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GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN IT-BPM SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Information Technology has become the flagship industry underlying India’s recent presence on the global stage. It is also in the spotlight worldwide due to the relatively high and increasing numbers of women in IT in India in comparison to the small and falling numbers of women in this sector in the Western world. Women inclusivity efforts motivated women to join the IT sector without fear and enables them to build confidence. Gender inclusion which brings diversity in the workplace needs to be sustainable and this is a challenge faced by several companies. As of now, only 18 per cent of women in the IT industry are employed at management level - a figure that needs to be increased. We need to appreciate the diversity dividend, so it’s really crucial to make that transition and increase the women workforce across the corporate ladder. Around 60 per cent of university graduates are women, 46 per cent of internet users are women,” said Suresh Narayanan, chairman and managing director at Nestle India Limited, speaking at the summit. When women become part of the workforce it requires out-of-the box thinking to factor in parameters of safety and security. With this, it becomes imperative for companies to bring in gender-neutral mentoring and tackle bias to strengthen the talent fabric of the company. This study aims to understand the constraints faced by women employees in the workplace and to determine the impact of women inclusivity in jobs in IT –BPM sector.

KEYWORDS

inclusivity, attrition, impact, reasons, efforts.

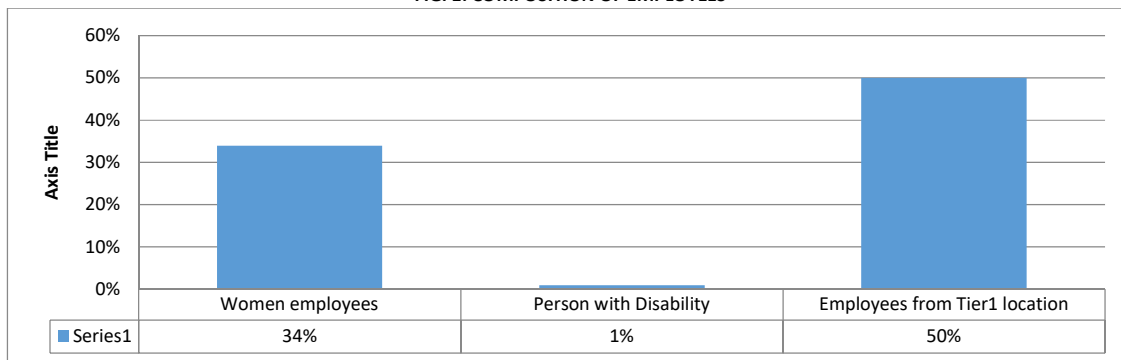
INTRODUCTION

The industry is increasingly turning women centric, with women constituting 51 per cent of entry level hiring, and having a 50 per cent higher chance of getting IT-BPM job offers. The study was aimed at understanding the role of women in the sector, and help companies formulate practices which can further accelerate inclusion in the industry. According to the industry focus is shifting from inclusivity & diversity to empowerment, stating that women are also moving away from support roles and growing in core business operations through added focus on Over the years, NASSCOM has been working with various stakeholders across the industry to enable organizations to build a work environment that embraces diversity where employees, customers and other stakeholders thrive and succeed. NASSCOM has been instrumental in creating platforms of knowledge exchange across various forms of inclusion and across different cultural context for companies to share and learn best practices. The organization is also working with the government and the society to create a legal and commercial framework for support the same. Gender equality has been established at entry levels, women still constitute a far lower share of CXO roles; the trend of women resigning at a higher rate than men as their personal priorities change is hampering this growth.

COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYEES IN IT-BPM INDUSTRY

Information technology-business process management (IT-BPM) industry employs around 3.7 million people and generates indirect employment for more than 10 million employees. This makes it the largest private employer in India. The industry, which is fast growing, enjoys worldwide demand for its services. In FY2016, it clocked an estimated revenue of 143 billion USD. This in turn has given rise to challenging job opportunities as well as roles, and has made the industry an attractive place for millennials and young minds, who view the sector as a viable career option, irrespective of gender, disability and location. The average age of the workforce within the industry stands at 27 years. It thus emerges as a leading sector in terms of employing the millennial workforce (defined roughly as those born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, and for whom digital is a way of life). The industry is a melting pot of different cultures, nationalities and geographies in India. Today, around 50% of its employees hail from Tier I locations in India. Further, it employs foreign nationals from over 100 countries (a total of 1,70,000 foreign nationals), and over 40% of the headcount of global MNCs in India. While a majority of its hires (approximately 50%)are graduates (excluding engineers), the sector employs a diverse mix in terms of skills and knowledge, with a fair share of engineering graduates (32%) and postgraduates (13%), and over 2,50,000 digital specialists and super specialists in the area of social media, mobility, analytics, cloud (SMAC).Today, women constitute 34% of the IT-BPM workforce (i.e. over 1.3 million women employees)—an increase of around 1.8 times since FY2009. Nearly 10% of these women are in senior management roles (approximately 1% in the C-suite). Further, around 28% of the women employees in the sector are primary breadwinners, thereby indicating the changing trend of women’s employment and inclusion in the sector. The ITBPM sector is one of the frontrunners in driving practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwDs) in India. However, PwD representation in the sector is less than 1%, which indicates the need to implement progressive measures in this space.

