

**SUSTAINABLE CAREERS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA - A
STUDY OF THE ISSUES, CHALLENGES, AND ENABLERS IN
THE IT SECTOR**

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By**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “Sustainable careers for women in India- A Study of the issues, challenges, and enablers in the IT sector”, submitted by SWATI SINGH, bearing Reg. No. 16MBPH10 in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Management Studies is a bonafide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

Further, the student has attended courses, workshops, and seminars as per the course requirements and has following publications and presentations at the time of the submission of this thesis. The student has produced evidence for the same in the relevant area of this thesis.

Publications

1.Singh, S., & Vanka, S. (2021). Career Break, not a Brake on Career: A Study of the Reasons and Enablers of Women’s Re-entry to Technology Careers in India. *Business Perspectives and Research*, 9(2), 195–214.

2.Singh, S., & Vanka, S. (2020). Mentoring is essential but not sufficient: sponsor women for leadership roles, *Development and Learning in Organizations*, 34 (6), 25-28.

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Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfilment of course work requirement for Ph.D.

S. No.	Course	Course Name	Credits	Result
1	Core Course	Statistics for Business Analytics	3	Pass
2	Core Course	Research Methodology	3	Pass
3	Core Course	Academic Writing for Doctoral Students	4	Pass
4	Seminar Course	Career Branding	3	Pass

Further, the student has attended a ten-day ICSSR Sponsored Research Methodology Course, organized by the School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad during 09-18 July 2019.

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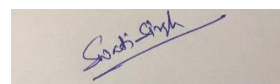
Prof. Mary Jessica

DECLARATION

I, Swati Singh, hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “**Sustainable careers for women in India- A study of the issues, challenges, and enablers in the IT sector**”, submitted by me under the guidance and research supervision of Prof. V. Sita is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodganga /INFLIBNET.

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ABSTRACT

The career development and advancement of women professionals in technology sector has been a topic of copious research, deliberation, and discussion since long. There is plenty of research on issues and challenges faced by women in Information Technology (IT) sector too. Alongside it, as more and more women continue to enter the workforce, corporates and governments are also keen to support women's career through effective practices and policy regulations. Despite these advancements, women continue to drop out of technology careers, with this voluntary drop-out being highest during the mid-career level. This voluntary drop out jeopardises career sustainability of women professionals. Although extensive research has been carried out on women's career, there is a lack of detailed investigation on issues related to sustainable career development of women's professional. Further, it is also intriguing why women continue to leave organizations despite the availability of flexible work arrangements, how and why they enter the dynamic IT sector after a career break. This thesis attempts to answer these questions. Additionally, this thesis also studies the role of organizational career management practices in IT sector which is known for gender-based talent drain.

To this end, this thesis focuses on three key aspects of sustainable career development of women i.e., workplace flexible work arrangement and women's career with special focus on flexibility bias, career reentry after a career break, and role of organizational career management practices in sustainable career development. The study investigates these three aspects with the help of three different studies – a survey based quantitative study, an interview based qualitative study, and a case study. The results of the studies indicate that perception of workplace flexibility bias may attenuate the purpose of flexible work arrangement. Result indicated that workplace flexibility bias positively influenced turnover intention, negative work to family spillover, and work alienation among women professionals. The results of qualitative

study revealed the reasons and enablers of career reentry among women professionals. It highlighted the importance of career identity, and work centrality as a propeller for career reentry. Further the study also revealed that women need different types of enablers for career reentry, signifying the importance of support ecosystem and active agency for career restart. The case study revealed that organizational career management practices are crucial. A gamut of career support and career management practices with distinct orientation towards women's career needs at different career stages are vital for sustainable career development of women professionals. Based on the results of three studies a framework for sustainable career development of women professionals is also presented in the thesis.

CONTENT

Description	Page No.
Certificate	i -ii
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv-v
Abstract.....	vi-vii
Content	viii-xi
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii
Abbreviations	xiv
Notations.....	xv
CHAPTER I	
1. Introduction.....	1-17
Sustainable career-the concept.....	5-7
1.1 Women professionals in technology careers: global perspective.....	7-9
1.2 Women professionals in Information technology careers: an Indian perspective.....	9-10
1.3 Organizational initiatives to support women in IT careers	11-12
1.3.1 The Problem persists.....	11
1.4 Need for the study.....	12-13
1.5 Motivation for the research.....	13-14
1.6 Overview of the thesis.....	14-17
CHAPTER II	
2. Literature Review	18-43
2.1 Flexible work arrangements.....	19-26
2.1.1 Types of Flexible Work Arrangements.....	20-26
2.1.2 Benefits of Flexible work arrangements to women professionals.....	20-21
2.1.3 The dark side of work flexibility.....	21-25
2.1.4 Workplace flexibility bias and Turnover Intentions	25-26

2.2 Career break.....	26-33
2.2.1 Career Reentry and women professionals.....	27-28
2.2.2 Issues and challenges to career reentry	28-31
2.2.3 Issues and Challenges to career reentry for women in Indian context.....	31-33
2.3 Organizational career management for women professionals	34-43
2.3.1 Organizational career management.....	34-35
2.3.2 Organizational career models and women’s career.....	35-38
2.3.3 Organizational career management practices for women’s career development....	
.....	38-43

CHAPTER III

3. Research gap, Research questions, and Objectives44-00

3.1 Research Gap45-46

3.1.1 Workplace flexibility bias.....	46-47
3.1.2 Career re-entry after a career break.....	47-48
3.1.3 Organizational career management practices and women’s career.....	48-49

3.2 Research questions and objectives – key variables and conceptual framework.49-59

3.2.1 Workplace flexibility bias.....	49-50
<i>Mediating variables</i>	50-53
<i>Theory and conceptual framework</i>	53-54
<i>Research questions and Research objectives – Workplace flexibility bias</i>	55

3.2.2 Research questions and Research objectives – Career Reentry among women professionals in IT.....	56
--	----

3.2.3 Research questions and Research objectives – Organizational career management practices for sustainable career of women professionals	56-57
---	-------

3.3 Research objectives and corresponding studies.....57-59

CHAPTER IV

4. Research methodology 60-70

4.1 Study wise overview of research methodology.....62-65

4.2 Sampling Procedure and Technique.....65-00

4.2.1 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study I.....	66-67
<i>Sample Size Determination & Justification</i>	67
4.2.2 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study II.....	68-69
4.2.3 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study III.....	69-70
CHAPTER V	
5. Analysis and Results.....	71-00
5.1 Study I.....	71-00
5.1.1 Procedures and Participants.....	73-74
Pilot testing and instrument validation.....	74-76
5.1.2 Data collection and sample characteristics.....	76-77
5.1.3 Common method variance.....	77
5.1.4 Descriptive statistics.....	78
5.1.5 Structural Equation modelling (SEM).....	78-83
<i>Measurement model</i>	78-80
<i>Hypothesis testing</i>	81-82
<i>Mediation analysis</i>	82-83
5.1.6 Key findings – Study I.....	83-84
5.2 Study II.....	85-106
5.2.1 Procedure and participants.....	85-87
<i>Data Collection</i>	86
<i>Sample characteristics</i>	87
5.2.2 Data analysis and results.....	87-92
5.2.3 Reasons for career re-entry.....	87-92
5.2.4 Enablers of career reentry.....	93-98
5.3 Study III.....	99-00
Tata Consultancy Services – The case.....	99
5.3.1 Procedure.....	99-100
5.3.2 Case Study	100-106
5.3.3 Key findings.....	107

CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Conclusion.....	108-121
6.1 Discussion.....	109-111
6.2 Contributions.....	112-114
6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions.....	112-113
6.2.2 Practical Contributions.....	113-114
6.3 Recommendations.....	115-118
6.3.1 Framework for sustainable career development of women professionals.....	116-118
6.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research.....	119-120
6.5 Conclusion.....	121
Bibliography.....	121-140
Appendices.....	141-165

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1- Summary of research related to workplace flexibility bias.....	23
Table 2.2 - Issues and challenges related to women’s career break and career reentry...	29
Table 3.1- Summary of research questions, research objectives and corresponding studies.....	57
Table 4.1 A snapshot of research methodology employed for different studies.....	65
Table 5.1 Construct reliability and validity for pilot sample.....	75
Table 5.2 Discriminant validity for the pilot sample.....	76
Table 5.3 Sample characteristics.....	77
Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics.....	78
Table 5.5 CFA- Reliability assessment.....	80
Table 5.6 Discriminant Validity.....	80
Table 5.7 Hypothesis testing- direct relationship.....	82
Table 5.8 – Mediation analysis.....	83
Table 5.9 Demographic profile of respondents.....	86
Table 5.9a- Thematic analysis- Reasons of career reentry.....	91
Table 5.9bThematic analysis- Enablers of career reentry.....	95
Table 5.9c Orientation and Benefits of career management and support practices of TCS.....	104

