CHAPTER 8

Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions

8.1 Summary of findings

Major findings of the study can be summarized under a few sub headings as follows

8.1.1 Economic Prospects

It has been observed that IT is a lucrative career and it gives financial independence to professionals at a very young age. Gender equality is found to be observed in the pay pattern. Most of the IT workers own one or more cars, apartments, air conditioners etc. They show significant inclination towards branded commodities which stand witness to the cultural shift after globalisation. The spending capacity of IT family is found to be significantly higher when both the partners are working in IT.

8.1.2 Socio cultural findings

IT professionals veer away from the traditional socio-cultural practices of life either due to their work schedule or due to the cultural shift. Professionals above the age of 40 are found to be very less. Hindu and Christian representation is almost evenly balanced, but Muslims are found to be lesser in number. Representation of scheduled Caste and Scheduled
Tribe in the IT work force is found to be negligible. Inter-caste marriages are seen to be common among IT professionals in Kerala which is expected to be the outcome of financial independence at a relatively younger age. Onsite options cause the employees to stay separated from their families. Presence of parents of the professional or partner is found to be common in many families. This is mainly to serve as a back up in child-rearing and other household activities. The other reason is the dependence of parents on their wards at later stages of life. Rather than formal educational qualification, individual capability in software development determines one’s merit in employer’s assessment. In a nutshell, social involvement of IT professionals is found to be not promising.

**8.1.3 Health**

Information Technology work is found to affect the general health of IT professionals. Quantitative analysis, information from key informants and direct observation show that IT professionals face various life style diseases like overweight, hypertension, hypotension, eyestrains, neck/shoulder pains, indigestion problems etc.
8.1.4 Work Culture

Work culture is found to be inferior in IT industry in Kerala. Both the qualitative enquiry and quantitative findings corroborate that the IT companies are particular in hiring professionals who are committed to be in Kerala due to family-bound reasons. Only big Indian companies operating from Kerala show flexibility in recruiting staff irrespective of the domicile status of the candidate. Salary increment is observed to be at a very low rate compared to major IT destinations such as Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad etc. Majority are of the opinion that voluntary overtime work to complete the assigned task is a common practice in IT industry in Kerala. Performance-linked bonus is the pushing force behind this overtime. Sustainability in the field depends on skill updating. Struggle in completing the overloaded work, skill-updating, and discharging family commitments are highly stressful for the professional. Major portion of the employees do not utilize their leave period fully due to overload of work. Working from home option is largely rejected by the employees on the fear that work will further encroach on their already limited family time. Majority of the employees stick to the current employer not due satisfaction with the job, but due to their inability to move
either outside Kerala or within Kerala. Further, in some cases regulatory controls such as the MOU of G.TECH stand in the way of moving out of the job. Employees give high priority to options such as living with family above factors like brand image, technology, and salary when looking for a change. Majority of the IT work force is employed on a permanent basis while a lesser percentage opts for contract employment. IT employee can be summarily sacked any day without any reason. The job insecurity is found to cause stress among employees. In general IT employers in Kerala do not make any deliberate attempt to improve work-life balance. Instead they try to increase profit by relying on the near captive immobility of the employees. Rani, Kamalanabhan, and Selvarani (2011) observed that organisational growth depends on employee satisfaction which in turn is dependent on work-life balance. Hence the existing work culture will affect the IT growth of Kerala adversely.

8.1.5 Woman Representation

Female representation is found to be higher than that of male representation in the entry cadres but the percentage goes down significantly in the middle and upper level positions. This is because the women leave their career when the family
demands increase. Women professionals reach higher positions only at later ages because they take breaks for child rearing and other family bound responsibilities. Women working in IT are found to prolong having children due to career-related reasons. None of the IT organisations in Kerala give child care facilities at their work premises. Hogarth et al. (2000) and Doble and Supriya, (2010) found that women consider child care facilities at work place a major factor for achieving work-life balance. This study report also agrees with these findings. This study results also agree with the findings of Padmanabhan (2011) that women in IT industry in Kerala either leave career for the family or struggle between family responsibilities and career ambitions. The enquiry on the demands on career women in IT reveals that the IT women are putting up with this plight in silence because it remains an unnoticed and undiscussed area. This finding agrees with the observation of Shankar (2008) that the underrepresentation of women in decision making structures in IT industry may reduce the negotiating power of women for better work-life balance policies. This study results must be observed in the context of the suggestions of Valk and Srinivasan (2011) that better work-life
balance policies in IT segment help to explore the potential of women capital to address the shortage of professionals in IT.

