CHAPTER- I
INTRODUCTION AND
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Career denotes one's line of work. Development means growth, maturation, progress or success. Career development refers to success in one's line of work. This growth is welcome as it is positive. Nevertheless, career development does not always positively influence a person's life.

Women unlike men never really stop working. Their day begins with cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for in-laws, parents, husband and children, continues in the office as a mentor, leader, colleague and ends at home when she falls asleep after putting the house to rest. Growth in profession indicates a better pay and hence a better shot at life. However, the perks are accompanied with certain disadvantages such as longer working hours, increased work pressure and added responsibilities. Invariably, promotions are accompanied with transfers.

Women are left to walk the tight rope between family obligations and professional responsibility. One can never take precedence over the other. A fine balance between professional and personal life becomes the need of the hour.

Internet has made the world a global village. Information is obtained at the click of the mouse. This has led computers to become an integral part of everyday life. As a result, Informatics based IT industry is now rapidly growing. Handsome pay, opportunities to work abroad and highly innovative platform are the major reasons for its popularity among the engineering aspirants.

From time immaterial Indian culture has placed its women on a pedestal. According to the Hindu mythology Sakthi is the equal half of Shiva. However with the passage of time all things Indian are being viewed as inferior.

The colonization by the British, French and Portuguese have ended with Aug 15th 1947. Yet, India continues to be attracted to all things foreign. In doing so, Indian's have embraced the western norm of male superiority. Better late, than never. It is high time Indians embarrassed the culture and beliefs of their ancestors.
India has given this world the bravest woman in Rani Laxshmi Bai of Jhansi, an extraordinary astronaut in Kalpana Chawla and an iron lady in Indira Gandhi. Indian women need only to look to themselves for inspiration. From being a home maker to being a king maker should be walk in the park.

Today, women are living in a transition period of a new age defined by global competition, rampant change, faster flow of information and communication, increasing business complexities and pervasive globalization. Every field be it medicine, politics, sports, media, entrepreneurship is swarming with women. Likewise, IT too is actively employing women.

IT is an industry which depends on brain rather than brawn. Good aptitude, communication skills, technical competency, adaptability and ability to think on their feet are the few attributes which have made women indispensible to the IT sector.

A decade ago, it was difficult to find a large percent of women in the IT world, let alone in positions of authority. However, smart work, dedication, presence of mind, persuasiveness, a willingness to take risks, uncanny intuition, handling stress and an ability to give a 100% every time has changed this perception. As more individuals are testing their skills in management oriented jobs, one can see how women are progressing because of their quick wit and ability to find a solution to trying situations.

From the burka clad women of Kashmir to the cosmopolitan women in a pair of casual jeans and t-shirt, the contemporary Indian women are admirably living the multiple roles of a mother, wife, daughter, employee, employer, friend, mentor, etc., with relative ease. Multitasking has now become an inherent skill.

If he is the body, she is the soul. If he is brain, she is the heart. Neither one can survive without the other. Hence, men and women need to work hand in hand, alongside each other, cultivating a healthy environment both at home and workplace for a better and a brighter tomorrow.

In this context, the study of impact of career development on life of women in general and women executives in the IT industry in particular has taken on greater importance.
1.2 NEED FOR THE STUDY

In the past decade women were not so welcome to hold and glorify the top positions of different corporate houses since, they faced barriers while climbing up the corporate ladder. Howsoever, time and again women have proved them wrong, succeeding over these imposed barriers and making major contribution towards organizational excellence. There has been an impressive increase of women in the workforce, they continue to be underrepresented in managerial positions in the information technology field.

Despite, a lot of emphasis given to the education of girls, they continue to play second fiddle both at home and the workplace. Women still fall back on their extended family for support. They give travelling jobs amiss, often giving up promotions that would necessitate a change of place, as that would mean relocating the entire family. Women might be under-represented in corporate India occupying only a few plum posts, but they are getting more opportunities, are more qualified than ever, and the corporate environment too has been much more conducive than before for women. What remains a challenge is straddling the traditional and modern, and the constant reinventing of oneself to meet these challenges.

The increased participation of women is due to several factors such as education, economic necessity and personal goals as well as the fact that there are so many more options and avenues available for women to enter and re-enter the workplace after taking sabbaticals for family reasons.

