

The work-life balance of IT professionals: An analysis of the Chennai IT sector

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Abstract: Everything has become much easier thanks to automation and computerization, and there are many opportunities in the IT sector with good salaries but uninteresting employment. In the IT industry, work-life balance has emerged as a difficult problem. The attention of companies and employees has grown significantly. To strike a balance between business and personal interests, a research on work-life balance has been taken into account. The goal was to determine the reasons behind the disparate work-life balance and the harmony-maintaining strategies implemented by the IT sector. This study report also highlights the IT companies that implemented efforts including flexible work schedules, part-time employment, and the availability of child care centres to encourage work-life balance.

1. Introduction:

According to common belief, a contented employee makes a better employee. However, it appears that the employers are having trouble grasping this reality. We require it to keep us motivated and allow us to give our best; alternatively, too much pressure results in stress. Stressful occurrences in life that happen at work, such as losing your job, having your hours and circumstances changed, getting laid off, having your organisation reorganised, etc. The Indian IT sector has long been free from employment laws, which has helped it expand quickly and become competitive in the global market. The majority of the IT industry is transitioning from a typical eight-hour workday to a twenty-four-hour workday, seven days a week. Since most employees work on Saturdays and Sundays as well, there is a fluctuating pattern in the working hours that differs much from the typical one, which runs from 9 am to 5 pm. Workers who perform well under duress are more prone to experience despair. An overly stressful workplace produces a variety of negative outcomes, including job dissatisfaction, staff turnover, decreased efficiency, absenteeism, drunkenness, lack of drive, and lack of innovation.

According to research, HR professionals that are forward-thinking and looking for creative methods to boost their company's competitive edge in the market may discover that work/life balance difficulties provide a win-win solution. Women are increasingly a noticeable presence in the workforce. The idea that males should be the breadwinners and women should take care of the home and children has changed, with women being seen as capable of managing both of these responsibilities. However, employees are disregarding other facets of life outside of work, such as spending quality time with children and families, enjoying leisure activities, and making time for personal interests as they become more and more ambitious and career-oriented. High levels of employment stress, flexible work schedules, and target-based operations go hand in hand with this. The idea of outsourcing services like child care and senior citizen care emerged as a result of the shifting social structures brought about by dual career couples or single parent households. It's thought that obligations related to one's profession and family must be integrated and balanced. Women in India face difficulties striking a work-family balance because of the country's changing social structure and the firmly ingrained traditional role of women as carers and homemakers. A working woman must take care of her developing kid in addition to pursuing a successful job and financial independence in order to fulfil the role of mother. Due to the tremendous demands of both, it is a hard task to do service to one without ignoring the other.

Jenkins (2000) notes that challenges related to raising children, juggling many responsibilities, etc., have an impact on family dynamics and general health. People who were securely attached saw benefits in their

relationships with their families and at work. Negative stress is turning into a serious sickness in the workplace, according to Barden (2001), and it may be expensive for companies as well as cripple people. Professional stress management speaker Lucy Barnes Foster (2002) conducted a survey and discovered that stress reduces productivity and Work-life balance is a result of interactions between many aspects of a person's life; the benefits and drawbacks of this balance or imbalance may be felt at various societal levels. Work-life balance is a problem that has an impact on the community and society (Carruthers, 2005; Spinks, 2004; Parsons, 2002). In response, businesses have implemented work-life policies to address concerns voiced by their staff members (Roberts, 2005). The Families and Work Institute (1991) found that change, such as downsizing, is the best indicator of corporate family friendliness since the organisation views work-life balance efforts as a means of retaining employees. However, another reason might be that corporate culture becomes more flexible during periods of organisational upheaval. A research conducted by Spherion in 2003 found that 96% of respondents thought that offering flexible work schedules, job sharing, or telecommuting to employees makes them more appealing as employers.

