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EDITOR'S NOTE



In this volume, we are glad to include seven papers which bring forth a spectrum of research domains such as marketing, ICT, Corporate Governance, Human Resources, GST, Entrepreneurship, and Law. It is heartening to see that all the papers exude high levels of enthusiasm in the respective areas of research and fairly enrich the domain of knowledge in one way or the other. The research report on the “Entrepreneurial Inclinations of University Students”, contributed by the research scholar Ms. Gouri R.V. & Dr. Pradeep Kumar N., for example displays the various elements of the standard methodological terminology, thereby providing the readers a clear cut picture of the quantitative research process. The link forged to depict the relationship between theory and research is also exemplary.

However, it is not claimed that all the research papers in this volume have been perfected by peer review or editorial pruning process. The authors’ liberty to present their research findings in a format of their own grounding in the research process is honoured as a special privilege under the notion that every step the authors follow fit perfectly with the circumstances in which they conduct the research. Evidently there may be chances for a reader with a critical edge to stumble upon the methodological pitfalls found here and there in the papers and must be very cautious of blindly following the methodology in these papers as a recognisable templates for their research pursuits. KICMA publishes these papers with the utmost good faith of encouraging research and promoting research orientation among academics.

Dr. B.R. Prasannakumar
Editor-in- Chief

Consumer Engagement on Premium Cars in Kerala, India

Asha Devi J.^{1*}, Sumi A.M.* & Dr. K.S Chandrasekar²

ABSTRACT

Consumer engagement is an emotional connection between a customer and a particular brand. High consumer engagement will buy more, promote a specific brand, and increase loyalty. Can achieve consumer engagement by providing a high-quality consumer experience. The average consumer is disclosed to thousands of brand-related messages daily but is conscious of 86 and only engages with 12. It is not enough to mention the particular brand and hopes it gets noticed statistically; it will not need to ask someone. The dealer has to do more than get and keep consumers' attention and convince them to take action in response. In other words, if the dealer was not engaging consumers, they got little or no hope of turning them into loyal consumers. Premium cars were generally equipped with the leading up-to-date and highest-level technology and safety features that are not standard cars. Premium cars have high-end materials and finishes within and exterior of the car. Here, the study focused on identifying consumer engagement concerning premium cars in Kerala. It also focused on the relevance of consumer engagement, various factors affecting the sales and services of premium cars, and challenges facing the dealership for consumer engagement in the sales and services.

Keywords: Consumer Engagement, Premium Cars, Sales, Service, Kerala.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer Engagement refers to a company's or brand's efforts to create relationships with individuals through personalized interactions on multiple channels to gain and retain loyal consumers.

Successful consumer engagement accomplishes that goal by;

1. Distinguishing the brand from its competitors
2. Creates an emotional connection among consumers to the brand
3. Creating ongoing, Omni-channel conversations

Numerous positive customer engagement strategies will be wont to model a consumer engagement strategy; major brands use everything from funny, responsive social media agents to supply personalized

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discounts, offers, and reductions to inspire loyalty and affection in their consumers. There were two fundamental sorts of cars in the past, luxury and affordable, but now times have changed. Last decade, there has been a development within the “premium” car and truck category. The premium and luxury categories of cars are similar, but there are some changes, and a few characteristics are different between both vehicles. Technology and safety features are the most significant similarities between premium and luxury models. Premium and luxury vehicles are generally equipped with up-to-date and highly advanced technology and safety features that are not standard cars. The technological qualities have larger touch screens, preventative safety tech, and an array of cameras.

Luxury and premium cars consistently have high-end materials and finishes on the within and exterior of the car. High-end interior elements comprise leather seating, leather-wrapped wheel, heated seating, ventilated seating, and name-brand stereo equipment. The exterior features typically comprise bigger and better quality wheels, name-brand tires, a sunroof if available, tinted windows, and window shades. The most significant difference is that typically all luxury brand cars like Mercedes or BMW come standard with luxury features. At the same time, premium cars tend only to be the best trim level of a specific model. For example, Chrysler 300 Limited is the base trim; therefore, the Chrysler 300C Platinum is the premium car trim.

The premium car trim has all the bells and whistles and is filled with name-brand products; rock bottom trim may have various things. Another considerable difference is value v. status. Premium cars are generally not perceived when they involve status. For example, the person driving a Lexus has special status or image of wealth. The person who drives the premium version of the Kia Optima (Overland) is just seen as someone with Optima. The status and name brand are well worth the value, whereas others just want the features at a lower cost. This is the difference between a \$50,000 vehicle and an \$80,000+ vehicle.

Premium and luxury vehicles are generally equipped with the leading up-to-date and highest-level technology and safety features that are not standard cars. Additionally, luxury and premium cars typically have high-end materials and finish on the car’s interior and exterior.

Premium Cars are classified into three are;

1. Entry Premium: between 25 lakhs to 50 lakhs
2. Mid Premium: between 50 lakhs to 75 lakhs
3. Ultra Premium: Above 75 lakhs

Most roads are riddled with pits and potholes, while the remaining ones are not wide enough to handle the ever-increasing traffic volume. In the previous studies, it is stated that there was no significant relationship between the sale of brands of luxury cars in Kerala and the worst condition of the road. The appetite for luxury cars among affluent Keralites has remained high as around 150 units of cars within the high-end segment with sale prices of quite Rs. 25 lakh each are sold within the state every month.

The automobile industry has registered sales of around Rs. 75 crores per month. The annual sales of luxury carmakers like BMW, AUDI, Volvo, Porsche, Jaguar Land Rover, etc., will make astonishing sales. Based on a mean price of Rs.50 lakh, most cars carry a tag of anything between Rs. 28 lakh to Rs. 3 crores per unit. The automobile industry has registered total annual sales of nearly Rs. 900 crores. By adding premium, first-time registration charges, and road tax to the present figure, the annual turnover of Kerala’s premium car segment would touch the Rs. 1,000 crore mark.

In Kerala, the district-wise sales point that Ernakulam leads is luxury sales; after that, Kozhikode led and followed by Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur. The sales in northern districts and Malappuram are considered into the account of Kozhikode. Most buyers are Non-Resident Indians (NRI); the remaining are the state’s leading business people, medical, and IT industries. Around 30 percent of the consumers of the posh sports utility vehicles sold by Porsche and other top-end brands are below 40 years old. Women constitute only 5 percent of the total customers of the premium segment, data shows.

The majority of the consumers employ full-time drivers, taking into consideration of the poor condition of roads and inadequate parking facilities. Most of the demand is based on the diesel models, while white and silver are the most preferred colors. The luxury car industry in Kerala has noted a decent growth of 10-20 percent per year. Furthermore, they are also making a lucrative market for the top-end carmakers. In the domestic luxury car market, the sales often exceed that of a country's metro cities. Most dealers are located in Kochi, the hub of the luxury car market in Kerala. In the opinion of market experts, the general trend is moving from a traditional sedan to a cross-over vehicle. In Kerala, BMW was continuously the leader in the state's luxury car segment. It has annual sales of above 800 and 65 units monthly. Sales only in Kochi account for 15 units a month, and around 10-12 cars are sold in Thrissur.

If the average price is Rs. 50 lakh per unit, the segment's annual turnover will be around Rs.900 crore from a purchase of 1,800 units. The Insurance premium and road tax of these will amount to Rs. 1080 crore. Amidst upbeat data and sales figures, what worries the dealers is the frequent complaints of shortened tyre life they receive from the owners of those costly wheeled beauties, owing to the poor condition of our roads. Kerala is now a robust marketplace for luxury vehicles, and we need to give the proper ambiance to spice up the arrogance of the consumer to pick a specific car, says Eldo Benjamin, vice chairman of Nippon Toyota. This paper seeks to place Kerala increasingly housing some of Asia's most prominent car showrooms. It also outlines the salience and shortfalls of consumer engagement in premium cars. Here the study covers consumer engagement and the sale of premium cars in Kerala.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the relevance of consumer engagement in the sales of premium cars in Kerala.
2. To study the various factors affecting the sales and services of selected premium cars based on consumer engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Patterson et al. (2012) learned the role of consumer engagement in services. They explored the intensity of consumer engagement in service industries which has the potential to make a unique presence in explaining service loyalty. Consumer engagement includes four shells: strength, loyalty, concentration towards consumers, and interaction.

Sashi (2012) described that customer engagement integrates with the marketing concept, modeling the customer engagement cycle and matrix through relationship marketing. He created a model of the customer engagement cycle with connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, loyalty, recommendations, and engagement as stages in the cycle.

Greenberg (2008) narrated that on social media path is used for customer engagement. Some forms of social media are tools –automotive blogs, wikis, and podcasts. Some are review comments, Social tags ratings, photos, and videos. The influence of social media also impacts sales in the current market. The benefits and the issues that happened because of social media will rectify wisely.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data are collected from primary and secondary data sources. In the present research work, Premium car sales and consumer engagement have been taken for the selected period. This study mainly concentrates on primary data collected through mailing questionnaires and direct consumer interaction. Secondary data are collected from studies on consumer engagement, journals, newspapers, websites, and manuals. The data analysis technique used for the study is Percentage (%) analysis. A percentage is described as a given part or amount in every hundred. It is a fraction with 100 as the denominator and is represented by the symbol "%." It provides a detailed understanding of consumer engagement in selected premium cars in Kerala.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

From the consumers' responses to premium cars, it is identified that 41 respondents, 61% are business people. The remaining are Doctors, Engineers, Advocates, NRI, IT professionals, lecturers, etc. It shows that there is a significant relationship between consumer engagement and consumer profession. Analysis of percentage of consumer income shows that consumer's income is above rupees 1,00,000. Therefore it shows that there is a significant relationship between consumer engagement and the income of a consumer. The satisfaction level of consumers with the sales services states that 95.2% of consumers are satisfied with the after-sales services of their car companies. That means there is a significant relationship between consumer engagement and after-sale services of the company. The percentage of the quality of the consumer service department. This shows that 59.5% of consumers are highly satisfied, 38.1% are satisfied, and the remaining are just ok with consumer service. That means the majority of the consumers are highly satisfied with the consumer service of their brand. So there is a significant relationship between consumer engagement and customer services. Vice-president of Nippon Toyota, Eldo Benjamin, says that Kerala is now a substantial market for luxury vehicles and has the right ambiance to boost the customer's confidence in selecting a particular car. According to industry observers, Kerala's luxury car sales boom started in 2011-12. Now, the state is assessed to account for 13 percent of the national sales of premium cars. An upscale deluxe car is no longer the preserve of big planters and NRIs. Doctors, chartered accountants, architects, and young entrepreneurs are all lapping up marque brands. Mercedes-Benz, India's largest luxury car manufacturer, is providing its innovative 'Service on Wheels' customer offering in Kerala. This unique customer-centric initiative focuses on getting closer to the Mercedes-Benz customers in Tier II & Tier III cities, which do not have a direct dealership presence. The truck has completed nearly 25000 Kms and catered to over 500 customers in India since its inception. In Kerala, the 'Service on Wheels' truck has catered to over 100 customers in the region of Kollam, Adoor, Kottayam, Chalakudy, Thodupuzha, Trivandrum, and Pathanamthitta. This endeavor is an aspect of Mercedes-Benz's hugely popular service differentiation strategy under the 'My Mercedes, My Service' umbrella.

