Changing work life of women in IT industry - An Analysis of Kerala

Abstract

The word" Changing Work Life " means transition period from entry level job to professional level activities and its impact on life. In another way researcher can say that stepping out of familiar dependent phase to a independent phase. Changing work life has become one of the core values of numerous organizations and around the world today. Originally, work was a matter of necessity of survival. Throughout the years , the role of "work" has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed. It may also have a negative impact on the family with lack of care to children and dependents, conflict with the spouse and dissatisfaction with life. The insight will contribute towards the basic understanding in IT organizations, and behavioral sciences with special reference to changing work life of women employees in IT sector. For the purpose of this study researcher had selected sample from three major IT hubs of Kerala,Technopark(Trivandrum),Infopark (Kochi),Kinfrapark(Calicut). This study made an attempt to bridge the gap by highlighting the relevance and importance of changing work life of individual and organizations .The study would bring a series of serious and productive discussion on the changing work life of women in IT Sector of Kerala.

Keywords: work life, Information technology, women, kerala

Introduction

Information Technology (IT) industry is internationally regarded as the main engine of global economic activity. These organizations are important for a number of reasons such as employment creation, social stability and wealth creation for the country. The Indian IT industry consists of a large number of emergent firms. There is an association which regulates the industry on a voluntary basis. This association is the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), the premier trade body and the chamber of commerce of the IT software and service industry in India. Kerala has attained worldwide acclaim for its achievements in IT sector. These achievements help in improving the physical quality of life of the people and in the creation of social infrastructure, particularly in health and education systems. This focus has led to the all round quality of life. Even though the quality of life is significantly superior to that of other Indian states, industrial growth has not been commensurate with the state's potential. This has created large scale unemployment and low per capita income. The Government of Kerala has announced IT policies in 1998, 2001 and 2007 delineating strategies for exploring the opportunities and resources offered

by Information Technology. Kerala has advanced levels of literacy, education and health care system. Excellent telecommunication net work reaching all towns and villages, educated womenfolk, availability of world class IT professionals and three international airports at Trivandrum, Kochi and Calicut are the advantages of Kerala. The Government of Kerala has announced its IT Policy in 2007. This policy makes Information and Communication Technology (ICT) a tool for improving governance and promotes economic development through investment in this sector. In earlier days the contribution of a woman was restricted only to her home and family but now, crossing the thorny boundaries of the society, women have ventured into corporate. The growth of education and awareness has led women to work in industries and corporate. "Women are not only the backbone of nuclear and joint families but also the national economy". Women have started venturing into areas which were seen as dominated by men. Women in all fields have proved their excellence and skills. Women have proved their commitment and versatility for ages and have also carried different roles successfully. When highlighting IT industry, women constitute a major part of the IT sector and their contribution to this area is huge. The specific reasons behind joining this industry are easy entry and exit, acceptable remuneration and not much qualification. Despite all these facts, women still find it difficult to cross the boundaries of their home and make future in the corporate world. Further they also face issues like gender discrimination, harassment, stress and less support from the family. Women employees are sometimes benchmarked against the male counterparts, despite the fact that they undergo the same hardships to accomplish their objectives. A married woman has higher responsibility to take care of children and the family and hence encounter difficult situations sometimes. It is also because of the office norms that a woman employee has to leave job as some companies do not facilitate them with maternal and child care leaves. The growth of the IT sector has been highly inspiring but it has also caused tremendous changes in the life of its employees. Women's participation in every sector is undoubtedly high and women employees constitute one third part of the IT sector but there are various difficulties faced by them. Women who work in ITs generally have an issue in balancing between three jobs i.e. office, household and child care. It is also felt that they aren't given equal opportunities and the evaluation of performance isn't fair. The present study is confined to women employees working in IT sector in Kerala. This study lights upon women employees working in IT sector in Kerala and the different challenges like gender discrimination, family support, insecurity of job, stress faced by them while at work. These studies try to identify the various attributes that adds to a women's safety and security.

Methodology

The population of the study includes employees from IT firms in select IT parks in Kerala. Total number of firms in Kerala during the time of this research was 314. Based on the Geographical distribution the state of Kerala was divided into three regions North, Central and South. And based on the Number of Employees

working in the firms the IT firms were grouped into four categories. They are less than 100, 101 to 500, 501 to 1000 and greater than 1000 respectively.

