



ROLE OF WOMEN IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ITs) SECTOR

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Abstract: Indian society faced a tremendous changes and found a remarkable place in the modern world as per its existed own culture and tradition. Women in India constituted half of the population and played a significant role in the economic development mostly in the technical reforms. This chapter aimed to discuss the women participation, issues and challenges faced by women employees in the IT sector of India. This chapter underlined that women are facing insecurity at the workplace. As per the case study related to five organizations such as Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., Infosys Ltd., Wipro Ltd., HCL Tech Ltd and Tech Mahindra revealed that the number of women on the board was very low as compared to men. There are so many issues related to women when they are going to get job in the industrial sector especially in IT sector. In IT sector women are facing inadequate employment opportunities as due to the high pressure of work they are getting very less chances of work even they get but they are receiving very low wages as compared to men in the same task. No objection, the Indian constitution provided right to women employees for working in any field but they are facing certain types of issues and challenges as gender discrimination, problem of women employees either rural or urban areas.

Keywords: Women status, Gender Disparity and Discrimination, Issues and Challenges faced by Women in IT sector in India.

Introduction

During the (1990s), globalization has facilitated market liberalization and information technology sector in India. In recent decades, the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) enhanced by the high speed data communication, improved communication network that led to widen the scope of opportunities for people. The pace of liberalization and globalization in (1990s) gave the way for growth of IT industry in India. The emergence and growth of IT industry has also facilitated by government initiatives such as establishment of Software Technology Parks (STPs) and also providing tax holiday to profit earning IT industry etc. Instead of boosting the export and generating a new pool of entrepreneur, IT sector also generated employment opportunities particularly for a large segment of educated unemployed youth also including the job option for women. In India, IT and ITES areas has helped for changing its agribusiness economy to a learning based economy. This sector has prominent affects of individuals who are poor and living in provincial areas in India. IT industry is one of the best ways to get job for those people who good communication and skill of knowledge. IT sector has emerged to become largest platform for employment

generator to both men and women in India. Indian IT and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) aimed to generate innovation and growing with new phases as the major sector can combine to contribute services industry like IT trade, Education, Financial services, Media, Hospitality, accommodation and food services, entertainment, culture, transportation, warehousing and storage. In the world, the businesses are not possible without help of IT and ITES in which these sector having significant influence on the works of enterprises and it can be claimed to be guided for survival and growth of the economies in real. There are so many vocations for both men and women in the IT industry in India like computer build, developer, researcher, client, database manager, database authority, interface creator, organize expert, programming engineer, analyst, framework examiner, executives and so on. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "To awake people it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the moves and the nation moves." It is important to note that IT industry has now captured around (51%) of the world market.

Meaning and scope of IT sector

It implies information technology consisting two major components as IT services and business process outsourcing (BPO). Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) implies an industry acronym for all types of services and activities that depends upon on information in India.

Women in IT sector Overview

Indian women now contributed almost (34%) in the IT workforce and most of the people falling under the age of (30). The youth of Indian IT labor force has significantly empowered with rapid growth, moreover India is now almost at 50:50 gender parity rate in **STEM** (Science Technology Engineering and Math) graduates. Now how India will face challenge in retaining gender diversity through into middle management and leadership roles in the economy. As per the given Indian government policies, NASSCOM policies and initiatives and some of the encourage task undertaken by the IT service companies themselves, it will be interesting to examine of this success at graduate level to maintain gender parity status through to management aspects.

Review of Literature

The review of literature will help us to know the condition and status of women in IT sector in India.

Bhattacharyya and Ghosh (2012) this paper analyze the issues of opportunities and constraints the women employees face in the Information Technology sector in India. This stud underlines that IT sector, through its employment, contributed significantly to women empowerment in India. Its employment elasticity provided inspiration to female students to take part in technical and professional courses for getting job in the market. As Most of the reviews revealed, notwithstanding overall satisfactory about gender neutral, moreover an optimal level of gender inclusivity was still to be achieved, especially to the senior level. Moreover, this sector requires being extra-careful in doing away with the prevailing maladies such as 'Feminization' and 'Glass

ceiling' etc. The theoretical aspect of individualization in the workplace was palpable but at the societal level, patriarchal strategies dominate on the Indian ideology. The reflection of this paper was arrived at, on the basis of, the inputs drawn from different literatures of secondary sources.