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. 1- Outline of the thesis.....	16
Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework.....	54
Figure 4.1- Overview of research methodology.....	62
Figure 4.2. Research onion model.....	63
Figure 5.1 Measurement model.....	79
Figure 5.2 – Structural model and path analysis.....	82
Fig 5.3 Career reentry framework based on career enablers identified in the study.....	97
Figure 5.4– Gender diversity at TCS.....	105
Figure 5.5- Percentage of women professionals at different levels.....	106
Figure 6.1 Framework for sustainable career development of women professionals....	116

ABBREVIATIONS

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CMB	Common Method Bias
CR	Composite Reliability
DOF/DF	Degrees of freedom
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index
HR	Human Resource
LLCI	Lower Limit Confidence Interval
NWFS	Negative work to family spillover
RMSEA	Route Mean Square Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TCS	Tata Consultancy Services
TI	Turnover intention
TLI	Trucker Lewis Index
ULCI	Upper Limit Confidence Interval
WA	Work alienation
WFB	Workplace flexibility bias

NOTATIONS

% Percentage

Σ Sum of Observations

δ Error Variance

χ^2 Chi-Square

λ Loadings

β Un-Standardized Beta Coefficient

H Hypothesis

n Number of Observations

p / p-value Probability Value of Significance Level

R -Square Coefficient of Determination

S-B χ^2 Satorra – Bentler Chi-Square

t t-Statistic

X Independent Variable

Y Dependent Variable

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The work context of the contemporary era mirrors the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of the landscape in which it unfolds. The changing work context characterized by demographic changes, altering work relations, technological advances, socio-cultural changes, and increased regulatory frameworks around work, impinged career sustainability to a great extent. The contemporary work context presents unpatrolled uncertainties and hardships, amidst this volatile scenario careers are under tremendous pressure. Under such a context curating a sustainable career has become a challenge. The scenario signifies a need for enhanced attention for crafting sustainable careers that adopts a long-term perspective for career development, focusing on renewability, flexibility, and balance (De Vos et al., 2020).

While developing a sustainable career is challenging in general, it is even more challenging for women professionals in specific. Women's careers are often non-linear (Herman, 2015a). Furthermore, women's careers in technology and science sectors are reported to depict non-linear trajectories to a large extent (Ahuja, 2002). The voluntary drop out of women professionals from technology careers is a global phenomenon. The problem of drop out of talented women from workforce has gained attention of scholars who have explored the situation relating it to several research issues like glass ceiling, workplace stereotypes, systemic barriers to name a few (Kirton & Robertson, 2018) . Researchers in the Indian context have concluded that major reason of the drop-out is the socio-cultural environment in India which puts tremendous pressure to perform series of non-work roles along with the work responsibilities (Srinivasan et al., 2013). However the similar drop out in western context

(Silbey, 2016) often referred as opt out revolution which is an entirely different socio-cultural setting, raises questions and demands further probe on issue.

The women world-wide are less likely to enter and more likely to leave science and IT careers at relatively higher rate, and this leave rate is highest during the mid-career stage leaving very few women at the top (Catalyst,2018). The sharp decline of women participation in workforce, primarily due to drop out in India is alarming (World Bank, 2017), which is evident from the statistics – female are 51% of total IT workforce at entry level, 34% at mid-level and have a meagre single digit representation at the top level (Shyamsunder & Carter, 2014). The problem has a multi-level impact, and it surely makes a business case.

Studies have proved that organizations with more women in workforce have reported to have higher profits, stock prices, return on equity and earning per share, in short better financial performance (Catalyst,2004). An inclusive workplace ensures a better environment for organizational learning. Apart from the long-term benefits linked with the women participation the cost of hiring and training should also be considered while assessing the overall loss due to the gender-based brain drain. The loss of losing trained women employees at their mid-level career amasses into a big cumulative loss resulting in the loss of competitive advantage too (Ioannidis & Walther, 2010). Thus, the gender related brain drain is indeed a matter of great concern for the organizations. Moreover, in countries like India where the problem is already very acute, and the next generation talent pool is going to be more diverse with a large number of women getting enrolled for technical education and higher education at a faster rate (Sindwani, 2020).

The growing number of women in technical education ensures a greater availability of women participants for recruitment at entry level. However, if the leaky pipeline of talent drain is not fixed, more and more of women would leave the workforce, ultimately adding to the

overall cost and eventually a big loss to organizations. Thus, creating sustainable careers for women IT professional is not only essential for women employees but a necessity for IT organizations as well.

The IT sector is highly demanding, and it characterized by fierce competition, technological advancements at a fast rate, 24*7 work requirements and need for continuous skill upgrading. Together these factors put immense pressure on the careers of individual who are employed in the sector. Although the past researches have studied issues pertaining women professionals in India (Baral & Bhargava, 2011), (Srinivasan et al., 2013) focusing mainly on a certain work behaviours and career stages, but a more comprehensive theory based view is required with focus on key issues related to different career stages of women professionals to provide a detailed picture with respect to career sustainability.

The issues and challenges related to career sustainability are intricately linked with the issues of career planning, career development and career management across the lifespan. Traditional career theories have incorporated all these issues around an organizational career concept which starts in an organization, nourished by an organization, and usually follows a linear progression in an organization or two (Van der Heijden et al., 2020). However, the contemporary careers (including women's career) are neither linear nor restricted to a single organization. A work context characterised by multiple organization, multiple clients, multiple workspaces are the reality of today's careers. While the context has become increasingly volatile at one hand, career issues pertaining to women's career remain a challenge especially in technology careers.

Recent career theories like Boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001) and Protean career (Hall, 2004) emphasise on career self-reliance and value-interest alignment to cope up with the challenges. However, this notion of career self-reliance alienates the impact of

organizational career management or organization support that aids career development of employees. Further, with respect to the women's career development role of organizational support is important as women face unique set of challenges in their careers at different career stages. Therefore, an over-emphasis on career self-reliance (individual agency) and underestimating the role of organizational career management practices (organizational agency) is a myopic approach.

The emerging concept of sustainable careers incorporates the importance of dual agency i.e., both the role of individuals and organizations in career development across the lifespan. This concept also includes the importance of context for the sustainable career development within which careers are negotiated and shaped.

Sustainable Careers - The Concept

Sustainable careers relates to the study of work experiences across the lifespan, focusing on several career stages, career issues, cutting across different work-life domains and context: work, family, socio-cultural, and technological (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015). The sustainable career as a concept adopts a contextual and a relational perspective focusing both on individual and the context. This perspective sets it apart from the other (recent) career paradigms which stress upon the role of individual in career development eg. Boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001), Protean careers (Hall, 2004). These career paradigms have primarily highlighted the importance of career self-management signifying the role of individual's skills, knowledge, initiatives, and endeavours in career development. The role of individual in developing a successful career is undoubtably important, at the same time the role of employer/ organizations that provide critical career support to individuals is also critical, sustainable career concept gives importance to this dual-agency, which sets this concept distinct from the other career paradigms (Van der Heijden et al., 2020).

The concept of sustainable careers is still in its nascent stage. Thus, the concept is being defined, redefined, and evolving. Further, because of its multi-faceted significance it has garnered a lot of attention in research arena related to “careers”. Therefore, it becomes important to elaborate the understanding related to the concept, as it provides an opportunity to enlarge the body of knowledge related to it and add to the research body of career literature. The exiting research of the concept gives a broad understanding of the concept. In the nutshell, sustainable career is the one that endures over time (Valcour, 2015), characterised by renewability, flexibility and balance (Newman, 2011), adopts a comprehensive view of career choices considering all parties involved to create sustained future employability (De Vos & Van der Heijden, 2015), and engages people across the life span. As, the concept itself is evolving, it has been discussed from different point of view. De Vos et al. (2020) provides a process view with health, happiness, and productivity as key indicators Valcour (2015). Newman (2011) have focused to present the feature or characteristic view related to the concept. Valcour (2015) details the characteristics of a sustainable career which provides a comprehensive picture, enlisting four key attributes of sustainable careers (1) alignment of work with the one’s strengths, interests, and values; (2) continuous learning and improvement; (3) enhancing employability; and (4) maintaining work-life fit across the life span.

