Performance of Women in the age of Information Technology: A Snap Short in Indian Working Society

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Abstract

The emergence of Information Technology (IT) sector in mid 1990's has unveiled a potential employment opportunity for women in this organized sector congenially befitting their job environment and offering, in principle, least gender discrimination. Economic growth and technological advancement in India in the current decade is very impressive. Technology, market and development are considered gender – neutral. In returns of Indian context, the concern over work life balance is gradually becoming a common talk. Being a woman she has to play two roles first is the personal life that means home making and second is the professional life that means from where she earns money for her family to lead life at ease. Each role has its own demand and responsibility. They have to create a balance between these two roles. When such role demands overlap, multiple problems are faced leading to losses for all concerned; the individual, the family, the organization and the society. Professionally, women in it industry have contributed much to the well being of society. They deserve better recognition, remuneration and work conditions. Information Technology (IT) sector, through its employment, contributes substantially to women empowerment. Its employment potentiality provides inspiration to female students to take up technical and professional courses with an eye to the job market. Most reviews reveal that, notwithstanding overall satisfactory gender neutral pursuit by this sector, an optimal level of gender inclusivity is still to be achieved, especially to the senior level. Moreover, this sector requires to be extra – careful in doing away with the prevailing maladies such as 'Feminization', 'Glass ceiling' etc. The theoretical aspect of individualization in the workplace is palpable but at the societal level, patriarchal strategies dominate on the Indian psyche. The reflection of this paper is arrived at, on the basis of, the inputs drawn from different literatures of secondary sources.

Women are the new paradigms of today's culture beginning from home to working sector. Women work in three criteria. Women are taking active participation in management, local governance and political fields. Women trend in working sector has changed with globalization. Women are involved in SNA activities. A survey has also been conducted about the nature of women work behaviour. A significant part of women are unpaid because they are socially un-recognized. Women work is rendered invisible because of social perceptions. Women are the resource of our country in every field. Women have shifted traditional assumptions about their roles and capabilities. Women have basic rights about decision making. There are facts and figures about women participating in different roles. In this era women have made comprehensive steps in educational attainment and workforce participation. Women participation in work is one of the proxy indicators of women in overall status in society and gender empowerment. Women are managing complex interfaces between domestic and work culture. This is the very power of women in this 21st century.

This paper attempts to analyze the issues of problems, opportunities, challenges and constraints the women employees face in the Information Technology (IT) sector in India.

Keywords:

Women, Information Technology (IT), Gender discrimination, Personal life, Professional life, Work life balance, Employer challenges, SNA Activities.

1. Introduction of the Study

Information Technology (IT) has not been very long since the terms '*women*' and '*careers*' came to the associated in the Indian context. Globalization has made deep inroads in the Indian scene in post – 1990's. It sets off, market liberalization and emergence of Information Technology (IT) sector. Development of Information Technology (ICT), in recent decades, facilitated by the high – speed data communication links, contributed to improved communicative networks bridging the temporal and spatial boundaries and correspondingly, widened the scope of opportunities for people seeking paid work. The onset of Liberalization and Globalization in 1990s paved the way for growth of Information Technology (IT) industry in India. Information Technology (IT) industry enjoys natural comparative advantage of 12 hour time gap with

most of the overseas countries, exposure to a large cross – section of educated English speaking but cheap labour force and above all, Indian Government's policy incentives. For an example, setting up of several Software Technology Parks (STPs) and providing tax holidays to profit making Information Technology (IT) industry etc... Besides boosting up export earnings for the country and creating a new pool of entrepreneurs, Information Technology (IT) sector has its inherent spillover benefit of creating employment potential for a large pool of educated unemployed youths including an attractive option for the women. It is worth mentioning that Information Technology (IT) industry has now captured about 51 per cent of the world market (Kumar 2001). National Association of Software Services Company (NASSCOM) – Mencher, Report 2009, on the other hand, has revealed that over the years the proportion of women workforce at entry level as well as middle level management has increased considerably but there is lack of adequate representation of women at the senior level.

Figure: 1

Women's empowerment is not a new word in today's gender literature. Women are becoming more and more self dependent by accessing to all opportunities which women were denied in the past. Women have possessed the power to utilize power in every field. The role of women is rooted into eternity. A woman goes under many transitions. It takes time for women to unfold her into self established person. There are two types of struggling women in the community. One who has highly established and the other is a struggling society to confine her-self into proper designation.

Gone are the days when men overruled women in each sphere and gone are the days when women were denied of freedom and opportunities. At present time, women are setting up enterprises and taking up income generated activities maintaining family. The role of Indian women has ranged from that of a deity from pure to vulgar from being supreme to downtrodden and also innumerable manifestations of virtue or vice. Indian women have undergone drastic change. Now-a-days this change is due to increase in globalization, impact of technology, impact of media and other cultures,

impact of social, economic and political cross currents of the world, and unforeseen and unanticipated events across the world. The social cultural context of women growing up remained the same for thousands of years, political ideology and governance of a nation emerged from the 1940's in India, industrialization took roots and mass education for both women and men. Women has to play multiple roles sometimes role of wife or mother or role of parents or daughter and simultaneously in the social setting to play different roles in community and doing this she has to submerge her own self role and real identity. This is the century of telecom, Information Technology (IT) and financial institutions. Women expertise in all the industries is beginning to emerge and women are emerging as a force to reckon it. The transition will be where women will create new paradigms. (Parikh, 2005)

Although gender empowerment has been a buzzword in development circles, the concept remains ambiguous. Gender concerns and discourses survive within the development bureaucracies dominated by men. It is easier for them to ring – fence gender issues as a problem of poverty and to argue against '*feminization of poverty*' than to admit the gender disadvantage which crosses the boundaries of class and ethnicity. Since the beginning of planned development, women have been viewed as a deprived section requiring welfare measures. Most studies and reports on women have only remained as a source of data, which rather endorses the passivity of the state. It studies the impact of technology on various social parameters of village economy. It examines the link between technology and occupational pattern of women, the level of female education and identifies the factors that influence women employment. Education and technology should ensure liberation and freedom of thought for all human beings. It should break gradually the shackles of tradition that binds women in the man-made gaol. The gender issue should be de-linked both from myopic economics and insensitive politics.

