

Job Related Factors and Work Life Balance of Female Employees in Kerala - A Study of IT Sector

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Abstract: *The role of women has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. This has resulted in a scenario in which working women have tremendous pressure to develop a career with simultaneous active engagement in personal life. This affects the person's physical, emotional and social well-being. Thus, achieving work life balance is a necessity for working women to have a good quality of life. This paper is an attempt to study nature of work in IT industry and to explore satisfaction of female employees with their working environment. This study was conducted among employees of IT organizations at Info Park, Kochi, which has a total population of over 12000 women employees. For the quantitative approach, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 350 female employees from 15 selected I T organizations.*

Keywords: Information technology, work life balance, socio-economic status, female employees

1. Introduction

Indian economy propelled with introduction of new economic policy attained speedy momentum and steady path which ultimately transformed Indian economy drastically. It thoroughly reflected in major aspects of socio-economic life with generation of numerous employment opportunities in various levels aspiring talented and intellectual personalities throughout the country. During the past, there was accelerating numbers of women participation and involvement of women workforce in India over decades and particularly IT industry became lucrative and large numbers of talented women entered to this sector and its intrinsic characteristics attractive in conformity with its unique nature of long duration working hours, time bound commitments to global oriented clients and work constraints in night shifts which are adversely affecting work-life balance among working women.

1.1 Women in IT Industry in India

The role of women has been changing substantially over the last decade and half, both inside and outside homes. In addition to their role within households, they are now having a larger role in the outside world also, especially in the labour market. Though women are found in all fields, their participation in the IT industry is more. According to India Skills Report, 2016 Software and IT constitutes the second largest non- agricultural sector (30%), after Pharma and Care (41%), in which women are better represented among the twelve industrial sectors of the Indian economy. Unlike other sectors, this fast growing business sector is looking for knowledge only. Hence, they do not discriminate the gender. As a result, there is significant number of women employees in this sector. India's IT-BPM industry currently employs nearly 3.9 million people, of which over 34% are women (~1.3 million). (NASSCOM report 2017).

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To analyze the work related factors IT industry in Kerala.
- 2) To study the level of satisfaction of female employees with their working environment.

2. Methodology

2.1 Population and Sample

Population is the totality of all elements defined prior to selection of the sample. Population comprised of all the employees working in I T companies at Info Park , Kochi and it is identified as the women I T professionals in the companies . There are around 202 companies at Info Park as on August 2017 and 32000 employees are working here. Women IT professionals constitute 12500. Power Analysis is used to determine sample size.

2.2 Employment Status of Info Park as on August 2017

Total number of companies	202
Total number of Employees	32000
Number of women employees	50%

Multi stage random sampling technique was followed for the selection of the sample required for the present study. In the first stage, companies were divided in to large, medium and small on the basis of total number of employees working. For this study, a survey of socio economic background and WLB among women in Kochi IT industry was conducted by means of a structured questionnaire which was distributed directly to 400 active employees in the industry. These collected data were analyzed by using standard statistical techniques.

2.3 Period of study

The primary data were collected from Women IT employees through the questionnaire from August 2016 to February 2017.

2.4 Data Analysis

2.4.1 Classification of Organisation on basis of Size

Companies were classified in to large, medium and small on the basis of number of employees working. This classification is made to analyse the relationship between the size and W L B of women employees.

Table 1.1: Size Wise Distribution of Sample Organisation

Category	Frequency	Percent
Small	44	12.6
Medium	122	34.9
Large	184	52.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: primary data

Table 1.1.shows size wise distribution of sample firms. It shows that 13 % respondents are from small and 35 % from medium and 52 % respondents are from large organisation.

Table 1.2: Distribution of Sample by Age

Age	No of respondents	Percent
Below 20	2	0.6
20-30	294	84.0
31-40	46	13.1
41-50	6	1.7
above 50	2	0.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: primary data

Table 1.2 shows that 84.0% of respondents are having age between 20 to 30 years. The mean is approximately 25 years. This indicates that the mean age of the respondent is lies between the classes 20-30. I T industry for women is a young women’s career that inevitably gets cut off with increasing family responsibilities.

2.4.2 Marital Status of the Sample

To understand the variables of Work-Life Balance in a better manner, respondent’s marital status is being studied. Data regarding marital status is presented in the following table.

