

# **Work-Life Balance and Challenges faced by women employees in IT sector – A study of select IT companies in Telangana**

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## **Abstract**

In the Indian economy, women play a vital role in doing the house works and managing the family from all perspectives. Women must do all the work when they are not working or working in the organization. Work life balance of women employees plays the major role because they have to manage their personal life for their good quality of life. The quality of life is based on the professional life of each and every women employee who is coming forward to support to their family. Nowadays there are more women employees emerging in the IT sector, working in both day and night shifts. The problem of the women employee's face is health condition, Pregnancy discrimination, no equal pay, etc. This study explains the work-life balance of women in the IT sector and also shows how the women employees are balanced and Satisfied in IT sector and the factors that affect the work life balance of women employees are working hours, Job satisfaction, working condition, etc.

## **Keywords**

Work-life balance, working condition, women challenges.

## **1. Introduction**

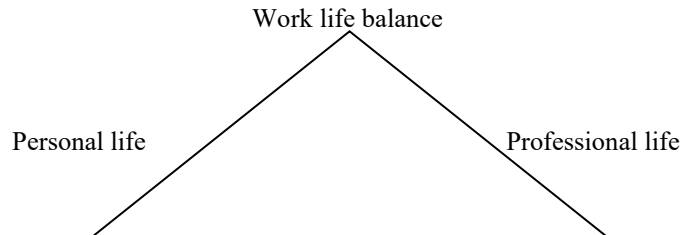
After liberalization, privatization and globalization, India has been recognized as one of the major emerging economies of the world. This has led the country's business process to a momentous paradigm shifts that compel Indian organizations to transform into the new way of functioning compared to that of earlier days. In the era of competitive modern world, employees in various organizations, particularly women employees, most often encounter never ending challenge of performing well as they are forced to devote most of their time at work. At the same time, commitment towards self development, allegiance to family and social life as well as duties along with organizational obligations are essential for any individual employee.

Work Life Balance and Women at Workplace Arthur M. and Cook A. (2003) Women work force now constitutes a significant percentage of the total work force in any organization today. With the major changes in the nature of work and work arrangements, including the increasing numbers of women participating in the paid work force, changes in women's career expectations, the decline of the family wage, the disappearance of the job for life and changes in family formation, the relationship between families and labour market participation has come under

considerable scrutiny. The pressure of career and family hits women hard at the mid-level especially. Mid-level career women face more challenges when balancing work and life, leading to more difficulty in career growth. The difficulty stems from the fact that there is a double push on these career women as they are forced to compete between two competing ideals: of mother and devoted worker.

#### Work Life Balance

The term work life balance was coined in 1986. Work life balance can be defined as achievement and enjoyment of all four life quadrants-Work, Family, Friends and self. Work life balance is to balance between the personal and professional life.



If the personal life is balanced then the professional life also balanced. Once the women employees are satisfied with their needs then they can manage their work life balance easily.

#### The global scenario of work life balance

During the 1960s and 1970s, employers considered work-life mainly an issue for working mothers who struggled with the demands of their jobs and raising children. During the 1980s, recognizing the value and needs of women contributions, pioneering organizations began to change their internal workplace policies, procedures and benefits. The changes included maternity leave, employee assistance programs (EAPs), flexi-time, home-based work, and child-care referral. During the 1980s men also began voicing work-life concerns. In 1990s solidified the recognition of work-life balance as a vital issue for everyone women, men, parents and non-parents, singles and couples. The 1990s saw a rise in the number of working women and dual-income families. A second family configuration, the lone parent household also became prevalent in the 1990s. The labor force experienced considerable challenges in balancing the work and family responsibilities. This growing awareness of the central importance of the issue resulted in major growth in 18 attempted work-life solutions during this decade.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The present research work is undertaken with the following objectives:

- To ascertain the different dimensions of work life balance among women employees in IT sector
- To study the work life balance of women employees across their demographic characteristics such as age group, number of children.
- To identify the relationship between family environment and work life balance.

### 1.2 Work Life Balance Aspects

Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. The work life balance is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society. Based on the above, there are three major aspects of work/life balance viz., Time Balance, Involvement Balance and Satisfaction Balance. Each aspect is explained hereunder.

**Time Balance:** The time balance of work is concerned with the amount of time given to work and non-work activities and roles.

**Involvement Balance:** This aspect of work life balance refers to the level of psychological involvement in or commitment to non-work roles.

