TS workers (88 per cent) never buy such items. But the MS workers' superior living standard is reflected in the fact that more than 50 per cent of them buy such items regularly or occasionally.

In the type of food given to children, there is difference between the MS and the TS. Ninety per cent of the MS respondents have stated that the young children are given tinned food and other special nutritious food. In the case of the other 10 per

cent, children also share the same food which is prepared for all in the family. But in the TS, only 55 per cent of the respondents have said that children are given special food. In the case of the remaining 45 per cent, children take the same food as that of the elders. Thus, it is found that special treatment of children in the matter of food is more a feature of the MS families. Their better education and earnings must be responsible for such behaviour. Better treatment meted out to children is an important indication of both the concern for children and the financial position of the parents.

Fuels Used

The type of fuel used also can indicate the life style of a people. Modern fuels like electricity and LPG are more convenient to be used and help reducing discomfort and drudgery in the kitchen. But such fuels are relatively costly at least in terms of initial investment. Table 4.5 shows how a MS worker's kitchen is more convenient and modern than a TS worker's kitchen, as indicated by the fuels used. Firewood

Table - 4.5: Distribution of Workers by Type of Fuels Used

Sector	Firewood	LPG	Electricity	Kerosene
MS	54(60)	33(37)	33(37)	51(57)
TS	89(99)	3(3)	1(1)	11(12)

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

Source: Survey data.

is the most important fuel for almost all the TS workers. Just three of them use LPG, one uses electricity and eleven use kerosene.

Sixty per cent of the MS respondents use firewood.⁵ The fact that 60 per cent of them use firewood, does not indicate that they use it exclusively. Thirty seven per cent each of the MS respondents use LPG and electricity for cooking. Fifty seven per cent use kerosene. This means that most of the MS workers use more than one fuel. So the kitchens of the MS workers are relatively free from heat and smoke. It appears that the MS worker's kitchen is comparatively modern. As will be seen later, many of the MS families use pressure cooker, mixer/grinder and other domestic appliances.

Housing Conditions

Out of the sample of 180 workers, 165 own houses - 78 in the MS (86.6 per cent) and 87 in the TS (96.6 per cent).

5. Firewood is the major conventional source of energy used for cooking in Kerala. A shift from firewood to gas, kerosene, electricity etc. can indicate modernisation tendencies. In the urban areas of Kerala, 82.92 per cent of households use firewood, 6.32 per cent use gas, 4.48 per cent use kerosene and 0.57 per cent use electricity as the major source of energy for cooking. In the rural areas, firewood is more in use (97.89 per cent) and other fuels are rarely used. A comparison of the type of fuel used by our sample workers with that of the state's population shows that the MS workers are more comfortably placed in this respect. See Government of India; Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Sarvekshana, Vol. XII, No.2, Issue No.37, October 1988, Delhi, pp. 19 & 20.

The data as such give the impression that in the matter of housing, the position of the TS workers is better. But this is far from true. All the 12 MS respondents without houses of their own live in factory quarters. They do not feel any immediate necessity for building a house. Eight of them have either inherited or purchased land/house plot. Most of them say that they have no house, purely on the legal ground that when the family property has been partitioned, the house has gone to a sibling. So theirs is not a case of destitution, of having no shelter. On the other hand, the three TS workers without houses of their own live with relatives - one with his sister, another with his aunt and a third with his uncle. An analysis based on parameters like floor area, nature of roof, wall and floor, availability of own drinking water facilities, toilet facilities etc. shows that the housing conditions of the MS workers are much superior to those of the TS workers. In fact, they are much better than those of the general population.

In the MS, 42 per cent of the respondents live in company quarters. Quarters provided by the companies conform to a certain minimum standard. The materials used for constructing such quarters are bricks, cement, tiles, asbestos, RCC etc. Drinking water, electricity, toilet facilities etc. are provided in all quarters. The difference maintained among the different categories of employees is only in the

number and size of the rooms. Thus, a reasonable minimum of housing facilities are available to even the lowest category worker in the MS, if he gets a quarters. Therefore, it has been decided to exclude, from our survey those MS workers who have quarters, for purposes of making comparison in respect of houses owned by the TS and MS workers.

Table 4.6 suggests that the MS respondents own more spacious houses as shown by the floor area. No worker in the

Table - 4.6: Floor Area of the MS and the TS Houses

(Percentage of Houses in each Category)

Unit(Sq. feet)	MS	TS
Less than 100	--	23.3
101 - 300	7.7	36.7
301 - 600	9.6	34.4
601 - 900	30.8	4.4
901 - 1200	9.7	1.1
1201 - 1500	28.8	-
More than 1501	9.6	-

Note: Four per cent of the MS respondents could not give the correct floor area of their houses.

Source: Survey data.

MS lives in a house measuring less than 100 sq.ft. while 23 per cent of the TS workers live in such small houses which are nothing but huts. Sixty per cent of the TS respondents live in houses measuring less than 300 sq.ft., but only 8 per cent of the MS respondents live in such houses. Seventy nine per cent of our MS respondents live in houses with an area of more than 600 sq.ft. But only 5.5 per cent of the TS respondents live in such houses.

Twenty seven per cent of the TS respondents still live in thatched houses. Sixty nine per cent of the TS workers live under tiled roofs. Only 4 per cent live in houses with RCC roofs or roofs with mixed materials. In the MS, not a single house has thatched roof. Thirty seven per cent of their houses have tiled roofs, 33 per cent have RCC roofs and 27 per cent houses have more than one type of material for roofing (eg. Tiles and RCC).

Walls of 'pucca' houses are built of materials like laterite and bricks while mud, grass, leaves etc. are used in 'Kacha' houses. All houses of the MS respondents are built of bricks and laterite. But the walls of only 73 per cent of the TS houses are built of bricks and laterite. In 24 per cent of houses, coconut leaves (woven and tied as a screen) are used as the wall material.

Seventy seven per cent of the MS workers' houses have

cement floors, 3 per cent have tiles or mosaic and 10 per cent use composite materials (eg. cement and mosaic, cement and tiles etc.). Mud and cowdung, conventionally used for plastering the floor is no longer used in the MS houses. But in 23 per cent of the TS houses, mud and cowdung are still in use. However, use of cement is becoming widespread with 77 per cent of the TS houses having used cement for flooring.

Sixty three per cent of the TS households and 92 per cent of the MS households are electrified. In this respect, the position of even the TS workers is better than that of an average Keralite: only 24 per cent of houses in the state are electrified.⁶

While 88 per cent of the MS households have own drinking water facility, only 41 per cent of the TS households have such facility. The rest have to share a well or a public tap with others.

Cent per cent of the MS households have independent bath rooms. But only 25 per cent of such households have bath attached rooms. In the TS, 50 per cent of households have no bath rooms of their own. Thirty two per cent of households have independent bath rooms while 18 per cent have common bath rooms to be shared with other families. Not a single TS household has a bath attached room.

6. Government of Kerala, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Survey on Housing and Employment, 1980, Trivandrum, 1982.

All the MS households have independent latrines.⁷ But only 69 per cent of the TS households have independent latrine facility. Sixteen per cent of the TS households have no latrine at all, while another 16 per cent have common latrines to which other families also have access.

Ownership of Land

Land is still an important asset in the asset portfolio of households in Kerala. According to the Debt and Investment Survey of the Reserve Bank of India, the value of land as a proportion of the value of total assets of the households in Kerala was 66.2 per cent. In this respect, the state ranked second among the Indian states, the first being Punjab (66.3 per cent).⁸ The average value of land owned by a household in Kerala was Rs.54674/- which was only second to Punjab where the value of land per household on an average was the maximum (Rs.56496). Land is owned by the families of all but 5 respondents in the MS and 4 respondents in the TS. As regards the size of land held, there is considerable difference between

7. The 38th round of the National Sample Survey (Jan.-Dec. 1983) shows that 91 per cent of the rural households and 37 per cent of the urban households in India have no latrine. In Kerala, the proportion of households which own no latrine is much less i.e. 60 per cent of households in the rural areas and 27 per cent of households in the urban areas. See Sarvekshana, Vol. XII, No.2, Issue No. 37, Oct. 1988, Op.cit., p. 8.

8. Reserve Bank of India (RBI), All India Debt and Investment Survey, (AIDIS), Bombay 1987, p. 17.

the MS and the TS workers. The MS workers' average land holdings is 112 cents which is more than the state average (41 cents)⁹. But the TS worker's land holding on an average is only 17 cents which is less than the state average. The size distribution of land among workers' families is shown in Table 4.7.

In the MS, only 11 families own less than 10 cents of land as against 53 in the TS. Only twelve families in the MS own between 11 and 20 cents as against 14 in the TS. Twenty one MS families have between 21 and 50 cents. Only thirteen TS families have that much land. Thirteen MS families own between 51 and 100 cents. The corresponding number in the TS is only 4. Eighteen families in the MS own between 1 to 3 acres. Just 2 TS workers own land of that size-class: one owns 120 cents and the other 111 cents. Seven MS families own between 3 to 5 acres and 3 families own more than 5 acres. Stated differently, 28 MS families own more than one acre. As against, only two TS families own more than one acre and the size of the largest holding in TS is 120 cents.

Forty seven out of the 85 MS workers who own land (55.2 per cent) own more than the state average of 41 cents. But only 11 out of the 86 TS workers who own land (12.8 per cent) have more than the state average. This brings out the

9. Eighty seven per cent of households in Kerala owns land. Average area owned per household owning land was only 41 cents in Kerala against 144 cents in the country. Quoted by Gulati, Leela and Rajan, Irudaya, Population Aspects of Aging in Kerala, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1988, p. 55.

Table - 4.7: Ownership of Land by Size-Class

(Number of families)		
Size-class	MS	TS
Upto 10 Cents	11	53
11-20 "	12	14
21-50 "	21	13
51-100 "	13	4
101-300 "	18	2
301-500 "	7	0
Over 500 "	3	0
Total	85	86

Source: Survey data.

poor land ownership position of the TS worker, not only in relation to the MS worker, but also in relation to the average Keralite.

Following observations can be made from the above facts. Firstly, ownership of land is almost universal among the workers. But the size of the land held, except by few MS workers, is not large.

Ownership of wet land is a sure indication of the agricultural background of the families. Twenty three MS worker families in our survey own wet land. As against, only one TS family owns wet land. Average area of wet land owned by the MS workers who own such land is 136 cents. But in the TS the lone owner of wet land has only 23 cents which he has got as ancestral property. Wet land owned by the majority (70 per cent) of the MS workers is also ancestral property. Table 4.8 given below shows from which sources the worker families have got their land.

Table - 4.8: Source of Land Owned

(Number of workers' families)

Sector	Inherited	Purchased	Spouse's share	Kudikidappu	Others*
MS	51(60.0)	37(43.5)	11(12.9)	1(1.1)	--
TS	34(39.5)	23(26.7)	15(17.4)	18(20.9)	7(8.13)

Figures in brackets indicate percentages to total.

*: Purambokku or other possessions, without any legal right.

Source: Survey data.

Three fifths of the workers in our sample of MS households had inherited some land. More than two fifths had purchased land. In the case of land inherited and purchased, the proportion is far higher in the MS than in the TS. But a larger proportion of TS workers had received land as their spouse's share and as 'Kudikidappu'. The fact that 21 per cent of the TS workers have Kudikidappu land shows that their families were feudally attached to the landed gentry. The lower proportion of MS workers receiving land as spouses' share need not mean that less importance is given to dowry system by them. Dowry system is widely prevalent in Kerala. But among the well-to-do, payment is made in cash. Those who are poor are forced to part with their land as daughters' share. The relatively high proportion of the TS workers who get their wife's share as land is possibly an indication of their lower social and financial status.

Total Non-land Assets

We have made an attempt to assess the total value of non-land assets of our respondents in the MS and the TS. The assets considered by us include financial assets, buildings,

consumer durables and vehicles. We have excluded the value of land and computed only non-land assets, because the value of land vary widely according to location and the figures given by the workers do not seem to be quite reliable.

Value of all non-land assets per household in the MS is Rs.1,28,816/- as against just Rs.34,165/- in the TS. The TS - MS ratio in the value of non-land assets is 3:8. This ratio is higher than the TS - MS salary ratio of 2:9.

Value of non-land assets of our respondents according to size-class is presented in Table 4.9. In the MS, there is no worker with non-land assets valuing less than Rs.10,000/-. The assets of seven workers range between Rupees 10-25 thousand and 10 workers between Rs.25-50 thousands. Another 28 have assets between Rs.50-100 thousands. Fifty per cent of workers in the MS have non-land assets above Rs.1 lakh. Out of these, the non-land assets of 30 workers range between Rs.1 - 2 lakhs, 10 workers between Rs.2-3 lakhs, three workers between Rs.3-5 lakhs and two workers Rs.5 lakhs. In sharp contrast, the non-land assets of 50 per cent of the TS workers are valued at less than Rs.25,000/-. One-third of the TS

Table - 4.9: Distribution of Workers According to the Value of Assets other than Land
(in Rs. thousand)

Sector	Class Intervals								
	Upto 5	5-10	10-25	25-50	50-100	100-200	200-300	300-500	Over 500
MS	0	0	7	10	28	30	10	3	2
TS	7	9	28	30	13	2	1	0	0

Source: Survey data.

workers have non-land assets in the range of Rs.25000/- to Rs.50000/-. There are only 3 workers in the TS, the value of whose non-land assets exceed Rs.1 lakh. To put it differently, the assets of 97 per cent of the TS workers are valued at less than Rs. 1 lakh only.

Financial Assets

There is considerable difference in the value and pattern of financial assets held by the MS and the TS workers. The average value of financial assets held by a MS worker is Rs.23088/- as compared to Rs.7447/- by a TS worker. Apart from the compulsory Provident Fund deposits, the most popular financial assets are Life Insurance Policies, National Small Savings Certificates and subscriptions to Chit Funds.¹⁰ Though working in factories, company shares and deposits have not become popular among them. Surprisingly, despite spread of banks' branches in Kerala,¹¹ the number of workers who maintain bank accounts is very small.

10. Chit funds are indigenous financial institutions working on the principle of mutual trust. They are run mostly by private individuals, but subject to the regulations of the Government.

11. In 1987, out of the total number of offices of the commercial banks in India (55,198), 2776 (5.03 per cent) were located in Kerala. The number of bank offices in the state was 913 in 1970-71 and 2399 in 1980-81. There was one commercial bank's branch for every 10,421 persons in the state as against one branch per 14432 persons for all-India. See Banking Statistics Division, Department of Statistical Analysis and Computer Services, Reserve Bank of India, Banking Statistics - Quarterly Hand out, June 1988, Bombay, 1988.

*: Government of Kerala, Department of Economics and Statistics, Kerala Economy 1986, Trivandrum, 1986.

Table 4.10 gives the number of workers having different types of financial assets and the average value of these assets.

In selecting their financial assets, the MS workers have acted logically. Their preference for Life Insurance Policy may be due to its extra advantage of covering risks. Tax benefits may be another reason for this preference. The next in popularity is the National Savings Schemes which also offer tax benefits. More than one-third of the workers have placed their trust in Chit Funds, the indigenous financial institution. Provident Fund, Insurance and Chits and some Small Savings Schemes - all have one advantage in common. Once the commitment is made, one has to continue it, if the advantages are to be reaped. Thus, such schemes work as some sort of compulsory savings. It appears that the MS workers' pattern of financial investment is not much different from that of other middle class fixed income groups.

But, the TS workers, with their small incomes do not have much financial assets other than the statutory deposits made in the Provident Fund account. The next important medium of their savings is Chit Funds, but the average deposit in Chit Funds is very small; it is only Rs.280/-. The number of those who have joined Chit Funds is also small; it is only 16. Only five workers have taken Life Insurance Policies and the average paid up premium is Rs.2,650/-. Just 3 workers have bank accounts.

Table - 4.10: Number of Workers having Financial Assets and the Average Value of

<u>Assets</u>		(Amount in Rupees)												
Sector	NO.	Average	NO.	Average	NO.	Average	NO.	Average						
		age		age		age		age						
Bank deposits	11	8364	63	4456	89	14068	2	4500	34	4125	52	1909	7	28000
Life Insurance Policy	3	75	5	2650	89	6359	0	0	16	281	2	750	0	--
Provident Fund														
Company Shares														
Chits														
National Savings														
Others														

Source: Survey data.

One has Rs.100/- in a bank and another has only Rs.50/-. But the third one has Rs.46,000/- in a bank which he has got out of a Motor Accident claim.¹² Only two workers have joined some National Small Savings Scheme.

Table 4.11 gives the relative importance of different financial assets by their value in the two sectors. The Table shows that Provident Funds constitute the major share of financial assets of both the workers in the MS and TS. Nearly 97 per cent of the financial assets of the TS workers are in the Provident Fund account. Other financial assets are negligible in their case. The reason may be that after statutory deduction is made from their wages to the Provident Fund account, they are not left with much to save. To the MS worker, insurance policy is the second major financial asset after Provident Fund and Chit funds come next. National Saving Schemes and bank accounts constitute only a minor share in their asset portfolio.

Value of Houses

The most widely owned non land asset is a house. As noted earlier, a vast majority of workers, both in the TS and the MS own their own houses.

But there is wide disparity between the MS and the TS workers in the quality of their housing as seen earlier. This disparity

12. That amount cannot be treated as his saving and therefore has been excluded for purposes of calculating the average bank deposit.

Table - 4.11: Relative Importance of Different Types of Financial Assets in Terms of Total Value

Sector	Bank deposits	Life Insurance Policy	Provident Fund	Company Shares/Deposits	Chits	National Savings	Total
MS	92004 (4.9)	2,80,728 (15.0)	12,52,052 (66.8)	9,000 (0.5)	1,40,250 (7.5)	99,268 (5.3)	18,73,302 (100)
TS	225 (0.03)	13,250 (2.27)	5,65,951 (96.67)	--	4,496 (0.77)	1,500 (0.26)	5,85,422 (100)

Percentage of the value of each asset to the total value of assets is given in brackets.

Source: Survey data.

is reflected in the average value of houses in the two sectors. The average value of a residential building in the MS is estimated to be Rs.72026/- whereas the TS worker's house costs only about its one-fourth i.e. Rs.19034/-. The MS workers' house is far superior to the house owned by an average Keralite.¹³

Ownership of Vehicles

A vast majority of workers both in the MS and TS own their own personal conveyances. Details regarding the ownership of vehicles is given in Table 4.12. The TS workers cannot afford any motorised vehicle. The only vehicle owned by the TS workers is bicycle.¹⁴ Fifty seven of them (63 per cent) have bicycles.

In the MS also 47 (52 per cent) workers possess bicycles. But a large proportion own motorised transport. One worker owns

13. Next to Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh it is in Kerala, that the value of building per household is the highest. (Jammu & Kashmir Rs.19,464, Haryana Rs.19,002/-, Himachal Pradesh Rs.18,215, Kerala Rs.17,411, All India Rs.9,141). See Reserve Bank of India, All India Debt and Investment Survey 1981-82, Bombay, 1987, PS - 8.

14. One TS worker was found to own an autorickshaw. But it is not used for his personal conveyance. The worker concerned is a senior loading worker who has three sons - all self-employed and living together. It is their combined income which has enabled them to purchase an autorickshaw which one of them ply.

Table - 4.12: Distribution of Workers According to Ownership of Vehicles

Sector	Car	Scooter/ Moped	Bicycles	Auto- Rickshaw	Bus
MS	1	33	47	1	1
TS	0	0	57	1	0

Source: Survey data.

a car and another a bus.¹⁵ Thirty three workers (37 per cent) own a scooter or a motor cycle or a moped.¹⁶ The ownership of two wheelers is in a way lower than what may be anticipated in view of the fact that most of the MS

15. One worker owns a bus. He hails from a rich family of business men who have a lot of landed property also. All his brothers are in their own line of business. It is this background which has enabled him to buy a bus on hire purchase basis in his wife's name and to operate it on the scheduled route as public carrier.

