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## HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES & WORK LIFE BALANCE: WOMEN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

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### ABSTRACT

*Work life balance is achieving a balance between work and family demands. Large number of women is entering in information technology industry and Women more likely suffer from role over load as she was found to undertake majority of house hold duties with work responsibility as a result confronted with work life imbalance. Human resource management professionals have to take some initiatives in the form of human resource management practices to deal with work life imbalance. This study is an attempt to find out relationship between human resource management practices & work life balance among women information technology professionals. A well-structured questionnaire was developed. A sample of 130 women information technology professionals were drawn from Pune, one of the information technology hub of Maharashtra. Result reveals that there exist a significant relationship between human resource management practices & work life balance among women information technology professional. Human resource management practices taken in the study to attain work life balance are self rostering, telecommuting, unpaid maternity leave, paid maternity leave, a carers room or bringing children to work in emergencies and carers leave. Study suggested that information technology organization should implement these above mentioned human resource management practices in their organization to better manage work life imbalance among women information technology professional.*

### KEYWORDS

human resource management practices, information technology industry, work life balance, women information technology professional, work life balance initiatives.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In developing country like India, drastic changes have been observed from last few decades. Shift of family structure from joint to nuclear family, changes in work culture from fixed hour working to long working hours and Entry of women in workforce from the time when men as the bread earner of family and women as the homemaker or caretaker of family. To the time now when the men earns and women earns too. But Women are still taking care of family, so the question is how she manages the dual role of working outside as a professional & managing family responsibility as a homemaker. Hence the concept of work life balance arises. *Work life balance is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life* (Clarke, Koch and Hill, 2004). Women struggle to balance their multiple roles as compared to their male counterpart (Kamenou, 2008). Women more likely suffer from role over load as she was found to undertake majority of house hold duties and moreover women scarifies more at the time of childcare responsibility (Bridge, 2009). To deal with above mentioned situation human resource management professionals were taken some initiatives to balance the work & non work life of women professionals & these initiatives were known as human resource management practices. HRM practices are those favorable practices which are created by employers for their employees to manage their work and non-work demands. *HRM practices relate to specific practices, formal policies, and philosophies that are designed to attract, develop, motivate, and retain employees who ensure the effective functioning and survival of the organization* (Cheng Ling Tan & Azzat Mohd Nasurdin, 2011). Earlier women's were associated with the professions like teaching, nursing, and banking and now after globalization & urbanization with improved education the society has witnessed a surge in the participation of women in the Information Technology Industry. The Indian Information Technology Industry has marked their identity in the last few years and emerged as one of the fastest growing sector not in terms of economic growth but also in terms of employment generation. Work culture of IT industry is highly demanding as the IT projects were basically outsourced from US, Europe, Australia etc., and employees need to work according to their working hours. With the growing number of women in IT industry, highly demanding IT work culture and multitasking women who played dual role in work & family front has emphasized practitioners & researchers interest in the topic Human resource management practices & work life balance among women IT professionals of India.

## 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 WORK LIFE BALANCE & WOMEN

Work life balance is a state of equilibrium in which an individual can balance work & non work demands. The term work life balance was first coined in 1986 although its usage in everyday language was sporadic for a number of years. Earlier the term was known as work family conflict. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) defined work family conflict: "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect". Then the term were called as work family balance Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw (2003) defined work- family balance as "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family

role". In recent scenario the term is known as Work-life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life (Hudson, 2005).

Women experiencing more work family conflict than due to role-over load, interference from work to family and interference from family to work (Higgins et al. 1994). Women confronted with more work interference in family than men as women spent more time on fulfilling family responsibility as compared to men, in spite of spending around same number of hours in paid work as men. Both men & women reported the same level of family interference in work (Guttek et al. 1991) but contrary to Gutak study Rajadhyaksha and Velgach (2009) in their study found that women experienced more family interference with work as compared to men. However both men & women experience same level of work interference with family.

The concept of work life balance attention in management studies by the entry of women in work force and captured more attention due to growing number of women with dependent children entering in to the workforce (Hamilton et al., 2006). Study revealed that women having dependent children confronting more work life imbalance than those who do not have dependent children as women having children need to spent time with them for their upbringing (Sanjiv Gupta, 2009). Women being married and having children directly affect the balance of work and personal life (Nathalie & Philippe, 2006). As the age of women increases and they get married & have children, their responsibilities increases at home that affect their work life balance. Parallely as their length of service increase their responsibilities at work place will also increase. Hence it is quite natural that as the working women grow in their age, their responsibility will also increase that may affect their work-life balance (Kumari K. Thriveni & Devi V. Rama, 2012).