More recently, scholars have attempted to provide greater conceptual clarity and theoretical grounding to the concept. De Vos et al., (2020) laid out the process model of sustainable careers detailing several aspects of sustainable careers. A major highlight of the model is the systemic approach, that involves the individual and the context which influences the development of a sustainable career. It signifies that the development a sustainable career is impacted by the individual’s proactivity, adaptability, and active agency. Alongside, it is also influenced by work as well as family context that involves organizational context, work, family life. Apart from it, the changes in events in the macro context also influences the development of a

sustainable career. The model signifies the importance of person-career fit to highlight the vitality of suitable fit between individual's need, interest and values and the context. When such a fit is attained, a sustainable career can be developed with key indicators of health, happiness, and productivity. Achieving such a fit is seemingly difficult for an individual, and more so for women professionals as they are expected to strike a balance between work and non-work context while managing the dual responsibility of work and family. Literature presents evidence of barriers and challenges to sustainable career development of women professionals. Furthermore, research indicates that such challenges are found to be amplified in technology careers due to systemic barriers, dynamic technological advances, and influence of existing norms often favouring men (Kirton & Robertson, 2018). Issues, challenges, and barriers to women careers in technology sector are detailed in the next section.

1.7 Women professionals in technology careers: Issues, challenges, and barriers (a global perspective)

Women have forayed into different careers spreading their wings in different sectors and proving their might. However, scholarly research indicates that despite this advancement, women remain underrepresented in technology careers across the globe (Makarem & Wang, 2020). A global assessment of science and technology sectors revealed that women accounted for less than one third of the total workforce in 2014 (Catalyst, 2018). The representation of women in technology sector varies from country to country, ranging from less than 20 % in engineering in USA (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), around 30 % in technology careers in European union, around 20 % in Canada, 19 % in Australia (Catalyst, 2018). The picture in developing countries is not different either. There is a growing interest among women to join technology careers, although the overall representation of women in technology careers is low (UNESCO, 2016).

The underrepresentation of women in technology career is further aggravated by voluntary drop-out or career exit of women professionals. Research attribute this drop-out to several factors. Gender bias in pay, promotion, assignments and development opportunities are considered to be an important factor of voluntary drop-outs (Hart, 2016). Other scholars attribute it to the feeling of isolation in a male-dominated technology driven sector (Herman, 2015b). Furthermore, lack of advisory support, inadequate feedback and sponsorship are also cited a key reasons of discontinuing technology careers by women professionals. The voluntary drop-out of women professionals usually begins at five years to their career and peaks at the ten years into their careers (Center for Talent Innovation, 2014). This phenomenon results in a situation with more women at the entry-level, few at the mid-level and fewer at the top level.

The voluntary drop out of women from technology careers is evidently a global phenomenon. Statistics reveal that in technology driven sectors the turnover rate of women professionals is concerning, globally around of 50% of women opted out to leave technology careers and shifted to other sectors as compared to 31% of men (Catalyst, 2014). Alongside, another prominent phenomenon with respect to women careers in technology sector is a gap between technical educational and opting for technical education. Furthermore, as many as 38% of those women who opted for technology careers after the technical education quit their careers and never returned to technology careers (Catalyst, 2018). The underrepresentation of women in technology careers, thus, is a multifaceted issue.

Scholars have attempted to explain the reasons behind the barriers and challenges in technology careers from different perspectives. Gendered organizational culture and inequality regime proposed by Acker (2006) is often used to explain the systemic and structural barriers that impede the women's advancement in technology careers. Organizational culture and management practices are rooted in gendered norms and women feel isolated in male-dominated work environment. The work norms and performance expectations are gendered

and incongruent with feminine gender roles, values and identity resulting in turnover intention and voluntary dropouts. The underrepresentation and voluntary dropouts are global reality, and India is no exception to it. India is a prominent player in Information Technology (IT) in the world, this sector employs many women professionals in different roles. This sector being one of the largest employers of women professionals provide an opportunity to understand the issues related to women careers. The issues of women careers in information technology sector are presented in the following section.

1.8 Women professionals in Information technology careers: Issues, challenges, and barriers (an Indian perspective)

India is one of the largest Information Technology (IT) and Business process and management destination in the world. The IT industry accounted for 8% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020. The sector is one of the largest employment providers in the country, in 2020 it recorded 138,000 new hires (IBEF, 2021). Information Technology (IT) sector is one of the top employment providers of women in India, roughly accounting for 30% of total workforce. While the figure is seemingly appreciative, IT sector in India is plagued with different set of issues with respect to women careers. There is a continuous drop-out of women employees from the talent pool beginning at five years into their career, thus causing a lower representation of women in higher level of occupation (NASSCOM, 2018). The opt-out or drop-out is one of the key reasons of lower numbers of women professionals in senior and leadership roles.

The underrepresentation of women in senior role is found to further influence the growth prospects of women professionals at lower level of career ladder, as they do not find appropriate role models around them (Valk & Srinivasan, 2011). Furthermore, with lesser women at increasing level of occupation, the industry becomes male dominated in terms of performance expectations and work behaviours for senior roles which are often non-compatible

for women. These factors together create a situation in IT sector where women are in significant number at the entry level, few at the mid-career level and fewer at the top level (NASSCOM, 2018).

Scholars have explored the reason behind the skewed representation of women professional in IT sector at different levels in the Indian context. Furthermore, scholars have studied the nuances of India as a unique context different from the west as far as socio-cultural and familial expectations from women are concerned. In India, women are viewed as secondary earners. Further, family is the primary domain for females. The socio-cultural factors which include distinct roles expectations from women add extra pressure to the working women in India (Wesley & Muthuswamy, 2005). In India work and family roles are defined differently for men and women (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004). According to a Nielsen global survey that Indian working women are the most stressed in the world (Wharton, 2011). Indian working women are pulled in a different direction as they attempt to conform to the image of "ideal wife", "ideal mother", "ideal daughter-in-law" etc. which acts as a source of stress (Hewlett & Rashid, 2011). Such stress results in work-family conflict that leads to exhaustion, burnout (Verma et al., 2018) and a decision to quit careers. Inadequacy of resources due to insufficient support is one of the most potent role stressors among women working in IT sector, married women experience greater stress as compared to unmarried women (Aziz, 2004). Against the backdrop of such socio-cultural context, it becomes difficult for women professionals to continue in a dynamic and demanding profession like IT where skill obsolescence is a norm. Women in IT sector thus, start to exit from their profession at mid-career level when the family responsibility increases, thus resulting in a voluntary drop out (Srinivasan et al., 2013). Women professionals in the dynamic sector like IT, thus, require, effective support to continue their careers. In the following section, the steps taken by IT organizations to support women professionals is provided.

1.9 Organizational initiatives to support women in IT careers

IT organizations, Institutions, and policy makers are aware of issues and challenges faced by women professionals in the sector. Consequently, a series of reforms and initiatives have been implemented in the sector to support women develop a successful career. IT organizations have launched several family-friendly policies to provide support to working women in India (Balachandar & Gurusamy, 2012), which include education and day care support for children, health care support for family members and dependents. Alongside, IT organizations also provide flexible working hours to suit the requirements of women professionals, this include both temporal as well as spatial flexibility (Mehta, 2016). The flexibility offered by the organizations provide an opportunity to women employees to have a greater control over the way they can manage their work and non-work domains. Both flex-time and flex-place flexibility enable women to decide when and where the work will be carried out. This explains the reason behind IT sector being one of the top employers of women professionals in India. This, however, presents only one side of the picture and statistics reveal that despite these initiatives voluntary drop-out of women professionals from IT talent pool is still a dominant challenge for the IT firms.

Another, prominent phenomenon with respect to women's career in the IT sector is a low rate of career returnship to IT after the career break or a drop-out. In response, several IT organizations have introduced career-returnship or career- restart programs to support career resumption of women on career break in IT eg. Restart with Infosys, TATA Second Career Internship Program (SCIP) (Modassir & Ramesh, 2017). These initiatives have helped women return to IT careers after the career break. However, the problem persists, women remain underrepresented in IT sector (NASSCOM,2018).