16. The proportion of two-wheeler owners does not seem to be high in comparison with the Pune workers studied by Abha Chaturvedi. Against 36.3 per cent of our MS workers, 43.5 per cent of Pune workers owned motorised two wheelers. Ownership of bicycles too was higher among the Pune workers (81.6 per cent).
See Chaturvedi, Abha, Op.cit., p.22.

workers get vehicle loans and allowances. The reason may be that those who stay in the quarters do not need any vehicle to travel to the factory. Besides, one of the factories we have covered (FACT) maintains a fleet of buses for providing transport facilities to their employees.

Consumer Durables

The Debt and Investment Survey (1981-82) of the Reserve Bank of India had found that there is a shift in asset preference, even among rural households towards durable household assets. This trend is visible among industrial workers in our sample. Number of workers owning different consumer durables is given in Table 4.13.

If ownership of vehicles and consumer durables is taken as an indicator of a better standard of living, the living standard of the MS workers in our sample is superior to that of the average Keralite. Their life style appears to be more modern. The Table also brings out the considerable disparity between the two sectors in the ownership of consumer durables.

Household furniture, appears to be the most important consumer durable in the TS household. Every TS household owns cots. Almirah is owned by 34 households (38 per cent). Only 12 TS households own setty or sofa. Fourteen of them own fans. It appears that the cost of such items is prohibitive as far as the TS workers are concerned.

Table - 4.13: Ownership of Consumer Durables

Items	Number of Respondents	
	MS	TS
Jewellery	77	45
Radio	77	52
Tape Recorder	36	9
Television	38	2
VCR/VCP	2	0
Camera	8	1
Fridge	12	1
Pressure Cooker	35	3
Mixer/Grinder	45	3
Hot Plate/Cooking Range	15	0
Gas Stove	31	4
Washing Machine	5	0
Fan	62	14
Steel/Wooden Almirah	87	34
Sofa/Setty	73	12
Cot	90	90

Source: Survey data.

The life style in the MS household is far superior as reflected in the ownership of the furniture items mentioned above. All the MS households own cots. Seventy three households own sofa/setty. Eighty seven own almirahs. Sixty two households have electric fans.

Coming to the ownership of domestic appliances like gas stove, cooking range, mixer/grinder, pressure cooker, refrigerator and washing machine, it is found that the standard in the MS household is much higher. Judged by the use of such items, the kitchen of the MS household is relatively more modern. Fifty per cent of them own mixer/grinder, 39 per cent, pressure cooker, 34 per cent, gas stove,¹⁷ 17 per cent, hot plate/cooking range, 13 per cent, refrigerator and 6 per cent, washing machine. Number of owners of such items is negligible in the TS. No TS household possesses a washing machine or a cooking range. Just one TS worker owns a fridge. Three each own a pressure cooker and a grinder. Only 4 own a gas stove. It is found that in both the sectors, workers give priority to the acquisition of entertainment items.

However, the disparity between the two sectors prevails in the ownership of entertainment items too. Radio is owned by 77 MS workers and 52 TS workers. Television is owned by 38 MS and 2 TS workers. Thirty six MS and 9 TS workers own tape

17. Gas is used as a primary source of energy for cooking only in 0.1 per cent of rural households and 6.3 per cent of urban households of Kerala.

See Sarvekshana, Oct. 1988, Op.cit., p. 21.

recorder. In the MS, the number of workers owning fridge or washing machine is much less than those owning tape recorder or Television. It is suggestive of their preference for entertainment.

Possession of gold and wearing of gold ornaments is part of the Malayalee culture. Use of gold pendent (thali) is associated with the marriage ceremony itself. It is customary in Kerala that part of the share due to daughters is given in the form of gold. Societal influence on the workers in this regard is quite conspicuous in their ownership of gold. Eighty six per cent of the MS households and 50 per cent of the TS households own gold jewellery. It means that, excepting the unmarried in the MS, most others possess some gold.

Liabilities

According to the Debt and Investment Survey of the RBI, 28.5 per cent of the rural households and 29.7 per cent of the urban households in Kerala were indebted in 1980-81.¹⁸ Average debt burden was Rs.3351/- in rural households and Rs.9728/- in urban households. Our study shows that the indebtedness of the industrial workers in our sample is much more than the state average. As many as 82 workers (91.1 per cent) in the MS have liabilities and their average liabilities amount to Rs.20928/-.

18. See Reserve Bank of India, All India Debt and Investment Survey 1981-82, Bombay, 1987, p. 31.

Surprisingly, in the TS, only fewer number of workers (53) have liabilities. The average liability is only Rs.5,171/-. However the liability constitutes only a small proportion of assets of both the TS and MS workers. It constitutes only 15 and 16 per cent of the non-land assets of the MS and TS workers respectively. There is not a single worker, either in the MS or in the TS, whose liability exceeds assets. Distribution of workers according to the size class intervals of liabilities is presented below in Table 4.14.

Nearly seventy per cent of the MS respondents and 100 per cent of the TS respondents are having liability below Rs.20,000/-. The liability of 17 MS workers is between Rs.20,000/- - Rs.50,000/-. The liability of only eight MS respondents is above Rs.50,000/-. There is liability exceeding Rs.1 lakh only in the case of 2 MS respondents.

Out of the 53 TS workers having liabilities, 35 workers have a liability of, less than Rs.5,000/- only. Of the remaining, 10 workers have liability in the range of Rs.5,000/- to Rs.20,000/-. There are only 8 TS workers whose liability exceeds Rs.10,000/-, but nobody has a liability above Rs.20,000/-.

The sources of liabilities observed in the case of the workers in our sample and the average liability per reporting worker are given in Table 4.15.

The Table indicates that MS workers take not only more loans but they take them from more varied sources. The number of sources for TS workers is limited. They have not taken

Table - 4.14: Distribution of Workers According to Amount of Liabilities

(Amount in Rupees)

Sectors	Class Intervals										Total
	1000 - 2000	2000 - 5000	5000 - 10000	10000 - 20000	20000 - 50000	50000 - 75000	75000 - 100000	100000 - 200000	200000 - 500000	500000 - 1000000	
MS	2	4	13	19	19	17	3	3	2	2	82
TS	11	7	17	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	53

Source: Survey data.

Table - 4.15: Number of Workers Taking Loans from Different Sources and the Average Liability Per Reporting Worker.

(Amount in Rupees)

	Personal		Financial institution		Provident Fund		Life Insurance Corporation		Mort-gage		Housing Loan		Chit Funds		Others	
	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount	No. Aver- age	amount
MS	16	7081	13	6785	57	3767	8	6219	13	5346	13	32915	23	11400	42	11680
TS	22	3546	17	4535	0	--	0	--	8	3025	15	4900	5	1160	6	2583

Source: Survey data.

loans from Provident Fund or Life Insurance Corporation. Hire purchase commitments are also made by none of them. The single largest source of loan to the TS worker is personal loan. Twenty two of them in our sample have taken such loans and the average liability is Rs.3546/-. Seventeen of them have borrowed from financial institutions like banks and co-operative credit societies. The liability per reporting worker on an average is Rs.4535/-. These are largely under the schemes launched by the Government as well as the banks to advance loans to the low income groups for various purposes. Fifteen TS workers have taken housing loans from the institutions like the Housing Development and Finance Corporation. The debt burden on an average is Rs. 4900/-. Eight have taken loans by pledging/mortgaging jewellery or other assets. Contrary to what is expected, their borrowings from Chit Funds have been negligible; only five workers have borrowed from Chit companies. The reason is not far to seek. Only 16 TS respondents (17.7 per cent) have joined Chit Funds. Most of them have only small deposits. The TS workers have borrowed less, and from limited sources, not because, they do not need loans but because they are not as credit-worthy as the MS workers. A closer observation will reveal that apart from personal loans and mortgages, their major borrowings are from agencies and institutions whose main function is to advance housing and other loans to weaker sections of the society.

A large number (57) of the MS workers (63.3 per cent) have taken loans from the Provident Fund account. It came out during discussions that whenever a reasonable amount accrues to their credit in the Provident Fund account, the MS workers borrow from their account. It is recouped by monthly deductions from salary. This facility encourages the workers to purchase houses, consumer durables and two-wheelers as often as funds get accumulated in their Provident Fund account. Often such purchase is the response to the desire for conspicuous consumption stimulated by demonstration effect. Those who live in the factory township want to keep up with others, those in the village surroundings want to satisfy their status consciousness and those who live in the low income areas want to be a step ahead of others. In our sample, twenty three MS respondents have borrowed from Chit funds. Chits play an important part in the borrowing schemes of the MS workers. Sixteen have taken personal loans and 13 each from financial institutions, housing agencies and through mortgages. Personal loans to our respondents in the MS do not always mean loans taken from friends for a few days, in times of emergencies. Instead, it often means loans taken from private parties, including their own colleagues, on payment of fairly high rates of interest. In fact, there are workers who take loans from their Provident Fund account and from Co-operative Banks/Credit Societies for lending such amounts at a higher rate of interest. However, we do not have sufficient data to prove this. For

Table - 4.16: Distribution of Workers According to the Purpose of Loans

		(Number of workers)								
Sectors	Consumer Durables	Vehicles	House	Land	Health	Education	Regular consumption	Social consumption	Investment in Financial Assets	Others
MS	15	18	30	8	4	5	6	22	6	6
TS	0	1	25	0	3	2	10	14	0	8

Source: Survey data.

obvious reason, those who lend money will not admit it, but at least a few have admitted of such lending. But it is the debtors who generally say that they have borrowed from such sources.

Table 4.16 shows the different purposes for which the workers take loans. The most important purpose for which workers, both - TS and MS, have taken loans is for the purchase or construction of houses. The next important purpose is social consumption. As in the case of sources of loans, purposes of loans too are less varied in the case of the TS workers. The TS workers, unlike their MS counterparts do not borrow money to buy land or to buy consumer durables or to invest in financial assets. With their very small income, they cannot afford any of these. Considering the very high price of land in the Alleppey area, and the very low wages which they get, the coir factory workers who constitute our TS sample can entertain no hope of purchasing a piece of land. Most of the consumer durables are also beyond their reach. Only one TS worker has borrowed money to buy a bicycle. The question of financial investments out of borrowed funds also does not arise in their case.

In the MS 6 workers have invested the amounts borrowed from their Provident Fund account in financial assets. It indicates financial prudence. If money can be withdrawn from the Provident Fund account and invested in Life Insurance, Unit Trust or certain other special savings schemes (eg. National Saving Certificate, National Saving Scheme) considerable tax

benefits can be reaped. In fact, we have observed that towards the end of the financial year, most of the income tax assesseees in our sample make deposits in such accounts with a view to avoid the payment of tax. Eight of the MS respondents have invested borrowed funds in land, 18 in vehicles and 15 in consumer durables. Borrowings for land seem to be for acquiring a house-plot in the place of work.

Though 35 workers are found owning vehicles - mostly scooters, vehicle loans are taken by only 18 workers. (We do not take bicycles into account because most of the MS workers can afford to have one without taking loans). Fifteen workers have reported that they have borrowed money to buy consumer durables, but the different types of durables owned are several times greater and the number of such owners is also much larger. Such differences may be due to the fact that those who purchased vehicles or consumer durables, a few years ago might have already completed repayments. It is also possible, that some of them have acquired them from their own funds.

Thirty workers in the MS have borrowed to build houses while 25 in the TS have also borrowed for the same purpose. As noted earlier, it is the single item for which the maximum number of borrowers in both the sectors have taken loans. For medical care and education, loans are taken by the respondents in the TS and MS, but the number of loanees is slightly higher in the MS. To incur debt for consumption purpose is not a healthy sign.

But it is found in both the MS and TS. In fact, it is the second most important purpose of loans. The number borrowing for social consumption is greater, in the case of the MS workers. It is in the TS that more workers have borrowed for regular consumption. This is understandable in view of the low levels of income of the TS workers.

Acquisition of consumer durables and vehicles has become a mark of modern living. Therefore, the MS workers' habit of regular borrowing, despite their relatively good income is not difficult to understand. Opinions however, can differ on the desirability of this trend.

CHAPTER V

WORK, COMPENSATION AND SATISFACTION

A work force which is satisfied, is the best guarantee for higher labour productivity. It is also the best insurance against labour militancy and disruption in production. The levels of satisfaction of workers determine, to a large extent, their attitudes towards work, managements and trade unions. Therefore, in this chapter we propose to examine how satisfied are the workers in our sample about their work, working conditions, compensation, retirement benefits, future prospects and welfare facilities. Before we turn to a discussion on this subject it becomes necessary to find out what the workers themselves value most in their job.

What is Valued Most in a Job?

A job is something which satisfies not only many wants but also many urges of a worker. Some may attach importance to the material rewards of the job. Some others may get deeply involved in the work if it is to their liking, even if the rewards are not much. To some others the human relations that develop in a work situation will be of greater value. Yet others may consider what a job might bring to them in the future, at the time of their retirement.

With a view to get an insight into the workers' perception about their jobs, several relevant aspects of a job were listed and the workers were asked to give three ranks to each of them according to their order of preference. Their order of preferences is given in Table 5.1. From an analysis of the workers' answers, it is found that job security is what is valued most by the workers in both sectors. It is found that in the MS, 69 workers and in the TS 66 workers (total 135) have given one of the three ranks to job security. Thirty six workers in the MS and 23 in the TS have given first rank to this variable. It may be noted that the largest number of respondents in the MS and TS who have changed their jobs did so in order to get a more secure job. (See Table 3.2 in Chapter III). What emerges is that in the highly competitive and uncertain labour market of Kerala, job security is of utmost importance to most of the workers. Next to job security, importance is given to remuneration - pay and over-time by most of the workers. Sixty eight workers in the TS and 49 workers in the MS have given one of the three ranks to this factor. Twenty seven TS workers each have given first and second ranks to this variable. Future prospects is the next important variable. With regard to the above three variables, the workers perception is more or less the same among the MS and TS workers. By giving greater importance to job security, good pay and future prospects, they are showing more concern for material aspects of a job. Non-

Table - 5.1: Distribution of Workers According to Their Ranking of the Different Rewards from Job - Sector-wise

Rewards from job	Ranks			Total (1-3)	TS	Total (1-3)
	MS	TS	TS			
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Pleasant working conditions	11	5	11	27	8	3
Interest and variety	12	5	2	19	3	2
Good pay and over-time	10	21	18	49	27	14
Job security	36	16	17	69	23	19
Future prospects	11	15	12	38	9	11
Good work mates	6	15	14	35	16	17
Retirement benefits	1	6	11	18	4	4
Others	2	3	1	6	0	0

Source: Survey data.

material needs like good work mates¹ too is important. But other non-material aspects like interest and variety in a job, pleasant working conditions etc. come only way down in the workers' preferences.

Workers' Perception of Their Job Status, Work and Working Conditions

Table 5.2 depicts the views of the workers in our sample about their working conditions. Only 28 per cent of the MS workers and 5.5 per cent of the TS workers are of the opinion that their working conditions are very good. Working conditions are bad in the opinion of only 4.4 per cent of the MS respondents and 8.8 per cent of the TS respondents. A majority of them earn in between. Fifty eight per cent of the TS workers and 28 per cent of the MS workers find their working conditions to be good. Another 28 per cent of the TS workers and 40 per cent of the MS workers consider them to be fairly satisfactory. On the whole, it appears that both the TS and MS workers are reasonably satisfied with their working conditions.

Work Load

From an analysis of the respondents' opinion about their work load, it was found that work load is generally heavy in the TS and normal in the MS. Sixty two per cent of respondents in the TS have reported that they have heavy work load. No respondent in the TS has said that his work load is light. But in the

1. To the TS workers, the desire for good work mates is not wholly a non-material desire. Since the wages in the TS are paid on piece rates and since work is organised on a team basis, good work mates can lead to better wages.

Table - 5.2: Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Working Conditions

Units/Sector	Very good	Good	Fair	Bad	Total
HNL	3 (6.7)	16 (35.6)	24 (53.3)	2 (4.4)	45 (100)
FACT	22 (48.9)	9 (20.0)	12 (26.7)	2 (4.4)	45 (100)
Total MS	25 (27.8)	25 (27.8)	36 (40.0)	4 (4.4)	90 (100)
Total TS	5 (5.6)	52 (57.8)	25 (27.8)	8 (8.8)	90 (100)
Total MS & TS	30 (16.7)	77 (42.8)	61 (33.9)	12 (6.6)	180 (100)

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

Source: Survey data.

MS, 12 per cent of the workers feel that their work load is light. In certain sections like maintenance, particularly in a new firm where machines are all in perfect condition, maintenance workers may have only light work. But there are sections like loading, bagging etc. in the MS units, where the work is heavy. Table 5.3 given below indicates the workers' views about their work load.

Table - 5.3: Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Work Load

Units/Sector	Light	Normal	Heavy
HNL	2 (4.4)	38 (84.4)	5 (11.1)
FACT	9 (20.0)	30 (66.7)	6 (13.3)
Total MS	11 (12.2)	68 (75.5)	11 (12.2)
Total TS	--	34 (37.7)	56 (62.2)
Total MS & TS	11 (6.1)	102 (56.6)	67 (37.2)

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

Source: Survey data. .

Night Shifts

Sixty seven per cent of respondents in the MS and 66 per cent in the TS have to work in night shifts. Though shift work effects their daily routine and family life, a large proportion of respondents (53 per cent) in the MS welcome it. In the TS, only 28 per cent of workers welcome shift work. This may be due to the fact that unlike in the MS, shift work is not a routine affair of the TS workers. They are asked to work in night shifts only when their companies have to execute a time bound order. Some welcome night shifts, because even after taking some time for sleep, they can spare some time for other domestic duties. Some others think that as factory employees, it is their duty to work in night shifts, when asked to do so. Some workers, though only few, welcome night shifts for family reasons. For instance, if a worker has young children and the wife is employed, he would like to remain at home during day time.

Wages

Wage is an important item about which 61 per cent of the TS workers have expressed dissatisfaction. About 36 per cent are 'somewhat' satisfied. Only three per cent are very much satisfied. On the other hand, only one-eighth of the MS workers are dissatisfied about their present wages. In fact, 29 per cent are very much satisfied.

Though a majority of the MS respondents have expressed general satisfaction over their present wages, eighty eight per cent of them believe that their firms have the ability to pay more wages. Eighty three per cent of the TS respondents also believe so. Only one worker each in the MS and TS think that their firms have no ability to pay more wages. The rest of the workers (11 per cent in the MS and 15.5 per cent in the TS) have pleaded their ignorance on such matters. The majority of workers believe that their firms have the capacity to pay higher wages because of the high production and high profit of their firms. Besides, 33 per cent of the MS respondents believe that more wages can be paid if the firm is managed better. According to them, there is much waste which can be avoided. Several workers have mentioned specific areas where efforts are called for, for minimising cost. Eighteen per cent of the MS respondents have said that if workers co-operate well, their contribution to productivity will improve and as a result, the firm's ability to pay wages will also increase.

Over-time

In the MS plants we have surveyed, over-time work is a major source of supplementary income. In the HNL, the total over-time payments are estimated to form 20 - 24 per cent of the total wage bill. In FACT, it comes to about 18 - 20 per cent of the wage bill. In individual cases, the over-time payment may come to 50 per cent or more of a worker's regular wage bill.

