

Chapter VII

Research Findings

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7.1. Introduction

With informational economy shaping world business scenario the software project development opened an ocean of opportunity for technically educated mass of developing countries. The nature of job; being desktop with a particularly designed schedule and cozy working environment with intellectual orientation, it has become rather a preferred option for the technically qualified female. Moreover the physical rigor, rough working environment and labour related issues of manufacturing sector are absent in IT sector. Further the IT jobs provide for lucrative financial packages along with overseas assignment and also cosmopolitan work environment. All these put the IT women executives in the exclusivity domain in society. Though in a global scenario they are no better than casual labour but for their relatively substantial high income as compared to their counterpart in other professions even having superior qualification they feel elated and they develop pseudo superiority complex. The typical Indian mindset of glorifying foreign return add feather to their pride cap. These executives are very much influenced by foreign life style and try to imitate them, assuming it as means of career advancement. Due to better financial gain, they even try to mould their periphery as per their perception. Though many of them do not get real job satisfaction but the lure of economic gain attracts them to this job. In addition to that this study found that software companies operating in Mumbai want their executives to be capable enough to work as generic programmers on different platforms and in various programming languages so that they can be shifted from one

project to another as and when required. This flexibilisation of work scenario is a compulsive characteristic of IT companies as studied by researcher, since there operation is mostly client driven.

In Indian context these software development entities are located mostly in cities like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, Gurgaon, Kolkata etc.(to be precisely in tier one cities in general). Mumbai being a cosmopolitan city with substantially varied IT job opportunities attracted female software professional as an initial entry as well as with a scope of relocation after marriage.

Majority of women software engineers under the present study have come from middle class educated urban background and hail from nuclear families. They are educated in English medium and already in possession of some appropriate background and skill to fit into globalized work scenario. Many of them are having both their parents working; thus they have been socialized with career oriented life style. Hence they focus mostly career as primary goal and prefer to get married only in late twenties. Even after getting married they prefer to delay in raising family. Marriage as they consider renunciation of their careers, responsibility for their children and co mobility according to the professional destiny of their husband. Women working in IT sector in Mumbai city are mainly migrated due to job placement. Also a sizable number of women have migrated due to marriage. Other way it can be interpreted that the women do prefer to marry a person whose working place will be favorable to a job placement of theirs. Mumbai appeared to be a very ideal in fulfilling these criteria for women executives. The researcher found that

majority of migrant women IT professionals working in Mumbai are from states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Further it has been observed that these women prefer to marry a technically educated person may or may not be from IT profession. However their spouse needs to be well settled in a white collar profession like management executive, college teacher or government officer. If the spouses are self-employed then they should be technically qualified with tertiary qualification.

These women executives depend primarily on their spouse on the issue of support system, be it logistic, emotional or financial if required. At the same time in many cases spouses are appeared to be pragmatic and extend necessary support for a bigger goal. Few depend on their parents and in-laws in the matter of logistic and emotional support. In case of unmarried female executives the support of parents is very much important in all aspects.

7.2. Gender (In)equality in IT Sector of Mumbai

The observed fact is that women tend to be over-represented in the lower level jobs such as programming and testing. For these work they are designated as software engineer, senior software engineer etc. Their number is less in higher level managerial assignments like Project Manager, Consultant, Senior Consultant and as Delivery Head. It has been observed from present study that though few number of women work in the capacity of Project Manager, Tech Lead and Senior Manager; but the proportion of women steadily declines at the higher level because of their lack of skill

upgradation hence unable to catch up with fast changing technology and also due to want of excellent academic profile. This marginalization of women at the higher echelon is caused by the lack of technical upgradation as their overall lifestyle is circumscribed with family commitment, domestic responsibilities, child bearing, child rearing and other social restriction impeding their frequent mobility to various geographical locations. The dynamism of growth in this sector is directly related to one's capacity to keep upgrading and broadening his/her skill. [But at the same time this working condition poses more challenge for married women who have to juggle between profession and family more than unmarried women that disturbs their family and also takes a toll on career ambition because of personal incapability. There is an intangible barrier within a hierarchy in Indian IT companies that prevents women from obtaining upper-level positions (Better known as Glass Ceiling)].

This study found that there did not appear to be any deliberate gender discrimination per se in IT sector located in Mumbai; rather it exemplified gender neutrality practices. The under representation of women at higher echelon of IT company is more technical and social in nature rather than policy loophole. There is no equal access to training and knowledge upgradation facilities to women. There is also prevalence of gender pay gap, discrimination in getting key positions and getting utility allowances because women are deliberately sidelined in holding lucrative offshore projects.

