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Trends in the Changing Occupation Structure- A Case Study of Thiruvananthapuram District, Kerala

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Abstract:

Human activity is a major force shaping the earth surface and changes in the land use is one of the most important fields of human induced environment transformation. This change can be better understood by analysing occupation structure prevailing in an area. Occupational structure is a significant aspect and reveals the socio-economic development of an area. The changing occupation structure showcases the trends in the economic development. The study conducted for Thiruvananthapuram district for a period of thirty years highlights the fact that there are some notable changes in the occupation structure which produced a comparative change in the life of people.

1. Introduction

The development of a society depends upon the nature and extend to which its population is involved in economic activities. According to Bogue (1969), "the economic and social well-being of a nation or a community is influenced by the number of earners, their qualifications and the regularity of their employment and the amounts they earn". The proportion in which the working population is distributed among different categories of industries and occupations tells much about economic organization of society and help to correlate this with other sectors of social life (Kohli, 1973). Thus the structure of a country's work force gives a broad idea about the stage of economic development of that country.

Occupational structure is the distribution of different types of occupation done by the residents of an area and gives an idea of which type of work predominates in a society. The occupational structure is shaped by various factors like the structure of the economy, technology and administrative responsibility, labour-market (which determines the pay and conditions attached to occupations); and by status and prestige (influenced by occupational closure, life-style, and social values). It is difficult to attach causal primacy to any one of these factors; moreover, their role in shaping the occupational structure changes over time, as society changes. For example, during the early phase of industrialization, the dominance of manufacturing made for a preponderance of manual occupations, while in recent times the shrinking of this sector, together with the growth in services, has made for an expansion of white-collar occupations. Changes in the occupational structure are also related to changes in the demand for different occupational services, as a result of socioeconomic improvements and technological advances (Blau and Duncan, 1967). The proportion of a country's population that is in the labour force is determined mainly by two factors: (1) the extend to which different groups in the population participate in the labour (2) the demographic composition of the population mainly the age-sex structure (U.N, 1973). Thus an analysis of the data on the industrial and occupational composition of the working population is desirable for the formulation of regional programmes of economic development and also to describe or measure the achievements of economic and social programmes in the region (Kohli, 1973).

2. Objective

To analyse the trend in changing occupational structure of Thiruvananthapuram District for the period of three decades from 1981 to 2011.

3. Study Area

Thiruvananthapuram district lies between 8° 17' 25" to 8° 51' 46" North latitudes and 76° 40' 25" to 77° 17' 6" East longitudes (Fig. 1). It covers an area of 2192 km² which accounts for 5.64% of the total area of the state. The district stretches along the shores of Arabian Sea for a distance of 78 kms. Kollam district is on the north and Thirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts of Tamil Nadu are on the east and the south respectively. The district can be divided into three geographical regions –highlands, midlands and lowlands. The lowland area borders the coastal zone along the west, to the east of it lies the midland and to the east of this zone lies the highland which mainly consists the forested regions of the district. The district has six taluks namely Chirayinkeezhu, Nedumangad,

Thiruvananthapuram, Varkala, Kattakada and Neyyattinkara, 115 villages, one corporation and four municipalities. There are 11 community development blocks and 73 panchayats in the district. The district houses the many important government offices in the state, educational institutions and also has developed as an important IT hub. It is also a proposed site for many upcoming new vision projects. So it is undoubted that all these changes which evolved within a couple of decades have definitely affected the occupation structure of the district and indirectly the life of the residents and their standard of living and vice versa.

