ABSTRACT

The study entitled “Gender Dimensions of Employment in Kerala- A Study With Reference to ICT” examines the main features of the software and services workforce in Kerala with particular emphasis on gender aspects of employment in the sector. It is organized in nine chapters. The study found that the state of Kerala at present has an insignificant position in software and services industry in the country. But of late there are indications of a gradual take off of the industry in the state.

Women representation in technical side of software industry in Kerala was observed to be less than one third of the workforce with increasing entry reported over the years. Women were observed to be concentrated at the lower end of the work pyramid and remained under represented at the top level jobs indicating the existence of a glass ceiling and reproduction of traditional patterns of vertical sex segregation in the information economy also.

IT was perceived to offer a level playing field for women employees without significant gender differences in many work characteristics. Gender disparity in remuneration reported in other scientific and technical fields in India was also not observed in the IT field particularly among young professionals. However the work culture of the industry coupled with onset of caring responsibilities after marriage was noted to turn the so called level field into an unequal one for female professionals with family commitments. It created an invisible ceiling which confined most female professionals to the middle management level and prevented them from reaching the maxima of their career potential.

Work in IT sector was noted to be contributing to women empowerment and was also instrumental in initiating fundamental changes in the socio-economic fabric of the state. It was leading to the emergence of new forms of working such as home based tele-working in certain segments of the industry like medical transcription which was found to relax the barriers of age and geographical location for females.

Based on the findings of the study, a number of policy measures were suggested which we hope will serve to address the issues faced and help to enhance women’s achieved functionings.

KEYWORDS: Information Communication Technology/ Information Technology, electronic industry, software and services industry, software industry, Information Technology Enabled Services, workforce, glass ceiling, hierarchy, human resource, Business Process Outsourcing, tele-work, flexible work, work- life balance, work culture, gender equality, vertical sex segregation, work pyramid, career progression.