A STUDY ON THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IN THE IT SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAKKANAD

Dissertation submitted to

St.Teresa's College (Autonomous)

(Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam)

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS in ECONOMICS

By

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MARCH 2024

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Project titled "A STUDY ON THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IN THE IT SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAKKANAD" is a record of the original research work conducted by Kavya Manoj (Register No: AM22ECO010) under my guidance and supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree in Master of Arts in Economics (Affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam). The research work has not previously formed the basis for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Associate ship, Fellowship or any other similar title and it represents a contributory work on the part of the candidate.

Dr. Anupa Jacob   Dr. Anupa Jacob

Head of the Department   Guide and supervisor

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Project titled "A STUDY ON THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IN THE IT SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KAKKANAD" submitted by me for the M.A. Degree in Economics is my original work and this work has not been previously formed the basis for the award of other Academic qualification, fellowship of other similar title of any other University or board.

Signature of the supervisor   Signature of the candidate

 Dr. Anupa Jacob   Kavya Manoj

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Industrial Revolution, women's participation in the labour force outside the home has increased in industrialised countries, with particularly large increases in the 20th century. Largely regarded as an asset to an industrial society, women in the workforce contribute to higher national economic performance as expressed in GDP while reducing labour costs by increasing labour supply. Females' lower access to higher education excluded them from well-paid and high-ranking occupations. Female advancement into higher professions such as law and medicine has been put off in most countries due to women not receiving higher education and degree qualifications. For example, Cambridge University did not confirm higher education for women until late 1947. For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, women were primarily confined to low-paying, low-status occupations or paid less than men for the same work. During the 20th century, however, there were shifts in the labour market. Office work that did not require heavy labour became widespread, and women increasingly obtained higher education, which led to better-paid, longer-term careers rather than lower-skilled, shorter-term jobs. Mothers are less likely to be employed than men and women without children. (Joyce & Maria, 2020).

The rising rate of women's participation in the labour force has led to more equal payment of hours worked across regions of the world. In Western European countries, however, the nature of women's employment participation remains significantly different from that of men. Increasing equality for women in banking and the workplace could boost the global economy by up to \$28 trillion by 2025. One of the main issues women face in the workplace is the pay gap. Gender disparity refers to the difference in pay between men and women in the workforce. Civils Daily noted that India has the highest gender pay gap. The World Inequality Report 2022 states that men earn 82 per cent of labour income, while women earn 18 per cent of it, others include sexual harassment, pregnancy discrimination, lack of equal opportunities, difficulty re-entering the workforce, etc. India's IT sector had the highest female participation rate at 30 per cent, followed by financial services companies at 22.4 per cent during the 2021–22 financial year, according to an analysis of voluntary Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting disclosures provided by 134 companies by the CFA Institute. (Biswas, 2023)

Considered to be the largest white-collar employer in the country, the IT sector has the highest representation of women in the workforce, while FMCG and industrials occupy the bottom two spots in the list with 5.5 per cent and 4.3 per cent representation, respectively. In line with NASSCOM's recent report 'Strategic Review 2023: Priming for a 'No Normal' Future' states

that the IT industry has 5.4 million employees and is estimated to create 2,90,000 new jobs and increase revenue by 19 billion dollars. This includes 2 million women employees and a net addition of over 1,40,000 women employees in FY23, the report said. The labour force participation rate of Indian women averaged 12.7 per cent across the companies in the sample. Converted to the number of employed women as a percentage of the total number of employees, this means that there was one woman for every eight people on the payroll. (Vidya S, 2023)

1.2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The paper presents various aspects of work-life balance for working women. This review highlights work-life balance definitions and theories, work-life balance variables, issues related to working women, work-life balance initiatives and strategies, and work-life balance outcomes. The contribution will help in understanding the issue of balancing the work life of working women. "Women at Workplace and Work-Life Balance: A Literature Review" (Bharadwaj & Shanker, 2019)

The paper investigates the difficult obstacles that working women encounter in maintaining a balance between their personal and professional lives. Several factors about married working women's work-life balance have been investigated in this study. After data were exposed to descriptive statistics, it was discovered that working women in Visakhapatnam experience a significant number of challenges concerning work-life balance. The findings also suggest that people's level of liveliness is influenced by their work-life balance. "A Study on Work-Life Balance in Working Women" (Lakshmi & Prasanth, 2018)

The significance of work-life balance (WLB), theories surrounding WLB, factors influencing WLB, facilitators of WLB, coping mechanisms associated with WLB, WLB and performance, and ultimately, the effects of WLB have all been examined by the researcher in the literature on WLB of female employees. The researcher has reviewed previous studies to address the various facets of work-life balance in this article. "Work-life balance of women employees: a literature review" (Vasumathi, 2019)

The study indicates a favourable correlation between the number of female employees and the adoption of WLB practices in businesses. This study takes a different approach to methodological analysis by using fuzzy sets to examine the empirical data from 87 Spanish SMEs. The primary conclusion of the study is that the degree of WLB policy implementation is not influenced by the presence of women. On the other hand, it appears that the lack of women determines whether or not these policies exist. Similarly, in the absence of organizational commitment to work-life balance, work-life policies do not exist. "Work–life balance and firms: A matter of women?" (Adame, Caplliure & Miquel, 2016)

The study investigates several topics, including measuring the degree of satisfaction that female respondents to the survey felt about the various determinants of work-life balance, identifying the key variables that affect work-life balance across different categories of female employees in the IT industry, and measuring the overall work-life balance of female employees across all cadres. "A study on the impact of work-life balance on the well-being of employees at Quantum Software Solutions Pvt Ltd" (Peter & Kavitha, 2020)

The researcher tries to find out the issue of work-life balance of women IT managers in the city of Mumbai. The study was conducted among 50 female IT professionals through a questionnaire survey, and issues such as working hours, family responsibilities and career growth were considered parameters of work-life balance. The work also seeks to identify the causes of work-life balance and possible corrective measures. "A Study on Work-Life Balance of Women Working in IT Sectors of Mumbai City" (Das & Mishra, 2016)

The association between work-life balance coping mechanisms or practices in IT companies and work-life balance among female employees in Hyderabad's IT sector is examined in this article. The study shows how much work-life balance is influenced by work-life policies and practices. The study discovered that work-life balance among female IT personnel is significantly impacted by organizational policies. It also demonstrates how crucial leadership is to the adoption of work-life balance strategies. The study also highlights the significance of work-life balance for both individuals and organizations by demonstrating that welfare programs, role conflict, and job sharing are found to have better levels of employee satisfaction. "The impact of work-life balance practices on women employees in the IT sector" (Manasa & Showry, 2018)

The paper describes how women employees in the IT sector are balanced and satisfied. It also identifies the factors that impact women employees' work-life balance, such as working hours, job satisfaction, working conditions, etc. The statistical methods of Chi-square and the correlation test were used to analyze the data on women employees' job satisfaction. "A study on work-life balance of women employees in it sector" (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020)

The study analyses the work-life balance of women in the IT industry and what actions should be taken, both personally and as an organization, to help women employees manage their personal and professional lives. Data was gathered from 113 female employees working in various IT-related areas. "Impact of work-life balance of female IT sector employees" (Flora & Lakshmi, 2022)

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the working environment of IT sector from women's perspectives.
- To analyse how working conditions affect their families and relationships
- To analyse work life balance of female IT sector employees on the basis of individual related variables and work-related variables.

1.4. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Nowadays the participation of women in the workforce is at an increasing rate and this comes with its challenges including managing their in homes as well as their workplace and finding the balance between both. Balancing work with personal responsibilities is a big challenge for women. Women often find it difficult to balance between advancing their careers and fulfilling caregiving, whether for children, elderly relatives, or others. Flexible work arrangements are vital to manage these dual responsibilities. Societal expectations and workplace cultures can still be hurdles for women who prioritize family or flexibility. Yet, supportive partners, family, colleagues, and gender-inclusive policies are important in helping women achieve balance. Prioritizing self-care is crucial too, as women strive to maintain their well-being amid work and personal demands. Creating environments that value and support women's diverse needs is essential for achieving genuine work-life balance. Variables like their work environment, the social support they receive; the availability of time available for child birth and rearing, etc. all are determinants of work life balance. The understanding of these variables are used to get a clear picture about work life balance has prompted this research.

1.5. METHODOLOGY

This study is supported by primary data. The primary data was collected through in-person interviews and phone interviews. The sample size taken is 50 samples from the female IT Sector employees from Kakkanad during the year 2024.
The study focuses on HR firms in particular because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days and their work is tedious. The method used is random sampling.
One of firms was chosen from the top 10 IT firms in Infopark. The other firms were chosen from a list of HR firms. These categories were formed because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days, working at odd hours including night-time shifts and their 4work is tedious in nature. Using the lottery method one firm was chosen from both categories each.
The analysis of work-life balance of female IT sector employees is done based on individual variables (age, marital status, parental status) and occupational variables (workplace flexibility, workplace culture, social support). The first objective is analysed using Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic

growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The method for data analysis is done by using pie charts, bar graphs, etc.

1.6. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This research is based on the 7th Goal of the Sustainable Development goals (SDG).

"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership."

The SDG 8 as stated by the official website: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all"

1.7. SCHEME OF THE STUDY

The scheme of the study is organised into 4 chapters:

CHAPTER 1: This chapter includes the introduction, review of literature, objectives of the study, research problem, methodology, theoretical framework and the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: This chapter deals with the overview of the work life balance of women in the IT Sector

CHAPTER 3: This chapter includes the analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected of female employees in the IT Sector with special reference to Kakkand.

CHAPTER 4: This chapter contains the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study

1.8. LIMITATIONS

- Some of the questions asked can be quite personal so the respondent might feel hesitant to disclose their answers with complete honesty.
- Respondents might feel pressured to provide socially desirable responses, which can cause an underreporting of stress or dissatisfaction with work-life balance.

CHAPTER 2

WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IN IT SECTOR – AN OVERVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The phrase "balance of work and life" came into existence in 1986. The outcome can be used to describe a healthy work-life balance and satisfaction from life's four main aspects: one's career, family, friends, and self. The aim for achieving work-life balance is to achieve harmony in one's private and professional domains. A healthy balance among one's personal and professional lives is crucial for the other. Keeping a work-life balance will be effortless to them if all of their needs are met. (Sreeleka & Balamurugan, 2020)

2.2. WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance for staff members is an important aspect of wellbeing; it relates to how they handle their personal and professional responsibilities in order to ensure that their work is completed to the highest possible standard while ensuring they have sufficient leisure. Work-life balance is an important variable in employee engagement, retention, and productivity. Why is it important, and what steps can you take to help staff find the correct balance? Let's travel back in time to a period before 2020, or before the pandemic occurred. It's simple to overlook how antagonistic and detached our methods of striking a balance between work and other facets of our lives were.