The sampling method used for the study is Mulistage Strafified proportional to size sampling. In the first stage the state of Kerala was divided into three regions North, Central and South. In the next stage one IT park from each region was selected such a way that parks with highest number of IT firms are included. Accordingly Technopark in Trivandrum from the southern region, Info Park in Kochi from the central region and Kinfra park in Kozhikode from the northern region were selected. As the third stage firms in each park were categorized into four strata ie. Employees less than 100, 101 to 500, 501 to 1000 and greater than 1000 respectively.

Discussion and findings

The study gives a detailed analysis of the various demographic features of women employees , problems of women in work place and job satisfaction of women in IT Sector.

Age of the women employees is the one of the important factors in any study. Mental maturity, understanding of people, analytical abilities, emotional balances and judgement are the factors affect the age of women employees. The age wise distribution of women employees in IT sector in this study constitutes 52% is with the age structure 18-25. The educational level of women employees in the IT sector are given in the study state that where majority are degree holders (59%) where as 32% are PG holders and 9% qualified in certain professional courses. For women with jobs characterized by challenging work, decision-making attitude, and supportive supervisors, relationships with the spouse can lead dissatisfaction in marital life. A study carried out by NSSCOM (2000) shows that 80% of spouse of women employees are working and 20% are not working. The proportion of married-couple families in which both the husband and wife were employed edged up over the year to 53.2 percent.

Rajadhyaksha U. and Bhatnagar, D. 2000 observed changes in typical Indian family structure from hierarchical to more nuclear, dual career couple family has increased pressure on women to manage both work and family. In urban India, traditional large combined and extended families are giving way to nuclear families. This change is providing couples with more independence but is taking away the traditional support system from family members, especially for child care and household work and in case of illness. The increase of dual-career couples with young children and changes in the traditional family structural configurations has resulted in changes in home and family responsibilities for women causes work life imbalances. From this study 54% of women employees have nuclear type family, 26% are extended family, 17% are single parent family, 2% are childless family and 1% are joint family.

Cooke.F.L (2009) reported that the complete accessibility to extended family networks and low cost childcare services further encourages dual full-time working among couples with young children. The one child policy enforced by the government is to control the population growth has further reduced the amount of childcare work for working couples and made women employees to quit their job due to imbalances in life. From the study 53% of women employees in IT sector have only one child, 38% have two children, 6% have three child and only 3% have more than three children. In order to retain in job they prefer only one child policy that make women employees to quit job and sit as home maker alone.

Aaltio and Huang (2007) expressed that those who have childcare and Elderly care commitment, outsourcing house work (babysitting, cooking and cleaning) is the most commonly used personal coping mechanism to reduce work life conflict. The study of female IT managers found that women sought support from parents or parents-in law, hired tutors for children's homework, employed domestic helper for child minding, cleaning, cooking, shopping, and shared family responsibilities with their husband. The study shows the age of first child of women employees where 23% are 1-3 years age and more than 7 years need special care period, 22% are 3-5 years aged child need more care and 18% are5-7 years aged child shows the importance of care given to first child and women's are not able to balance work and life because of their first child age and care given

The survey, conducted Sept. 15-Oct. 13, 2015, among 1,807 U.S. parents with children younger than 18, also shows that in two-parent families, parenting and household responsibilities are shared more equally when both the mother and the father work full time than when the father is employed full time and the mother is employed part time or not employed. But even in households where both parents work full time, many say a large share of the day-to-day parenting responsibilities falls to mothers. Where as in the case of working women of employees in IT sector the age level of second child shows that 42% are in age of 5-7years, 25% are less than 1 year, 19% are between 1-3 years and 14% are in the range of 3-5 years feel very difficult to manage household responsibilities with this age level of second child

According to the online survey conducted by India Bytes in 2008, there were about 64.4 million Indians who used computers either at their home or work on a daily basis. By 2014, the number was expected to reach 1 billion. With increasing number of computer users, the number health issues are also growing at a rapid pace. If you work in front of a computer for a few hours that too once in a while you may not be at a health risk.