**8.1.6 Family Environment**

Family environment of IT families are found to be inferior in general. The quality of family environment goes down when both the partners are working in IT. The study could not establish a relation between the family environment and the designation of the employee. The problems of children are not visible today but direct observation and discussions reveal a potential for concern on that front.

**8.1.7 Marital Quality**

Marital quality of the IT professionals in Kerala is not a promising one. The marital quality is observed to go down when both the partners are working in IT. The study could not establish a valid relationship between the job status and marital quality. A significant observation is the drinking habit of female IT professionals which stand witness to the degradation of family values. Marriage break downs are found to be on the increase among IT couples. Work-life imbalance is observed as the common cause in degradation of family environment and marital quality. This finding should be evaluated in the context of the suggestions of Ramanathan and
Vanitha (2011) for the implementation of work-life balance policies in IT segment for the benefit of the employee, organisation and the nation and its economic growth.

8.1.8 Stakeholders’ awareness of the problem

The government departments concerned like Labour department, IT department, Kerala state IT mission and the officials of the Technopark and Infopark do not have any authentic information on the size of the IT workforce in Kerala. Evidently, these departments do not have any hint on the problems of IT employees. The employers are on the lookout for cost reduction and short-term gains. The employees themselves perceive these problems as the natural fallout of the big earning. In short, the stakeholders’ scant awareness of the ill effects of IT employment on the familial space and their total blindness on the availability of pragmatic solutions towards the betterment of the situation brings the present study to the following suggestions. Implementing pragmatic policies to protect the human resource in IT is long overdue now.
8.2 Suggestions

8.2.1 Need to protect HR in IT

Kiran Karnik the Chairman of NASSCOM in 2005-2006, while presenting the organization’s annual\(^1\) report addressed the need to protect and nurture quality work force in IT industry to ensure their availability. He observed that India can reach greater heights, if we use this potential advantage of human capital with long-term objective. Mittal (2011) The chairman NASSCOM 2010-2011, based on his conversations with fortune 500 company heads in the US commented that the US considers India not only as the prime destination for cheap labour but also as the strategic partner in technological advancement. He argues for the need to maintain and improve the quality of the resource to exploit these new opportunities.

8.2.2 Flexible work environment

Scandura and Lankau (1997) opined that workers in a flexible working environment show more organizational commitments. Eaton (2000) observed that the family-friendly policy does not make any improvement in organizational commitment of the employee unless it provides a work culture which enables the employees the free and fearless enjoyment of

\(^1\) Source: [www.nasscom.org](http://www.nasscom.org)
flexibility. It has been observed in this study as well that employees are reluctant to use their available leave because of the work pressure. In such an environment flexible work hours neither make any improvement in attitude of the employee towards the organization nor in the work-life balance of the employee.

8.2.3 Abandoning overtime

ACS (Australian Computer Society) suggests that the working hours in IT should be from 10am to 3 pm (Mandla et. al. 2005). Bailyn, Drago and Kochan (2001) observed that an American software company called SAS Institute Inc., which has more than 5000 employees, introduced work-life policy based on their understanding that s/w development is an all consuming industry which leads to burn out. They introduced a rule that even the CEO of the organization should leave before the gates close by 6 in the evening. This company provides enough sick leave. It also provides child care facilities and eat together facilities for families in their cafeteria. Here the salary is not as huge as is common in the industry, but their attrition rate is very low and 51 percent of work force is women. This is certainly a model which can be practised in Kerala too. Such work practice, flexible working hours, salary and so on can be
well adapted to the Kerala IT context. The employer, here can utilize the available resources in a more efficient way than overworking the workforce under duress. This trend has to be introduced as a work culture.