In India mostly it is women who have to do household as cook, clean the house, do the dishes, wash clothes, care of children and men do not share on most of the household works. Men do that work that is to be dealt outside the house. Now a day there is increasing need for getting some income for the family then women have to work harder. Women workers have to handle Persecution's at their work place, sometimes just over look things to ensure that their job is not jeopardized in anyway. Many Indian families are still living as joint families along with the parents and in-laws. This adds to their stress further because they have to please all the family members of her husband. Listen to their complaints that they make against her and turn deaf ears towards them and so on. Overall, majority of women in India look towards or live in the hope that things will change.

Women workers in India are faced with lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other countries. Besides, of so many efforts from past years, female section of society is deprived in compared to male section. They are not given first priority in social and economic decisions in her own family. According to United Nations Development Programmer (UNDP) report, women are involved in doing 67 per cent work of world still they are socially and economically deprived. They are receiving only 10 per cent of the universal income and have 1 per cent part in global assets. This discrimination also persists in their work place in un-organized sector. In informal sector, women workers don't get same wages for same nature of work for same hours done by men. They are exploited at workplace. They are some acts i.e. The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008, Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act, 2010 etc... But, due to their improper implementation, women workers are forced to work and live in miserable conditions in unorganized sector.

2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of my research are to address some of the issues relating to women in the age of information technology in India in various incases and how to maintain or balance their work life and personal life. The objectives are;
(i) To study the health status of working women and media's role in women health in India.
(ii) To study the trend of women participation in working sectors as labourers in Indian states.
(iii) To clear main problems of working women.
(iv) To identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges and problems faced by women workers.
(v) To identify the key socio-economic pointers contributing to women's status, safety and security.

3. Information Technology (IT)

Information Technology (IT) is the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information by a

micro-electronics-based combination of computing and telecommunications. Information Technology (IT) is the industry, which through the use of computers and other supporting, equipment helps in the spread of knowledge. Information Technology (IT) for some time was synonyms to computers. But with the rapid and advancement in various information delivery systems such as radio, television, telephone, newspapers, fax and of course computers and computer networks, information technology refers to the entire gamut of media and devices used to transmit and process information for use by various target groups in the society. Information Technology (IT) has therefore, been rights termed at information and communication revolution.

4. Literature Review of the Study

The literature review shows that more focus is on married working women than on unmarried working women (Karl, 2009). It is also seen that focus is more on organized sector rather than unorganized sector of working women (Shalz, 2011). Eggins (1997) advocates for more facilities to women in the work-place suggesting that, **"***... it is an important part of developmental strategy as well as an act of social justice.***"** The World Bank (1991) estimates that Indian Women make up one-third of the labor force. Singhal (1995) is of the opinion that, **"***Participation of women in workforce is essential for economic development and population planning.***"**

Somjee (1989) has some very strong critical comments. She has said that, **"***In the history of women's studies, which is not very long, a variety of approaches have been adopted in order to understand women's problems and find solutions to them. such approaches range from how women are perceived in various cultures and historical settings, given their biological functions and what nature 'intended' them to do, to their decline in power and status vis-à-vis men in the complex social evolution, to a widely shared emphasis on the need to make women equal through the economic on the need to make women equal through the economic and legal route which treats them as individuals rather than those having the sole responsibility for looking after the family.***"**

Mitra (1997) analyses the causes and comes to some important conclusions, **"***Relationship between women and professions could be perceived as one of women in full-fledged professions, medicine, law, academics, etc and another in the***** *semi-professions-like nursing, teaching, clerks etc.***"**

Okolo (1989) studied that another obstacle is the lack of role models of executive women due to their scarce presence in top managerial positions. Likewise, this study found out that there 18 is no gender difference in organizational hierarchies when a woman has already gained access to them. **"***The lack of impact in women can occur because executive and managerial women have developed survival features becoming immune to the effects of men's hierarchies. A hierarchy composed by men solely may have an effect upon the election of a managerial board, and then its further influence is not very strong.***"**

Ronald J. Burke, Mustafa Koyuncu and Lisa Fiksenbaum (2010) examined the relationship of the perceived presence of organizational practices designed to support women's career advancement and their work attitudes and satisfaction and their psychological well being. Data were collected from 286 women in managerial and professional jobs working in a large Turkish bank, a 72 percent response rate. Five organizational experiences were considered, **"***Negative attitudes towards women, equal treatment, support, career barriers and male standards. Women reporting more supportive organizational experiences and practices were more engaged in their work, more job and career satisfied, and indicated greater levels of psychological well being.***"**

Wentling (2003) showed that the twin roles of women cause tension and conflict due to her social structure which is still more dominant. In her study on working women in Delhi, she has shown that **"***Traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same basically and hence women face problem of role conflict change in attitudes of men and women according to the situation can help to overcome their problem.***"**

Sophia J. Ali (2011) **"***Investigated the challenges facing women in career development. She found that most of the women employees were dissatisfied with career development programmers and women were discriminated against in career development opportunities. The study recommended that organizations should strive to ensure that career development programmers were set to enhance career development amongst women employees. Top management should also be committed to the career development of women, and organizations should also introduce affirmative action to urgently address career development of women.***"**

Figure: 2

5. Background of the Study

Before the economic liberalization policy of the congress Government (1991) in India, the scenario in organization were completely different from that which exists now in terms of stability of workforce as opportunities were very few at that time comparatively. In the early 50's and 60's more Government Organizations or Semi-government Organizations and very few private players existed. People preferred working in government or semi–government organizations, as it provided job security and quality of work life. People who entered the job market remained with one employer for a very long time, some times for the duration of their working life. If they change jobs it was usually a major career and life decision and some who made many and frequent job changes was looked at as an incompetent person not able to survive anywhere, struggling to make both ends meet. In the 70's and later, external mobility increased dramatically posing a great threat to the organizations. The personnel or HR managers of the organizations found themselves with a new phenomenon to consider, the employee turnover. Moreover, voluntary turnover has now increased drastically, as the Indian market is opened to foreign players as well. Besides this, the government is also encouraging entrepreneurship, so there are many domestic players also entering the Indian market. The situation has resulted in stiff competition for competent workforce. Poaching and job-hopping has become the order of the day. As the organization began to feel the impact of the rise of voluntary employee turnover, employee retention strategies emerged.