FIG. 1: COMPOSITION OF EMPLOYEES



REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shanker (2008) in the study on gender relations in IT companies in Bangalore revealed that there is a increasing trend of women employees joining the IT sector is due to the various influencing factors like lucrative job options, higher salary, flexible work options. He attributes that greater representation of women in the workforce to comparatively high salaries, easy international mobility and gender neutral policy based on knowledge-centric skills possession. Varma (2002a) asserts that IT sector still remains a preferred choice among many fresh technology graduates for obvious reasons of clear career choices, best salary offered in the industry, rewarding career, international exposure and experience and perfect work ambience and above all intellectually stimulating work opportunities. Tank

and Khuperkar (2009) explored different perspectives to gender equality in India, such as mindset, policies and gender equality drawing similarities and highlighted changes in the working environment in private sector and public sector firms. The overall growth of the society can be enabled only if there is equal emphasis paid to gender equality policies and what the society stands to lose by not providing equal opportunity to everyone and several roadblocks were identified to put them in place. Patel & Parmentier (2005), in their study on the traditional gender roles in the IT sector discussed the issues of gender equality in the IT industry. They emphasize that the Western paradigm of development and modernization suggests that as rational processes and bureaucratic functions overtake traditional forms of social organization, gender inequities will disappear, along with other forms of social closure based on differentiation such as religion and ethnicity. They maintain that the participation of women in IT continues to be influenced by traditional gender roles. He argues that in spite of attaining some of the highest levels of education in Indian society, such women are still associated with traits that include being secondary, invisible, reproductive and unpaid – in general, they are assumed to take the role of a follower. The study of Clark and Sekher (2007) has drawn inference that flexible labour market in this high tech sector improves women employees' financial autonomy, greater mobility and their larger social acceptance in male dominated society. Like Clark et al. Shanker's study (2008) asserts that IT industry is the destination of the „privileged“- young, educated, urban and upper caste with middle class family background- constitute the majority of the workforce. She further observes that women professionals have enhanced their social status in terms of having economic capital (high income, foreign travels), social capital (role model and greater prospects of marriage) and symbolic capital (prestige attached to profession).

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the constraints faced by women employees in the workplace.
2. To determine the impact of women inclusivity in jobs.

METHODOLOGY

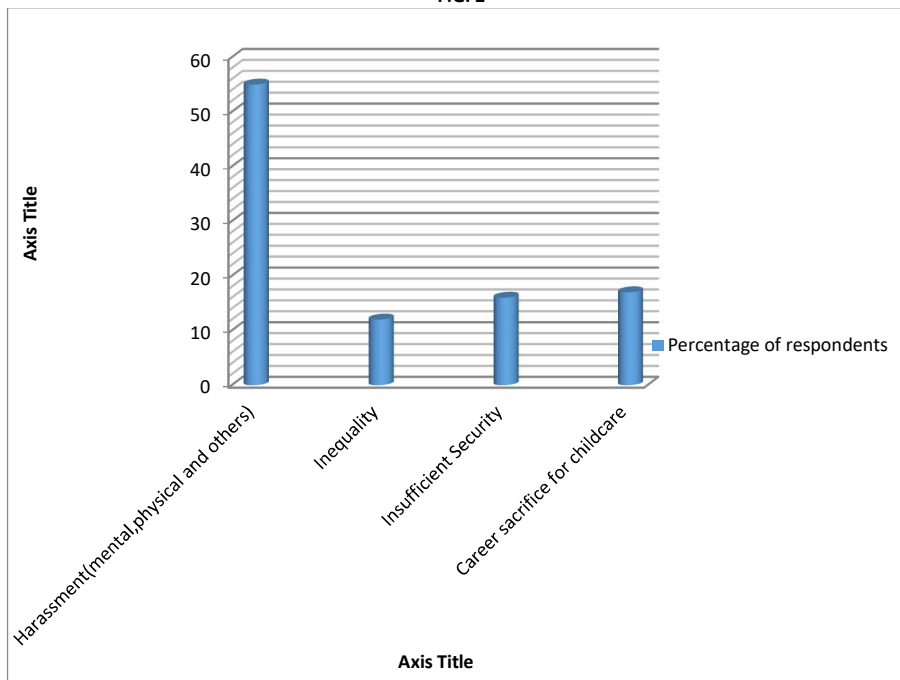
A survey was conducted among 100 women IT workers at Technopark by using random sampling method. 10 female employees from 10 companies were selected using random sampling, by making a total of 100 respondents. Questionnaire is used for collection of primary data which is circulated via hard copy and Google forms

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN IN IT INDUSTRY

TABLE 1

Reasons	Percentage of respondents
Harassment (mental, physical and others)	55
Inequality	12
Insufficient Security	16
Career sacrifice for childcare	17