Pandu and Poorani (2013) analyze the work life balance becoming an area of growing concern about women in the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services sector (ITeS). The present paper provided a greater understanding especially of the work-life balance of women employees in IT and ITeS industries. An experiential survey of 80 IT employees and 80 ITeS employees was carried out over time. Both the sub-sectors were evaluated on five sub-scales- workload and responsibility, work environment, feelings about work, family dependants and absence from work. The sector wise regression analysis represented that feelings about work, family dependants and absence from work were the major strong contributors to a sense of balance for an employee. However, no significant relationship was found between work environment and work-life balance in the study.

Dharane and Baragade discussed the role of women in IT and ITES Industries in India. Today, the women development is in another stage. The position of women in IT was an exploration segment that had gotten much consideration as of late even at present. Women have gradually climbed to positions of authority in all areas of the economy; in any case, every lady who makes it to the highest point of her field was typically alone once she arrived. Huge numbers of the issues for these women were the same, from inquiries of male mastery to mystery discourse and also from segregation to pay disparities. Since the fields and plans are so different, nobody straightforward, arrangement of answers resounds over the board. It is clear, in any case, that women will be an instrumental in driving partnerships to new resolutions in the market. Today it will show a scope of point of view on gender and IT. The point is to show a portion of the real verbal confrontations and studies of IT to feature some vital issues of worry for women in position of authority. It is an Industry that utilizes PCs, programming projects and correspondence materials to recover, store transmit and secure information. Creating and created nations depend on IT and ITES to guarantee quick advances. Organizations and associations likewise depend on the field for most extreme yield.

Vettriselvan *et al.* (2019) this study elaborated the picture of issues and challenges faced by the women employees in the modern world with special reference to the technical industries in India. For conducting study the purpose focus group discussion were conducted among the 50 women employees in the different types of technical enterprises. The study results were narrated in the different headings. This study found that mostly women were feeling insecure in the work place due to many reasons but they were working in the industries to prove themselves to the society in terms of various aspects such as fulfill the economic needs of the family, social recognition, passion and enjoy the social freedom from the traditional society to a modern one. This study suggested the society and industries to treat all the gender in equal and also maintain the social balance. Furthermore the numbers of industries specific studies were needed in this area to figure out the reality of the women workers in the Indian society and the modern world.

World Economic Forum (2016) the report discussed the aspect of women and work in the fourth industrial revolution along with the gender industry gap. This reports underlines the women and work opportunities in the industrial sector. Today's leaders have inherited company and industry cultures in which women participated to varying degrees. Across all industries, women at present reported on an average 33% of junior level staff, 24% of mid-level staff, 15% of senior level staff and 9% of CEOs. Across all industries, companies reported that they found women harder to recruit, with the reported ease (or in this case, difficulty) of recruiting women directly proportional to the existing gender composition of the industry. Persistent gender wage gaps were reported across all industries, even in industries where female participation was comparatively high. For terminating gender gap the reports suggest followings approaches such as measurement and target setting, Leadership and company commitment, Responsibility beyond the office, Work environment and work-life balance, Awareness and accountability, Mentorship and training.

This paper will clarify the following major objectives in details.