This is possible because all categories of workers do not have to work over-time and some shun over-time duty. So those who are enthusiastic in taking up over-time duty can earn more. The average over-time payment of a TS worker ranges only between Rs.5/- to Rs.30/- per week.

Eighty nine per cent of the MS workers get over-time work. But only seventy seven per cent of them welcome it. Thus we find that in the MS, over-time work is thrust upon at least some who do not want it. In the TS, some workers who are anxious to get over-time work do not get it. Though 90 per cent of the TS workers welcome over-time, only 58 per cent actually get it.

Apart from the monetary benefits, over-time work offers certain additional advantages. For instance, if a worker in a shift gets over-time work in the ensuing shift, his two days' duty is completed within 16 hours. Then he gets a day off from the work. We have observed that in certain cases, some work continuously for three shifts. As the workers in the modern sector plants have no regular week-end holidays, such off-duty days can be used for attending to domestic and other out of plant duties. Among those who do not welcome over-time, 62 per cent in the MS and 60 per cent in the TS do so for reasons of health. They say that over-time work is strenuous. As seen earlier, over-time work in the TS is not as lucrative as in the MS and that is why some workers do not welcome it. In the MS,

14 per cent of those who do not welcome over-time give the reason that it affects their routine. Twenty four per cent of them do not welcome over-time for family reasons. Views of the workers in the two sectors about the different types of (other) compensation they receive are given in Table 5.4.

Bonus

As per the Bonus Act, workers become eligible for bonus only five years after commercial production begins. At the time of the survey, therefore, the workers in the HNL had not become eligible for bonus. Instead, they were paid an exgratia sum of Rs.900/-. Therefore, they have not answered this question. The MS workers thus include only workers of FACT and a majority of them is very much satisfied about bonus.

Provident Fund

Eighty per cent of the MS workers are very much satisfied about the Provident Fund Scheme. But in the TS, only 24 per cent have reported so. In the MS, eight per cent of workers' wages is the minimum to be contributed to the Provident Fund. The employer also contributes eight per cent of each workers' wages. But in the TS, the workers' share and the Employer's contribution would together work out to only 12.5 per cent. As their wages are lower than in the MS, the total amount getting accumulated in their Provident Fund account will be lower.

Table - 5.4: Distribution of Workers According to Their 'Satisfaction' Over Wages, Provident Fund, Bonus and ESI.

Types of Compensation	(Number of Workers)					
	Levels of Satisfaction					
	Very much satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied			
MS	TS	MS	TS	MS	TS	
Present wages	26	3	52	32	11	55
Provident fund	72	22	16	52	2	7
Bonus*	25	--	7	--	13	--
E.S.I.	25	17	13	40	44	32

*: Views of HNL workers on bonus are not included in the Table as they were not eligible for bonus, at the time of our survey, since the company had at the time not completed five years after the commencement of commercial production.

Source: Survey data.

Employees State Insurance

Employees State Insurance is the scheme which provides for the treatment and or maintenance of those workers who fall ill. It also ensures some support to the dependents of those who die in harness. Towards the Employees State Insurance scheme, employees have to contribute 2.25 per cent of their total emoluments. Employers contribute 5 per cent of each worker's total emoluments. From the Employees State Insurance hospitals, workers are expected to get free medical treatment. If death occurs, the worker's family is to get benefit from the scheme. The amount in such cases works out to 75 per cent of the emoluments received by the deceased and it is payable to the spouse till death.

A large number of (35.5 per cent) workers in the TS are not satisfied with Employees State Insurance. Fifty four per cent of the MS workers also have expressed dissatisfaction over the working of the Employees State Insurance scheme. There is a general complaint about the indifference of doctors, corrupt practices in connection with issuing medical certificates, lack of medicines in the Employees State Insurance hospital, delay in reimbursement when medicines are purchased from outside etc.

Table 5.5 shows how the workers in the two MS units view the various items of compensation such as wages, Provident Fund and bonus. The Table shows that generally the workers of

Table - 5.5: Distribution of Workers in HNL and FACT According to Their Satisfaction About Different Types of Compensation

Types of Compensation	Very much satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Not satisfied	
	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT
Present Wages	4	22	33	19	7	4
Provident Fund	33	39	10	6	2	0
Rates of Bonus	-	24	--	17	--	4
E.S.I.	0	25	6	7	31	13
Retirement Benefits	8	23	11	17	6	3

Source: Survey data.

the FACT are more satisfied about wages, bonus, Provident Fund etc. than those in the HNL. The FACT is a comparatively older company and the many benefits which the workers enjoy now are the cumulative results of successive rounds of negotiations and settlements between the labour unions and management during the long period of its existence. But the HNL is a relatively new company and hence the workers are at a disadvantage with respect to wages and fringe benefits.

Job Security

As seen earlier, job security is the aspect of work which workers value most in their job. In fact it is the most important attraction of industrial employment in a state where unemployment is the highest. In order to assess, to what extent the workers feel secure about their jobs, a question has been asked whether they think their job is 'very secure', 'secure' or 'insecure'. The answer to this question given in Table 5.6 reveals that workers even in Traditional sector do not feel insecure about their jobs. Fifty eight per cent of the MS respondents have answered that their jobs are 'very secure'. Forty one per cent think that it is 'secure'. Only one out of 90 workers has felt his job insecure. But in the TS, only 22 per cent of the respondents consider their job to be 'very secure' while 73 per cent have said it is 'secure'. The remaining workers believe that it is 'insecure'. The greater sense of security felt by the MS workers can possibly be attributed to the fact that the MS units are large and

Table - 5.6: Distribution of Workers According to Their Opinion about Job Security - Sector-wise

Factory/Sector	Very secure	Secure	Insecure
HNL	12 (26.6)	32 (71.1)	1 (2.2)
FACT	40 (88.8)	5 (11.1)	0
MS	52 (57.8)	37 (41.1)	1 (1.1)
Total TS	20 (22.2)	66 (73.3)	4 (4.4)
MS & TS	72 (40.0)	103 (57.2)	5 (2.8)

Figures in brackets represent percentages.

Source: Survey data.

are in the public sector. But the TS units which we have surveyed are in the private sector-several of them owned by individuals. It is natural that one who is employed in a private sector firm, does not feel as much security as a public sector employee. Yet it has to be noted that even the workers in the private sector generally feel security of jobs. This is in a way surprising as the coir industry is now considered to be a 'sun-set' industry.

Promotion Prospects

In the TS, 98 per cent of the respondents have reported that there are no promotion prospects for them. But in the MS,

55 per cent of the respondents believe that their promotion prospects are either 'good' (17 per cent) or are satisfactory (38 per cent). However, quite a large number (42 per cent) considers their promotion prospects unsatisfactory.

Retirement Benefits

Workers' views on the retirement benefits available to them also show that the MS workers are more satisfied than the TS workers. Of the two MS units covered in the study, respondents in FACT are found to be more contented. (See Table 5.7.). Unlike in other matters, 24 per cent of the MS and 38 per cent of the TS respondents could not give their views on retirement benefits. In fact, many are not aware of the details in this regard. It may perhaps be because, 'retirement' is not something of immediate concern for most of the workers.

Welfare Facilities

In the next section, we make an attempt to assess the workers' own rating of the welfare facilities available to them.

As in the case of wages, bonus, and retirement benefits, the MS workers are by and large, contented with the welfare facilities available to them. The TS workers report that they do not get many of these facilities.

About most of the welfare facilities, a large majority of MS respondents have expressed satisfaction by saying that

Table - 5.7: Distribution of Workers According to Their Views on Retirement Benefits

Unit/Sector	Very much satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied	Do not know/ no opinion	Total
HNL	8 (17.7)	11 (24.4)	6 (13.3)	20 (44.4)	45
FACT	23 (51.1)	17 (37.7)	3 (6.6)	2 (4.4)	45
Total MS	31 (34.4)	28 (31.1)	9 (10.0)	22 (24.4)	90
Total TS	11 (12.2)	26 (28.8)	19 (21.1)	34 (37.7)	90

Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total.

Source: Survey data.

they are either 'good' or 'adequate'. Facilities for education, recreation and the provision for emergency loan are widely appreciated by them. But 40 per cent of them feel that the provision for supplying goods at fair price is inadequate. Here the complaint is that the price in the fair price shop is not as fair as it is expected. Nearly forty per cent of them have said that the medical facilities are inadequate.

A small number of workers in the MS has said that some of these facilities are not available to them. It does not mean that the company has not arranged such facilities; it only means that they are not able to make use of such facilities. For instance, when a MS worker says that housing facilities are not available, what he means is that quarters has not yet been allotted to him. Or when one says that there is no facility of fair price shop, it means that either the price there is not fair or that since he travels everyday to the factory from his distant family house, he is not able to buy anything from that shop.

Most of the companies, in the modern sector, provide several welfare facilities to the workers. In a way, these are the special attractions of an industrial employment. The FACT and HNL run High Schools within the township for offering educational facilities to the employees' children. In addition, these units run their own hospitals within the township. The hospital run by FACT is a full-fledged one with most of the modern facilities. Both companies have constructed a number of family quarters as well as bachelors' dormitories. As the number

of quarters is not sufficient to meet the demand of all workers, quarters are allotted on the basis of seniority.

For providing transport facility to the workers, the FACT is running a fleet of buses on several routes to suit the timings of different shifts. Besides, vehicle loans are also advanced to the workers. Those who own vehicles are paid vehicle allowance also. But since the funds earmarked for giving vehicle loans every year are often inadequate to meet the ever growing demands, there are always applicants in the waiting list. The HNL does not provide bus service to the employees, but vehicle loans and vehicle allowances are given to the workers.

Both the units in the MS we have surveyed provide recreation facilities through clubs. FACT's services for promoting sports and for providing recreation facilities are particularly commendable. At the time of recruitment, preference is given to sports talents.

The modern sector plants we have covered run co-operative fair price shops with a view to make consumer goods available to the workers at reasonable prices.² Consumer durables like TV and Fridge are also arranged for workers on credit.

There is also provision for extending loans to the workers in times of emergencies. For example, in the HNL an employee can

2. At the time when Palmolein was in short supply we saw the Welfare Officer in the HNL taking personal interest to get Palmolein released from the Civil Supplies Corporation for distribution among the workers.

get a loan equal to ten times the value of shares he has taken in the Employees Co-operative Society. Loan from the amount which a worker has in his Provident Fund account is easily available. In the HNL, one can draw a festival advance of Rs.500/- during any one of the ten festivals recognised by the company.

The MS units run canteens to provide food to the workers at a nominal rate. These canteens are heavily subsidised. For example, a worker in the HNL gets meals for Re.1/- and snacks for Ps. 20. The subsidy amount which the HNL pays every month to the canteen is estimated to be Rs.1.15 lakhs.

Of the two MS units covered, it is the workers in the FACT who are more contented with the welfare facilities available to them than the HNL workers. It is only natural that in an older unit like the FACT, with a long history of trade unionism, the workers are able to secure and enjoy more benefits.

Table 5.8 shows how the workers in HNL and FACT differ in their views about the adequacy of welfare facilities.

Except for the minimum loan as school advance at the time of reopening of the schools, none of the above mentioned facilities are available to the workers in the TS. But even the facility available is 'inadequate' according to 61 per cent of the TS respondents. The gulf that exists between the TS and MS workers in the matter of standard of living, income, savings, assets etc. gets further widened because most of the welfare

Table - 5.8: Distribution of workers in HNL and FACT According to Their Views on Welfare Facilities

Welfare facilities	(Number of workers)									
	Good		Adequate		Inadequate		Total		Total	
	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT	HNL	FACT
Education	21	40	61	17	2	19	7	0	7	7
Medical	5	20	25	14	8	22	23	9	32	32
Housing	14	19	33	14	8	22	12	11	23	23
Transport	9	24	33	13	13	26	18	7	25	25
Recreation	13	37	50	22	4	26	8	4	12	12
Canteen	5	23	28	22	20	42	17	2	19	19
Provisions at fair prices	3	9	12	10	12	22	19	17	36	36
Emergency/personal loan	15	40	55	16	2	18	12	1	13	13

Source: Survey data.

CHAPTER VI

WORKER AND HIS UNION

Among the social organisations of the workers' world, trade union is the one which exerts maximum influence. The trade union which a worker joins and the extent to which he gets himself involved in union activities etc. determine the worker profile to a great extent. In turn the union which one joins, one's expectations from the union etc. are also influenced by the worker profile. The trade unions can play a political role in a modern state and can work to promote class consciousness and solidarity among the workers. At the same time, the working class consciousness can influence the working of the unions. It is in this context that an analysis of the workers' relationship with the trade unions is attempted here.

Given the high level of literacy, newspaper reading, political consciousness and past history, one would expect a high degree of unionisation among workers in our sample. Our field data confirm this reasoning. The proportion of workers having membership in unions is the highest ever reported in India. It is 86.6 per cent in the TS and 95.5 per cent in the

MS.¹ Only four respondents from the MS and twelve from the TS are not members of unions. Some of the non-members are new recruits and are yet to take membership. Others have got disillusioned with union's performance and have stopped paying subscription.

According to Vaid,² "Kota industries did not have any unions functioning during the field work" of his study (1968). About the industrial workers of Gujarat (1968) N.R. Sheth had reported union membership of 70 per cent.³ Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair⁴ (1978) found that the trade union membership of Trivandrum workers was equally high (70 per cent) though the

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1. The trade union membership as a percentage of employment has been gradually rising in the factory sector of the state. Though there were occasional fluctuations, the long term trend continued to be the same. In 1951, 21 per cent of the factory sector employees had membership in trade unions. This proportion rose to 44 per cent by 1983. (Still it remains much lower than the union membership observed in the present study). See Thampy, M.M., Impact of Trade Unionism on Industrial Development of Kerala, M.Phil Thesis, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin 1988. Source: Calculation based on data from Government of Kerala, Administrative Reports and Office of the Labour Commissioner, Trivandrum.
 2. Vaid, K.N., Op.cit., p. 136.
 3. Sheth, N.R., The Social Framework of an Indian Factory, Manchester University Press, Delhi, Oxford, 1968.
 4. Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

workers covered included workers in the unorganized sectors also. Only two per cent of the women workers in Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone, Bombay (1984) were found to have trade union membership as revealed in a recent study by Sharma and Sengupta.⁵ A study made by Indrani Mukherjee⁶ (1985) reported that only 60 per cent of the jute workers even in Calcutta had got membership in unions. Abha Chaturvedi's⁷ study (1987) of the workers of Pune has shown that only 58 per cent of the workers have union membership.

Reasons for Joining Unions

Reasons for joining Trade Unions vary among workers. Forty four workers in the MS (48.8 per cent) joined trade unions for the passive reason that it is 'better to be a member than being nowhere'. A majority of the TS workers (61.1 per cent) also joined unions for the same reason. Only ten per cent of our MS respondents and 24.4 per cent of the TS respondents have reported that they joined unions with a view to get economic and other benefits. Thirty per cent of workers in the MS and 3.3 per cent in the TS joined unions believing that union alone could take up their problems and issues with the management. It was for the protection of their rights that 10 per cent of respondents in the MS and 1.1 per cent in the TS joined unions. Nobody from our sample has joined a union out of coercion.

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5. Sharma, R.N. & Sengupta, Chandan, Women Employment at SEEPZ (Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone), A Report: Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, 1984.
 6. Mukherjee, Indrani, Industrial Workers in a Developing Society, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985.
 7. Chaturvedi, Abha, Workers' World, Times Research Foundation

It is surprising that the single largest number of the MS workers and a majority of the TS workers have joined unions for the passive reason to be in the mainstream of the workers' world and not to be left alone. Only very few think of the specific gains that follow from union membership. Of course, if a problem arises, they will approach the union.

In making the choice regarding which among the many unions to join, a worker has to weigh many factors, in mind. The importance of these factors is depicted in Table 6.1.

Only twenty five per cent of the workers (MS & TS) are found to have joined unions on the basis of their political affiliation though a majority of them support political affiliation of unions and are members of such unions. Another important factor that weighed in the workers' mind is better leadership. Twenty two per cent of the workers joined their unions for this reason. Seventeen per cent of the respondents joined a union for the reason that it is the major union. Sixteen per cent opted for their union for its better bargaining ability. Fourteen per cent had been attracted to particular unions by the presence of their friends.

Based on the reasons given by the MS workers for joining particular unions, we find that their preference is in the following order: political affiliation (23 workers)

Table - 6.1: Distribution of Workers According to the Reasons Given for

Joining the Particular Union

Unit/ Sector	Political affiliation	Better leader- ship		Major Union		Only Union		Better bar- gaining agent		Friends in the union		Category union		Other reasons		
		Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	Num- ber	Per- cent- age	
MS	23	26.4	14	16.1	15	17.2	13	14.9	6	6.9	16	18.4	8	9.2	15	17.2
TS	18	22.5	23	28.8	13	16.3	3	3.8	20	25.0	7	8.8	0	0.0	8	10.0
Total MS & TS	41	22.8	37	20.6	28	15.6	16	8.9	26	14.4	23	12.8	8	4.4	23	12.8

Source: Survey data.

friends in the union (16), major union (15), better leadership (14), category union (8) and better bargaining agent (6). But the TS sector workers show a different order of preference; better leadership (23), better bargaining agent (20), political affiliation (18) and major union (13). Thus the TS workers give greater importance to leadership and bargaining power than to political affiliation though a vast majority of the TS workers have joined left unions. When most of them consider the leadership quality and bargaining ability as the deciding factor, they are actually looking for the union which would help them most. But in the modern sector, to the workers having greater economic security, politics and friends come first; all other considerations come only next. For instance only 16 per cent of MS respondents have given better leadership as the reason for joining the particular union. Only seven per cent of the respondents have considered the bargaining ability of the union when taking membership. But the corresponding percentages in the TS have been 29 and 25 respectively. Early recruits to a factory in its infancy usually join the first union which is formed there. So the reason which some of the old workers have given for joining a particular union is that it is the 'only' union. In the MS units where there are unions formed exclusively to cater to the interests of a particular category of workers, some workers join these 'category unions'.

Most Important Trade Union Functions

The trade unions perform diverse functions. Some of

these functions are of direct relevance to the workers. Some are fraternal functions. Some others are concerned with larger issues like strengthening class solidarity and restructuring the world.

For a better understanding of the workers' expectations from a trade union, we have given the following list of possible trade union functions and asked the workers to rank them in their order of preference.

1. Protection from management.
2. Defending workers' rights.
3. Securing high wages.
4. Improving the working and living conditions.
5. To educate workers and help them in social uplift.
6. To create and operate benevolent funds.
7. Political objectives.

An analysis of the ranks given by the workers to the different functions is given in Table 6.2.

It is found that a large majority of the workers both in the modern and traditional sectors give importance to direct functions which are of immediate concern to them. Only very few workers give importance to fraternal functions or functions concerning larger political questions.

Defending workers' rights is the function to which greatest importance is attached by both the MS and TS workers.

Table - 6.2: Ranking of Important Trade Union Functions

It/COOP	Protection for Management			Securing High Wages			Defending workers Rights			Improving the working Political Objectives and Living conditions			Education and Social Creation and operation of workers of Sanveghat Funds			Others															
	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3	Rk 1	Rk 2	Total Rk 3													
1	12	5	22	4	13	11	28	18	12	8	38	6	6	6	18	4	4	9	17	1	2	2	5	0	2	0	2	2	1	1	4
2	7	12	12	2	16	29	30	5	5	5	15	2	0	2	13	4	4	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
3	19	17	17	6	24	27	57	48	18	13	79	8	15	8	31	7	8	14	29	1	3	3	7	0	3	2	5	3	2	1	6
4	17	14	14	16	22	20	58	29	25	19	73	8	9	5	22	10	16	17	43	3	4	5	12	4	3	5	12	1	0	0	1
5	36	31	31	22	46	47	115	77	43	32	152	16	24	13	53	17	24	31	72	4	7	8	19	4	6	7	17	4	2	1	7

1: Rank.