The Indian Information Technology (IT) professionals are the most sought after by Information Technology (IT) companies all over the globe. In India the Information Technology (IT) professionals are well paid and are offered world class benefits. Therefore, job in Information Technology (IT) sector is a dream come true for many young educated professionals in India and they strive towards this goal. They also get an opportunity to live and work abroad in addition to attractive pay package and benefits.

The rise of Information Technology (IT) sector in India brought in drastic changes in life style, sociality, family structure, self-identity and attitude of the urban middle class in India. Information Technology (IT) professionals were looked upon with respect as they enjoyed better social status and were envied lot.

6. Trends in Employment of Women

It is true that, compared to many other countries, there has been relative stability of aggregate female work participation rates in India, which have remained quite low over time. But, there are wide variations and differing trends across states, rural and urban areas, as well as changes in the pattern of work. For urban women, the increase in regular work has dominantly been in services, including relatively low-paid domestic service, along with some manufacturing. In manufacturing, there has

been some recent growth of petty home-based activities of women, typically with very low remuneration, performing outsourced work as part of a larger production chain. But, explicitly export-oriented employment, even in special zones set up for the purpose, still accounts for only a tiny fraction of women's paid work in urban India. However, in rural India self-employment has come to dominate women's activities even in non-agricultural occupations, largely because of the evident difficulty of finding paid work.

In India, rapid changes in industrialization and economic development have taken place after the liberalization program of the government of India during the 1991 and the trends in the employment situation in India and other developing countries over the last two decades has suggested that not only the employment rate has increased especially in the urban area and other organized sectors, there has been important "Gender Structure Changes" in the labor force. There have been changes in women workers in different industries (Jose, 1993).

Information Technology (IT) coupled with the economic development efforts have both thus impacted the employment patterns, positions, performance and prospects of many of the jobs and hence completely revolutionized the thinking and the way the HRM is practiced in the industries.

Despite the increased opportunities for women in IT industry, recent employment trends indicate that the percentages of women in specific technical fields have remained flat or declined. Factors that drove women away from high-tech companies early in the decade included (Cummings, 2009) et al;

✓ An exclusionary culture that did not support women's advancement.
✓ Inflexible work-place those were not conducive to work-life effectiveness.
✓ Isolation of women because of a lack of role models networks and mentors.
✓ The failure of companies in the high-tech sector to strategically and objectively identify and develop talent.

Table 1: Women's Employment in the Organized Sector

Srl: No:	Division & Industry	Women Employees (in Thousands) as on 31-03-2001		
		Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
1.	Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing	48.30	464.40	512.80
2.	Mining and Quarrying	55.60	8.40	64.00
3.	Manufacturing	93.00	937.00	1030.00
4.	Electricity, Gas and Water	44.70	1.30	46.00
5.	Construction	63.20	4.00	67.30
6.	Wholesale, Retail Trade, Restaurants and Hotels	17.40	29.40	46.80
7.	Transport, Storage and Communications	174.90	8.10	182.90

8.	Financing, Insurance Real E-state and Business Services	184.80	60.20	245.00
9.	Community, Social and Personal Services	2177.20	577.30	2754.50
	Total	**2859.20**	**2090.10**	**4949.30**

Source: India, Ministry of Labour, Directorate General Employment and Training. (2003). Employment Review January – March 2001. New Delhi. P. 24

The increase in the growth of employment appears to be much higher for female workers compared to male workers. Even where the proportion of working women as reflected in the female work participation rate may be low, the absolute numbers have significantly increased, given the rate of population growth over time. The increase in work opportunities during the early years of the new millennium has been to the tune of 9.3 million jobs per annum from 1999-2000 to 2004-05. This acceleration in employment growth from 1.25 per cent per annum from 1993-94 to 1999-2000 to 2.62 per cent per annum in the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05 (GOI, 2008) has been beneficial to women's participation as well. Of the 46 million job opportunities created from 1999-2000 to 2004-05 compared to 24 million in the earlier period, i.e. 1993-94 to 1999-2000, nearly 15 million women joined the workforce. Urban areas almost doubled their number of women workers, while in rural areas women workers increased from 9 to 12 million. Are these signs of a gradual but definite wind of change with more women entering the labour market? This positive change is noted more forcefully in the urban context where requisite educational inputs and modern thinking vis-à-vis women's work is increasingly becoming noticeable. Rural agriculture is increasingly drawing women's labour supplies, with over four-fifths of the women in rural areas working in agriculture. This gains significance amidst the declining share of male workers from 74 per cent in 1993-94 to 66 per cent in 2004-05. Thus, it seems that women in rural areas are finding it harder to shift away from agriculture. Involvement of women in agriculture is largely as cultivators or farmers as well as agricultural laborers. However, there has been a slight decline in the share of women as agricultural laborers, while their share among cultivators has increased. In urban areas, women have achieved substantially higher growth of employment in manufacturing and have been able to increase their share, especially after 1999-2000 from 24 per cent to over 28 per cent in 2004-05. Thus, in urban areas, the share of female workers in manufacturing has increased substantially while that of male workers has not. Even in the services sector, women have gained in terms of employment, especially in the domestic and personal services category.