Nevertheless, these skilled women workers are mostly in jobs related to data entry and data preparation. Still, there is a scarcity in terms of female resource when it comes to functional roles such as programmers and analysts. There is a huge demand for such profiles and women workers can command very good pay packages in these roles. While, it is the role of parents and teachers in our society to motivate the women fraternity to explore career options in the IT industry, it is necessary for the Government’s concerned departments to undertake special program to encourage women to take up jobs in the IT industry and, make special provisions for their entry in this sector.
A career is a life-long, uninterrupted experience of work, which can be divided into neat stages of development, starting with initial ideas about working and ending with retirement. Career development is the process of managing life, learning, and work over a lifespan.

However, the patterns of women’s career development are frequently affected by family as well as workplace commitments and responsibilities, unlike those of men. This study is based upon many constructs which shape women’s career and its impact on their life. The constructs are: technical knowledge, proficient leadership, general smartness, training and development, widen new opportunities, career path guidance, motivation, conducive work environment, stress management and health care, self awareness, encouraging and supportive family, flexible work arrangements and social impact.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Information technology is a sector where a quarter of the total workforce comprises of women, however, their representation at the top is abysmally low. Only, one in every 10 senior management positions are occupied by a woman in the Indian IT sector. In 2011, 3% of women occupied senior management roles, while 16% of them were at the mid management level and 81% of women were at the junior level in the IT industry. Thus, their absolute numbers remains static at higher job positions.

What is alarming is that a large number of women dropped out of the industry due to various reasons at crucial times of their careers. The research reveals that while 22% of women left their jobs because of family reasons, 27% of them quit for taking care of their children and 32% of women had felt no suitable employment opportunity. A big issue confronting this sector is that many women after taking a hiatus for various reasons are unable to find themselves suitable jobs despite, efforts made by the companies. Women switch jobs more frequently than men because of the complexities of the dual role as working women and mother, lack of family support and motivation, no proper career guidance from the organization and family.
The challenge for women multiplies in the age group of 28-35 years when they start handling both family and increased work responsibilities. In-spite of being high performers, they tend to give-up on their career for personal reasons.

Women are not considered for certain critical roles, because it is assumed that they would not be able to give their 100% for the job. Women owing to their personal commitments are viewed as being fragile and lacking in an analytical mind which are a couple of reasons for discriminations against them.

It is a known fact that women comprise half the world's population. But, due to numerous reasons only a minimum percentage of this women population are a part of the workforce. Given that the organizations have already scooped up the cream layer of the available talent pool which majorly comprises of men. This study would hence, be in the interest of the organizations, as they would be able to tap into this unutilized highly efficient resource pool of women. From an individual woman's perspective, to the make the best of all available opportunities, this study does a detailed analysis of the capabilities required and the situations to be handled, by the working women to decide and develop their career path in IT.

Women’s career development must take account of five factors:

- Career preparation, or how women are brought up to view the idea of a career and whether they believe they will have one or not.
- Availability of opportunities should be taken into consideration, and whether they are limited for women, when compared to men.
- Marriage, viewed as neutral for men but harmful to the career of women.
- Pregnancy and having children inevitably cause women to take some kind of career break.
- Time and again career breaks and family relocations often mean that women’s careers do not follow the same chronological patterns as those of men.

Career development theory translates the different experiences and expectations of women into operationally how they manage and progress in their careers. This area of study provided a framework for research and analysis.
The present study titled “Impact of career development on life changes of women executives in IT field” probed the following questions:

i. What are the demographic aspects that affect the career development of women?
ii. What impact the constructs of career development have on women's life?
iii. What is the relationship between career development and life changes of women?
iv. Does stress and social aspects influence the life of women?
v. How working environment plays an important role in impacting the life changes of a woman?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To answer the above research questions, the following objectives were framed. In the present empirical study, the objectives were mainly focused on exploring the factors crucial for career development and life planning of women executives in IT field and providing suggestions for achieving a balance between the two. In brief the objectives are-

1. To assess the women's perception on life changes based on demographic aspects and constructs of career development.
2. To study the impact of stress and social factors, which affects the women's life.
3. To examine the relationship between career development and life changes of women in IT field.
4. To develop a model for work environment that affect the life of women executives.
5. To suggest better ways and means for improving career and enriching an individual's personal life.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The validity of any research depends on the systematic method of collecting data, and analyzing the same in an appropriate order.
An extensive use of both primary and secondary data was made. In this study, descriptive research was used.

