



EFFECT OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES MARITAL STATUS ON CAREER GROWTH IN INDIAN IT-BPO INDUSTRY

Dr Jitendra Kumar Dwivedi

Assistant Professor, Govt. N.K College, Kota (C.G.)

Abstract

Leading the way in knowledge-based services, the Indian IT-BPO industry has advanced gender inclusion. In order to meet the needs of female professionals, companies have implemented flexible policies. However, findings of the study suggests that, even in this apparently progressive field, a woman's marital status may still have a major impact on her ability to develop in her career progression.

Introduction

The IT-BPO industry in India has been a game-changer for how we conceptualize work. Teleworking, once a novelty, has become a mainstream possibility thanks to this sector's embrace of technology. This shift towards remote work, coupled with the outsourcing of jobs, has opened doors for women in developing countries like India. These new opportunities have empowered women and fueled economic growth.

The IT-BPO industry itself is a powerhouse, boasting an annual revenue of \$60 billion and ranking as India's top private employer. It directly employs over 2 million people and indirectly impacts millions more across various industries. But what truly sets this sector apart is its commitment to gender equality. Unlike many traditional industries in India, IT-BPO has championed inclusivity from the start, actively recruiting women and creating a space where they can thrive. As a result, the industry boasts a significant number of qualified women in its workforce, whose contributions are essential to the success of these companies.

The Indian IT-BPO industry is witnessing a surge in female employees, fueled by a growing number of women graduating with engineering degrees. This trend is further bolstered by a shift in societal attitudes, with working wives becoming increasingly accepted and the IT-BPO sector gaining recognition for its safe and supportive work environment. However, research underscores the continued importance of gender diversity for businesses. Companies with at least two women on their boards boast a higher return on equity compared to the industry average. This financial advantage is further amplified by studies like a 2008 Economic Times report, which revealed that Indian companies led by women achieved a significantly faster growth rate than the broader market. These findings highlight the critical need to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, as currently less than 2% of directors in Indian companies are female.

India's IT-BPO industry stands out for its commitment to women's empowerment. Recognizing the growing economic power of women, this sector has become a champion for initiatives that promote their success in the

workplace. Research suggests a clear link between female employment and a nation's overall well-being, further motivating these efforts. IT-BPO companies go beyond mere recognition; they actively value the unique skillset women bring. An HR expert in the industry emphasizes these strengths: women excel in leadership roles, demonstrating a distinct style that combines strong motivation with emotional intelligence. They naturally incorporate empathy into decision-making and possess a natural ability to navigate conflict resolution.

IT-BPO companies are undergoing a shift, recognizing the valuable contributions of women and actively working to create a work environment that fosters their success. This commitment translates into a range of programs and policies that address women's specific needs and propel their career advancement.

Work-Life Integration: Understanding the importance of work-life balance, IT-BPO organizations offer flexible work hours. This allows women to manage both their professional aspirations and personal responsibilities effectively, creating a win-win situation for both employees and employers.

Supportive Family Policies: IT-BPO companies acknowledge the critical role women play in families. They offer extended maternity leave, providing crucial time for mothers to bond with their newborns. Additionally, paternity leave policies encourage fathers to share childcare responsibilities, promoting a more balanced approach at home. Some companies may even go further, offering childcare options to ease the burden on working parents.

Safety and Security: Security is a top concern, especially for women working non-traditional hours. IT-BPO companies are frontrunners in addressing this by implementing stringent policies. These may include after-work escorts or safe transportation options to ensure women get home safely. Additionally, comprehensive transit policies can provide peace of mind for employees who rely on public transportation.

Leadership Inspiration and Development: IT-BPO companies are smashing the glass ceiling by showcasing successful women in leadership roles. This visibility serves as a powerful motivator for younger women, demonstrating the career paths available to them. Mentorship opportunities can further empower these aspiring leaders, providing valuable guidance and support on their journeys.

Increased Participation at All Levels: Beyond inspiration, IT-BPO organizations are actively creating opportunities for women to contribute at all levels. Specific programs and dedicated support structures can remove barriers and encourage women to step into leadership positions and contribute to strategic decision-making. This not only benefits women's careers but also enriches the organization with diverse perspectives and experiences.