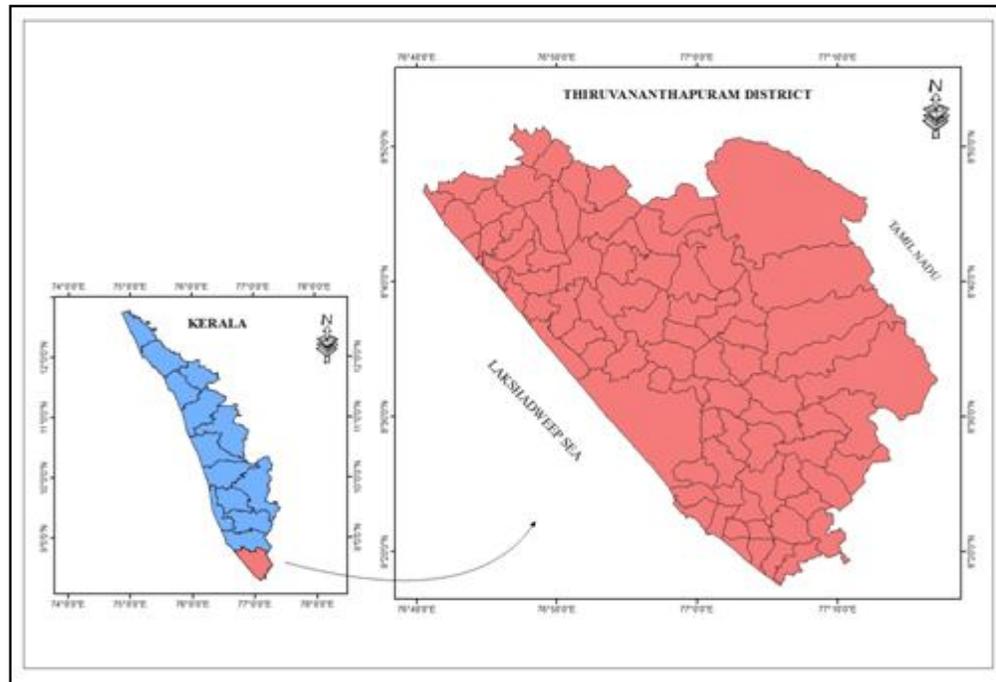


Figure 1: Study Area

4. Methodology

The study mainly used census data of 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011. Classification based on Industrial category of workers was used for the study. Adopting 1981 census categorisation, workers were classified into four groups namely Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Household Industry Workers and Other Services. For a detail analysis, the study area was divided into three zones based on elevation as highland, midland and lowland. Areas with altitude less than 20 mts is classified under lowland, 20 to 100 mts as midland and areas with elevation more than 100 mts as highland. The data has been processed and tabulated by statistical techniques. The various statistical terms and formulas used in the study include:

Growth rate is the amount of increase that a specific variable has gained within a specific period and context. Similarly growth rate of the working population is the amount of increase the percentage of workers in each occupation category and was calculated using:

$$\text{Growth Rate (GR)} = \frac{(P_2 - P_1)}{P_1} \times 100$$

where, P_1 and P_2 are population at time points 1 and 2

The Work Participation Rate gives an idea about the percentage of workers to the total population and was calculated based on:

- Work Participation Rate (WPR) = Number of worker in a specific group / Total size of the population $\times 100$

The Economic Dependency Rate (Shryock et al., 1976) is defined as the ratio of economically inactive population or Non workers (NW) to the economically active population or workers (W)

- Economic Dependency Ratio (EDR) = Non worker / Workers $\times 100$

5. Analysis

5.1. Participation Rate of Workers and Non workers

The work force participation index reveals that, during the 1981 census, working population was 7,84,274 (30.20 %) and the non workers accounted for 18, 11,383 (69.79 %) (Table 1). About 46.39 percent of the males and 14.19 percent of females were workers. During 1991 census, the number of workers increased to 9,60,726 (32.60 %) in which male workers constituted 50.23 percent and female workers 15.58 percent. The non workers proportion decreased to 19,85,924 (67.39 %) persons. In the 2001 census, total workers were 10,47,935 (32.4%) and the non workers accounted for 21,86,421 (67.59 %). During this census about 51.37 percent of males and 14.5 percent of females were workers.

Years	Workers (Includes main and marginal)			Non workers		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1981	30.2	46.39	14.19	69.79	53.6	85.5
1991	32.6	50.23	15.58	67.39	49.76	84.41
2001	32.4	51.37	14.5	67.59	48.62	85.49
2011	37.3	54.63	21.37	62.69	45.36	78.62

Table 1: Percentage of workers and non workers from 1981 to 2011

Source: Compiled from various census publications

The recent census shows an increase in total workers to 12,31,669 (37.3 %) and the non workers reduced to 20,69,758 (62.69%). There is a considerable increase in the proportion of male and female workers to 54.63 and 21.37 percent. It is evident that the occupational structure shows a positive and developing growth structure during the study period with an increase of seven percent in the working force for thirty years.

