WORK-FAMILY BALANCE OF INDIAN WOMEN SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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One of the significant changes witnessed in the labour markets in India in the last decade has been the entry of women information technology (IT) professionals in the rapidly growing software services sector. Consequently, there has been an increasing interest in academia and among practitioners in the topic of work-life balance, specifically of working women in the IT industry. There is still a glaring under representation of samples from emerging economies in the research literature on work and family. Increased globalisation, coupled with the recognition that balancing work and family is a challenge for employed parents in almost all modern societies, suggests that a programme of this research should be conducted in different cultural contexts.

The main research question of this study is: How do work and family related factors influence the work-family balance of Indian women IT professionals? What challenges do they face and what coping strategies do they use to achieve work-family balance? The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 13 women IT professionals in the software sector in Bangalore, India. The narratives reveal six major themes: (1) familial influences on life choices; (2) multi-role responsibilities and attempts to negotiate them; (3) self and professional identity; (4) work-life challenges and coping strategies; (5) organisational policies and practices; and (6) social support. While some of the findings in this study are supported by existing literature in the field, the dominant role of the family in the Indian context is of particular significance. One of the key implications for organisations is the need for human resource (HR) departments to design and implement policies that enable women to balance their work and personal lives in a manner that is sculpted within the family lives of the women rather than as a standalone policy.

INTERVIEW

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE SURVEY: A HOLISTIC VIEW FOR ALTRUISTIC PRACTICE
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICE: INTERVIEW WITH N R NARAYANA MURTHY, FOUNDER, INFOSYS TECHNOLOGIES

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While corporate governance is emerging as a discipline of academic interest and of relevance to business practice, its vast content and its institutional and cultural context hamper the emergence of a unified framework and standard content. Eschewing the discipline- or region-based approach, this survey paper takes a holistic approach to corporate governance in arriving at a unified framework and also incorporates the concerns of practice by seeking the views of N R Narayana Murthy, Founder Chairman, Infosys Technologies. The paper first covers the extant literature on investors, managers, directors, and law and regulation—the four main dimensions or pillars of corporate governance practice. It dwells on the responsibilities of the investors or shareholders comprising blockholders and institutional investors, controlling shareholders, debt holders and hedge fund investors who constitute the external control governance mechanism and those of the board of directors that acts as the internal control governance mechanism. It looks at the constitution of boards, particularly the proportion of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ directors on boards. The paper then surveys the manager or CEO who is key in the separation of ownership from control and is entrusted with the control of managing shareholders’ wealth, examining the important issue of compensation and incentives of managers. The fourth pillar, the legal and regulatory mechanisms which control the external governance of corporate entities, is examined next.

Animating the framework is the experience of Mr. Narayana Murthy, who counterintuitively did not emphasise any of the four dimensions. In Infosys, the company he founded and led, Mr Murthy said that the focus was not on shareholders’ reactions but on the value system, ethics and integrity; product market competition, he believed, was achieved through better engagement with employees and customers. The company’s focus on customer satisfaction and employee happiness would ensure a strong future, reflect in the share prices and ensure compliance with corporate governance mechanisms and regulatory laws.