International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume: 04, Issue: 05 "May 2019"

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN KERALA- A STUDY OF IT SECTOR

Prof. Shaniba. M. H.

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Al Ameen College, Edathala, Aluva

ABSTRACT

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

Keywords: Information technology, Work life balance, Socio-economic status, Female employees.

INTRODUCTION

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

Women in IT Industry in India

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The role of women has been changing substantially over the last decade and half, both inside and outside homes. In addition to their role within households, they are now having a larger role in the outside world also, especially in the labour market. Though women are found in all fields, their participation in the I.T. industry is more. According to India Skills Report , 2016 Software and IT constitutes the second largest non- agricultural sector (30%), after Pharma and Care (41%), in which women are better represented among the twelve industrial sectors of the Indian economy. Unlike other sectors, this fast growing business sector is looking for knowledge only. Hence, they do not discriminate the gender. As a result, there is significant number of women employees in this sector. India's IT-BPM industry currently employs nearly 3.9 million people, of which over 34% are women (~1.3 million). While this percentage is much better than the overall female share (24%) of India's total workforce, an analysis indicates that over 51% of entry level recruits are women; over 25% of women are in managerial positions but <1% are in the C-Suite. In 2017, it is estimated that the number of firms that have more than 20% women at senior level will increase to nearly 60%, and nearly 51% of firms will have more than 20% of women at C-suite level. Notably, the report highlighted that company boards with 10% women, have 2.5%-5% higher returns on equity. Also, the tech sector is the second largest sector with women employees after agriculture (NASSCOM report 2017).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To analyze socio- economic and demographic status of female employees working in IT sector in Kerala.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample

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

Table 1.1: Employment Status of Info Park as on August 2017

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

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

Period of study

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

DATA ANALYSIS

Classification of Organisation on basis of Size

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

Table 1.1: Size Wise Distribution of Sample Organisation

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

Source: primary data

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

Socio Economic Profile of the Sample

The table 1.2 to 1.25 exhibited below gives the socio- economic background of women working in software industry in Kerala.

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Table 1.2: Distribution of Sample by Age

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

Source: primary data

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

Table 1.3: Distribution of Sample by Religion

Religion	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Hindu	179	51.1
Muslim	62	17.7
Christian	105	30.0
no religion	4	1.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: primary data

The religion-wise distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 5.3. The majority (51%) are Hindus. 30% are Christians and 18% of the respondents are Muslims.

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Table 1.4: Distribution of Sample by Community.

Community	*Frequency*	*Percent*
General	258	73.7
OBC	86	24.6
SC/ST	6	1.7
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.4. shows that majority (73.7%) of the respondents belong to the general community. About one fourth (24.6%) of the respondents belong to the OBC community. SC/ST community constitute negligible proportion (2%) in the total women software professionals.ie, women from backward community is still very far away from this glamour sector. Thus the evidence points to the existence of a barrier for entry of women from scheduled caste/ scheduled tribe category into the industry.

Table 1.5: Distribution of sample by Place of Residence.

Place of residence	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Rural	91	26.0
semi-urban	126	36.0
Urban	133	38.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.5. shows that most of the women employees live in cities and towns. Urban and semi urban together constitute 74%, whereas only26% is from rural area.

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Table 1.6: Distribution of Sample by Academic Qualifications

Educational qualification	***Frequency***	***Percent***
Below Graduation	2	0.6
Graduation (other than B.Tech)	18	5.1
Post-Graduation (other than M.Tech and MCA)	4	1.1
Diploma	4	1.1
B.Tech	237	67.7
M. Tech	33	9.4
MCA	52	14.9
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

A detailed analysis of educational qualification of women professionals revealed that 67.7% had a computer or computer related engineering background (Computer Science Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Information Technology and Electronics and Communication) while the other 9.8 % are having M..Tech and 14.9% are having M C A . This lends support to the view that IT companies also hire personnel from any branch of engineering since they believe that engineering courses train students in logical thinking, problem solving and analytical skills which are essential for software programming.

Monthly Income of Female Employees

Information about Monthly Income group of respondent is collected and classified in to six categories in order to analyse the relationship between.

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Table 1.7: Distribution of Sample by Annual Income of the Family

Average annual income of the family(in Rs)	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Up to 2 lakhs	172	49.1
2-4 lakhs	82	23.4
4-6 lakhs	40	11.4
6-10 lakhs	28	8.0
10-15 lakhs	17	4.9
Above 15 lakhs	11	3.1
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.7. shows that nearly 50% of family is having annual income below 2 lakhs for 23.4% annual income lies between 2-4 lakh and only11.4% of the family is having income between 4-6lakh.Only 16% of family is earning above 6 lakh per annum.