Table 1.3: Distribution of Sample by Marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Unmarried	179	51.1
Married	169	48.3
Divorced	2	0.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary Data

The details of marital status of the respondents are shown in table 1.3. More than half (51%) of the respondents are single.48% are married. Only 1% is divorced. It is evident from this Table that the participation of unmarried women in I T sector is higher and they are ready to they postpone marriage in order to secure better career.

2.4.3 Work Related Factors

Table 1.4: Distributions of Sample by Experience

Years of experience in this field	Frequency	Percent
0-1	257	73.4
2-5	93	26.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

The details of experience of the respondents are shown in table 1.4. 73.4% of the respondents are having an experience of up to one year. 26.6% have an experience of 2-5 years. The low proportion of highly experienced respondents

shows how women have problems in continuing their service.

Table 1.5: Distribution of Respondents by Tenure in the Present Organisation

Years of experience with the present organization	Frequency	Percent
0-1	131	37.4
2-5	156	44.6
5-10	47	13.4
Above 10	16	4.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

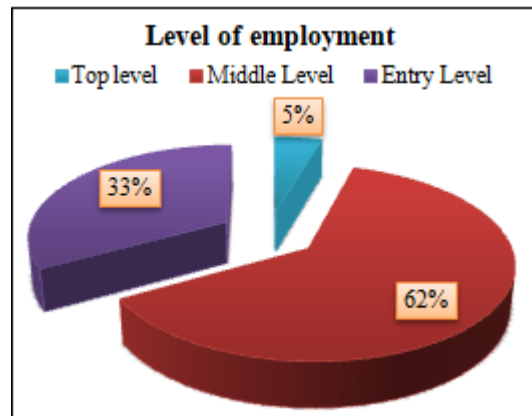
Table 1.5.shows that 45% of respondents are working in their present organizations from 2 to 5 years whereas 37% are completing one year. Only 5% are having more than 10 years of experience in the present company.

Table 1.6: Distribution of Sample by the Levels of Employment

Level of employment	Frequency	Percent
Top level	16	4.6
Middle Level	218	62.3
Entry Level	116	33.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

2.4.4 Distribution of Sample by the Levels of Employment



Source: based on table 1.6

It is clear from the diagram 5.19.that majority of employees are at entry level (33.1%) and middle level (62.3%) even though they have experience in this field. Only 4.6% are at higher level. There is very little representation of female employees at the top level management. It is also indicated that women employees are quitting or losing their job as they move to higher levels of employment since they cannot manage themselves in dual role.

Table 1.7: Distribution of Sample by Designation

.Current designation	Frequency	Percent
Software Analyst	129	36.9
Software Developers	167	47.7
Support Lead	20	5.7
Project Manager	34	9.7
Total	350	100

Source: Primary data

Classification of sample employees according to designation shows that 37% working as software analyst and 48% designated as software developers. Only 15% constitute support lead and project manager.

Table 1.8: Distribution of Sample by Type of Job

Type of job	Frequency	Percent
Part time	14	4.0
Full time	336	96.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.8 reveals that it is the nature of I T industry that employees are appointed on full time basis.96% of women professionals are working as full time employee.

Table 1.9: Distribution of Sample by Nature of Job (Permanent/Temporary)

Terms of employment	Frequency	Percent
Permanent	340	97.1
Contract	10	2.9
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.9.shows that majority (97%) of the respondents are working as permanent employee in the I T industry. Only 3% is working as temporary staff.

Table 1.10: Distribution of Sample by Monthly Salary

What is your approximate average monthly income in Rs	Frequency	Percent
10,000-25000	126	36.0
25000-50,000	187	53.4
50,000-75,000	21	6.0
75,000-1,00,000	7	2.0
1,00,000-1,50,000	7	2.0
Above 1,50,000	2	0.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

The salary slabs of the respondents are shown in Table 1.10. The majority (53%) of the respondents earn between Rs.25, 000 and 50000.36% are lies in 10,000- 25000 slab. Only smaller percentage (11%) earns above Rs.50000.

2.4.5 Average Weekly Working Hours

Average weekly working hours in a week will define the Work-Life balance or imbalance of women I T professionals

Table 1.11: Distribution of Sample by Average Weekly working Hours.

Average weekly working hours	Frequency	Percent
Less than 40hrs	60	17.1
41 -50 hrs	276	78.9
50-60 hrs	14	4.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.11. Indicates that 79% respondents work 41 to 50 hours in a week whereas 17% of respondents work less than 40 hours in a week belong 4% works 50 to 60 hours in a week.