In actuality, a large number of them faced terrible work-life situations in 2019:

- A quarter of all labour was done from home, both throughout the week and on the weekends.
- Forty percent of them stayed hooked to their laptops and PCs till 10 p.m.
- Employees only completed 8 hours of productive labour per day.

Though discussions regarding Working from Home (WFH) and Working from Anywhere (WFA) began in 2019, things did not really alter until the worldwide lockdowns of 2020–21. Even though some knowledge workers previously had access to company-provided technology, including smartphones, this pandemic increased our reliance on it. For a while, video calls were the only way to interact with people and communicate. The capacity to

combine work and life has become even more crucial since we can now access work at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. As a result, we made the decision to examine how one might achieve the balance between work and life, which is sorely required these days. "2024 employee experience trends report" (Qualtrics, 2024)
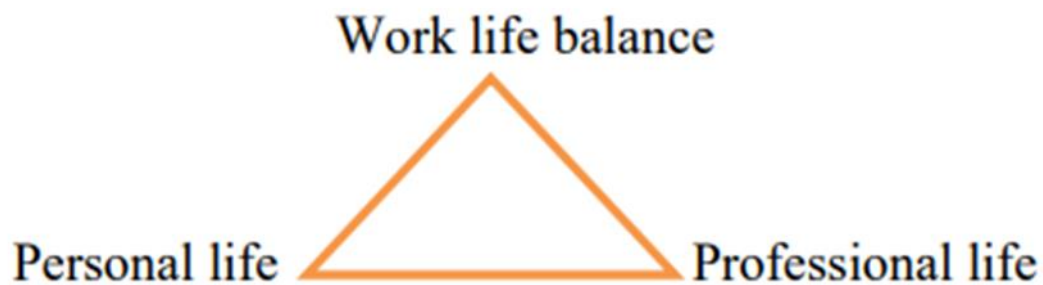
2.3. IMPORTANCE OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Recently, a research conducted by Aviva caused a bit of debate. It was found that since the epidemic, people's priorities have changed from incomes to work-life balance. According to Aviva, more workers (41 per cent) than paid employees (36 per cent) stated that the work-life balance was the reason they were attracted to their current position. There has been a shift in this rating since 2019 before this epidemic. Maintaining a balance between work and personal life is not only important for your staff's relationships and health, but it can also boost productivity and consequently performance levels. If your staff doesn't view their work as a chore, they will, in short, work harder, make fewer mistakes, and have a higher likelihood of becoming brand ambassadors. Firms that are renowned for encouraging work-life balance are growing in popularity, particularly in light of how challenging it can be to find and keep younger workers in the modern era. Putting emphasis on work-life balance will boost employee retention and help you draw in the finest applicants for new hires. It can save time and money while delivering talent within the highest quality. (Wedgewood, 2019)

2.4. WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN

Lack of time is a serious problem that affects many women around the world, especially those who try to balance their responsibilities at work and at home. Research shows that when it comes to unpaid labour, women in developed nations put in twice as much hours as males on tasks like cleaning, cooking, and child care. In developing nations, this time gap explodes to 3.4 times. (Hyde & Greene, 2020)

This imbalance is sometimes caused by deeply ingrained cultural norms and gender expectations that shape women's roles. But at times the disparity seeps more quietly into our everyday activities. The so-called "hidden load," which includes activities like food planning, scheduling playdates for kids, and emotional work, consumes a large portion of a woman's time and is sometimes overlooked by economic metrics. In recent years, poverty—caused by both overt and covert obligations—may cause women, particularly those who provide care—to leave the workforce entirely or choose to work in lower-paying positions.

Thus, the crucial challenge that emerges is: In the modern world, how can women attain a work-life balance?

"The hidden load: How 'thinking of everything' holds mums back" (Hogenboom, 2021)

Based on the responses of 5000 women in ten countries *Deloittes Women @ Work: A Global Outlook report 2023* provides an all-encompassing picture of working women and how well businesses are doing in their attempts to engage and retain women in the workplace. Three years in one of the main conclusions for 2023 is about flexibility and working hours. Findings indicate that an organizations capacity to provide women with flexibility regarding the completion of their work is a major factor in engagement and retention even more so than the physical location of the employees.

FIGURE 1

When tops where: More women left their jobs due to inflexible working hours than work location

Main reason(s) given by women who left their former employer in the past year

Pay wasn't high enough
18%

Lack of flexibility around when I work
14%

The role didn't offer a positive work/life balance
12%

I was bullied/harassed or faced microaggressions
11%

The role didn't offer opportunities to advance
10%

Lack of learning and development opportunities
9%

My previous role was eliminated/I was let go
8%

I was feeling burned out/the job was detrimental to my mental health
7%

I was unable to perform my work because my responsibilities at home increased
6%

I didn't find my previous role fulfilling
6%

Note: N = 912.
Source: Women @ Work: A Global Outlook 2023.

Deloitte Insights | deloitte.com/insights

2.5. SOLUTIONS TO WORK LIFE IMBALANCE

The issue is that prevailing ideas about work-life balance still place the burden of solving the problem on women and are individualistic in nature. Furthermore society generally benefits from the challenges they encounter as a result of wearing many hats. This maintains a pattern in which society profited from the overburdening of women while avoiding the fundamental issues and refusing to acknowledge its role in it.

As a result more women are speaking out against the myth of a work-life balance and sharing their personal stories of being made to choose between aspects of their lives and the consequences that follow. So how do women manage their professional and personal lives without feeling like they are carrying the weight of society as a whole? The discussion of optimal work-life balance solutions should take place inside institutional agencies that include organizational and social support.

Certain forms of assistance can be obtained by

- Social Assistance:
  Social structures like the family that influence society by educating the public about the fair distribution of resources and the justice of shared social responsibilities, the government, the media, educational institutions, houses of worship, financial associations, and policy associations have a duty to influence public opinion on behalf of women. Work-life balance helps women manage their children on their own, which reduces the likelihood that they will need help from other members of society. Men should reconsider their roles as spouses, fathers, and family members and take on more shared home responsibilities with women.

- Organizational Support:
  Compared to male participants, more female participants in this study of Bangladeshi women stated that work-related concerns had a greater influence on their work-life balance than family-related concerns. They complained about the rigid and lengthy work hours, the absence of specific rules at day-care facilities, etc., and said that, with management's help, striking a balance between work and life would be comparatively simple. Based on the Gender Equality Principle (GEP) of San Francisco's work-life balance recommendations, corporations can support working women more effectively by putting these five strategies into practice:

  1. Exit And Re-entry Plans
     Results from the San Francisco GEP indicate that married fathers are more likely to work than other men but married mothers—especially those with younger children—are less likely to work than other women. Since women are disproportionately impacted by having children it is crucial that businesses talk about assisting them in leaving and returning to the workforce after having children.

2. Dependent Childcare Support
   Provision of day-care services and availability of information and resources about day-care services are two forms of support for dependent child care. Working moms will be better equipped to carry out their responsibilities as a result.

3. Increased Workplace Flexibility
   Concerns regarding the absence of paid time off wellness initiatives and family support guidelines in the workplace can be mitigated with the aid of flexible work arrangements. Some examples of flexible work arrangements offered by companies to their employees include the ability to work overtime on some days of the week or the opportunity to work from home or part-time hours on other days. Giving them advance notice and some control over their shifts and overtime hours is another way to help them make appropriate plans for family care. Flexibility can be implemented in the workplace in a variety of ways to support women.

4. Fair Access to Opportunities for Professional Development
   Management believes that equal access to professional development opportunities including networking, client growth, and mentoring should be available to women from all industries and backgrounds.

5. Encouraging Women to Have Equal Access to IT, Vocational, And Literacy Training
   Many women are still underrepresented in historically male-dominated industries and are unable to make high-level contributions at work because of a lack of education and training, even though there are many professional training opportunities accessible. These shows almost never target women as their audience. Since information technology (IT) is crucial to the modern economy, more women need to be encouraged to pursue careers in these traditionally male-dominated fields. In order to boost women's involvement, training and vocational courses ought to be made available to them in a range of formats, such as work shadowing, evening and weekend sessions, online learning, mentorship, and tutoring programs.

"Support Is the Work-Life Balance Women Need" (Kolade, 2022)

2.6. WORKLIFE BALANCE OF FEMALE IT EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

For women working in the IT industry work-life balance is crucial. In the IT sector primarily, maintaining a balance between personal and professional lives is more difficult for female employees. Individuals and demographic factors are among the many factors that impact work-life balance. Women employees must therefore strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020)

In today's economy India stands out as a player, in the field of Information Technology (IT) with a strong focus on exports. These exports play a role in driving the revenue of the IT industry accounting for approximately 79 per cent of its total earnings. Despite this reliance on exports the domestic market also plays a role showing steady revenue growth over time. Over the years the IT industry has seen growth within India's export landscape increasing from less than 4 per cent in FY1998 to around 25 per cent by FY2012. The services sector, known for its prowess holds a share in India's GDP and export earnings. Surprisingly it achieves this with 25 per cent of the country's workforce dedicated to it as per Sharma's findings in 2006. According to Gartner research some of the players in Indian IT services include Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Infosys, Wipro, Tech Mahindra and HCL Technologies. These companies have made contributions, to shaping India's presence on the IT stage. (Janani, 2021)

Many IT industry professionals are under stress due to long work hours, high work pressure, and a lack of work flexibility. This is generating problems in their personal lives and at work, as well as lowering their productivity and job performance. Concern in the community is increasing that the Life at home and at work has taken on a worse quality. These have led to low employee input and performance at their place of employment because workers who struggle to manage their personal and professional lives together also frequently struggle to manage tasks at work, which lowers employee performance. Furthermore, there exists an opinion that is often espoused by certain management experts, but without much empirical backing: employees are less inclined to exhibit unwavering dedication to the company. (Mehtha & V. R., 2012)

2.7. WORKLIFE BALANCE OF IT EMPLOYEES IN KERALA

In addition to supporting the commercial IT sector, the Kerala government has launched a number of citizen-focused initiatives to raise the calibre and accessibility of its services. In order to properly understand the state of information technology, we must first distinguish between (i) IT as a production sector, which includes IT software and services, hardware that supports IT services, and (ii) IT for e-governance and as a tool for socioeconomic growth. The majority of the analysis that follows is focused on Kerala's software and services export industry, as our study primarily examines gender issues in the software and services production sector, particularly in its export segment, and there is essentially no trustworthy secondary data on the state's entire software and services industry. Because of its high level of e-literacy,

Cochin was recognized as the second best ITES destination in the country by NASSCOM, which conducted a survey of all nine of the top ITES destinations in the nation. Kerala's commercial centre, Kochi, serves as the state's IT hub. The Kerala government is developing a new IT park called Info Park, which is situated in Kochi.