1.9.1 *The Problem persists*

The overall evaluation of the women careers in the IT sector reveals that despite several initiatives, policies, and supporting practices the issue of underrepresentation of women professionals still exists. This indicates that there could be certain covert or hidden issues that may hinder the career progress of women professionals, that demand further probe. It is surprising that despite the availability of flexible work arrangements that enable women to integrate their work and life effectively, women decide to opt-out of their IT careers. This merits scholarly attention to explore the reasons behind voluntary drop out despite organizational support in terms when and where the work is to be carried out. The factors or reasons behind it could be hidden or covert and exploring them could be beneficial to both organizations as well as women professionals.

Similarly, while IT organizations have begun initiatives for career restart of women professionals on career break, low number of women in mid-career and top level indicate that their career resumption is not as expected. This, however, indicate towards the need to study the career experiences of those women who return to IT careers after a career break. Furthermore, underrepresentation of women in IT sector is a global problem, but some organization(s) have fared well with their concerted efforts to manage women's career effectively, a study of such organizations could also be vital to understand the problem and come up with probable and a sustainable solution.

1.10 Need for the study

The problem of underrepresentation of women in the IT sector and voluntary drop out of from the talent pool is a multi-faceted problem that has an impact at multiple levels. The issue is strategically important to IT firms and makes a business case. Due to voluntary drop out of

women professionals, IT firms face a loss of talent, at the same time there is a cost involved in hiring a replacement.

It is vital to acknowledge that women employees require certain specific benefits. Flexible work arrangements extended maternity benefits, childcare leaves, among others. These measures incur costs to the organization. However, these costs can be seen as investments as it may not only help retain women employees but attract potential employees too. At the same time the loss of talent due to voluntary drop-out results in search of replacement which is a huge cost for organizations. Not only the cost of recruitment but the cost of training and induction is also incurred on every candidate. This signifies a double loss arising out of loss of talent due to opt-out of women professionals. This opt-out adversely impacts the gender diversity in the organizations which is found to be positively linked to firm performance (Jeong & Harrison, 2017) and corporate social responsibility (Byron & Post, 2016).

Put simply, the loss of women professionals may adversely impact firm performance and other matter of strategic importance to a great extent. Furthermore, as the statistics reveal that the talent pool in the Indian context will be more diverse in future owing to a greater number of women opting for science and technology education (Sindwani, 2020), the voluntary drop out may aggravate if the issue remain unaddressed. This signifies the need to study the issues related to women's career in IT sector.

1.11 Motivation for the research

The existing issues and challenges pertaining to women's career and the need for the study form the motivation for this research. It is intriguing that despite organizational willingness to support women professionals in their career advancement gender-based talent drain has not stopped. Similarly, it is also notable that although most IT organizations have introduced

flexible work arrangements, yet the voluntary drop-out of women professionals is still prevalent.

Another intriguing question with respect to women's career in IT relates to the career after the career break. Recently many organizations have introduced career restart program for women professionals (Rajesh & Tamilnadu, 2013), to support women on career break to restart their career in IT. To this end, it would be valuable to unravel the process of career reentry among women resuming their IT career, specifically by exploring the reasons and enablers of career reentry. Most organizations in IT sector face the challenge to manage women's career sustainability, however, some valuable insights can be drawn from those organizations that have effective organizational career management practices.

These three key aspects of women's career viz workplace flexible work arrangement, career reentry, and organizational career management practices for women's career form the area of inquiry for this thesis. In the next chapter (Literature review) literature survey each of these areas are presented in detail. Based on the literature review, literature gap, research questions and objectives are formulated each of these aspects separately.

The detailed outline of the thesis with the description of the thesis with the description of the contents of each chapter is provided in the next section. Furthermore, the flow of the thesis is also outlined in figure 1.1.

1.12 Overview of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. This section describes the contents of each chapter briefly. The flowchart (figure no. 1.1) provides a pictorial representation of the key contents of each chapter.

Chapter I – Introduction

This chapter introduces the context of the research and the complexities involved in developing sustainable careers of women. It discusses the concept of sustainable careers, its characteristics, and its indicators with the process model of sustainable careers. This chapter also outlines the issues, barriers, and challenges of women's career in technology sector from the global as well as the Indian perspective. The chapter outlines the need for the study and motivation for research based on the study context and problems.

Chapter II – Literature Review

The literature review chapter was guided by research questions. Literature review was carried out in three key areas related to women's career- flexible work arrangements, career- reentry and organizational career management practices. Based on the literature review research objectives were formulated at the end of the literature review chapter.

Chapter III- Research gap, research questions, and objectives

The chapter on research gap, research questions, and objectives presents a detail about research gaps related to three key aspects of women's career- flexible work arrangements, career-reentry and organizational career management practices. Further, research questions, and objectives pertaining to each aspect is detailed in this chapter.

Chapter IV – Methodology

This chapter outlines the methods used in the thesis to answer research questions and achieve research objectives. Based on research questions and objectives three different studies were carried out. The research philosophy, research design, research approach, methodological choice, research strategies, time horizon, data collection tools, and data analysis methods are discussed in detail for all three studies.

Chapter V- Analysis & Results (Study I, II, III)

In this chapter, analysis, and results of all three studies are presented. Study wise depiction of procedure, analysis and results are given in this chapter. In this chapter study wise details of the procedure, participants and sample are also provided. The analysis and results of each study are also discussed in the detail.

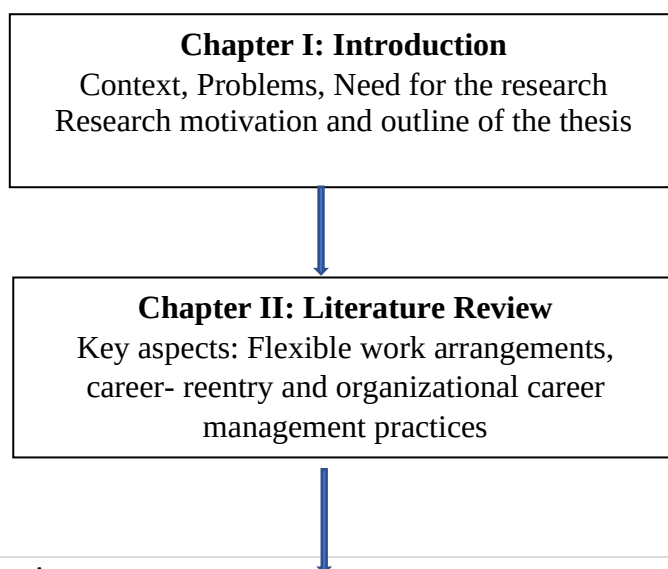
Chapter VI- Discussion & Conclusion

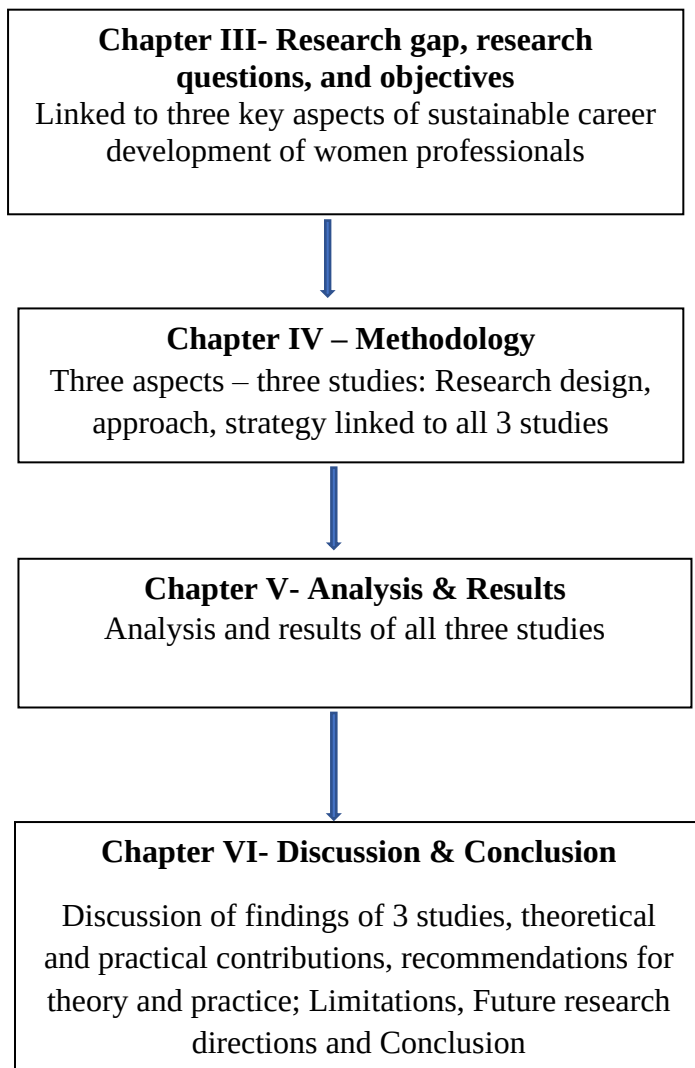
The results and findings of each study is discussed in detail in the light of existing literature in the discussion chapter. This chapter also provide an explanation to the findings obtained in the study with the key focus on the Indian context. Furthermore, this chapter discuss the practical and theoretical contributions of the study.