Table 1.8: Distribution of Sample by the Place of study

Whether studied outside Kerala	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Yes	102	29.1
No	248	70.9
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.8. shows that 71% of the respondents studied within the state for their Engineering course. Rapid increase in the number of engineering and professional colleges helped girls' students to pursue their engineering and other professional courses in the state itself. Still about 29% studied outside Kerala.

Marital Status of the Sample

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

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Table 1.9: Distribution of Sample by Marital status

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

Source: Primary Data

The details of marital status of the respondents are shown in table 1.9. More than half (51%) of the respondents are single.48% are married. Only 1% is divorced. It is evident from this Table that the participation of unmarried women in I T sector is higher than that of Aothers. It is also evident that they postpone their marriage in order to secure better career.

Spouse Employment

The Employment of Spouse is studied to understand the influence of Spouse Employment on the different variables of Work-Life Balance

Table 1.10: Distribution of Sample by Spouse Employment

.Is your spouse employed	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Yes	161	95.3
No	8	4.7
Total	169	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.10. reveals that majority of women professionals (95%) are married to employed persons. Only 5% women, their spouse is doing business.

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Table 1.11: Distribution of Sample by Nature of Spouse Employment

Whether your spouse is working in IT sector	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Yes	86	53.4
No	75	46.6
Total	161	100.0

Source: Primary data

It is clear from table 1.11.that out of 161 women professionals whose spouse is employed, 53 % of them is employed in I T sector. So they can understand nature of job in I T sector. It will help them to avoid conflict at home.

Size of the Family

The size of the family generally, determines the number of dependnts, child care etc. It has an influence on W L B of women employees.

Table 1.12: Distribution of sample by the Size of the Family.

Number of members in the family	*Frequency*	*Percent*
1-2	24	6.9
3-4	240	68.6
5-7	79	22.6
More than 7	7	2.0
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 15.12 shows that around 69% per cent of the women employees have 3 to 4 members in their families, while 23% of the respondents have a family size of 5 to7 members. Only 2% comes from the families having more than 7 members. It indicates that increasing number of nuclear family.

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Table 1.13: Distribution of Sample by Nature of Family

Type of family	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Joint family	76	21.7
Nuclear family	266	76.0
Others	8	2.3
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.13 shows the Nature of family of the respondents. Among them 76% are in nuclear families and 21.7% are in joint families. It can be seen that a greater number of respondents are in nuclear families.

Table 1.14: Distribution of Sample by Number of Dependants

Number of dependents other than kids	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Nil	224	64.0
One	32	9.1
Two	78	22.3
Three	14	4.0
Four	2	0.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

The number of dependants of the respondents is shown in Table 5.1.5. 65 % of them haven't any dependents. 22% have two dependants and 9% have two dependants. Very few (5%) have more than three.

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Table 1.15: Distribution of Sample by Child Care Support

Being employed women who take care of your children	***Frequency***	***Percent***
Spouse	6	5.1
In-Laws	29	24.8
Parents	40	34.2
Servants	23	19.7
Day care centers	19	16.2
Total	117	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.15. clearly indicates that 59% of the employees stated that they have either parents or in laws to take care of their kids. Presence of elders at home for child care is great relief for them. But nearly 36% depend on servants and day care centres for taking care of their kids.

Support of servants/helpers in household work

Support of home servants in household work is a great relief for women employees in our society where all household activities are supposed to be the responsibilities of women. It helps them to balance their work and personal life

Table 1.16: Distribution of Sample by the support of servants/helpers

Do you have servants/helpers in your home	***Frequency***	***Percent***
Yes	75	21.4
No	275	78.6
Total	350	100.0

Source: Primary data

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Table 1.16. shows that only 21% of women professionals are getting servants and 79 % of women doing domestic work either alone or support of family members.

Health Status of Female Employees

Table 1.17: Distribution of Sample by Stress Related Diseases

Are you suffering from stress related diseases	***Frequency***	***Percent***
Head Ache	122	54.2
Hyper-tension	10	4.4
Obesity	12	5.3
Back pain	66	29.3
Headache and Hyper-tension	12	5.3
Headache and ophmalmic disease	3	1.3
Total	225	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.17. shows the health condition of women professionals working in software industry. Long working hours, long sitting in front of the system, stress on the completion of work etc. causes many health problems and it reduces the quality of work. From the table it is clear that Majority of employees are suffering from headache (54%), back pain (29%) and other stress related diseases.