A group of manager prefers women executives as they are more focused, multitasking, less involved in politics and avoid gossiping. They are more concerned in completing their work so that they will not stay beyond office hours and can go home for their domestic commitments.

Another group of managers are skeptical about availability of women executives as they have lot of reservation due to family commitments and avoid working in flexible time zone. In addition to that many a time they could not complete the target due to sociological reason like marriage, transfer of spouse to another city or getting gynecological issues (like child birth) and at the mid of operation the same has to be handled by another person. Hence the employers find it convenient to avoid women executive all together.

In a holistic analysis it is found that women have to make substantial compromise on career front for the sake of family and social obligation. At an advance stage of life the support they get may be more of financial than emotional. And the prevailing pre-conditioned social structure makes career a secondary option for women.

7.2.1. Sexual Harassment

In addition to these almost sixty percent women admitted that incidence of sexual harassment is there in IT sector. Though in book of conduct the IT companies adhere to directive of Hon. Supreme Court of India on sexual harassment but in reality there is ample incidence of violation in covert manner. Some executives claim that few

women take this as an easy way to growth. But for women who denounce this may fall into prey of superiors and get harassed. They lose in work place resulting low productivity and at the individual level they also suffer from depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, traumatic stress, fatigue, loss of motivation and isolation. Sexual favouritism is rampant to climb up in career and to get the project particularly offshore assignment of one's choice. However the preventive policy is very strict and any case if proved can lead to dismissal of the employee irrespective of rank and file.

7.3. I T Sector Work Scenario and Stress

The research has confirmed that there is higher work stress due to long stretchable working hours, deadline oriented work scenario leading to overtime and holiday working scenario without compensation and continuous demand to upgrade skill to match with dynamic technology. And for women IT executives the higher the work stress, higher is the incidence of not fulfilling all of their various functions and roles on a daily basis.

A woman working in IT sector in Mumbai is expected to spend minimum twelve hours per day to maintain professional life in a right way in a normal working condition. It has been found that stretching the working hour was a normal phenomenon in IT jobs as the companies were always at tenterhook to meet the target deadline as per client's requirement (Simply because in order to procure order from overseas clients Indian based IT companies give a short duration commitment to execute a project as compared to their other international counterparts).This leads to

long working hour for IT executives and overnight stay at work site. At times this is termed as Indian work culture(sophisticated synonym of exploitation). In that case certain employees think of their superiority as they work beyond office hours. The companies used these employees to keep up their client's satisfaction by illogically getting them (the employees) to work in odd hours (like assigning work at 5.30 pm and finish up by next morning 6.30 am where regular office timing would be 9 am to 6 pm).

Since the major chunk of Indian IT development is overseas projects, the difference of time zone forces an IT executive to stay at odd hours at office in order to match the convenience of its overseas client. This institutionalized (though illogically) working scenario of Indian IT sector is putting the employees in general and women employees in particular under stress which drastically jeopardize the work life balance of women. The present study revealed that in reality, many a time both married and unmarried women were not able to stay in the office for long hours particularly in late evenings unless there was a very much demanding situation. It is because married women have constraint of family responsibilities and for unmarried female it is social disapproval and parental objections. Thus when there is more work pressure or important deadlines to be met, women get more stressed and resultant is failure in balancing work and family life smoothly. This happens very often in IT companies in Mumbai. The situation was found to be very dicey in the present study. If a female IT executive reluctant to take the work pressure at the professional front due to family or domestic compulsion in comparison to her male peers she is vulnerable to low career growth. On the other hand if she takes the career as a priority then there happens to be

disastrous repercussion at domestic front as all the family members expect her to play the typical gender role as conditioned in Indian social system. This happens because despite gradual shift in societal attitude and values regarding gender roles in the city, women still shoulder the major responsibilities for family as well as household activities. This very often lead to inter role conflict while playing organizational and non-organizational role. The identical scenario is more prominent in case of married than unmarried women employees.

To face this reality, women executives of IT sector in Mumbai try different methods of negotiation to manage their work and family life. The first of its kind of negotiation is in taking up assignments where travelling to abroad either for a long term or for a short term is to be avoided. This is typical in the case of married women. Hence they tend to take up low end job like maintenance and quality assurance. In the second kind of negotiation the married women try to continue for a long time stay in one organization for consolidating their stake rather than job switching which they might have used to do till they got married. The third negotiation they make by preferring to work only in general shift (9 am to 6 pm). This is preferred by both employee and employer alike for security reason. In case by chance if the working hour is stretched it can at maximum go up to 9 pm. By doing these negotiations the women IT executives of Mumbai are deprived of professional growth and financial gain to a large extent. This also leads to create discrimination between male and female to hold equal position in India as well as onsite.