According to the report of NASSCOM – survey of facilities at NTMIS, AICTE, Government of India, NASSCOM, 70 per cent of software professionals in Information Technology (IT) companies were men in India, whereas 21 per cent were women. However, the ratio is likely to be 60:40 (male:female) by the year 2013. Women have thus come to play a major role in the growth of Information Technology (IT).

Table 2: A Sample Indicative of this Trend.

Name of the Organization	Total Employment	Women Employed	Ratio
WIPRO	12658	2530 (19.98%)	1:5
TCS	21800	5450 (25%)	1:4

INFOSYS	15356	2896 (18.86%)	1:5
HEWLENT-PACKARD	2245	320 (14.25%)	1:7
POLARIS	4800	1200 (25%)	1:4
L & T INFOTECH	2250	900 (40%)	1:2.5
HCL TECHNOLOGIES	5757	1150 (19.97%)	1:5
SUN MICROSYSTEMS	596	119 (19.96%)	1:5
ORACLE INDIA	2702	540 (19.98)	1:5
PHILIPS SOFTWARE	757	190 (25.09)	1:4
SIEMENS INFORMATION	1390	260 (18.70)	1:6
ROLTA INDIA	2346	123 (5.25)	1:19

The increase in the number of women in the labor market signifies an important trend regarding women's employment. This has been occurring alongside increases in labor force and workforce, especially for urban women, although rural women workers predominate in terms of participation rates and overall magnitude. The increasing share of women's participation in the labor force and its significant contribution to household income as well as gross domestic product (GDP) require some policy attention be paid to the gender dimensions of employment. The eleventh Five Year Plan document for the first time in the history of Indian planning recognizes women not only as equal citizens but as '*agents of sustained socio-economic growth and change*' (GOI, 2008, p. 5). A multi-pronged approach is emphasized to address issues concerning women workers, such as provision of basic entitlements and strengthening of institutional mechanisms.

India's economy has undergone a substantial transformation since the country's independence in 1947. Agriculture now accounts for only one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP), down from 59 per cent in 1950, and a wide range of modern industries and support services now exist. In spite of these changes, agriculture continues to dominate employment, employing two-thirds of all workers. India faced economic problems in the late 1980's and e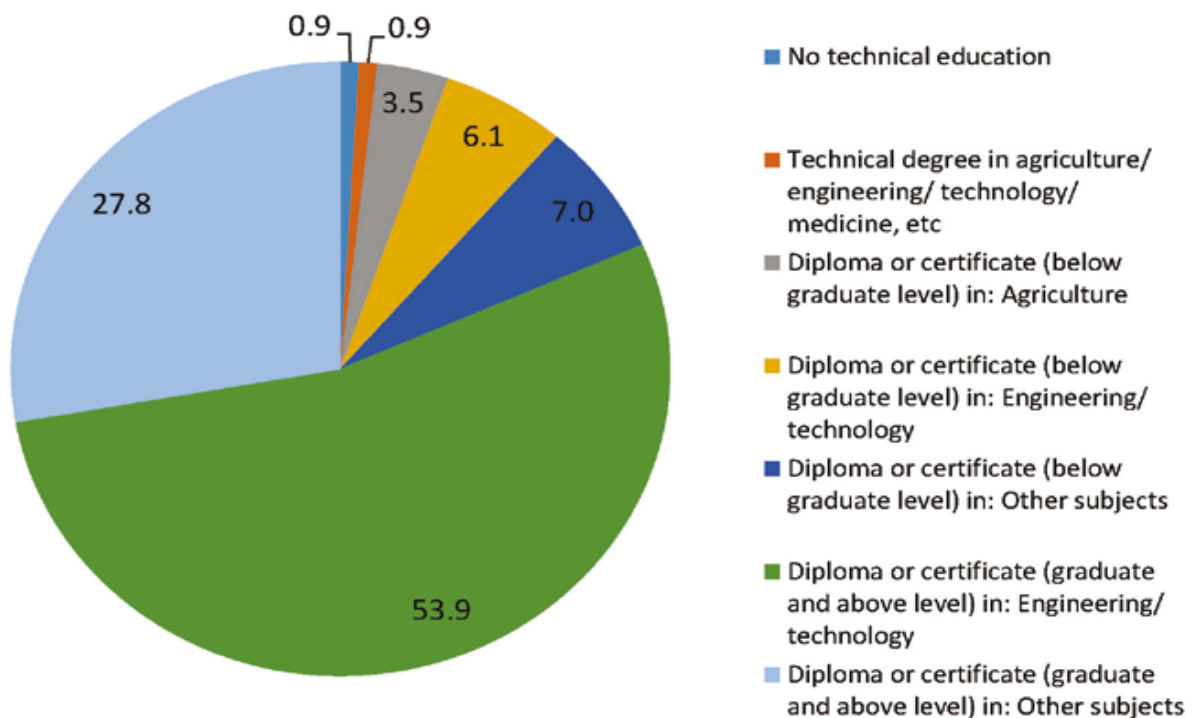arly 1990's that were exacerbated by the Persian Gulf Crisis. Starting in 1992, India began to implement trade liberalization measures. The economy has grown-the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate ranged between 5 and 7 per cent annually over the period and considerable progress has been made in loosening government regulations, particularly restrictions on private businesses. Different sectors of economy have different experiences about the impact of the reforms. In a country like India, productive employment is central to poverty reduction strategy and to bring about economic equality in the society. But the results of unfettered operation of market forces are not always equitable, especially in India, where some groups are likely to be subjected to disadvantage as a result of globalization. Women constitute one such vulnerable group. Since globalization is introducing technological inputs, women are being marginalized in economic activities, men traditionally being offered new scopes of learning and training. Consequently, female workers are joining the informal sector or casual labor force more than ever before. For instance, while new rice technology has given rise to higher use of female labor, the increased work load for women is in operations that are unrecorded, and often unpaid, since these fall within the category of home production activities. The weaker sections, especially the women, are denied the physical care they deserve. There is, thus, hardly any ability for the majority of Indian

women to do valuable functioning; the '*capability*' to choose from alternatives is conspicuous by absence.