"Work - Life of Female Employees in Kerala – A Study of IT Sector in Kerala" (Shaniba, 2018)

2.8. INFOPARK

Because of its high level of e-literacy, Cochin was recognized as the second best ITES destination in the country by NASSCOM, which conducted a survey of all nine of the top ITES destinations in the nation. Kerala's commercial centre, Kochi, serves as the state's IT hub. The Kerala government is now developing a new IT park called Info Park, which is situated in Kochi. Since its founding in 2004, it has experienced rapid growth, and in a short amount of time, IT giants including Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, Affiliated Computer Services, OPI Global, IBS Software Services, and US Technology have invested in it. Due to its rapid growth and ideal location in the emerging metropolis of Kochi (formerly known as Cochin), Info Park is well-positioned.

"Work - Life of Female Employees in Kerala – A Study of IT Sector in Kerala" (Shaniba, 2018)

2.9. CONCLUSION

In this section the overview of the study was presented. An introduction about work life balance was given, followed by its importance, the work life balance of women and solutions its imbalance. Then the work life balance of women in India, in Kerala as well as in Infopark was presented.

<h1 style="text-align:center">CHAPTER 3</h1>

<h1 style="text-align:center">THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN IN THE IT SECTOR</h1>

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the primary data collected through in person interviews and telephone interviews and its analysis. The objectives of the study are to analyse the working environment of IT sector from women's perspectives, to analyse how working conditions affect their families and relationships and to analyse work life balance of female IT sector employees on the basis of individual related variables and work-related variables. The study focuses on HR firms in particular because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days and their work is tedious. The method used is random sampling. One of firms was chosen from the top 10 IT firms in Infopark. The other firms were chosen from a list of HR firms. These categories were formed because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days, working at odd hours including night-time shifts and their 4work is tedious in nature. Using the lottery method one firm was chosen from both categories each. The respondents contained twenty five female respondents each from both the firms. Pie charts and bar graphs are used for analysis.

3.2. AGE OF THE RESPONDANTS

<p style="text-align:center">FIGURE 3.1</p>

Age of respondents

20-30 38.0%
30-40 44.0%
40-50 10.0%
50-60 8.0%
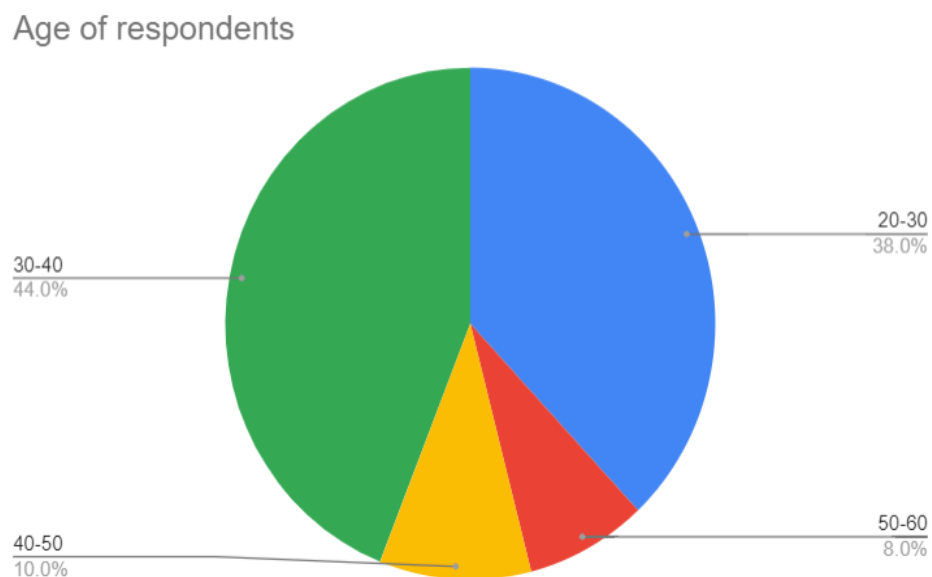
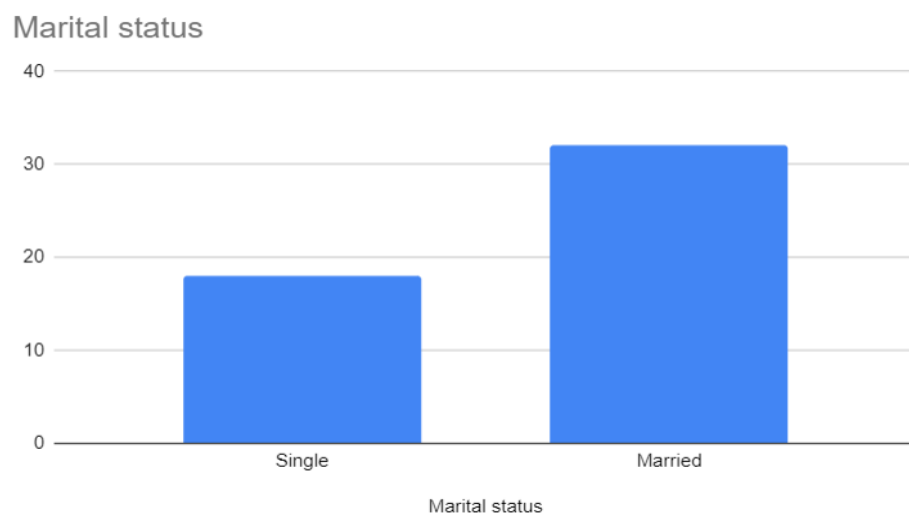<p style="text-align:center">Source: Primary data</p>

Here we explore how age influences perceptions of work-life balance among female respondents. By examining the age distribution of participants, we aim to uncover any trends or differences in how different age groups manage the demands of work and personal life.

All of the respondents in the survey are women as the study focuses on the work life balance of women. Among the respondents, 38 per cent of the respondents are of the age group 20-30, 44 per cent are in the age group 30-40.

This means majority of the respondents are from the early thirties to late forties.

3.3. MARITAL STATUS

FIGURE 3.2

Source: Primary data

We investigate the relationship between marital status and perceptions of work-life balance among female respondents. The goal of this analysis is to identify any relationships between relationship status and the capacity to balance personal and professional obligations by looking at the distribution of marital status within our sample.   The majority, 64 per cent of the respondents were married.

3.4. NUMBER OF CHILDREN

TABLE 3.1

No. of children	Percentage of respondents
0	42
1	34
2	18
3	6

Source: Primary data

Understanding the dynamics of the number of children can offer insights into the unique needs of working mothers and inform policies and initiatives aimed at supporting them in achieving a healthier balance between work and family life.

Out of all the respondents, 42 per cent respondents said that they don't have any children, i.e., the majority of the respondents didn't have any children.

3.5. WORK EXPERIENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THE IT SECTOR

TABLE 3.2

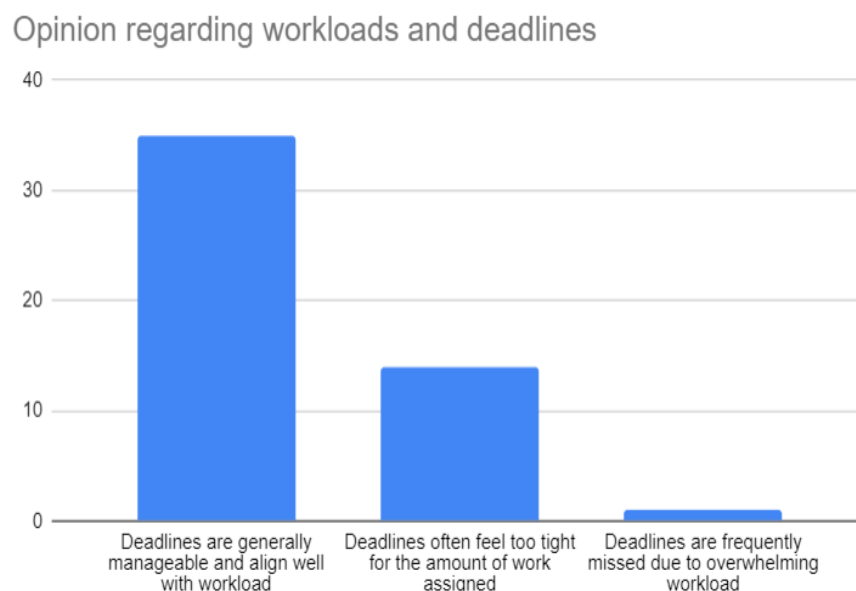| Years	Percentage of respondents
Less than year	20
1-3 years	28
More than 3 years	52

Source: Primary data

By examining the distribution of work experience levels within our sample, we aim to identify any trends or insights regarding how experience in the workforce may influence one's ability to manage professional and personal commitments. Understanding these dynamics can provide valuable insights for employers and individuals alike, guiding efforts to create more supportive and inclusive work environments for women at different stages of their careers.

52 per cent of the respondents have worked for more than 3 years. Majority of the respondents have worked in the IT Sector for more than 3 years.

3.6. OPINION OF THE RESPONDENTS REGARDING WORKLOADS AND DEADLINES.

FIGURE 3.4


Opinion regarding workloads and deadlines

Source: Primary data

Here we focus on capturing the opinions of respondents regarding their workloads and deadlines. The objective of analysing the working environment of IT sector from women's perspectives is applied here.

70 per cent responded that deadlines are generally manageable and align well with workload. Two per cent responded that deadlines are frequently missed due to overwhelming workload. The majority responded that deadlines are generally manageable and align well with workload which indicates that opinion of the respondents regarding workloads and deadlines were positive, i.e., they were manageable.