In the case of personal negotiation these women prefer to delay their marriage and if married, they prefer to delay in raising family as child is considered as a major impediment to their career growth. Those who have kids mostly keep their children in crèches even at a very tender age and also get them engaged in hobby classes(i.e. activities like singing, dancing, drawing, swimming etc.) so that feeling of absence of mother and loneliness can be reduced. Hence these children upbringing is done through a different way of parenting where direct involvement of real parent is reduced to a large extent contrary to Indian ethos. In a nut shell, these kids are nurtured through a sort of outsourcing which should be generally exclusive responsibility of parents e.g. looking after school homework, going for regular outing, sharing stories, cooking delicious meal, spending quality time with children etc. It has a direct impact on child's emotional stability and child parent bonding. Many of the respondents have reported that there happened to be significance neglect of family functions during the week days. Some of them were having the feeling of guilt due to their inability to discharge their role and functions effectively.

Another social reality is that though women in IT sector are in lucrative profession at the same time are not liberated from their gender specific role. Many of them continue to handle these responsibilities and end up with doing first shift at office, second shift at home and sometimes third shift for kid. These result in lots of overload of role leading to high level of stress. It has also been observed that when women are unable to manage both family and career, they prefer to take a career break for settling the issues.

Having personal time is the biggest challenge for women in IT sector. Their profession has a major influence on their pattern of sociality. Lack of free time to socialize with family members, friends and relatives is a common phenomenon among female executive of Mumbai IT sector because of the nature of their work.

In order to save time and also as a matter of convenience these women mostly depended on company provided transport system to commute from home to work place, habituate of buying readymade foods, procure household items online and outsource their domestic responsibility like cooking, cleaning and paying utility bills. Still they hardly find 4 hours a day to spend quality time with their children. Whenever they find time, mostly in weekends, they play with their kids, dine with them or spend time in watching the TV together. The social life of these women is basically carried out through mass media like chatting with friends and family members through social networking and internet. In other word they have developed a virtual social world where physical interaction is minimal or almost nil. They do not have much time to attend social functions of family and relatives.

7.4. I T Work Culture

As work culture of an organization is a combination of assumption, belief, values and norms that are shared by all the members. Work culture is very much associated with organization's goal and nature of competition with others. It has been observed that in IT sector the work culture is completely different from other sectors. This is mostly based on management by objective ethos which is characterized by target

achievement and volume of revenue generation. The capability of an executive is evaluated on the basis of his/her money making capacity which is highly individualistic, action oriented and competitive. Absence of unionization also make them more individualistic and me centered they become more competitive to peers in order to grow with their career.

As Information Technology is a high skilled technical job; the government discourages the trade unionism in IT sector (rather facilitates not to have trade union). Hence these employees do not get the protection of labour laws and sometimes feel exploited by the management policy. However in big companies some mechanism is there to protect the need of the employees and to retain the skilled employees for the growth of the company as well as to deliver the target to clients on time. With the provision of traditional employees' union client driven job operation would be affected and company would lose contract with foreign client. So IT employers discourage unionism. But with the open culture of IT, individually women employees do bargain for their benefits (mostly pay hike).

It has also been revealed from the study that IT pay packages are fixed and no overtime financial benefits for working beyond office hours or in holidays. Even if this provision is there in some companies it is very meagre. No standardized practice is followed universally. This is the prime reason of high attrition rate among women IT executives in all companies i.e. pay package differential.

It has been observed that there is no collective identity and working cohesion among all departments especially among women employees. Women IT executives with high skill and more exposure to foreign assignments possess superiority complex. They are egoistic and try to be dominant over other women involved in domestic projects and other wings of IT organization because of their high economic gain. So the researcher also felt some degree of class discrimination exist in work culture and socialization process among women executives of IT sector.

7.4.1 Individualization in IT sector

Financial independence of women working in IT sector gives them more respect in the society. It enhances their reputation and begets more freedom and independence. These women become self-empowered and establish their self-identity through their high income carving out a class of their own. Individualization scenario is commonly found among IT employees where employees prioritize their personal goal to that of the employers. It has been observed that women working in IT companies in Mumbai are mostly oriented with their individual action plan based on their self-interest and ideology rather than collective identity with the team and technology. This attitude and work approach is very often reflected in the cases of employees aspiring for promotion, career growth and negotiating for better pay package. They even prefer to switch over to other companies where they find growth potential with advance technology platform and compatible domain for job satisfaction. With this multiple dynamism (one to satisfy employer requirement and other to keep oneself always upgraded with latest technology) lead to severe stress as expressed by respondents.