The International Labor Organization's (ILO) analysis of employment trends shows that in spite of that, the progress in some areas, women generally continue to earn lower incomes suffer higher unemployment and remain largely restricted to low skilled part – time, informal and unstable jobs (IOL, 2001). The ILO's World Employment Report – 2001 '*Life at work in the information econom*y' suggests that the development of Information Technology (IT) offers many new opportunities for women but unless these are supported by deliberate policies to ensure participation, ownership, education, Information Technology (IT) training as well as family-friendly policies in information work place, the old gender bias will persist.

Most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plow fields and harvest crops while working on farms, women weave and make handicrafts while working in household industries, women sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores (e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children). Although the cultural restrictions women face are changing, women are still not as free as men to participate in the formal economy. In the past, cultural restrictions were the primary impediments to female employment now however; the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment as well. The Indian census divides workers into two categories; '*main*' and '*marginal*' workers. Main workers include people who worked for 6 months or more.

NSS Figure: 3 General education of women working in IT in India 2011 (source: NSS 2011)

During the year, while marginal workers include those who worked for a shorter period. Many of these workers are agricultural laborers. Unpaid farm and family enterprise workers are supposed to be included in either the main worker or marginal worker category, as appropriate. Women account

for a small proportion of the formal Indian labor force, even though the number of female main workers has grown faster in recent years than that of their male counterparts.

7. Health Status of Women

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India is one of the few countries in the world, where women and men have nearly the same life expectancy at birth (kilbourne, 1990). Recently there is a great decline in the sex ratio in India. The most extreme expressions of the preference for sons are female infanticide and sex selective abortions. Apart from that, women are prone to many life threatening diseases, but they get less health care than men even as children. Poor health has repercussions not only for women but also their families. Women in poor health are more likely to give birth to low weight infants. They are also less likely to be able to provide food and adequate care for their children.

Unwanted pregnancies terminated by unsafe abortions also have negative consequences for women's health. The high levels of maternal mortality are especially distressing, because the majority of these deaths could be prevented if women had adequate knowledge about health services either proper prenatal care or referral to appropriate health care facilities (Jejeebhoy and Rao 1995). In fact the leading contributor to high maternal mortality ratios is lack of access to health care (The world bank 1996). Studies have found that twenty percent of all maternal deaths in India is caused by anemia (The world bank 1996).

Women do not even have the knowledge about anemia a simple reason for death which can easily be avoided if they get the knowledge. India has the highest incidence of cervical cancer in the world which could be reduced by a simple papsmear test. News reports say that female infanticide has reached the one crore mark in the last decade in India. And everybody knows that hundreds of women are killed every year on every front and every imaginable pretext. If this trend continues there is possibility of women becoming an extinct species. Despite the alarming growth of the epidemic AIDS, most women in India have little knowledge of AIDS. The NFHS found that a large majority of Indian women had never heard of AIDS. There were many misconceptions among those who had heard of the disease.

8. Women Population

At the 2001 census, India had a female population of 496million. India accounts 15 per cent of World's women characterized by vast regional differences and a variety of cultures. But, social discrimination and economic deprivation on the basis of gender is common to all, irrespective of religion, cast, community, and State.

Empowerment of women, gender discrimination, and violence against women, which have become serious subjects of sociological research in contemporary times, was hitherto neglected. While contemporary social changes have exposed women to unprotected socio-economic, cultural and political environment, there are no corresponding protective social systems and institutions of social justice to safeguard their interests. There are many who are skeptical about women's ability to exercise equal rights with men and about their capacity to play equal role with men. But such apprehensions are ill-founded in the context of the broader opportunities available for women following mechanization of industry and agriculture, enabling women to compete with men successfully.

Innovations in science and technology have removed the disparity between men and women attributed to physical strength alone. Women are able to handle modern appliances which require intelligence and training and not merely physical strength. Thus, India has now several women working as pilots, driving locomotives, buses, tractors and machinery in workshops. Sex as maternal factor in the area of legal rights has practically disappeared. It is not therefore fair to relegate women as a group to an inferior position in society. The Constitution does not regard sex as a permitted classification and prohibits sex as a basis of differential treatment in all areas of legal rights. Modernity has resulted in a growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. The earlier conception that man was the provider of basic necessities for family and women the child bearer and care taker of home, is no longer valid in the changing social structure and economic compulsions.

However, any attempt to assess the status and problem of women in a society should start from the social framework. Social structure, cultural norms, and value systems are crucial determinants of women's role and their position in society. In respect of the status there is a gap between the theoretical possibilities and their actual realization.

9. Work Life Balance

In an increasing competitive environment, it is difficult to separate home life and work life. Employees to-day and more likely to express a strong desire have a harmonious balance among future career, family life and leisure activities.

Women working in the Information Technology (IT) sector, especially older women who are married, have to constantly juggle between roles as home-makers, mothers, wives and employees. The priorities imposed on women by society need not be explicated. Few companies have specific HR policies to help women balance out the contradictory pulls between the home and the work place. Consequently most women techies have to give up a minimum of three years of their professional life once they decide to have children. And three years is equivalent to a life-time in the Information Technology (IT) industry, where obsolescence sets in every three months.