Hogarth (2009) stated that women felt that child care facilities should be available in working place to ensure work like balance. Comfort (2003) analyzed on workplace and reported that childcare and elder care services should be available at work place by type of benefit, and the job characteristics. In their study they have conclude that women should be provided with increased access of flexi-time and also part-time work facilities for women in work place with support to take care of children at work place to balance both work

and family. In this study spouse and parents look after child when women went to job.16% of in-laws and servants take care of children when women employees left home and 12% arrange day-care facility to look child when employees in IT sector leave home for work. From the study it is clear that 64% of women employees get more than 6 hours to spend with children and spouse,16% get only 2-4 hours,15% get only 4-6 hours and 5% get only less than 2 hours shows they are dissatisfied with time spend with spouse and children

Studies have shown that in dual-income families on average, men spend over 35 hours a week with their children. However, in general, men's involvement in such activities is primarily in the form of providing emotional care-giving while women, by and large, are still responsible for providing physical care-giving to their children. Study conducted among working women in IT sector explains their time spending with children for various activities half of respondents spent less than 2 hours with children for playing

Women employees find this difficult to manage especially the married women with kids. The long work time with the timings changing continuously, accompanied by dual responsibility one at home and another at work place lead to many problems. Greehaus and Beutall (1985) researched on pressure on the working women and concluded that time based conflicts, work schedules, work orientation, marriage, children and spouse; employment patterns may all produce pressure to participate extensively in the work role or family role.. The study shows the satisfaction level of family towards the time spend with women in family. In the case of children's study 36% are satisfied and 28% are not at all satisfied. In the case of caring spouse, child and family16% are highly satisfied and 25% are not at all satisfied. In the case of enjoy with family only13% are highly satisfied and 38% are not at all satisfied.10% are satisfied with fulfilling house hold need and28% are not at all satisfied. Keeping track of bank account 20% are moderately satisfied .going out with family 12% are highly satisfied and 29% are not at all satisfied. In the case of entertainment only 33% are satisfied and 19% are not at all satisfied. Health care 7% only are satisfied and 42% are not at all satisfied. Basic duties 27% are satisfied and 27% are not at all satisfied. Routine responsibilities only13% are satisfied and29% are not at all satisfied. In the case of emotional commitment only 12% are highly satisfied and 31% are not a all satisfied. This shows the satisfaction level where majority of women employees are not at all satisfied with work time arrangement thus create imbalance in personal life causes dis satisfaction in personal life

Block (1973) Women are not more satisfied with their lives than their husband it seems that their own level of life satisfaction depends on that of their partners. In contrast, men experience higher levels of work family interference, probably because they work more hours than their wives; this experience of work family interference, it makes them less satisfied with their life in general. While a study conducted among working women in IT sector the study shows the satisfaction level of family with work time schedule 35% family are satisfied with work time schedule.305 are moderately satisfied,20% are dissatisfied with work time schedule of women employees.9% are highly satisfied with work time schedule of women employees

and 6% are highly dissatisfied with work time schedule of work and family are not able to adjust the work time schedule with family duties create problems in persona as well as professional life.

Golden (2007) defines overwork as the point "when the length of work hours begin to adversely affect the health and safety of individuals, families organizations and the public even if the workers themselves voluntarily, work the excess hours," Golden also emphasizes that regulation is required not only in cases where the longer working hours are involuntary, in order to protect the safety and health of both workers involved and the general public and employees get tired because of workload. Study conducted among working women in IT sector reveals that 44% women employees feel sometimes tired because of work, 28% always feel tired because of work and 20% feel rare tiredness because of work and 8% never feels tired because of work. Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both good and bad experiences. Maxwell and McDougall (2004) reported that work life balance initiatives helped in management of stress and also improved performance. Duxbury et al (1998) discussed on work-related stress consists of working conditions involving heavy workloads, lack of participation in decision making, health and safety hazards, job insecurity, and tight deadlines.

Simon (1992) Shift results show physical health problems of fatigue, sleeping, eating and/or digestion problems, higher accident rates at work, coronary heart disease, and mental health and relationships problems. The author includes workload and repetitive tasks as physical and- psychosocial work factors. In home care work, the workload and repetitive tasks on the job are both physical and mental work affect their health so to be safe they are advised to do work out. Study conducted among working women in IT sector prefer to do work out in many places such as organisational health centre, walking, near gym., walking and other modes. Some respondents work out in their residence, 34% prefer walking as a work out measure, 11% choose other modes such as playing, sports, swimming, tread mill and dancing, 7% prefer to do work out in organisational health centre and 6% only prefer near gym.