5.2. Distribution of Main Workers

The 1981 census showed that, the total workers in the district was 7,84,274 in which 7,03,340 were main workers and 80,934 were marginal workers. Main working population was highest in Thiruvananthapuram city corporation (1,27,346) followed by Nedumangad Municipality (11,793) (Fig.2). Among the panchayats, Parassala accounted for 10,719 workers, followed by Ulloor and Thiruvallam with 10,514 and 10,452 persons each. Ottoor (2,757) and Pallickal (2,792) panchayats has the lowest number of working population. Workers engaged in other service occupation were 3,79,432. Agricultural labourers accounted for 2,34,668, cultivators were 61,141 and those engaged in household industries were 28,099. It can be noticed that majority of the panchayats bordering corporation and municipalities showed high concentration of workers compared to other areas. The highland regions shows low concentration of workers.

In the 1991 census, the number of workers increased to 9,60,726, which include 8,88,613 main workers and 72,113 marginal workers. Thiruvananthapuram city corporation (1,54,747) has the highest proportion of main workers. Like the previous year, Nedumangad municipality was placed second (15,396). Ulloor panchayat had the highest proportion of working population (13,865) followed by Parassala (12,849) and Kadinamkulam panchayats (12,382). 5,00,918 people were engaged in service sector, 2,58,911 are agricultural labourers, 1,07,655 are cultivators and 20,120 are household workers. Kallikadu and Pallickal panchayat has the lowest number of workers.

According to 2001 census there are 10,47,935 workers. In this 8,18,497 are main workers and 2,29,438 marginal workers. 4,36,721 persons belong to service category, 68,375 are agricultural labourers, 25,731 cultivators and 19,830 are household workers. Thiruvananthapuram city corporation (2,21,229) tops with highest number of workers followed by Neyyatinkara Municipality (17,313). Among panchayats, Sreekaryam panchayat (12,777) has the highest proportion of workers followed by Kadinamkulam panchayat (12,606). Kallikad and Pallickal panchayat still had the lowest working population concentration.

