

ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT MECHANISM RELATED BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR

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(ABSTRACT)

The present study attempts to analyse the support mechanism related barriers faced by the women in IT Sector. A sample of 300 women employees is drawn on the basis of judgement sampling from IT companies in NCR. To achieve the objective taken up in the study, primary data were collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire on five point Likert scale. The data were analysed through various descriptive and inferential statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation and Mann Whitney U-test and Kruskal Wallies H-test, etc. It is found that lack of support to work in night shifts, more dependent on others, lack of support from society for changing gender role myths, career is not fit with family traditions, lack of peer relationship, lack of support from friends regarding career decisions, lack of parent's support for professional pursuits are the support mechanism related barriers being faced by women employees at different stages of career in IT sector. It is recommended that organisation should include women in policy making panels to lend women perspective to them like wellness programmes, women safety at work, etc. They should also be offered child care services that will help them to commit time to work assigned.

Keywords: *Women, Barriers, Support, Mechanism, Professional*

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide growth of software industry, well-known as Information and Technology (IT) and Information Technology enabled Services (ITES) sector has opened up new outlook for women. The industry currently employed more than 3.5 million people and largest private sector employer in India. It is also playing a key role in promoting diversity within the industry as it employed more than 34 percent women employees of total employed (NASSCOM, 2015). The IT industry in India is project based and as export revenues for FY 2016 is projected to grow by 12 to 14 percent. This require companies to provide strong operational and delivery service in a 24/7 environment. This will create pressure on software professionals to work for longer hours. This pressure is an outcome of two factors: firstly, the time differences with the US and Europe, which are the dominant trade partners in the industry, necessitate employees to work evenings in India and maintain the concept of a 24-hour knowledge factory; and secondly, the fast change in technology in IT sector demands continual learning. In order to cope up with the change, software professionals need to put up in training and educational programmes. Thus women who want to excel in IT industry need to maintain consistently high learning curve. In order to meet the industry knowledge standard, they have to sacrifice her personal time. Long working hours, unpredictable workloads and the constant pressure of updating skills have a negative impact on

work-family balance (*Srinivasan, 2014*).

In patriarchal society like India, where women are considered as home maker and men as bread winner, the new and expanded role of women with a strong occupational identity is putting pressure on their determination with their careers. When women and men work participation rate in India is compared with other countries, a huge difference is found. By work participation mean the amount of time spent in hours in the labour market. In India, women have to take care of their children, preparing meals and other daily home chores. Their engagements in domestic work restrict them to their families and they have lesser time for training, leisure, self-care and social, political, and other such activities. In developed countries, women spend, on an average, almost four hours a day on domestic work, whereas men spend, on an average, less than two and a half hours a day *i.e.* half the amount of time spent by women. In developing countries like India, women spent 6.7 times more time than men in domestic work (*UN Women, 2015*).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The articles appeared in various journals on different aspects of career progression of women employees are restrictive in nature and do not give a comprehensive picture. *Kalia (2007)* found that the major problem faced by the women manager is the time boundation to meet the deadlines as senior have lot of expectation from them at this level and side by side, they have to meet their home responsibilities also. Further in order to complete the assigned tasks, they have to stay late in office which amounts to a lot of physical strains as well as neglect their home responsibilities. *Ahmad et al. (2008)* found that employees having children and elder dependents on them faced more work family conflict as others. Moreover the study shows that employees having younger child faces more work family conflict than others. *Elmuti (2009)* found that there are barriers like discrimination, family-life demands, prejudice and stereo-typing which prevent women from entering management positions and cause lower advancement rates. Moreover, women are perceived by most men and women as more sensitive and encouraging leaders than men. Men too think that women do not get equal opportunities in professional development. The study suggested that training could help women be more prepared for leadership role. *Kumar et al. (2012)* found that there are various factors like physical strain necessitating longer hours of stay in the office, inevitability of conventional domestic obligations as a home maker leaving little time for career growth, combining domestic work and office work leaves no time for making them fit for higher posts, strain of frequent tours and field visits, fear of transfer which disturbs family life and domestic peace which prevent women employees from aspiring of higher level post in banking. *Kibelloh (2013)* found that female career aspirant face work family conflict as a major problem. Many women are facing the demands of performing multiple roles such as employee/employer, wife, mother, a daughter to elderly parents and students. Overall, the findings indicated a positive attitude toward online MBA programmes as a viable tool for facilitating work-family balance and career aspirations and a wealthy source of information. However, students' motivation for online learning, lack of networking provision and perceived lack of quality assessment requires consideration. *Cahusac et al. (2014)* found that professional and managerial mothers left the job due to several factors like long working hours, culture need to socialise out of working hours, hegemonic masculine ways of socializing, particularly around drinks and evening events are essential for career progression in some occupations. Due to time constraint, females are not able to attend these events resulting that mothers are excluded from the networks of support that emanate from male-based social activities within and outside the organizations. It was found that working professional mothers face a 'take it or leave it' situation. Mostly women choose second option. *Morley (2014)* found that women are rarely identified, supported and developed for leadership; therefore they are not achieving the most senior leadership positions in prestigious national co-educational universities. The reason behind this is not only the challenges of navigating between professional and domestic responsibilities, but also located in discriminatory structures including how women are often located on career pathways that do not lead to senior positions. It was also found that logic of reciprocity implied in meritocracy, *i.e.* that talent, hard work and commitment will be identified and rewarded, is being