8.2.4 Workload reduction

Knowledge updating is a mandatory requirement for sustaining the IT industry. To retain the competitive advantage, the organization should provide facilities for its employees to update their skills. It is observed that, a large percentage of employees are preoccupied about their lack of time in updating knowledge. The researcher in informal communication with the employees found that the IT professionals use self-applied means to update their skills mainly by self learning process and technology group interactions over internet. One to one chat or/and group discussions help them in updating themselves. Researcher’s observation is in alignment with the findings of Upadya and Vasavi (2006) that IT employees generally update knowledge and skills in informal ways. Hence long hours of work as reported by a large percent of employees hinder them from learning new technologies. The practical solution to this is nothing but a reduction in the work load rather than the work hours because a good percentage works overtime voluntarily to
complete the task. Even if work hours are reduced in Kerala employees are liable to work overtime to complete the task. So policy change should be made at the organizational level to reduce the work load.

NASSCOM HR summit in Chennai on 3 July 2008 strongly suggests the need to implement work-life balance policies such as flexible work hours, child care facilities, keeping work hours judicious etc to attract and retain talents in IT industry.

**8.2.5 Family time for children**

Crouter et al. (1990) observed that children of career couples performed better in school when their after school activities are monitored by parents. India is expected to become a developed country by 2020 with its human capital. The children of the academically and logically bright IT parents inherit qualities such as brilliance and hard work. These qualities must be explored in the proper way to nurture them into valuable capital. So the industry leaders also, as part of their business agenda should put in some efforts to make career couples available for their children during after school hours to generate the next level quality employees.

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2 Source: Workforce Dynamics – Demographics, Diversity and Multi-sourcing: Do standard HR programs fit the changing dynamics. [www.nasscom.org](http://www.nasscom.org)
8.2.6 Social involvement

Programs must be designed according to the local needs. In Kerala culture, attending funerals, marriages etc have a significant role in social life. So organization must design a leave policy which does not affect this social involvement as well as the business objective of the organization. For example, a person working on projects meant for US clients can’t enjoy leave on Independence Day in India while s/he need not work during holidays in US. Such situations can be avoided by an open dialogue between the Indian partner and the US counterpart. Here also the issue is that the employees are reluctant to use their available leave because of work pressure. Hence allocating required number of employees to the project is more important than anything else in the Kerala context.

Since Australia’s population is culturally and linguistically diverse, work-life balance manual suggests the need of cultural and ceremonial leave for celebrating indigenous festivals. The same is highly relevant in Kerala culture as well and employees must be given unpaid leave to join in such customary celebration which definitely reduces their work stress and improve productivity.
Software companies follow a highly individualized approach to employees. Each employee is supposed to keep to her/himself his/her salary details; one is not supposed to share even project details with employees of other organizations. But the Kerala culture has a deep-rooted custom of people attending rituals, cultural festivals, family functions etc as mandatory part of social involvement. Hence the Kerala populace is more family-oriented. The employer tries to make an employee highly individualized; while, conversely, the social set up tries to emphasize the value of tradition. This causes conflict.

8.2.7 Use women potential

In order to advance the women professionals’ chances to continue in the industry after marriage and child birth we must look in to the outdated attitudes of role definitions in family. In a conventional family, child rearing and home managing is always considered to be women’s responsibility. In such an environment it is difficult for a woman to reach higher positions in IT employment. The European Commission’s report (2008) makes a strong statement: “Stereotyping constitutes a barrier to individual choice for both men and women...Action to combat gender-based stereotypes must start at a very young age and
should promote behaviour or models which value individual choices of educational pathways and support equality between men and women, also in the sharing of domestic and family duties.” The report goes on to say: “The media as a whole must participate in efforts to tackle stereotypical images of women and men and must promote a realistic image of their abilities”. Hence our education and family systems should incorporate the idea that child rearing and home management is a combined effort of both partners and not a single person’s responsibility. Efforts must be taken to inculcate such idea in our social system.

**8.2.7.1 Human Rights of a pregnant woman**

Article 21 of the constitution enforces the right to health of the mother and child. Article 25.2 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights Law which is considered to be the force of customary international law states that Mother and Child are entitled to special care and assistance. All children whether born in or out of wedlock shall enjoy the same social protection.