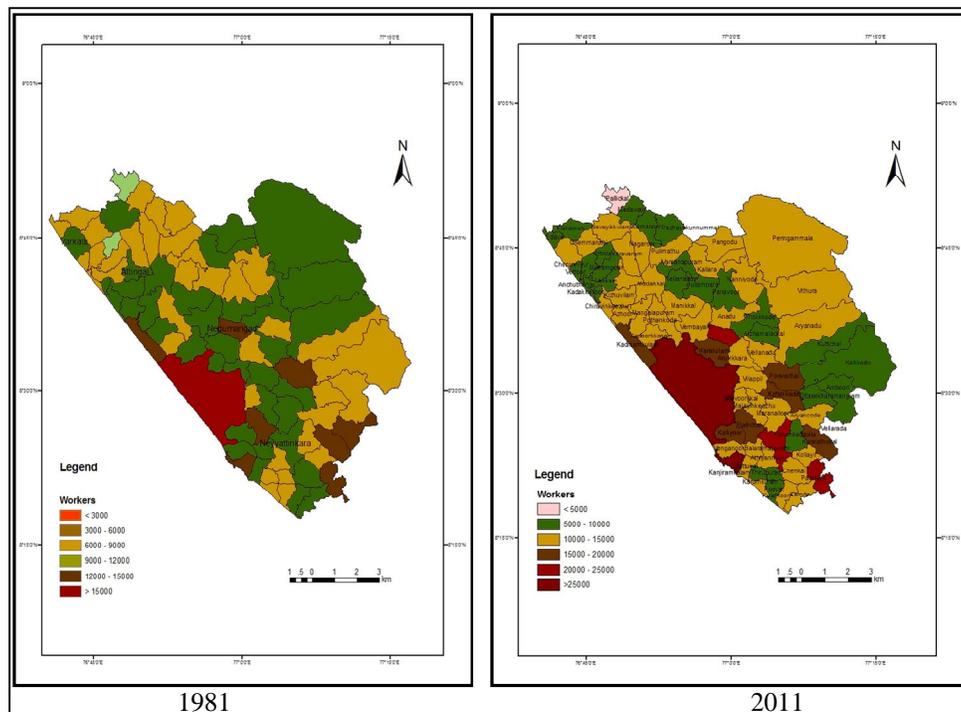


Figure 2: Distribution of main workers in Thiruvananthapuram district during 1981 and 2011

2011 census saw an increase in the total number of workers to 12,31,669 with 9,21,282 main workers and 3,10,387 marginal workers. Highest working population is still concentrated in the Thiruvananthapuram city corporation (2,98,817). Karakulam (15,194) and Kadinamkulam panchayats (13,808) reports highest working population concentration (Fig.2). Workers engaged in service sector increased to 8,19,263 while all the other sectors showed a decreasing trend. Agricultural labourers decreased to 55,785 Cultivators to 26,756 and Household workers decreased to 19,478. The midland and lowland zones of the district still posses high concentration of workers in the district but its concentration is increasing along the highland areas also.

5.3. Growth Rate of Workers

The analysis showed that a positive growth rate exists in the total number of workers in the district. An increase of 57.04 percent is seen in the three decades. It is 45.62 percent for males and 9.57 percent for females. Among different categories, except for other services, all other categories experience a fall in concentration of workers (Fig. 3).

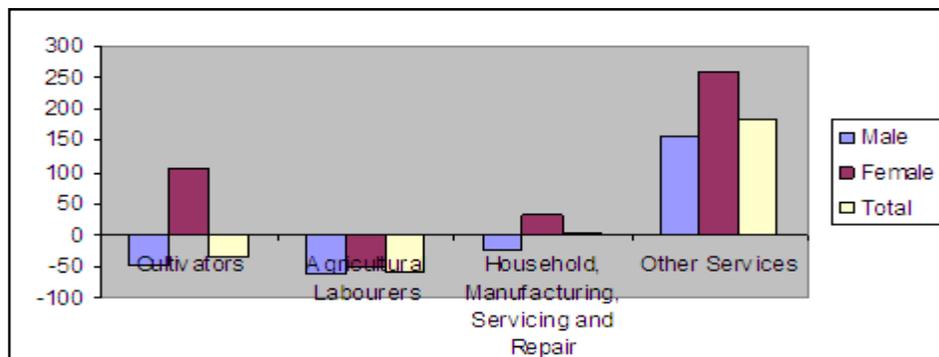


Figure 3: Growth rate of workers 1981-2011

The total growth rate of cultivators is -36.47 percent, agricultural labourers -59.74 percent and household workers 1.73 percent. For other services it is 181.94 percent. Female workers shows the highest growth rate in this sector with 258.26 percent while it is only 157.95 percent for males. The situation is same in the case of cultivators and in household workers category as these two groups include more females. The growth rate of female cultivators is 103.91 percent and household workers in 32.63 percent and in both categories males workers shows negative growth with -46.53 and -25.09 percent respectively. It is evident from the above discussions that there is a favourable space for workers especially female workers in the district.

5.4. Economic Dependency Rate (EDR)

The rate of economic dependency revealed that the economic stress of the district is becoming less with the increase in employed population. During 1981 census the economic dependency was 230.96. After this, the change was more prominent and now according to the recent census it is 168.04. For male population, in the 1981 census, EDR showed 115.56 and on the basis of 2011 census, it is 83.04 (Table 2). Where as for females, the EDR was 589.96 which was high, but according to the recent census analysis it became 367.87 which also supports the fact that a favourable atmosphere for employment development persists in the district.