For women IT executives of Mumbai, this coupled up with traditional domestic commitment makes it more difficult and stressful as observed by the researcher.

7.4.2 Job Satisfaction

The job satisfaction in IT sector is judged basing on three factors i.e. appropriate technology platform, adequate pay package and reasonable work content. The women IT executives of Mumbai, having academic background like computer engineering, information technology and MCA find the job quite interesting and very much compatible to their background knowledge. But another segment of women executives belonging to other branches of engineering and MBA qualification, at times, find their academic background being quite mismatching to their job assignment leading to dissatisfaction.

These executives definitely expect a fat package but it should be symbiotic with appropriate technology platform. Many of these executives though get comparable package, are dissatisfied for working in a not so good technology platform. Dissatisfaction also cropped up when one is being loaded with additional responsibility without expected proportionate enhancement of pay. Unfortunately in the prevailing market scenario of IT companies surveyed in this study follow neither uniform nor transparent pay structure for their employees. Onsite project assignments abroad are financially more lucrative in comparison to domestic (Indian) projects. Hence this (onsite project assignments abroad) is being an all time preference to each level of employees; and, one gets frustrated if such assignment is denied to her due to

any reason. Because of multitude of dissatisfaction by women executives in IT sector it's a normal phenomena to observe high level of attrition in IT profession (in Generic job assignment) as executives toggle between companies or technology. Overall scenario leads to a permanent vulnerability and re-adjustment leading to stress. This affects the women IT executives of Mumbai very adversely in discharging both societal obligation and professional commitment leading to compromise and adjustment as discussed earlier.

7.4.3. Promotion

Merit though prime factor of promotion in IT sector, but an element of favoritism is inevitable in addition to minimum level of merit as observed in this study. Favoritism may be in form of emotional involvement and physical proximity. And the employees' tenacity and capacity to pick up new technologies also considered as an important factor for upward mobility in the hierarchy. Impression management though not an approved norm but a tradition in IT sector in order to pocket better work assignment and career growth. This study found that by and large women IT executives tread this path of impression management in order to ensure upward mobility. This covert way of discrimination typically in case of women IT executives is a serious demotivating factor.

Promotion is done on the basis of following criteria.

1. At the time of recruitment no special treatment is given all have to pass through a standard procedure.

2. Then while going in hierarchy following parameters are taken into account in the order mentioned below.

- a. Rating of immediate superior
- b. Skill upgradation
- c. Existing salary slab
- d. Academic qualification*

*Person acquiring qualification from national level institutes are given weightage.

Due weightage is also given if a person acquires qualification like ME/M.Tech/M B A etc.

Initial three years are crucial for IT job as it is the learning phase. After this initial three years the employee becomes skilled enough to be placed in financially lucrative projects. Thus the career oriented women executives at least spend few more years after this initial three years in IT for capitalizing the knowledge and skills they have developed. This becomes an important factor for delaying the marriage for the sake of career.

The table no.7.1 gives a broad view of promotional avenue for an IT executive. The designations of executives differ from company to company. In case of trade off during promotion merit is given priority over seniority. Since merit is qualitative in nature some amount of favouritism or bias cannot be ruled out.

Table no 7.1: Promotional Avenue in IT Sector

Designation	Criteria / No of years before promotion
VP	Based on Merit
Associate VP	Based on Merit
Delivery Head / Project Incharge / Assistant V.P	Based on Merit
Senior Manager	3 to 4 years
Asst Manager/Manager	3 to 4 years
Associate/Team Leader/Tech Lead	2 years
Senior Consultants/Senior Software Engineer	2 to 4 years
Consultants/Software Engineers	2 years
Trainees/Junior Software Engineer	2 years

Some of the IT companies who mostly deal with sub-contracting projects follow the policy of hire and fire. It is revealed from the study that in software maintenance and support activities seventy percent executives are female and thirty percent executives are male. But in case of project development activities the male female proportion is 1:1. i.e. fifty percent each. Since female executives are compelled to take more social responsibilities as compared to their male counterpart they are constrained to take up higher position as these positions are very competitive in nature.

7.5. Leave facility in IT sector

None of the IT companies under this study follow identical leave policy. Excluding national holidays hardly any public holiday is available to IT employees. It is not

surprising that most of the IT companies surveyed by researcher used to bully their employees and deny the leave facility in one pretext or the other. Moreover leave is governed by client's convenience rather than employee's requirement. Only in case of maternity leave the company follows government regulation. Prenatal leave is available only in highly structured company like TCS and LTITL. But going by global standard they hardly provide lactation break (And facility like private expression / breast feeding room is a far cry). In overall scenario, the leave structure of the same IT company, operating in USA or UK is far superior as compared to that of Mumbai operation. Respondents are very much critical of non-availability rather denial of festival leave leading to conflict in family front (especially for married women) in typical Indian social structure as it is contrary to age old tradition.

