



EXPLORING WORK LIFE BALANCE IN EMERGING IT CLUSTERS: A STUDY OF WOMEN PROFESSIONALS IN COIMBATORE

M. Manjurani* & S. Durga**

* Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Thavathiru Santhalinga Adigalar Arts, Science and Tamil College, Perur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

** Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, Thavathiru Santhalinga Adigalar Arts, Science and Tamil College, Perur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract:

The rapid expansion of the Information Technology sector in emerging urban centers has significantly increased employment opportunities for women professionals. However, the demanding nature of IT work, including extended working hours, rotational shifts, deadline pressure, and continuous digital connectivity, often creates challenges in maintaining a healthy balance between professional and personal life. This study examines the level of work life balance among women employees working in the IT sector in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. The research investigates the influence of working hours, job stress, organizational support, and family responsibilities on work life balance and further analyzes its relationship with job satisfaction. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected from 500 women employees working in various IT companies in Coimbatore through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, chi square test, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed to test the hypotheses and interpret the findings. The results of the study are expected to provide empirical insights into how work related and family related factors shape the work life balance of women professionals in a Tier II city context. The findings will help organizations design supportive human resource policies that promote flexibility, reduce stress, and enhance employee satisfaction. The study contributes region specific evidence to the growing body of literature on work life balance among women in the Indian IT sector.

Key Words: Work Life Balance, Women Employees, Job Stress

1. Introduction:

The participation of women in the professional workforce has increased significantly over the past two decades, particularly in knowledge driven industries such as Information Technology. The IT sector in India has emerged as one of the largest employment generators, offering opportunities for skilled professionals across technical, managerial, and support roles. Alongside metropolitan cities, emerging urban centers like Coimbatore have developed into growing IT destinations, providing employment opportunities for a large number of women professionals. While employment enhances economic independence and career growth, it also introduces new challenges in balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family commitments. Work life balance has therefore become an important area of academic and organizational interest. Work life balance refers to the ability of individuals to manage work demands and personal life responsibilities in a manner that minimizes stress and role conflict. It does not imply equal distribution of time between work and family; rather, it reflects the ability to fulfill both roles effectively without compromising well being.

The IT sector operates in a highly competitive and dynamic environment characterized by tight project deadlines, global client coordination, night shifts, and continuous technological upgradation. These factors often extend working hours beyond standard schedules and blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. Women employees, in addition to their professional roles, frequently manage household responsibilities, childcare, and elder care. This dual responsibility may increase stress levels and affect job satisfaction and overall well being.

Coimbatore city, traditionally known for its textile and manufacturing base, has gradually expanded into the IT and service sectors. With increasing employment opportunities for women in software development, IT enabled services, and managerial roles, it becomes essential to examine whether the working conditions in this regional context support a healthy work life balance. This study seeks to examine the level of work life balance among women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city. It analyzes the impact of working hours, job stress, organizational support, and family responsibilities on balance and explores the relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction. By focusing on a Tier II city, the study provides localized empirical evidence that can assist organizations in developing policies tailored to regional work environments.

2. Review of Literature:

Work life balance has emerged as an important research area in organizational studies, particularly in knowledge intensive sectors such as Information Technology. According to Greenhaus and Allen (2019), work life balance refers to the extent to which individuals are equally engaged and satisfied with their work role and family role. Their study emphasizes that imbalance between these roles leads to psychological strain and reduced well being.

Working hours and workload are considered primary determinants of work life balance. Allen et al. (2020) found that extended working hours significantly increase work family conflict, particularly in dual role households. In the Indian IT sector,

Lakshmi and Kumar (2021) reported that long working schedules and continuous project deadlines negatively influence the personal life of women software professionals.

Job stress is another major factor affecting balance. Borah and Bagla (2022) identified that high performance pressure and multitasking in IT organizations increase emotional exhaustion among women employees. Similarly, Rani and Reddy (2024) observed that rotational and night shifts disrupt biological routines and reduce family interaction time, thereby affecting work life balance. Organizational support has been recognized as a positive contributor to balance. Sharma and Bhatnagar (2022) found that flexible work arrangements and remote work options improve employee well being and reduce turnover intention. Kumari and Devi (2023) also concluded that perceived organizational support plays a significant role in maintaining balance among women employees in the IT sector. Family responsibilities significantly influence women's professional experiences.

Nair and Gaikwad (2020) highlighted that childcare and elder care responsibilities create role conflict for women in technology driven industries. Yadav and Dabhade (2019) further noted that family support systems can moderate the negative impact of job stress on work life balance. The relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction has also been widely examined. Singh and Mishra (2023) established a strong positive correlation between work life balance and job satisfaction among women professionals. Employees who experience better balance demonstrate higher organizational commitment and productivity. Although these studies provide valuable insights, most research has focused on metropolitan IT hubs. Limited empirical studies have examined work life balance among women employees in emerging Tier II cities such as Coimbatore.