Years	Male	Female	Total
1981	115.56	589.96	230.96
1991	99.08	541.75	206.71
2001	94.64	589.54	208.64
2011	83.04	367.87	168.04

Table 2: Economic Dependency Ratio of Thiruvananthapuram District 1981-2011

Source: Compiled from various census publications

5.5. Zone Wise Classification of the Workers

The lowland zone of the district has the highest proportion of working population (Table 3). In the year 1981 about 61.89 percent of workers resided in this zone. Midland zone had 33.7 percent and highland zone had only 4.31 percent workers. In the year 2011, lowland zone still has the highest proportion of workers with 64.03 percent of workers residing in this zone.

Zone	1981			1991			2001			2011		
	Male	Female	Total									
Highland	4.27	4.44	4.31	3.78	4.22	3.87	3.48	3.01	3.37	3.2	2.92	3.13
Midland	35.22	28.27	33.7	36.01	29.94	34.71	33.52	27.49	32.22	33.72	30.07	32.82
Lowland	60.49	67.27	61.89	60.2	65.82	61.4	62.99	69.48	64.39	63.06	67	64.03

Table 3: Concentration of Workers in Various Zones 1981 to 2011

Source: Compiled from various census publications

Midland zone has 32.82 percent and highland has 3.13 percent workers. There is a decrease in the percentage of workers in the highland (Table 3) and this can be attributed to increasing migration due to the change in the interest of people. Now a days people are mostly interested in activities other than primary occupations and have made them migrate to other portions of the district in search of jobs.

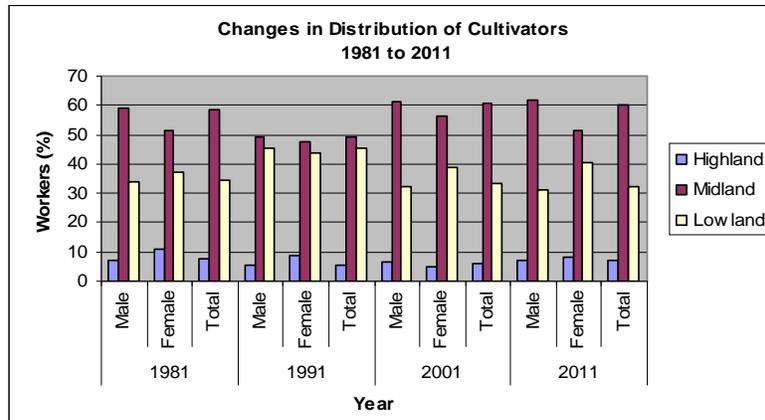


Figure 4

The study of category of workers shows that there is only a slight variation in the cultivator for the three decades (Fig.4). The highland region shows a slight decrease to 7.3 in 2011 which was 7.45 in 1981 but it is seen that the rate of cultivators increased from 2001 which was 6.7 percent.

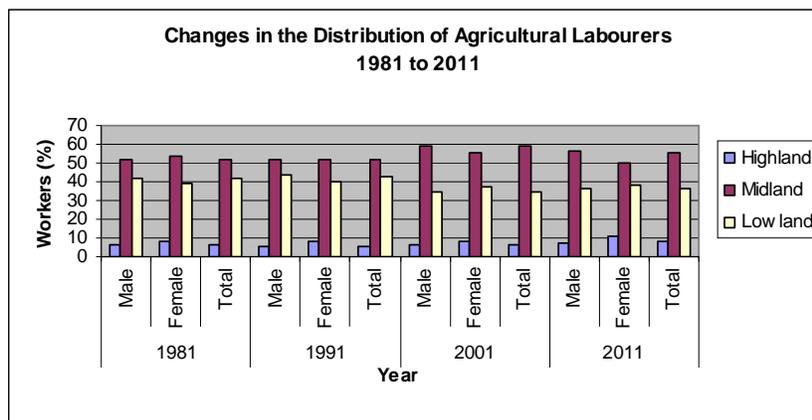


Figure 5

For the agricultural labourers, the three decades had brought only slight increase in the highland and midland region (Fig. 5) but it is negative for the midland region as the previous census had 58.65 percent but it was reduced to 55.5 in the 2011 census.