The present study indicated that women executives were compelled to take break for child care, domestic and societal commitment. Though IT companies facilitate these executives to join back to the same job, but that is always accompanied with riders. It may be settling for a lesser package or may be to work in a different technology platform or may be at a lower rank as compared to one's peer who has not taken the break. This creates dissatisfaction at work which ultimately transmitted to family life. To neutralize the issue of leave women prefer to opt for work from home facility. However as observed in present study, the 'work from home facility' is not uniformly followed for all level of employees barring a selected few in senior position. Another concept of part time work is not encouraged in structured company.

Though the human resource (HR) departments interacted in this study claimed that the companies follow family friendly policies in order to poll better employee, but in practice that is never realized. All the provisions are very much facilitated to rigorous work assignment and as a result family takes a back seat in the process.

It is quite evident from the study that IT companies believe in stretching of working hours and it's a fairly regular feature; simply means "Employees to work beyond office hours and should not expect any additional compensation". No doubt this leads to nothing but stress.

7.6. Fringe benefits and work provision policy in IT Sector

Women IT professionals want to have a gymnasium in their office premises in order to work out and relax. They do want equal opportunity with male counterpart to access training in order to grow in career. Since the IT job is stressful, counselling facility and health related programs are expected. Women employees also want some type of family support program and relocation assistance. Gymnasium facility is available in almost all IT companies so also health programs. However the provision of counselling is available in structured companies. Very few companies provide any tangible family support or parenting program. Relocation assistance is restricted to high end employees only.

Facility like concessional loan in tie up with banks is a feature in many of the corporate but it is not so in case of many IT companies (excluding few structured

ones). Subsidized canteen, an integral feature in IT companies, is marred with dissatisfaction either on the quality of food or on the menu or on the hygiene or on the service quality.

In a nutshell there is no uniformity in providing fringe benefits. The maximum fringe benefit is restricted to LTC and subsidized canteen in structured companies. Very few high end companies (like TCS, Accenture and LTITL) only provide all fringe benefits. In general substantial number of companies where observations were made do not provide competitive fringe benefits.

7.7. Work, family and lifestyle

As discussed earlier, the obvious reason of higher economic gain, put women IT executives of Mumbai in a different pedestal and the distinct work culture has a deep effect in shaping the perception of a woman on family structure, attitude and approach to marriage. They want to pose different which is reflected in their sophistication to social obligation and inter personal relationship. In the present study, while personal interaction was made it was observed that they were having a feeling of superiority complex. They were egoistic and independent minded where career and financial gain were the prime factor of their measurement of success. They were significantly characterized by possession of property, owning vehicles and using modern gadgets. They denounced lifelong dependence on spouse and with working exposure in global scenario they were very much influenced by western (typically American) cultural values.

As number of women working in IT sector has increased there has been a change in social life. And this changed social dynamics have several fall outs. In Mumbai sizable IT professionals are first generation professionals and migrants from different parts to the city. With aforementioned scenario the first casualty was joint family structure, which got disintegrated paving a way to nuclear families. Nuclear family facilitates more freedom and autonomy to women and also egalitarian while taking important decisions. But at the same time working women also face the increased burden of familial responsibility though they get some support from their spouse in dealing with household chores. In IT sector job in Mumbai it is imperative to continuously update with fast changing technological scenario to remain gainfully employed and that is also to be coupled up with stretched working hour and deadline accomplishment. To prosper and grow in this challenging work environment family becomes secondary status for women IT executive. The researcher found that in general in a joint family set up, since some important issues like child rearing etc. is taken care by grandparents; the family does not slip down to secondary status in an overall scenario.

This is complimented with fact that management appreciates, if the employees give priority to work over family. In fact the management discourages to avail facility like leave on pretext of family issues and family takes a back seat on employer's perspective. Though the researcher found that at times, management do accommodate family needs and family members are encouraged to join company celebrations, but it is never sufficient to neutralize the stress.

Holistic analysis indicated that the level of balancing or integrating personal and professional life is the key factor of growth; it can be achieved by developing strong network among colleagues. Another way is to take a part of work to home and complete it before coming to office next day. Though the least preferred is to stay beyond office hours to complete the job, but in reality some women executives do the same so that office worries are to be buried at office only and additionally they need not have to come to office on off days. And unfortunately employers appreciate if a person stays beyond office hour whether any work is there or not.