Work life balance can be represented as two spheres indicating two lives i.e. Personal and Professional. Exhibit: 1, represents regular interaction between two spheres. The semi-permeable spheres denote regular contact of these spheres with external environment. As shown in exhibit: 2, when organizational life sphere starts intruding into personal life sphere or vice-versa, imbalance gets started.
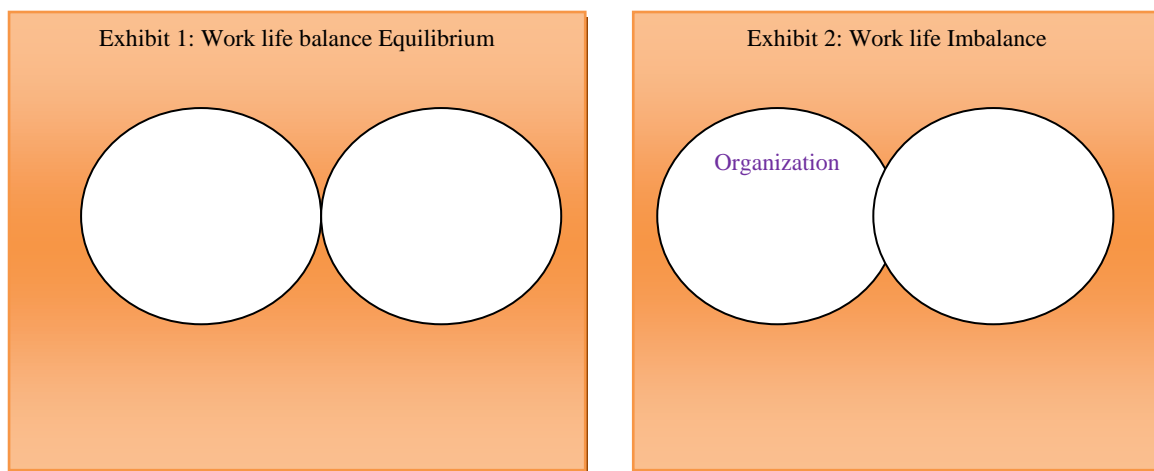

Figure: 4

There must be proper balance between these spheres. If there is lack of balance between personal life and professional life there occur work family conflict which hampers your personal life as well as your professional life also. Work family conflict is negatively linked to several organizational out comes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress and turnover. Work-family conflict can be considered a source of occupational stress. In many Information Technology (IT) related jobs, employees are expected to work late, be on call to solve technical problems and travel all of these factors can result in conflicts between working and family life. Work-family conflict has been defined as 'a form of inter-role conflict that occurs when the demands of work and family are mutually incompatible'. The two components of work-family conflict, family matters that spill over into working life and work factors that spill over into family life, can add to the psychological demands placed upon workers and therefore affect their well being, stress and depression, physical ailments and life satisfaction.
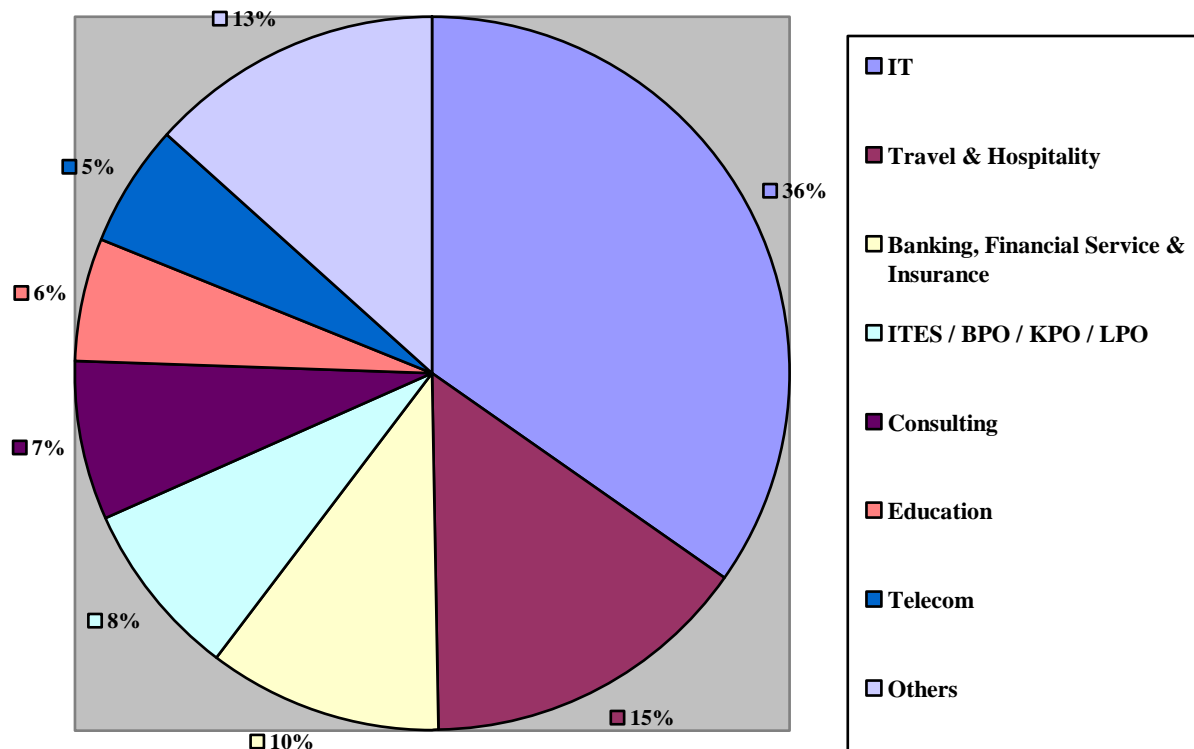
Figure: 5 Women Employed in Different Industries

10. Problems Faced by Working Women

❖ **Occupational problems as Stress:**

In women Occupational stress is stress involving work. Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key personal and family issue for many societies. There are many facets in working mother's lives that subject to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis.

Occupational or work-related stress defined by World Health Organization's (WHO), **"*Is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.*"**

❖ **Reasons of occupational Stress**

Imbalance between work and family leads to occupational stress. Imbalance between work and family life arises due to a number of factors. Various factors are following;

(a) Mental Harassment:

It is an age old convention that women are less capable and inefficient in working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment. In addition to this, the same attitude governs injustice of unequal salaries for the same job. The true equality has not been achieved even after 61 years of independence. Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career.