CONCLUSION

Consumer engagement in premium cars in Kerala has tremendous growth. The business people's Non-Resident Indian (NRIs), Doctors, Engineers, Advocates, Architect, Lecturer, IT Professionals, Actors, and Film producers choose Entry Premium Cars its price range is between 25 Lakhs to 50 Lakhs. According to Martin Schwenk, Managing Director, and CEO of Mercedes-Benz India, Indian consumers were chosen the driver-operated vehicle over many other markets. It creates a different framework: the consumer was comforted in the second seat row. They also highlight that it is a notable usage trend in India. So the company has a strong focus and dedication to the functionality and comfort in the second row. It was not achieved with the E-class Sedan but also with its SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) range of GLE and GLS. A consumer engagement campaign study identified that car manufacturers and dealerships had a lower level of trust from all sectors. Every consumer has great expectations about the quality and service of the car. So the dealers should conduct service campaigns to them to convince them about the quality of service. The increasing digitization of the auto space will increase transparency and consumer trust.

From this study, it is identified that the dealers charge high service costs. Due to that, most consumers were not in contact with their dealer company if there was any car problem. The dealership should reduce the service cost to retain the consumers, increasing consumer engagement. 95.2% of consumers are satisfied with the after-sales services of their car companies. The dealer company provides efficient after-sales services to their consumers. 59.5% of consumers are highly satisfied with the consumer service of their brand. In Kerala, most consumers prefer Sedan model premium cars and Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) premium cars. Most of the consumers in Kerala purchase premium cars based on their brand. Rests of them preferred Technology and Build quality of the cars. Advertisement has a significant influence on buying behavior. Here the study expresses that brand advertisements and purchases influenced the consumers. Most of the consumers were chosen premium cars with design of the car. Others considered the mileage, salesperson influence, vehicle test drive, and performance and maintenance costs before purchasing premium cars. Consumer engagement in premium cars increased in Kerala.

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The Right to Work in IT industry- A comparative study on the role of International Labour Standards and Indian Constitution

Dr. Bejoy M.S. Raj

Introduction

Labour Laws are based on the important aspects of human rights and the international conventions and standards. IT industry in India is the largest exporter of IT in the world. India's 79 percentage of total revenue is covered by this industry. IT industry provides for the largest private sector employment in India. Labour rights are human rights, and the ability to exercise these rights in the workplace is prerequisite for workers to enjoy a broad range of other rights, whether economic, social, cultural, political or otherwise.

India has been a member of the ILO since its inception in 1919. Some of them to be highlighted are those relating to: Hours of work, Night Work for Women, Right of Association, Weekly Rest, Workmen's Compensation, Protection against accidents, forced labour, equal Remuneration, discrimination, equality of treatment. The ILO Conventions have been ratified by India to improve the labour conditions. Even the Constitution of India is having close resemblance and impact of the ILO Constitution along with the ILO's Conventions and Recommendations.

International labour standards refer to conventions agreed upon by International States, resulting from a series of value judgments, set forth to protect basic worker rights, enhance workers job security and improve their terms of employment on a global scale. The intent of such standards, then, is to establish a worldwide minimum level of protection from inhumane labour practices through the adoption and implementation of said measures. From a theoretical viewpoint, it has been maintained, on ethical grounds, that there are certain basic human rights that are universal to humankind. Thus, it is the aim of international labour standards to ensure the provision of such rights in the workplace, such as against workplace aggression, bullying, discrimination and gender inequality, on the other hand, for working diversity, workplace democracy and empowerment. Associated with the development of successful international labour standards is proper monitoring and enforcement of labour standards. Most monitoring occurs through the ILO, but domestic agencies and other NGOs also play a role in the successful monitoring of international labour standards.

Some of those conventions specify the goals and values to be secured by labour legislation for workmen. They include: An adequate means of livelihood, Prevention of the concentration of wealth and means of production, Equal pay for equal work by men and women, Protection and preservation of the workers' health, The right to work, the right to education, and the right to public assistance in cases of undeserved want, just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief, A living wage, and a decent standard of life. It is also found out that major companies in this sector come from international regime. But the

sector is violating the basic norms of the international conventions: especially, Preamble and Minimum Standards (Core Labour Standards) of ILO. Against the Conventions of 29, 87, 89, 98, 100, 105, 106, 111, 118, 135, 156, 171 and Recommendations of 90, 113, 143, 163 etc., of ILO India has adopted more than 34 Conventions of ILO including Hours of work, Night work for women etc.

Most of the companies have the policy of working 24x7 hours, which may create problem for different sections of employees especially, women. Being the signatory of ILO, it is high time that India needs to implement the basic labour rights and wage - norms in the IT SEZ industry within the country. IT Company policies and terms and conditions mentioned in appointment letter cannot override provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act and also the company cannot violate the basic human rights of an employee which are mentioned in the Constitution of India (Fundamental Rights) and in ILO conventions, including Conventions No. 29 of 1930, 100 of 1951, 111 of 1958 etc.

Basic labour laws – Constitution of India

The main provisions of the Constitution which protects, support and act as a guideline to various labour laws for their effective implementation and functioning are:

Article 14: Equality before law and equal protection of the laws.

Article 16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

Article 19 (1) (c): Freedom to form associations and unions.

Article 23 & 24: Right against exploitation.

Article 32: Right to fundamental Remedies.

Article 35: Gives power to Parliament to legislate for the enumerated matter-which legislation can contain penal provisions.

Article 38: State to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people.

Article 39 (A): Equal justice and free legal aid.

The state shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and shall in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation of schemes or in any other way, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities Inserted by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec 8, (w.e.f 3-1-1977).

Article 41: Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases.

Article 42: Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

Article 43: Living wage, etc for workers.

Article 43 (A): Participation of workers in management of industries.

Article 47: Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.

It is essential to implement this provision into the Basic Labour Law for the IT professionals, who do overtime, night shifts etc, to avoid serious mental and physical problems.

Article 226 & 227: Power of High Court to issue certain writs and power of superintendence over all court by the High Court. In *M.C.Mehta vs State of Tamil Nadu* ((1991) 2 SCC 193) the Supreme Court held that once the fundamental rights of the labourers is infringed they could approach the Supreme Court by issuing writ under Article 32, 226 and 227.

Article 19 (1) (c) speaks about the fundamental rights to freedom of citizen it incorporates the rights to form an association and union or to participate in such associations. In *Balakotiah vs Union of India* (AIR 1958 SC 232) the appellant was terminated under Railway Service Rules for he was being a member

of Communist party and a Trade unionist. The appellant contended that the termination from service amounted in substance to a denial of the right to form association. It was therefore held that the order for terminating his services was not in contravention of Article 19 (1) (c) because the order did not prevent the appellant from continuing to be in Communist party or Trade Union. But the court kept silent on the denial of right to work on a reason that the employee is being a Communist party member.

The above-mentioned provisions of the Constitution are calculated to give an idea of the conditions under which labour can be had for work and also of the responsibility of the appropriate government, both central and state, towards the labour to secure for them social order and living wages, keeping with the economic and political conditions of the country and dignity of the nation.

Indian constitution and International labour law

India being an original member of the UN is also an active member of the specialized agencies of the UN. ILO provides technical assistants for solving labour problems. India has been a member of the ILO since its inception in 1919. ILO has adopted many conventions out of which India has ratified 34 Conventions only. Some of the highlighting ones are:

1. Hours of work¹- Convention No. 1 of 1919, relating to the limiting of working hours to 8 hours in the day and 48 hours in the week (ratified on 14th July, 1921)
2. Night Work for Women²- Convention No. 4 of 1919, which prohibits the employment of women during the night time (ratified on 14th July, 1921)
3. Right of Association³ - Convention No. 11 of 1921, relating to right of association (ratified on 11th May, 1923)
4. Weekly Rest- Convention No. 14 of 1921, provides for 24 hours weekly rest to employees in Industrial undertakings (ratified on 11th May 1923). ILO has adopted no standards that deal directly with public holidays, whereas Article 7 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights requires that such holidays be paid. It has, however, adopted standards on weekly rest..

Convention No. 106 allows temporary exemption:

- In case of accident, actual or threatened, force majeure or urgent work to premises and equipment, but only so far as may be necessary to avoid serious interference with the ordinary working of the establishment;
 - In the event of abnormal pressure of work due to special circumstances, in so far as the employer cannot ordinarily be expected to resort to other measures;
 - In order to prevent the loss of perishable goods.
5. Workmen's Compensation - Convention No.18 of 1925, provides workmen's compensation for occupational diseases (ratified on 30th September 1927). ILO defines 'Workmen Compensation' is for the Protection against sickness, disease and injury arising out employment and Constitution of India Article 42 relating to just and humane conditions of work include for social security more effectively.