Source: Survey data.

Fifty three per cent of the MS and 32 per cent of the TS workers have ranked this function first. Twenty per cent of the MS and 28 per cent of the TS workers have ranked it second. Seventy seven MS workers (85.5 per cent) and 73 TS workers (81 per cent) have given either first, second or third rank to this function. Protection from management is the next function in the workers' order of preference. Twenty one per cent of the MS respondents and 19 per cent of the TS respondents rank this function as first. Nineteen per cent of the MS and 16 per cent of the TS workers have given this function second rank. One of the first three ranks are given to this function by 53 MS workers (61 per cent) and 45 TS workers (50 per cent). Next in importance is the function of securing higher wages. Fifty seven MS (63 per cent) and 58 TS (64 per cent) respondents give one of the first three ranks to this function. But only 6 MS and 16 TS workers give first rank to it. And 24 MS and 22 TS workers give it second rank. Only eight workers each in the MS and TS consider improving the working and living conditions as the most important function of the trade unions. Just seven workers in the MS (7.7 per cent) and 10 workers in the TS (11 per cent) think that working for political objectives is the foremost function of trade unions. Thus we find that larger issues concerning the working class find only an insignificant place in the workers' scheme of things. However, the data show that the TS workers are slightly more interested in such issues than the MS workers. The number of those in the

TS who give first, second and third ranks to the function of strengthening class solidarity is ten, sixteen and seventeen respectively as against the corresponding figures of seven, eight and fourteen in the MS.

Defending workers' rights, getting protection from management and obtaining higher wages, in that order - is what both the MS and TS workers consider as the most important trade union functions.

Subscription to Membership Fees and Other Union Funds

Going by regular subscriptions to union funds, workers in our sample are quite involved in their unions. Almost all our respondents subscribe regularly to union membership.⁸ But when it comes to contribution to their union funds, the proportion of contributors in the TS comes down sharply.

As against, 87.7 per cent of the MS workers who are found subscribing to other union funds, only 64.4 per cent of the TS workers are found to do so.⁹ Prima facie, the differences in the contribution made to union funds found between the MS and TS workers may look like an indication of the relatively low interest of

8. Only 60 per cent of the union members covered in the Trivandrum study are found subscribing regularly to union membership. This difference may be due to the differences in the nature of units covered in the two studies. Our study was confined to well-organized large and medium units where unions are systematically organized. The Trivandrum study covered all units, large, medium and small (including household units).

See Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

9. The study about the Trivandrum workers shows that only 27.6 per cent of the union members subscribe to other union funds, Ibid.

the TS workers in union activities. But it is likely that this may be more due to the low earnings of the latter.

In terms of membership, subscription to union and contribution to other union funds, our sample shows more union consciousness than the sample in the Trivandrum study. It appears that in the larger and better organized units, workers get better and regular income and therefore they can afford to pay more. Further, in such units the unions will have a better organisational set up and therefore collections will be easier.

Trade Union Actions

Participation in trade union actions, rather than mere membership in a union, is a better indicator of trade union consciousness.¹⁰ Table 6.3 given below gives an idea about the extent of participation in trade union actions. To the question whether they had taken part in trade union actions called by their union, nearly two thirds of the MS workers who are union members have said that they have always participated in trade union actions. But only a quarter of the union members in the TS have answered in the affirmative to this question. As against 33

10. Studies made in Calcutta and Bombay have revealed that workers' interest and involvement in trade unions are not of a high order. Fifty eight per cent of the jute workers of Calcutta (1985) showed only low involvement. Twenty eight per cent showed medium or average involvement and only 14 per cent, high involvement. In an automobile factory of Bombay (1974) union interest shown by workers was low in the case of 30 per cent, medium in the case of 37 per cent and high in the case of only 33 per cent of the workers. See Mukerjee, Indrani, Op.cit., See also Sharma, B.R., 1974, Op.cit.

Table - 6.3: Participation in Trade Union Actions

Unit/Sector	Number of workers			Total
	Always	Sometimes	Never	
HNL	27	17	0	44
FACT	28	11	3	42
Total MS	55	28	3	86
Total TS	20	47	17	78
Grand Total	75	75	21	164

Source: Survey data.

per cent in the MS, the majority of union members in the TS are only occasional participants in union actions. The number of those who have never participated in any trade union action is also higher in the TS (17).

From the data given above, it may appear that the TS workers are less active in unions than the MS workers. Given the history of militant trade union actions of the coir workers of Alleppey and given the fact that communists have bigger hold on the workers even now, these findings appear to be rather strange.

The lower participation rate of the TS workers in trade union actions has to be seen perhaps in the light of their lower

wages. Most of them are paid at piece rates. So even their low wages are dependent on the quantum of output. And unlike most of the MS workers, the TS workers are more or less solely dependent on their wages. As noted in Chapter III, their appointments were mostly through the good offices of someone who was close to the management. This fact is likely to make them more submissive. Besides, some sort of personalised relation exists between the workers and management. Again, the TS units covered are all in the private sector and are of medium size. In such units the number of workers is not large and the consciousness of collective strength will be less.

Response to different types of trade union actions such as general strike, sympathetic strike and strike at the work place may give another indication of workers' commitment to their unions and class. Data regarding the workers' participation in such union actions are presented in Table 6.4.

Fifty nine per cent each of the respondents in both the MS and TS have reported that they 'always' participate in the strike at the work place, called by their unions. But 34 per cent in the MS and 32 per cent in the TS have admitted that they participate only "sometimes". No worker, either in the MS or TS has reported that he 'never' participates in such actions. In this respect, there is no notable difference between the workers in the two sectors.

Table - 6.4: Workers' Participation in Different Types of Strikes

Unit/Sector	Strike at work place		Sympathetic Strike		General Strike							
	Always Num- ber	Sometimes Percent- age	Always Num- ber	Sometimes Percent- age	Always Num- ber	Sometimes Percent- age						
HNL	34	75.5	11	24.4	30	66.7	15	33.3	39	86.7	6	13.3
FACT	19	42.2	20	44.4	10	22.2	29	64.4	30	66.7	9	20.0
MS	53	58.9	31	34.4	40	44.4	44	48.9	69	76.7	15	16.7
TS	53	58.9	29	32.2	29	32.2	53	58.9	48	53.3	34	37.8
Total (MS & TS)	106	58.9	60	33.3	69	38.3	97	53.9	117	65.0	49	27.2

Source: Survey data.

Regarding sympathetic strikes 44 per cent of our sample in the MS and 32 per cent in the TS have reported that they 'always' participate. The proportion of those who participate 'sometimes' is 49 per cent in the MS and 59 per cent in the TS.

About 77 per cent of the respondents in the MS and 53 per cent in the TS have reported that they always participate in general strike.¹¹ The proportion of those who participate 'sometimes' is 17 per cent in the MS and 38 per cent in the TS.

A close look at the data shows that the proportion of those who 'always' participate in strike at the work place is the same in both the MS and TS. But in the other two forms of union action viz. sympathetic strike and general strike, participants are more among the MS workers. As regards participation in different forms of strikes, it is the highest for general strikes followed by strikes at work place among the MS workers. Sympathetic strikes attract the lowest participation of both the MS and TS workers. Between general strikes and strikes at work place, participation of the TS workers, is lower in general strikes.

11. General Strikes are mostly called by political parties. Often they are called as part of a Bandh. On such days, transport net work, supply of electricity etc. are completely paralysed. Hence even those who are willing to work may not be able to do so. This may be one of the reasons for the high participation rate in general strike.

In the NS itself there is remarkable difference in this respect between the respondents in HNL and FACT. Respondents in FACT are not as fervent as those in HNL in participation in trade union action. Here, it is to be remembered that it is the workers in FACT who have expressed greater satisfaction about the working conditions like wages, Provident Fund, bonus and other facilities such as housing, medical care, education and canteen. Perhaps, it means that those who are more contented will be less active in union matters. When the workers who are more contented do not take part in the strikes at the work place, it is understandable. But when their participation is lower in sympathetic strikes and general strikes, it indicates something of greater significance. Such a phenomenon raises larger questions like class consciousness and class solidarity of workers. For, sympathetic strikes are often held as a token of sympathy with workers in other units facing some serious problems. General strikes are also called on larger economic and political issues. So lower participation in such strikes can be taken as an indicator of weakening class consciousness.¹² But this observation need not be wholly correct in explaining the behaviour of our sample of workers. As noted earlier, the reason for the low participation rate of the TS worker in sympathetic and general strike may be economic.

12. According to Wilensky, as American workers have grown richer, the spontaneous protest movements of yesterday have given way to the 'business unions' of today. See Wilensky, Harold, L., Op.cit., p. 15.

These low paid workers, many of who are paid at piece rates, may not be able to afford to lose their wages for matters which are only distantly connected to them. This may be a situation where the poor financial position of the TS worker prevents him from standing up for the cause of his class. Thus the cause for the lack of class solidarity may not be the same for the relatively affluent FACT workers and the low paid TS workers. Class solidarity seems to be often diluted by affluence in the case of the MS workers and poverty in the case of the TS workers.

We have also sought to find out whether they participate in trade union actions voluntarily or not. Their response is given in Table 6.5. Majority of respondents (50) in the MS

Table - 6.5: Nature of Factors Prompting Participation in Trade Union Actions

Unit/ Sector	Voluntary	Forced	Obeying union decision	No answer
MS	50	5	24	7
TS	56	6	4	12
Total	106	11	28	19

Source: Survey data.

and (56) in the TS has said that they join trade union actions voluntarily. But a minority ie. 5 workers in the MS and 6 in the TS has said that they are forced to join such actions. There is another category who feels it obligatory to take part in trade union actions when asked by their union to do so. In other words, they strike work, whether they like it or not, if their union demands. Twenty four MS workers and 4 TS workers belong to this category. The large number, though in minority, of those belonging to the last two categories do reveal a degree of passivity in trade union actions among workers.

In Kerala, the trade unions organized in factories are, in most cases affiliated to some political parties. But there are a few 'independent' unions also. Though independent unions are not directly affiliated to political parties, some of the leaders of such unions are found to be associated with one political party or other. But the different office bearers may have connections with different political parties. Such unions are able to attract members having different political leanings. Table 6.6 gives the political affiliations of unions in which our sample of workers are members.

In our sample, not a single respondent belongs to unions affiliated to Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Janata Dal, Kerala Congress or Muslim League. There are two workers in HNL belonging to BJP's trade union namely BMS and one worker belonging to Congress (I) union. All others belong to either Congress(I)

Table - 6.6: Political Affiliation of Unions

Unit/Sector	(Number of workers)					
	Cong. (I)	CPI (M)	CPI	Other parties	Independent unions	Total
HNL	12	19	3	3	6	43
FACT	16	0	3	0	24	43
Total MS	28	19	6	3	30	86
Total TS	21	19	32	0	6	78
Total MS & TS	49	38	38	3	36	164

Source: Survey data.

unions or Communist unions. Altogether, there are 49 workers belonging to Congress(I) unions of which 28 are in the MS and 21 in the TS. It means that 57 per cent of the Congress (I) unionists are in the MS and only the remaining 43 per cent belong to the TS. Thirty eight workers belong to unions affiliated to CPI(M) of which 19 are in the MS. All these 19 respondents are found in HNL. CITU (trade union wing of CPI (M)) has not got a unit in FACT so far.¹³ There are 38 respondents belonging to AITUC affiliated to CPI of which 32 are in the coir factories(TS). In other words, 84.2 per cent of CPI union members are found in the coir factories. From this, it appears that coir factories are strong holds of CPI union. Our finding that the CPI unions dominate the coir sector is not in conformity with an earlier study¹⁴ which showed that 69.2 per cent of workers in the coir factories of Alleppey belonged to CITU, 16.4 per cent belonged to AITUC and 13.6 per cent belonged to INTUC. Ramachandra Raj had found that AITUC and INTUC unions "derive active support from the management and the government".¹⁵ This may be one of

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13. There are five unions in FACT, recognised by the management. Three of them are general unions and two, category unions. One of the General Unions, viz. FACT Employees Association is an independent union, not affiliated to any political party. Our enquiry, particularly in the context of the absence of a CITU unit there, has revealed that most of the leaders of this union are connected with the CPI (M). All the Marxist sympathisers among workers are found in this union. The figures of affiliation of workers to the CPI(M) unions may thus be understating the position.
 14. Ramachandra Raj's study of the coir factory workers (1980) had shown the strength of trade unions in coir factories in the order of CITU, AITUC and INTUC.
 15. Ramachandra Raj, G., Industrial Conflict, Light & Life, Publishers, New Delhi, 1980.
Ibid., p. 60.

the reasons for the growth of these unions, over time.

Taking all factories together, Congress (I) unions have the largest following and CPI (M) and CPI unions come next with equal patronage of workers. But if we take the two communist unions together, their combined membership is 76 in our sample. A notable feature is that CPI is mainly confined to the coir sector. The Congress (I) union is fairly well represented in all units. CPI (M) unions have equal strength in the MS and TS, but as mentioned earlier, CPI (M) does not have a union in FACT. As noted earlier, the interests of the CPI (M) supporters in the FACT are protected by the independent union. These independent unions are found mainly in the MS. The FACT Employees Association - an independent union is fairly strong in FACT. workers, irrespective of their affiliation to different political parties, join this. In addition to general unions, there are two category unions - FACT Workers' Union and FACT Engineering Workers Association. Both these category unions are led by Congress (I) leaders. But as these unions are pledged to protect the interests of certain categories of workers, such workers irrespective of party affiliations join them.

All those workers who have joined trade unions affiliated to political parties do not think that affiliation of unions to political parties is desirable. Their opinions in this regard are given in Table 6.7. Though nearly two thirds of the MS workers in our sample are members of unions affiliated to political parties, only 41 workers (45.5 per cent) favour the

Table - 6.7: Desirability of Union Affiliation with Political Parties - Workers' Views

Units/ Sectors	Number of Workers			Total
	Desirable	Not desirable	No opinion	
HNL	25 (55.5)	20 (44.5)	0 (0)	45 (100)
FACT	16 (35.6)	26 (57.8)	3 (6.6)	45 (100)
Total MS	41 (45.6)	46 (51.1)	3 (3.3)	90 (100)
Total TS	54 (60.0)	30 (33.4)	6 (6.6)	90 (100)
Total MS & TS	95 (52.8)	76 (42.2)	9 (5.0)	180 (100)

Figures in brackets represent percentages.

Source: Survey data.

affiliation of unions with political parties. In the TS, 54 workers (60 per cent) favour unions' political affiliation, though seventy members are members of unions affiliated to political parties. Put it differently, out of those who favour unions' political affiliation, 57 per cent belong to the TS and only 43 per cent belong to the MS. It appears that more TS workers believe that only political influence can help them. Within the MS itself, there is considerable difference in the views of workers in the two units. While 56 per cent of our sample in HNL favour affiliation of unions with political

parties, only 36 per cent in FACT do so. The long tradition of the existence of independent unions in FACT seems to have tilted their views on political affiliation of trade unions.

Important issues like multiplicity of unions and union leadership by workers themselves, are being debated at several levels. Opinion of our respondents on these issues are discussed below:

Attitude Towards Multiplicity of Unions

Multiplicity of unions is alleged to be one of the causes for industrial unrest in several organizations. Units surveyed by us also have a large number of unions. Against this background, it is interesting to note that only 5 out of the entire sample of 180 workers favour multiplicity of unions in an establishment. Obviously, this is a phenomenon which the workers themselves do not want, but imposed upon them by external forces and they are only hapless victims.

Both the MS and TS workers would like to see one of their co-workers rising to trade union leadership. Eighty four per cent of the workers, irrespective of the sector to which they belong prefer worker-members to become their leaders. This is the ideal situation for which they aspire. The desire shown by our sample of workers to see their work mates in positions of trade union leadership is in contrast to the finding

of the Trivandrum study.¹⁶ That study had revealed that 50 per cent of the workers supported outside leadership. The reason for this difference in attitude may be that in many of the small units covered in that study, the workers need outside leaders as counterweights to the management.

On the question of dispute settlement, the general view in both sectors is that the unions and management should directly negotiate for bringing about settlements. Ninety two per cent of the MS workers and 69 per cent of the TS workers prefer bipartite settlement to State intervention. Thirty per cent of the TS workers want settlement through State intervention, because they believe that the agreement will be better adhered to, if the Government becomes a party to the settlement.

Moving from Union to Union

There is a growing feeling among trade union leaders and political parties that workers no longer have permanent loyalties to their unions. But change of unions is not very common. This is brought out in Table 6.8.

Fifty nine MS respondents (66 per cent) and 54 TS respondents (60 per cent) have never changed their unions. But 28 workers in the MS (27 per cent) and 35 (37 per cent) in the TS have changed their unions at one time or other. Twenty four MS

16. See Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

Table - 6.8: Number of Workers Changing Unions

Sector	Never	Once	Twice	Thrice	Not applicable	Total
MS	59 (65.6)	24 (26.7)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)	90 (100)
TS	54 (60.0)	33 (36.7)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.1)	90 (100)
Total MS & TS	113 (62.8)	57 (31.7)	4 (2.2)	2 (1.1)	4 (2.2)	180 (100)

Figures in brackets represent percentages to total

Source: Survey data.

respondents and 33 TS respondents have changed their unions once. Three workers in the MS and one worker in the TS have changed their unions twice. One each in the MS and TS has changed union thrice and nobody has changed union more than thrice.

We have made an attempt to find out the reasons for workers shifting from one union to another. Most of the workers have given the reason as dissatisfaction with leadership. Twenty two workers in the MS and 32 in the TS have given this reason for changing the union.

As noted earlier, most of the workers in our sample who have changed their union give the reason for changing the union as dissatisfaction with trade union leadership. Table 6.9 shows that dissatisfaction with trade union leadership is the major cause of union changes. Dissatisfaction with the party to which

Table - 6.9: The Major Reasons for Changing Unions

Sector	Number of workers who have changed union	Number of workers giving 'dissatisfaction with leadership' as the cause
MS	28	22(78.6)
TS	35	32(91.4)
MS & TS	63	54(85.7)

Figures in brackets indicate percentages to total
Source: Survey data.

union has been affiliated is the reason for only 4 respondents in the MS and 3 respondents in the TS.

Union Performance

An attempt has been made to assess how the unionised workers rate the performance of their unions. The views of 3 workers (MS 1 & TS 2) who had no membership at the time of interview were also taken into account. Technically, they were not members then, since they had not renewed membership by paying the subscription. In spite of that technicality, they have volunteered to give their views on the basis of their past association. Table 6.10 presents the picture of the workers' assessment of the performance of their unions. Only 22 per cent of the whole sample have said that their unions perform very well. Fifty one per cent have said that their unions perform reasonably well. Twenty three per cent of the respondents have reported that the performance is 'not too well', while three per cent have reported that the performance is poor. It means that a majority of respondents are generally satisfied about the union performance. Though a majority of the TS workers are also generally satisfied, the degree of dissatisfaction is higher in the case of the TS workers.

The widespread dissatisfaction with trade union leadership is not confined to workers who have changed their unions. This is brought out in Table 6.11 which gives the workers' views on trade union leadership. As many as seventy five per cent of

Table - 6.10: Rating of Union Performance

Sector	Very well Number age	Reasonably well Number age	Not too well Number age	Poorly Number age	Total
MS	19 21.8	51 58.7	16 18.4	1 1.1	87
TS	18 22.5	35 43.7	23 28.8	4 5.0	80
MS & TS	37 22.1	86 51.5	39 23.4	5 3.0	167

Source: Survey data.