breached in relation to the recognition of women as leaders. *Narayanan (2015)* found that the work-life balance issue is a major concern to the women employees working in IT industries. Furthermore, high job involvement, job demands, lack of career opportunities were some of the sources of dissatisfaction which led to high levels of work-family conflict which in turn has contributed to work-life imbalance among women working in IT industries. The study suggested that companies should address the issue of work-family in a more holistic manner, examining both immediate and long-term consequences for employees as well as the organization else women employees who are currently working with the organisation might transmit a negative image of the company to their acquaintances and to potential applicants, hence the organisations must become fully aware of the issues of work-life balance of women employees and act upon it. The foregoing review of literature and other articles which could not be cited here shows that no concerted effects were made to study the support mechanism related barriers faced by the women employees in IT Sector, therefore the present study is undertaken.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the study is to analyse the support mechanism related barriers faced by women employees in IT sector in North Capital Region (NCR).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the above objective, the hypotheses designed and tested for the present study are as follows:

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference among the age-wise viewpoint of female employees towards the support mechanism related barriers in IT sector.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference among the income-wise viewpoint of female employees towards the support mechanism related barriers in IT sector.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference among the marital status-wise viewpoint of female employees towards the support mechanism related barriers in IT sector.
- H₀₄: There is no significant difference among the experience-wise viewpoint of women employees towards the support mechanism related barriers in IT sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population for the present study is the female employees working in IT companies in NCR. A sample of 300 female employees is drawn on the basis of judgement sampling. To achieve the objective, primary data were collected through a pre-tested structured questionnaire on five point Likert scale *i.e.* Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Neutral (N), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA). The collected data were analysed through various descriptive and inferential statistical techniques like percentage, mean, standard deviation, *etc* with the help of PASW (18.0 version). For coding and editing the data, weights are assigned in order of importance *i.e.* 5 to Strongly Agree (SA), 4 to Agree (A), 3 to Neutral (N), 2 to Disagree (D) and 1 to Strongly Disagree (SD). Further, Kruskal Wallies H-test and Mann-Whitney U-test have been used to test the hypotheses and validate the results of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The age-wise, income-wise, marital status-wise and experience-wise analysis of comparative viewpoint of respondents towards the support mechanism related barriers faced by the women employees at different stages of career in IT sector are shown in the Table. As viewed by them, the barriers in order of importance are lack of support to work in night shifts (Mean=4.08, SD=1.16), more dependent on others (Mean=4.04, SD=1.01), lack of support from society for changing gender role myths (Mean=3.90, SD=1.08), career is not fit with family traditions (Mean=3.32, SD=1.38), lack of peer relationship (Mean=2.51, SD=1.37), lack of support from friends regarding career decisions (Mean=2.25, SD=1.00), lack of parents support for professional pursuits (Mean=2.22, SD=0.89).