1 National institutions are to determine the circumstances and limits in which exceptions to the normal hours of work are permitted:

1. Permanently in works which are essentially intermittent, for public interest, and for technical reasons;
2. Temporarily in cases of accident, urgent work, force majeure, abnormal pressure of work, collective stoppages of work and national emergency;
3. Periodically for annual stocktaking, the preparation of annual balance sheets and seasonal activities.

2 The prohibition of night work for women in industry was the subject of one of the first two international labour conventions adopted in Berne in 1906.

3 The UN has released a report on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in the workplace, to be presented to the 71st session of the general assembly on, 20th October 2016.

6. Protection against accidents - Convention No. 32 of 1932, provides for the protection of workers against accidents (ratified on 10th February, 1947)
7. Forced labour (- Convention No. 29 of 1930, concerning the suppression of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms (ratified on 30th November 1954). Article 2 of the Convention, thus, all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered him voluntarily.
8. Equal Remuneration- Convention No. 100 of 1951, concerning equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value (ratified on 25th September, 1958) The President of India promulgated the "Equal Remuneration Ordinance" on 26th September 1975 in pursuance to the Directive Principles incorporated under Article 39(d) and The ordinance was replaced by the enactment The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.
9. Discrimination⁴ - Convention No. 111 of 1958, regarding no discrimination in case of employment and occupation (ratified on 3rd June, 1960)
10. Equality of Treatment⁵- Convention No. 118 of 1962 provides equality of treatment (social security) (ratified on 19th August, 1964)

The ILO conventions have been ratified by India to improve the labour conditions. They have directed an indirect influence as well as impact on the Indian Labour Legislation. Even the unratified conventions have their impact in some or the other form in labour legislation in India. Even the Constitution of India is having close resemblance and impact of the ILO Constitution along with the ILO's Conventions and Recommendations.

A comparison of Labour Rights of India and ILO

The ILO conventions have been ratified by India to improve the labour conditions. They have directed an indirect influence as well as impact on the Indian Labour Legislation. Even the unratified conventions have their impact in some or the other form in labour legislation in India. Even the Constitution of India is having close resemblance and impact of the ILO Constitution along with the ILO's Conventions and Recommendations.

Sl. No.	Constitution of India	Constitution of ILO
1	Preamble: Justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thoughts, expression, belief faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity;	All human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity;
2		Establishment of Peace and Harmony of the world;
(i)	Just and humane conditions of work and this object is further achieved through the provisions of the Factories act, 1948;	Establishment of a maximum working day and week;
(ii)	Article 41 deals with Right to work, education and public assistance;	Prevention of unemployment;
(iii)	Article 43 requires the States to take measures to secure to the workers adequate living wage;	Provision for adequate living wage;

4 Under ILO Convention No 111, of 1958 defines 'discrimination' includes 'any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation'

5 Convention No. 19: Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation), 1925

(iv)	Article 42 relating to just and humane conditions of work include for social security more effectively provided in social security legislations like Workmen's Compensation Act, E.S.I Act and E.P.F Act;	Protection against sickness, disease and injury arising out employment;
(v)	Article 24 specifically provides for protection of children, young persons and women, which is also provided in Factories Act;	Protection of Women, Young persons, and children:
(vi)	Social security legislations mentioned above in item (iv) provide for this subject.	Provision of old -age and injury protection;
(vii)	Article 39 (c) provides for equal remuneration for work of equal value;	Recognition of the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value;
(viii)	Article 19 (1) (c) ensure Freedom of Association. India has ratified ILO convention No. 11 & 141.	Recognition of the principle of freedom of association;

Conclusion

All employees around the world should have decent working conditions. Companies need to uphold labour standards across their own operations and value chains. Decent work involves employment that is productive and delivers a fair income. It also should ensure workplace security, social protection, better prospects for personal development and social integration. Businesses should also focus on non-discrimination, equal opportunities and treatment (including for men and women), and freedom to express workplace concerns. The industrial or labour laws of the country are also applicable to the IT Industries, but not all the laws. The IT industries have been exempted from many labour laws due to its unique working conditions. Labour in IT companies sometimes is not considered as 'hard' work as compared to other industrial working modes. But the emotional and the mental pressure they undergo is always went unnoticed. The IT industries try their level best to avoid the obligations which are imposed on them by the law, the so called HR laws which are controlling the employment process of the industry are often employer friendly. But in recent times the employees are getting aware of the labour rights they poses as being "workers of computers". The awareness of the so called international and national labour rights empower the employee's confidence, especially in getting unionized, and enhance his working skills. Such a change in IT labour laws would create a good working atmosphere and it will also create a better employee-employer relationship.

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Awareness and Perception of Consumers towards Goods and Service Tax

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Abstract

On July 1, 2017, the GST was introduced to resolve the issues with the prior tax system by subsuming a number of indirect taxes. One of the key aspects of the new system is that consumers bear the final burden of tax payment as it is a destination-based tax system. GST is implemented with the intention of simplifying the tax structure, reducing the tax-on-tax effect, increase in the gross domestic product, reduce the price of goods and benefiting consumers. Thus, when GST is implemented, the consumer is the group that will be most affected. So, this study aims to assess the awareness and perception of consumers towards the GST system. The study reveals that there is a significant correlation between consumers' perceptions of the GST and their level of awareness of it. And the qualification level of consumers has a strong influence on their awareness regarding GST.

Keywords: *Consumer awareness, Goods and Service Tax, Perception, Qualification of consumer, Simplification of Tax structure, Tax on tax effect*

Introduction

Clauses 366 (12A) of the constitution Bill defines GST as "goods and service tax" means any tax on supply of goods, or services or both except taxes on the supply of the liquor for human consumption. Further the clause 366 (26A) of the Bill defines Services means anything other than Goods. Thus, it can be said that GST is a comprehensive tax levy on manufacture, sale and consumption of goods and services at a national level. The proposed tax will be levied on all transactions involving supply of goods and services, except those which are kept out of its preview.

With the aim of having one nation, one tax, the GST, a comprehensive form of VAT, was adopted in India on July 1st, 2017. By combining a number of indirect taxes, it is a unified tax system. It does away with several taxes and lessens the cascading impact, which makes it possible to sell goods to consumers at cheaper rate. It simply taxes the value additions made at each stage and the final burden of paying tax is borne by the consumer. By abolishing the jurisdictional restrictions on the flow of goods and services, GST creates a common market in India. The dual tax system eliminates double taxation and gives the federal and state governments equal authority to administer and collect taxes.

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The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is a significant tax reform in India's indirect tax system. It is a destination-based tax system and tax is collected from the point of consumption. Therefore, the final burden of paying tax lies on consumers. So, it is important to measure their awareness and perception towards GST.

Literature Review

Ray Sarbapriya, 2020 found that most of the respondents support the new tax reform for India and opined that the turning point in the country's taxation structure. The majority of customers believe that GST is a fair tax and will have a positive impact on GDP and the nation's economy over the long term. He suggested that the government must put more effort to ensure that customers understand the GST well and form a favorable opinion of it, which will encourage acceptance.

Kumar, 2018 the survey revealed that the number of legal requirements has increased due to GST. The majority of people believe they still need more clarification on the GST and have expressed a desire to talk to others about it. Customers must have a good understanding of the taxation policy in order to create a favorable perception of it. The Haryana Custom Department might launch and promote a significant publicity campaign that would aid in educating consumers about the benefits of GST in India and creating good perceptions among them.

Minucg & Jijik, 2019 The study found that the majority of customers agreed that the GST is a straightforward and clear tax system that contributes to the government's increased revenue. In the future, GST will contribute to lower product and service costs, which will lower our nation's inflation rate. Future GDP growth in our nation will be boosted by the GST, which will also raise government revenue.

Nayaka, 2022 According to the study's findings, consumers have a reasonable level of knowledge of the GST, and that knowledge varies depending on the respondents' levels of education. The majority of respondents had a favorable opinion of the GST system, and the majority of consumers are happy with how well it functions. Consumer awareness must be raised by ramping up advertising efforts and adding a course on the GST to undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as other means.

Statement of the problem

In India, GST came into effect on July 1st, 2017 to address the shortcomings of the prior system. Transparency, ease of compliance, simplicity, reduction in tax burden, mitigation of tax-on-tax effect, simplification of tax rates and structure, and the long-term benefit of economic development are the key objectives of the new system.

Recent studies, including by the OECD, indicate a link between tax morale- citizens' perceptions of tax issues and perceptions of the quality of social expenditures. In other words, people who receive good quality public services are more willing to pay their taxes.

It's critical to understand how consumers feel about the new system while evaluating its impact and efficacy. Since the new system is a destination-based tax mechanism and collects tax at the point of consumption, it has a greater impact on consumers. The new system of tax may create a feeling among consumers that they are being charged unreasonably in the name of tax. Consumers ultimately bear the burden of paying taxes. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how customers view and accept the GST.

Every public policy requires the trust and acceptance of people for whom they are intended. In case of GST also, strict regulations and routine check by authority is not enough for better tax compliance. Consumers should be aware and cooperative to tax process in order to ensure tax collection. If the consumers have a better perception towards GST backed by informed judgment, vendors will also be forced to comply with tax regulations (like issuing bill on sale). An educated consumer will also be aware of the consequences of not complying with tax regulations.

In our economy, consumers belong to various categories. They also differ on educational qualifications also. So, it is important to examine whether there is any relation between educational level and consumers' awareness about GST.

Objectives of the study

1. To measure the awareness and perception of consumers towards GST.
2. To study the association between the awareness and perceptions of consumers towards existing indirect tax system.

Methodology

The study aims to find awareness and perception of consumers in Thiruvananthapuram towards GST. A sample size of 100 respondents were selected based on convenience sampling. A questionnaire using 5-point Likert scale has been designed to measure the awareness and perception among consumers regarding GST. For measuring Awareness and Perception, five statements are used in each variable namely: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. The Statistical Tool -Pearson's Correlation is used for analysis and interpretation of data collected.