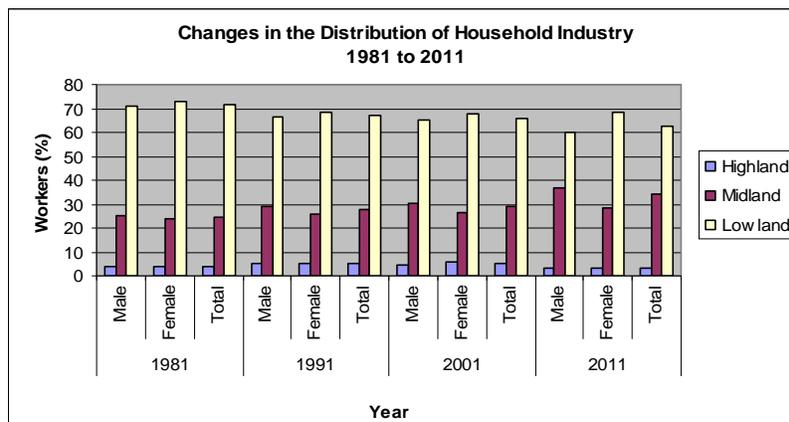


Figure 6

The study of household industry workers shows that there is positive variations in the number of workers in all zones for the three decades (Fig. 6). But the comparison of 2011 census with the previous census reveals that all the other zone shows less number of workers compared to midland which have 34.12 percent of workers to 28.93 percent in 2001. Thus the household sector is more developed along the midland zone of the district.

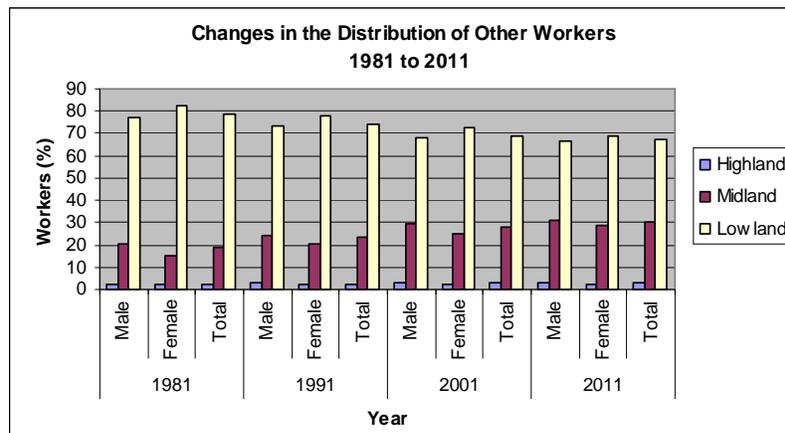


Figure 7

Other service sector shows notable changes compared to the 1981 census as during those years lowland area was mainly devoted for it as 78.49 percent of the workers from this region (Fig. 7). During 2011 census, the workers from midland increased to 30.35 percent from 28.34 percent but for lowland it decreased to 66.9 percent from 68.81 percent of 2001. Concentration of other workers remained almost constant during the study period.

According to United Nations (1973) "the process of economic growth is accompanied by profound changes in the structure of labour force. With economic development, there is a movement of labour force away from agriculture and increase in the proportion of secondary and tertiary activities. It is generally considered that once a certain stage of development has been reached, the share of labour in secondary sector may stabilize or possibly even decline, while that of tertiary continues to expand". Thus it can be analysed that the district is in the path of economic development and it initiates the need of better study which assures multidimensional development.

6. Conclusion

Man power is the basic resource of a country. The efficiency of a country to employ its human resource is important in deciding how much it will develop economically. As occupation reflects the individual's position in a technical division of labour, it is taken to be a central determinant of current and future economic opportunities in modern societies. Change in occupation may mean change in acceptable standard of living, values, ideology and circumstance in which livelihood is to be earned. It is an indicator of growing society (Pant, 1992).

Analysis revealed that the concentration of workers are increasing in the district and in that service sector workers are increasing. The lowland and midland zones are the main area of concentration of workers. This is mainly due to the increasing job opportunities in this zone. This is also the proposed site for many new ambitious projects and so is a boon for employment aspirants with its high investments in the job sector. This factor highlights the importance of better planning both in case of industrial and residential aspects and should be given ample importance while preparing development plans.

7. References

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