Age-wise Analysis

Statistically, age-wise results of Kruskal Wallis H-test shows that the respondents differ significantly in their viewpoint towards lack of peer relationship ($p=0.000$), career is not fit with family traditions ($p=0.000$), lack of support to work in night shifts ($p=0.000$), lack of support from society for changing gender role myths ($p=0.000$), more dependent on others ($p=0.000$) as barriers at 5 percent level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

Income-wise Analysis

Statistically, income-wise results of Kruskal Wallis H-test shows that the respondents differ significantly in their viewpoint towards lack of peer relationship ($p=0.000$), career is not fit with family traditions ($p=0.000$), lack of support to work in night shifts ($p=0.000$), lack of support from society for changing gender role myths ($p=0.000$), more dependent on others ($p=0.000$) as barriers at 5 percent level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected.

Marital Status-wise Analysis

Statistically, marital status-wise results of Mann-Whitney U-test shows that the respondents differ significantly in their viewpoint towards lack of parents support for professional pursuits ($p=0.000$), lack of support to work in night shifts ($p=0.001$) and more dependent on others ($p=0.004$) as barriers at 5 percent level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected.

Experience-wise Analysis

Statistically, experience-wise results of Mann-Whitney U-test shows that the respondents differ significantly in their viewpoint towards lack of peer relationship ($p=0.000$), career is not fit with family traditions ($p=0.000$), lack of support to work in night shifts ($p=0.000$), lack of support from society for changing gender role myths ($p=0.000$) and more dependent on others ($p=0.000$) as barriers at 5 percent level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To sum up, lack of support to work in night shifts, more dependent on others, lack of support from society for changing gender role myths, career is not fit with family traditions are the main support mechanism related barriers faced by the female employees on the basis of age, income, marital status and experience. It is recommended that organisation should include women in policy making panels to lend women perspective to them like wellness programmes, women safety at work, *etc.* They should also be offered child care services that will help them to commit time to work assigned. This study will have practical implications for B. Tech. students and IT companies in NCR in particular and India in general. The present study focused only on women engineers working in IT sector, which can be extended further at macro-level by including other sectors of the economy to compare and proper generalization of results.

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Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of Marital Status

Sr. No.	Statements	Descriptive Statistics		Inferential Statistics							
		Mean	SD.	Age		Income		Marital Status		Experience	
				H- Test		H- Test		U-Test		U-Test	
				χ^2	Sig.	χ^2	Sig.	Z	Sig.	Z	Sig.
1	Lack of Parents Support for Professional Pursuits	2.22	0.89	1.823	0.610	1.447	0.485	4.297	0.00*	0.946	0.344
2	Lack of Peer Relationship	2.51	1.37	45.659	0.000*	36.727	0.000*	0.915	0.360	6.741	0.000*
3	Career is not fit with Family Traditions	3.32	1.38	82.625	0.000*	66.531	0.000*	1.528	0.127	8.954	0.000*
4	Lack of Support from Friends Regarding Career Decisions	2.25	1.00	1.447	0.695	2.449	0.294	0.208	0.836	1.088	0.277
5	Lack of Support to Work in Night Shifts	4.08	1.16	30.198	0.000*	27.784	0.000*	3.301	0.001*	5.454	0.000*
6	Lack of Support from Society for Changing Gender Role Myths	3.90	1.08	52.008	0.000*	41.646	0.000*	0.280	0.779	7.036	0.000*
7	More dependent on Others	4.04	1.01	22.342	0.000*	16.495	0.000*	2.901	0.004*	4.639	0.000*

Source: Survey, Note: * = Significant at 5 percent level

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