**Satisfaction Balance:** This is the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles and activities. The level of satisfaction tends to increase when the involvement in work is more because we feel empowerment as when we involve ourselves in our work-related activities and start owning the responsibility from responsibility, the authority

flows. When there is balance between authority and responsibility, one ought to receive the satisfaction. Since there is always a need to examine the balance between work life and personal life is likely to impact on most people during their employment resulting in the need for flexible work arrangements at some stage, even for a short period of time. Adjustments to work arrangements are likely to take the form of leave or a shortening in working hours usually on a temporary basis but sometimes on a permanent basis. There are different types of responsibilities in life cycle of the people, which requires change in work arrangements.

### **1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of women also include the following**

- i Birth of a child
- ii. Becoming a parent, guardian or grandparent
- iii. The need to take care of a family member when they fall ill or has a disability or onset of short-term or long-term illness or disability
- iv. The desire to spend time with the family at any stage
- v. The desire to pursue personal and/or community interests, such as volunteer work or sporting activities
- vi. Decide to study further
- vii. Feeling of tiredness, stress and unenthusiastic at work
- viii. Spending too much time on travelling to and from work everyday
- ix. Considering retiring from the regular workforce.

## **2. Review of the literature**

Marcello Russo (2016) Workplace and family support and work–life balance: Implications for individual psychological availability and energy at work. The study presents three studies that explore the ways in which multiple support sources (workplace and family social support) help individuals to experience work–life balance (WLB) and thereby develop a sense psychological availability and positive energy at work. The findings of their study shed light on the importance of support from work and non work sources for the pursuit of employees to achieve balance in the spheres of work and life and suggest that the WLB helps in the development of psychological availability and augmenting employee positive energy.

J. Sudha (2014) research has been found the various aspects such as career advancement, Work life and Stress, career aspiration, Work Family conflict and Family work conflict, child care in context with Work life balance (WLB) and its practices and has also revealed the overview of the various challenges and the issues faced by Women employees to achieve WLB.

Santhi and Sundar (2012) in their research article entitled “A study on the Work Life Balance of women employees in Information Technology Industry” state the aspects like the level of satisfaction perceived by the women respondent employees on the varied determinants of WLB. The major factors that influence the WLB among various categories of women employees in I.T. Industry are support system, child care, benefits, alternate working hours, relocation, recreation and work environment. The various life programmes implemented by I.T. firms in Chennai show that work life programmes implemented to satisfy different categories of employees differently. In other words the set of factors facilitating WLB is different for different groups.

Vanitha & Meenakumari (2011) in their study entitled “Family Vs Work Conflict among Working Women in India with Special Reference to IT, Education and Banking Sector” state that the women in India in the status of working have to play multi role both at family and work places and those roles execute multi tasks at different levels and every working women cannot escape from that situation, in this 47 aspect conflict is an unavoidable human devaluation which must be faced by every woman. The level of conflict will cause both positive and negative impacts.

## **3. Methodology**

The study was carried out on the basic observation that, post liberalization, women prefer to take up IT as a profession due to its inherent perceived benefit of high paying salary and international exposure. But with changing scenario this may hold good for highly structured companies. Majority of IT jobs are time bound, have a different work culture and employers are more demanding. Careful observation can indicate that many young female IT professionals joining at junior level do not make it to top as compared to their male counterparts. In many cases the female gives prime importance to her commitment to family and children by compromising her professional growth.

For conducting this study primary data was collected from 220 female IT.A Study on Work Life Balance of Women Working in IT Sectors of Hyderabad City.

#### **4. Data collection**

The data was collected to understand their working hours, commuting time, household commitments and the challenges to fulfill expectations of spouse and kids. The data was analyzed using simple bifurcation and using weighted average. A comparative and preferential analysis was done to find the root cause of issues and its repercussion on work life balance.

#### **5. Results and Discussion**

The demography of respondents are as follows in Table 1.

Table 1. The demography of the respondents

Type of Respondents	No. of Respondents
Married	32
Unmarried	15
Divorcee	03
Women having kids	17
Women not having kid	15
Average age	38
Graduate	18
Post Graduate	32
Junior executive	19
Middle level executives	22
Senior level executives	09
Average Income(INR) Not CTC	4.2 Lakhs p.a

##### **5.1 Observations**

Working days/working hours/commuting time

The above table illustrates that IT companies work in five days schedule per week. The general prescribed working hour is 9 hours per day. But in reality in an average the IT executives work 11 hours per day. This happens because at times, in order to meet deadline of completing project these executives have to stretch the working hours beyond the normal schedule. Further information revealed that one way commuting takes around 2 hours for an IT executive. But the high standard deviation shows high variation of commuting time from 4 hrs maximum to 0.5 hrs minimum as observed depending upon the distance between workplace and residence.