Further, in this chapter recommendation for future research are outlined, and practical recommendations are enlisted. This chapter also presents the limitations of all the three studies carried out for the thesis. This chapter also include conclusion of the thesis.

The flowchart below provides a pictorial description of the outline of the thesis and depicts the flow of the research work from the Introduction to the Conclusion of the thesis.

Figure 1. 1- Outline of the thesis





CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Literature Review

The literature review chapter presents literature related to the three aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals discussed in the introduction section. In the introduction section it was highlighted that the career trajectory of women in IT are characterized by intermittent opt outs. Women professionals look for flexible work arrangements to sustain their careers. Further, women also attempt to re-enter the workplace after a career break, making re-entry a crucial aspect linked to sustainable careers. In addition, organizational career management practices with reference to women's career are significant for developing a sustainable career of women professionals. This chapter outlines the literature linked to these three aspects of sustainable careers of women professionals. To this end, literature review chapter is divided into three sections pertaining to the three aspects discussed above.

The first section captures literature related to flexible work arrangements. The second section captures literature related to career re-entry. The third section captures literature related to organizational career management practices with reference to women's career.

2.1 Flexible work arrangements

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) are defined as a work arrangement between employees and employers where an agreement is made on when, where, and how the work will be carried out or delivered by the employee (Kossek & Thompson, 2016). Flexible working has increased significantly over the years. Theoretically, the increase of FWA has been attributed to the enhanced control that it offers to employees enabling them integrate their work and non-work domains more effectively, it also signals that employers care for them and their needs (Thompson et al., 2015). The attractiveness of FWAs have been explained in literature through the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Furthermore the resources

demands model proposed by Voydanoff (2005) has also been used to explain the benefits of flexible work arrangements. These theories suggest that individuals strive to conserve resources that help them achieve their goals, workplace flexibility as a practice is viewed as boundary spanning resource (Voydanoff, 2005) that enables individual to make easy transition between work and non-work roles and integrate them better.

2.1.1 Types of Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible Work Arrangements are primarily categorised into flextime and flexplace (Allen et al., 2013). Flextime relates to the flexibility in terms of “time”. It enables employees to alter their temporal boundaries around their work. Flextime enhances the availability of time periods when employees can manage non-work demands effectively, as it provides employees with discretion and control over their start and stop work times (Barney & Elias, 2010). Flexplace relates to flexibility in terms of “location”. This flexibility provides employee with the discretion over where they conduct their work. Flexplace enables employees to alter physical boundaries around their work (Shockley & Allen, 2007), thus, providing spatial flexibility. Research reveals that as women often have dual responsibility of work and family, they seek flexibility at workplace and seem to be benefitted out of such arrangements.

2.1.2 Benefits of Flexible work arrangements to women professionals

Flexible work arrangements enhance employee’s control over their time (temporal flexibility) and location (spatial flexibility) of work. The availability of this control is especially beneficial to women professionals who are enabled to manage work-life effectively with the help of flexibility. Workplace flexibility is also considered as a driver of diversity at the workplace (Hall & Parker, 1993). Research reveals that flexible working allows mothers to balance their work and family (Chung & van der Horst, 2020) which may lead to increased satisfaction.

Scholars also report a positive relationship between flexible schedules and work-related wellbeing for women (Kim et al., 2020).

Several studies conducted in the Indian context also reveal the benefits of flexible work arrangements for women employees. In a comparative study of working women (without flexibility) and women working from home Desai et al. (2011) found that women with flexible working were lesser stressed, more well-adjusted and more satisfied with their careers. Similarly, Rastogi et al. (2016) reported that flexibility was positively related to work family enrichment. Jain (2021) also reported that women seek flexibility more than men to manage their work and life effectively, and availability of such arrangements helps in gender parity. Studies also reveal that flexible work arrangements may have long term positive impact on women careers. Younger et al. (2015) report that innovative career support practices like FWAs helped women professionals succeed and sustain in their careers. In similar vein, Bhattacharya et al. (2018) posited that workplace flexibility was crucial for career advancement and acquiring leadership roles for women working in the Indian IT sector.

2.1.3 The dark side of work flexibility

There is ample evidence which suggest that flexible work arrangements are beneficial to employee as well as employers, a parallel strand of research, however, indicate a dark side of workplace flexibility. In this regard scholars have found that employees are hesitant in availing flexibility arrangements as they fear career penalties (O'Connor & Cech, 2018). The growing literature on this area of workplace flexibility often relates to the study of workplace flexibility stigma (Chung, 2020) or workplace flexibility bias (Munsch et al., 2014). These concepts have been used in the literature to highlight that flexible work arrangements are not widely used by employees due to existing norms, work-non work identities, and employees who avail such arrangements are often devalued. For the purpose of this research the concept of workplace

flexibility bias has been adopted. The definition and summary of recent research on workplace flexibility bias is presented below.

Workplace flexibility bias

Workplace flexibility bias (WFB) is defined as- a general negative sentiment toward people who avail workplace flexible arrangement for personal and family needs (Cech & O'Connor, 2017) specially women. It is also referred as — employees perception and belief that those who work flexibly at their workplace are less likely to get ahead in their careers (O'Connor & Cech, 2018a). Recent research on this phenomenon indicate that when employees perceive/ believe that this bias exists in their workplace their job satisfaction and work engagement is adversely affected (O'Connor & Cech, 2018b). It is notable that, the mere perception of negative sentiments towards the use of flexibility practices can lead to impact work-life balance negatively and increases turnover intention. This bias influences all worker's experiences and not only those who use it, as it is interpreted to be the organizational culture (Cech & Blair-Loy, 2014).

In a recent research conducted on archive dataset in the US context, O'Connor & Cech (2018b) reported that workplace flexibility bias enhances unfavourable work outcomes and attenuates positive work outcomes. In another study, Cech & O'Connor (2017) found that workplace flexibility bias acts as a 'second-hand smoke' which has a toxic effect on employee's health. They found that perceived workplace flexibility bias adversely impacts employee's sleep quality, lead to depression symptoms and frequent use of sick leaves. They also found that workplace flexibility is positively linked to enhanced stress and negative work to family spillover. This study indicated that perception of the existence of WFB may result in adverse health impact for workers, defeating the objective of flexible arrangement at the workplace.

In a recent research Ferdous et al. (2020) reported that the perception of existence of bias towards flexibility usage is positively related to lower employee well-being and increases turnover intentions. They attempted to explain this relationship with the mediating effect of flexibility usage. Similarly, Hirsh & Fuller (2020) reported that women faced stronger wage-penalties when opted for work from home, signifying a negative effect of the usage of workplace flexible arrangements and the bias linked thereof. Thus, research evidence that workplace flexibility bias acts as an invisible barrier that inhibits employees to avail flexible work arrangements. The negative sentiment linked with the use of workplace flexible arrangements lead to negative career outcomes. The summary of recent research on workplace flexibility bias is given in table 2.1.