India has ratified the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Article 10.2 of ICESCR says that special protection should be accorded to mothers for a reasonable period before and after child birth. During this
period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits. Article 6 and 7 ensure her right to work within reasonable working hours. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Woman (CEDAW) is ratified by India and it spells out the reproductive rights of women. Article 11.2 clearly defines the government’s responsibility in ensuring pregnant women’s rights at work.

**Article 11.2:** In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, the article states that parties concerned shall take appropriate measures:

a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discriminatory practices like dismissals on the basis of marital status;

b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation
in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-
care facilities;

d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

Protection of Human Rights Acts 1993 (PHRA) recognizes that the above conventions are now part of the Indian Human Rights Law. Section 2(d) PHRA defines “human rights” to mean “the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.”


Since the above conventions are now part of the Indian Human Rights Law it is to be made mandatory in the IT sector wherein the corporate culture of ownership is to be toned down to a more pluralistic employee-centered ethos.
Hence the government of India and the respective state
governments are responsible to implement an adequate
welfare scheme for pregnant women in this highly lucrative
profession

It is observed that, as in any business organization, the
growth of Indian IT business also depends on the customer
satisfaction. Uninterrupted high quality service is required for
achieving this goal. At the same time protecting the basic
human rights is vital for the effective long term functioning of
any employment system and, moreover, it is a primary
obligation of the State to interpret with some sensitivity the
meaning of the rights it has ensured its citizens. In a business
perspective also, implementation of family-friendly policies have
strong implication. Waldfogel (1998) demonstrated that
generous maternity-leave policies help higher rate of employee
retention following childbirth. Waldfogel suggested that even
though this policy is costly, comparing the cost of recruitment
in long- term perspective, applying this policy is effective.

Weighing these considerations of equal relevance the
following suggestions are made for general consideration:

1) Pregnant women’s working hour should not exceed 8 hrs.

If the existing client requirement demands more working
hours substitute a pregnant employee with another without cutting into her benefits.

2) An order by the government not to lay off any woman during pregnancy for whatsoever reason.

3) Allow feeding mothers to take a break for 6 months with all allowances and full salary. If required let her to take a break for another 6 months without perks or benefits but without any serious service loss.

4) When a woman comes back to the industry after a break she should be given intensive training on new technologies and made competent.

5) In return for the investment in terms of manpower updating by the company, the employee remains bonded to the organization for a required period of time. In case of a change in job within a year of rejoining the employee can be required to adequately compensate the company.

6) Incorporate these decisions as part of the quality process of the company and make the employees loyal to their parent organization.

Union ministry of women and child, in October 2010, came up with a novel program, the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) approved by the cabinet committee
on Economic affairs for the welfare of lactating and pregnant women especially in the rural areas. It does not cover the Central and State government employees because they are already being protected under the care of maternity leave. But it shows the concern of the government of India in protecting the interest of pregnant women. These points discussed here are left unnoticed because all eyes are fixed on the lucrative part of IT employment.

Meeting the demands of economic, social and family relationships in the 21st century requires a new and broad-ranging approach to a dynamic employment model of social partnership within a strong regulatory framework. There is now an urgent need to address these issues for India to have a competitive edge in the global economy where there are arrangements to fit better the employee’s diverse circumstances and aspirations

8.2.8 Day Care Centres

A good percentage is worried about the lack of support facilities near their work sites. Shared day care centre is an option where individual day care centres may not be economically viable for small organizations. The infrastructure providers such as Infopark, Technopark etc can start such
facilities. Ford motor company and Union of Automobile Workers in US (UAW-United Auto Workers) jointly started a crèche for its workers. Here children of workers and managers get the same privilege; they, moreover, make use of local community involvement. This initiative makes the company a preferred employer among employees. The involvement of local community in setting up shared services in child care will be a possible method for small and medium enterprises where cost is also a factor. Tax deductions for employers facilitating such environment (Bailyn, Drago and Kochan 2001) can also be thought of. This kind of initiatives can be started in Kerala as well to reduce the work-family conflict.

Significant percentage responded that their parents live with them to support them and also because their parents need the back up of their children. It certainly points to the necessity of day care centre for elders also. It can also help them in keeping a balance in work and life.