Results and Discussions

Table 1
Awareness of Consumers on GST

	Mean	Standard Deviation
GST is simple and understandable (A1)	3.3700	1.55476
GST enhanced transparency in tax system (A2)	3.3800	1.65010
GST rates are considered when making purchase decisions (A3)	3.3000	1.49410
GST invoice is clear and understandable (A4)	3.3700	1.55476
GST is beneficial in long-run (A5)	3.3800	1.65010

Source: Primary Data

Table 2
Perception of Consumers on GST

	Mean	Standard Deviation
GST is a good tax reform but needs improvements (P1)	3.3800	1.65010
GST has increased the tax burden of consumers (P2)	3.3600	1.56683
GST has impacted the purchasing behaviour (P3)	3.3700	1.55476
Prices got reduced after implementation of GST (P4)	3.3800	1.65010
GST has increased the tax revenue of Govt. & beneficial for the economic development (P5)	3.3300	1.49410

Source: Primary Data

The mean score in Table 1 and Table 2 indicate that most of the selected consumers have a better awareness and positive perception towards GST.

Hypothesis Testing

H1: There is statistically significant relationship between awareness and perception regarding GST.

GST has increased the tax revenue of Govt. & beneficial for the economic development (P5)	Pearson Correlation	.852**	.887**	1.000**	.852**	.887**	.887**	.872**	.852**	.887**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).											

Source: Primary Data

Correlation test is used to determine compute different kinds of correlation coefficients between variables and if the correlations are significant or not. The alternative hypothesis is that there is a significant association between awareness and perception of consumers towards GST. Those consumers who are more aware of GST have a more positive perception and accept the new tax system. This hypothesis is being tested in this analysis. For that, five statements from each variable are given to respondents for measuring awareness and perception.

It is clear from the study that around 61 percent of the respondents are aware about the GST and their perception towards GST system is positive. They agree that the new tax system is simple, understandable and transparent. The system helps the government to increase the tax revenue and thereby achieve the economic development. They are agreed that it is a good tax reform which is beneficial in long run but needs improvements.

Those consumers who are not aware about the system have a negative perception and they believed that the new system caused to increase their tax burden and results increased price of goods and services.

The correlation between the two variables has proved to be significant and the positive values of correlation indicate a positive correlation between the variables. Hence the alternative hypothesis H1 shall be accepted.

H2: There is statistically significant relationship between qualification and level of awareness about GST.

Table 4
Correlation between Educational level and Awareness on GST

		Education Qualification	Avg_Awareness
Education Qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Avg_Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.656**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data

The alternative hypothesis is that there is a significant relationship between qualification level and awareness about GST. Those consumers who have better educational qualification are more aware of GST and accept the new system. Hence the alternative hypothesis H2 shall be accepted.

Conclusion

This study attempted to assess consumers’ awareness of the GST and determine their perceptions towards it. And also tried to measure if there is any association between the qualification and awareness level of

consumers. It was shown that there is a significant correlation between consumers' perceptions of the GST and their level of awareness of it. Around 39 percent of the 100 samples chosen from the city of Thiruvananthapuram are not fully aware of GST. Their perception is affected by their level of awareness. And it varies depending on the respondents' levels of education. Consumer awareness must be raised through increasing promotional activities. The government should work more to ensure that consumers understand the GST well and form a favourable opinion of it, which will encourage acceptance. Good consumer awareness is crucial since it can create a favourable perception of the taxation policy.

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Corporate Governance -Perception of Employees of IT Sector in Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Corporate governance refers to the set of guidelines, customs, and procedures that regulate and control a business. Corporate governance generally entails striking a balance between the needs of all of a company's various stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, clients, suppliers, financiers, the government, and the local community. This study aims to investigate how employees of Information Technology(IT) companies view corporate governance in their organisations. Their perception towards different aspects of corporate governance are examined in this research paper. In order to study the perception of employees a five point Likert scale questionnaires were used. to investigates how employees perceive corporate governance. The results were positive because the majority of employees emphasised the importance of proper implementation of corporate governance.

Keywords: Corporate governance, perception, Stakeholders, Management, IT companies

Introduction

Corporate governance is the collection of laws, procedures, and rules that govern how corporates are run. It involves the factors that affect the stake holders of the firm. According to J. Wolfensohn, president of the World Bank, (1999)“Corporate governance is about promoting corporate fairness, transparency and accountability”. The corporate governance framework is framed by Board of Directors. Decisions about applying corporate governance in the firm have a greater effect on employees. Since employees are among the most significant stakeholders, it is to be expected that they will have the highest level of stakeholder engagement. Corporate governance in India is based on policies, internal controls, and procedures that define the strategy for managing stakeholders and business operations, including management, staff, customers, industry associations, and the government. Such policies should be structured in a way that upholds the values of transparency, accountability and fairness. A great deal of serious attention has been paid to corporate governance over the past 10 years as a result of high-profile frauds and other illegal behaviour by powerful company executives. A company's financial health and level of trustworthiness may suffer as a result of bad corporate governance.

Statement of the Problem

Globalisation had a greater influence on the growth of IT sector in India. The Indian IT industry saw a significant rise in the share of technology as more and more service providers both Indian and global

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provide low cost, flexible solutions to customers. Fair, transparent and ethical governance practices should be adopted by the IT firms to continue its growth. The companies have to adopt a Code of Conduct to its employees including Managing Director and Executive Directors. The employees must have proper awareness about the corporate governance practices of the firms. This research paper aims to find out the perception of employees towards the corporate governance practices of their firm. It also analyses the level of satisfaction among employees regarding the disclosure of information to employees as a stakeholder of the company.

Literature Review

According to CotelU (1995), the equity distribution between insiders and outside investors—including executives, CEOs, and other corporate or institutional investors connected to management—determines corporate governance. Berle and Means (1932). Viewed that the main activities of corporate governance are controlling and regulating ownership within the organisation. A more complete structure for the corporate governance idea has been presented by Calder (2003). According to this study, corporate governance is connected to the procedures, obligations, and controls carried out by organisations' governing bodies. In his research, Wolneizer (1995) observed that while audit committees may increase public trust in the financial reporting process' integrity and strengthen auditor independence, the goal of raising the caliber of financial reporting is not likely to be achieved. According to Dr. P.K. Chakroborthy (2004) while the board of directors are ultimately in charge of ensuring good corporate governance, the role of the auditors as well as that of other organisations like the government, regulators, industry associations, chambers of commerce, etc. is also crucial. In his article on what went wrong with Satyam, Professor JP Sharma(2014) came to the conclusion that tough policy changes are needed to reform corporate governance in India. Corporate governance systems can at least serve as a way of discovering unethical behaviour by senior management before it is too late, even though they cannot totally prohibit it. Botha (2011) emphasised the importance of "employees being aware of their company's corporate governance systems as well as its objectives and directions because employees' involvement significantly contributes to the improvement of the business and creates confidence in the promotion of corporate governance principles in the workplace." According to Davies (2006), employees are a key stakeholder in every business since they use the organisation to enhance and expand their resumes while also providing the skills and expertise that the company needs to succeed.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the perception of employees towards the corporate governance practices of their firm.
2. To analyse the level of awareness among employees regarding the corporate governance practices of the organization.

Research Methodology

The present study has adopted survey method for collecting the views of the employees of the IT companies regarding corporate governance practices. So the population of the study consists of employees working in various IT companies in Kerala. The sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used for the study since the population is limited but extremely large. A total of 100 employees from top level and middle level were selected as sample. To gather the primary data, a standardised questionnaire was given to each participant. The study was deemed to be appropriate for the Likert's 5-point scale method. Secondary data were collected from Annual Reports, Newspapers and from different websites.

Hypothesis

- 1 The awareness level of the employees regarding corporate governance has no significant influence on their perception on corporate governance practices of their firms.

Corporate governance in IT sector

The Information Technology (IT) industry has a unique position among the many industrial sectors because it is a significant source of foreign exchange for India. The businesses in the IT industry offer information technology (IT) services such software support, computer system design, and data processing capabilities. Because of the numerous corporate scandals that have occurred globally, good governance in IT firms is urgently needed. - The IT Governance Institute (ITGI) formed by Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA), a global body of information security professionals, defines IT governance as the board's ability to direct and control the enterprise's use of IT resources in line with strategic goals.

Information technology is essential for the growth of contemporary industries as well as for the nation as a whole. One of the major drivers of economic growth for the Indian economy has been the IT sector. The sector has significantly contributed to changing the perception of India from a bureaucratic economy with slow growth to one with inventive entrepreneurs and a major player in the provision of top-notch technological solutions and business services on a worldwide scale. The industry of information and communication technology has been crucial to the development of Kerala. The value Kerala's IT sector adds to the state's economy must be greatly increased if Kerala is to maintain its position as a top location for IT. Technopark, Thiruvananthapuram, Infopark, Kochi and Cyber Park, Kozhikode are the major IT parks of Kerala.

Analysis and Interpretations of Data

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	56	56
	Female	44	44
	Total	100	100
Age	25 - 35	27	27
	36 - 45	33	33
	46 - 55	15	15
	Above 55	25	25
	Total	100	100
Employment status	Top level	32	32
	Middle level	68	68
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary data

Table 2
Employees' Perceptions towards Corporate Governance

Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
Code of conduct helps the efficient functioning of the company	3.98	1.33
Corporate governance is a key to success of the company	3.64	1.28

Proper training has been giving about the matters related to corporate governance	3.77	1.42
My organisation ensures equal treatment of the employees of my firm	3.87	1.34
My organisation ensures the independency of internal and external auditors	4.10	1.27
My organisation ensures the maximum access of information to the shareholders	4.40	0.98
My organisation ensures the resources allocation in the interest of shareholders	4.36	1.03
My organisation favours focusing on maximising value rather than maximising profits.	3.90	1.25
My company absolutely forbids defrauding customers by making implausible promises or having unrealistic expectations	4.00	1.23
My organization considers environmental issues during decision making process	2.53	1.14
My organization ensures transparency and fairness in business transactions	3.77	1.42
My organization is a socially and ethically responsible citizen	4.10	1.27

Source: Primary data

The results of the study depicts that the highest mean score was obtained for the statement that the company ensures maximum access of information to the shareholders followed by the statements that the firm ensures resource allocation in the interest of the shareholders and that the organization is a socially and ethically responsible citizen. The mean scores shows that the employees have a good attitude towards the corporate governance system followed by their firms.