(b) Sexual Harassment:

Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions and hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging modesty of women. Most of the women tend to be concentrated in the poor service jobs whereas men are in an immediate supervisory

position, which gives them an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women.

(c) Discrimination at Workplace:

However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. They are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all working women. A majority of working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues. This is usually the case in factories and labor-oriented industries.

(d) No Safety of Working Women While Traveling:

Typically, the orthodox mindset in the Indian society makes it difficult for a working woman to balance her domestic environment with the professional life. In some families, it may not be acceptable to work after six o'clock. Those families that do accept these working hours may experience considerable anxiety every day about a woman's safety while traveling. So many issues affect a working woman because she is closely protected or watched by her family and the society.

(e) Lack of Family Support:

Lack of proper family support is another issue that working women suffers from. At times, the family doesn't support women to leave the household work and go to office. They also resist for women working till late in office which also hampers the performance of the women and this also affects their promotion.

(f) Insufficient Maternity Leaves:

Insufficient maternity leave is another major issue that is faced by a working mother. This not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also detrimental to their personal lives.

(g) Job Insecurity:

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which sometimes puts unhealthy and unreasonable un-reasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload extremely long work hours and intense pressures to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travel and too much time away from family also contribute to an employee's stressors.

(h) Workplace Adjustment:

Adjusting to the workplace culture, whether in a new company or not, can be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture such as communication patterns of the boss as well as the co-workers, can be lesson of life. Maladjustments to workplace cultures may lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or even with superiors. In many cases office politics or gossips can be major stress inducers.

(i) Other Reasons:

It include Personal demographics like age, level of education, marital status, number of children, personal income and number of jobs currently had where you work for pay and Work situation characteristics like job tenure, size of employing organization, hours worked per week.

11. Scope of the Study

The study is exploratory in nature and seeks to identify the problems and challenges faced by urban women in different professional sectors like public sector enterprises, banks, schools and colleges, hospitals, commercial organizations etc... Further the study also aims also at finding out the organizational supports for women employees so that the women employees are able to give their best to their organization and are able to reach their full potential.

12. Methodology of the Study

The present study is secondary in nature. I do not attempt has been made to include any statistical data in this investigation. The data used for the study has been collected from Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Research Articles or Papers, Journals, E-Journals Reports, Books, and on-line data bases. For that, I have used different websites.

13. Life Events in Career Development

❖ Opposing

The three most frequent personal or family life events that hinder career development includes difficult balancing work and family, slowed down

career progression to have children and marriage difficulties.

(i) The women faced difficulties in balancing work and family as they have too many work and family responsibilities and sometimes they did not have time to accomplish everything effectively. To them, time management was the biggest challenge and trying to do everything well and not feeling guilty if something did not get done.

(ii) Women also feel that their career slowed down in order to try and have children. They deliberately turned down promotions so that they could reduce their travel schedule reduce the stress at work and concentrate on trying to start family.

(iii) Also marriage difficulties create conflict between work and family for women. This marriage difficulty sometime resulted because of working tremendous amount of hours, having to relocate or not having time to socialize. Having to manage the effects of marriage difficulties and the demanding requirements of work made it extremely hard for women to continue to progress in their careers.

❖ **Helping**

There are some events in personal or family life that can help women in their career development. The five most frequent personal or family life events are supportive and encouraging parents, supportive and encouraging spouse, learning the value of hard-work and good work ethics from parents, parenting and raising children and supportive children. Having supportive and encouraging parents had a positive impact on their career development. Having supportive family and parents means having parents who assist them in developing good-work ethics by involving her as a child to work on projects around the house, encouraged them to do well in degree classes helped them address personal barriers that they encountered in their lives, encouraged them to take advantage of opportunities that were presented to them and encouraged them to take risks.

Having a supportive and encouraging spouse also had a positive impact on their career development. Parenting and raising children also had a positive impact on their career development in Information Technology (IT) industry because being a parent made them a more balanced person. In addition, the lessons they learned from parenting in their

personal life many times extended to professional life.

14. Major Challenges

The six major challenges the women face is work or life balance, extremely difficult or challenges job assignments, dealing with inter-personal or people issues, dealing with company politics, gender discrimination and male dominance in Information Technology (IT). Balancing work or life responsibilities has been a major challenge in their careers. Women indicated that it was difficult to achieve balance in work or life when having to put so many hours at work to succeed in their positions.

Extremely difficult and challenges job assignment is also a major challenge they encountered in their career. Many times these professionals were given some very though assignments were the people before them had failed. Some of the women were assigned to assist in leading major corporate mergers or given international assignments in countries that had cultures that did not view or accept women as leaders. The women professionals many times encountered difficulties in dealing and relating to people at different levels of the organization, understanding how others feel, motivating employees toward superior performance and establishing networks.

Dealing with politics in the organization was a major challenge encountered in their career. In many instances, the women professionals believed they had difficulty conforming to company norms, fitting in, adapting to the organization's informal power structure, primarily because established political systems and networks were composed of men and were therefore sometimes not available to women.

Gender discrimination was a major challenge in their careers. Because they were women, they have advanced more slowly were not given promotions that they deserved had to work harder to prove themselves were not taken seriously or were treated with less respected and were banned from international job assignments.

In addition, male dominance in Information Technology (IT) was a major challenge in women careers. Female role models and mentors were difficult to find in the Information Technology (IT) field because it is mostly male dominated. They felt that having female role models to look up to and having the opportunity to talk and share your

experiences with a female mentor was important for building self-confidence. These respondents were many times made to feel like outsiders or were intimidated by male colleagues, which created challenges to their career development.