## 2.2 HRM PRACTICES & WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN

Indian women professionals striking with the work life imbalance, so many factors like role conflict, lack of recognition, organizational politics, gender discrimination, elderly and children care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support influencing the issue (Vijaya Mani, 2013). "Work-life" is an umbrella term incorporating wide range of HRM practices envisioned to support employees to balance their work and non-work responsibilities (Callan, 2007; Glass & Finley, 2002). Supportive HRM practice is becoming a challenge for the employers to provide. They commonly refer to practices that enable employees to balance the demands of paid work and personal life which can be in the form of workplace flexibility or work time flexibility (Subramaniam, 2010). HRM practices were basically covering two factors i.e. work based factor & family based factor to manage work life balance. HRM practices under family based factor are provision of childcare/eldercare help women to get relieve from some family responsibilities; and HRM practices under work based factor are flexible work schedules, work from home to assist women to better manage their family commitments by giving them greater control over their work arrangements. (Niharika & Supriya, 2010; Heywood & Jirjahn, 2009). Working women confronted with less work life conflict if organization provides HRM practices having leave policies like maternity leave, carer's leave. These leave policies provide an opportunity to give full attention to family as per requirement while remain attached to the organization (Rogier & Padgett, 2004) and, as a result will be able to concentrate more on work, which in turn increase performance.

Organizations basically develop HRM practices for female employees' to their family responsibilities with work responsibilities. Although both men and women can suffer from work-family conflict (Grönlund, 2007; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; van Veldhoven & Beijer, 2012), and organization often provide HRM practices for both men & women, but it is found that women employees are frequent user of HRM practices (Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson, & Siddiqi, 2013; Wise & Bond, 2003). Studies reported that organization having HRM practice to support work life balance will help to decrease absenteeism and turnover (Rogier & Padgett, 2004), and increase productivity and innovation (Taneja, Pryor, & Oyler, 2012) and as a result employee will have more loyalty & attainment towards organization (Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Wang, Lawler, & Shi, 2011).

## 2.3 WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG IT WOMEN PROFESSIONALS

Sushree Sangita Das et al (2016) in their study analyses the ground reality of women information technology professionals in Mumbai and they found that duration of working hours are not uniform and it may vary as per the task. They need to work for around 12 hours per day. Managing house hold activities & dependent care is a big challenge for them. This affects the normal family life, lead to both physical and mental exhaustion resulting in stress. Study also reported that in order to play dual role rationally, women information technology professionals in Mumbai are already seen, in compromising either at family or at the professional life. Bharathi S. Vijayakumar (2015) in their study of work life balance of women employees in IT industry with special reference to Pune focuses on certain key professional challenges and personal challenges and enhancers to work life balance. Study recommends that travel time from home to workplace to be lessened, Supportive people at office & family, job rotation, crèche facility within the company premises, and work from home at least 2-3 days a week will help better manage work life balance.

Vanitha & Meenakumari (2011) in their study stated that women played multifaceted roles at family, society and at work places with extraordinary pressures. Due to absence of co-ordination and support from work & family part work family conflict arises and it also mutually influences each other. The impact of these influences impetus with work and family problems and sometimes leads to undesirable consequences.

Reimara and Vasanthi (2011) in their study have attempted to understand how work and family related factors influence the work-family balance of Indian women information technology professionals. The study revealed that of women information technology professionals can attain work life balance by setting priorities in their work and personal lives and by having support systems from supervisor, co-supervisor and from family members. The study also concluded that working women can achieve work life balance only when organization design & implement supportive HR policies and practices. As a result women professionals would be more committed towards organization & perform better at work place, and this in turn participate in the growth of economy and positively impact society as whole.

Valk and Srinivasan (2011) in their study of the work and family related factors in women information technology professionals in India shows six major dimensions namely family influence on life choices, attempts to negotiate multi-role responsibilities, self and professional identity, work life challenges and the combating strategies, organizational policies and practices and social reinforcement.

Kelkar (2003) in his study observed that human resource management practices to balance work life imbalance are available in information technology companies of Jargaon but only on paper not on real sense. Employee has to work around 14-16 hours a day a work place & if required then need to work on home as well.

