



A STUDY ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the study of women empowerment in information technology (IT) industry. India has become a dominant country in the IT industry globally. In the last decades, the industrial scope in India was dominated by the growth of agriculture and manufacturing sector. But in the last 10 years, especially after 2016, the IT sector started to play an important role in India's economic growth. Information technology is now a robust \$60 billion industry. The IT sector is unique in terms of women's participation in the workforce. Every second new hire in the IT industry is now a woman. The e-Government initiative has also provided an opportunity for women empowerment by increasing women's access to information. It provides the same information for women as it does for men. This information is uncensored and goes without any distortion. Major players in the IT industry are now providing an environment to retain talented women in the workforce. To create a women-friendly work environment, leading companies now offer perks like lactation centers, additional maternity leave, housing schemes, nurseries and the option to relocate to a city of their choice in case of a husband transfer. It is not only a good HR practice but has become a survival asset for companies facing a talent crunch. Gender diversity is essential in business. Educated women have a significant gap in the traditional family, child rearing and socially oppressed lifestyle. The impact reduces the barriers of time and distance in organizing and managing business delivery services. A large proportion of outsourcing jobs go to women. The freedom to work from anywhere anytime can be a catalyst for economic independence and empowerment of women by increasing their additional income. According to National investment promotion & facilitation agency where shows that Today, of the 5 million professionals in the IT sector in India, about women. The

article discusses the strengths, opportunities of information technology and the role it can play for women empowerment.

Key words: women empowerment, information technology, NOGs, Government.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every second recruit entering the \$245 billion India IT industry is woman. According to the review held by Burgundy Pvt and Hurun India. Currently, Tata Consultancy Services has the highest number of women with 2.1 lakh, Infosys with 1.25 lakh and Wipro with 88,946, HCL with 62,780 women and Trust with 62,560. Major companies in the IT sector are now providing an environment to retain talented female employees. To create a women-friendly environment, leading companies now offer perks like lactation centers, maternity accessories, work from home, crèches and the option to relocate to a state of their choice in case of changing husbands. Other IT companies have also launched diversity drives to attract women into their workforce.

2. ROLE OF VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

Various organizations including NGO's, government, and private institutions have led to improvement in status of women through IT.

2.1 ROLE OF NGO'S

Smile (Savitri Marketing Institution for Ladies Empowerment) Smile Foundation is to empower underprivileged children, youth and women through relevant education, innovative healthcare and market-focused livelihood programmes. Smile Foundation is to deploy best possible methodology and technology for achieving ideal SROI (social return on investment), to practice and promote good governance. To link business competitiveness of the corporate with social development initiatives; also to sensitize privileged children, youth and citizens in general to promote Civic Driven Change. Organizes IT seminars in collaboration with IT organizations. NIIT has launched quick JYOTI programmed for IT training of ladies. The programmed is designed to provide laptop literacy to women from six years to sixty years. It provides practical literacy on the only hand and blessings women in searching for and receiving statistics beneficial in their daily lifestyles. The duration of fast JYOTI programmed is 18 hours.

SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) has launched IT programmed to boom performance of rural micro organizations.

Ujjas Innovation: its miles an initiative to empower ladies via bringing out their personal e-news letter called "Ujjas". The publication went on air on All India Radio Bhuj Station in Gujarat. The publication gives a medium to specific perspectives in opposition to girl infanticide, dowry, and other relevant issues.

NGOs in India play a crucial role in empowering women in the information technology (IT) industry by offering various programs and initiatives:

Training and Skill Development: NGOs provide training programs to equip women with the necessary IT skills, helping them gain proficiency and confidence in areas such as coding, programming, digital literacy, and software development.

Education and Awareness: NGOs raise awareness about the opportunities available in the IT industry and encourage women to pursue careers in technology. They also work to dispel stereotypes and misconceptions that might discourage women from entering the field.

Mentorship and Networking: NGOs offer mentorship programs that connect women with experienced professionals in the IT industry. These mentors provide guidance, share insights, and help women navigate challenges they might face.

Scholarships and Financial Support: Many NGOs provide scholarships and financial assistance to women who want to pursue education and careers in IT. This helps mitigate financial barriers that might otherwise prevent women from entering the industry.

Advocacy for Gender Equality: NGOs advocate for policies and practices that promote gender equality within the IT industry. They collaborate with stakeholders, including government agencies and businesses, to create an inclusive environment for women.

Entrepreneurship Support: Some NGOs focus on encouraging women to become tech entrepreneurs. They provide resources, training, and mentoring to help women start and grow their own IT businesses.

Safe and Supportive Spaces: NGOs create safe spaces where women can learn, collaborate, and share their experiences without fear of discrimination or harassment. This fosters a sense of community and empowers women to pursue their IT aspirations.

Research and Data Collection: NGOs conduct research to gather data on the challenges and opportunities for women in the IT sector. This data helps inform their programs and advocacy efforts.

Capacity Building: NGOs build the capacity of women by enhancing their soft skills, leadership abilities, and confidence, which are essential for success in the IT industry.