Table 3
Awareness level among employees regarding corporate governance practices

Awareness level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard deviation
High -3	58	58	2.44	0.279
Moderate-2	28	28		
Low -1	14	14		
Total	100	100		

Source: Primary data

Hypothesis test

1. The awareness level of the employees regarding corporate governance has no significant influence on their perception on corporate governance practices of their firms

Table 4
ANOVA test for differences in perception of employees on corporate governance practices based on awareness level

Variables	Level of awareness	Mean	Standard deviation	Significance
Corporate governance variables	High	3.07	0.061	0
	Moderate	4.65	1.406	
	Low	4.92	1.028	

P<0.05

Source: Primary data

The ANOVA result shows that awareness level of the respondents influences their perception on corporate governance of the company with statistical significance at the level of 0.05 (sig=0.001). The p value is less than 0.05. So, the hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

The primary goal of the study was to examine how IT sector employees perceive corporate governance. The study revealed that employees have good knowledge about corporate governance practices of their firm. The results were positive because the majority of employees emphasised the importance of corporate governance, even if some employees lacked enough knowledge about these issues. Employees feel that corporate governance is essential to an organization's success. The majority of employees stressed the value of implementing corporate governance training programmes within their workplace. Additionally, a significant majority of employees demonstrated strong social awareness of corporate governance standards because they believe their company values cultural sensitivity. Good governance practices will increase efficiency among employees. There is a critical need for employees to get more involved in developing and broadening their knowledge of corporate governance practices within their company.

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Entrepreneurial Inclination of Students at the University of Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Research on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students from developing countries is scarce. This article provides some information on the propensity for entrepreneurship among University of Kerala students. A total of 234 graduate and undergraduate students from three faculties were surveyed to gauge entrepreneurial inclination and the relationship between demographic and socioeconomic characteristics and entrepreneurial inclination. The entrepreneurial inclinations of part-time and full-time students differed noticeably. On the basis of analysis and findings, recommendations for further study are offered in this article.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship inclination

Introduction

Over the past few decades, entrepreneurship research has increased (Alstete 2002; Klapper 2004; Frank et al. 2005; Gurol and Atsan 2006). This has mainly been caused by how crucial entrepreneurship is to promoting economic growth and jobs (Gorman, Hanlan, and King 1997; Brockhaus 1991). In terms of engagement in entrepreneurial activities, developed and developing nations showed significant differences in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report 2007 (Bosma et al.). The majority of developed nations, including Spain, Greece, and Italy, reported excellent rates of entrepreneurial participation. With the exception of China, Romania, and Thailand, where participation rates have increased, developing nations still lag behind (Bosma et al.).

In order to realise its vision of a "Skilled India," the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Skill Development work quickly and to the highest standards to skill a large number of people. It is supported by the Directorate General of Training (DGT), the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA), and the 187 training partners registered with NSDC, which are its functional arms. The Ministry is in charge of organising all national skill development initiatives, bridging the gap between the demand and supply for skilled labour, developing the framework for technical and vocational education, skill up-skilling, developing new skills, and encouraging creative thinking for both existing and future job opportunities.

It is acknowledged that entrepreneurship can serve as a catalyst and incubator for scientific advancement, new product development, and market innovation (Mueller and Thomas 2000; Jack and Anderson 1999). These advantages, in our opinion, will also strengthen the Indian economy. This will facilitate the creation of a precise national policy to encourage entrepreneurship.

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Research on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students from developing countries is scarce. By offering some insights into students' entrepreneurial intentions in India, a developing nation, this study seeks to address this gap.

Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is a person who launches a new business despite risk and uncertainty in the hopes of making money and expanding their business. The act of producing something new and valuable while investing the necessary time and effort into taking on financial, psychological, and social risks is known as entrepreneurship (Hisrich and Peters, 2002).

The process of founding and growing an enterprise is called entrepreneurship. It is a complex activity. Timmons (1989: 1) described it as "the power to make anything from essentially nothing." Entrepreneurship is "initiating... and establishing an enterprise rather than... monitoring one," claims Cromie (2000).

The best predictor of intended action is intentions (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Yi, 1989). A large portion of what we term "entrepreneurial" activity is carefully thought out conduct. By detecting intentions toward any intended conduct, we can anticipate it more accurately than we can explain it (Krueger, Reilly, Reilly and Carsrud 2000). Thus, knowing intentions is especially helpful when the target occurrence is uncommon, unclear, or includes unpredictable time gaps, such in the case of entrepreneurship (MacMillan and Katz, 1992).

Theories on Entrepreneurship:

Numerous entrepreneurial theories can be found in the literature, according to a review. According to one idea, personality qualities including the demand for achievement and locus of control are related to entrepreneurship (McClelland, 1987; Dyer, 1994). Another idea connects it to formal institutional elements including laws, regulations, policies, government support, and culture (North, 1990). The aim or propensity of students to become entrepreneurs is investigated in this study.

Two significant theories are revealed by a survey of purposeful models for entrepreneurship. Shapero's Entrepreneur Event Model and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (1982). Both are helpful in predicting business intention. Since it is challenging to observe activity, the intention is proven to be the best predictor of planned behaviour. (1989) Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Yi, 1989)

Entrepreneurial Intention

Numerous empirical findings are revealed by a survey of the literature. Studies on entrepreneurship from the past few years, however, several of these investigations were carried out in Developed nations (Veciana, Aponte, and Urbano 2005; Lee et al. 2006; Kolvareid 1996; Koh 1995; Tkachev and Kolvareid 1999; Peterman and Kennedy 2003; Guerrero, Rialp and Urbano 2008; Wang and Wong 2004; Li 2007).

Extensive research of university students' entrepreneurial perceptions in Puerto Rico and Catalan was done by Veciana, Aponte, and Urbano in 2005. Only 12 per cent of the Puerto Rico sample expressed a genuine intention to start a business, whereas 74% exhibited high attractiveness and 66.14% had high feasibility.

Students from China, Fiji, Korea, the United States, and Korea were all included in a thorough study. According to Lee et al. (2006), the thriving American economy is to blame for the poor intention of American pupils. However, students from Fiji and Korea demonstrated strong entrepreneurial intent.

The entrepreneurial intent of male students is typically higher than that of female students, however a Russian survey of 512 medical and technical students found no evidence to support this claim. Another study carried out in Spain found that female students had higher entrepreneurial intentions (Guerrero, Rialp, and Urbano 2008).

In a number of nations, including Spain (Veciana, Aponte, and Urbano, 2006) and Russia (Tkachev and Kolvereid, 1996), family engagement in business has been proven to affect pupils' entrepreneurial tendency, but not in the United States.

Students who enrol in classes linked to entrepreneurship are more likely to launch a company. Additionally, it was discovered that age and employment history affect entrepreneurial intent. Self-employment has been demonstrated to benefit from work experience (Bates 1990; Schiller and Crewson 1997).

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to investigate the level of entrepreneurship propensity among the younger generation. In particular, this study aims:

1. To examine the relationship between students' demographic factors and their entrepreneurial inclination
2. To determine whether there is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclination of full-time and part-time students,
3. To determine whether there is a significant difference in the entrepreneurial inclination of undergraduate and postgraduate students
4. To determine whether there is a significant difference between the type of programme enrolled in and students' entrepreneurial inclination

Research Design and Methodology

In order to collect data from the respondents, who were undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Kerala, An online survey was self-administered was used to get the data. Two components make up the questionnaire: Section A contained questions intended to elicit demographic and other personal characteristics; Section B contained 12 questions intended to learn more about respondents' perceptions of and propensities for entrepreneurship. The respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements in the questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale in this section. Due to time constraints, convenience sampling was used, and 234 of the 550 questionnaires issued were successfully collected (a response rate of approx. 42 per cent), was judged to be complete, and could be used for data analysis. Randomly selected classrooms with active instruction had their completed questionnaires gathered there and then.

Demographic and Personal Characteristics of the Sample

Based on the demographic information in Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents (67.5 percent) were female and between the ages of 21 and 25. (71.4 percent). 86.3 percent of the total respondents were undergraduate students, and the remaining 13.7 percent were graduate students. Furthermore, 67.5 percent of respondents were full-time students, as opposed to 32.5 percent of respondents who were part-time students.

Table 1
Frequency Distributions of Sample (n = 234)

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	76	32.5
Female	158	67.5

Age		
<20	8	3.4
21-25	167	71.4
26-30	32	13.7
>30	27	11.5
Student Status		
Full-time	158	67.5
Part time (Distance Education)	76	32.5
Student education level		
Undergraduate	202	86.3
Postgraduate	32	13.7
Programme enrolled		
Bachelor of Geography	2	0.8
Bachelor of Business Administration	94	40.2
Bachelor of Sociology	13	5.6
Bachelor of English	30	12.8
Bachelor of Commerce	30	12.8
Bachelor of Psychology	1	0.4
Bachelor of History	21	9
Master in English Literature	2	0.8
Master in Commerce	13	5.6
Master in Business Administration	28	12

Responses to the Construct on Entrepreneurial Inclination: Means and Frequency Distribution

Table 2
Mean and Frequency Distribution of Responses (n = 234)

Items	Mean	Strongly Disagree and Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Strongly Agree and Agree (%)
1. I have strong business plans once I finish my studies.	3.73	8.5	31.1	57.6
2. I am interested in starting my own business venture.	3.92	8.3	17.4	71.4
3. I was always inclined to entrepreneurship.	3.56	7.0	41.5	48.6
4. I always imagine myself being a type of entrepreneur one day.	3.77	7.5	24.9	64.7
5. I'm incredibly motivated to run my own business.	4.01	4.5	17.4	85.1
6. If a nice business opportunity comes up, I won't mind quitting my education.	2.58	51.5	22.4	23.2
7. Social and economic climate in India is very conducive to entrepreneurship.	3.45	7.0	44.8	45.2
8. In our society, entrepreneurs are treated with utmost respect.	3.69	2.5	37.3	57.3
9. Current economic climate, brought on by globalisation, is unfavourable for business owners.	3.00	26.1	45.2	25.7

10. In Indian society, there aren't many opportunities for entrepreneurship.	3.09	26.1	36.9	34.0
11. In five to seven years, I envision working for a company.	2.75	42.8	33.6	20.7
12. Planning for a business of some kind has, is, or will be a significant aspect of my college career.	3.66	6.8	36.3	56.8

The means and frequency distribution of the 12 responses to the questionnaire's Section B items are tabulated in Table 2. This table demonstrates that the mean score (with the exception of two questions) is greater than 3, indicating that the participant has a high inclination for entrepreneurship and a low preference for choosing a job (self-employment). A low score for item 6 ("If a great business opportunity arises, I won't mind terminating my studies.") may indicate that respondents value education even when they have an entrepreneurial bent.