## 3.7. SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES AND TOP MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 3.5
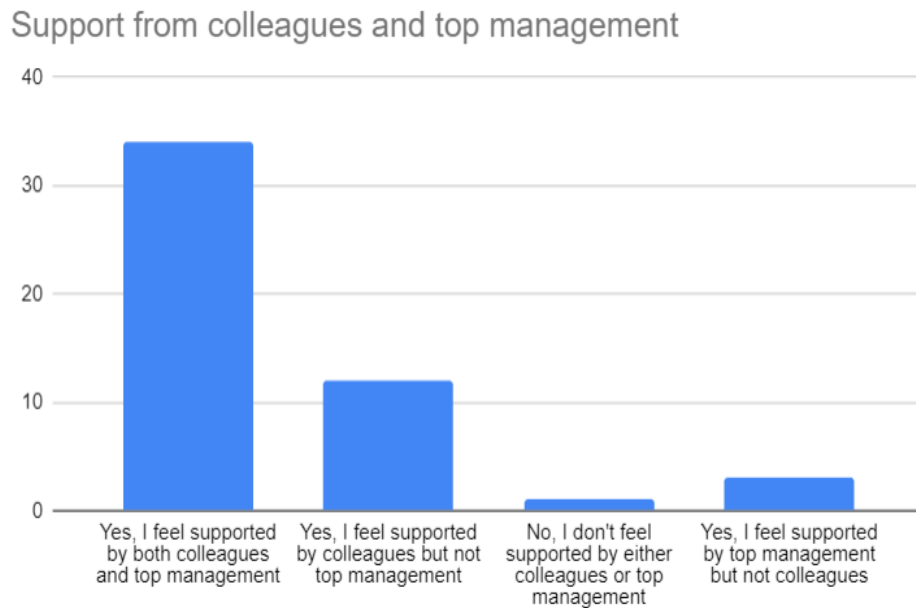
Source: Primary data

By examining feedback provided by participants, we aim to uncover insights into the level of support individuals feel they receive from their peers and higher-ups in navigating professional challenges and achieving work-life balance.

68 per cent of the respondents felt that were supported by their colleagues as well as top management. Two per cent responded that they don't feel supported by either colleagues or top management. The majority of the respondents felt that they got support from their colleagues and top management indicating that the majority had good interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

3.8. COMMUNICATION ABOUT WORK LIFE TO EMPLOYERS OR SUPERVISORS

FIGURE 3.6
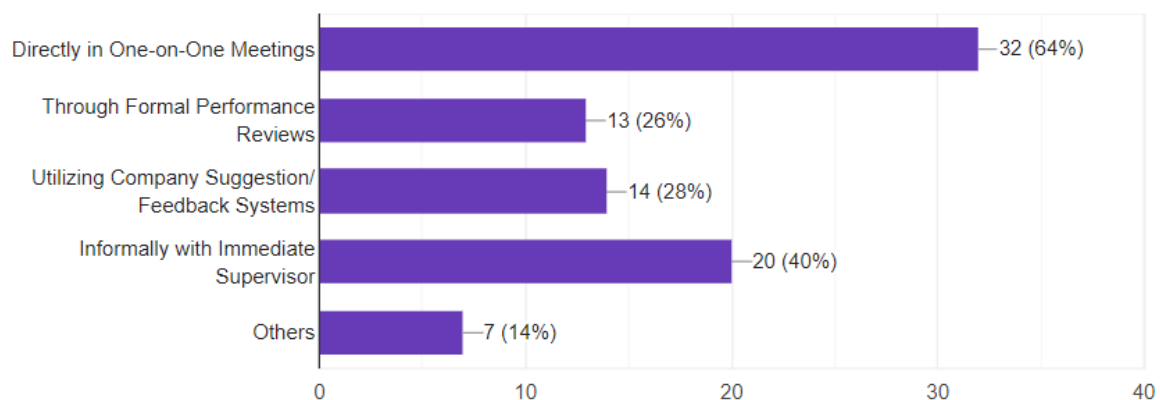
Source: Primary data

The frequency and effectiveness of communication regarding work-life balance between employees and their employers or supervisors are analysed here. By examining the feedback provided by participants, we aim to uncover insights into how comfortable individuals feel discussing work-life concerns with their superiors and whether such communication channels effectively address their needs. 64 per cent responded they communicated through direct one-on-on meetings. The majority responded that they preferred direct meetings and informal communication with their immediate superiors indicating they preferred informal and direct methods of communication.

3.9. DISCRIMINATION OR BIAS IN THE WORKPLACE REGARDING SALARY, PROMOTIONS, OR ATTITUDES

FIGURE 3.7

Discrimination or bias in the workplace regarding salary, promotions, or attitudes
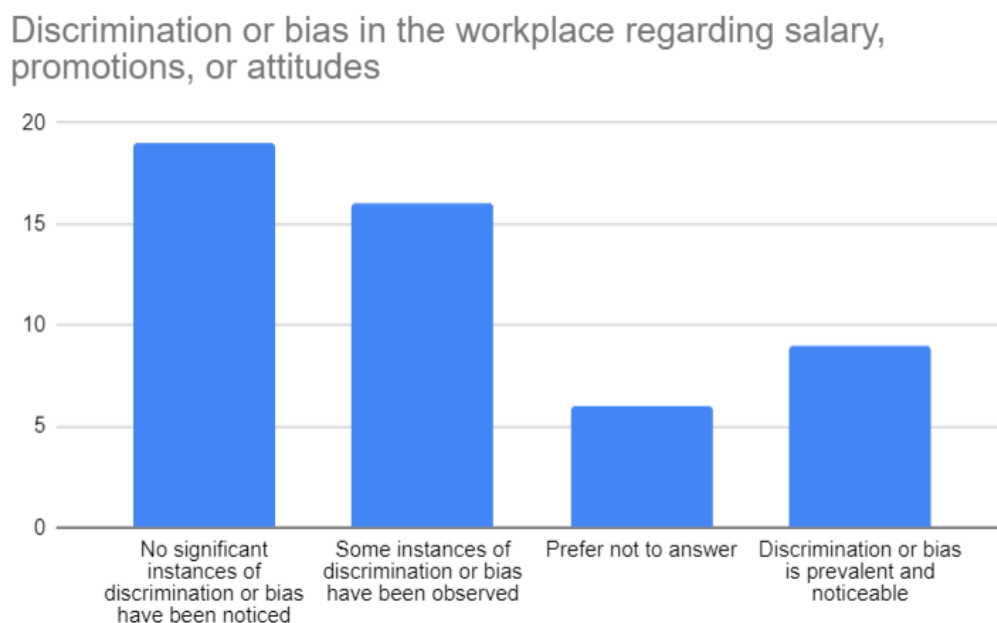
Source: Primary data

In this analysis we delve into potential disparities and biases within the workplace concerning salary, promotions, and attitudes towards employees. The responses are used to uncover any instances of unequal treatment based on gender. Understanding these workplace dynamics is crucial for fostering a fairer and more inclusive organizational culture. 38 per cent responded that they notice no significant instances of discrimination or bias while 12 per cent preferred to not answer the question. The majority responded that little to no discrimination or bias in the workplace regarding salary, promotions, or attitudes were noticed.

3.10. SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

FIGURE 3.8
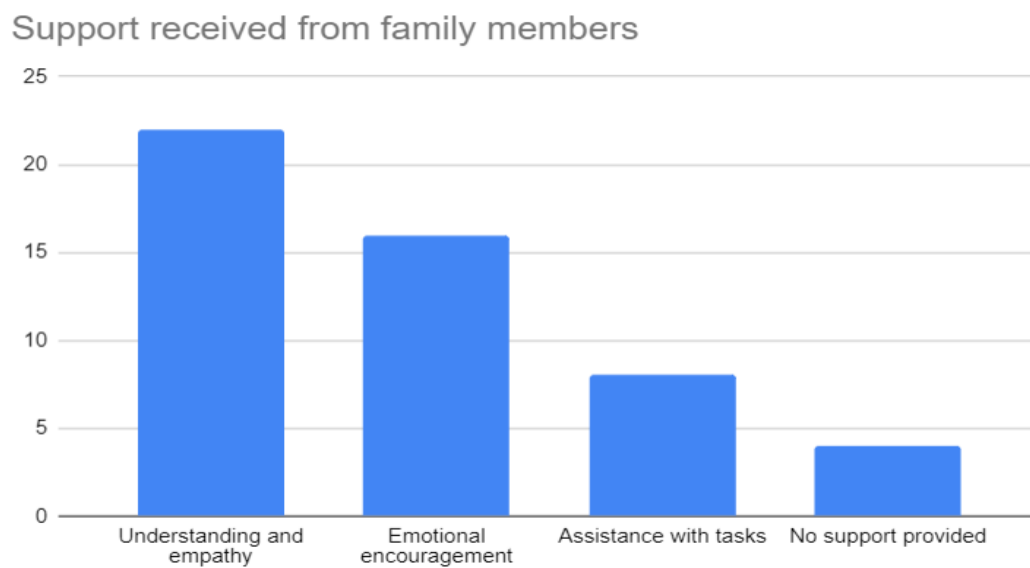
Source: Primary data

We analyse the support received from family members to understand the it as it is a crucial element that contributes to work life balance of women. Out of all the respondents 44 per cent responded that family supported them by showing understanding and empathy to them. Eight per cent said that no support was provided by family members. The majority reported that family supported them through understanding and empathy indicating that family members provided them with emotional support.

3.11. DIFFICULTIES FACED AT HOME BECAUSE OF THEIR WORK

FIGURE 3.9
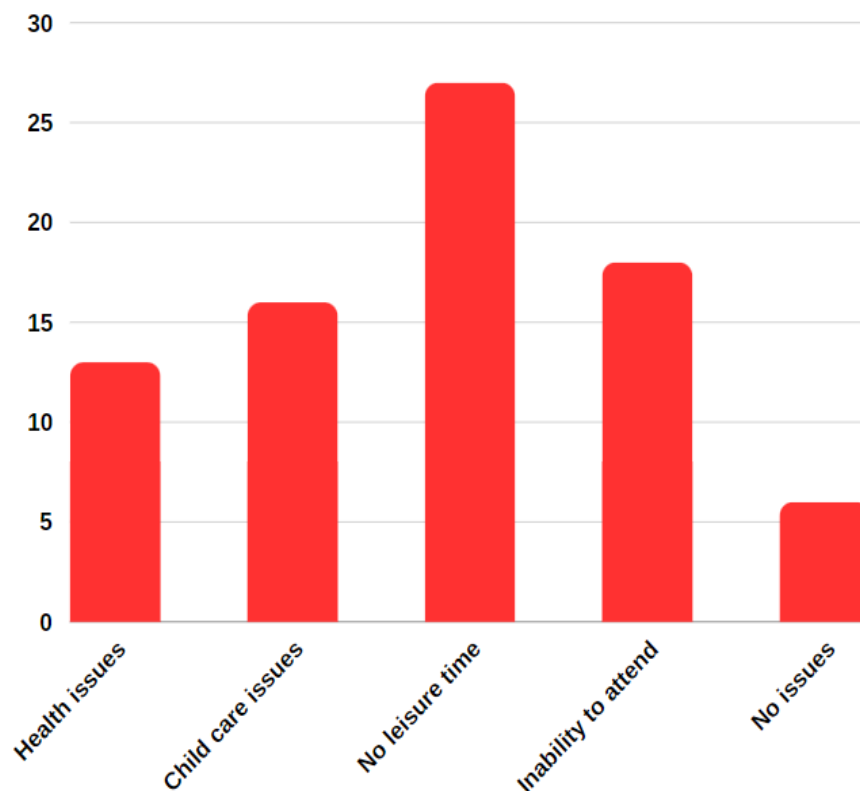
Source: Primary data

This data is analysed to understand the environment and attitudes at home regarding the respondents employment. When asked about the difficulties they face at home due to their work 54 per cent responded that they have no leisure time 12 per cent faced no such issues. The majority responding that they have no free time indicate that they might lack work-life balance resulting in lower time offs from their responsibilities.

3.12. FAMILY MEMBERS AND THEIR SUPPORT TO THE HOUSEHOLD

FIGURE 3.10
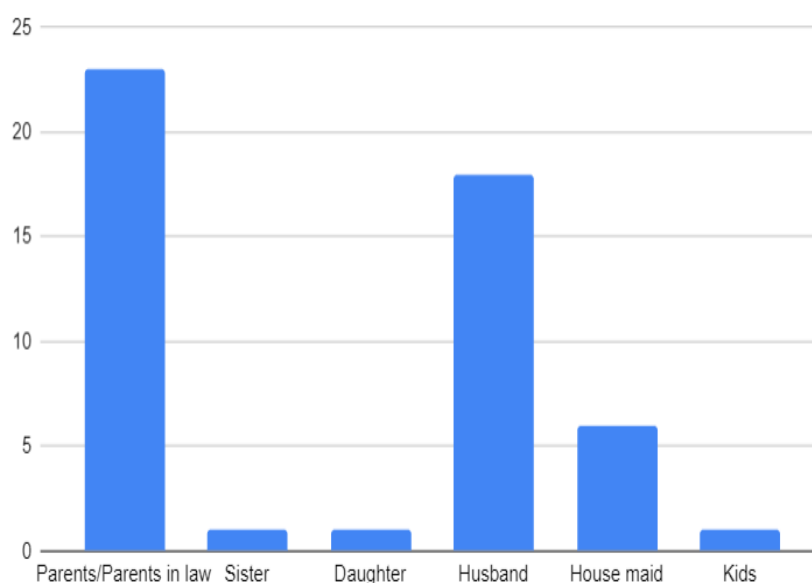
Source: Primary data

The family members and their support are very important for meeting responsibilities at home and at work. 46 per cent responded that their parents and parents in law were the one who helped them with managing household responsibilities while two per cent of the respondents reported that they were supported by their sister, daughter, and kids each. The majority responded that their parents or parents in law supported them the most when it came to managing their household responsibilities.

3.13. CARE OF ELDERLY PARENTS

FIGURE 3.11
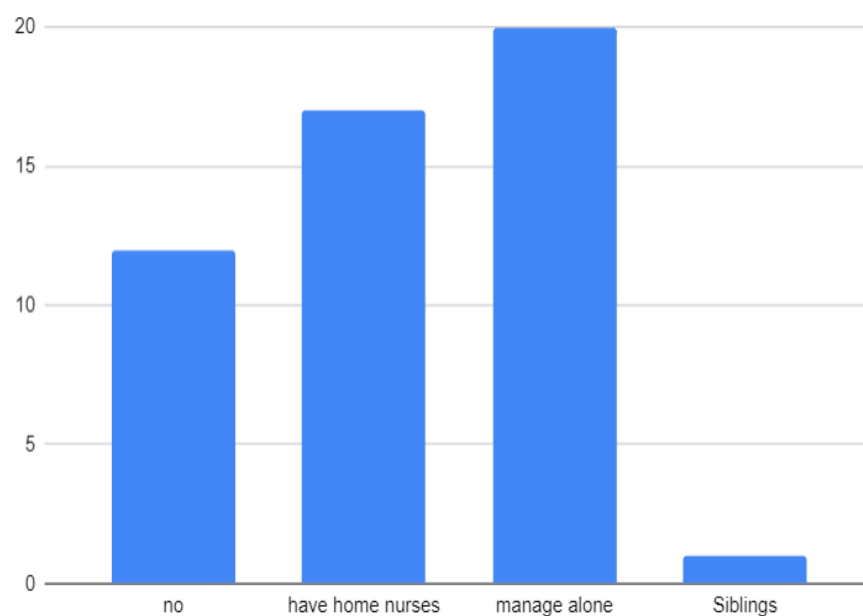
Source: Primary data

Analysing this data is to focus on understanding the challenges and responsibilities associated with caring for elderly parents. By gathering insights from respondents, we aim to uncover the impact of caregiving duties on individuals' work-life balance and overall well-being. 40 per cent of the respondents said that they managed alone when it came to taking care of their elders. Majority of the participants had to manage alone when it comes to taking of their elderly parents indicating that that more responsibilities lead to more imbalances in their work-life balance.

3.14. HOURS OF SLEEP

FIGURE 3.12
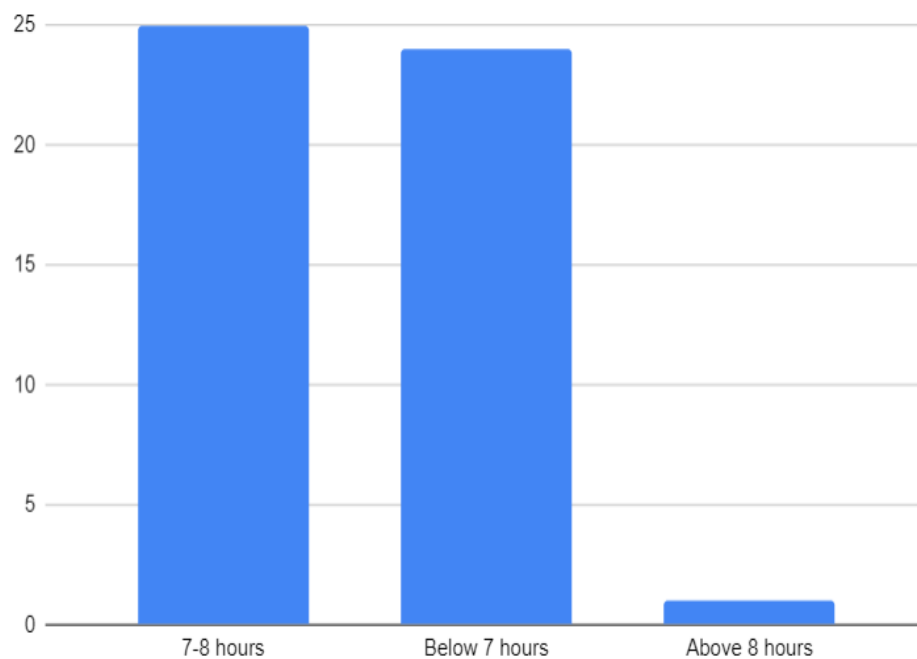
Source: Primary data

Here we delve into the significance of sleep for overall health and well-being. By examining the perspectives of respondents, we aim to highlight the role of adequate sleep in various aspects of life, including physical health, cognitive function, and emotional regulation. 50 per cent of the respondents said that they slept 7-8 hours on average per day while 48 per cent reported getting below hours. Only two per cent responded about getting more than 8 hours.

This indicates the majority of the respondents got 7-8 hours and a near majority getting below 7 hours of sleep.

3.15. LIFESTYLE DISEASES

FIGURE 3.13
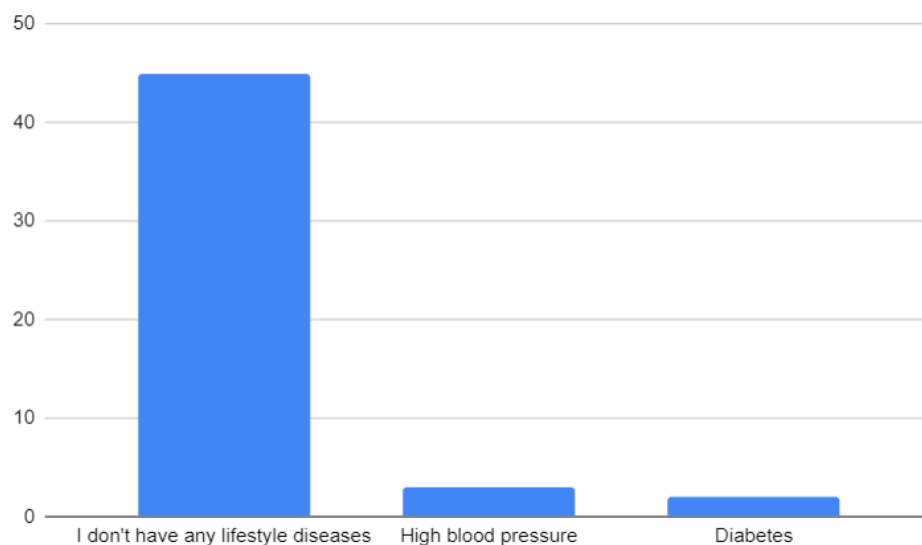
Source: Primary data

Focusing on understanding the prevalence and impact of lifestyle diseases on individuals' health and well-being is key to understanding the dynamics of lifestyle diseases which is crucial for informing preventive strategies and promoting healthier lifestyles to reduce the burden of these conditions on individuals and healthcare systems. 90 per cent of the respondents claimed that they didn't have any lifestyle diseases while six per cent responded having high blood pressure and four per cent having diabetes.

This indicates that the majority did not have any lifestyle diseases, and that they are more on the healthier side.