## 3. NEED OF THE STUDY

The topic of work life balance got more attention by the entry of women in work force & changes in work culture. Previously male was bread earner of family & female was caretaker of family so they both perform their roles & responsibility independently and no clash happened but after entry of women in work force role interference has been observed like interference of work in to family and needs to work 24\*7 and specially in IT industry project were outsourced from USA, Europe etc and employees need to work according to their work time and both the factors enhance work life imbalance among women IT professionals. So HRM professionals have to take initiative to deal with the work life imbalance. This study is an attempt to identify factors affecting work life balance & to know the relationship between HRM practice & work life balance among women IT professional.

## 4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women's are playing multifaceted role of handling paid work responsibility with homemaker and caretaker of family. This results in role-over load or role conflicts among working women. IT industry demands 24\*7, 365 days working, as the projects in IT industry were outsourced from western country and IT professionals required to give support as & when required. So this study is an attempt to identifying factors affecting work life balance of working women in IT industry and to find out human resource management practices that help women IT professionals in managing their multifaceted role henceforth in attaining work life balance.

## 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives of this Study are:

1. To identify factors of work life balance among women IT professionals of Pune.
2. To study relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of Pune.
3. To put forth suggestions for human resource management practices supportive to work life balance among women IT professionals of Pune.

**6. HYPOTHESIS**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of Pune.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of Pune.

**7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**7.1 DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE**

The study was conducted for women IT professionals of Pune. Sample of 130 women IT professionals was drawn through convenient sampling.

**7.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL USED**

A structured questionnaire developed for the purpose of study. Questionnaire is divided into three parts namely: demographic profile contains age, marital status, children status, educational qualification, monthly income, and experience, work life balance scale contains 22 items grouped into four factors, and six women centric human resource management practices.

In work life balance & human resource management scale 7 point liker scale was used and coded as 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Slightly Agree, 6 = Agree, & 7 = Strongly Agree.

Cronbach's alpha statistics was applied to check the reliability of the questionnaire, thereafter factor analysis for work life balance was done. To achieve the objective & test the hypotheses of study Pearson correlation was applied.

**8. RESULT & DISCUSSION**

Statistical testing & analysis was done by using SPSS (originally Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 22 for Windows.

**8.1 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

150 questionnaire was distributed among women IT professional of Pune out of which 130 completely filled was receive & used for further analysis. Out of 130 68 was married & 62 unmarried and 40 is having children & remaining 90 is not having children.

**8.2 RELIABILITY & VALIDITY**

A questionnaire consist two different scales: human resource management practices and work life balance. Cronbach's alpha statistics is measured for both the scales individually. As shown in the table 1 given below the Chronbach's alpha value of work life balance is .889 & human resource management practices are .850. The Chronbach's alpha value more than 0.72 is considered as good and acceptable in literature. Inter-term correlation between the variables is good, hence questionnaire has sound validity.

**TABLE 1: RELIABILITY STATISTICS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES SCALE**

Scale	Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Work-Life Balance	.889	.890	22
HRM Practices	.850	.855	6

**8.3 FACTOR ANALYSIS**

All the variables of work life balance scale have good inter-item correlation. To check data adequacy KMO Barlett's test of sampling adequacy was applied. The KMO value for work life balance scale shown in table 2 is .787, which is acceptable value and good, as value of KMO above 0.5 is acceptable and higher the value more adequacies associated with data. Hence data is adequate & factor analysis could be applied. To identify the factor principal component analysis was done and as a result four factors have been extracted with eigen value more than 1. All the factors accounts for cumulative variance of 69.111% shown in table 3. Four factor were named as work family interference, family work interference, work family enhancer, & family work enhancer

**TABLE 2: KMO & BARTLETT'S TEST OF WORK LIFE BALANCE**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.787	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1998.385
	df	231
	Sig.	.000

**TABLE 3: FACTOR ANALYSIS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.817	30.987	30.987	6.817	30.987	30.987	3.966	18.029	18.029
2	5.049	22.950	53.937	5.049	22.950	53.937	3.944	17.925	35.955
3	2.105	9.567	63.504	2.105	9.567	63.504	3.774	17.155	53.110
4	1.234	5.608	69.111	1.234	5.608	69.111	3.520	16.001	69.111
5	.787	3.577	72.688						
6	.765	3.479	76.167						
7	.699	3.178	79.345						
8	.654	2.974	82.319						
9	.526	2.393	84.712						
10	.471	2.143	86.855						
11	.436	1.980	88.835						
12	.407	1.851	90.686						
13	.363	1.649	92.334						
14	.293	1.330	93.664						
15	.261	1.187	94.851						
16	.247	1.121	95.971						
17	.198	.898	96.869						
18	.189	.859	97.728						
19	.163	.739	98.468						
20	.147	.668	99.135						
21	.115	.521	99.656						
22	.076	.344	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

**8.4 HYPOTHESIS INTERPRETATION**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of India.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is significant relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of India.