Three columns—"strongly disagree and disagree," "neutral," and "strongly agree and agree"—have been added to Table 2 to further characterise the responses. Strong entrepreneurial inclination is indicated by the significantly larger ratio of "strongly agree and agree" replies to "strongly disagree and disagree." However, the "neutral" response rate is also relatively high, demonstrating the respondents' condition of ambivalence.

Four (items 1, 2, 4, and 5) of the 12 measures used to investigate the perception of entrepreneurial inclination directly measure the students' entrepreneurial intention. The high frequency of replies to items 2, 4, and 5 suggests that the respondents have a strong entrepreneurial propensity. Of the respondents, 85% said they had a strong desire to own their own business, 71% said they were interested in beginning one, and 65% said they saw themselves as some kind of entrepreneur in the future. However, the desire to launch a business does not come right away. The responses on items 1, 4, 11, and 12 indicated that the students were more likely to establish or own a business later in life.

It is crucial to emphasise further that the average scores for all four items—numbers 1, 2, 4, and 5—are higher than 3.7, which is much higher than the neutral score.

Based on the responses to questions 7, 9, and 10, it can be seen that few respondents firmly agreed with the statements "The Indian social and economic environment was supportive of entrepreneurship," "The economic conditions were favourable for entrepreneurs," and "There were many business/entrepreneurial opportunities in the Indian society." Most respondents were also unsure on these points. This would suggest that the students are unaware of the support network, incentives, and programmes the Indian government has put in place. Additionally, it's possible that the students won't be able to relate to or comprehend how outside environmental conditions, such as graduate unemployment, affect entrepreneurship. This perspective would suggest that additional efforts should be made to inspire, raise awareness of, and provide support for those interested in entrepreneurship.

Gender, Student Status, and Education level Vs Entrepreneurial inclination: T-test

To test if there were any statistically significant differences in the propensity for entrepreneurship between male and female students, a T-test was used. It revealed a p-value of larger than 0.05, indicating that there was variance homogeneity (one of the assumptions for independent group t-test). At the 5% level of significance, neither the t-value nor the accompanying p-value were significant. We can therefore draw the conclusion that there are no appreciable differences between men and women in terms of their propensity for entrepreneurship. Table 3 presents the outcomes.

Table 3
t-test for Gender, Student Status, Occupation, and Degrees

Variables	t test		
	t	df	Sig
Gender	0.583	232	0.560
Student Status	-1.749	232	0.082
Work Status	-0.339	129	0.735
Degree Status	-0.669	36.680	0.508

A test was used to see if there were any notable differences between full-time and part-time pupils in regards to their inclination for entrepreneurship. The t-value and accompanying p-value were determined to be significant. Accordingly, we draw the conclusion that there considerable variation between full-time students compared to part-time, given their preference for entrepreneurship. The mean score for full-time students (3.74) was lower than the mean score for part-time students (3.76). the number of students enrolled in part-time classes (3.93). This was because there were already many part-time students involved. in a few entrepreneurial endeavours. the people who were Possibly due to some jobs enrolling in higher education discontent with their employment. The outcomes are shown in Table 3.

The perception of undergraduate and graduate students toward entrepreneurship was compared using a T-test to see if there were any significant differences. At the 5% level, the t-value and related p-value were judged to be non-significant. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that there are no appreciable differences between undergraduate and graduate students in terms of their propensity for entrepreneurship. Table 3 presents the outcomes.

Programs enrolled vs Entrepreneurial inclination: Analysis of Variances (ANOVA)

Students from the various programmes varied significantly in terms of their propensity towards entrepreneurship. The following analysis is shown. It was determined that the F-value and associated p-value were significant ($p > 0.05$). Table 4 presents the findings. This finding demonstrates that business students frequently have an entrepreneurial inclination.

Table 4. ANOVA for Programs Enrolled					
Variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Programme enrolled	586.500	9	65.167	2.322	0.016

Conclusion

The best predictor of planned action has always been inclination, especially when that behaviour is uncommon and challenging to detect. Studying the entrepreneurial tendency of students—future India's generation—becomes even more important when entrepreneurship is put on the national agenda.

Eighty-five percent of the University of Kerala students said they were interested in beginning their own business and had a strong desire to operate a business (71 percent). Students may be discouraged from establishing a business soon after graduation for a variety of reasons, including lack of exposure, experience, and knowledge about entrepreneurial opportunities and programmes.

Professionals with advanced degrees will be the next generation of entrepreneurs. Compared to full-time students, part-time students are more likely to be business owners. The study also discovered a significant link between family background and entrepreneurial inclination.

Between undergraduate and graduate students and their inclination for entrepreneurship, the study found no evident differences. The kind of programme the students picked and their inclination for entrepreneurship varied, though. They should have a strong support system in place so they may benefit from the nation's strong entrepreneurial tendencies.

Limitations of the Study

There were certain limitations of this exploratory investigation. The sample for this study was gathered from only one university in Kerala. The distribution of respondent's gender and age was not equal. Some responders continued to request clarification on particular items even after the pilot test. Future research should include a wider sample of universities from both the public and private sectors. The ability of private institutions, which are by definition managed by entrepreneurs, to foster an entrepreneurial spirit among students could be compared to that of public universities.

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Farmers' Attitude towards Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture sector could be benefited with the use of ICTs. Hence, extensive use of information technologies got to be promoted to farm level for transfer of technologies. The main target of the study was on the attitude of farmers towards information and communication technology tools in Kottayam district of Kerala. Interview schedule was used for data collection from the farmers, who were selected based on convenient sampling. The outcomes confirmed that majority (73.34%) of farmers had medium level of attitude towards ICT tools. Findings of multiple linear regression shows that all the fourteen independent variables put together contributed 75.80 per cent of the total variation in the attitude towards ICT tools by the farmers. The regression coefficient results revealed that certain profile characteristics were positively significant with the attitude towards ICT tools; while certain others did not.

Key terms: *Attitude; e-agriculture; extension; farmers; ICT based farming.*

Introduction

Over the years, Agriculture Extension has been pivotal in dissemination of information towards farmers which contributes to their productivity as well as standard of living. This process paved way for technology diffusion and adoption in farming in the modern era. In India, modernisation of agriculture was done with the objectives becoming self-sufficient in food and also to double farmers' income.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) provides two-way communication between rural communities and development organizations. ICTs also improves the capacity to look for information and increase the number of information available, provide quality information, reduces uncertainty and enhance market participation.

Meera et al. had stated that as a results of the emerging new paradigm of agricultural development, old ways of delivering vital services to citizens are being challenged; traditional societies are additionally being modified into knowledge societies all over the world. Positive attitude of farmers toward information and communication technology will magnify their agriculture productivity and also improve their socio economic conditions.

The major ICT tools for agricultural sector include personal computers, mobile telephones and other telecommunication devices. ICT has many potential applications in delivering agricultural extension and

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can bring new information services to rural areas. ICT tools can help in meeting the challenges in agricultural development in the following ways:

- Agriculture Information, Awareness and Education using ICT.
- Advanced information about adverse weather condition, so that farmers can take precautionary measures.
- Real time and near real times pricing and market information.
- Information dissemination about various government schemes.
- Information regarding agrifinance, agriclincs and agribusiness.
- Online Farmer Communities

Information is a valuable input through which farmers adopt new technologies to make the farming more profitable. The application of ICT offers wider possibilities, there by strengthening transfer of technology between research and extension system and further onward transmission to the end users. Due to the decreasing strength of field level functionaries at gross root level it becomes a challenging task to the concerned agencies to reach the farming community with latest technical knowhow. It is quite evident that the advent of ICT revolution which is well utilised by other sectors than agriculture sector. Hence, use of ICT for farm communication plays a vital role in bridging this gap at rural areas hence access to these ICT tools is a crucial requirement for sustainable development of the farming community. It is quite evident that many of the bottlenecks hinder the free flow of information through these tools. Hence it is time to seriously look into these issues to make future communication system more sustainable. With this history this study has been formulated with the following objective:

- To study the attitude of farmers towards information and communication technology tools.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Kottayam district of Kerala. A sample of 120 farmers were selected for the study by convenience who are using ICT tools. Data was collected through a well-structured interview schedule which was developed keeping in view of the objective of the study. For this objective, schedule consists of 21 statements. Out of 21 statements, 15 were positive and 6 were negative statements and rated on a five point continuum 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Undecided', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree' with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive statements. For negative statements the score of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were assigned for 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Undecided', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree', respectively. On the groundwork of attitude scores obtained, farmers were categorized into three categories as less favourable, medium favourable and highly favourable. The collected data were coded, classified and tabulated. Coefficient of correlation was carried out to find out nature of relationship between profile characteristics and attitude of farmers. Multiple linear regression was also carried out to find out functional relationship between independent variables with attitude of farmers.

Results and Discussions

At a look from Table 1 inferred that majority (73.34%) of the farmers had medium level of attitude towards ICT tools followed by high (15.00%) and rest (11.66%) of the farmers had low level of attitude towards ICT tools.