Understanding the boundaries and interactions between an employee's professional and personal life has become more important in light of the numerous changes in the workplace and employee demographics over the past few decades (Hochschild 1997; and Hayman 2005). As more and more women enter the profession, it is becoming more usual for couples to have two careers (Moorhead et al., 1997). Technology advancement is one of the main reasons for the level of worry over work-life balance. In their report "Flexible Working: Working for Families, Working for Business," the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce (2009) noted that women continue to hold the majority of jobs in our society and, as a result, have the most difficulty juggling their caregiving obligations with the demands and expectations of full-time employment. The degree to which work and personal life activities are prioritised as neither is ignored is stated by Vanitha (2011) in her essay titled "A study on Work Life Balance of IT employees through Emotional Intelligence with special reference to Indian context." Social responsibility, impulse control, and empathy are emotional intelligence measures that are positively correlated with high scores on these behaviours. According to Vanitha and Meenakumari's (2011) study, "Family Vs. Work Conflict among Working Women in India with Special Reference to IT, Education, and Banking Sector," women's employment participation in popular organisations varies depending on priority and service, which is increased annually in accordance with Indian tradition. Furthermore, women must fulfil a variety of duties in the home, in society, and at work. Both work and family disputes are indulged by the imbalanced coordination and support, which also has a reciprocal effect. These factors can have a negative impact on family and professional issues and can have unfavourable outcomes.

The work pattern of the IT sector is described by Ramanathan & Vanitha (2011) in their study piece titled "Work-Life Balance-A Primitive Channel Source for Work Culture at Workplace with Special Reference to IT Employees in India." Professionals working in the IT industry at different levels deal with a variety of evolving challenges related to individual commitment and organisational policies. Panisoara and Serban (2013) - Research was done to find out how marital status affected work-life balance so that businesses could develop and use policies and strategies that would inspire employees. According to Wheatley's (2012) research, the presence of work-group cultures prevents female employees from attaining a work-life balance. The overlap of work and leisure activities made time management difficult. It was discovered that, among other things, problems finding a place to park their automobile were causing tension and stress when juggling work. According to research by Desai et al. (2011), women who worked from home experienced less stress, were more able to adapt, and were happier in their employment. Doherty (2004) examined the primary obstacles to promotion into managerial positions in her study on working-life balance efforts for women in the hotel sector. It was discovered that extensive work hours were required for managerial responsibilities. Rehman and Roomi (2012) discovered that one of the main factors influencing women entrepreneurs' motivation is attaining a work-life balance. The problems were a lack of time, gender prejudice, and the social and cultural standards of an Islamic community that is patriarchal. Rajkumar S. and P.S. Swaminathan (2013)- A study was carried out to investigate the levels of stress experienced by employees across various age groups, professions, job kinds, working hours, and work environment. Employee stress is highly individualised. According to his research, there is a maximum performance level at which each person may operate at their peak potential. He has

determined that role overload, role self-distance, and role stagnation are the three factors that cause work-related stress.

2. Methods:

Study Design: Using Scopus and Web of Science Search engines, information is gathered from a variety of study papers and articles. **Type of Study:** Descriptive Research Participants are drawn from Primary Data, which is gathered from several studies involving people in the 20–40 years of age range that were carried out in Chennai. The dates are December 20, 2022, to March 31, 2023.

Problem Description:

- At the centre of the new social contract being negotiated between businesses and employees are diversity and work/life programmes. (For instance, the level of dedication and effort that employers want compared to the degree of flexibility that employees demand).
- To identify win-win solutions, the knowledge of specialists in work/life balance and diversity management will be essential.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondent

Variable	Number	Percentage
Age		
Less Than 25 Years	45	23
26-35	97	49
Above 36 Years	58	28
Total	200	100
Gender		
Male	130	65
Female	70	35
Total	200	100
Marital Status		
Married	120	60
Unmarried	80	40
Total	200	100
Parent		
Yes	91	45
No	109	55
Total	200	100

The data was collected to understand their working hours, commuting time, household commitments and the challenges to fulfil expectations of spouse and kids.

Table 2: Demographic profile of the female respondent

Type of Respondents	No. of Respondents
Married	32
Unmarried	15
Divorcee	03
Women having kids	22
Women not having kid	28
Average Age	38
Graduate	18
Post Graduate	32
Junior Executives	19
Middle level executives	22
Senior level executives	09
Average Income(INR) Not CTC	5.4 Lakh p.a

Working days, working hours, and commute time: This survey revealed that IT organisations had a five-day workweek. The standard recommended amount of time to work is nine hours a day. However, in actuality, IT executives put in 11 hours a day on average. This occurs because these executives occasionally have to work over their regular schedule in order to fulfil project completion deadlines. Additional details showed that an IT executive's commute takes about two hours each day. However, the large standard deviation indicates a wide range in the amount of time spent commuting, from a maximum of 4 hours to a minimum of 0.5 hours, depending on the distance between the place of employment and the location of home. Thus, it follows from the aforementioned fact that a woman employed in Mumbai's IT industry is expected to dedicate at least 12 hours a day, under typical working conditions, to matters pertaining to her career. This interferes with a typical family's existence and causes stress as well as physical and mental tiredness.