Table 2.1- Summary of research related to workplace flexibility bias

Author (Year)	Type of Study & Context	Major Findings	Remarks
Ferdous et al. (2020)	Cross-sectional survey (Australia)	Perception of flexibility stigma lowers overall well-being of employees and enhances intentions to leave. Mediator (FWP Usage)	Stigma Theory and Ecological systems theory
Fuller & Hirsh (2020)	Quantitative, Secondary Data (Canada)	Women experience wage-penalties when opt to work flexibly	Work-life facilitation- formal availability v/s actual use
Cañibano (2018)	Qualitative (Spain)	Workplace flexibility: contributions and inducements; the paradox	Paradoxical tensions characterize workplace flexibility. Theoretical Lens: Psychological Contract
O'Connor & Cech (2018)	Quantitative- Secondary data (US)	Flexibility bias lowers job satisfaction and enhances turnover intentions among employees and negative work-family spillover	Theoretical Lens: ideal worker norm

Cech & O'Connor (2017)	Quantitative- Secondary data (US)	-workplace flexibility bias linked to poor health and increase in the use of sick day leave -enhanced stress as well as adverse work-life spillover	Theoretical Lens : Stress process theory
Munsch (2016)	Controlled online experiment (US) – 653 MTurk	-Participants rated employees working flexibly work more negatively than those who did not work flexibly - telecommuting (or “flexplace”) was rated more negatively than flextime	Theoretical Lens: ideal worker norm
Kossek Thompson & Lautsch (2015)	Conceptual	-Co-workers’ perceptions towards the distribution of accessibility of FWA -Potential backlash towards the use of flexibility	Flexible work arrangement as a systemic organizational change
Cech & Blair-Loy (2014)	Survey, USA	Flexibility stigma is linked to low intent to persist, poor balance in work and non-work domain, and low job satisfaction.	-Ideal-worker norm -Work devotion schema
Munsch et. al (2014)	Experiment (US) – 422 MTurk	-Flexibility bias is rooted in pluralistic ignorance -flexplace requesters face greater stigma as compared to flextime requesters. -In case of high- status employees working flexibly, flextime bias (but not flexplace) was reduced.	Theoretical Lens : Pluralistic Ignorance

Stone & Hernandez (2013)	Qualitative (N=54) US	-workplaces culture can create flexibility stigma and bias - when women perceive high levels of stigma, they leave their careers/ jobs/ organizations	Theoretical Lens: Status legitimization theory
Williams et. al (2013)	Conceptual	-Women face strong flexibility stigma if working flexibly is linked to motherhood and caregiving	Theoretical Lens: work devotion schema

2.1.4 Workplace flexibility bias and Turnover Intentions

The research on workplace flexibility bias indicates that the negative sentiments related use of flexible work arrangements leads to intention to leave the organization among the employees. Stone & Hernandez (2013) carried out a qualitative study in the US context and found that women availing flexibility face to several types of stigma, which results in their voluntary drop out of their profession. Furthermore, if women perceive a high levels of flexibility stigma, the intention to suspend their careers is enhanced.

Similarly, Cech & Blair-Loy (2014) studied the consequences of stigma linked to the use workplace flexibility practices and reported that those who perceived a higher level of flexibility bias exhibited lower intentions to persist. In the same vein, O'Connor & Cech (2018b) found that perception of flexibility bias enhanced turnover intentions among the employees. This signifies that the perception of workplace flexibility bias leads to turnover intentions among the employees. A study of this nature exploring the relationship could the

valuable in the Indian IT context, where voluntary drop-out among women employees is a challenge. The findings of such a study may expand the understanding of the antecedents of voluntary drop out or opt out of women professionals from the IT sector.

2.2 Career break

Career break relates to a span of time for which an employee is not involved in paid work. Research evidence that key reasons behind a career break among women are marriage, relocation, elderly care, motherhood, and health issues (Panteli & Pen, 2010). A career break leads to a discontinuity in employment causing a downward mobility in remuneration and work status. It happens due to deterioration of human capital, skill obsolescence, loss of networking opportunity, and low self-confidence (Kaushiva & Joshi, 2020a). The influence of career break is worse in science and technology careers owing to the dynamic nature of skills and technical expertise of the sector. Hence, it is not surprising that career breaks are often viewed negatively by the organizations and continuous employment is given preference for new jobs and recruitments (Manning & Petrongolo, 2008).

Research highlights that women on career break often attempt to return to paid work, referred as career resumption, career restart, or career reentry (Gale, 2013). However, the reentry is not only difficult but also women face wage differentials (Mortelmans & Frans, 2017), downward mobility etc., signifying a career break penalty. Furthermore, research also evidence that career reentry might not fix the career break penalty (Javornik, 2017) and wage differentials often remain significant throughout their careers.

It is noteworthy that the work-family dynamics may lead to a need for career break for a woman professional, the effect of such a break may remain intact throughout her work life despite the career reentry. The phenomenon of career reentry, hence, becomes vital to be studied while exploring the issue of sustainable career for women professionals. Moreover, in the dynamic sector like information technology it assumes greater significance.

2.2.1 Career Reentry and women professionals

Women's careers are non-linear. It involves career transitions, breaks, career resumptions, and complex career pathways. Traditional career models and career paths, hence, seems to be inadequate to explain career trajectories of women professionals. Career reentry i.e. decision to return to paid work after a certain period of career break has been explained by contemporary theories and concepts like boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001), protean careers (Hall, 2004). These theories highlight the role of career self-reliance and subjective career success, thus, explain the career reentry decision of women professionals based on their context and life events. In addition, the concept of 'frayed careers' (Sabelis & Schilling, 2013) has been used to highlight the intricacies, volatility, capriciousness and highly temporal nature of 'career' as part of a life course, indicating the complexities of women's careers and career break. Similarly, kaleidoscope career model (Sullivan et al., 2009) highlights the issues and challenges of women's career and discuss its complex trajectory including career break and reentry.

Career reentry after a career break is difficult for women in technology careers. Research indicates that women on career break choose a less challenging, low paying but a better fit work which is often undertaken to sync work and non-work domains (Hakim, 2000). To this end, Herman (2015a), studied career reentry patterns of women professionals and concluded that they usually indulge in three types of reentry behaviours - *rebooting*, *rerouting* and *retreating*. Rebooting refers to entry to the same sector either in full-time or a part-time role. Rerouting refers to the returning to paid work but in different sector, this also includes different types of employment like full-time, part-time, entrepreneurship, job sharing, and freelancing etc. Reentry, hence, has been studied as a general phenomenon with a focus on women engaging in paid work after a career break, regardless of shifts in career, field or sector (McKie et al., 2013).

Literature highlights that women reentry to paid work is driven by different reasons and motives. In an extensive study on women on career break and reentry women, Cabrera, (2007) found that reentry women displayed different motives career reentry. Most important reasons cited for career reentry were income, job opportunity, career development, need for intellectual stimulation, and favourable life event (kids were older).

In another study, Hewlett & Luce, (2005) highlighted that woman return to careers in search of meaningful work and rebuild their self-esteem and confidence. It is notable that reentry to paid work is often difficult and demanding. Only a small percentage of women professionals who opt-out of careers successfully resume their careers later. The issue of career reentry among women professionals, thus, merits scholarly attention.

2.2.2 Issues and challenges to career reentry

Career reentry has been studied as a vital aspect of career trajectory of women professionals. Scholars have explored several dimensions related to career reentry. Zimmerman & Clark, (2016) presented a review and synthesis of women's career break and career reentry experiences and highlighted the work out comes of career break. They also noted long term career impacts of career break that hinders reentry of women professionals. Most studies have focused on studying career trajectory of returning mothers. In this connection, Stone & Lovejoy (2019) presented a comprehensive picture of women's careers and challenges faced by mothers during career reentry. In their study they interviewed about 80 percent of their sample whom they interviewed 10 years ago to know the reasons for career opt-out. Employing the same life history interview approach, they reported that although, four-fifths of their respondents returned to work—but it in different fields, and with less prestigious careers and positions than earlier. They concluded that women do not resume their careers, but restart and reconstruct them. It is established that women experience several challenges while attempting career reentry after a career break. Scholars have explored different aspects of career reentry and

impact of career break on women's career. Table no. 2.2 presents a summary of research related to women's career break and career reentry.

Table 2.2 - Issues and challenges related to women's career break and career reentry

Author(s) & Year	Methodology	Major Findings
Annaswamy (2020)	Quantitative	Women leave science and tech careers due to lack of mentorship, unsupportive culture, lack of role models
Stone & Lovejoy (2019)	Qualitative	-four-fifths of their respondents returned to work—but it in different fields, and with less prestigious careers and positions than earlier -women reconstructed their career after the career break
Evertsson et al. (2016)	Quantitative (Secondary data)	-discontinuous work increased downward mobility - family leaves lead to reduces chances of career development
Herman (2015)	Qualitative	-returning to STEM careers are difficult - many women take different careers after taking a career break from technology and science careers
McIntosh et al. (2015)	Qualitative	-lack of organizational support may inhibit proper integration of reentry women in organization
Cahusac & Kanji (2014)	Qualitative	-women extend their career break due to masculine organizational culture -due to demanding work context and timings, women prefer to opt for a part-time or downgraded work
Maher (2013)	Qualitative	-women on career break opted for flexible work,

McKie, Biese, & Jyrkinen (2013)	Qualitative	-women who opt for self-employment after a career break - need for autonomy and flexibility guided the decision for self-employment
Panteli (2012)	Quantitative & Qualitative	- organizational intervention to support career reentry helps women on career break in IT sector -different types of interventions helps in providing different types of support ex. IT expertise and self-confidence
Herr & Wolfram (2011)	Quantitative (Secondary data)	- career break for childcare -those who worked in organizations without family-friendly environment before career break had a lesser likelihood to re-enter.