Table 1.18: Distribution of Sample by Visiting Physician

How often do you visit your physician	***Frequency***	***Percent***
Monthly	18	7.1
Quarterly	81	32.1
not getting time	153	60.7

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Total	252	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table 1.18 shows that majority of women employees (61%) are complaining that they do not get time to consult doctor for personal health care.32.1% are of the opinion that they visit their physician quarterly and only 7% employees are getting time for monthly health check-up.

Table 1.19: Distribution of Sample by Reasons for doing/seeking a job.

Which of the following makes you to take up job	***YES***	***%***	***No***	***%***
It meets personal /family financial requirements	228	65.1	122	34.9
Future financial safety	223	63.7	127	36.3
Because I am qualified	190	54.3	160	45.7
To overcome bored bane at home	77	22.0	273	78
To build up a career	245	70.0	105	30
To Care dependents	132	37.7	218	62.3
Financial and social independence	238	68.0	112	32

Source: Primary data

Table 1.19 shows that overall relative majority (70%) of respondent prefer job because they want to build up a career. Financial independence and safety (65%), and Educational qualification are other main push factors to seek job. It indicates that concern for dependent care and support their families are becoming less important for present generation.

Findings -Socio Economic Profile of the Female Employees Working in I T sector

The work life balance of sample women I T professionals is measured after studying their socio-economic profile and the major findings are:

- Most of female employees are having age between 20 to 30 years. The mean is approximately 25 years. This indicates that the mean age of the respondent is lies between the class 20-30.
- 51. 1% of respondents are unmarried. With the personal discussion it was revealed that those female respondents who are not married they postponed marriage in order to build up their career have plans to be getting

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- Out of 161 married women professionals whose spouse has a job, is working in IT sector (53%). This is supporting factor for women professionals that their husbands can understand the nature of their job and give family support.So they can understand nature of job in I T sector. It will help them to avoid conflict at home
- Educational qualification of women professionals revealed that 67.7% had a computer or computer related engineering background (Computer Science Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Information Technology and Electronics and Communication) while the other 9.8 % are having M.Tech and 14.9% are having M C A.
- The socio economic analysis shows a disappointing fact that the exclusion of SC /ST and other backward classes from the IT industry in Kerala. Only 1.7% constitute backward classes where as 73.7% from forward class and 24.6% are from Other Backward Class O B C). This revealed that IT industry is inclined more towards creamy layer sections of the society.
- Most of the employees are living in urban area (38%) and semi urban area (36%).Since Kochi is a metropolitan city and employees are residing in and around city .They are living in apartments closer to their organisation.
- 68.6% of women in IT sector having 3-4 members in the family or they are having nuclear family(76%).This indicates development of a social set up with the spread of nuclear family in Kerala.
- 76% of employees are having nuclear family and 21.7% have joint families. It can be seen that a greater number of respondents are in nuclear families.
- 59% of the employees stated that they have either parents or in laws to take care of their kids. Presence of elders at home for child care is great relief for them. But nearly 36% depend on servants and day care centres for taking care of their kids.
- Support of home servants in household work is a great relief for women employees in our society where all household activities are supposed to be the responsibilities of women. It helps them to balance their work and personal life .Above table shows that only 21% of women professionals are getting servants and 79 % of women doing domestic work either alone or support of family members.
- 40.9% are depending on public transport to reach office. Very Often women have to find their way home from there. It does not cause a problem in many metros. But in a place like Kerala where ladies travelling alone by public transport after 7.30-8 p.m. are even now rare, this was a problem which sometimes made even unmarried ladies desirous of working late to think twice before doing so. The problem was worse in Info Park which does not have any park transport facilities. Also the smaller companies who do not

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provide conveyance facility. Late night travelling especially in public transport system is a serious concern for the safety and security of the women.

- 40.40% of women working in IT sector in Kochi are having children in the age group of 3 – 8 years.
- 64% women working in IT sector in Kochi are having no dependent other than kids. That means elder care is not at all a matter of concern for them.
- 70% of respondent prefer job because they want to build up a career. Financial independence and safety (65%), and Educational qualification are other main push factors to seek job. It indicates that need for dependent care and financial support to families are becoming less important for present generation.

CONCLUSION

Women constitute an important section of the workforce. However, the present situation of a large number of well-qualified women who due to various circumstances have been left out of their jobs needs to be addressed. Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organization. The study shows that various measures should be adopted to utilise the skill and capacity of women in organised sector especially fast developing industries like Information Technology. Various factors like age, community, religion, marital status, number of dependants, academic qualifications, technical qualifications, designation, nature of job and number of years of experience etc. affect work life balance of women employees and their participation in I T sector.

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