Table 3: Perceived Adverse Impact of Work

VARIABLE	MEN	WOMEN
Health	Yes	55
	No	45
Sleep	Yes	35
	No	65
Exhaustion	Yes	51
	No	49
		60

Interpretation:

Approximately 43% of women and 55% of men thought that their health was impacted by their jobs. 60% of women and 65% of men said that their ability to sleep was impacted by their jobs. 60% of women and 51% of men said they were exhausted from work.

IT Companies in India, striking the correct balance between work and personal life is a top priority. They also prioritise teamwork and light hearted fun in order to preserve work-life balance. The work-life balance score is 67 out of 100. What the folks on the list below have to say about their experiences working at IT Company and how they manage to reconcile work and life.

Manager states that Give and take is the foundation of life, and this is also true at work. Companies are often bragging about their work-life balance rules and how they want their staff to have a healthy work-life balance and enjoy their time off, but in actuality, this is usually simply canned marketing speak. Furthermore, the ideal work/life balance is deeply ingrained in IT culture.

- Adaptability, fresh knowledge, and improved work-life harmony.
- Superior Work-Life Balance in comparison to rivals.
- Although many organisations preach about work-life balance, I have only ever really experienced it.
- excellent overall, free, transparent, work-life balance, and decent company.

It has implemented an initiative whereby staff are permitted to "work from home" nine days a month. In an attempt to retain talent, stop attrition, and increase productivity, It has made more adjustments to its HR strategy. The second-biggest software exporter in the nation now permits its workers to work nine days a month from home, up from four previously. A few days ago, The network's goals are to simplify work-life balance regulations, offer parenting therapy, and allow staff members a forum to voice concerns and exchange opinions with other members on their experiences as working parents. For people who are relocating, the web also offers helpful information on physicians, day care centres, and schools.

The initiative is to ensure that parents who are in a position to contribute effectively to the growth of Company by helping them strike the best balance between work and life. Employees' Reviews:

- Everything is great except for the lower pay. Facilities, management, and opportunities are excellent. The workplace is casual. If you're willing to work, there is a lot of training available.
- A pleasant place to work. Good culture in work. Job security is provided. The firm is process-oriented. Within the organisation, they have upheld professionalism and decency.
- Good company to work for with lots of chances for professional growth provided you match the correct practises. Gorgeous campuses with a plenty of amenities.

- The work atmosphere and environment is excellent. Learning about scope is excellent, but the task is difficult.
- Effective work culture, teamwork, employee care, work-life balance, efficient work practises, and senior practise lead compensation and benefits
- Numerous events pertaining to social issues occur periodically. Work-life balance initiatives and other employee engagement programmes are truly wonderful.
- My job is really exciting and demanding, and workers have worked with in large part because of its strong work culture and collaborative work environment.

3. Concluding Remarks:

Based on available data, Chennai is ranked extremely low in terms of work-life balance, according to a recent study by the Amsterdam-based consultancy Arcadis that looked at 100 cities worldwide. Chennai was ranked in the 70s. In order to gauge work-life balance, Arcadis Sustainable Cities Report looked at the average yearly working hours in each city, the findings showed that, on average, Indians work 2,195 hours annually, which is significantly more than the 1,473 hours in Hamburg, which was among the top three cities for work-life balance. Added to the 2020 EY research report on work-life balance in eight countries, including India. In that poll, more than thirty percent of Indian participants reported that in the last five years, juggling job, family, and personal obligations had grown more difficult.

Finally, Work-Life Harmony Procedures are vital to an organization's ability to keep talented workers who can achieve both personal and professional goals. If the policies recommended in this study article were mandated, the employees would gain more from them. Numerous IT firms have invented novel policies; which has a leave pooling policy. The other businesses should figure out what model works best for them and push for an engaged staff as a means of building successful organisations.

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