2.4.6 Distance from Home

Distance travelled by employees determines time taken to reach office. Time management is a one of determinant of work life balance.

Table1.12: Distribution of Sample by Distance from Home

Distance from home to office	Frequency	Percent
Less than 2km	79	22.6
2-5km	113	32.3
5-10km	47	13.4
More than 10km	111	31.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table1.12. shows that majority of women (59%) lives within 5 km radius. 32% of women travel more than 10 km to reach office and back to home.

Table 1.13: Distribution of Respondents by Mode of Transport

How do you reach office?	Frequency	Percent
Company vehicle	68	19.4
own vehicle	91	26.0
Public transport	143	40.9
Others(friends etc)	48	13.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Details of the type of vehicles owned by respondents are shown in table 1.13. 26% of the respondents use own vehicle to reach office.41% are depending on public transport system where as 19% use company vehicle. This indicates that a large number of women I T professionals (60%) are using private transport.

2.4.7 Time Taken to Reach Office

Time taken to reach office is studied to find out the relation between Work Life Balance and imbalance for professionals. The classified information according to time taken is presented in the following table.

Table 1.14: Distribution of sample by Time Taken to Reach Office

How much time you take to reach office	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1hour	267	76.3
1 hour to 2 hours	47	13.4
More than 2 hours	36	10.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

The table 1.14.shows that 76.3% of respondents take less than one hour to reach office which indicates that they are residing near to their work place. 13.4 % takes one to two hours and 10.3 % takes more than 2 hours to reach office.

Table 1.15: Distribution of Sample by working in Night Shift

Do you work in night shift	Frequency	Percent
Yes	76	21.7
No	274	78.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Above table shows that only 21.7% are working in night shift. But the problem is that many of the smaller companies could not provide security for the few women who wanted to work late within the firm as a result of which companies themselves discouraged women from staying. However a substantial difference was reported between male and female

professionals in terms of the ability to work in night shift. It is difficult for the female professionals to stay late due to transportation problem.

Table 1.16: Distribution of Sample by the Satisfaction with the Working Environment

Are you satisfied with the working environment?	Frequency	Percent
Highly Dissatisfied	8	2.3
Dissatisfied	4	1.1
Neutral	109	31.1
Satisfied	189	54.0
Highly satisfied	40	11.4
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

More than half (54%) of the women employees are satisfied with the working environment .But it should be noted that 31% of employees are neutral, i.e. neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only 11% of the women expressed complete satisfaction about working environment and 3.4% are dissatisfied with the working environment.

Table 1.17: Distribution of Sample by Separate W L B Policy of the Organisation

Does your company have a separate policy for work life balance?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	76	21.7
No	274	78.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Need for separate W L B policy is important in the I T industry because of its peculiar nature of work. This table reveals how many companies have separate work life balance policies for of the wellbeing of their employees .More than three fourth (78%) of companies do not have separate W L B programmes. Only 22% of companies have this programme.

Table 1.18: Distribution of Sample by Rating o W L B Policy of the Organisation

How do you rate the WLB Policy of your organization?	Frequency	Percent
Highly Dissatisfied	8	2.3
Dissatisfied	12	3.4
Neutral	151	43.1
Satisfied	154	44.0
Highly satisfied	25	7.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is understood from the table 1.18that 44.1% the women employees working in IT sector expressed satisfaction about W LB policy implemented by their organisation. But 43.1% haven't expressed any opinion. This neutrality can be a reflection of their dissatisfaction about the policy. 7.1% of the employees expressed that they are highly satisfied, 2.3% are highly dissatisfied and 3.4% are moderately dissatisfied.

3. Findings of the Study

The findings are based on analysis of primary data as well as review of literature .Primary Data collected through well-

structured questionnaires were circulated to the women employees working in IT companies to record their responses and the recorded responses were examined and analyzed in the previous chapter. With increasing working population and changes in perceived company commitment and loyalty, Work and Personal Life balance is a real issue for employers and employees alike. Employers can benefit from these policies too as they can help to develop a more committed and productive workforce. These findings based on a survey of female employees in I T industry at Info Park reveals some worrying facts about work-life balance of the respondents.