3.16. HARASSMENT FACED AT WORK DUE TO INCOMPLETE WORK

FIGURE 3.14
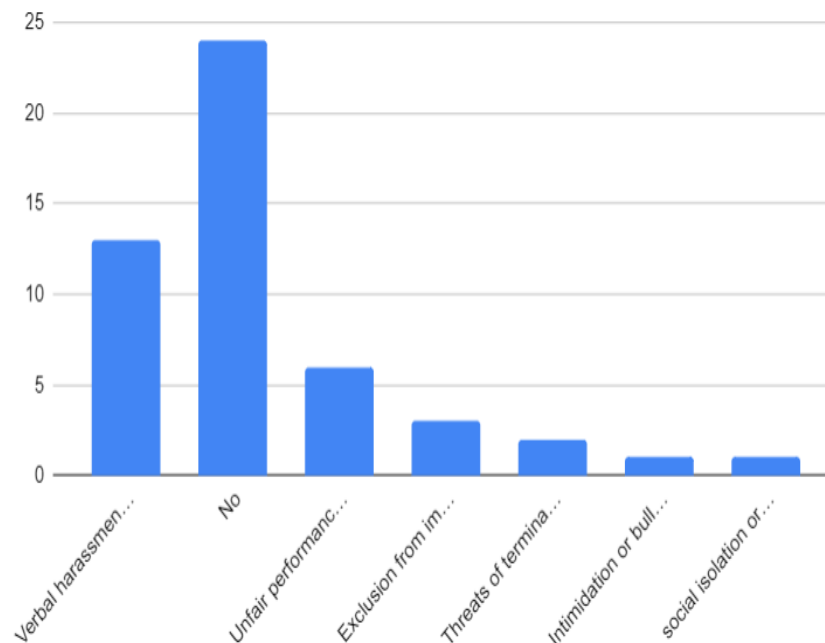
Source: Primary data

By gathering insights from respondents, we aim to shed light on the prevalence and impact of such harassment on individuals' well-being and work performance. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for implementing measures to prevent and address harassment, and fostering a more respectful and supportive work environment for all employees. Out of the respondents, 26 per cent said that they faced verbal harassment or criticism from colleagues or superiors due to being unable to finish on time. 48 per cent of the respondents had responded that they did not face any harassment.

The majority claimed that they didn't face any harassment due to their inability to complete work on time.

3.17. WORKING HOURS

FIGURE 3.15
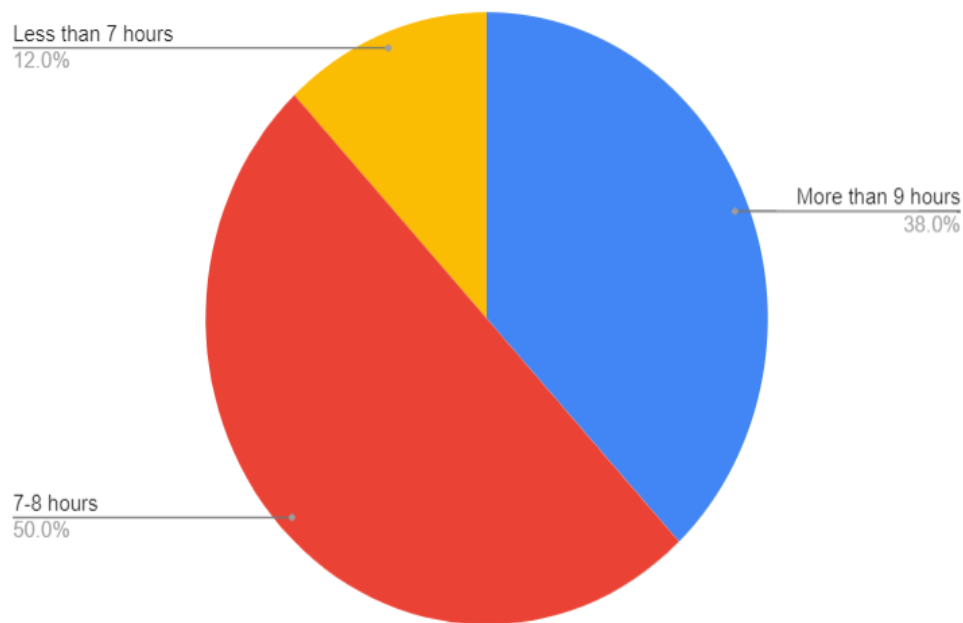
Source: Primary data

We focus on exploring the working hours of individuals and their implications on various aspects of life. By gathering insights from respondents, we aim to uncover patterns in working hours, including regular hours, overtime, and flexible arrangements, and understand how they influence factors such as productivity, work-life balance, and overall well-being. Understanding the dynamics of working hours is essential for informing policies and practices that promote healthier and more sustainable work routines for individuals across different industries and occupations.

Out of the respondents, 50 per cent claimed they worked 7-8 hours a day while 38 per cent reported working for more than 9 hours. The majority of the respondents worked 7-8 hours which indicates that the majority have fair working hours.

3.18. SAFETY AT NIGHT

FIGURE 3.16
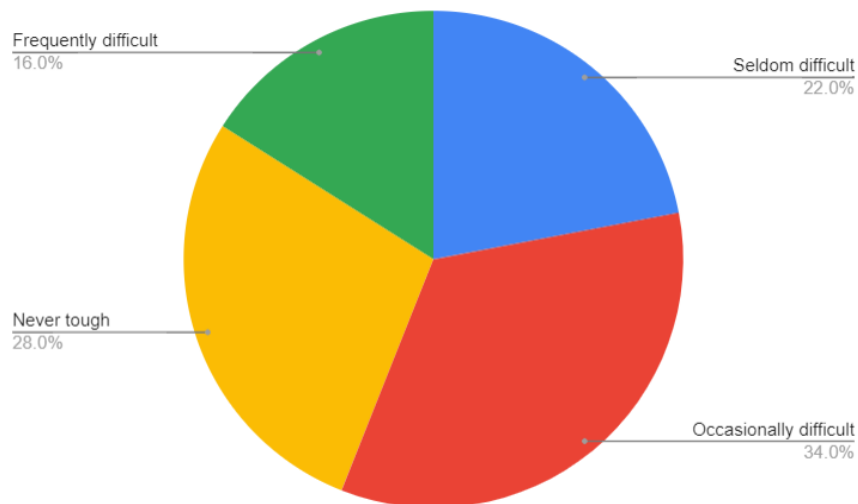
Source: Primary data

Analysing this data help us to understand how safe the respondents feel at night in different places like their neighbourhoods, workplaces, and public areas. Knowing these feelings helps us figure out how to make sure everyone stays safe after dark. It's important for making places feel secure and making sure people feel confident when they're out at night travelling after work. 28 per cent of the respondent said it was never tough for them to travel at night. 22 per cent said they seldom found it difficult to travel at night. 34 per cent found it occasionally tough while 16 per cent found it frequently difficult to travel at night.

The majority of respondents felt it was occasionally difficult to travel at night.

3.19. MAJOR FACTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR DISSATISFACTION REGARDING THEIR WORK

FIGURE 3.17
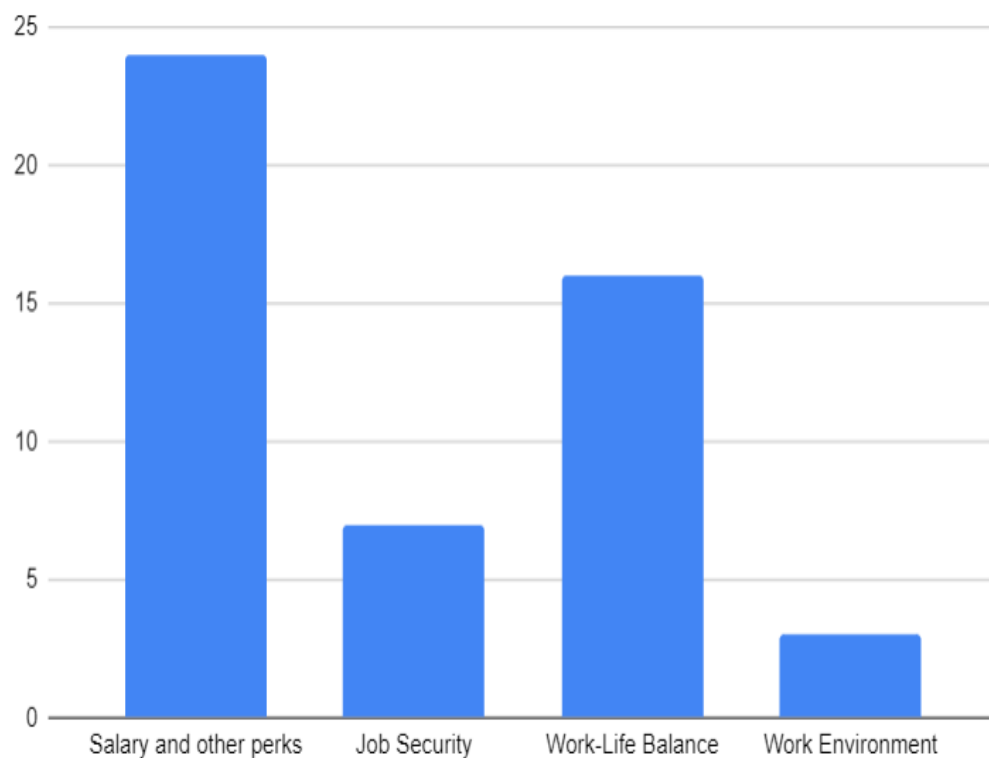
Source: Primary data

This analysis is conducted to figure out what makes people unhappy with their jobs. By asking people about their experiences, we can find out the main reasons why they don't like their work. Understanding these reasons can help improve workplaces and make people happier in their jobs.

48 per cent of the respondents said that their salary and other perks was the major factor causing dissatisfaction towards their work. Six per cent showed their dissatisfaction towards their work environment. The majority of the respondents stated the major factor contributing to their dissatisfaction was their salary and other perks.