Coefficient of Correlation between Profile of Farmers and Attitude towards ICT tools

To study the nature of relationship between the profile characteristics of farmers and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools, coefficient of correlation were computed and the values are presented in Table 3. From Table 3 it is evident that amongst independent variables of farmers, twelve variables viz., education, land holding, experience in farming, experience in usage of ICT tools, possession of ICT tools, annual income, training undergone, social participation, extension contact, innovativeness, economic orientation, scientific

orientation and cosmopolitanism had positive and significant relationship with attitude. Whereas, profile characteristics such as risk orientation had a negative and significant relationship with attitude of farmers and age had a negative and non- significant relationship with the attitude of farmers.

Table 1
Distribution of respondents according to their attitude towards ICT tools

S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Less Favourable	14	11.66
2	Moderately Favourable	88	73.34
3	Highly Favourable	18	15.00
	Total	120	100.00

Content Analysis of Attitude Statements Regarding ICTs Tools

An appraisal of the content analysis of 21 statements as shown within the table 2 that just about all of the respondents had medium favourable attitude towards ICT tools.

Table 2
Content analysis of attitude statements regarding ICTs tools

SNo	Statements	SA F	%	A F	%	UD F	%	DA F	%	SDA F	%
1.	ICT can provide a reliable information	45	37.50	60	50.00	4	3.34	6	5.00	5	4.16
2.	ICT can provide practical oriented information	44	36.66	61	50.85	3	2.50	5	4.16	7	5.83
3.	ICT can access at any where	2	1.66	26	21.67	11	9.17	54	45.00	27	22.50
4.	ICT tools can increase confidence level	21	17.5	39	32.50	21	17.50	37	30.84	2	1.66
5.	It is difficult to use ICT tools by rural people	4	3.33	2	1.66	4	3.33	44	36.68	66	55.00
6.	We have to pay money for getting information through ICT tools	89	74.18	24	20.00	4	3.33	2	1.66	1	0.83
7.	ICT tools can provide information very quickly	18	15.00	28	23.33	6	5.00	55	45.84	13	10.83
8.	ICT tools are more interactive	19	15.83	44	36.68	40	33.33	15	12.50	2	1.66
9.	Can ICT tools help for information sharing	29	24.17	68	56.68	5	4.16	7	5.83	11	9.16
10.	ICT can access at any time	30	25.00	50	41.68	8	6.66	28	23.33	4	3.33
11.	Can ICT tools make complex ideas into simple ideas	9	7.50	23	19.16	7	5.83	56	46.68	25	20.83

12.	I am wasting my precious time by browsing unnecessary sites	7	5.83	58	48.34	15	12.50	28	23.33	12	10.00
13.	Initial cost of ICT tools are very high	5	4.16	1	0.83	4	3.33	23	19.16	87	72.52
14.	Information provided by the ICT tools is not suitable to tackle local problems.	35	29.18	66	55.00	7	5.83	7	5.83	5	4.16
15.	ICT can access by anybody.	11	9.16	57	47.52	4	3.33	34	28.33	14	11.66
16.	ICT tools are not suitable to illiterate people.	1	0.83	4	3.33	5	4.16	38	31.68	72	60.00
17.	Information provided through ICT is not in local language	49	40.84	51	42.50	6	5.00	7	5.83	7	5.83
18.	Traditions inhibit the use of ICT tools by rural	34	30.84	52	43.33	1	0.83	29	24.17	1	0.83
19.	ICT application in agriculture has created employment opportunities.	26	21.67	65	54.17	3	2.50	23	19.16	3	2.50
20.	ICT application in agriculture has improved the social status of the farmer	34	28.33	55	45.85	4	3.33	25	20.83	2	1.66
21.	ICT can increase the standard of living	30	25.00	56	46.68	7	5.83	25	20.83	2	1.66

Age Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It was revealed from the Table 3 that there was negative and non-significant relationship between age and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. From this, it is ready to be inferred that because the age increases the favourable attitude towards ICT tools was decreased but the relationship was non-significant. Age may have negatively influenced on utilization of ICT tools due to lack of skill in utilization of ICT tools.

Education Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It used to be evident from the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between education and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. The very fact that humans collect their understanding from formal schooling system which makes an individual greater confident and self-reliant in any decision making process.

Land holding Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 there was a positive and significant relationship between land holding and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. This is often due to the very fact that size of landholding provides the financial base for farmers to practice new technologies disseminated through ICT tools for reaching high profit. Higher land holding often operates via economic condition which enables farmers get right of entry to ICT tools which results in favourable attitude towards ICT tools.

Experience in farming Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between experience in farming and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. The rationale might be the experience in farming increased, higher are going to be their technology-wise knowledge and there'll be more favourable attitude towards ICTs.

Experience in usage of ICT tools Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From Table 3 shows that a positive and significant relationship between experience in usage of ICT tools usage and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. This reason is that farmers having the medium possession of ICT tools. Experience of ICT tools usage results in favourable attitude towards ICT tools.

Possession of ICT tools Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between possession of ICT tools and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. The very fact is that farmer having more ICTs tools are socially rich, progressive and superior farmer. They mainly use new ICT tools in farming. They are looking out for more information for his or her monetary improvement in agriculture. The farmers having larger possession of ICT tools have high favourable attitude towards ICT tools.

Annual income Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It used to be evident from the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between annual income and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. The motive would possibly be that the annual income of the farmers directly affects the economic viability, stability and rational behaviour of an individual. Hence, increase in the income levels associated amplify access to ICT tools which leads to a favourable attitude towards the ICT tools.

Training undergone Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between training undergone and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. It implies that number of trainings passed through will increases the attitude towards ICT tools also increases. This may be because of the very fact that the farmers exposed to medium to high trainings and infrequently contacted with agricultural department personnel and scientists that they can gather the expertise about ICT tools and utilization of new technologies.

Social participation Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between social participation and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. Reason is that farmers had been having membership in social organisations. The farmers who actively participated in social matters to do of society has resulted in expanded attention of ICT tools and which lead to a favourable attitude towards the ICT tools.

Extension contact Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 indicates that positive and significant relationship between extension contact and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. Extension participation exposes farmers to new areas of farming strategies with a knowledge and achievement. Also provides the chances for gaining knowledge about agricultural innovations. Most of the extension programmes may moreover additionally alternate their way of wondering degree via a range of educational ability which results in a way of favourable attitude towards ICT tools.

Innovativeness Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between innovativeness and attitude of farmer towards ICT tools. Innovativeness is that the individuals who are prone to innovation, usually it'll

have greater orientation towards technology and usage, these factors do naturally have an impact on the attitude towards ICT tools.

Economic orientation Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It used to be evident from the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between economic orientation and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. This is able to possibly be because of that training will help them to reinforce in terms of their know-how, attitude and skills in the way of their income generating things to do which results in excessive financial gains.

Risk orientation Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It was evident from the Table 3 that there was a negative and significant relationship between risk orientation and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. The fact that farmers having greater risk with the ICT tools they didn't use; ICT tools results in less favourable attitude.

Scientific orientation Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

It was evident from the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between scientific orientation and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. It was the logical thinking and which helps the individual to apprehend the object thoroughly and formulate more favourable attitude towards scientific method of usage of ICT tools.

Cosmopoliteness Vs Attitude towards ICT tools

From the Table 3 that there was a positive and significant relationship between cosmopoliteness and attitude of farmers towards ICT tools. Cosmopoliteness is that the degree to which an individual is oriented outside the social organization because the individual's cosmopolite nature increases the favourable attitude towards ICT tools increases.

Combined Impact of all Independent Variables on Attitude of Farmers towards ICT Tools.

To determine the combined impact of all the independent variables in explaining the attitude of farmers towards ICT tools, multiple linear regression analysis was taken out. The computed co-efficient of determination (R²) value and partial regression co-efficient (b) values with their corresponding t-values were presented in Table 4.

Table 3
Relationship between profile characteristics of farmers with attitude

S. No.	Independent variables	'r' value
1	Age	-0.144 NS
2	Education	0.193*
3	Land holding	0.275**
4	Experience in farming	0.202*
5	Experience in usage of ICT tools Possession of ICT tools	0.205* 0.245**
6	Annual Income	0.186*
7	Training undergone	0.199*
8	Social Participation	0.510**
9	Extension Contact	0.188*

10	Innovativeness	0.209*
11	Economic Orientation	0.376**
12	Risk Orientation	-0.221*
13	Scientific Orientation	0.327**
14	Cosmopoliteness	0.293**
	** 0.01% level of Significant.	* 0.05% level of Significant.
		NS-Non Significant

Table 4. Multiple linear regression analysis of selected independent variables with Attitude towards ICT tools

S. No.	Independent variables	Regression coefficient	Standard error	't' value
1.	Age	-0.389	0.045	-4.360*
2.	Education	0.129	0.239	1.900 ^{NS}
3.	Land holding	0.040	0.346	0.692 ^{NS}
4.	Experience in farming	0.576	0.042	7.317*
	Experience in usage of ICT tools	0.135	0.066	2.336**
5.	Possession of ICT tools	0.116	0.222	1.508 ^{NS}
6.	Annual Income	0.016	0.205	0.313 ^{NS}
7.	Training undergone	-0.160	0.447	-2.843*
8.	Social Participation	0.622	0.063	11.894*
9.	Extension Contact	0.083	0.064	1.448 ^{NS}
10.	Innovativeness	0.168	0.116	3.090*
11.	Economic Orientation	0.263	0.092	4.761*
12.	Risk Orientation	-0.182	0.259	-3.556*
13.	Scientific Orientation	0.060	0.077	1.097 ^{NS}
14.	Cosmopoliteness	-0.015	0.071	-0.205 ^{NS}
	$R^2=0.758$ ** 0.01% level of significant			* 0.05% level of significant NS- Non Significant

Results from the Table 4 found that the 15 independent variables with the attitude towards ICT tools by the farmers taken on Multiple Linear Regression analysis gave the Co-efficient of Multiple Determination (R²) value of 0.758. Hence, it is able to be inferred that all the independent variables put together contributed 75.80 per cent of the total variation in the attitude towards ICT tools by the farmers and remaining 24.20 per cent was due to extraneous factors.

The regression coefficient given in the Table 4 similarly revealed that the profile characteristics namely age, farming experience, farming experience in ICT tools, training undergone, social participation, innovativeness, economic orientation and risk orientation were found to be positively significant. Remaining profile characteristics viz., education, land holding, possession of ICT tools, annual income, extension contact, scientific orientation and cosmopoliteness were non-significant with the attitude towards ICT tools.