The above summary of the studies reveals that career break result in several challenges for women professionals making career reentry difficult. For instance, career break results in low self-confidence, low-self-esteem which further lowers their chances of reentry. Career breaks increased downward mobility in terms of careers and remuneration (Evertsson et al., 2016). Research reveals that women's decision to return to careers depends upon their experience before the career break. Herr & Wolfram (2011) carried out a study on the secondary data and found that women who worked in a non- family friendly organization before their career break were reluctant to return to their careers. Furthermore, women on career break require support from organizations for reentry and organizational support policies and interventions influence career reentry positively (Panteli, 2012). It is however vital that women on career break work

on their adaptability, enhancing human and social capital which found to be vital for re-employment after the career break McArdle et al. (2007).

The above studies were carried out in the western context and provided a global perspective of issues and challenges related to career break and career reentry of women professionals. Although, most of the research related to career break and career reentry has been carried out in the western context, there are some evidence available in the Indian context as well. In the next section research related to women's career break and career reentry in the Indian context is presented.

2.2.3 Issues and Challenges to career reentry for women professionals in Indian context

The socio-cultural context of a country reflects in the career and work context too. India's unique socio-cultural context with pre-defined gender roles influence career decisions and career choices of women professionals. Usually, these gender roles and expectations create competing demands, resulting in inevitable work-family conflict (Hewlett & Rashid, 2011). While demands are competing women generally do not receive much social support to sustain their careers. In India which scores low on gender egalitarianism (House et al., 1999), spousal support for house chores and career is less likely as compared to western countries which are high on gender egalitarianism. Put simply, with 'commitment to family responsibility' and lack of social support it becomes difficult for a woman to sustain a career in a sector like IT (Buddhapriya, 2009).

Many women enter IT workforce every year, not all have a continuous career. Many opt-out of workforce, and among those who opt-out, only some re-enter. Ravindran & Baral (2013) studied reentry women and reported that competing family and job demands resulted in career break and formal and social support in organization was vital to continue their career post reentry.

Further, in a study of 152 reentry women in IT sector, Ravindran & Baral (2014) reported that job and career outcomes of reentry women were the function of work-family culture, diversity climate, and organizational justice. Workplaces places that openly address and support reentry women on work-family issues are conducive to reentry. Reentry women display greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment and career commitment while working in an organization with a positive work-family culture. Furthermore, they also found that diversity climate is a crucial factor for women re-entering the workforce. If a returning women felt welcomed and included, they displayed greater job and career satisfaction. In addition, organizational justice was found to be a crucial factor influencing job and career attitudes of reentry women. Indicating that when reentry women feel that organizations treat them fairly their job satisfaction and organizational commitment are higher. Surprisingly, the findings of the same study showed that policy availability had no significant impact on job and career attitudes of reentry women. This reaffirms the notion proposed by scholars (Allen, 2001) who suggests that mere availability of family-friendly policies does not ensure their usage of their efficacy towards work-life balance or support.

Recently, (Kaushiva & Joshi, 2020b) carried out an experimental study to compare the assessment of a woman applicant with a career break with the assessment of a woman applicant who attended a career restart or support program post their employment break. Based on the data of 190 respondents they reported that a career support program had a significant effect on the assessment of job fit. Furthermore, they also found that such a program acted as an individuating information about the re-entering women. It was seen as an active agency by women on career break that reduced obscurity regarding her skills, and abilities due an interruption in her career . This study, hence, highlighted the importance of career support programs for the sustainable career development of women professional.

The study by Rajesh & Tamilnadu (2013) explored the organizational readiness towards accepting women on career break for a second career. To this end, they conducted a survey among 388 respondents (managers, senior managers, top executives, and board members) from diverse sectors including IT, manufacturing, insurance, FMCG, among others. Findings of their research indicated that corporates intend to inculcate women on career break into their workforce formally, but reentry women may require adequate amount of family and social support for resuming their careers. They also called for an extensive study to come up with a career re-entry models for women career returnees.

Overall, there seems to be some evidence on career reentry of women professionals in the Indian context. Collectively, these studies outline a critical role of socio-cultural context, individuating information (active agency), organizational support in terms of diversity climate, organizational fairness, and effective organizational career management practices. An important theme emerges from the studies discussed so far relates to organizational career management practices needed for sustainable development of women's career. As highlighted in chapter I, with the growing focus on career self-management, research on individual aspects of career management has seen a rapid rise as compared to organizational career management practices (Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007). However, owing to the unique nature of women's career, role and importance of organizational career management practices cannot be ignored. Accordingly, the next section provides an overview of the organizational career management practices linked to women's career development and reviews the evidence related to it.

2.3 Organizational career management for women professionals

2.3.1 Organizational career management

Organizational career management (OCM) relates to the activities initiated by the employer to plan, manage, and support the careers of its employees. It involves an array of policies,

programs, interventions, and practices that are built around syncing individual and organizational needs with an objective of mutual benefit (Baruch & Budhwar, 2006). It involves a wide range of activities varying from a formal to less formal eg. skill training to mentoring with key objective to help employee grow in their careers. Traditionally, organizational career management were focused on hierarchical growth within an organization, contemporary organizational career management practices focus more on enhancing internal as well as external employability of an employee (De Vos et al., 2009).

Rosenbaum's (1984) work is the seminal theoretical work on organizational career management practices that explains the relationship between organizational investment and individual's career growth. Building on the importance of organizational support for individual's career, Rosenbaum advocated the need for 'sponsored mobility' against the sole focus on individual's focus on investment on human capital. Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) proposes that an individual's career advancements are the outcomes of individual's investment in skills, knowledge, education, training; and individuals can control their achievement to a great extent. Rosenbaum, however, highlighted the limited scope of the individual's investment in developmental activities as compared to organizations and explained the need for organizational career management. Furthermore, he also explained the link between investment in individuals career development activities, individual's achievement and favourable organizational outcomes linked with it.

The definition of OCM emphasises on identifying practices that can be helpful in career development of employees. However, scholars point out that there is little consensus types, specifications or integration of such practices (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019). Different scholars have proposed different set of practices for organizational career management. Baruch (2006), however, enlisted several practices under the organizational career planning and management practices. These practices involve a set of interventions varying from job posting,

training counselling, catering to special needs of certain group of employees, assessment and feedback, diversity training, developmental opportunities etc. The key focus is to use the most appropriate practice/ a set of practices as per the requirement for sustainable career development of employees.

2.3.2 Organizational career models and women's career

Traditional career development models which form foundation of human resource development practices (and organizational career management) in several organizations were based on the study of men, and their linear progression in career. In this regard, (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) points out that traditional career development models focused on upward mobility within an organization or two in a lifetime of an individual.

Similarly, (Ng et al., 2005) reported that traditionally the career development models emphasised upon the career tournament model that was built around winning in a competitive environment with a focus on climbing up the corporate ladder with pay rise, promotion, and hikes. Although these models and practices worked for traditional organizations helping men ascending the corporate hierarchy, they did not focus on the issues and challenges of women entering the workforce. As the traditional career models revolved around working men, many organizational programs neglected the unique challenges of women's career, leading to a call for a greater focus on it from scholars(Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008).

Literature highlights two key differences in the experiences of men and women professionals at work that impacts their career in several ways. First relates to the obstacles at the workplace which are unique to women. Second relates to the family and non-work responsibilities which are again unique to women which effects the amount of time, resources, and energy they can commit to the work domain.