1.5.1 SAMPLING DESIGN

The researcher approached 300 women executives located in Bangalore, Chennai, and Coimbatore for collecting information. They were chosen by non-probability convenience sampling method.

1.5.2 DATA COLLECTION

1.5.2.1 Primary data:

The primary data was collected from women executives in IT field. The information was gathered through questionnaire method. In order to fulfill the objectives set, a sample study was undertaken by using a well-framed questionnaire that was duly filled in by the respondents. The respondents were mainly from IT companies in Bangalore, Chennai and Coimbatore.

1.5.2.2 Secondary data:

The primary data was supplemented by a spate of secondary sources of data. Latest information in the IT sector was gathered from well equipped libraries in Coimbatore and Chennai. Apart from this, secondary data was collected from leading journals such as *HRM Review, Management International, Journal of IT, Journal of Managerial Psychology, Career Development International, Gender in Management, Journal of Management and Organization etc.* The Internet web resources were also made use of.

1.5.3 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

By virtue of mass data obtained from the research survey as well as, the data collected from secondary sources, descriptive and analytical research was considered the most appropriate for the study. The research problems and the questionnaire were all framed accordingly. The suggestions offered in the final chapter of the present research report emerged from the inferences drawn from the study of the sample respondents. The researcher used close-ended questions in the questionnaire to collect the necessary primary data.
The differences in the impact of career development on life changes of women executives is based on their age, educational qualification, experience, location, marital status, type of family, number of family members, income level, child care arrangement, travelling distance between work place and residence, technical knowledge, proficient leadership, general smartness, training and development, widen new opportunities, motivation, self awareness, encouraging and supportive family and flexible work arrangement. These factors were studied through Percentage analysis, Mean and Standard deviation, Two-way table, Chi-Square test, Multiple regression analysis, Factor analysis and Structural path analysis.

1.5.4 PILOT STUDY

The questionnaire meant for the research was pre-tested with fifty respondents. After pre-testing, necessary modifications were made to the questionnaire, based on the advice obtained from subject experts and the research supervisor, to fit in the same on the track of the present study.

1.5.5 FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The core of the study being “Career Development and Life Changes”, the analysis centers on the dependent variable life changes with the related independent variables.

1.5.6 CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

To find the degree of influence of the independent variable on the level of satisfaction, a chi-square test was used and the formula is given as follows.

Chi-square statistics is defined as

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i} \rightarrow \chi^2_{(a-1)d.f} \]

O = Observed frequency
E = Expected frequency
1.5.7 MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

A regression is a statistical tool used to find out the relationship between two or more variables. In simple regression, there will be only two variables; one variable is caused by the behavior of the other. The former is defined as an independent variable and later is defined as a dependent variable. When there are two or more independent variables, the analysis that describes the relationship between the two is called multiple regression. The main objective of using this technique is to predict the variability of dependent variable on its co-variance with all the independent variables. It is used to predict the level of dependent phenomenon through multiple regression analysis model, if the level of independent variable is given.

1.5.8 FACTOR ANALYSIS

Factor analysis is used to study a complex product or service in order to identify the major characteristics (or factors) considered important by the respondents. The purpose of factor analysis is to determine the responses to the several number of statements which are significantly correlated.

1.5.9 STRUCTURAL PATH ANALYSIS

Path analysis deals with the casual relations underlying a set of independent variable and a set of dependent variables. The casual relationship between two variables may be direct or indirect. Here, path diagrams are setup and casual relationship between the variables are attributed according to theory or hypothesis of a researcher. The path analysis is carried on to test the relationships as theory says or as the researcher assumes. It is a series of regression analysis simultaneously done to determine the set of theorized relationships.

1.6 PERIOD OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to a period of 7 years from 2005 to 2012. Reviewing the relevant literature and setting up the dimensions took 2 year and six months. The data collection from primary sources took one year six months. Preparing the master table, data analysis and interpretation took another one year six months. Presentation of the data in the form of the report took one year six months.
1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study highlights the factors influencing career development and its impact on life changes of women executives in IT field. It also identifies the perception of women employees, which in turn paves the way for their career growth. This analysis to some extent helps organizations and women in career management and career planning respectively. Based on their opinion, one can easily predict the constructs of career development and its impact on life changes.

1.8 DIMENSIONS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE CHANGES OF WOMEN EXECUTIVES

1.8.1. Technical Competence:

Technology is changing with the blink of an eye. With computers becoming integral part of life, every job requires intelligence and technical skills. Technological expertise helps in developing core competence.