Professional development is learning to earn or maintain professional credentials such as academic degrees to formal course work, conferences and informal learning opportunities situates in practice. It can be described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluating stage. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the opinion regarding women makes sacrifice in personal life for professional development where 86% strongly agree to the point that they sacrifice personal life in order to attain a good professional life and 14% state that no need of sacrificing personal life in order to attain a good professional development believe that need more balance in life can attain good professional development without sacrificing personal life. According to various work /life balance surveys, more than 60% of the respondent professionals surveyed said that are not able to find a balance between their personal and professional lives. They have to make tough choices even when their work and personal life is now here close to equilibrium.

Lee and McCann (2007) recognized the decent working time from the perspective of human development theorists or the capabilities approach to working time, therefore, encompasses the need for offering workers the opportunity to choose their working hours on the basis of their capabilities of functioning, in order to improve the quality of their lives (for example daily hrs) and arrangement (for example un social hrs) of working time. Working time is the period of time that an individual spends at paid occupational labour. Many countries regulate the work week by law, such as stipulating minimum daily rest periods, annual holidays and a maximum number of working hours per week. Working time may vary from person to person often depending on location, culture, lifestyle choice, and the profitability of the individual's livelihood. In the case of women in IT sector 77% are working up to 8-10 hours and 23% are working up to 7-8 hours in a day normally work where no women employees are working 10-12 hours and above 12 hours in a day.

Women employees feel longer working hours are problem faced in order to maintain work life balance and job position plays a major role on balancing work life. Study reveals that executive / administrative / management / clerical / secretarial /technicians/service/maintenance position of women employees feel longer working hours to great extend where other category of women employees feels sometimes as longer working hour as major problem. So accept H4a where longer working hours of women employees in IT sector is influenced with job positions.

So from the study it reveals that work load, time management, multiple roles and longer working hours are the major problem faced by women employees in IT sector. Work load of women employees is influenced by age level, multiple role of women employees is influenced by marital status, time management of women employees is influenced by family support and longer working hours of women employees is influenced by job position of women employees

Organisation needs various techniques to equip employees with right set of skills and knowledge of how work should be performed. It involves a course of exercise that will prepare individuals and enhance their performance in work place. For that organisation provide various policies which suits the need of women employees in IT sector. This section reviews the major organisational policies and programmes that help women employees to balance their work life.

Roehling (2001) conducted an empirical research and suggested a direct relation-ship between work life balance programs and retention which helps the employees to achieve a meaningful balance between work and personal life, these programs may only hold benefits for the employers rather than employees. The complexities exists in balancing work and personal life and the importance of balance for individuals' well-being should be investigated by an organization to provide work life balance programs which are related to retention strategies through the positive impact of these programs on individual's perceptions of balance. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the opinion regarding work life policies in organisation should be customised to individual need reveals that 57% women employees strongly agree

that work life policy should be customised for individual need,31% agree to same and 12% feel indifferent in work life policy and customised need of individuals.

Thompson, Andreassi and Prottas (2003) has identified work life policies which are very important and defined as the base level indicators of an organization, prioritizing work over family or family over work and these policies include flexible work scheduling and leave of employees from work. Work-life balance policies help in reducing the stress and provide a good work place where there is less chance of accidents in the working and also provide a fair platform for every employee, ultimately enhancing productivity.

Ferrer (2006) expressed that private sector provide family friendly benefits such as workplace childcare and employment insurance supplements to maternity, paternity and sick leave and other alternate work arrangements. Some of these policies include facilitating leave from work for family reasons such as extension to leave which may be paid or unpaid and facilitating changes in work schedules such as switching to part time work, job sharing or reduced work week, flexi-time (flexibility in start and stop hours) or telework (work from home) and family support policies such as offering help with child/elder care to balance work and life. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the satisfaction level of organisational policies such as public holiday leave 43% are satisfied and 23% have no opinion. In case of insurance plan 30% are satisfied and 20% are dissatisfied where 43% have no opinion. Staff counselling schemes34% is satisfied and 10% are dissatisfied. In the case of social club schemes 27% are satisfied and 14% are dissatisfied. Baral (2009) conducted a study on 730 managerial employees from various organisations in India, and found that family significantly contributes to work in terms of enhancing performance and positive emotions at the workplace. The finding indicates that one of the important determinants of work life balance is availability of work life balance programs. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the satisfaction level of organisational policies such as incentives offered 42% are highly satisfied only 5% are dissatisfied. Team work arrangement 55% are satisfied only 6% are dissatisfied. In case of time management 46% are satisfied and 8% are highly dissatisfied.