Woman's role in Indian family is mostly expressive one; as she provides warmth; security and support. In the present study married women have reported their main concern was the kid's upbringing to provide safety, security and basic necessities for them. The another major concern of the married women in the study has been reported that spouse's career, healthy marital relationships and the emotional security are of paramount importance which demands each other's mutual support. However the job demands at the work place had an effect on the physical and mental health of the women and it becomes more hazardous when both the couples are in identical job or in equally stressful job. Respondents have reported that husband's emotional support along with moral and logistical supports of family members (like parents and in laws) have helped them in managing this demanding professional life. That also alleviated the stress to some extent. However there are some incidents of flight away from stress situation; this flight may be from family to meet workplace demand or vice versa if there is scant or inadequate support from family or from work place.

In the current study, women who had got the support of their tech leads/ managers reported that they coped up more effectively with the stressful work place. However others have expressed their resentment of not being accommodated with their request and sometimes had been ignored and discouraged. At times it was revealed that the supports given by managers are highly inconsistent and very much subject to manager's perception to a particular situation.

Researcher found that the typical approach of women IT executives of Mumbai has a negative influence on their family as well as social life. It has been observed that there are instances of divorce among IT women professionals because of their economic independence, ego, lack of patience and tolerance, biased towards western life style at the individual level. Professional stress and job related frustration work as catalyst in wrecking family life and social isolation for IT women executives. All these give rise to a new social structure typical to IT professional which at times is characterized by live in relationship, pre-marital or extra marital affairs and even leading to crime.

Though not expressed in open but many respondents confided that the practice of live in relationship is quite normal mostly to beat the cost of housing in a city like Mumbai. It is more rampant during their foreign assignment at first to quell the cost of housing and secondly it is no more a taboo there. The issue of pre-marital and extra marital affairs reported mostly in overseas assignments.

7.8 Health Hazards

The study revealed that women IT executives of Mumbai faced dual nature of stress both mental and physical. As evident from study the reason for stress stems from the nature of job assignment which is characterized by stretchable working hours, holiday working to meet the deadlines, monotony, time zone adjustment and cascading effect of team inter dependability. This sector is very volatile and the employee faces the problem of job security and constant upgradation of skills to remain marketable thereby making the women professional more stressful. Stress among coworkers may arise because of heavy competition, organizational politics, favoritism etc. Stress reaches at high level when they compete for same position to occupy. Adding to that, constant exposure to electromagnetic radiation in a computer environment makes the situation worse as far as health is concerned.

Most of the women IT professionals suffer from typical health aliments like backache, headache, irritating eyesight and spondylitis. Furthermore there happens catastrophic failure in balancing or managing both career and family effectively as the situation observed in the study leaves women IT executives with less or no time for themselves. Mood swing, anxiety, sleeplessness, mental strain are very rampant among them.

The situation for married women IT executives is worse as they fail to balance among various role sets (as a professional, as a wife, as a mother, as a daughter in law) and very often land up with role conflict. It may be in form of compromising on child

care to attend professional commitment or may be unable to spend quality time with spouse, because of the compulsion to meet client deadline or may be avoiding or ignoring social obligation due to lack of leave. These create lot of misunderstanding in family front and also play as an impediment in career growth. To escape out of this situation many of them are seen to have stooped to different types of addiction in form consumption of alcohol, smoking etc.

7.9. I T Profession and Unmarried Women Executives

Since IT is a high paying desk job many technically qualified young women graduates take this as a preferred profession. In this present study it was found that though their parents feel happy for their daughter doing a high paying job, but are concerned on issues like stretching work hours and night shifts. Though the IT companies take all possible security measures for night shift working but the girls' parent feel insecure and get irritated if there is repetitive night shift allotted. However refusal to work in night shift makes an executive vulnerable to low growth and challenging opportunities get transferred to male counterpart. Almost half of the young women executives feel that profession might be a stumbling block in their marriage. Two third of IT female professionals not necessarily like to marry a person from IT profession as they perceive that it would lead to more stressful life. Nevertheless one third of them still like to have an IT professional as their life partner. Society as a whole show positive concern for IT female executives with a few obstinate elements reacts with criticism. However most of the girls in IT profession are forward looking persons and ignore these fringe elements.