1.8.2. Proficient Leadership:

Leadership is an important construct of career development. It is the foundation on which successful women executives thrive. Skillful leadership is marked by the ability to practice what one preaches. Good leaders are those who lead by example, listen to all and work as a team player.

1.8.3. General Smartness:

Smart women, know how to take their game to the next level. Managing one's mind, optimistic outlook, self-confidence, never say die attitude, rational thinking, multi-tasking, efficient leadership skills and credibility are attributes of a smart women.

1.8.4. Training and Development:

Education is a continuous process, that ends only with life. Workforce training and development are essential for career development of an employee. It is the responsibility of the management to provide adequate tools with updated technology.
1.8.5. Widen New Opportunities:

In every difficulty lies an opportunity. Women can create opportunities for themselves by taking on more challenges, exploring new avenues and treading paths least travelled. Organizations have adopted equal opportunity employment policies, besides conducting seminars and offering training programmes, thereby throwing the field wide open for women.

1.8.6. Career Path Guidance:

Women require various training classes and seminars in order to achieve their potentials as executives. Mentors play a crucial role in career progression, development of leaders, early socialization at the workplace and career success.

1.8.7. Motivation:

External and internal motivation drives people to achieve goals on both personal and professional fronts. Internal motivation must be from within oneself. External motivation comes from family, organization and society. Encouragements, monetary benefits, promotion, praise, appreciation, fair treatment and even a pat on the back can be highly motivating.

1.8.8. Conducive Work Environment:

A supportive and conducive work environment is a key factor for any organization. There is a direct relationship between high morale and productivity. A good working environment is a sure way of improving creativity and output as, proper ambience creates a feel good environment for workers.

1.8.9. Stress Management and Health Care:

Stress has now become the leading cause for physical and mental illness. IT professionals are more prone to stress, mainly due to long working hours and a sedentary life style. Gym facilities, yoga and aerobic classes organized at workplace as well as delegation of work at home go a long way in stress management.
1.8.10. Self Awareness:

A form of intelligence, self-awareness is the understanding of one's own knowledge, attitudes, and opinions. Self awareness leads to self acceptance, making change and adaptability possible. This in turn ensures a high self-esteem.

1.8.11. Encouraging and Supportive Family:

Husband's understanding and ability to adjust, enable women to cope with crisis better. Motivation, encouragement and sacrifices made by the family goes a long way in helping women multi-task, reducing their stress appreciably, and improves their efficiency both at home and work.

1.8.12. Flexible Work Arrangements:

Happy employees make for happy workplace. Organizations ensure various flexible work arrangements such as flexi-time, allowing women to choose their own working time, working from home option is a boon for working mothers, compressed work weeks and part-time work or job sharing.

1.8.13. Social Impact:

Peer group influence plays a vital role in career development particularly, the influences of people of approximately the same age, social status, and interest influences individual's achievement, beliefs, and behaviors. However, social support at the family level is fading away due to increasing nuclear family norms, and at the organizational level due to automation systems.

1.8.14. Life Changes:

As women are starting to break the barriers to emerge from the confinements of their home we see a lot more female faces in every aspect of our life. We see women as world leaders, CEOs, captains and in various other positions of authority. It is very important for a female to be independent. A job or a regular source of income not only ensures this but, also makes her confident and helps her to deal with problems more efficiently. It provides a backbone to women. More women are engaging themselves in various work to bring about a change in their lives as well as society. Thus, we see more and more women given challenging jobs in various companies. They are bagging the top positions solely on the basis of their hard work and presence of mind.
1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The survey was conducted only in Bangalore, Chennai and Coimbatore and the questionnaire was administered to only 300 respondents. Hence, the results arrived from the study may or may not be applicable to other districts and states of India.
2. The questionnaire method which was adopted for collecting the data in this study has its own limitations.
3. Time was one major constraint in collecting data from the respondents. Information given by certain respondents was from memory, as they had no account of them.
4. The primary data collected during the survey was regarding the career development prevailing at that point of time. Hence, the research may vary with career planning and management.

Hence, the generalization of the findings of the study is subject to these limitations.

1.10. CHAPTER SCHEME

This empirical study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter I : Introduction and design of the study.
Chapter II : Review of literature.
Chapter III : An overview of career development and life changes.
Chapter IV : Data analysis and interpretation.
Chapter V : Summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion.