



## WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN LEADERS IN IT PROFESSION

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**ABSTRACT** Work and family are the two most important domains in a person's life. The changing economic condition and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. Work life and personal life are inter-connected and interdependent for earning livelihood. Spending more time in office, dealing with employees and the pressures of the job can interfere and affect the personal life, sometimes making it impossible to even complete the household chores. On the other hand, personal life can also demand the persons who have the kid or aged parents, financial problems in their life. It leads to absenteeism from work, increase the stress and lack of concentration at work among the employees. IT profession emerged as one of the largest employers in the country. Software sector has not only created plentiful job opportunities but has also resulted in new types of challenging careers for women. It provides opportunities for the educated, middle class women to build their own dreams and performance. In the present scenario most of the software employees are women. This paper is an attempt to study working women leaders in maintaining a balance between their personal and professional life and their perception of work-life balance measures in their organizations.

**KEYWORDS :** Work-life Balance, IT Profession, Working Women

### Introduction

The current global economy is significantly complex and interlinked. In the highly competitive global scenario, society and organizations are filled with conflicting commitment and responsibilities. Hence, work-life balance has become an important issue at workplace. Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Over the years, there is a growing perception that the quality of an employee's personal life and family life impacts work quality and that it makes business sense to promote work and family integration (Lockwood, 2003). A conflict between work and family has real consequences and negatively affects the quality of family and career attainment of both men and women. The growing number of women in the workforce has led to an increasing amount of problems, specifically among working women in the IT industry. Work/life balance is one among them and has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organizations as well as for the lives of employees.

Women have attained remarkable success in male-domain occupations in all over the world. Worldwide the number of women in the workforce has increased over the years with a corresponding increase in the number of highly educated women equipped with technical knowledge. However, discrimination against women in the workplace has impacted their advancement in jobs that acquire higher societal recognition among men. Women are doing leadership role throughout their lives.

Information technology (IT) field is important because IT is a high-growth sector, in terms of the number of professionals being hired and their respective salaries. Women are graduating and entering technical positions and professional qualifications or achievements. Many computing professions are expected to grow faster than the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) average, making computer science a strong career choice for women (National Center for Women & Information Technology, 2014a). Women leaders in IT profession occupied as team leader, project manager and CEO. Women in information technology increases over the years.

Information Technology Industry characterizes long working hours and work overload. The world has recognized India's competitive advantage in software services and today India is a magnet for software clients owing to the quality of its skilled software manpower (NASSCOM, 2010). India has gained a lot of interest as a source of software and has emerged as a leader in the software industry. The role of women working in these industries has been changing substantially over the last decade and half, both inside and outside homes. In addition to their role within households, they are now having a larger role in the outside world also, especially in the labour market. Though women are found in all fields, their participation in the I.T. industry is more. Women's participation in the IT workforce is seen as a critical enabling factor for the continued growth of the industry (The

Economic Times, 2009). Women who aspire to play a bigger role in technology need to maintain a consistently high learning curve. With the constant innovation happening in this arena, it is not enough to be a good worker in the IT industry; one must keep updating technological skills. No other industry sees such significant changes in technology from time to time (Ali, 2006).

Work Life Balance is a person's control over the responsibilities between their workplace, family, friends and self. A successful work-life-balance strategy reduces stress levels and raises job satisfaction in the employee while increasing productivity and health care costs for the employer. (Kalaiselvi, Muruganandam, Sakthi 2010). Research survey results on work life balance quotes that there is an alarmingly high percentage of respondents who feel that work is the cause of health problems, specifically stress, lack of exercise and imbalance between work and family. Hence the present study focuses on work-life balance of women leaders in IT profession.

### Review of Literature

Webster (2002) points out that family structures and female roles vary across countries, but overall, women continue to be the primary provider for domestic and childcare responsibilities. The presence of large numbers of women in the workforce and their drive for careers has resulted in increasing attention to work- family balance issues.

The role of workplace support, i.e., the support received from supervisors and co-workers (Voydanoff, 2002) is another critical element of work-family balance.