Partnerships and Collaborations: NGOs often collaborate with IT companies, educational institutions, and government agencies to create a more inclusive ecosystem that supports women in technology.

3. Role of governments

- ❖ Government has provided various policies for girls like free education, reservation in jobs, admissions, elected members of local bodies, member of board of directors in public limited companies etc.

Government is giving loan and subsidies to women for

- ❖ Higher studies, projects and research.
- ❖ Tamilnadu State Women's Development Corporation

(TNSWDC) has launched my IT project for women over 38 districts. And each woman is given free laptop, printer, camera and projector for their use. The project also includes yoga classes and personality development classes for women as added advantage.

- ❖ Exclusive job melas for women and girls in specific sectors shall be held and top industries/corporate shall be encouraged to participate and recruit.
- ❖ Internship opportunities can be given in startups. This shall be organized as part of job melas.
- ❖ Creche facilities to be compulsory in all working places and it shall be the responsibility of employers and these shall be subject to annual audit jointly by the labor and Social welfare and women empowerment.
- ❖ Medical facilities/ doctor on call shall be made available in working areas and periodical medical checkup shall be conducted.

4. Role of private sector

Project Shakti launched by Hindustan Unilever promotes internet penetration among rural women. The project now provides services to 135000 villages, across 15 states and has developed 45000 women entrepreneurs. Project Shiksha of Microsoft and Internet Bus of Google are also contributing to increase internet awareness.

E-choupal initiative of ITC has reached 40,000 villages covering 4 million farmers through 6500 kiosks.

NASSCOM: National Association of Software and Service Companies provide mentoring and empowering women managers across junior, middle and senior level from the IT Industry through various workshops, activities and training sessions.

India Shop, an e-commerce website in TamilNadu, has been designed to sell rural women’s cooperatives and NGO’s.

Swayam Krishi Sangam (SKS) is using IT’s such as smart cards and hand held devices to improve microfinance projects to empower poor women.

NABANNA: Networking Rural Women and Knowledge, a UNESCO sponsored project in NABANNA, India was launched to empower women through use of intranet portals, databases, and web based applications. Through the NABANNA network women share local indigenous information and information obtained at group meetings and newsletter. Women gained more respect in their local community. Younger women were more confident to approach job market. Women became more creative after learning programs like paintbrush. Women developed a sense of unity among them and bringing forth leadership qualities.

Employment opportunities in the IT sector: Women friendly environment is creating opportunities for women employment. The gender distribution of employment in IT manufacturing sector is given in table1.

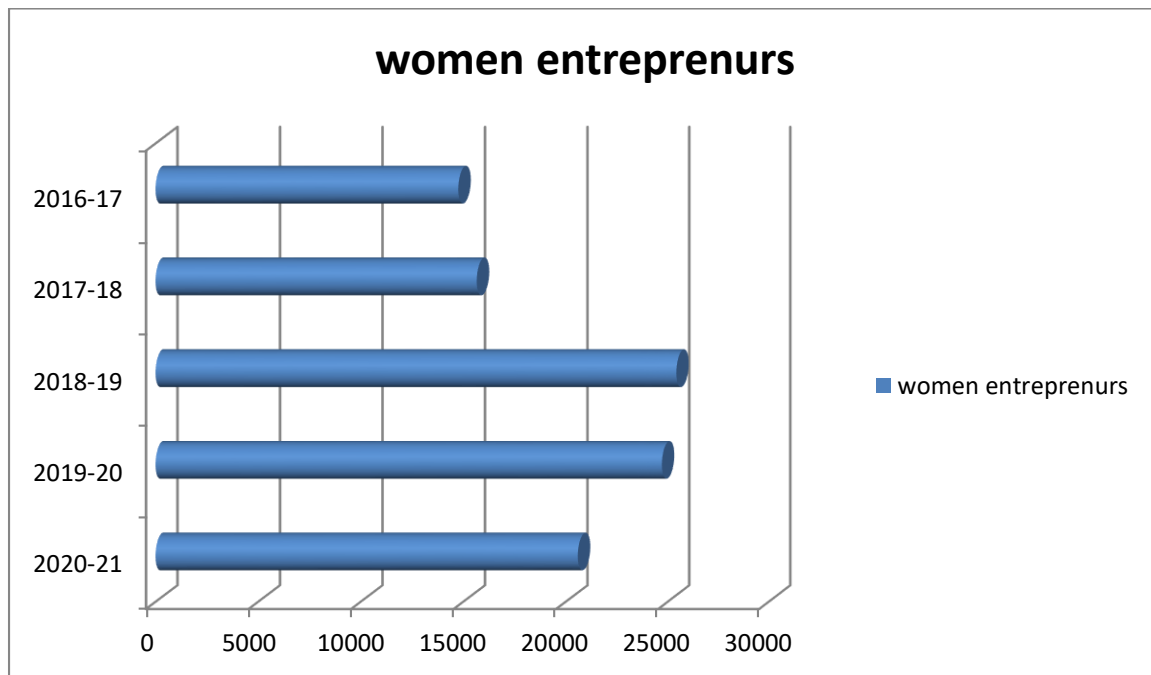
Table 1: NO OF PERSONS EMGAGED IN IT SECTOR GENDER WISE



SOURCE: Ministry of statistics and programme implementation

Table 2: No of women entrepreneurs under prime minister's employment generation programme (PMEGP).