15. Managing Work Life Conflict

One of the most common and potentially most effective ways for dealing with work life conflict is to establish family and life friendly policies. These practices include offering dependent care, implementing work flexibility policies and providing strong supervisory support. For instance employees who had flexible hours and discretion over when and where work was done were less likely to experience negative spillover from work to home.

Dependent child care is one of the most common ways organizations attempt to mitigate work light conflict. Providing on-site child care offers great convenience to employees as they are able to simply bring their young children to work with them and pick them up at the end of the day without ever having to leave the office.

Offering dependent child care to Information Technology (IT) employees may be a particularly useful mitigation strategy for reducing work-life conflict. As discussed above, Information Technology (IT) workers frequently have changing schedules that require them to work shifts late into the evening. By offering on-site child care the employer can dictate the hours of operation for the day care facility and may be able to provide care during hours that off-site provides are unwilling or unable to staff. For instance, toward the end of major upgrades or releases that may need to be staffed 24/7, the organization may be able to make arrangements with their day care facilities to provide staff during the evening or night time hours to watch children while Information Technology (IT) workers push to complete the project.

Another common way in which firms adopt family-friendly policies is by allowing employees to engage in virtual work, meaning that employees are electronically linked to the organization, yet physically located in the home. The argument in favor of virtual work suggests that employees will feel less conflict and stress because technology allows for more flexibility and autonomy in deciding how and when work will be completed. Working 'virtually' allows employees with young children to tend to their needs while still working full or part time. In addition, virtual work reduces time based conflict by reducing the number of hours an employee is asked to commute each week. Employees may enjoy significant time savings in major metropolitan areas, allowing them to engage in more non-core related activities. The success of virtual work has been a source of debate in the academic literature. Numerous studies have indicated that work life balance is improved with the addition of virtual work.

16. Limitation of the Study

Due to time constraint this research review study has been made on the basis of previous data. This study may be up-dated and redesigned by considering the latest available data. There is a lot of scope for further researches on this issue by considering other factors which I have not considered in my present study, it would have been more.

17. Recommendations of the Study

The following recommendations are presented by the researcher to increase the use of technology facility by women;

- ✓ Increase funding for family planning
- ✓ Develop a culturally sensitive family planning strategy and implement it
- ✓ Reduce the incidence of early marriage
- ✓ Conduct a communication campaign in favors of girls
- ✓ Contributing to the educational and skills development of women
- ✓ Governments should make it mandatory for companies to install Global Positioning System (GPS) in vehicles carrying women, in all industries which engage women in night shifts.
- ✓ Child care facilities and child care leave for working women should be provided by every organisation like government policies.
- ✓ Organisations should have an internal code to ensure security of women employees and take measures to ensure that they discharge their job in a secure atmosphere.

In a patriarchal society like India a particular boundary exists only for women and if they try to cross that boundary then people start maligning them like '*eve-tising*'. The general perception is that if, some women are doing things differently, beyond people's limited imagination and out of sync with traditional thinking like - going out for jobs, wearing different type of fashionable clothes, talking freely with male members etc…

immediately they are branded as loose women. India probably has still a long way to go to make our work-places free from any prejudices, abuses and harassments. Even then we can still try at solving some of the related issues and problems with some possible solutions that have been mentioned above so that women become stronger and are able to handle any adverse situations.

18. Concluding Observations of the Study

Although gender empowerment has been a buzzword in development circles, the concept is being used in so many different ways that it remains ambiguous. Effective policy design requires an accurate understanding of the gender issues within a broad social framework. We need poverty independent gender analyses and policies in order to rescue gender from poverty trap. Women's income earning activity should not be temporary, exploitative and reversible. Education and technology should ensure liberation and freedom for all human beings. It should break gradually the shackles of tradition that binds women in the man-made gaol. Technological development can be both a threat and an ally to women in their various roles. Therefore we should integrate gender into technology and development. More nuanced discussion of the complex inter-relationships between gender and technology is needed. Training program for successful technology transfer is necessary to derive the benefits of existing market driven technological promotion. The new technology should be used as a vehicle for gender equality in the backward societies

Now a day's women workers are improved and promote in their workplace and in technological work. Trade Union should try to improve the conditions for woman's workers in many parts for example maternity leave is easily give to women and help the woman for achieve higher post actually women's nature is promotion to gain high quality in every field but if the condition is not ready then the reduction of promotion and optimization in work will be occur and etc...

Women workers are often subject to sexual harassment then the Government should put strict rules for these types of crimes , also public transport system sometimes danger for woman and Government should put more Inspection. Traditionally people think that men should only work and gain money and women should work as house hold but, the financial demands on the Indian

families are increasing that's why women also should company in gaining income for families. Therefore, a fundamental change is required in attitudes of employees, family members and public.

The gender issue should be delinked both from myopic economics and insensitive politics. There is no substitute for a gender analysis, which transcends class divisions and material definitions of deprivation. Therefore '*adding women*' is not necessary, but an insight and rethinking development concepts and practices as a whole through a gender lens is necessary. We have to initiate debate on state non-action on gender issues. Despite several rules and acts in place, all rights of women are being violated and they have been suffering in silence. A vigorous multi-pronged and multi-professional effort is needed to establish the woman as a human being in her own right. With the hosanna of modernization it is imperative to dispel myths, superstitions and misconceptions about woman and her duties and adopt a rational attitude towards the woman as a human being.

Despite jamboree of techno culture we need a meaningful social transformation, which gives the equal independent human status to women. Economic citizenship is not sufficient for transforming existing asymmetric gender relations. In all backward states like Orissa, girls are educationally very successful but socially women are not. The wife may be happy but the women not. The real progress should occur when the women become the producers of their own welfare and bounty, not the recipients of charity. The chance for a social transformation should begin and end with the women kind in the ground because, nothing grows from the top. Effective policy design requires accurate understanding of the gender issues within a broad social framework. Women development is a social process to be evolved from the society but not a technological product to be achieved by a triggered policy.

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