Therefore it can be inferred from aforementioned observation that a women working in IT sector in Hyderabad is expected to spend minimum 12 hours per day in matter related to professional life in a normal working condition. This affects the normal family life, lead to both physical and mental exhaustion resulting in the stress.

##### **5.2 Family Liability**

The information on employers perspective on family issues has been analyzed in this section encompassing the overall employer's perception and family requirement. The rating for different aspects (both positive and negative) are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively below.

Table 2. Rating of Respondents on Family and Work (Positive Aspects)

Policy	Level of Agreement	
	Mean Score (At the rating of 4)	Standard Deviation
Management accommodative to family needs	2.7	0.95
Family members encouraged to join company celebrations	2.6	0.54
Rating of Respondents on Family and Work (Non Positive Aspects)		
Policy	Level of Agreement	
	Mean Score (At the rating of 4)	Standard Deviation
Keeping work ahead of family is appreciated	2.6	0.54
Discouragement of leave for family issues	2.2	0.84
Family takes a back seat	2.09	0.95

The study revealed that management is accommodative to family needs to an extent of 67% rating and also family members are encouraged to join company celebrations (rating of 65%), But at the same time the analysis showed that management appreciates if the employees keep work ahead of family (rating of 65%).The management discourages to avail leave on pretext of family issues (rating of 55%) and family takes a back seat on employers perspective (rating of 52%) .Hence though as a whole the rating of issues on positive aspects are more as compared to ratings on the negative aspects, but the companies are more concerned about their revenue and make some overtly looking family centric activity like making a family get together. But issues like taking leave for family requirement are not encouraged.

Further, Women employees in Indian scenario are compelled to take break for child care and domestic commitment so also the case for women IT professionals in Hyderabad. Though joining back to job is permitted, but it is always accompanied with riders in an IT organization.50% of respondents said that the package on return would be less as compared to one's peer who has not taken the break. As there is rapid change in technology the changed technical scenario during the break might make it incompatible for the employee while rejoining as expressed by 19% respondents.31% of respondents felt that on return after a break one has to settle for the available vacancy both in terms of rank and technology platform.

### 5.3 Observations

As observed by the research the duration of working hour is not always uniform in case of women IT professionals in hyd city. The working hours vary as per nature of project assigned to them. However there is no substantial variation in putting number of hours at work place as per the age, educational qualification and experience of the women employee per se. However young married women employee of early thirties or late twenties having kid are more stressed while interfacing their work and non-work lives. Baby care and managing household chores have been observed as the most pressing demand for them at the family. Along with this they are having their spouse working in 9 to 6 schedule thereby mostly depending on housemaids and some of them put their kids in crèches. Any disturbance in this apparatus leads to conflict and irritation. Most of the respondents (85%) are suffering from life style diseases like anxiety, mood swing, hypertension and loss of sexual appetite leading to friction between partners. It has also been clearly observed from current study that in order to play dual role rationally, women IT professionals in Mumbai are already seen, in compromising either at family or at the professional life.

### 6. Conclusion

To conclude, the study examines the work life balance of the women employees in the education and how they balance their work and family life in the organization. Work-life balance (WLB) is to craft and safeguard supportive

and healthy work environments which enable employees to have balance between their paid work and personal/family responsibilities. The demand of work is increasing the issue of WLB is becoming more and more relevant around the globe.

In case of a woman professional in IT sector it is very important to understand the ground reality and strike a balance between professional and personal life for achieving professional excellence. Without this the women professional in IT sector would continue to be concentrated at the lower level and would not be able to climb up to the upper echelon of the job hierarchy by competing with their male counter parts.

It is general expectation that employer should be sensible enough towards women employee in IT sector while implementing work flexibility policies especially in a city like Hyderabad which has its inherent disadvantages of high cost of living, distance from work place to residence and majority being nuclear family dweller with both the spouse being career centric, work life balance is a biggest challenge. And unfortunately kids are being the biggest causality. They are being deprived of parental care very often. It is a matter of concern for both employer and women employee, their partners and other family members to build a healthy rational society by integrating work and family life. Family which is the primary core value of Indian society should not suffer.

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