By implementing these initiatives, IT-BPO organizations are making significant strides towards gender equality. These efforts create a supportive and empowering work environment for women, allowing them to thrive and contribute their full potential to the company's success.

Objective

The main objective of the study was to measure the factors which significantly affects women's career related decision in IT-BPO Industry. The specific objective was

- To measure the effect of Marital status on women's selection of career in IT-BPO Industry

Research Methodology

The survey design goes beyond simply asking women about their career choices. It delves deeper by gauging the degree to which a woman has to advocate for herself and negotiate with family members who might

traditionally hold sway over her decisions. This sheds light on the social dynamics at play and potential challenges women might face.

The answer options provide a nuanced spectrum of how decision-making power regarding a woman's career might be distributed:

Independent Decision-Making (1): The woman reigns supreme. She has the sole authority to make career choices without needing to convince or negotiate with anyone.

Male Dominance (2): The patriarchal influence prevails. A male family member, such as a father, husband, or son, dictates the woman's career path.

Shared Decision-Making with a Male Family Member (3): This scenario reflects a more collaborative approach. The woman and a male family member come to a joint decision, potentially indicating a power shift or a more equitable dynamic.

Shared Decision-Making with a Female Family Member (4): Collaboration within the family unit exists, but this time with a female relative like a mother, sister, or daughter. This highlights the potential for supportive networks among women.

External Influence (5): The decision-making power lies outside the family circle. Perhaps a community leader, employer, or other external figure holds sway over the woman's career options.

By capturing these various scenarios, the survey provides valuable insights into the social and familial forces that can shape a woman's career path. It unveils how much agency women have in navigating their professional aspirations.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\alpha = 0.76$) indicates that the instrument has good internal consistency.

Sampling

Purposive sampling method was used for data collection. 100 questionnaires were distributed, out of these 86 responses were included for further analysis.

Hypotheses

Following Null hypotheses was framed for the study of research objectives and tested at 5% level of significance.

$H_{(0)1}$ - Career growth in IT-BPO Industry of women is independent of women's Marital status.

Results

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondent women based on the family member who typically makes decisions about their careers.

	Respondent Only	Male Member only	Respondent jointly with male member	Respondent jointly with female member	Someone else
Career related decision	41.5	12.0	29.6	15.3	1.6

Drawing on data from **Table 1**, we can explore how women in the survey navigate career decisions. The table offers insights into the level of autonomy women hold in this area. It suggests that career paths for some women are charted independently, while others involve male family members in the decision-making process to varying degrees. This highlights the potential diversity in how women approach career choices.

Table 2 Values of Chi-Square and respective significance level

	Marital Status
Career related decision	15.210 (.004)

Value of Chi-Square and significance level is exhibited in **Table 2**. It was found that Career related decisions varies significantly with marital status of women. Thus null hypotheses $H_{(0)1}$ is rejected.

Conclusion

Leading the way in knowledge-based services, the Indian IT-BPO industry has advanced gender inclusion. In order to meet the needs of female professionals, companies have implemented flexible policies. However, findings of the study suggests that, even in this apparently progressive field, a woman's marital status may still have a major impact on her ability to develop in her career progression.

Limitations:

The study only included women from Raipur, Chhattisgarh, excluding women in other Indian cities, particularly metropolitan areas. Women in IT-BPO industries in different cities, especially metros, might have different career decision-making factors.

Recommendations for future studies:

Include women from various regions, states across India, and even other countries to gain a broader understanding.

Consider incorporating additional variables related to career choices of women in the IT-BPO industry within the measurement tool.

References

Boender, Carol & Malhotra, Anju & Schuler, Sidney Ruth (2002); *Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development*, ICRW Conference Paper, pp. 5-9,11,16, <http://www.icrw.org/>

Kabeer, Naila (1994); "Empowerment from Below: Learning from the Grassroots", chapter 9 in: *Reversed Realities – Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London and New York: Verso, pp. 243-244, 250.

Mason, K.O 1986. "The status of women: conceptual and methodological issues in demographic studies" *Sociological Forum* 1(2):284-300.

Nasscom Mercer- Gender Inclusivity In India; Building Empowered Organizations, 2009.