Table - 6.11: Workers' Opinion on the Honesty and Integrity of Trade Union Leaders

Unit/ Sector	Trade union leaders are hon- est	Percent- age	Trade union leaders are not hon- est	Percent- age	Don't know	Percent- age	Total
HNL	12	26.7	32	71.1	1	2.2	45(100)
FACT	9	20.0	34	75.6	2	4.4	45(100)
Total MS	21	23.3	66	73.4	3	3.3	90(100)
Total TS	20	22.2	68	75.6	2	2.2	90(100)
Total MS & TS	41	22.7	134	74.5	5	2.8	180(100)

Source: Survey data.

the respondents have said that trade union leaders have no honesty and integrity. Remarkable similarity is observed in the views expressed by the workers belonging to different units and to the two different sectors. The workers' stricture on their leaders transcends all union and party barriers. Whichever be their union, an overwhelming majority of workers believe that the trade union

leaders have no honesty and integrity.¹⁷ Despite widespread dissatisfaction about union leadership, it is really surprising that workers generally stick on to their unions. It is quite possible that they stick on to their unions as they do not have much of a choice. Out of the 28 workers in the MS who have changed their union at some time or other, 20 have stated that trade union leaders have no honesty and integrity. Same is the case with 30 respondents (out of 35) in the TS who have changed their union. Whenever a grievance is felt, it is the trade union leaders who are first approached by the workers. So it is natural that workers do not like to continue in a union, the leaders of which have no reputation for fairness and integrity. In the opinion of the workers, many trade union leaders have become mere 'careerists'. This trend does not augur well for the trade union movement in the state.

A large number of workers today think that the leaders of unions do not take decisions in the best interest of the workers. The workers' opinions in this regard are given in Table 6.12. Fifty one per cent of the MS workers and 63 per cent of the TS workers in our sample have been of the opinion that union decisions are not always taken in the best interest of workers.

To another question as to what extent the leaders consider their personal gain rather than the interest of the workers while taking decisions on behalf of the union, seventy three per cent of the workers in the whole sample have replied that sometimes

17. During our conversation with workers, many of them brought to light certain corrupt practices of union leaders.

Table - 6.12: Whether Trade Union Decisions are Taken in the Best Interest of workers

Sector	Yes	No	No. of respondents	
			Don't know	Total
MS	44 (48.8)	46 (51.2)	0 (0)	90 (100)
TS	32 (35.6)	57 (63.3)	1 (1.1)	90 (100)
Total MS & TS	76 (42.2)	103 (57.2)	1 (0.6)	180 (100)

Figures in brackets represent percentages to total.

Source: Survey data.

in the decision making, trade union leaders consider their personal gain, rather than the interest of the workers. Here, personal gain can be in different forms. Direct monetary gain is only one of them. If appointments are given by the management on their recommendation, that can become a source of indirect gain to them. Anyhow, in such cases workers' interest becomes the first casualty. The worker's opinions in this regard, too cut across the boundaries of unions and their political affiliation. There is not much difference between the TS and MS workers in this regard.

Seventy four per cent of the workers in the entire sample are of the view that some of the strikes to which they are drawn are called just to suit the convenience of their political masters/party. Regarding these opinions expressed, again there is not much difference between the MS and TS workers.

The views expressed by the majority of workers about the integrity of the trade union leaders and the questionable motives of their actions deserve serious consideration. No wonder, most of the workers have admitted, they have joined a union thinking it better to be a member of a union rather than being nowhere. They do not expect much benefit from any union. All that they want is not to be left alone.

CHAPTER VII

SOCIAL RELATIONS, ASPIRATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

In this chapter, we propose to discuss a few selected aspects of workers' lives like their pattern of residence, social relationships, expectations, aspirations, attitudes and political involvement. A discussion on these aspects is expected to throw some light on the embourgeoisement trends, if any, among workers in our sample.

Area of Residence

Area of residence gives an idea about the reference groups with whom social interactions are made by the residents concerned. Life style, habits, customs, consciousness, aspirations - all are likely to be influenced to some extent by the place of residence. In other parts of India, where the labour force comes from distant areas in the state or from other states, workers gravitate towards certain areas which can be clearly identified as working class localities. Again, as noted earlier in Chapter I, in other developed countries, the workers tend to move to the suburbs as they become more affluent. In this respect they are trying to emulate the middle class. In Kerala, it is difficult to locate clearly both these tendencies as there are not many clearly demarcatable working

class localities or middle class neighbourhoods.

Table 7.1 gives the respondents' own opinion about the type of localities, where they reside.

Table - 7.1: Workers' Opinion About Their Area of Residence

(Number of workers)

	Factory township	Working Class neighbourhood	Middle Class neighbourhood	Mixed area	Total
MS	33	10	10	37	90
TS	0	38	2	50	90
Total (MS & TS)	33	48	12	87	180

Source: Survey data.

In the opinion of our respondents, only 38 out of the 90 workers in the TS live in what they consider a working

class neighbourhood. But the majority of our TS respondents live in mixed areas, where they get opportunities for social interaction with all groups in the society. Only two live in middle class localities. As for the MS workers, thirty three live in factory quarters. Ten each live in working class and middle class neighbourhoods. The largest single number (37) live in mixed areas. As quarters for officers, supervisors, and different categories of workers are provided in the same township, those who live in the quarters can also be considered as living in mixed areas. Thus, only 11 per cent of the MS workers are found to be living in working class neighbourhoods. This analysis as seen earlier is subject to limitations arising from the settlement pattern in Kerala. In Kerala, unlike elsewhere in India, there are few industrial cities or towns.

Of the two MS units, FACT is located in an industrial area. But only recently, the area was declared a municipal area. The other unit, HNL is located in a rural area. The area where the TS units are located, no doubt, is a municipal area. But except for a few coir factories whose number and size are shrinking, there are not many industries located there. The town, which was once a flourishing Port town, is today only a District head quarter town. The above peculiarities of the location of our industrial units need to be understood for appreciating better the settlement pattern of workers in our sample. Unlike workers in other states, all the

workers in the TS and a majority of the workers even in the MS belong to the same or nearby areas where their factories are located.

As seen in Chapter II, 64 per cent of the MS workers belong to the two districts where the MS factories are located. If the two neighbouring districts are also considered, it can be found that 78 per cent of the MS workers are more or less local. In the MS, only one worker lives in a rented house. Fifty six workers live in their own houses (including family house) and 33 in factory quarters. Not all the MS workers who are allotted factory quarters live there. Six respondents, though allotted factory quarters live there. Six respondents, though allotted quarters, stay there only occasionally or use the quarters only as a resting place. They prefer to commute for work from their native place. Of the remaining workers, six who belong to distant places have built their own houses near the factory. In the case of 32 workers, they live in their native places which are near the factory. Eighteen workers who belong to distant places prefer to live in their own houses in their native places and commute every day for work. The excellent transportation system in the state has facilitated this pattern of settlement away from the factories. An analysis of the time taken to reach the factory from their places of residence indicate both the proximity of the workers' place of residence and the transportation facilities available. A TS worker takes only 20 minutes on an average, to reach the factory. He travels mostly on his bicycle. The average time taken by a MS

workers (50 per cent) reach the factory in less than 15 minutes. Another 14 workers take between 30 - 60 minutes. Thus, 75 MS workers of the sample (83 per cent) have to take only less than an hour to reach the factory. Only fifteen workers (17 per cent) take more than an hour for travel. Thus, travel for work does not seem to be a difficult task in the Kerala workers' daily routine.

Several other factors also contribute to this situation. As noted earlier, only one worker lives in a rented house. Majority of workers live in their own houses or their ancestral houses in their native places. Thus, living away from the factory sites enables them to save rents. Again we have seen in Chapter II that a good number of our MS respondents have a farming background. By staying in their native place, the workers can look after their agricultural land. Even the non-agricultural households in the state may have some land around their houses. They can raise some crops or vegetables from the plot, though the agricultural income may not be very high. In addition, in the plot around their houses, they can rear one or two cows and a few hens. The more important factor is the social security feeling obtained. Besides, even in the villages of Kerala, infrastructures for education, health care, travel, communication etc. - are fairly well developed.¹ Under these

1. Regarding availability of basic infrastructural facilities within a minimum distance, the State of Kerala is far ahead of all other states. Kerala tops in 17 out of the 22 facilities taken into account.
See Oommen, M.A., 1990, Op.cit.
See also Cochin Stock Exchange, (unpublished), Monograph, p. 17.

circumstances, it is natural that most of the workers live in their native place, if possible, and travel everyday to the factory. This particular residential pattern of industrial workers has influenced the profile of workers in many ways. This has prevented the evolution of a typical working class ethos, culture and consciousness. The industrial workers of Kerala are exposed to a wide variety of social contacts and influences. Outside their working place and outside their working hours, they identify themselves more as part of their native society with all its heterogeneity than as part of an homogeneous industrial working class.

Frequency of Visit to Native Place

The Kerala worker, even when he stays away from his native place, is not one who has severed all connections with his people. Twenty five out of the 36 respondents who live away from their native place make frequent visits (monthly) and 4 respondents make periodical visits (at least once in 6 months). Only 7 respondents have reported of rare visits i.e. annual or biannual, of the seven, 3 belong to states other than Kerala. It is also found that 29 out of 36 workers spend their leave period for visiting their native places. The small size of the state and the excellent transportation facilities make the continuance of links possible.

Children are also brought up in such a way as to maintain good connection with the family in their native places.

Out of the 36 respondents residing away from their native places, only 27 have children. Eleven have reported that they take their children regularly to the native place. Eight have said that children are taken occasionally to their native place. Only 8 respondents have said that children are taken rarely to their native place.

Out of the 36 MS workers who live away from their native places, about twenty two per cent have not yet decided as to what to do after retirement. Another 22 per cent have decided to settle down in their place of work. But most of them (56 per cent) have expressed their desire to go back to their native place after retirement. This data also confirms the inference that the Kerala worker still maintains his links with his native society.

Social Contacts

The residential pattern of workers noted above and the links they retain with their native society have enabled them to have wider social contacts, with people from all strata of society. Most of the respondents in the sample (MS 66.6 per cent and TS 73.3 per cent) have reported that they have social contacts with people of higher status. It is in their native place that such contacts generally develop. The contacts of those who live in their native place are not very much restricted by their occupational status. In spite of the differences in

occupation, income or education, the people of a particular place will have opportunities to come together and work together. Matters of common interest like local needs, religion or political parties may bring them closer.

Children's Friends

The pattern of children's friendship too shows that income or social differences do not stand in the way of their finding friends of their choice. No doubt, 50 per cent of the MS respondents and 49 per cent of the TS respondents have said that their children's friends belong to the same social stratum as theirs. But 42 per cent of respondents in the MS and 36 per cent in the TS have said that their children have friends from all strata - higher, lower and the same. In the TS, more respondents (13 per cent) have reported that their children have friends belonging to higher stratum. But only 4 per cent of the MS respondents have said that their children have friends from higher stratum. This may be because, at least some of the MS workers belong to the highest stratum in their village societies.

Caste and Occupation of Close Friends

Though workers have wide social contacts, their close friendship is restricted largely to their work mates. This is revealed in Table 7.2. Close friends of the sample of workers in both the MS and TS, particularly in the MS, are mostly factory

Table - 7.2: Occupation of Close Friends

(Number of Friends)

Occupation	MS	Percentage to total	TS	Percentage to total
Factory worker	153	60.9	137	51.5
White collar employees	39	15.5	34	12.8
Self-employed	20	7.9	44	16.5
Merchants	17	6.7	8	3.0
Agricultural Labourer	2	0.7	16	6.0
Casual Labourer	0	0	15	5.6
Farmer	9	3.5	0	0
Professional	6	2.4	0	0
Teacher	2	0.8	0	0
Student	2	0.8	0	0
Unemployed	1	0.4	12	4.5
Total	251	99.6	266	99.9

Source: Survey data.

workers. Sixty one per cent of friends in the case of the MS workers and 51 per cent in the case of the TS workers are factory workers. Next in importance are the white collar employees and the self employed. In the MS about 15 per cent

of friends are white-collar employees as against 13 per cent in the case of the TS workers. But in the TS, next to factory workers, the largest proportion of friends (16 per cent) belong to self employed category (eg. plumber, electrician, painter). The MS respondents have a larger proportion of friends than the TS workers from walks of life like merchants, farmers, professionals, students and teachers. In the case of the TS workers, about 12 per cent of their friends are from the category of agricultural and casual labour and five per cent from the unemployed. While they have some friends from the category of traders, they do not have any friends among farmers, teachers, students and professionals. The MS workers, on the other hand, have no friends among the casual labourers. Their friends among the agricultural labourers and the unemployed are also very few. On the whole the MS workers have more connections with the socially and economically better off people. The difference noticed here may be due to the superior socio-economic background of the MS workers and or due to their present relative affluence. Intentionally or unintentionally, some social distance is being maintained by them with the weaker sections of the working class. As in the case of occupational status of friends, the caste/community status of friends also shows that workers have got more friends among their own communities/castes. Our respondents have been asked to mention the castes and communities of three of their close friends. Most of the workers have friends from

all castes. But friends from the same caste out-number friends from other castes. In the case of the three major communities, the ratio of workers to friends of the same community is given in Table 7.3.

Table - 7.3: Ratio of Workers to the Friends of the Same Community

Caste/Community	MS	TS	Total
Nair	1.33	1.57	1.37
Ezhava	1.00	1.83	1.64
Christian	1.92	1.81	1.86

Source: Survey data

The Table shows that social contacts are more restricted to their own community and castes in the case of the Nair and Ezhava workers in the TS. But in the MS, it is the Christian workers who show greater tendency to develop friendship with members of the same community. The data show that the workers, by and large, have not been able to break their castes' barriers, at least in the matter of their friendship.

Expectation about Children's Careers and Education

According to Goldthorpe, high expectation regarding children's future is one of the middle class perspectives. According to him, the middle class has higher future orientation. Hobsbawm also regards high career expectations regarding children, as one of the indicators of labour embourgeoisement tendency. Expectations of our sample of workers about their children's careers are given in Table 7.4.

Table - 7.4 Type of Job Preferred for Children - by
Number of Workers-Sector-wise

Sector	Any job	Factory work	Office/white collar work	Professional/Executive	Trade/Business	No. Idea
MS	10	14	9	28	0	7
TS	4	5	47	1	1	4

Source: Survey data.

The Table, shows clearly that the expectations of our workers in both the TS and MS for their children are quite high. Quite a large number of them would like to see their children take up

white collar employment. In the MS, the career expectations are still higher. A large number would like their children to be professionals or executives.

Their career expectations are reflected in their expectations on children's education. A good portion of the family budget is spent on their children's education. Our survey shows that 5.5 per cent of the monthly budget in a MS household and 4.5 per cent of the monthly budget in a TS household are set apart for this purpose. However, the actual amount spent on this item in a TS household is only half of that in a MS household. Expectations of workers on their children's education are given in Table 7.5.

Sixty workers in the MS and 62 in the TS have indicated their expectations about children's education. Twenty one MS workers want their children to study in a college. Three want their children to study upto post graduate level. Twenty seven MS workers want their children to pursue some job-oriented course in an Industrial Training Institute, or a Poly-technic or a professional college. Nine workers have no idea yet about it. In the TS, only nine workers want their children to stop their education with S.S.L.C. Forty two respondents want their children to get college education. Of them, one aims at the post graduate level. But only 9 TS respondents prefer job-oriented courses for children. (I.T.I./Polytechnic 8, Professional 1). Two workers have no idea yet.

Table - 7.5: Expectation about Children's Education - by Number of Workers - Sector-wise

Sector	S.S.L.C.	Pre-Degree B.A./B.Sc.	I.T.I/Poly- technic	Post- graduate	Profess- ional	Others	No.idea	Total
MS	0 (26)	21 (13)	13 (28)	3 (1)	14 (1)	0	9	60
TL	9 (31)	41 (1)	8 (1)	1 (0)	1	0	2	62

Respondents' education given in brackets.

Source: Survey data.

One important feature which is observed is that in the MS and in the TS, the respondents want their children to get much higher education than what they themselves could get. The TS workers seem to consider college education as covetable for their children, but the MS workers are more aware of the job market and so they prefer job-oriented courses.

In literacy and universality of education, Kerala is in the forefront of the rest of India. Besides, Kerala is one of the very few states in India which still gives much importance to English education. Of late, many English medium schools have sprung up in the state, most of them in the private sector. The high patronage, which these schools enjoy among the middle class, indicates the people's general preference for English medium schools, though education is free in the Malayalam medium (Government owned and Aided) schools upto the Matriculation stage. The English medium schools are fairly expensive. The preference for English medium schools, despite these cost factors, seems to be linked to the acute unemployment problem and the state's position as an exporter of educated manpower. Against this background, an examination of our respondents' preference for medium of children's education is attempted here.

In the TS, there are 53 school going children, of which 50 are in Malayalam medium schools (aided or owned by Government). Only 3 children study in English medium schools. As against, 20 children of the MS workers (37 per cent) study in English medium schools.

It is true that a majority of children in the MS and TS study in Malayalam medium schools. But the proportion of the children of the MS workers found in English medium schools is not small. This may give some indication of the higher aspirations of the MS workers regarding their children's education and careers. Fulfilment of this aspiration is facilitated by the availability of English medium schools run by the two public sector units.

There are other indications of the future orientation of our workers. The difference between the TS and MS in this regard arises largely because of the difference in economic status. Most of the workers save mainly for their children's sake. In the MS, most of the workers give special food to their children. Forty per cent of the MS workers subscribe to children's magazines in English and 31 per cent to children's magazines in Malayalam. Even in the TS, 13 per cent subscribe to children's magazines in Malayalam.

Our sample of workers hold very progressive views on gender equality among children. Workers in both the MS and TS have said that in the matter of food, health and education they give equal treatment to male and female children. The question about the type of treatment given to male and female children has been asked only to those workers who have both sons and daughters. Such workers number 36 each in the MS and TS. Thirty four respondents each in the MS and TS have answered that they

give equal treatment to male and female children. Thus it is found that 94.4 per cent of respondents in the MS and TS treat their male and female children in the same way and in this respect no difference is found between the MS and TS.

The matriarchal system in which lineage and property were handed through the female was widely followed in Kerala till recently. This system ensured high status for women. The equal status enjoyed by girls in the families we studied is only natural in such a background. It may be noted that the gap between male and female literacy is comparatively small in Kerala and over the years the difference has been declining further. In 1971, literacy rate for males was 66.4 and for females 54.3. These rates increased to 75.3 and 65.7 respectively by 1981, showing a narrowing of the difference.²

Subscription to Newspapers and Journals

Going by the data on subscription to newspapers, Kerala worker is quite inquisitive to know what is taking place around. This is understandable in view of the high level of literacy found in the case of the Kerala workers as well as the Kerala population as a whole.

In the MS, 75 workers (83 per cent) subscribe to Malayalam dailies, 10 per cent to English dailies, 64 per cent to Malayalam weeklies, 9 per cent to English weeklies, 31 per cent to children's magazines in Malayalam and 40 per cent to children's magazines in English.

2. See Census of India Reports, 1981.

In the TS, nobody subscribes to English dailies or magazine. But 50 per cent buy Malayalam dailies, 32 per cent weeklies, and 13 per cent children's magazines. Financial constraint must be the reason why one half of the TS respondents do not buy news papers. Many respondents have reported that they read or borrow periodicals from libraries or clubs.