Victoria state government suggests feeding rooms associated with workplace to help feeding mothers to continue their career. Also healthy, hygienic facilities to express milk are another alternative for feeding women. Establishing these kind of facilities are certainly a necessity to retain women workforce
in IT. Australian Computer Society in its work policy report suggests reduction in tax on employee’s salary for the amount which they contribute to build support systems like day care centres, health clubs etc. This is a very valid suggestion that can be imbibed in the Indian context where cost is a factor to establish such facilities.

8.2.9 Carer’s Room

In the study none of the IT employee in career couple family agree that they can take their child to office when an unexpected situation arises and a child can’t go to school. Never once did the researcher spot the presence of a single child in either Technopark or Infopark campus during the study visits to the park. The lack of a carer’s room is the reason for that. Office of Indigenous Policy Co-ordination (OIPC) Certified Agreement 2005–2007 in state of Victoria in Australia suggested the need of carer’s room in offices where employee can safely keep a child or an elder person when a situation arises. Similar set up can be helpful in each park, more practically on shared services model. In this room the dependent child or parent can wait till the work is over and employee is free to go home.
8.2.10 Implementing on the job fitness program

A significant percentage of IT workforce is found to face health problems. Companies suggest health programs but do not make provision for time. Hence companies should see to it that time is allocated for that.

Wattles and Harris (2003) suggest that fitness programs may positively influence employees’ productivity, job satisfaction and absenteeism. Interventions like ergonomics and fitness programs help to improve the working conditions for the software professionals. Improved physical conditions and morale can contribute to cost savings due to a lowering in health care premiums, lower absenteeism and increased productivity. Charpe (2009) observed that implementing on-the-job fitness program reduces, considerably, the musculoskeletal illness like back pain in software professionals.

8.2.11 Starting Health facility centre

Singh (2009) opined that marriage counsellors have a lot of importance in guiding couples through stormy seas and averting the imminent pain of divorce. Sexologists and psychologists interviewed also suggested the role of counsellors in the early stages of the conflict. This is possible if such facilities are available in the work place. One sexologist
interviewed pointed out that if he opens a clinic in Technopark or Infopark no one will come to him because it will brand him as a psycho-sexual patient. But if there is a facility centre where doctors of variegated disciplines come, naturally the professionals will come if they face some sort of stress or sexual problems. Also, it is difficult for individual companies to start such facilities because most of the companies belong to SME group. So it is advisable to start shared services which render the service of allopathic / ayurvedic physicians, marriage counsellors, sexologist, psychologist etc. Tele-counselling to employees is another significant option that can be undertaken by health facility centres.

The single parent family was only 11 percent of American families in 1970 but its percentage grew to 25.7 in 1984((Norton and Glick, 1986). The figures soared to 26.6 percentage in 1994 (Blau, Ferber and Winkler, 1998). These social changes happened along with the technological development of US. Singh (2009) argued that to combat the continuing erosion of family values and family systems, strong consistent policies should be set up. According to him India has to face the problem encountered by many developed countries. The change in family and moral values of Keralites has been observed in
this study, and this leads to the necessity of formulating policies for creating facilities and support structures to address the above problems.

**8.2.12 Stress Management/Time Management Programs**

McDougall (1999) opines that stress management, time management, childcare and counselling services can reduce stress levels and absenteeism. Many Bangalore and Chennai-based companies have already started these programs for the well being of the employees. One of the psychologists who participated in the interview is working as a resource person for a CMM Level 5 company for their employees in Tamilnadu and Karnataka. This company employs this psychologist’s service to counsel their employees when they face problems. This company has a division in Kerala and they have started to use her service. But no other company provides any such facilities for the employees. Rather than employing counsellors and consultants on an individual basis, companies can think of such facilities as shared services based in Infopark and Technopark. This will certainly reduce the cost for providing these facilities.
8.2.13 Include Life Skill Education in curriculum