3.20. SEARCH FOR NEW JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FIGURE 3.18
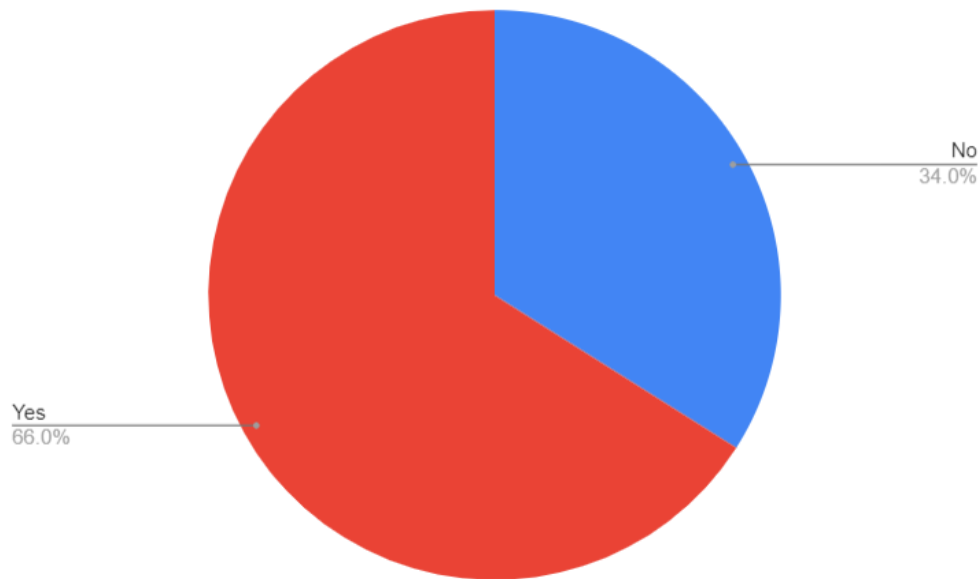
Source: Primary data

Dissatisfaction in current work place leads to many women searching for new job opportunities. It is vital for women to find a work place that is conducive to their needs and goals. 66 per cent of the respondents reported that they were looking for new opportunities while 34 per cent said that they were not looking for any job opportunities. The majority of the respondents reported that they were looking for new job opportunities due to their dissatisfaction with their current jobs.

3.21. FACTOR THAT CONTRIBUTES THE MOST TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE

FIGURE 3.19
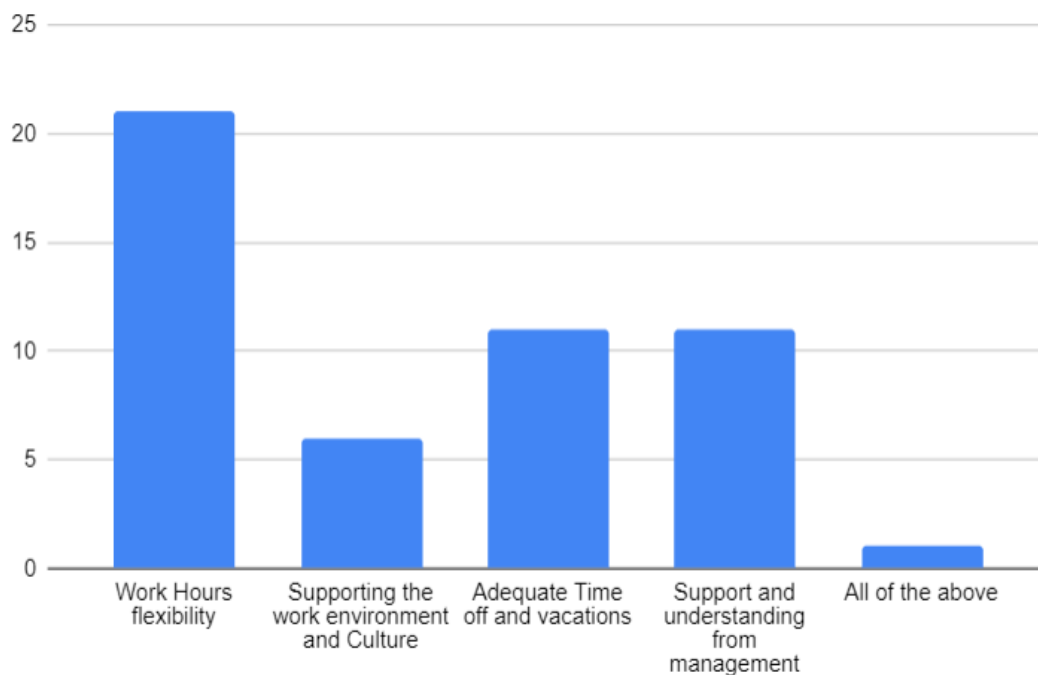
Source: Primary data

This analyses the factors that contributes the most to work life balance out of work hours flexibility, supportive work environment, adequate time offs and support from management. 42 per cent of the respondents said their work hour flexibility contributed the most to their work life balance. The majority of the respondents reported that the factor which contributed the most to their work life balance was flexible work hours.

3.22. THE ROLE OF THE COMPANY IN PROMOTING A SENSE OF BELONGING BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEES

FIGURE 3.20
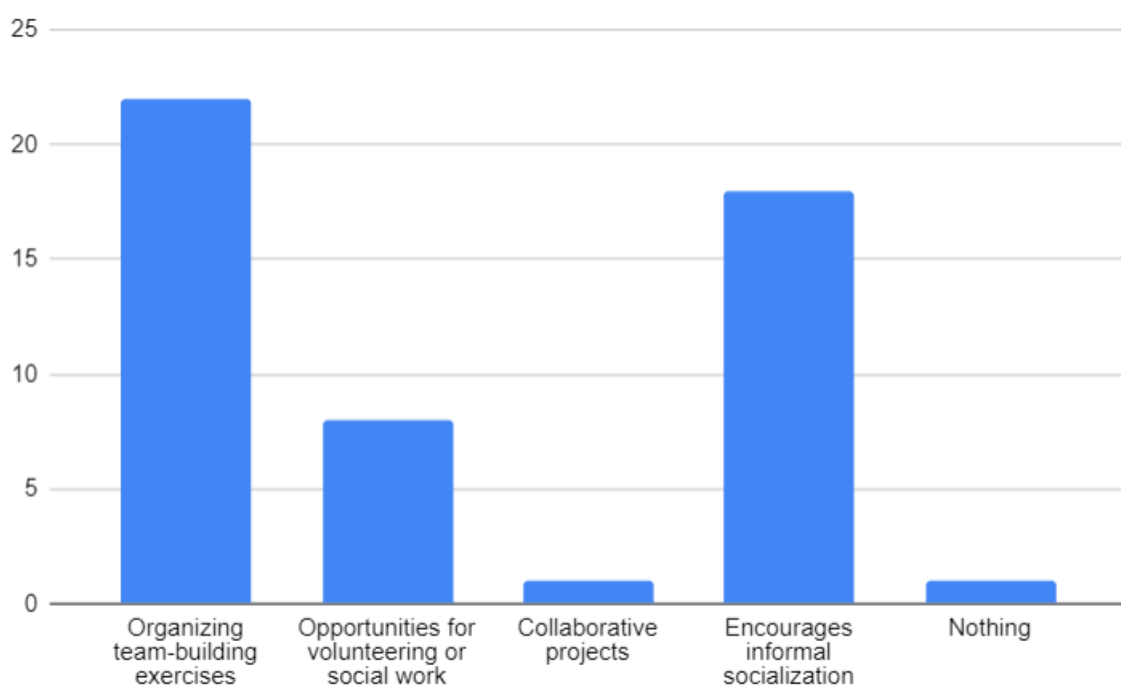
Source: Primary data

By asking employees about their experiences, we can find out what companies do to help everyone feel connected and included. Understanding this can help companies create a better sense of belonging for their employees. 44 per cent responded that their company promoted a sense of belonging between the employees through organising team building exercises while two per cent reported that the company did nothing to promote a sense of belonging.

This indicates that the majority of the respondents found that their company promoted a sense of belonging between the employees through organising team building exercises.

3.23. STRESS MANAGEMENT

FIGURE 3.21
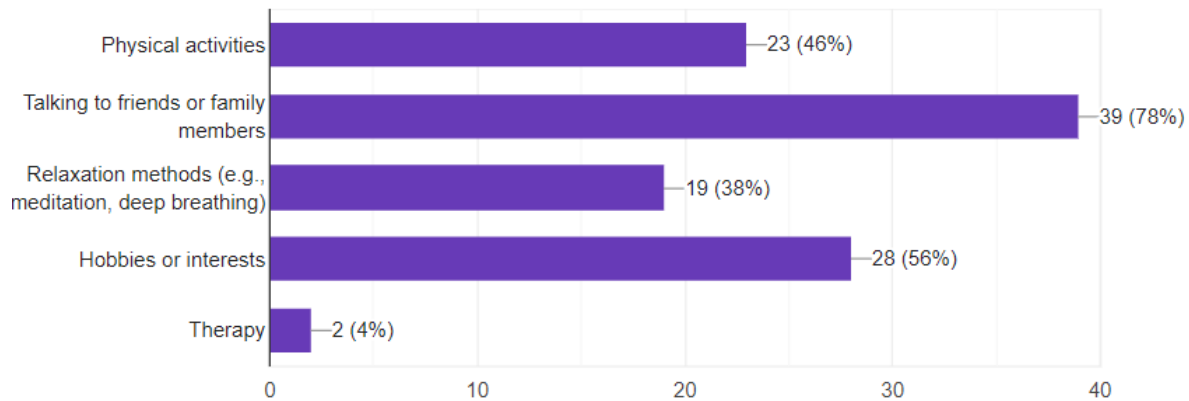
Source: Primary data

The analysis here explores how people handle stress in their lives. By asking them about their experiences, we hope to learn about the different ways they cope with stress. Understanding these strategies can help others find better ways to manage their own stress too.

Out of all the responses, 78 per cent chose to talk with friends and family to reduce work related stress. This indicates that the majority of the respondents chose communicating with friends and family as a means of coping with work related stress.