(Sekaran, 1989) When an organization offers its employees policies, practices, benefits and services to help them integrate their work and family responsibilities, they feel committed to the organization and indulge themselves in organizational citizenship by Life satisfaction was conceptualized as deriving from satisfaction through having a good job and family life. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the satisfaction level of organisational policies such as compensation packages 31% are satisfied and 7% are highly disasatisfied.In case of breast feeding support group 57% have no opinion 235 are dissatisfied and only 14% are satisfied. Women empowerment schemes 49% have no opinion, 20% are dis satisfied and 21% are satisfied. Women cell forum offered policies 23% are dissatisfied and 13% are highly satisfied. Grievance redresses system and anti sexual harassment cell policies in organisation 56% are satisfies and 25% are highly satisfied and only 10% are dissatisfied. In case of suggestion schemes 435 have no opinion, 215 are dissatisfied and 17% are highly satisfied with the organisational policies. Skill improvement means

basically a technique used to equip employees with right set of skills and knowledge of how work should be performance .It involves a course of exercise that will prepare individuals and enhance their performance in work place. Study conducted among working women in IT sector state the opinion regarding the skill improvement programme they getting where 75% opined that they never get any kind of skill improvement programme and 25% opined that they receive skill improvement programme during the course of work. This study found that organisation have social function suitable for family reveals 85% opined that there is no such social function arranged for family get together and 15% opined that they had receive social function from organisation suitable for family.

Carbita & Perista (2006) established a direct relationship between job satisfaction and work life balance. In this study the opinion regarding current job satisfaction level compared with last 6 month reveals that 40% are satisfied ,33% are dissatisfied with last month job,13% are highly dissatisfied because of last stringent workloads and 11% are highly satisfied with last 6 month job. Job satisfaction is defined as 'the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) in their job' Job satisfaction is a result of employees' perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important. Job satisfaction is an emotional response to a job situation which can be inferred, often determined by how well outcomes meet or exceed expectation. The progressive organization, therefore, regularly measures the satisfaction which is facilitated by work-life balance but hindered by burnout of the employees. A healthy balance between family and job leads to higher job satisfaction, thereby reducing the cost to organization and enhancing employee performance. Employee burnout is negatively related to job satisfaction as it adversely affects employee wellbeing, leading to lower job involvement, undesirable behaviour at work and cynical attitude resulting in poor employee performance. Study conducted among working women in IT sector reveals that multiple roles of women employees is a problem which always affect them because they are spending 8-10 hours with the organization. Employees state that multiple roles of women employees is highly influenced by hour work in organization. So from this section it is clear that job satisfaction of women employees is influenced by number of dependent, hours work with organization and type of family and is not influenced by physical work environment. In order to make more women employees satisfied with job organization have to provide flexibility in time schedule, reduce overtime work and make friendlier atmosphere in the organization.

Conclusion

The research findings have given an understanding of IT sector women employees' demographic profile, their home & work characteristics, outcomes of work/family interference, coping strategies, and life satisfaction provided by their current work situation with to regard work life balance, health, psychology, sleep disorder and marital, family, job & career satisfaction. Studies disclose that the major segment of the workforce women is struggling to balance these two most important forces in their lives. Many successful

women employees worry about being good wives, mothers, sister, daughters and daughters-in-law. This research makes a modest attempt to put in perspective issues concerning what happens when women dedicate themselves to their work and the impact of work on their personal, familial and social life.The study revealed that lack of time is the greatest problem for women professionals in their dual role performance and find less time in spending time with family. The findings also indicate the positive association between family and spouse support in enhancing the level of job involvement. Organizations must also assist employees to learn how to achieve and maintain suitable work-life balance. Then only major problems and challenges can be wiped out from work place where can provide better job satisfaction to women employees in IT sector.

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