A STUDY ON WORK FROM HOME AND WORK LIFE BALANCE OF IT SECTOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES REFERENCE TO PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

The novel corona virus (COVID-19) is a pandemic sweeping across the globe, has challenged society in ways once considered unimaginable, forcing people to reconsider a wide variety of practices, from work, to leisure, to basic travel and daily tasks. Today's work environment and the culture have seen a sea change. The corona virus pandemic has dramatically altered the workplace. To slow the virus's spread and protect employees, many companies have shifted to remote work, with video calls and instant messaging replacing meetings and break room conversations. Therefore, the study focuses on the work from home and maintenance of work life balance among women executives working in IT Parks.Sample Area selected for this study is Pathanamthitta District of Kerala state. The primary data is collected through structured questionnaire from 60 women employees in IT Parks. The study found that majority of the respondents is productive and satisfied with work from home arrangements during Covid times.

Keywords: Work from home, IT Sector, Corona virus, Work life balance.

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19, has accelerated the process of change from Working from Office to Work from Home(WFH).It has the potential to reduce commute time and provide more flexible hours, Work from home is a working arrangement in which a worker fulfils the essential responsibilities of his/her job while remaining at home, using information and communications technology (ICT). It requires a shared responsibility and commitment by both employers and workers to ensure business continuity and employment.

In the present competitive world, IT organizations are filled with conflicting commitment and responsibilities. This has made work from home and work life balance a challenging issue for the women employees in the IT industry. It is the responsibility of an individual to balance work and life. Work life balance is a significant factor leading to overall performance of women executives. If they know how to negotiate the way between thorns and hurdles of work life, success will be the outcome.

The study is an attempt to identify the initial impact of work from home and maintenance of work life balance of women executives in the IT industry. The study will bring the perception and satisfaction of work from home and maintenance and challenges encountered in work life balance of the women executives in IT industry and it attempts to make an effective use of the strategies for exploring their values.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know whether the women employees are productive and satisfied on work from home facility.
2. To identify the challenges of the women employees on work from home facility.
3. To know the perception of women employees with respect to work from home facility.
4. To give appropriate suggestions on the basics of study.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

 India makes a mark on the world map with the help of booming IT industrial sector. The Indian economy steady growth is backed up by the contribution of IT industry towards the country's GDP. It provides world class technology solutions across the globe. In this context the organization has made a great effort to bring up work-life balance among the employee through which the organization attain its ultimate objective with the upliftments of IT sector. The economy is gradually changing its focus from agricultural based economy to a knowledge driven economy with eminent IT employees. The present study is confined to identify the challenges faced by the women employees and the study also try to find out the whether the women employees are productive and satisfied on work from home facility and also the perception towards it.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

 The present study consists of women employees who are currently working in work from home arrangement. The primary data is collected through structured questionnaire from 60 women employees in IT Parks. The population of the study includes the women employees in IT sector in IT Parks. Convenient sampling technique is used for collecting the data from different women employees. Sample size Sample size is 60 which comprise of women employees from IT Parks. Sample Area selected for this study is Pathanamthitta District. As the study is meant for the IT sector women employees who is working in executive level in various IT parks. The respondents are collected from different IT parks such as Techno park, Info park and Cyber park.

1.5 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The reviews collected for this research are summarised as follows:

Kaluzniacky (1999)[1], in his study "Work stress factors among Information systems professionals in Manitoba" Stated that IT workers are faced with rapidly and continuously changing technologies and methodologies and causes stress in employees. While technological change has had an impact on individuals in many professions, this change is even more immediate, more direct for the IT worker.

Cooper (2001)[2] , in his study "Organizational stress faced by women employees" stated that the changes in the family structures, increased participants by women in the work force, and technological changes that enable job tasks to be performed in a variety of locations have

blurred the boundaries between work and home life and concluded that it created the potential for conflict to occur between on-the-job and off-the-job roles.

Jane Levis (2002)[3] , in his study "Gender and Welfare State Change" stated that Work life balance remains profoundly a gendered issue. He has argued that rising levels of female labour force participants do not necessarily signal gender equality if women are being drawn into the labour market on men's terms. The discredited male breadwinner household model may increasingly be suspended by the adult worker model, yet the new model is premised on an essentially masculine understanding of the labour process.

Kelkar (2003)[4] , in his study "Women in the digital Era" he observed the heavy work schedules and 14- 16 hours work days is the norm of IT companies. The employees work long hours in office and 2-3 hours in home. The study concluded that there is no such balance between work and family in the industry.

Vittal (2003)[5] , in his study "Strategies to empower women in IT sector" stated that in order to empower women in the IT sector. It is necessary to investigate the social impact of IT sector on the women's community. The researcher has indicated the emergence of "metro-sexual men", men who are sharing the responsibility of the family which might help women to be an active agent in the IT work force. It is also observed that dropout rates of women get increased with their marriage and child birth. This places a great burden on women and restricts women's choices in terms of better job opportunities.

Harshpinder and Aujla (2004)[6] , in his study "Stress management techniques used by Working Women and Non-Working Women of Ludhiana city" investigated to analyse the different stress management techniques used by 75 working women and 75 non-working women of Ludhiana city. Results showed that majority of the respondents in both the categories were using stress management techniques wiz relaxation, music, prayer, and recreation with family. Planning and relaxation were most preferred techniques among both the groups.

Ramesh P.V (2004)[7] , in his study "Cyber Coolies in BPO; Insecurities and Vulnerabilities of nonstandard work" stated that leave structure has an impact on the family life of the women employees in Information Technology sector. The workers are allowed to avail leave only with the prior consent of the team leader or manager to ensure that the work is not disrupted. Availing leave without prior consent is treated as unauthorized absence which is sufficient reason to terminate the service of the worker.

Yasbek (2004)[8] , in his study he concluded that work life balance policies are positively associated with the job tenure of the female employees, and more ever the practices of such policies have a great effect on the turnover rate of employees. Work life balance policies help in reducing the stress and provide a good work place where there is less chance of accidents in the working and also provide a fair platform for every employee, ultimately enhancing productivity.

Ujvala Rajadhyaksha (2012)[9], in her PhD thesis "Work-Life Balance in South-east Asia: The Indian Experience" represented angle of social for work-lifer initiatives. Such a perspective requires greater reliance on governmental policy in addition to organizational incentive to balance work-family demands. At the moment, however there is an absence of a governing policy at the national level to guide work family efforts for varied segments of workers in the country. There is absence of policy initiatives or organizational interventions for workers in the unorganized sector.

1.6 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the study is to identify whether the women employees are productive and satisfied on work from home arrangements. Before that, it would be worthwhile to examine the socioeconomic profile of the respondents. Accordingly in the present section, efforts have been made to throw light on their socio-economic characteristics by using certain general indicators such as gender, marital status, age, educational qualifications and so on. The composition of the demographic variables of the respondents and the data showing how much women employees are productive and satisfied is given in the following Table 1.1

Table 1.1 Socio- Economic Profile of Respondents

Socio personal trait	Percentage	Socio personal trait	Percentage
Age		*Effectiveness of training programme*	
Below 25	*68*		
26-35	*22*	*Effective*	*77*
36-45	*5*	*Ineffective*	*7*
Above 45	*5*	*Neutral*	*16*
Marital status		*Work experience*	
		Less than 1 year	*60*
Married	*33*	*1-3 year*	*30*
Unmarried	*67*	*3-6 year*	*3*
		6-10 year	*4*
		Above 10 year	*3*
Educational status		*No. of years as customers*	
Graduation	*45*	*0-1*	*28*
Post graduation	*35*	*2-4*	*32*
profession	*13*	*5-9*	*30*
other	*7*	*10 above*	*10*
PRODUCTIVITY AND WORK FROM HOME		*Satisfied from work from home facility*	
Highly productive			
Productive	*12*	*Yes*	*45*
Less Productive	*72*	*No*	*15*
Least Productive	*16*		
	0		

The women employees are facing several challenges during work from home times. The table 1.2 exhibits challenges due to covid situations while working from home

Table 1.2 Challenges Facing While Working From Home

Sr. No.	Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Covid 19 Anxiety	11	27	11	9	2	60
2	Physical Workspace	13	29	11	4	3	60
3	Poor Network	21	18	13	5	3	60
4	Lack of Colleague Interaction	23	26	8	2	1	60
5	Household Works	8	32	12	5	3	60

Statement 1 states the "Covid 19 anxiety" as challenge that employees are currently facing while working from home. Out of 60 respondents, 27 respondents agree with the statement, 11 are neutral. Statement 2 states the "Physical workspace" as challenge that employees are currently facing while working from home, 29 respondents agree with the statement. Statement 3 states the "Poor network" as challenge that employees are currently facing while working from home. Out of 60 respondents, 21 respondents strongly agree with the statement and 3 respondents strongly disagree with the statement. Statement 4 states the "Lack of colleague interaction" as challenge that employees are currently facing while working from home, 23 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 26 respondents agree with the statement. Statement 5 states the "Household works" as challenge that employees are currently facing while working from home. Out of 60 respondents, 8 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 32 of respondents agree with the statement, 12 are neutral, 5 respondents disagree with the statement and 3 respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

The women employees have different perception during work from home arrangements. The table 1.3 provides classification on the basis of feelings towards work lifebalance.

Table 1.3 Feelings towards work life balance

Sr. No	Statement	Strongly agree	agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
1	Flexible StartingTime	18	30	8	2	2	60
2	Flexible FinishingTime	15	32	8	3	2	60
3	Flexible Hours in General	16	26	10	3	5	60
4	Holidays	18	30	7	3	2	60

The Table 1.3 shows some statement which shows the employees feelings towards work life balance. Flexible starting time, Flexible finishing time, Flexible hours in general, Holidays and job sharing are the factors examined to find out the feelings of women employees towards work life balances.

Statement 1 says that "Flexible starting time" will help the respondents to balance their work life. Out of 60 respondents, 18 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 30 of respondents agree with the statement. Statement 2 says that "Flexible finishing time" will help the respondents to balance their work life. Out of 60 respondents, 15 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 32 respondents agree with the statement. Statement 3 says that "Flexible hours in general" will help the respondents to balance their work life. Out of 60 respondents, 16 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 26 of respondents agree with the statement, Statement 4 says that "holiday" will help the respondents to balance their work life. Out of 60 respondents, 18 respondents strongly agree with the statement, 30 of respondents agree with the statement.

1.7 CONCLUSION

The pandemic sweeping the world, COVID-19, has rendered a large proportion of the workforce unable to commute to work, as to mitigate the spread of the virus. This has resulted in both employers and employees seeking alternative work arrangements. In today's world, work from home and attaining work life balance is a holistic approach that takes into consideration the management of the multiple aspects of professional as well as personal life. It can be concluded from the study that works from home and maintenance of work life balance among the employees is an important phenomenon to be kept in mind by every organization.

The present study measures the level of satisfaction of women employees on the varied determinants of work from home and work life balance. And it is analyzed that half of the respondents are somewhat satisfied with the current work from home arrangements. The study also studies the perception of women employees with respect to work from home facilities. Due to this covid pandemic situation all workers are forced to work at home considering employees safety. The companies are trying their best for getting an efficient work from employees.

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