The following multiple linear regression equation was fitted to the data having 14 parameters.

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + \dots + b_{14} X_{14}$$

Conclusion

The findings indicated that farmers had medium level of attitude towards ICT tools due to more dependence on informal sources for getting information associated to agriculture, and that they had been not getting right information at right time from the prevailing extension system. Hence, that they had been showing positive attitude towards ICT tools, which give information around the year with none barriers. So there's a pressing want to rearrange high quality training programmes and demonstrations for farmers at village level on ICT tools. Additionally there to the government of Kerala need to provide subsidies on ICT tools for the farmers, in order that they ought to effortlessly get right of entry to the current day information on agriculture and allied sectors.

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Employee Welfare Measures in Tea Industry- A Study with Special Reference to Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Tea plantation industry is an important sector of Kerala economy. It plays a crucial role in because it not only a source of income generation but also it contributes to foreign exchange earnings and employment generation both directly and indirectly. Welfare means comfortable living and working conditions. Employee welfare is defined as all efforts geared to making life worth living for employees with their origin either in some statute formed by the state or in some local custom or in collective agreement, employers own initiative. It is the efforts to make life worth living for work man. The value of human assets can be increased substantially by making investment in their training and welfare activities in the same way as the value of repairs/overhauling, etc.

Keywords: Tea plantation industry, Employee Welfare, Human assets

Introduction

Industrial progress depends on a satisfied labor force and the importance of labor welfare measures was stressed as early as 1931, when the Royal Commission on labor stated the benefits which go under this nomenclature, are of great importance to the worker and which he is unable to secure by himself. The schemes of labor welfare may be regarded as a wise investment which should and usually does bring a profitable return in the form of greater efficiency. The very logic behind providing welfare schemes is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labor force for the organization. The purpose of providing such facilities is to make their work life better and also to raise their standard of living.

While the cost on training, development, etc., can be recorded separately and to be within the eventual, the expenditure on welfare activities can be added to the investment and the returns judged. Unlike other assets which have depreciation value as year's passes by, value of human assets appreciates with passing years. The value can depreciate by aging process which is generally hastened up by worries, unhealthy conditions, etc. once this process is slowed down, or at least if the employee is made to feel young in spirits the value of this asset appreciates considerably. Any investment constitutes the assets of a company and therefore, any investment for welfare of labor would constitute an extra investment in an asset.

Tea Industry in Kerala Economy

The first Plantation crop in Kerala was coffee. Decline in coffee economy due to diseases in 1870's, the coming of Brazil coffee and consequent fall in the price of coffee in international market etc. forced coffee

cultivators in India to prefer to tea cultivation. Thus British citizens, especially missionaries and retired persons, came to hilly areas of Peerumade for tea cultivation. The earliest record of commercial planting of Tea in Kerala was in the year 1875 (in Peerumade). The development of Kannan Devan Hills by James Finlay and Company in 1878 with tea as an exclusive crop was a landmark in the history of tea plantation in this part of the country. Soon, tea cultivation caught on in Wayanad in 1889 and planting was taken up on a large scale in the district. Now Kerala is one of the important tea producing states in India. Major tea producing districts in Kerala are Idukki and Wayanad. During 2016, the production of tea in Kerala was 67.7 million kg. (Source: Tea board of India, Economic review)

Kerala exports annually 35 million kilograms of tea valued at Rs. 2200 million, particularly to the Middle East, and Russia. The plantation sector is important to the economy of Kerala, contributing about Rs.29.11 billion to its GDP. Kerala produces 34% of the tea produced in the country. Kerala has approximately 37000 hectares of tea plantations, constituting 8% of the area under tea cultivation in the country. The importance of the plantation industry lay in its employment potential. It employs 5 million people, of which 60% are from the financially backward sections and about 50% are women workers.

(Source: State Planning Board, Government of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram (b) Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram.)

Welfare Measures in Tea Industry

The Tea Industry is an agro based labor intensive industry. It provides direct employment to over 1 million persons. Through its forward and backward linkages another 10 million persons derive their livelihood from tea. The Plantations Labor Act allowed employment of children above 12 years of age prior to 1987. This provision has since been abolished. No child below the age of 14 is employed in the tea estates now. In fact, following a recommendation by the CCPA in 1995, tea estates have stopped employment of any person below the age of 15 years.

A comprehensive list of welfare activities on labor welfare into two broad groups, namely:

1. Welfare measures inside the work place; and
2. Welfare measures outside the work place.

1. Welfare Measures inside the Work Place

The Conditions of the work Environment is very important in any industries. The workers should have the freedom to enjoy a safe and clean work place. The workshops should be properly sanitized and should be clean. The effluents in the work place should be controlled. The employees would contribute their maximum only when they feel comfort during work. Convenience is also an important factor which contributes to employee morale and motivation. The working hours and shifts should be properly arranged and communicate to them. The authority should take all steps to meet safety measures inside the work environment. A facility for Notice Board is also essential.

The workers should be provided with Conveniences like drinking water, Urinals and bathrooms, spittoons, Canteen services etc.

Health Services to workers is also important. As part of this, Factory health center, Dispensary, Ambulance, Emergency aid and Health education should be provided to the employees.

The industry also pays attention to the welfare of Women and Child. Separate services for woman workers are provided. Most factories have the facilities for Crèche and child care. They also assist them for Family planning Workers' recreation plays a vital role in physical and mental health and wellbeing of workers. The industry provide thrift and savings schemes, unemployment insurance, Profit sharing , bonus schemes, Gratuity and pension, loans, financial grants etc.

Various committees, Workmen's arbitration council and research bureau facilitates and ensure Labor management participation which is an essential factor for the success of any industry.

Most of the workers of tea industry might be uneducated or under educated villagers. For leading them to the main stream of society, the employers provide Reading room, Library, Adults education facility, Daily news review and facility for a Factory news bulletin.

2. Welfare Measures outside the Work Place

The employers of tea industry provide the basis amenities like Water, sanitation, and waste disposal. For providing education and wellbeing of the children of employees the company provides Schools facilities (nursery, primary, secondary and high school) and playgrounds. As most of the employees are from rural areas there may arise difficulties in transportation. To overcome this companies provide transportation facilities to the employees. Apart from this the employer provides roads, lighting, parking facilities also. The workers could also enjoy the Communication (post, telegraph and telephone) facilities arranged by the company. In the recent scenario they make the arrangements for not only traditional banking but also digital banking facilities to the employees. Employees and their families are also provided with free and quality Health and medical services like dispensary, emergency ward, outpatient and in-patient care, family visiting and family planning. Recreation facilities like games, clubs and craft centers are work under the control the managers. Cultural programmes are arranged periodically. The employer would also intermediate in the administration of community services and problems.

Intra- mural and Extra-mural Facilities

Intra-mural activities consist of facilities provided with in the factories and include medical facilities, compensation accidents, provision of crèches and canteens, supply of drinking water, washing and bathing facilities, provision of safety measures, activities relating to improving conditions of employment, and the like.

Extra-mural activities cover the services and facilities provided outside the factory such as housing accommodation, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, amusement and sports, educational facilities for adults and children, and the like. It may be started that the welfare activities may be provided by the employer, the government, non-government organization and the trade unions, while, what employees provide will be started later; the activities undertaken by other agencies.

Statutory welfare schemes

The statutory schemes are those schemes that are compulsory to provide by an organization as compliance to the laws governing employee health and safety. These include provisions provided in industrial acts like Factories Act 1948, Dock Workers Act (safety, health and welfare) 1986, Mines Act 196. The statutory welfare schemes include the following provisions:

1. **Drinking Water:** At all the working places safe hygienic drinking water should be provided.
2. **Facilities for sitting:** In every organization, especially factories, suitable seating arrangements are to be provided.
3. **First aid appliances:** First aid appliances are to be provided and should be readily assessable so that in case of any minor accident initial medication can be provided to the needed employee.
4. **Latrines and Urinals:** A sufficient number of latrines and urinals are to be provided in the office and factory premises and are also to be maintained in a neat and clean condition.
5. **Canteen facilities:** Cafeteria or canteens are to be provided by the employer so as to provide hygienic and nutritious food to the employees.
6. **Spittoons:** In every factory there shall be provided a sufficient number of spittoons in convenient places and they shall be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
7. **Lighting:** Proper and sufficient lights are to be provided for employees so that they can work safely during the night shifts.

8. **Washing places:** Adequate washing places such as bathrooms, wash basins with tap and tap on the stand pipe are provided in the port area in the vicinity of the work places.
9. **Changing rooms:** Adequate changing rooms are to be provided for workers to change their cloth in the factory area and office premises. Adequate lockers are also provided to the workers to keep their clothes and belongings.
10. **Rest rooms:** Adequate numbers of restrooms are provided to the workers with provisions of water supply, wash basins, toilets, bathrooms, etc.

Non statutory Welfare schemes

Many non statutory welfare schemes may include the following schemes:

1. **Personal Health Care (Regular medical check-ups):** Some of the companies provide the facility for extensive health check-up
2. **Flexi-time:** The main objective of the flextime policy is to provide opportunity to employees to work with flexible working schedules. Flexible work schedules are initiated by employees and approved by management to meet business commitments while supporting employee personal life needs
3. **Employee Assistance Programs:** Various assistant programs are arranged like external counseling service so that employees or members of their immediate family can get counseling on various matters.
4. **Harassment Policy:** To protect an employee from harassments of any kind, guidelines are provided for proper action and also for protecting the aggrieved employee.
5. **Maternity & Adoption Leave** –Employees can avail maternity or adoption leaves. Paternity leave policies have also been introduced by various companies.
6. **Medi- claim Insurance Scheme:** This insurance scheme provides adequate insurance coverage of employees for expenses related to hospitalization due to illness, disease or injury or pregnancy.
7. **Employee Referral Scheme:** In several companies employee referral scheme is implemented to encourage employees to refer friends and relatives for employment in the organization.

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