(2016-17 to 2020-21) and current year up to 31.12.2023 is as follow:



SOURCE: Annual report 2021-21 Ministry of statistics and programme implementation

The IT sector has the highest representation of women in the workforce at 30%, while FMCG and industrial occupy the last with 5.5% and 4.3% representation, respectively, according to a CFA study (chartered financial analyst)

Apart from entrepreneurship other opportunities are:

1. Flexibility for women to work from home.
2. Women friendly working environment in IT companies.
3. Enhanced access of women to distance learning.
4. Access to information through e-governance initiatives of government.

CHALLENGES

The Women employees have to face challenges of long work hours, constant travelling and juggling different time zones of international clients, Social issues on account of working during night. As a result the industry is losing women employees at the middle and senior management level. In Infosys top management has less than 2% women employees. In a study conducted to assess the status of women in technical education and employment in Tamilnadu state. The other challenges are:

1. Poor regulation, and support for women working in informal sector.
2. Poor awareness of ICT for women.
3. Language barriers for the use of ICT for non English speakers.
4. Paternal set up of Indian society.

5. Conservative outlook for working women.

6. Challenges of managing career and family.

TABLE: 3 No of women employment and percentage of workforce in it sector

company	No of women employees	Women employees
TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES	2,10,000	35%
INFOSYS	1,24,490	40%
WIPRO	88,946	86%
HCL TECHNOLOGIES	62,780	28%
RELIANCE INDUSTRIES	62,560	18%
MOTHERSON SUMI SYSTEMS	52,501	41%
TECH MAHINDRA	42,774	34%
ICICI BANK	32,697	31%
HDFC BANK	22,750	16%
PAGE INDUSTRIES	22,631	74%

SOURCE: 2022 Burgundy private Huron India 500 Report

OPPORTUNITIES

Female ratio in IT industry has improved from 2016 to now 2023. IT reduces the impact of barriers of time and distance in organizing and managing the service delivery of businesses. A large part of jobs outsourced are going to women. The freedom to work from anywhere and anytime can become a catalyst for financial independence and empowerment of women by enhancing their extra income. A women entrepreneurship cell should be set up to handle the various problems of women entrepreneurs in all states at the college level.

Strength

Abilities to learn quickly, their persuasiveness, open style of problem solving, willingness to take risk and chances, ability to motivate people, knowing how to win and lose gracefully are the qualities that shine Indian women personality.

5. ROLE MODELS

5.1. Advertising



Shenan Reed

Name of Company: Morpheus Media

Description: Interactive Marketing & Advertising Agency (Utilizing the Online Media)

Success Story: Increase sales revenue up to 1650 % from 2003 (\$ 2million) to 2007 (\$ 35 million)

"What Morpheus does isn't like offline advertising, Reed notes." When we put it live, within 24 hours we know what it's doing -- and we can change it, optimize it, rotate in something new. "

5.2. Interactive Game



Jaqueline Beauchamp

Name of Company: Nerjzed Game Studio

Description: Interactive Game Studio **Success Story:** The first black - owned development studio to create a game for Xbox 360 (Top Leading Game Console by Microsoft) .

"Video games are driving scripts and vice versa . There's a convergence between the two, and what better place to be than in a position of knowing how to do both and knowing how to make those experiences cross different media ? "

5.3. Computer Service & Software



Vani Kola

Name of Company: Right Works

Description: e - Procurement Company

Success Story: Sold Right Works for \$ 22 million in cash and about \$ 635 million in stock and went to set - up Certus Software which targeted the Sarbanes - Oxley compliance space and became a market leader in the financial compliance market "

Software business models are fundamentally changing , so lots of interesting companies that provide service based application will have a role . "

5.4. Research & Development



Shafi Goldwasser

Name of Institution: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Description: Top Rank Research Institute in the world

Success Story: Two - time recipient of the Godel Prize a prize for outstanding papers in theoretical computer science)

5.5. Computer Service & Software



Susan Decker

Name of Company: Yahoo!

Description: World Wide Web Directory & Innovation Company

Success Story : As the President of Yahoo !, Decker has emphasized finding new ways to monetize advertising , and during the past year , Yahoo! announced partnerships with a dozen firms , including Google , Wal - Mart , Havas Digital and Public is Group , in hopes of creating more than \$ 1 billion in new revenues .

6. CONCLUSION

There is growing awareness of the potential role of women in the IT sector. Industrial organizations are undergoing a transformation to attract and retain talented female employees. The need to break the balance of family work in middle and top management is creating creative talent. These talented women can use their experience and skills to become entrepreneurs. Women at the forefront of the IT industry are role models for young generations. Women need to maintain a balance between life and personal life in order to provide opportunities for information and communication technologies. Family members should use the skills and talents of women to help them establish their own unique identity and for the economic well-being of the family.

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