3.24. PERSONAL RATING OF THE IMPACT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON THEIR WELLBEING

FIGURE 3.22
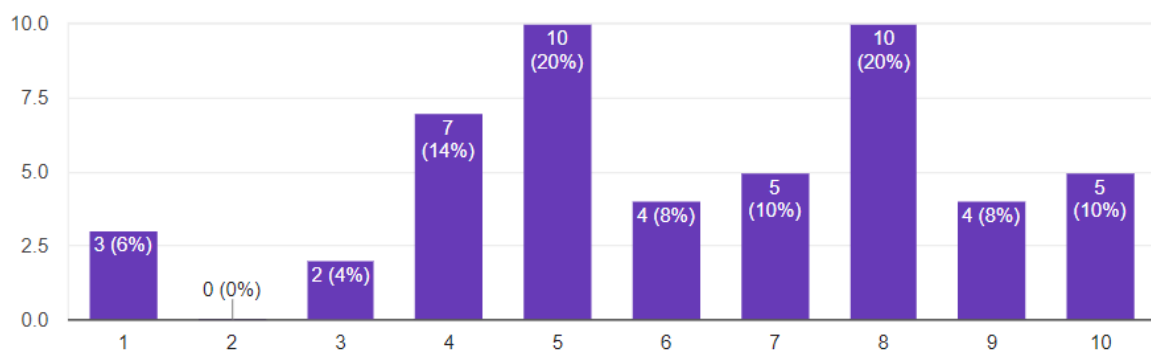
When asked to rate the impact of their work-life balance on overall well-being and happiness on a scale of one to ten, with one indicating low impact and ten indicating high impact:

- 20 per cent of the respondents gave a rating of 5 on 10
- 20 per cent of the respondents gave a rating of 8 on 10

When asked to rate the impact of their work-life balance on overall well-being and happiness on a scale of one to ten, with one indicating low impact and ten indicating high impact, the majority of the respondents rated 5 and 8 the most. Here we see two majorities, one indicating a middle rating on the scale and another a higher rating on the scale, indicating that there are generally positive relationship regarding the the impact of their work-life balance on overall well-being and happiness.

3.25. SUGGESTIONS MADE ABOUT CHANGES OR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT TO BETTER SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR WOMEN

These are the suggestions made when asked about changes or improvements the respondents would like to see in their current work environment to better support work-life balance for women:

- Need support from top management, reduction in the work load and night shifts to spend more time with family.
- Flexible working hours and working mode to be added options
- Equality
- Flexibility in approach to work
- 5 day work week
- Flexible working hours and more options should be added to the mode of work
- Child care facilities near work place for infants would be appreciated along with Hybrid work model
- More relaxed office atmosphere
- Need more support from colleagues
- More gender neutrality in workplace.

3.26 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the analysis of the primary data collected through in-person interviews and telephones interviews. The three objectives which form the base of the study are presented here. Majority of the analysis showed that the women in the study were able to manage their workloads and good interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The analysis also indicates that they also received support and understanding from their families and that there are generally positive relationship regarding the the impact of their work-life balance on overall well-being and happiness.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The study is based on the work life balance of female IT sector employees in Kakkanad. 50 samples were collected to obtain primary data and the responses were analysed using bar graphs and pie charts. The objectives of the study are to analyse the working environment of IT sector from women's perspectives, to analyse how working conditions affect their families and relationships and to analyse work life balance of female IT sector employees on the basis of individual related variables and work-related variables. The study focuses on HR firms in particular because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days and their work is tedious. The method used is random sampling. One of firms was chosen from the top 10 IT firms in Infopark. The other firms were chosen from a list of HR firms. These categories were formed because the employees of such firms tend to have long working days, working at odd hours including night-time shifts and their work is tedious in nature. Using the lottery method one firm was chosen from both. This chapter will present the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

4.2. FINDINGS

The study on work life balance of women in the IT Sector was conducted in the Kakkanad locality. 50 samples were collected and these are the major findings of the study:

All of the respondents in the survey are women as the study focuses on the work life balance of women. Majority of the respondents are aged from the early thirties to late forties. The majority, i.e., 64 per cent of the respondents were married. 50 per cent of the respondents were from the firm Zellis HR India Pvt. Ltd while the other 50 per cent were from TCS. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 42 per cent didn't have any children. Majority of the respondents, i.e., 52 per cent have worked in the IT Sector for more than 3 years. A majority of 70 per cent responded that deadlines are generally manageable and align well with

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workload which indicates that opinion of the respondents regarding workloads and deadlines were positive, i.e., they were manageable. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 68 per cent felt that they got support from their colleagues and top management indicating that the majority had good interpersonal relationships in the workplace. The majority, i.e., 64 per cent responded that they preferred direct meetings and informal communication with their immediate superiors indicating they preferred informal and direct methods of communication. The majority, i.e., 38 per cent responded that little to no discrimination or bias in the workplace regarding salary, promotions, or attitudes were noticed. A majority of 44 per cent reported that family supported them through understanding and empathy indicating that family members provided them with emotional support. A majority 54 per cent responded that they have no free time indicate that they might lack work-life balance resulting in lower time offs from their responsibilities. The majority, i.e., 46 per cent responded that their parents or parents in law supported them the most when it came to managing their household responsibilities. A 40 per cent majority of the participants had to manage alone when it comes to taking of their elderly parents indicating that that more responsibilities lead to more imbalances in their work-life balance. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 50 per cent got 7-8 hours and a near majority getting below 7 hours of sleep. A majority of 90 per cent did not have any lifestyle diseases, that they are more on the healthier side. A majority 48 per cent claimed that they didn't face any harassment due to their inability to complete work on time. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 50 per cent worked 7-8 hours which indicates that the majority have fair working hours. A majority of 34 per cent respondents felt it was occasionally difficult to travel at night. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 48 per cent stated the major factor contributing to their dissatisfaction was their salary and other perks. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 66 per cent reported that they were looking for new job opportunities due to their dissatisfaction with their current jobs. A majority of 42 per cent the respondents reported that the factor which contributed the most to their work life balance was flexible work hours. A majority of 44 per cent of the respondents found that their company promoted a sense of belonging between the employees through organising team building exercises. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 78 per cent chose communicating with friends and family as a means of coping with work related stress. When asked to rate the impact of their work-life balance on overall well-being and happiness on a scale of one to ten, with one indicating low impact and ten indicating high impact, a majority of the respondents, i.e., 20 per cent each rated 5 and 8 the most.

These are the suggestions made when asked about changes or improvements the respondents would like to see in their current work environment to better support work-life balance for women:

☐   Need support from top management, reduction in the work load and night shifts to spend more time with family.

☐   Flexible working hours and working mode to be added options

☐   Equality

☐   Flexibility in approach to work

☐   5 day work week

☐   Flexible working hours and more options should be added to the mode of work

☐   Child care facilities near work place for infants would be appreciated along with Hybrid work model

☐   More relaxed office atmosphere

☐   Need more support from colleagues

☐   More gender neutrality in workplace.

4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increased salary and other benefits for women
- Facilities to be provided regarding childcare like day-care centres near work area and longer maternal leave in the private sector
- More safer travel at night
- More flexible work hours
- More smoother communication and dispute resolution in workplaces

4.4. CONCLUSION

Achieving work-life balance for women is essential for both societal advancement and economic success, not only from a personal fulfilment perspective. The intricate workings of today's society require us to recognize and confront the specific challenges that women encounter in striking a balance between their personal and professional goals. We can enable women to succeed in their personal and professional lives by enacting laws and cultural changes that promote equality, adaptability, and holistic well-being. This is a societal obligation that helps every human being, not just women. In addition to improving individual lives, we also build families, communities, and the workforce at large by promoting a culture that prioritizes work-life balance.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name

2. Age

3. What company do you work in?

4. What is your marital status?

- Single

- Married

5. How many children do you have?

6. How long have you been working in the IT sector?

7. What is your opinion regarding workloads and deadlines?

- Deadlines are generally manageable and align well with workload

- Deadlines often feel too tight for the amount of work assigned

- Deadlines are frequently missed due to overwhelming workload

8. Do you feel supported by your colleagues and top management?

- Yes, I feel supported by both colleagues and top management

- Yes, I feel supported by colleagues but not top management

- Yes, I feel supported by top management but not colleagues

- No, I don't feel supported by either colleagues or top management

9. How do you communicate your work-life balance needs to your employer or supervisor? (Select all that apply)

- Directly in One-on-One Meetings

- Through Formal Performance Reviews

- Utilizing Company Suggestion/Feedback Systems

- Informally with Immediate Supervisor

- Other (please specify): _____

10. Do you think there is discrimination or bias in the workplace regarding salary, promotions, or attitudes?

- Discrimination or bias is prevalent and noticeable

- Some instances of discrimination or bias have been observed

- No significant instances of discrimination or bias have been noticed

- Prefer not to answer

11. What kind of support do you receive from your family members regarding your job-related challenges?

- Emotional encouragement

- Assistance with tasks

- Understanding and empathy

- No support provided

12. What are the difficulties you face at home because of your work?

- Health issues

- taking care of children

- No leisure time

- Inability to attend social functions

13. Who among your family members helps you the most with managing household responsibilities?

- Husband

- Parents/Parents in law

- House maid

14. If you have elderly parents that need care, do you

- manage alone

- have home nurses

- Others

15. How many Hours of sleep do you get on average?

- Above 8 hours

- 7-8 hours

- Below 7 hours

16. Do u have any of the following lifestyle diseases?

- Diabetes

- High blood pressure

- Others

17. "What types of harassment, if any, have you experienced as a female employee when you have been unable to complete work on time?"

- Verbal harassment or criticism from colleagues or superiors.

- Exclusion from important meetings or opportunities.

- Unfair performance evaluations or negative feedback.

- Threats of termination or disciplinary action.

- Social isolation or exclusion within the workplace.

- Intimidation or bullying tactics.

- Other (please specify): _____

18. How many hours do you work?

- Less than 7 hours

- 7-8 hours

- More than 9 hours

19. If you work a night shift, how difficult is it for you to travel at night?

- Never tough

- Seldom difficult

- Occasionally difficult

- Frequently difficult

20. What are the factors responsible for dissatisfaction with work-life balance?

- Salary and other perks

- Work-Life Balance

- Job Security

- Work Environment

21. If unsatisfied, are you looking for other job opportunities?

- Yes

- No

22. What factors contribute most to your work-life balance?

- Work Hours flexibility

- Supporting the work environment and Culture

- Adequate Time off and vacations

- Support and understanding from management

- Other (please specify): _____

23. How does your company promote a sense of belonging between employees, which might contribute to work-life balance?

- Organizing team-building exercises

- Encourages informal socialization

- Opportunities for volunteering or social work

- Other (please specify): _____

24. How do you cope with stress from work and maintain overall well-being?

• Physical activities

• Talking to friends or family members

• Relaxation methods (e.g., meditation, deep breathing)

• Hobbies or interests

• Therapy

• Other (please specify): _____

25. How would you rate the impact of your work-life balance on your overall well-being and happiness on a scale of one to ten, with one indicating low impact and ten indicating high impact?

26. Do you have any suggestions about changes or improvements that you would like to see in your current work environment to better support work-life balance for women?