- **Women Placement, Participation and Employment in IT sector.**
- **Issues and Challenges faced by Women in IT sector.**
- **Policies and Approaches for reducing the Gender Gap**
- **Suggestions and conclusion**

Now, we will examine these aspects systematically:

Women Placement, Participation and Employment in IT sector

As the Indian IT-BPO industry has emerged as the largest private hub of employer in the nation as it contains around (2.23) million direct job of professional's. The percentage share of female workers increased from (935%) in (2006) to 36% in (2008) and the current percentage share of women employees in IT sector in India around (34%). There are some reasons that motivated to women for participating in IT sector as white-collar job with comparatively high salary, easy international mobility and physically less demanding work in comfortable environment .The IT sector require higher and technical education and growing female participation in this sector revealed that it has encouraged the women to get professional, technical, higher education and especially computer engineering courses. In India, especially in the semi-urban and provincial territories women are not take-up interest in Math/Science in school or graduation level. Thus the placement in IT sector has significant Impact on women's employment. A recent case study conducted by NASSCOM's about the role of women at the higher post in five IT and ITES organizations in India showed that these five spots no less than twice between the year (2012-2017). These organizations comprised Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., Infosys Ltd., Wipro Ltd., HCL Tech ltd., and Tech Mahindra.

“Tata Consultancy Services Limited (TCS)”:- the annual report of TCS for the year (2016-17) reveals that there were (10) members as Board of Director comprised only one female Non-Executive Director Ms. Aarthi Subramanian experienced over (28) years in the global technology and she started her career with Tata Consultancy Services in India, Sweden ,the US and Canada. Thus the numbers of women on the board were (1/10).

“Infosys Limited”:- this organization comprised (9) Board members along with 3 women and women were independent Directors as Roopa Kudna, Dr.Punita Kumar Sinha and Kiran Mazumdar Shaw. Infosys Ltd also constituted 8 individuals team in their executive management. The numbers of women on the board were (3/9) and (0/8) in the executive management holding position.

“Wipro Limited”:- as Wipro formulated its Board of Director with (10) members along with one woman named Ireena Vitta was independent Director among the members. Thus, the number of women on Board were (1/10) and (0/16) in the executive management team.

“HCL Technology”:- this organization constituted (11) member among them three were women executive members. The numbers of women on the board were (3/11) and the numbers of women holding management position were (0/23).

“Tech Mahindra”:- as the director of this organization was M. Rajyalakshmi Rao and the numbers of women on the board were (1/10) and the numbers of women holding the management position were (0/17).

Thus the overall picture represents women placement was less in comparison to men in the IT sector of India.

Major issues and Challenges faced by Women in IT Sector

According to the Indian constitution there are some rights of women as an employee as right to equal remuneration for equal work , right to equal employment for women, right to good working environment and right to work and receive adequate wages etc. In spite of these rights there are some issues and challenges faced by women employee at workplace. We start discussion from general problem to industry specific.

“Gender Inequality”:- human gender is determined by biological aspects as women, men and transgender. The role and importance of men and women may change over time as per the geographical location and social aspects in the society. The word ‘gender’ is defined by the ‘sex’ of the human being. The differences between men and women are due to the achievements and active participation in a given task as per the tradition of the society. To change the position of women it is necessary to challenge the existing system and ideology of the tradition and culture in the society. For instance, in India, as a result of reforms now it is widely recognized that women must be empowered in the society. There are people organizations and movement, human rights and NGO movement trying to reshape and create alternative thinking and practices of

women in India. Gender division of employee will definitely lead to inequality because men's and women are not equally treated in the society.

“Problems of Gender Discrimination”:- generally gender leads to variation in wages and salary at the workplace especially in industrial and agriculture sector. Male employee are preferred in the industrial and agricultural sector because it requires strength as male worker have more potentiality than women that's why women are receiving less than male worker in these sector.

“Status of Women Employees”:- the status of women employee contains challenges along with social constraints in the Indian industries. Generally, women are cheap and easily available in the employee market. In India, women having lower income essentially, undertake reproductive, productive and community managing activities. Due to this role and position of the women in the society, now women need practical gender needs (PGNS) and strategic gender needs (SGND). These needs are associated to gender division of employee, power, equal wages and women control over their bodies. The emergence of garment industry have been generated (2) million job opportunities which comprises (90%) women. The reason is that the company can pay less to women than men employees.

There are two types of problems faced by rural women as discussed below:

- Problem in construction work: - women status in this work is classified as migrated employees and local employees. Under the construction work women are facing certain problems as irregular working hours, low wages and sexual exploitation. There are wide differences in wages paid to women and men and mostly it can be seen in the context of 'contract'.
- Problems for building employees: - generally women building employee is associated to the condition of work. As the every condition of work requires advancement of skills, frequent location, and freedom to plan and also to do work hard.