**TABLE 4: CORRELATION BETWEEN HRM PRACTICES & WLB**

Correlations			
		HRM Practices	WLB
HRM Practices	Pearson Correlation	1	.545**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	130	130
WLB	Pearson Correlation	.545**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	130	130

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To test the relationship between human resource management practices and work-life balance among women IT professionals' of India bivariate correlation was applied. As shown in table 4 the value of  $r = .522$  and  $p = .000$ . As the value of  $p$  is less than  $.05$ , hence null hypotheses is not accepted and alternate is accepted. Similarly value of correlation is also found positive, thus analysis indicates that there is significant positive relationship between human resource management practices and work-life balance among women IT professionals' of India. Positive relationship shows that implementation HRM practices self rostering, telecommuting, unpaid maternity leave, paid maternity leave, a carers room or bringing children to work in emergencies and carers leave will increase, so will be the work life balance among women IT professionals of India.

**9. FINDINGS**

Results reveals that human resource management practices plays significant role in attaining work life balance of women IT professionals. Positive correlation was found between human resource management practices and work life balance. This relationship indicates that implication of selected human resource practices increases work life balance among women IT professionals. Long working hours, shift system and other working conditions in Information technology sector make it more prone to disturb work and family equilibrium. In such environment human resource practices act as a support system for women employees who play dual role of house maker as well as professional. Situation become more difficult with working mothers and hence child care, maternity leave and other related policies provision contributes in balancing work and family both among working women.

Moreover, study also explored four factors of work life balance and indicates whether work will hinder or contribute in work life balance depends upon the policies followed by organization.

**10. RECOMMENDATION & SUGGESTION**

It is recommended that IT organization should take the issue of work life balance in priority and should take some initiative for their women employees to achieve work life balance. HRM practices like self rostering, telecommuting, paid & unpaid maternity leave and child care arrangement required to implement within IT organization to facilitate women IT professionals. It is recommended that travel time between home & work place need to be lessened; more supportive people at work place, family; and flexibility work rules along with good pay scale will help in achieving work life balance.

Effective implementation of HRM practices is required attain work life balance. Many IT organizations have HRM practices to attain work life balance but employees are not aware about availability of practices so it is suggested that employer should make aware employees about HRM practice so that they can take benefit of them. This will help them to manage work life imbalance and as a result employee performance will improve. Employee performance will help in increasing organization performance and decrease in employee absenteeism & turnover ratio.

**11. CONCLUSION**

Working women's are playing multifaceted role, same is with women IT professionals and IT industry follows the long working hours work culture. As a result the issue of work life imbalance came in front of women IT professionals. Literature reveals that they can cope up with work life imbalance only when organization provides them effective human resource management practices. Through extensive review of literature and experts opinion six major human resource management practices were identify which helps to attain work life balance among women IT professionals of India and these practices are practices self-rostering, telecommuting, unpaid maternity leave, paid maternity leave, a carers room or bringing children to work in emergencies and carers leave. The study attempted to measures the relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of India and findings reveals that's there is a positive significant relationship between human resource management practices and work life balance among women IT professionals of India. Hence, study concludes that IT organization should implement these above mention human resource management practices within their organization. Implementation of these practices will help IT women professionals to better manage their work & non work life. As result, their performance will increase and employee absenteeism & turnover will decrease and ultimately, organization performance will improve.

**12. LIMITATIONS**

Limitations of the study are:

- The study is limited to women IT professionals only.
- The findings of the study cannot be generalized as the data is only from a section of women IT employees from Pune.
- The study used the long instrument size which influences the attrition of respondents while filling questionnaire.

**13. SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY**

- The study includes only women IT professionals in future study can be done by covering women & men both.
- Current study includes six HRM practice to attain work life balance of women IT professionals. Further same study can be done by including more HRM practices like job sharing, health assessment program etc. to facilitate women IT professionals.
- Further comparative study can be done among married & unmarried women IT professionals.
- In future the study can be done between women IT professionals having child & not having child.
- IT organization can refer this study to get insight of HRM practices that help women IT professionals in maintaining their work life balance.

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