Our curriculum at all academic levels lack courses regarding life skills. Robbins and McFadden (2003) argued that people have less stress in their lives, both at home and at work when they have the skills necessary to balance their lives. In favourable circumstances, adolescents acquire critical adaptive skills in the family, among friends, and in the neighbourhoods but most people will need added skills gained through systematic instruction and practice in the classroom. Teaching skills in the areas of time and finance management, health and nutrition, parenting and family relations, job preparedness, decision making, and coping strategies would help children acquire the knowledge, ability, and attitudes necessary for success in life. This argument is based on a study conducted by Felstehausen, G., and Couch, S. (1989). They developed a model for linking research to practice which emerged out of the data collected from teachers who indicated why and where they included work and family issues in the secondary curriculum. Work and family concepts were most likely to be included in 1) family relations and 2) parenting and child development classes. The results of a follow-up to two major work and family satisfaction surveys were used by Felstehausen, Couch, and
Wragg (1993) as the basis of a curriculum to teach life skills to adolescents. They defined life-skills as the skills needed to be a healthy and productive member of the community. These skills enable the adolescent to become a self-sufficient and productive citizen.

Introducing life skill education in our higher secondary level of education will help equip our youth in managing work and life equally. Since IT is found to be weak in work-Life balance, continuing education in life skills can supplement engineering and technical education discipline as well. An Information Technology worker who has learned these skills as an adolescent will be better able to cope with the rigors of his/her new and demanding role in life. Although government has started a new venture called finishing school, their focus is only on horning the technical skill sets of the candidate to make them employable. Courses on enhancing the capability of individuals to implement work-life balance in tight work schedule will certainly be a agenda to be explored by the finishing schools.
8.2.14 Formation of employees union/professional association

Bailyn, Drago and Kochan (2001) suggested the necessity of professional associations/ labour unions for the formulation of polices for alleviating the work-life balance issues. But India’s stand on formation of union in IT sector is not encouraging. Sandu (2006) reported the views of Azim Premji of Wipro that formation of union will tarnish India’s IT/ITES image in the global economy. Sandu reports the view of Kiran Karnik, the then NASSCOM chairman, that IT employees are not interested in union formation because they are content with their work condition. The current study proved without any doubt that IT industry workers in Kerala are not content with the work conditions and they have work-life balance issues. Comparing the views of the learned employers and employees the researcher suggest the formation of professional association of IT work force which can provide a space for both the family and technical discussions. It certainly won’t disturb the competitiveness of India in global economy; all the same they can participate in IT employment policy making in general and also at the organizational level.
Take for instance the case of Australia, the government also speaks of enhancing choice for employers and employees to reach special agreements – allowing employers and employees to ‘sit down together’ and negotiate conditions that suit their mutual needs, including greater opportunities to balance work and family. But Stewart (2006) argues that this is a ‘convenient fiction’, and he suggests that ‘out in the real world, almost nobody believes this’. These reforms, as the present study bears out, are more likely to shift the balance of power in favour of the employers. Employee choices are more likely to be hampered than enhanced, because they are now more likely to be subject to the imposition of employer choices. Stewart, here, tries to show that these suggestions by the government try to unethically support the employer and sideline the views of Australian Industrial Relations Commissions.

8.2.15 Documenting policies

The awareness of employees about the various schemes, and facilities and rights is necessary if they are to benefit from them. Exhibiting family-friendly practices in notice boards, cafeterias etc are a good way of dissemination of information. At the same time, it reminds the employees about their own obligation towards their organization in return.
8.2.16 Difficulties in implementing the work-life balance policies

It is a common belief that an employee is just an employee to an organization and maximum utilization of his/her services will take the organization to success. But in the long term it is a holistic approach of treating the employee as a part and parcel of the organization and exploring the best in him by providing an excellent work environment where his family is a major point of concern that will help the organization. Educating organisations and leadership about the benefits of long term objectives, is an important task in implementing the work life balance policies. In the context of the software industry in Kerala, the organizations which, try not to win but just to stay afloat is a hurdle in implementing these strategies. They do not have any long-term objective but to grab money as and when the situation favours them. Not only in industry but in all facets of development, the short-term outlook is a hindrance to sustainable development and that has to be addressed by the government which can mandate business houses to set long term objective for the total quality development instead of resorting to unacceptable practices.
The National Government can think of introducing some ceiling for salaries (maximum salary) similar to the minimum wages for a particular employment in lower grade jobs.