Roper, et al (2002) observed that work – family conflict is a form of role conflict, in which the demands of paid employment, particularly those arising from the length and scheduling of working time, prevent the effective performance of family roles as spouse, parent, or career. Work-family integration is a term used by some in preference to the notion of work-life balance.

Malliga Dasgupta (2010) explored the relationship between psychosocial variables and emotional intelligence of women employees in Information Technology Industry. The psycho-social variables included in the study were Quality of Work Life, Work Family Role Conflict and Perceived Happiness of female IT professionals. The sample consisted of 30 female IT professionals of Kolkata. The findings positively correlated with Quality of Work Life and Happiness, indicating that it contributes toward achieving higher Quality of Work Life and greater perceived happiness and were negatively correlated with both the domains of Work family Role Conflict, indicating that Emotional Intelligence tunes down the perception of Role conflict and thereby reduces the stress produced by it.

Byrne, et.al (2005) found that the benefits of work-life balance

initiatives, for employers, are better talent attraction, enhanced productivity, better talent engagement, reduced work stress, reduced absenteeism, reduced costs, better motivation, employer branding, talent retention and efficient work practices.

Therefore, it can be assumed, from the above empirical findings that work-life balance among working women does not have an equilibrium and the benefits of the same is not resulted in higher contentment in women’s personal and work domains.

**Statement of Problem**

The changing economic condition and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. Work Life balance is important to the organizations for pleasant working environment and satisfied employee can deliver at the highest level of performance. Work-life balance is different for every individual. A woman employee might be dissatisfied due to improper work-life balance their life. Employee interactions with the organization, through other employees, management, customers, or others, the employee identification with the organization (Earle, and Jenny 2002). Simultaneously, the employee must manage their “self” identification. Recent days many of the IT sector employees have failed to balance the work and life (Dex Shirley and Scheibl Fiona 2001). They have facing number of problems in the society and also this leads to break up the marriage bonds shortly and they are struggled to mingle with the family activities and also less concentration towards their work (Dex Shirley and Scheibl Fiona 1999). Hence, it is desired to study the work life balance among the women leaders in IT industry working in Coimbatore city.

**Objectives**

The study was conducted with the aim of realizing the following objectives:

1. To find out the work-life balance of women leaders working in IT industries`
2. To find out women leader’s perception of work-life balance measures in their organization.

**Methodology**

The study was conducted among women employees who occupied leadership positions in their organization. The study was conducted in Coimbatore City of Tamil Nadu State. The sample consisted of 30 (N=30) women leaders. They were all selected randomly from five major IT companies which consisted of more than 500 employees. The respondents were from same culture and socioeconomic status.

In order to collect data for the purpose of the study, Better Work Life Balance Survey (BWLBS) – Employees Form prepared by Department of Industrial Relations, Queensland Government was used. The survey consisted of 59 items and the score ranged from 59 to 177 for personal work life dimension and 59 to 295 for organization work life balance measures. The survey questionnaires were handed over to the respondents and they were assisted suitably while responding. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were worked out to realize the objectives of the study.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Work-Life Balance Dimensions**

Dimension	N	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personal Work Life Balance	30	69.00	98.00	82.833 3	7.79073
Organizational Measures	30	111.00	187.00	140.16 67	15.09758

It is observed from the table that the personal work life balance among women leaders working in IT industry found to be average with the minimum score of 69 and maximum score of 98. The mean work – life balance score is 82.83 with the standard deviation of 7.79. On the other hand the women leaders’ perception of organizational measures for work – life balance in the work environment found to be average with the minimum score of 111 and maximum score of 187. Mean score for this dimension is 140.16 with the standard deviation of 15.09.

**Conclusion**

Work Life balance of the women leaders working in IT industry are an important variable that affect the quality of work behaviour and needs immediate concern as the IT industry faces shortage of efficient women leaders. The results of the present study reveal that the work-life balance of the women leaders in IT industry found to be below the average level. This shows the unique status of women professionals in IT industry. As found in several studies this may be due to inadequate support from various sources related such as family of women IT professionals and organization. From the study results it is known that their organizations do not provide sufficient measures to maintain balance between their work and personal life. The finding indicates that seek immediate attention of organization to take measures in order to promote work – life balance among women IT professionals.

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