Signs of Moderation

According to Wilensky, "in the Marxian view, a man is said to be class conscious when he is rationally aware of his own class interests and identifies with them and is aware of other class interests and rejects them as illegitimate."³ It appears that the Kerala workers are prepared to accommodate the interests of the managements. To the question asked whether a union should consider the firm's economic position also while pressing for a wage increase, eighty five MS workers (94.4 per cent) and 77 TS workers (85.5 per cent) have replied that the firm's economic position also should be taken into account. Only 18 workers (MS-5, TS-13) are of the view that, the workers need not bother about the firm's economic position; but their benefit alone need be their concern. The MS workers appear to be more reasonable in this respect.

There are other indicators of the Kerala workers' moderation. The Kerala industrial worker does not agree with the view

3. Wilensky, Op.cit., p. 15.

that the entire profit should go to the workers and not to the capitalists. Ninety one per cent of the MS workers and 96 per cent of the TS workers do not believe that the entire profit is due to them. It shows that class enmity has not grown to the extent of workers denouncing the role of the capitalists and denying to them their share.

A lot has been made out of the alleged militancy of the Kerala worker. But the answers which we have got to a question about the justifiability of violence in strikes present a different picture. Eighty two per cent of the MS workers and 94 per cent of the TS workers have said that violence can never be justified in a strike. Only 18 per cent of the MS workers and four per cent of the TS workers have said that violence can be justified in a strike. Even those who have justified violence do not do so outright. They have only said that the protracted course of a strike may precipitate situations in which, sometimes violence may naturally sprout. The Trivandrum study also had revealed that only 10.8 per cent of workers justify violence in a strike. The proportion justifying violence in our sample in fact is lower than the proportion of workers in Pune (25.6 per cent) who, are of opinion that violence can be justified.

Worker Participation in Management

It is not only that the Kerala worker is less militant. He is prepared to participate or 'collaborate' with the management. The concept of worker participation in management is not known

to our respondents though in none of the units surveyed, the scheme has been introduced yet. Only 4 workers in the TS and 1 worker in the MS have said that they have no idea about worker participation in management. This is in contrast with the workers in Tata Iron and Steel Company, Jamshedpur, where worker participation schemes are introduced. It is said that "most workers do not have even the faintest idea as to how these Joint Departmental Councils and other bodies work, what issues are discussed, and what is decided in them".⁴ Eighty six workers in the MS (95.5 per cent) and 68 in the TS (75.5 per cent) welcome worker participation at the plant level. But only a lower percentage of workers (91.1 per cent in the MS and 54.4 per cent in the TS) want worker participation at the Board level.

The reason for the difference in response may be that the better educated worker in the MS feels that there are competent people among them who can protect their interests, if sent to the board or plant level committees. Most of the coir factory workers with lower educational qualifications may have doubts about their own competence to grasp the problems of management. The idea of sitting on the Board of Directors and dealing on equal terms with the Directors may be beyond their comprehension or aspiration. Some workers have even said that even if the workers' representatives are taken to the Board, they will not be able to do much for the workers.

4. Kuriakose Mamkoottam, Trade Unionism: Myth and Reality, Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1982, p. 82.

Caste Consciousness

When class consciousness increases, caste consciousness is bound to come down. Thomas Isaac, has found that caste consciousness has come down among the coir workers of Alleppey. Our own findings go to confirm this. To find out how much caste conscious the workers are, we have asked an indirect question about their opinion on caste based reservation policy. Sixty seven per cent of the MS workers do not want reservation of jobs on the basis of caste. Seventy eight per cent of the TS respondents also take a stand against caste-based job reservation. For reasons which are understandable, seventy five per cent of Nair respondents and 83 per cent of Christian respondents are against caste-based reservations. Though Ezhavas and Muslims are treated as backward communities, 66 per cent and 56 per cent respectively of the respondents belonging to those communities have also expressed their opinion against caste-based reservation. It is surprising that while 50 per cent of Ezhavas in the MS have said that they are against reservation of job on the basis of caste, the corresponding proportion in the TS is much higher (70 per cent). It is possible that the communist-led unions which are prominent in the coir sector have helped them to rise above caste consciousness.

In Kerala, it may be remembered that the caste based organisations of forward communities like the Nairs and the

5. See Thomas Issac, T.M., 1985, Op.cit.

backward communities like the Ezhavas are divided on the question of communal reservation. Their approach to the Mandal Commission⁶ report for instance, differ substantially. It seems that the exhortations of the community leadership on this issue have not made much impact on the workers, especially the poorer sections among them.

Reservation for Relatives

The question of job reservation in the factories, for workers' relatives is a hotly debated one. Often trade unions have demanded this privilege as a matter of right. In the words of Uma Ramaswamy.⁷ "Getting a job has become so difficult that the workers have used their bargaining strength to demand that their children be given priority in the matter of recruitment". "Preference to the children of retired and retiring workers was raised as a major demand at the time of the general strike in 1972 (in Coimbatore). The demand was conceded in that the employers agreed that this would be an important consideration in recruitment".⁸

On the issue of job reservation for workers' relatives, the views expressed by the TS and MS workers are sharply divided.

6. B.P. Mandal Commission appointed by the Government of India in 1978, recommended that caste, not economic status (poverty) should be the criterion of backwardness for purposes of job reservation. The commission further recommended that 50 per cent of jobs should be reserved for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward communities.

7. See Ramaswamy, Uma, Op.cit., p. 16.

8. Southern India Mill Owners' Association, Award Settlements etc, Coimbatore, SIMA, 1972, p. 252. Quoted by Ramaswamy, Uma, Ibid., p. 18.

Only 46 per cent of the MS respondents want reservation for their relatives in factory employment; but 67 per cent of the TS workers make this demand. It may be noted that seventy four per cent of the industrial workers in Trivandrum had favoured ⁹ job reservation for relatives.

This is an issue having some ideological implications. If job reservation is granted for workers' relatives, that will work against the interest of the working class in general. Those who are fortunate enough to get a factory job can perpetuate this privilege through their descendants. In the long run, jobs open to outsiders will be rare in factories. It is interesting to note here that those who have shown greater class interest over caste interest continue to be guided by self-interest. The highly competitive labour market situation may be the reason for this demand. The difference in workers' aspirations about their children would partly explain the differences between the responses of the TS workers and the MS workers in this regard. The children of the former do not get high education, though their preference is for white collar jobs. So they consider a job in the coir factory, being a regular job, as covetable. The MS workers get better opportunities to provide sound education to their children. Most of them want their children to be professionals or executives or at least white collar employees.

9. See Surendranath & Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

Consciousness

To elicit the workers' views on questions like class interest, class consciousness, class solidarity, militancy etc. several questions have been asked. Only 34 per cent of the MS sample believe that the workers are oppressed and exploited. In the TS, 47 per cent hold the same view. Thus our sample of workers, particularly the MS workers have less grievances about their position in the production relations. Even the TS workers feel less exploited compared to the workers of Trivandrum¹⁰ district. The traditional concept of an exploited working class is becoming less and less appreciated by the present day workers.¹¹ At least, they do not feel so.

Only a small proportion of the workers in Kerala share the dream that ultimately power will come into the hands of the working class. Eighty per cent of the MS workers and 54 per cent of the TS workers do not cherish any such hope. This is in spite of the fact that a good number of workers belong to unions affiliated to communist parties.

Seventy eight per cent of the MS and 84 per cent of the TS respondents are of the opinion that workers have common class¹²

10. The study of workers in Trivandrum district had revealed that 71 per cent of the workers believe that they are oppressed and exploited.

See Surendranath & Ramachandran Nair, Ibid.

11. In the words of Uma Ramaswamy, "The notion of being a subjugated dispossessed proletariat does not appeal to them" (the Coimbatore workers). Ramaswamy, Uma, Op.cit., p. 149.

12. Seventy six per cent of respondents in the Trivandrum study also held the same view. Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair

interests. In fact, 72 per cent of the MS and 68 per cent of the TS workers feel that when workers in other factories and other sectors strike work, solidarity should be expressed through token strikes. But their actual practice seems to be different from what they profess. It may be recalled that to the question regarding their participation in sympathetic strikes, only 44 per cent of respondents in the MS and 32 per cent in the TS have stated that they always participated in such strikes. Forty nine per cent of respondents in the MS and 59 per cent in the TS have reported only of occasional participation.

According to Mark Holmstrom,¹³ "the organised and un-organised sector workers do not think themselves and act as separate classes". This is true about a great majority of our MS and TS workers. Nearly two-thirds of the workers (only negligible difference is found between the MS and TS samples) do not think that workers in modern factories belong to a class different from those in the traditional factories. To the question, "Do you think that modern factory workers have more in common with NGOs and white-collar workers or traditional factory workers"?, only thirteen per cent of the MS respondents answered that they have more in common with NGOs and white-collar workers. A vast majority (71 per cent) of them see themselves as more comparable to traditional factory workers, although there is a lot of difference between them and the TS workers in income, consumption and assets etc. But the TS workers'

13. Holmstrom, Mark, Cambridge, 1984, Op.cit., p. 322.

perception is different. Fifty one per cent of them think that the MS workers belong to a group somewhat similar to the NGOs and white collar workers. Only 31 per cent of them think that the MS workers have more in common with the TS workers.

In order to understand how our respondents see themselves in relation to other groups of workers, they were further asked whether they thought that the TS factory workers have more in common with casual workers or modern factory workers. Fifty per cent of the workers in the whole sample are of the opinion that TS workers have more in common with casual labour. The same proportion of workers in the MS and TS sample-subscribe to this view. Only eighteen per cent of workers in the MS and 28 per cent in the TS believe that the TS workers have more in common with the MS workers. Twenty two per cent of respondents have said they have no idea about it. The fact that 50 per cent of workers in the MS as well as TS think that the TS workers can be better clubbed with casual labourers, suggests the existence of a cleavage in the class perception of the organised sector workers. Though the TS workers club themselves with the casual labourers, the majority of them would not like the casual labourers in their factories to be given membership in the trade unions. A larger majority in the MS also do not like casual labourers to join their unions. But both group of workers do not mind casual labourers becoming permanent workers.

There seems to be some ambiguity in the class perception of MS workers. A majority of them think that they have more

in common with traditional sector workers than NGOs and white-collar employees as noted earlier. But to a direct question as to which class they will place themselves in, 89 per cent of the MS workers have answered that they belong to middle class. Only nine per cent have placed themselves in the lower class. On the other hand, 70 per cent of the TS workers have said that they belong to the lower class.

Worker and His Politics

As seen earlier, (in Chapter I) the Kerala workers had participated in the political struggles launched in the state during the pre-independence period. Their support was crucial in the growth and electoral victory of the communist parties in the state. As one of the more organised and vocal sections of society, the Kerala workers' political involvement and participation in political activity is of special interest. It is worth mentioning in this context that many writers on Labour Aristocracy have noted that Labour Aristocrats are politically more moderate.

Membership in political parties is an important indicator of one's interest in party politics.

Going by this indicator of one's interest in party politics, only a small minority of the industrial workers (25 per cent) is found to have taken membership in political parties. If party membership can be taken as the criterion, the TS workers can be considered politically more active. The number of those in the TS having membership in parties is double than that of their counterparts in the MS. It is found that only 15 workers in the MS (16.6 per cent) are members of political parties as against 30 in the TS (33.3 per cent). Table 7.6 shows the number of workers who have taken membership in different political parties.

Table - 7.6 : Membership in Political Parties

(Number of workers)

Sector	Cong.(I)	Cong.(S)	CPI(M)	CPI	RSP	Janata Dal	BJP	Kerala Cong.	Mus- lim Lea- gue	Total
MS	9	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	1	15
TS	5	-	9	14	-	-	1	1	-	30
Total	14	-	14	14	-	-	1	1	1	45

Source: Survey data.

The three major political parties to which workers are attracted are Congress(I), CPI(M) and CPI. The number of members is the same in the Congress party and in each of the two Communist parties. Two-third of the respondents who have party membership belong to the two Communist parties. Majority in the Congress party (nine out of 14) belong to the MS. But majority of workers having membership in Communist parties (23 out of 28) are in the TS. The membership pattern indicates that in the MS, Congress party is the most influential and CPI(M) comes only next. But in the TS, CPI commands the largest membership followed by CPI(M) and Congress(I). The influence of communal and regional parties¹⁴ over the workers is negligible as indicated by their membership. There is only one member each of BJP and Kerala Congress. There is no member of Muslim League or NDP or SRP.

The degree of political consciousness cannot be measured by party membership alone. Many who have no party membership can be supporters or sympathisers of political parties. This is all the more true of Communist parties where getting membership is rather difficult. Therefore, we have sought information

14. B.J.P.: Bharateeya Janata Party is considered as a party mainly of Hindus, which allegedly stands for reviving Hindu tradition.

Muslim League: A party committed to protect the interests of the minority community of Muslims.

Kerala Congress: A State party with its base mainly among the Christians of Central Travancore.

N.D.P.: National Democratic Party which draws its support from the forward caste of Nairs.

S.R.P.: Socialist Republican party which draws support from the backward caste of Ezhavas.

about the political sympathies of workers. Fifty three MS workers (58.8 per cent) and 38 TS workers (42.2 per cent) have been found to be sympathisers of some party or other.

In the MS, Congress(I) has 23 sympathisers, but CPI(M) (19) and CPI(10) together have 29 sympathisers. In the TS, Congress(I) has only 13 sympathisers while the communist parties have 25 sympathisers. (CPI(M) 13, CPI 12). The number of workers who have not joined any party, but are sympathisers of different parties is given in Table 7.7.

Table - 7.7: Sympathisers of Political Parties

(Number)					
Sector	Cong.(I)	CPI(M)	CPI	BJP	Total
MS	23	19	10	1	53
TS	13	13	12	-	38

Source: Survey data.

To get a better grasp of the political leanings of the industrial workers, it is necessary to take into account the party members as well as sympathisers. Table 7.8 gives the party-wise distribution of political support. The Table shows

Table - 7.8 : Workers Supporting Different Political Parties

Sector	Congress (I)		CPI (M)		CPI		Total
	Members Sympathi- sers (support- ers)	Total (support- ers)	Members Sympathi- sers (support- ers)	Total (support- ers)	Members Sympathi- sers (support- ers)	Total (support- ers)	
(1)	(2)	(1+2)	1	2	1	2	(1+2)
MS	9	32(35.5)	5	19	--	10	10(11.1) 66(73.33)
IS	5	18(20.0)	9	13	14	12	26(28.8) 66(73.33)
Total	14	50(55.5)	14	32	14	22	36(40.0) 132(73.33)

Figures in brackets represent percentages.

Source: Survey data.

that in the MS, Congress(I) is the party mustering the largest support. More than 35 per cent of the MS workers are either members or sympathisers of Congress(I). Around 27 per cent of MS workers support CPI(M) while 11.1 per cent support CPI. The two Communist parties together have the support of 38 per cent of the MS sample. The communist parties, taken together, have thus a slight edge over the Congress(I), even among the MS workers.

But the influence and hold of the Communist parties is much higher in the TS. Against 20 per cent of the TS workers supporting Congress(I), 24 per cent support CPI(M) and 29 per cent support CPI. It means that, 53 per cent of the TS workers are supporters of the Communist parties.

The political consciousness of the Kerala industrial workers is evident from their voting percentage in the Assembly elections held prior to our survey. (The survey was completed before the general election to the parliament held in 1989). Ninety seven per cent of the workers (both in the MS and TS) had voted in the general election.¹⁵ But in the panchayat/municipal elections held in 1988 the voting percentage had slightly fallen in the MS, but risen in the TS. (MS 93 per cent., TS 97.7 per cent). The votes polled by our respondents are of course,

15. The poll percentage of the 1987 assembly elections held on March 23, 1987 is estimated to be 80.5.

See Government of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Press Information Bureau, Kerala Assembly Elections-1987, Trivandrum, 1987.

See also Butler, David et.al., India Decides, Elections 1952-1989, Living Media India Ltd., New Delhi, 1989.

very high. The Trivandrum study¹⁶ had brought to light that 70 per cent of workers voted in the assembly election held prior to that study. But the proportion was as high as 97 per cent in the case of our respondents. Perhaps, the political consciousness has improved over time. It can also mean that political involvement is more in the more organised sections of workers represented in our sample. The fact that a greater proportion of the TS workers support the Communist parties, is corroborated by the voting pattern also. In the last general election in Kerala (1987), the Left Democratic Front¹⁷ and the United Democratic Front¹⁸ got equal number of votes from the MS workers (44.4 per cent each). Only 3.3 per cent of the MS workers voted in favour of Independent candidates and 4.4 per cent did not like to divulge to which party did they vote. But the TS workers' support to the LDF was overwhelming. Sixty per cent of the TS workers voted in favour of the LDF while only 29 per cent voted for UDF. More than 2 per cent (2.2 per cent) voted for Independent candidates and 5.5 per cent did not reveal to whom did they vote. Voting behaviour of our sample of workers in the general election of 1987 is shown in Table 7.9

The poor performance of independent candidates and the readiness of most of the workers to declare their political

16. See Surendranath and Ramachandran Nair, Op.cit.

17. LDF: A coalition led by CPI(M) and supported by parties like CPI, RSP, Janata Dal and Congress(S).

18. UDF: A coalition led by Congress(I) and supported by Kerala Congress, NDP etc.

Table - 7.9 : Workers Voted for the Major Fronts -
General Election - 1987

(Number of workers)

Unit/ Sector	LDF	UDF	Independent	Not willing to say
HNL	25(55.6)	14(31.1)	2(4.4)	3(6.7)
FACT	15(33.3)	16(57.8)	1(2.2)	1(2.2)
MS	40(44.4)	40(44.4)	3(3.3)	4(4.4)
TS	54(60.0)	26(28.8)	2(2.2)	5(5.5)
Total MS & TS	94(52.2)	66(36.6)	5(2.8)	9(5.0)

Figures in brackets represent percentages.

Source: Survey data.

leanings are indicative of the very high political consciousness of our respondents. One welcome feature found is that caste does not play any notable part in the voting behaviour of the Kerala industrial workers. Only one worker (in the TS) has admitted that caste is also one of the considerations in his voting decisions.

Details have been collected about the voting behaviour in the latest elections to the local bodies also held in 1988. Details are given in Table 7.10.

Table - 7.10: Workers' Voting Behaviour - Election to Local Bodies - 1988

(Number of Workers)

Factory/Sector	LDF	UDF	Independ- ent	Not will- ing to say
HNL	23(51.1)	14(31.1)	4(8.9)	2(4.5)
FACT	17(37.8)	22(48.9)	1(2.2)	1(2.2)
MS	40(44.4)	36(40.0)	5(5.5)	3(3.3)
TS	55(61.1)	27(30.0)	1(1.1)	5(5.5)
Total MS & TS	95(52.7)	63(35.0)	6(3.3)	8(4.4)

Figures in bracket represent percentages.

Source: Survey data.

From the MS workers, LDF got the same number of votes as in the previous Assembly elections (44.4 per cent). But there was a decline in the votes polled by UDF (ie. 40 per cent as against 44.4 per cent in the general elections). Both LDF and UDF could get from the TS workers one more per cent of votes each in the panchayat/municipal elections -

61.1 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. To sum up, it can be said that the economically well off MS workers and the poor TS workers show remarkable consistency in their voting behaviour. A majority of TS workers supported the left parties. In the MS, the two fronts - UDF and LDF got equal support.

The study reveals that the TS workers are more left-oriented and are politically more active. This is evident from their participation in election campaigns also. As against 23 per cent of the MS workers who took part in election campaigns, the proportion of the TS workers who took part in election campaigns was 38 per cent. Information has been collected regarding the workers' criteria for casting their votes. Seventy per cent of the MS respondents and 67 per cent of the TS respondents have reported that their voting was based on the party which the candidate represented. Forty seven per cent in the MS and 32 per cent in the TS took into account the candidate's merits also. The fact that the majority of workers in both sectors vote on the basis of party is indicative of their party loyalties.