Today's most of the people are shifted towards the urban places especially women due to better wages and salaries but there are also some issues faced by women employees. As in the environmental aspect, a married working person has a dual role as home, husband and children on the one side and her job placement on the other side. Women employees also sexually exploited by their male bosses and are generally done by placing the promotion. They are considered as “temporary employee” and are not taken seriously by their employers at workplace.

“Women Problems in IT sector”:- the problem of women IT employees are very different when these compare to other sector in the economy. Their status is very bad due to difficult task shifts and poor job security when this status is compared to other organized sector. The women's in IT sector are receiving less but doing more work.

There are some major's problems faced by women employees in IT sector of India:

- There is lack of job opportunities' for women in IT sector. They get very small proportion of employment opportunities due to high work pressure and they also don't get permanent job in this sector.
- In this sector, women employees are working more than receiving. As the same task is performed by women but they have to less than male employees.
- As the health of women in IT sector is weak because they don't get nutrition's food and proper medical care after delivery which affects their overall health and work.
- IT sector women employees generally works in the night and in addition to office work they have to work at home as child caring and so on. Thus, this working condition badly affects the health of women and her daily routine work and life in the society.
- Women employees in IT sector are facing the problem of maternity because they don't enjoy it due to high pressured working environment. In case of leave salary is not paid properly and women and women IT workers are asked to relieve the duty in advance join as fresher after the delivery. Thus it is how the working condition of women employees in IT sector.

Major Policies and Approaches for reducing the Gender Gap

In order to reduce the gender diversity, company requires actively managing talents rather than passive commitment in the market. The World Economic Forum's online repository of successful practices for gender parity information has been used in leading companies for closing the gender gap. The repository underlines six areas which reduce the gender parity in the industries.

- Measurement and Target setting: - there should achievable, relevant and retention targets at all levels along with an embedded mechanics in the economy.
- Mentorship and Training: - the diversity in human resources can be tackled through programmes that promote guidance about the culture of placement in the organization. The organization can benefit from the diverse workforce along with the alternativeness and promotion of female workforce. These training programmes for both men and women can be enhanced the relevant environment for increasing the value of the company.
- Awareness and accountability: - there should be awareness among the employees and the companies as per the prevailing environment of the economy. Job seeker requires watching the current market in which they are finding placement. Accountability of the senior management can prove effective in the company and even in the economy.
- Work environment and work-life balance: - in order to increase the efficiency of the work and value of the company, there should be friendly work environment along with work-life balance. As those

companies that offer parental leave, flexible working hours and other work-life balance gets more value in the marketplace.

- Leadership and company commitment: - generally leadership and commitment of the executive management of the company reflects its status in market. Thus there should be visible leadership by the chief executive and top management on supporting women in management. There should also be regular interactions and communication by senior management on gender equality.
- Responsibility beyond the office: - as many companies undertaking the exercise external value chain comprises diversity training for suppliers, distributors and partners to support women owned business in the organizations. External exercise can also be performed by way of gender neutrality in engaging girls etc.

Thus beyond these practices and challenges now it is cleared that there are gender gap challenges in the industrial sector of India.

Suggestions

There are some approaches related to women that can enhance their motivation toward the IT sector in India as discussed below;

- Specific task and working hours should be implemented at every place of work in IT sector.
- Bottom to top approach should be adopted with respect to women job security in IT industry.
- The government should introduce the major initiative related to women problems such as gender discrimination and sexual exploitation at workplace in the IT industry moreover this approach may start from local to national level.

Conclusion

As we have studied about the overall scenario of women employees in the Information Technology industry and from this, we can conclude that there are significant barriers facing by women at workplace in the IT industries. Now, government either local or national and organization should think about the policies and schemes that can encourage women to enter directly or indirectly in the IT industries as we know women has its own potentiality to boost the growth of the IT sector even overall economic development in India.

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