3. Objectives of the Study:

- The primary objective of the study is to examine the level of work life balance among women employees working in the IT sector in Coimbatore city.
- The study also aims to identify the work related factors such as working hours, workload, shift timing, and job stress that influence work life balance.
- Another objective is to analyze the impact of family responsibilities on the ability of women employees to manage professional and personal roles.
- The study further seeks to examine the role of organizational support, including flexible work arrangements and managerial assistance, in maintaining work life balance.
- The study aims to evaluate the relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction among women employees.

4. Research Methodology:

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine work life balance among women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city. Descriptive research is appropriate for identifying and describing the characteristics of respondents, while analytical research enables examination of relationships between variables. The study is based on primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to women employees working in selected IT companies in Coimbatore. The questionnaire included sections related to demographic profile, working hours, job stress, organizational support, family responsibilities, work life balance, and job satisfaction. Responses were measured using a Likert scale to ensure uniformity and reliability. The target population consists of women employees employed in software development, IT enabled services, managerial, and support roles in Coimbatore city.

A sample size of 500 respondents was selected using convenient sampling due to accessibility and practical constraints. The relatively large sample size enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings within the regional context. Respondents were categorized based on work pattern, including regular day shift, rotational shift, and night shift employees. This classification enables comparative analysis of work life balance across different working schedules. Secondary data were collected from academic journals, books, research articles, and credible online sources related to work life balance and women employment in the IT sector. For data analysis, statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, chi square test, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed.

SPSS and MS Excel were used for computation and interpretation of results. The period of the study covers data collected during 2025 to 2026. The geographical scope is limited to IT companies operating within Coimbatore city.

4.1 Research Gap:

Although extensive research has been conducted on work life balance, most studies are concentrated in metropolitan IT hubs. There is limited empirical evidence focusing on women employees working in the IT sector in Coimbatore city, which represents an emerging regional IT cluster. Existing studies often analyze either organizational factors or family responsibilities separately. Few studies integrate working hours, job stress, organizational support, family responsibilities, and job satisfaction within a single analytical framework using quantitative statistical tools.

Limited research has categorized respondents based on shift patterns such as regular day shift, rotational shift, and night shift within the same regional setting. Comparative analysis across different work schedules remains underexplored in Tier II IT environments. Furthermore, many earlier studies rely on smaller sample sizes or qualitative approaches, restricting statistical generalization.

There is a need for large sample, data driven research using correlation and regression techniques to examine the combined influence of multiple variables on work life balance.

This study attempts to fill these gaps by providing region specific, statistically validated evidence on work life balance among women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city.

4.2 Research Questions:

The present study is guided by the following research questions formulated based on the objectives and conceptual framework of the study.

- What is the current level of work life balance among women employees working in the IT sector in Coimbatore city?
- How do working hours influence the work life balance of women employees in the IT sector?
- To what extent does job stress affect the ability of women employees to maintain work life balance?

- Does organizational support, including flexible policies and managerial assistance, significantly contribute to improving work life balance among women employees?
- How do family responsibilities such as childcare and domestic duties impact work life balance?
- Is there a significant relationship between work life balance and job satisfaction among women employees in the IT sector?
- Does shift pattern (regular, rotational, night shift) create differences in work life balance levels among women employees?

4.3 Proposed Data Analysis Model:

The study employs a structured statistical model to test relationships among variables. Percentage analysis is used to describe demographic characteristics and general response patterns. Mean and standard deviation are used to assess central tendency and variation in responses related to stress, support, and balance levels. Chi square test is applied to examine associations between categorical demographic variables and work life balance levels.

Correlation analysis is used to measure the strength and direction of relationships between continuous variables such as job stress and work life balance. Regression analysis is employed to determine the impact of independent variables on work life balance. In the regression model, work life balance is treated as the dependent variable, while working hours, job stress, organizational support, and family responsibilities act as independent variables. The regression equation helps in identifying which factors significantly influence balance among women employees.

5. Expected Results and Discussion:

Based on the literature and hypotheses, it is expected that extended working hours and higher job stress levels will show a negative relationship with work life balance. Organizational support is expected to have a positive and significant impact on balance levels. Family responsibilities may show varying influence depending on marital status and support systems. It is further anticipated that work life balance will have a positive correlation with job satisfaction. Women employees who experience flexibility and supportive work environments are likely to report higher satisfaction and commitment. The discussion section will interpret statistical findings in relation to existing literature and highlight implications for IT organizations in Coimbatore.

6. Conclusion:

Work life balance remains a critical issue in the modern IT work environment, particularly for women professionals managing dual responsibilities. In emerging IT cities such as Coimbatore, understanding localized work conditions becomes essential for designing effective human resource strategies.

This study provides a structured empirical framework to examine how working hours, job stress, organizational support, and family responsibilities influence work life balance. By incorporating quantitative analysis with a large sample size, the research contributes regional evidence to the broader academic discourse.

The findings of this study are expected to assist IT organizations in developing flexible policies, supportive leadership practices, and employee wellness initiatives that enhance balance and improve job satisfaction. Promoting work life balance among women employees not only benefits individual well being but also strengthens organizational productivity and long term sustainability.

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