Going by the number of members and sympathisers of political parties, as also by the number canvassing in elections, the TS workers show higher political involvement. Members and sympathisers of Communist parties are more than that of the Congress(I) in both the TS and MS; but the margin of difference

between them in the MS is quite small. In fact, the Communist led Front and Congress(I) led Front have equal support from voters in the MS. In the TS, support for the Communist led Front is quite pronounced. The above findings can lead to the inference that the more affluent workers in the MS are more moderate politically. This is often cited as an indication of labour embourgeoisement.

It appears that the political activism of the workers is kept distinct from their union activism. The traditional concept of union as an agent for political change does not seem to be acceptable to our respondents. Even the Communists among them are no exception. To most of the workers, political affiliation is not the major reason for joining particular unions. Though most of them are members of unions affiliated to political parties, their attitude to such political affiliation of unions is negative. The workers in our sample do not accept the ideological position that, the workers as a class, are exploited. They do not believe that ultimately political power will come to the hands of the working class. But they cherish the dream of getting a share in political power. For this purpose, they are prepared to accommodate and collaborate. The political consciousness expected of the working class is not shown by the majority of our respondents. However, indicators like percentage of votes polled, membership in parties and interest in electioneering show that their involvement in party-politics is deeper than that of the general public.

CHAPTER VIII

FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS

In this chapter, it is proposed to give first, a summary of findings on the various aspects of the profile of workers discussed earlier. Major questions whether industrial workers form a select group of superior quality and whether embourgeoisement tendencies have set in among workers will be discussed subsequently.

A comparison of our findings with those of some of the earlier studies shows that there are more differences than similarities between the workers in our sample and workers elsewhere. Some characteristics of the sample respondents give the impression that the modern sector workers form a distinct group, not having much in common with the traditional sector workers. But certain other features, especially those relating to attitudes and aspirations, show that workers, despite the differences in their economic status constitute a group which is more or less homogeneous. In certain respects, the workers appear to be just a cross-section of the Kerala society. But in other respects, they stand apart as a select group from the population of the state at large.

Workers in the traditional and modern sectors differ considerably in their background. Most of the MS workers come from middle or lower peasant stock or white-collar background. But most of the TS workers are drawn from the working class background.

In contrast to the findings elsewhere, our study reveals that in Kerala the MS worker's background is more rural than that of the TS workers. This is partly because of the location of the sample MS factories in rural areas and coir factories in the urban centres.

Hindus and Christians are fairly well-represented in the factory employment, but the representation of Muslims is low. Scheduled castes have got only a nominal representation in the MS; but in the TS, they are totally absent. In the MS, there is domination of the two forward communities of Nairs and Christians. But in the TS, Ezhavas, a backward community among Hindus, dominate, and the next largest community is Latin Christians - a backward section of the Christians. The share of Muslims has been declining. What emerges is that forward communities dominate the MS employment and backward communities, the TS employment. This is in conformity with the recent studies

in other states where forward communities and upper caste Hindus have, of late, started joining industrial employment in modern factories.

Kerala is the most literate state in the country. This is reflected in the level of literacy of the workers also; almost all are literate. But in the levels of educational achievements, considerable differences exist between the two sectors. Workers, their parents, siblings, spouses are all better educated in the MS. However, one similarity is noteworthy. In both the sectors, most of the spouses are having either the same or higher education when compared to that of the respondents. The reason may be that in Kerala, where unemployment is rampant, those who have a factory job command a certain social status and they get a premium in the matrimonial market.

The present study reveals that the industrial labour market in the state is not a fully structured one. Employment Exchanges play only a negligible part in finding placement for the job-seekers and that too, only in the MS. But about half the MS workers in our sample has got vacancy information through newspaper advertisements. There exists restrictive practices like preference for the evictees. Influence has played an important role in recruitments. Especially, its role is overwhelming in the TS. Of the two MS units covered, influence has played greater

role in FACT. This has been partly responsible for the near monopoly of local labour in Kerala factories. Most of the workers in the MS come from the same or contiguous districts.

The TS worker has to wait longer to get the first factory job. This along with the acute unemployment problem prevalent in the state makes him less mobile. Though the TS worker is not generally satisfied with his compensation and working conditions, he sticks to the job considering the security and regularity of income in the present job and the difficulties in getting another job.

On the whole, the MS workers, particularly those in the FACT are a satisfied lot. They are generally satisfied with their working conditions, wages, bonus, retirement benefits, future prospects etc. On most of these, the TS workers are less satisfied. Workers generally do not feel that their work is dirty and of low status. But about the work-load, opinions differ considerably between the workers in the two sectors. While most of the MS respondents feel that their work-load is only normal, the TS respondents in general feel that the work-load is heavy. In the availability of welfare facilities, there is a wide gulf between the MS and TS workers: the TS workers do not get many of the facilities available to the MS workers.

The disparities between the TS and MS workers, arising from the comparatively better economic background of the latter, are perpetuated by the higher wages and other perquisites which the MS workers receive. In consumption, there are disparities not only in the levels but also in the pattern. The MS workers spend proportionately more on non-food items. Among food items, they spend more on quality food, tinned food and special food for children. Conspicuous consumption also is quite high among the MS workers. On clothing, medical care and children's education, the MS workers spend a comparatively higher proportion of their income. The number of those who drink and smoke are more among the TS workers, but generally speaking, workers in both groups do not go beyond limits, ignoring the needs of the family. Most of the workers live in their own houses. But the quality of housing is quite inferior in the TS as judged by the plinth area, and materials used for roofing, walls and floor. Many of the TS workers' houses lack conveniences like an independent latrine and a bath room. Many of their houses are only huts.

An examination of the size of land holdings, value of houses, financial assets and consumer durables shows that the gulf between the two sectors is very wide. In the case of consumer durables, the workers in both sectors show remarkable similarity in their preference for entertainment goods like radio, television and tape recorder over kitchen appliances like mixer/grinder and refrigerator. The lure of jewellery also is quite

high among both categories of workers. Acquisition of cultivable land does not seem to be an item in the priority list of both the MS and TS workers. However they lay emphasis on acquisition of a house-plot. Here the worker seems to move away from the traditional pattern of asset-holding.

Trade union membership is near total among the Kerala workers. The few who are not members, are either new recruits, or defaulters of subscription or those who temporarily keep away from their union due to some difference of opinion. However most of the workers have joined unions for the very passive reason that "it is better to be a member than being nowhere". But in the matter of joining a particular union, reasons differ. The largest number in the MS have joined unions on the basis of their political affiliation. But in the TS, this reason comes only next to 'better leadership' and 'better bargaining ability'. 'Defending workers' rights', 'securing high wages' and 'protection from management' - in that order are the important trade union functions, according to the workers. No significant difference is found in this respect between the workers in the two sectors. Larger 'political objectives' do not interest most of the workers. Though a majority of workers are satisfied with the performance of their unions, many are dissatisfied with the union leadership. They have doubts about the honesty and integrity of their leaders. Many feel that while taking union decisions, leaders take into account their personal gain and not the best interest of the workers. They also feel that workers'

interests are often sacrificed for the interests of the political parties to which the unions are affiliated. Political affiliation of the unions and membership in and support to political parties show that the TS workers are more left oriented. In the MS, the workers are divided equally among the United Democratic Front led by Congress(I) and Left Democratic Front led by CPI(M) in their voting pattern. It can be said that as compared to the TS workers, the MS workers are politically more moderate. This is particularly true of the more affluent workers of FACT.

An analysis of the participation in different types of strikes shows that both groups of workers participate alike in strikes at the work place. But in sympathetic and general strikes, participants are more in the MS. This may be viewed by some as suggestive of greater class consciousness among the MS workers. But it should be borne in mind that, wages are low and are on piece rate in the TS. Therefore, participation in any strike can mean a reduction in their already poor wages. Here, their class interest must have given way to the natural self interest of survival.

Most of the TS workers live in their own houses which are quite close to their factories. Most of the MS workers who are not allotted quarters, live in their own houses and commute every day for work. This enables them to retain their links with the native place. Even those who live in factory quarters visit their native places frequently. Their children are also taken frequently to their native places.

As a result of this peculiar pattern of residence, workers in both the MS and TS report that they have contacts with all strata of society. In both the MS and TS, children also have friends from all strata of society. However, in their own closer social world of friends, people from the same caste or community are more important. An analysis of the castes of close friends shows that the proportion of friends from the same caste is higher. It is not clear whether this is a matter of circumstance and convenience or a result of deliberate choice. Despite wider social contacts in both the MS and TS, friends are mostly of the same occupation. But the MS workers have friends among white-collar employees, teachers, professionals, farmers and merchants. Casual labourers, agricultural labourers, self employed and even the unemployed find a more prominent place in the TS workers' circle of friends. So the close social world seems to be different for the MS and TS workers. When they say that they have social contacts with people of all strata, perhaps it only means that, typical of the Kerala social life, nobody is totally ignored, neglected or segregated.

In both the MS and TS, parents' aspirations about their children's education are equally high. But the difference in their present economic and social positions is reflected in their aspirations also. The MS workers want their children to reach higher levels of education than the TS workers. Both however want their children to reach higher levels of education than they have reached.

In respect of children's career also, the parents, irrespective of the sector, want their children to reach higher positions. But the MS workers' aspirations are relatively higher.

An analysis of the differences between the profiles of the MS and TS workers shows that these differences have their origin in their socio-economic background. These differences at the entry point are accentuated by the differences in income, both wage income and non-wage income. The differences in background and current income are reflected in a number of variables like levels and pattern of consumption, living conditions, lifestyles quality of housing, size and pattern of assets etc. The differences in wages, perquisites, welfare facilities and working conditions make the MS workers more satisfied than the TS workers.

Regarding aspirations and attitudes, there are remarkable similarities between the MS and TS workers. Both have high expectations regarding their children's education and career. Both do not discriminate between female and male children. But the MS workers can spend more on children's food and education. The difference in the medium of education of children too arises from the difference in economic status.

In the membership of trade unions and participation in union actions, there are considerable similarities between both groups of workers. But due to economic reasons, the TS workers do not contribute as much to trade union funds other than regular

subscription. Nor can they afford to participate in sympathetic and general strikes as frequently as the MS workers. For economic reasons the TS workers expect more material benefits from their unions. Both groups are moderate regarding their demands and abjure violence in trade union actions. In sharing profits and making wage demands, both are prepared to accommodate the management's point of view. Both groups do not feel that they are oppressed and exploited. Both do not give much political role to their unions. Both do not believe that ultimately power will be transferred to the working class.

There can be two interpretations to the convergence in attitudes and aspirations of the TS and MS workers. One is that they think and act as separate classes. The more possible interpretation is that attitudes and aspirations of the society have influenced the thinking of both groups. Better educational levels reached by Kerala society, wide reading of newspapers, influence of social reform movements, the egalitarian influence of political parties etc. might have contributed to the society as a whole coming to share progressive, but moderate views, on many aspects of life.

There are many possible reasons why a separate working class identity and culture have not evolved for the industrial workers of Kerala. Firstly, the workers in the registered factory sector constitute only a small proportion of the total population and work force in the states. And even this limited number is

scattered and submerged in the total society. There exist neither industrial cities nor industrial slums in Kerala. So the worker lives and moves always in the midst of a larger community with all its heterogeneties. Most of them live in their native places. So an industrial culture, as seen elsewhere, does not seem to have emerged in Kerala. One does not find any phenomenon in Kerala which is specific to an industrial sub culture. The Kerala worker's reference group consists not of industrial workers only; he is exposed to a wider society. It is due to the influence of this larger society that certain common attitudes and outlook are found in the case of both modern sector and traditional sector workers, inspite of the differences in their background, education, income etc.

In most studies on workers' profile, one issue which is often raised is whether the industrial workers form a select group of superior quality in the total society and work force. Going by the economic status, workers in our sample including the TS workers are better off than the average residents of the state. The margin of difference between the economic status of a TS worker and the average Keralite however is only small.

The income of both the TS and MS workers is higher than the per capita income of the state. So also is the case with the per capita expenditure. Ownership and use of consumer durables, including personal conveyance, is quite high among the workers, especially the MS workers. Living conditions are also better.

The quality of housing, even though poor in the TS, seems to be better than what is available to many of the people in the state. In the level and composition of asset holding also the industrial workers' position is superior. Most of them own their own houses. In the matter of ownership of land, however, the average size of land owned by a TS household is lower than the state average. In the literacy and educational levels reached, the workers' position is better. The difference between the educational levels of males and females in the state is absent in most of the workers' households. In fact, in many of the workers' households, the spouses are better educated than the workers themselves.

A comparison of the profile of Kerala workers with that of the workers in other states, as revealed in some of the studies, shows that there are differences between them in many respects. Except for a very few, there are no immigrant labourers in our sample. Most of the workers come from the neighbouring places. They live in their own houses and commute every day for work. Even the few workers who live in factory quarters visit their native places very frequently. Because of these peculiarities, unlike in other states, the workers in our sample do not sever their links with their native society.

Unlike workers in the more modern sector elsewhere in India, most of the MS workers in our sample are first generation workers who come from peasant stock or from white-collar or trading background. The educational background of the MS workers and their families is high.

Another question which is often asked in all discussions on the profile of workers, is whether the workers are turning middle class or whether embourgeoisement tendencies are emerging among workers. A few studies in India have asserted categorically, on the basis of life styles and material conditions of life, that an upper crust of better off workers constitutes a group of labour aristocracy. But economic criteria alone are not enough to identify embourgeoisement tendencies. Goldthorpe in his Luton study has identified three aspects of affluent worker's everyday life to ascertain embourgeoisement tendency. They are: work, patterns of sociability and aspirations and social perspectives. Some of the criteria evolved by Goldthorpe, Hobsbawm and Hoggarts are not applicable in Kerala. For instance, an affluent worker in the west tends to shift his residence from working class localities to middle class neighbourhoods in the suburbs. In Kerala, as seen earlier there are very few purely working class localities or middle class areas. Pattern of inter class marriages is another criterion of Goldthorpe. But this is not applicable in Kerala, as most of the marriages are arranged within castes. The membership of social clubs is yet another criterion listed by Goldthorpe. But clubs are not important social institutions in Kerala.

There is practically no study in Kerala on the difference in the pattern of sociability, aspirations and social perspectives of different social classes like the working class and the middle class. In the absence of firm datum on these matters, one can

only go by popular notions about aspirations and social perspectives of different classes including the middle class.

Some of the middle class perspectives like future orientation, aspirations and hopes regarding children's education and careers are common to both the MS and TS workers in our sample. Moderation in political views and immunity to revolutionary appeals are also shared by the MS and TS workers alike.

In this situation, one can only go by the workers' own perception about the localities where they reside and the social classes to which they belong. Most of the workers in both the MS and TS live in mixed areas. This is in conformity with the pattern of residence found in Kerala. But 38 TS respondents have reported that they live in working class neighbourhood. This is in sharp contrast to the fact that only 10 MS respondents have said that they live in working class neighbourhood.

As noted earlier, nearly 90 per cent of the MS workers include themselves in the middle class. Only very few regard themselves as belonging to the lower class. None claims to belong to the upper class. This is in sharp contrast to the perception of the TS workers. Seventy per cent of them categorise themselves as lower class. Only 28 per cent claim to belong to the middle class. A vast majority of those placing themselves in the middle class, both in the TS and MS, thinks that they belong to the lower middle class.

The criteria used by the workers in classifying themselves are largely income related. Of the 90 workers in the MS, 41 have

used income as the criterion and 21 life style. Occupation as a criterion has been used only by ten workers. 'Comparison with others' have been used by 10 workers and social position by five. In the TS, a higher number (51) have used the income criterion. The second largest number (21) have used occupation as criterion. Life style (13), comparison with others (4) and social position (1) are relatively less important in the TS.

The low importance ascribed to 'occupation', 'comparison with others' and 'social position' is, in a way, significant. In stratifying themselves into social classes, both the MS and TS workers do not consider their occupation or place in the production relations as very important. In the Kerala society, where there has been a good deal of levelling of social positions, 'comparison with others' and social position also are not very important. What is more important is income and income related variables like consumption. In both these respects, the MS workers consider themselves to have reached the middle class standards.

In the case of a large number of the MS workers, it is not that they have moved up to the middle class because of their high wage income. As seen earlier, many of them hail from traditional middle class - from peasantry, from families of white-collar employees and merchants. Their employment as wage labourers in the MS is no doubt, a case of 'intergenerational skidding'. This would have taken place in any case due to fragmentation of holdings, the

size of which in Kerala is already the lowest among Indian states. If this were to happen, their income and social status were bound to come down. Many of them would not have been able to take their parents' white-collar occupations also due to more acute competition in the job market, resulting from the spread of education. With their present wage income, they are at least, able to retain their economic and consequent social position, despite the fall in their position in the production relations.

Goldthorpe and associates have found no definite embourgeoisement tendencies among the Luton workers. According to them "what the changes in question predominantly entailed was not the ultimate assimilation of manual workers and their families into the social world of the middle class, but rather a much less dramatic process of convergence, in certain particular respects, in the normative orientations of some sections of the working class and of some white-collar groups".¹ About the embourgeoisement tendencies among our MS workers in Kerala, the maximum that can be said is perhaps the same.

1. Goldthorpe, John, H., et.al.. Op.cit., p 26.

13 If yes, give the following details:

	Relation 1	Age 2	Monthly remittance 3
14			
15			
16			

17 Do you get any regular financial help from any of your relatives? 1 = Yes 2 = No

18 If yes, give details:

19 Type of family: 1 = Nuclear 2 = Extended 3 = Joint

20 Total monthly income of the family: Rs.

C. Earnings, Education and Occupation in the family — different generations

Relation	EARNERS					NON EARNERS			
	Age 1	Education +1	Occupation or job +2	Monthly income 3	Undergo- ing education 4	Looking for work 5	Old / Retired 6	Living with respondent Mark 77 7	Living separately Mark 88 8
1 Respondent									
2 Father									
3 Mother									
4 Spouse									
5 Son	1								
6	2								
7	3								
8 Daughter in law	1								
9	2								
30	3								
31 Daughter	1								
32	2								
33	3								
34 Son in law	1								

Education

- +1 Education
- +2 Occupation

- 1 Illiterate
- 2 Literate
- 3 Primary
- 4 Upper Primary
- 5 High School
- 6 Pre-Degree
- 7 Degree (General)
- 8 P. G. (General)
- 9 Professional degree & above
- 10 Vocational I.T.I. etc.
- 11 Diploma in Tech. edn. (Polytechnic)
- 12 Inservice Training
- 13 Others (specify)

Occupation

- 1 Rich Peasant
- 2 Ordinary farmer
- 3 Big merchant
- 4 Small Trader
- 5 Agl. Labourer
- 6 Unemployed
- 7 Unpaid family work
- 8 Casual Labour
- 9 Unskilled factory worker
- 10 Factory worker (supervisory, Tech.)
- 11 White collar (non-supervisory, clerk etc.)
- 12 White collar (Higher, supervisory)
- 13 Managerial
- 14 Lawyer, Doctor, Professor, Engineer
- 15 Teacher
- 16 Self employed (painting, wiring, plumbing etc.)
- 17 any other (specify)

C. Earnings, Education and Occupation in the family -- different generations

Relation	EARNERS							NON EARNERS		
	Age	Education or job +2	Monthly income 3	Undergo- ing education 4	Looking for work 5	Old / Retired 6	Living with respondent Mark 77	Living separately Mark 88		
35 Son in law	2									
36	3									
37 Brother	1									
38	2									
39	3									
40 Sister	1									
41	2									
42	3									
43 Any other (specify)	1									
44	2									

+1 Education
+2 Occupation:

Education

- 1 Illiterate
- 2 Literate
- 3 Primary
- 4 Upper Primary
- 5 High School
- 6 Pre-Degree
- 7 Degree (General)
- 8 P. G. (General)
- 9 Professional degree & above
- 10 Vocational I.T.I. etc.
- 11 Diploma in Tech. edn. (Polytechnic)
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- 13 Managerial
- 14 Lawyer, Doctor, Professor, Engineer
- 15 Teacher
- 16 Self employed (painting, wiring, plumbing etc.)
- 17 any other (specify)

D. Education and Occupation in the family — different generations

45	Grand father (Paternal)	+1 +2		54	Uncle (Maternal)	+1 +2	
46	Grand mother (Paternal)	+1 +2		55	" (2)	+1	
47	Grand father (Maternal)	+1 +2		56	" (3)	+1 +2	
48	Grand mother (Maternal)	+1 +2		57	" (4)	+1	
49	Uncles (Paternal (1))	+1 +2		58	" (5)	+1	
50	" (2)	+1 +2		59	Spouse's brothers (1)	+1 +2	
51	" (3)	+1 +2		60	" (2)	+1	
52	" (4)	+1 +2		61	" (3)	+1 +2	
53	" (5)	+1 +2					

+1 Education
+2 Occupation

Education

- 1 Illiterate
- 2 Literate
- 3 Primary
- 4 Upper Primary
- 5 High School
- 6 P.e-Degree
- 7 Degree (General)
- 8 P. G. (General)
- 9 Professional degree & above
- 10 Vocational I.T.I. etc.
- 11 Diploma in Tech. edn. (Polytechnic)
- 12 Inservice Training
- 13 Others (specify)

Occupation

- 1 Rich Peasant
- 2 Ordinary farmer
- 3 Big merchant
- 4 Small Trader
- 5 Agl. Labourer
- 6 Unemployed
- 7 Unpaid family work
- 8 Casual Labour
- 9 Unskilled factory worker
- 10 Factory worker (supervisory, Tech.)
- 11 White collar (non-supervisory, clerk etc.)
- 12 White collar (Higher, supervisory)
- 13 Managerial
- 14 Lawyer, Doctor, Professor, Engineer
- 15 Teacher
- 16 Self employed (painting, wiring, plumbing etc.)