8.2.17 Role of IT mission

The big role that the IT Mission Kerala can play in the current scenario can be observed in the context of a similar organizational set up in Australian industry. Business Victoria\(^3\) is a comprehensive online resource designed to help entrepreneurs to start, run and grow business in Victoria State in Australia. It is published by state government of Victoria and managed by the Department of Innovation Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD). This site has online toolkit \textbf{ways2work}\(^4\) for parents, care givers and employers helping people come back to the paid work stream and promoting work and family life. The major objective is giving directions for creating a family-friendly workplace which treats family life and professional life equally.

A very similar operation is possible by the departments like Kerala state IT Mission or by the IT department or Labour Departments. The ways2work floats family friendly policy as a tool to attract and retain talent and reduce cost of recruitment

\(^3\) Source \url{http://www.business.vic.gov.au}
\(^4\) Source \url{http://ways2work.business.vic.gov.au}
and training. It also suggests family friendly policy as a good caption for organizations to be known as good corporate citizens. So even though the express objective of IT mission is economic growth through IT industry, the implementation of family friendly policy through this organization is ideal for achieving its objective.

Australia faces diminishing student enrolment rate in ICT disciplines and low participation rates of women in the ICT workforce, due to its bad image as an employment segment of burn out and break down. The ICT industry must improve its reputation and practices to attract more students and women to ICT disciplines and to industry to meet the future demand within the Australian economy. Australian Computer Society (ACS) developed a policy on work life issues which provides guidance and recommendations for employers and employees in the ICT industry. This policy is developed by a working group of ICT leaders, practitioners and HR specialists from across Australia (Mandla et al 2005). The policy report goes on to say that to make Australia an on shoring centre of IT jobs it must implement work life balance policies. The same scenario of low enrolment rate in ICT education may happen in India as well. If a lack of adequate qualified human resource is felt in India, the
investment in infrastructure development by converting agriculture lands into IT spaces will have adverse effect on our economic growth. For a better future of ICT industry ICT work environment must become flexible, must have adequate leave, and must have options for Gym, Health exercises for nurturing a strong work force for tomorrow's need and also incorporate facilities such as crèche, elder care centres etc to attract women employees. Like Australian Computer Society, IT Mission Kerala can also contribute significantly in HR policy making and implementation.

8.2.18 Some more suggestions

1) Abolish the MOU of Technopark companies banning selection from member organisation. Fairly large percentage of employee force is against it so much so that it has even been nicknamed 'Bonded Labour'. Provide standard pay hikes and work-life balance options to prevent attrition.

2) Remuneration in IT industry is at its peak compared to other industries and government sector. But the complaint is that in Kerala, the rate of salary increase is not according to market norms and in two or three years it can reach levels much lower than what exists
in other states for comparable positions. So it would be necessary to make it at par with other states, or allocate stock options of the organization as an incentive.

3) The major complaint heard is lack of enough number of resources (personnel) in projects. This is a critical problem more acute than the salary issue, and is likely to affect their life on a day-to-day basis. Hence allow for enough number of resources.

4) Recruiting irrespective of the domicile of the candidate definitely gives leverage to the industry in the long term, even though it doesn’t look attractive in the short term. Hence organizations should, whenever possible, try to recruit irrespective of domicile.

8.3 Conclusion

The study which culminated in this work formally started only in 2007, but it is the outcome of research journeys since 2004 onwards. During these years the IT Scenario has undergone many changes globally and specifically in Kerala. Smart City, the dream IT project by Kerala Government in private-public mode was launched. The world witnessed a
massive global meltdown the repercussions of which were felt in the form of some companies in Infopark and Technopark closing down; many lost their jobs due to recession during these years. Now again IT is in the upswing. Many parents are channelling their children into IT education dreaming of a lucrative career in their own home town.

Reflected here is the major concern of employers as well as employees about IT work culture being highly demanding at a personal level. The splurge of IT money comes at the cost of the employees severely compromising their life outside work. The employees are of the opinion that, their modern life style is at the cost of their traditional family and social life. There is no way to improve the work-life balance in the present Kerala context. This is the common attitude heard from all the stakeholders in the industry. Further to the suggestions given here to change the scenario, it is a topic that needs further research- how can work life balance be implemented in Kerala in the IT sector to make the state a favourite of Employee’s choice which is ultimately mandatory to keep Kerala as an employer’s choice.