FIG. 2

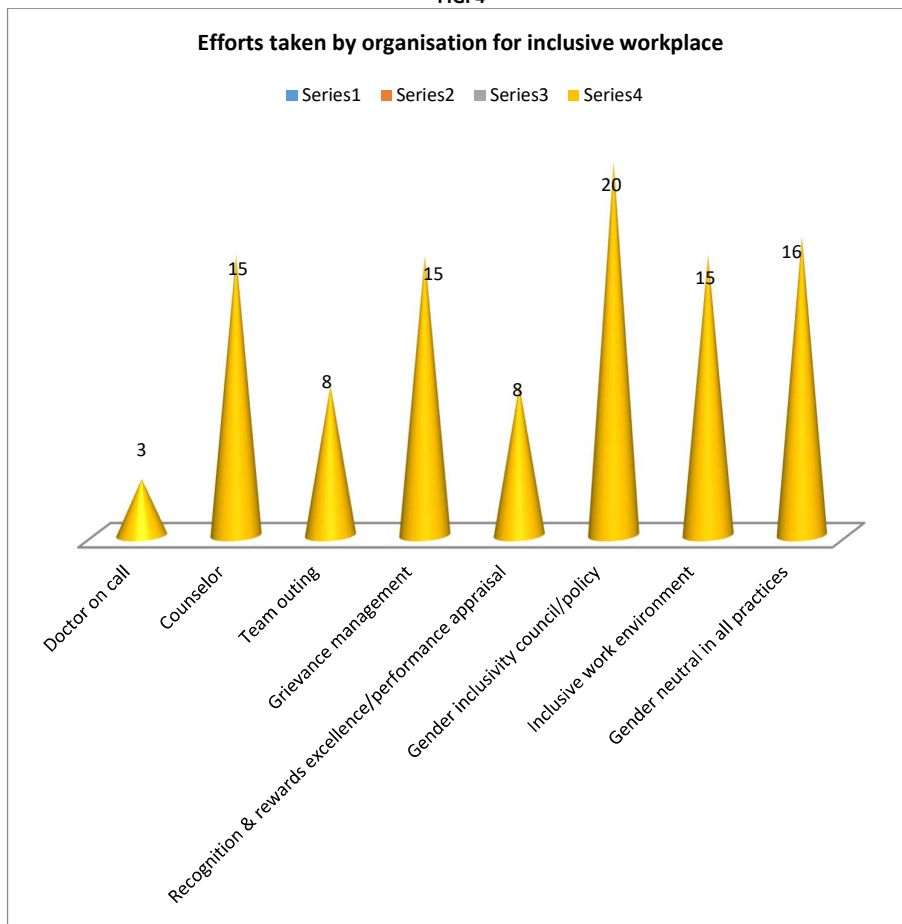


IMPACT OF WOMEN INCLUSIVITY ON JOBS

FIG. 3



FIG. 4



FINDINGS

The major problems faced by the women in ITES sector are described. The impact of gender inclusivity and the efforts taken by organization for inclusive workplace are analysed. 55% are of the opinion that they face many kinds of harassment at workplace like mental, physical, sexual etc. 12% suffer from inequality at workplace. 16% opines insufficient security at work place. 17% of respondents sacrifice their jobs for child care. As the leave availability for child care is very less they are forced to quit jobs for caring their child. The positive impact of the efforts around gender inclusivity have had on the organisations that participated in the study. 7% have opined to build a professionally oriented organization due to gender inclusivity. 20% opined to have higher employee productivity and profitability. 15% on customer satisfaction and value creation. 6% opined about ethical business practices. 7% on building an employer brand. 20% opined to have reduced attrition. 25% mentioned Enhance the organisation's creativity, productivity, and ability to manage change.

SUGGESTIONS

Some of the suggestions to build gender inclusivity are strong security requirements for women staff who work late and long hours. Strong emphasis on teamwork, irrespective of gender. Cross-cultural exposure. Aggressive and inclusive gender inclusivity policy that is proactive and stems attrition due to the need for a large

pool of skilled talent. The IT industry has a greater pool of women in the workforce, a more global mindset and a better access to technology and information. Greater need to balance work environment and culture. Challenge posed by the recruitment pool, in that there are fewer skilled women available to recruit from, due to the need for technical skills required by the IT sector. Long work schedule that requires policies to help women overcome and balance social and family obligations.

CONCLUSION

It is seen that women constitute a sizeable no. of workforce in IT. However, they are not representative of all women in the society. Access to IT is restricted to a select group of women. They are a select group of women who belong to urban background with high socioeconomic status. Implementation of gender inclusivity policies will go a long way in tapping more women workers and reduce attrition rates. As diversity plays a role in business transformation, companies across verticals should leverage technology to create a flexible gender-conducive working environment. Connectivity and technology are dimensions required to ensure gender inclusion. For outcome-based results, women employees should have the option of working in the virtual world, whose operations happen through algorithms and artificial intelligence. The efforts of the companies and stakeholders have been a contributing factor in achieving the growth in the number of women in India's IT sector. Furthermore, specific HR policies and practices such as conveyance, flexible working hours, parental leave, anti-harassment, healthcare, and an emphasis on recognizing and supporting women's needs have led to the positive trend.

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