	+1	
62 Spouse's sisters (1)	+2	
	+1	
63 (2)	+2	
	+1	
64 (3)	+2	
	+1	
65 Any other (specify)	+2	

E. Employment Data

66 Job designation (specify) :

67 Total salary (Rs.) :

68 Take-home salary (Rs):

69 Deductions towards

- a) P. F. (general & contributory)
- b) E. S. I.
- c) L. I. C. Premium & other deposits
- d) Debt repayments
 - 1 P. F.
 - 2 Vehicle loan
 - 3 Consumer durables
 - 4 Housing loans
 - 5 Personal loans
 - 6 Others (specify)
- e) Income Tax
- f) Others (Pl. specify)
- g) Total

70 Years of service in the unit

71 How did you come to know about this job?

(Give the Principal source)

- 1 = through family relations 2 = through caste or community contacts
 3 = through other personal contacts 4 = friends and neighbours
 5 = through an employment exchange 6 = through advertising
 7 = direct approach to enterprise 8 = Others (specify)

- 72 Persons / Agencies which helped in getting the job
(other than informing)
1 = A relation 2 = A politician 3 = A Govt. / Bank Official
4 = A trade union leader 5 = An employee of the factory
6 = A friend 7 = Any other (specify)
- 73 Other factors which helped
1 = Caste or community factor
2 = You had the required qualification
3 = You passed the selection test
4 = You passed the interview
5 = You had the required experience
6 = You had done apprenticeship with this employer
7 = Any other (specify)
- 74 Did you pay money for getting this job? If yes, to whom paid?
0 = Not paid 1 = To an agent / recruiting agency
2 = To the employer 3 = To a trade union leader
4 = To an official of the organisation 5 = Any other [specify]
- 75 Did influence count in getting this job? 1 Yes 2 No
- 76 Did you get this job, as a matter of claim because your father / mother worked here 1 Yes 2 No
- 77 Any other consideration which helped in getting this job [specify]

F. Worker and his job

- 78 Is the present job your first one 1 Yes 2 No
- 79 If not, how many times have you changed your job?
- 80 What was your last job? Designation?
Name of establishment
- 81 Total emoluments in your last job [Monthly] Rs.
- 82 Reason for leaving it: 1 It was temporary 2 Poor pay
3 Poor working conditions 4 Too much work 5 Irksome discipline
6 Lack of promotion prospects 7 No job satisfaction
8 Better pay here 9 Better retirement benefits
10 Family reasons: 10 1) To look after parents
10 2) To look after family property
10 3) Spouse's employment
10 4) Children's education
10 5) Nearness to home
11 Any other [specify]
- 83 How long had you to wait to get the first job? months
- 84 Have you ever worked as casual / temporary / contract labour here?
1 Yes 2 No
- 85 Have you ever thought of changing the present job? 1 Yes 2 No
- 86 If yes, why?

- 88 If you could start your working life over again, would you choose this kind of job? 1 = Yes 2 = No 3 = Don't know
- 89 Do you think that your workload in the factory is:
1 = Light 2 = Normal 3 = Heavy
- 89 1] Is your work dirty and of low status? 1 = Yes 2 = No
- 90 Are you given overtime work? 1 = Yes 2 = No
- 91 Do you welcome working overtime? 1 = Yes 2 = No
- 92 If yes, why?
- 93 If no, why?
- 94 Do you have to work in night shifts? 1 = Yes 2 = No
- 95 Do you welcome shift work? 1 = Yes 2 = No
- 96 If yes, why?
- 97 If No, why?
- 98 How secure do you think your job here is?
1 = Very secure 2 = Secure 3 = Insecure
- 99 What do you think about your promotion prospects?
1 = Good 2 = Satisfactory 3 = Not satisfactory 4 = Nil
- 100 Are you satisfied with your present wages, rates of bonus, E S I, P. F, retirement benefits etc.? 1 Very much satisfied
2 Somewhat satisfied 3 Not satisfied
- 101 Do you think the firm could pay you more than it does without damaging its prospects for the future? 1 Yes 2 No 3 D. K.
- 102 If yes, why?
- 103 If no, why?
- 104 Are the working conditions in the factory 1 Very good 2 Good
3 Fair 4 Bad
- 105 What do you think about the following welfare facilities in the organisation?
1 Good 2 Adequate 3 Inadequate 4 Not available
(a) Canteen (b) Medical (c) Housing (d) Transport (e) Education
(f) Recreation (g) Provisions at fair price (h) Emergency/Personal loan
- 106 What do you value most in a job? (Rank them)
1 Pleasant working conditions 2 Interest and variety 3 Good pay and the chance of overtime 4 Job security 5 Future prospects
6 Good workmates 7 Retirement benefits 8 Any other (specify)

H. Liabilities

116 Outstanding	117 Purpose for which incurred
a) Personal loan	1 Investment in financial assets
b) Loan from financial institutions	2 Consumer Durables
c) Loan from P. F.	3 Vehicles
d) Loan from L I C	4 House
e) Mortgage	5 Health
f) Housing loan	6 Education
g) CC, Hirepurchase	7 Consumption
h) Chitty	1) Regular
i) Any other	2) Social [a] Marriage [b] Any other (Pl. specify)

I. Consumption Pattern

- 118 What is your family's average monthly expenditure on food? Rs.
- 119 What is your family's annual expenditure on clothing? Rs.
- 120 How much do you spend on smoking every week? Rs.
- 121 How much do you spend on liquor every week? Rs.
- 122 (If you do not live in own house) How much house rent do you pay every month? Rs.
- 123 What is your average monthly expenditure on children's education? Rs.
- 124 How much do you spend on medical care? (annual) Rs.
- 125 How much milk did you buy last month? Litre: Rs.
- 126 How much ghee did you buy last month? Kg. Rs.
- 127 How much of the following did you buy last month?
- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| a) Meat (beef, buffalo) | Kg. | Rs. |
| b) Chicken : | | |
| c) Fish | | |
| d) Egg - Nos. | | |
- (If vegetarian, mark V)
- 128 Do you buy items like Squash, Jam, Horlicks, Boost etc.?
- | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------|---------|
| 1 Regularly | 2 Occasionally | 3 Rarely | 4 Never |
|-------------|----------------|----------|---------|
- 129 What fuel do you use for cooking?
- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|---------------|------------------|
| 1 Firewood | 2 LPG | 3 Electricity | 4 Kerosine stove |
| 5 Others (specify) | | | |
- 130 What liquor do you normally take?
- | | | | |
|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
| 1 Toddy | 2 Arrack | 3 Foreign liquor | 4 Nil |
|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
- 131 What do you smoke generally?
- | | | |
|---------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Beedi | 2 Cigarette | 3 Any other (specify) |
|---------|-------------|-----------------------|
- 132 What are the toilet items which you buy regularly?

Give the following details about the house in which you stay:

- 161 Floor area (sq. feet)
 1 Less than 100 2 101 - 300 3 301 - 600 4 601 - 900
 5 901 - 1200 6 1201 - 1500 7 More than 1500
- 162 Nature of roof: 1 Thatched 2 Tiled 3 RCC
 4 Asbestos, Zink, Tin
- 163 Nature of walls: 1 Mud 2 Leaves/grass 3 Bricks
 4 Laterite.
- 164 Nature of floor: 1 Mud 2 Cowdung 3 Cement
 4 Tiles/Mosaic 5 Marble.
- 165 Source of drinking water: 1 Own 2 Shared
- 166 Latrine 1 Independent 2 Shared.
- 166 1) Bath 1 Independent 2 Shared.
- 167 No. of bed rooms:
- 168 Total No. of rooms:
- 169 No. of bath-attached rooms:

K. Skill Level

- 170 In which of the following categories are you included by your organization?
 1 Skilled 2 Semi-skilled 3 Unskilled.
- 171 If skilled, how did you acquire your skill?
 1 Hereditary or family occupation 2 Vocational/professional training
 3 Apprenticeship elsewhere 4 Inplant training in other units
 5 Inplant training in the same unit 6 Learnt on the job
 7 Any other (specify)

L. Trade Unionism

- 172 Are you a member of any union: 1 Yes 2 No.
- 173 What is the most important reason for your joining the union?
 1 Because it is better to be a member than being nowhere.
 2 Others forced you to join. 3 For economic and other benefits
 4 Other (specify)
- 174 Do you subscribe regularly to union membership? 1 Yes 2 No.
- 175 Do you subscribe to other union funds? 1 Yes 2 No.
- 176 Do you read union literature and notice? 1 Yes 2 No.
- 177 Do you have personal contacts with union leaders? 1 Yes 2 No.
- 178 Do you regularly attend union meetings? 1 Yes 2 No.
- 179 Did you vote in the last union election? 1 Yes 2 No.

M. Trade Union Action

- 180 Have you taken part in Trade Union actions called for by your union?
 1 Always 2 Sometimes 3 Never.
- 180 (1) Strike at work place (2) General strike (3) Sympathetic Strike
 (4) Dharna (5) Jatha (6) Gherao (7) Picketing
 (8) Bandh (9) Hunger strike (10) Go slow (11) Other actions
 (specify)
- 182 Was your participation in the above action?
 1 Voluntary 2 Forced
- 183 To which political party is your union affiliated?
 1 Congress (I) 2 Congress (S) 3 CPM 4 CPI 5 RSP
 6 Janatha 7 BJP 8 Kerala Congress 9 Muslim league
 10 Other (specify)

- 184 Do you think that affiliation of unions with political parties is desirable ?
1 Yes 2 No
- 185 Why did you join that particular union ?
1 Your political affiliation 2 Better leadership 3 Major union
4 Better bargaining agent 5 Friends in that union
6 Others (specify)
- 186 Have you ever changed your union ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 187 If yes, how many times?
- 188 Give the reason for the change of union:
1 Dissatisfaction with leadership
2 Dissatisfaction with the affiliating party.
3 Change of Government
4 To follow the leader 5 Others (specify)
- 189 Do you welcome worker participation in management ?
1 At the shop floor / Plant level: 1 Yes 2 No
2 At the Board level: 1 Yes 2 No
3 Both 1 Yes 2 No
- 190 Do you want the temporary / casual workers in this firm to be given membership in your union ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 191 Do you want them to be regularised here 1 Yes 2 No
- 192 Do you believe that the Trade Union leaders have honesty and integrity. 1 Yes 2 No
- Do you agree ?
- 193 They take union decisions generally in the best interest of the workers 1 Yes 2 No
- 194 Sometimes, in the decision-making, they consider their personal gain, rather than the interest of the workers: 1 Yes 2 No
- 195 Sometimes, workers are drawn into disputes and strikes, just to suit the convenience of their political masters / party: 1 Yes 2 No
- 196 Can violence be justified during strike ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 197 What according to you are the most important trade union functions ?
(Rank them in their order of importance by marking 1, 2, 3 etc. at the right side)
- 1 Protection from managements 2 Securing high wages
3 Defending workers' rights
4 Improving the working & living conditions
5 To strengthen class solidarity 6 Political objectives (change)
7 To educate workers and help them in social upliftment
8 To create and operate benevolent funds
9 To restructure the world 10 Any other (specify)
- 198 Do you think a union should consider the economic position of a firm when pressing for a wage increase or is its job to concentrate solely on the benefits of its own members ? 1 Firm's economic position
2 Members' benefits only
- 199 How well do you think your union does its job ?
1 Very well 2 Reasonably well 3 Not too well 4 Poorly

Do you favour?

- | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|-----|---|----|
| 200 | Many unions in one establishment | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 201 | Trade union leadership by politician - unionists | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 202 | Trade Union leadership by non politician-unionists | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 203 | Trade Union leadership by worker-members: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 204 | Reservation of job on the basis of caste | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 205 | Reservation of job for workers' relatives | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |

N. Consciousness

- 206 Do you agreed:
- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|-----|---|----|
| 1) | Workers are oppressed & exploited: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 2) | Workers have common class interests: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 3) | Ultimately power will come to the hands of the working class: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 4) | The entire profit should go to the workers, not to the capitalists: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 5) | Workers in modern factories belong to a class different from those of the traditional factories: | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 6) | When workers in other factories strike work we should express solidarity through a token strike:
(Prompt to the modern factory workers that other factories mean cashew, coir etc: Prompt to the traditional factory workers that other factories mean HMT, Newsprint, FACT etc.) | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
| 7) | Militancy is the best Trade Union tactic | 1 | Yes | 2 | No |
- 207 Do you think that modern factory workers have more in common with:
- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | NGOs and white collar workers |
| 2 | Traditional factory workers |
- 208 Do you think that traditional factory workers have more in common with
- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | Casual workers |
| 2 | Modern factory workers. |
- 209 Do you favour:
- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1 | Bipartite settlement |
| 2 | State intervention |
- 210 What do you think, is your position in society:
- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|---|--------------|---|-------------|
| 1 | Lower class | 2 | Middle class | 3 | Upper class |
|---|-------------|---|--------------|---|-------------|
- 211 To which stratum of that particular class do you belong ?
- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|-------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Lower lower | 2 | Upper lower | 3 | Lower middle |
| 4 | Upper middle | 5 | Lower upper | 6 | Upper upper |
- 212 Why do you think so ?

O. Labour Aristocracy

- 213 In which area do you live ?
- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Factory quarters |
| 2 | Working class neighbourhood |
| 3 | Middle class neighbourhood |
| 4 | A very mixed area |
- 214 To which type of school are your children sent ?
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Aided/Govt. Malayalam medium where no fee is paid. |
| 2 | Aided/Govt. English medium |
| 3 | Unaided Malayalam medium where you pay fees. |
| 4 | Central syllabus, English medium where you pay fees.
(eg. CBSE, ICSE, Central School) |

- 215 How much education do you expect for your children ?
 1 SSLC 2 Pre-Degree 3 Degree 4 ITI
 5 Polytechnic 6 PG 7 Professional 8 Any other (specify)
- 216 What type of job would you prefer for your children ?
 1 Any manual labour 2 Factory work
 3 Supervisory / Technical job in factory
 4 White collar / clerical 5 Higher Govt. job 6 Executives
 7 Professional 8 Any other (specify)
- 227 What type of work is your son's / daughter's father-in-law doing ?
- 218 Are you a member of a sports/arts/recreation/
 service club ? (specify): 1 yes 2 No
- 219 Do you have close social contacts with people of
 higher status ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 220 If yes, describe its nature: 1 At native place
 2 At the place of work 3 At religious forums
 4 At social gatherings 5 Other (specify)
- 221 Mention the castes and occupations of
 three of your close friends:
- | | Caste | Occupation |
|-----|-------|------------|
| 1 = | | |
| 2 = | | |
| 3 = | | |
- 222 Do your children's friends belong to
 1 The same social stratum
 2 Higher " "
 3 Lower " "
- 223 Do you give equal treatment to your
 male & female children in the matter of
- | | | |
|--------------|-------|------|
| 1) Food | 1 Yes | 2 No |
| 2) Health | 1 Yes | 2 No |
| 3) Education | 1 Yes | 2 No |
- 224 Do you give your young children
 1 The same food which others take
 2 Special nutritious food
- 225 How do you spend your leisure ?
 (Rank the first three in the order of importance by marking 1, 2, 3 at the
 right side)
- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Upkeep of residence | 2 Social visit | 3 Visiting places of worship |
| 4 Cultivation/gardening | 5 Cinemas/plays | 6 Walking |
| 7 Playing cards | 8 Drink liquor | 9 Reading |
| 10 Playing with children | 11 Trade union activity | |
| 12 Cultural activity | 13 Social activity | 14 Others (specify) |
- 226 Do you have any business, trade, agency,
 occupation other than your factory job ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 227 If yes, specify
- 228 What is the annual income from that source? Rs.
- 229 Do you save ? 1 Regularly 2 Just now and then 3 Never
- 230 What is it that you save for ? 1 To buy land
 2 To buy/build a house 3 To buy consumer durables
 4 Children's education 5 Daughter's marriage
 6 Old age 7 Emergencies 8 Other (specify)

- 231 How much would you say, your standard of living had risen over the last five years ?
 1 Considerable 2 Moderate
 3 Negligible 4 Not at all
- 232 How do you spend your leave period?
 1 Pilgrimage
 2 Visiting native place 3 Picnics 4 Resting at home
 5 Attending to works at home 6 Encashing 7 Any other (specify)
- 233 When on visits, do you go alone or with family ?
 1 Alone 2 With family
- 234 How often do you visit your native place ?
- 235 How often do you take your children to your native place ?
 1 Regularly 2 Occasionally 3 Rarely 4 Never
- 236 After retirement:
 1 Will you go back to your native place ?
 or 2 Continue to stay here ?

P. Interest in Politics and Participation in Political action

- 237 Are you a member of any political party ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 238 If yes, which party ?
- 239 Are you a sympathiser of any party ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 240 If yes, which party ?
- 241 Did you vote in the last general election ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 242 For which party ? 1 LDF 2 UDF 3 Independent
 4 Not willing to say
- 243 Did you vote in the last Panchayat/Municipal election ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 244 For which party ? 1 LDF 2 UDF 3 Independent
 4 Not willing to say
- 245 Your voting behaviour was mostly based on:
 1 Candidate 2 Caste
 3 Trade union 4 Party consideration 5 Any other (specify)
- 246 Did you campaign for any party in the last election ? 1 Yes 2 No
- 247 Whoever comes to power, you feel indifferent ? 1 Yes 2 No

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