There is certain guideline laid down by National Association of Software and Services Companies (**NASSCOM**) towards ensuring safety of women employees. But a minuscule of employees are aware of these guidelines. It is high time to sensitize the female employees on these recommendations. These are

1. Permitting only authorized vehicles with valid stickers to enter the premises after due inspection by security guards.
2. Monitoring cabs ferrying women workforce using global positioning systems (GPS).
3. Boarding and de-boarding to be done in secure and well-lit areas.
4. Effective checks and controls on vehicle movement to be carried out in order to check any unwarranted activities of cab drivers, such as picking up strangers and staying away from the designated routes.
5. 24x7 emergency helpline number and other important numbers to be displayed in cabs.
6. Self-defense training for women employees by professional trainers to help them get trained in handling emergency situations; training drivers etc.

With reference to the guidelines of NASSCOM, the researcher made following observations on the measures taken by IT companies operating in Mumbai for the safety of women executives.

Primarily companies are focusing on sensitizing employees (particularly) about safety precautions as it is impossible for a company to police all its employees. Company rules specified that women must only travel in the presence of another male employee. A separate transport department, internal hotlines and SMS services were introduced to monitor commuting employees. Some companies used to deploy one security guard each in vehicles with women employees. The companies used to check the background of all security guards who accompany women in the company taxis, fingerprints and photographs all drivers and install GPS tracking systems in cars servicing their facility. In addition to this companies also conduct regular travel safety training sessions for women employees as well as self-defense programs.

7.10. Concluding Remark

Global standard benefits in the form of working hours, leave facilities (like maternity and child care), crèche facility, breast feeding room are unheard of, in Indian IT sector of Mumbai. Indian IT companies operating in Mumbai are profit centric and always expect their employees to work beyond stipulated time so that target is attained to keep them afloat in international scenario without any global level facilities to lessen the expenditure and keep profit margin high. This work scenario has become a professional hazard and lead to mental and physical stress. Indian women working in

IT sector because of their gender role find it more difficult to sustain in their job for a long time thereby curtailing their career growth.

Study says, the IT companies are exempted from following any type of labour law in Indian operation, whereas these are very meticulously followed in countries like USA and other European countries. In the pretext of deadline accomplishment the IT companies lobby strongly to thwart any law that would be favorable to employee. As already observed the IT companies are intelligent enough to recruit every person at the rank of executive thereby eliminate any possibility of unionization of employees. Government also remains liberal to IT companies as they account for a large chunk of foreign currency earning. This aspect should be looked into very seriously.

Many times it is found that women IT executives of Mumbai city get influenced by western culture and adopt a life style and attitude contrary to Indian tradition in respect of family, marriage, and cultural ethos and value system. Their distinct identity, lack of human communication with children, parenting through virtual medium drastically affects the socialization process and formation of child's personality.

The current study has been conducted by taking both gender equality approach and family centric approach. The basic aim was to facilitate more and more women to be part of the work force and at the same time, family as an institution would be maintained and functioned properly. In order to realize these two things the researcher found that India has a long way to go to provide equality of opportunities to her

women in order to maintain proper work life balance. Though women are joining the work force in more and more number but majority of them do not go up to pinnacle of their career because of their role at the family. Some women who give priority to their professional accomplishments, used to put family at secondary status. They either prefer to remain spinster or deliberately delay their marriage or do not raise family for a long time. They prefer to work hard for career growth. With this type of aggressive self-identity approach they treat any advice or suggestion from their parents and family members as encroachment into their self-domain. At the same time the researcher has observed that men are not participative in sharing so called female centric responsibilities (i.e. sharing household chores, child care etc.). Thus many working women develop a complacent attitude of being satisfied to a particular level or having a sense of guilt not being able to pay proper attention to family functioning. Thus in order to make women to continue in the most lucrative sector (i.e. IT), the attitude and mindset of both employer, partners of female employees and family members have to be changed. The employer should frame the policies to make it more women friendly, that to married women friendly. The family members need to give value to women's potentialities to be portrayed positively at the work place by extending necessary support as and when required, so that family life and work life can be in tandem to each other.

7.11. Recommendations/Remedial Suggestions

- IT companies operating in India should provide the internationally standardized facilities (like leave for child care, bereavement and festival

leave) and working condition in order to encourage more women to work and also able to sustain with growth.

- Facilities like lactation rooms, crèche and NGO services for child care and providing food at home should be roped to reduce break in career of women after marriage.
- Maternity and childcare leave should be in confirmation with international standard. It should be applicable to all levels of women executives of IT sector irrespective of rank and file. To be precise maternity leave should be for six months and lactation break should be the right of new mothers with adequate childcare (rather infant care) facility should be made mandatory for companies.
- The illogical mindset of staying beyond office hour is indication of more commitment should be buried down. Work from home should be a reality rather than extension of work to home.
- IT women executives must understand the sacredness and sanctity of marriage; family ethos and significance of parenting that are with Indian roots rather than just aping the western life style. To be precise if effective joint family system can be reconstituted and adhered to, then a big issue like child care can be easily taken care of. It also gives relaxation and mental peace as the employee will come back to home at the end of day; not to an empty house. For this the women executives must understand and recognize the

positive feminine cultural value of Indian women. This is because in Indian society a woman is considered as binding factor of a family. Hence a little concern to family life will reap rich dividend.