- The study reveals that three major distinctive nature of work that interferes with personal life were long working hours/work on holidays, no /less support from colleagues, inefficient time management, and lack of prudent policy from the management and frequent updating of technical knowledge are the major distinctive factors which hinder the work life balance of the women employees. Among them inefficient time management is the main factor.
- The two major factors impacting work – life balance of women IT professionals are feeling exhausted at the end of day especially during peak time and they have to either travel late night or have to engage night shift creating conflict in the family .This forces them to think about quitting their jobs or taking a career break.
- Need for separate W L B policy is important in the I T industry because of its peculiar nature of work. This table reveals how many companies have separate work life balance policies for of the wellbeing of their employees .More than three fourth (78%) of companies do not have separate W L B programmes. Only 22% of companies have this programme IT companies in Info Park are providing good facilities for the women. 50% of the employees expressed that they have good balance, 37.4% of the employees expressed that they have average balance, 6.3% of the employees expressed that they have very good balance, 4% expressed that they have low balance and 2.3% of the employees rated their work life balance as very bad. It is observed that most of the women employees working in IT sector have expressed that they are able to manage their work and life with high balance.
- Women I T professionals expressed opinion that working environment has brought high satisfaction towards the family life. More than half (54%) of the women employees are satisfied with the working environment even though 31% of employees remained are neutral, i.e. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only 11% of the women expressed complete satisfaction about working environment .The mean percentage score of level of satisfaction with the working environment by women employees working in software industry is 74.23% which indicate that of level of satisfaction with the working environment is good..
- The result of study supporting many previous studies that IT professionals working in software industry is suffering from health problems due to long working hours, long sitting in front of the system, stress on the completion of work etc. It adversely affects the quality of work. Majority of employees are suffering from headache (54%), back pain (29%) and other stress related diseases. Another

serious issue is that majority of women employees (61%) are complaining that they do not get time to consult doctor for health check-up. 32.1% visit their physician quarterly and only 7% employees are getting time for monthly health check-up.

- 44.6% % of the respondents are working in their present organizations having 2-5 Years' experience while a considerable proportion (34.4%) is just joined or having an experience of less than one year.
- Most of the women employees (53.4%) who are working in IT sector are earning Rs. 25000-50000 as salary. They are getting comparatively higher salary in the beginning and at younger age.
- 79% employees in IT industry working 41-50 hours weekly at office .i.e., with two weekend holidays (Saturday and Sunday) average working hours per day is 9 to 10 hrs
- Only smaller proportion (21.7%) of women working in IT sector in Kochi work in shifts. But in personal talk these employees revealed that they have to stay at office in late night during peak time. In smaller companies, providing security for the few women who wanted to work late within the firm was cited as another problem as a result of which companies themselves discouraged women from staying
- As the level of employment is concerned majority of employees are at entry level (33.1%) and middle level (62.3%) even though they have experience in this field. There is very few (4.6 %) representation of female employees at the top level management. This shows that higher level employment is occupied by the male professions .Either women are not interested because of heavy responsibilities and work load or employers are not showing interest towards women in this aspect. This will lead to underutilisation of productivity and capacity of women labour force.
- The importance stress reducing practices like in the organization will help them to get out of stress and tensions related to their job and to bring a better work family balance. But majority organization is not conducting stress reducing programmes and practices for their employees.
- 44.1% the women employees working in IT sector expressed satisfaction about WLB policy implemented by their organisation. But 43.1% haven't expressed any opinion. This neutrality can be considered as their dissatisfaction about the policy. 7.1% of the employees expressed that they are highly satisfied, 2.3% are highly dissatisfied and 3.4% are moderately dissatisfied. The mean percentage score of level of satisfaction with the WLB policy by women employees working in software industry is 70.80% which indicate that of level of satisfaction with the WLB policy is good. To test hypothesis we use one sample Z test and the p value is more than 0.05 which indicates that the level of satisfaction with the WLB policy is good.

4. Conclusion

Women constitute an important section of the workforce. However, the present situation of a large number of well-qualified women who due to various circumstances have

been left out of their jobs needs to be addressed. The problems faced are several, but, significantly, most often the "break in their careers" arises out of motherhood and family responsibilities."The study shows that various measures should be adopted to utilise the skill and capacity of women in organised sector especially fast developing industries like Information Technology. The enrolment of women in Higher/Professional education and in employment is high. Even though their proportion is high in the labour force, their status is not high when compared to that of males. Various factors like age, community, religion, marital status, number of dependants, academic qualifications, technical qualifications, designation, nature of job and number of years of experience etc. affect work life balance of women employees and their participation in I T sector. Women I T professionals should try to strike a balance between their professional and familial roles as it not only improves their status in the organization, but also promotes their self-confidence. They should learn more and more by participating various training programmes.

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