- As a part of coping mechanism each and every member of family should be educated and rational. Specifically the spouses should be more sensitive to need of a women and counter tradition and cultural norms by helping their wives to perform daily task and taking care of children. This is to be accompanied with concern of in laws to become pragmatic in facilitating the women to excel in her professional career. It can be in form of taking care of grandchildren, encouraging son and daughter in law to go for a holiday by taking responsibility of grand children during vacation. They must recognize and accept the fact that by facilitating their daughter in law to work, the ultimate gain is of their son and family.
- IT organizations of Mumbai should have an internal code to ensure security of women employees and take measures to ensure that they discharge their job in a secured environment. It may be in form of Radio Frequency Identification mechanism in transportation facility with satellite camera and widely covered cctv security system.
- Counselling services should be strengthened especially in order to deal with stressful condition of employee. Stress relieving programmes in form of yoga, family party should be organized in regular frequency.

- IT sector should follow ILO guidelines which prescribes eight hours of working per day with maximum fifty two hours per week and with maximum six days of working. Working above this limit should be compensated by overtime at a higher level.

- The code of best practices should be evolved in the IT companies to make the executives more effective, not to put the employees in the stretchable working hours; like rewarding an employee to accomplish work before time, discouraging to stay beyond office hours etc.

- An independent body should be constituted in case of sexual harassment at the work place rather than company authorities. This must consist of retired women Judge of High Court, a reputed doctor and a respected female personality of the locality. And government must empower them with magistrate power so that they can direct the police.

7.12. Limitations of Study

The study was conducted from the perspective of women working in IT sector and their positive experiences in relation to their overall life style as well as the challenges in managing family and profession. However the opinion of other family members and spouse were not taken into consideration as a part of this study.

The researcher found it very difficult to get proper and authentic data as none of the IT companies permit to undertake any interview in their premises. The researcher attempted to access the IT companies through University of Mumbai but they did not bother to respond any request from the competent authority.

Many respondents gave haphazard and were not serious in filling the questionnaire. Hence to get proper information on an average ten attempts were made either by meeting the same person again and again or by meeting more numbers of persons in identical position.

The study is restricted to Mumbai Metropolitan Region only. This city has its own inherent merits and demerits. Hence this study cannot be generalized on Pan India basis.

The study was based only on software project development personnel. There is a small chunk of employees who work in product development and R&D. In addition to that the IT companies also consist of hardware, maintenance and support personnel too; they were not part of study's population.

The researcher could find very small number of women executives at the top or strategic level. Moreover accessibility to them has been made very difficult. Hence their opinion could not be taken in relation to challenging situations before women employee while trying to balance their work and family.

There are many sensitive issues which were confided to researcher in close door meetings. There is much information related to matter like sexual harassment was confided orally in personal interaction. Hence a generalized opinion cannot be framed on these issues.

7.13. Further Research

This has been observed that women engaged in Information Technology sector in Mumbai city are definitely facing various challenges to grow in their career and at the same time to manage their family responsibilities. To generalize the finding of this research the same should be replicated at IT companies located at Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Raipur etc.

To make a holistic analysis of IT operations in India studies can be conducted on personnel engaged in IT Enabled Services (ITES) like hardware maintenance, networking and business process out sourcing. This type of Information Technology jobs require different skills and operate in a different work culture.

In addition to that IT companies do engage various types of semi-skilled, unskilled and supporting personnel in areas like utility maintenance, estate, security, canteen and logistics. Study on these IT sector employees can also be conducted.

There is an emergence of a new group of IT employees who are hired on a functional basis. Women having more familial load prefer this type of assignment as there is no

long term commitment involved. This type of job includes translators, functional programmers. Interpretive study can be conducted on overall work operation of IT sector by taking both male and female employees of all level. Comparative analysis between IT and other service sectors like banking, telecom, health care, teaching and consulting where substantial women are engaged; can be carried out.

IT sector work culture is different from other sector because of their client driven operation. Thus an analytical study can be undertaken on multiculturalism in IT sectors, its advantages and disadvantages and challenges before IT managers to accommodate a culturally diversified pool of employees to attain a common goal.