Several lines of evidence detailed that woman professional face unique obstacles due to gender differences. For instance, Bowes-Sperry & Tata (1999) suggested that women professionals are more likely to have experiences of incidences and episodes sexual discrimination and harassment as compared to men. Furthermore, the studies on sexual harassment highlight its career implications. McLaughlin et al. (2017), reported that sexual harassment enhances the financial stress on women professionals. The incidences and episodes of sexual harassment leads to such stress primarily due to job change, and effects women's career attainment significantly. Similarly, Houle et al. (2011) reported an association between sexual harassment and mental health issues. They further reported instances of sexual harassment in early occupational career had a long-term effect on the women who experienced it. Apart from harassment and discrimination, literature also details several phenomena which highlight unique challenges to women's career eg. sticky floor, glass ceiling, and glass cliff (Still, 1997). 'Sticky floor' is the metaphor that is used to explain the barriers faced by women professionals during the career growth from low occupational levels. Previous research has established that 'sticky floor' results in pay gap and skewed growth opportunities that effects women's career adversely (Liu, 2013; Smith et al., 2011).

Similarly, the metaphor 'glass ceiling' is used to explain invisible barriers to women career progression. It has conclusively been shown that glass ceiling has an adverse effect on women's career especially in technology careers (Amon, 2017). Similarly, (Smith et al., 2012) found that women's glass ceiling beliefs impacted their subjective career success negatively. All these barriers are unique to women's career and effect their career progression considerably. Hence, traditional career models which do not incorporate these challenges appear insufficient in addressing the issues and challenges pertaining to women's career.

Family and non-work responsibilities are the other aspects due to which women's career experience differ from men. It is now well established from a variety of studies that women

share a double responsibility of managing work and family, this dual role effects their career to a large extent. Furthermore, if organizations do not acknowledge and address these issues, career progression of women is expected to be adversely affected. In contrast, if organizations acknowledge and address these issues, women are expected to manage their roles effectively and sustain in their careers. Research establishes the importance of work-family support for women rather than general supervisory support and organizational support (Singh et al., 2018). Furthermore, there is a consensus among scholars about the availability and accessibility of family friendly work policies for the career growth of women professionals (Hakim, 2006; Villablanca et al., 2011).

Today, organizations endeavour to address the issues and challenges of women's career through several initiatives. However, devising HRD policies based on career models built around women's career appear to be a distant dream. On the other hand, scholars have attempted to put forth several career models which address unique career experiences of women professionals. To this end, (Rath et al., 2019) proposed an alternative career progression model for Indian women based on their study in financial sector, using a labyrinth approach. They identified key propellers (career facilitators) and preventers (barriers) that effected women's career progression. Further, they proposed a framework of model organization. It included enabling care, enabling career growth, and enabling organizational work which can strengthen propellers and weaken preventers, resulting in career progression of women professionals. Similarly, Kaleidoscope career model (Sullivan et al., 2009) is another career model which stresses the uniqueness of women's career. It highlights that most of the women look for a challenging job/tasks in their early-career stage, balance in mid-career, and authenticity in late-career. Based on the model, organizations are expected to respond to the distinct needs of women at different career stages and formulate career policies accordingly for sustainable career development of women.

Scholars argue that building organizational career management (OCM) practices based on the distinct need and career experiences of women is an effective way to support and sustain their careers (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). Literature on organizational career management practices pertaining to women's career appears fragmented. Most of the studies discuss it from the diversity management perspective (Shen et al., 2009), while others have focused on a few rather than a gamut of OCM practices (Dawson et al., 2015) needed for women's career progression. The next section provides a summary of organizational career management (OCM) practices discussed in literature for career progression of women professionals.

2.3.3 Organizational career management practices for women's career development

The term career development is used to describe the process that influences individual's career behaviour to manage life, learning, and work over the lifespan. More recently, Hoekstra (2011), described career development as an interactive process. Career development relates to the interactive advancement of career identity building and career growth and significance. Astin (1984) proposed a sociopsychological model of career choices and work behaviour. It is considered as the seminal work on women's career development. The model includes four constructs -motivation, expectations, sex-role socialization, and the structure of opportunity. The model assumes that motivation is similar for women and men, but their career choices and outcomes differ due to structure of opportunity, sex-role socialization, and expectations. Put simply, this model emphasises that a career development process differs for men and women. Powell & Mainiero (1992), presented a relational perspective on women's career. According to them women's career includes work as well as nonwork issues (personal and relational). They also highlighted the importance of subjective career success in women's career. Furthermore, building on unpredictable sequence of stages in women's career, they incorporated the impact of personal (life events), organizational (support at work), and societal (socio-cultural dynamics) factors on career choices and outcomes of women professionals. In

short, the above stated career models highlighted the distinctness of career development of women professionals.

The theoretical perspective on career development signifies the importance of evaluating women's career choices and outcomes distinctly to craft a sustainable career. Today, organizations device several organizational career management practices to support and develop careers of women. This mainly includes training and development, appraisal, and feedback, pay and promotion, networking, mentoring, sponsoring, family - friendly policies, and leadership opportunities. A review of above mentioned key OCM practices are detailed below:

Training: Training and development opportunities are crucial to enhance employee's performance and achievement. Moreover, training becomes crucial for women's career development especially for their upward mobility. In this regard Wirth (2001), notes that education and training is crucial for women to equip them with knowledge and skill required for managerial positions. In the similar vein, Burke (2002) argued that providing access to training is vital for women's advancement in organizations. This becomes important in the light of evidence regarding low female participation of women in training programmes. Vinnicombe & Singh (2002), noted that for career advancement and leadership roles it is essential that women recognize their ambitions, strengths, and positions, which can be achieved through training programs. Today organizations adopt a wide range of training interventions to accelerate and support women's career. It includes diversity training (Pendry et al., 2007), skill training, women-only training Vinnicombe & Singh (2002), among others. Scholars have also studied the impact of training programs on women career and report and positive relationship. Scholars found that diversity and gender sensitization training brought effective results leading to a more conducive workplace culture. Burke (2006) reported that success of diversity programs in organizations and its positive influence on women's career. Similarly, in a study

in the Indian context. Rath et al. (2015), noted that enabling women to enhance their competence, knowledge and skill was vital for their career advancement. Abalkhail (2019) found that training was crucial in career advancement of women professionals in their study of women professionals in middle eastern context. Research thus establishes the importance of training in career advancement of women professionals across the sectors and context.

Scholars, however, caution about the content of training programs especially with respect to diversity training. Ford & Fisher (1996) suggested that the context discussed/shown in diversity training may be differ from the current work of employees and exhibiting expected behaviours may be difficult. This signifies the importance of taking stock of current situation and chalking out a plan for career development of women. Further, Cheraghi & Schøtt (2015), education and training are highly beneficial for developing career competencies especially to fill the human capital gap arising out of gap or discontinuous employment. Rainbird (2007), studied the efficacy of training initiatives and found that it can be instrumental in removing the tackling the adverse effects of “sticky floor” of low paid jobs for women professionals. It can hence be concluded that the effects of training practices are multifaceted for women’s career development.

Mentoring – Mentoring is a relationship between a less experienced and a more experienced individual where the younger individual is often referred to as protégé’ and the experienced individual is known as the mentor. Kram’s (1985) work on mentoring is the seminal work on the phenomenon, who described mentoring is a process where mentors provide protégé’s with psychosocial support. This includes advisory support, guidance, career development support, and fostering visibility for protégé. At the same time and protecting them protégé’ from unfavourable forces, and making them aware of organizational politics (Kram,1985).

Research establishes a crucial role of mentoring in career advancement of women professionals. In their review about women and mentoring, Noe (1988) noted that mentoring may endow several benefits for women professional including psychosocial support, career development plans, and helping them acquire self-identity. In the similar vein, Ilgen and Youtz (1986) suggested that advisory and career benefits endowed by a mentoring relationship have a likelihood of having a positive impact on co-worker, and peer support. Nelson & Quick (1985) noted that a mentoring relationship may result in a positive mental health outcome for women who seldom find psychosocial support at work. Likewise, Ragins (1999) noted that mentors lend legitimacy to their protégé, provide job-related information and guidance to tackle organizational politics. Dreher & Cox (1996) suggested that a mentoring relationship can enhance self-confidence and facilitate career goals of women professionals. Highlighting, a unique benefit of mentoring, Rhode (2007) states that mentor buffers a protégé from overt and covert form of discrimination, including unconscious and implicit form of discrimination.

Research reveals that success of a mentoring relationship depends upon several factors. Moreover, it primarily depends upon mentor's position in the organization. Ramaswami et al. (2010) report that impact of mentoring for women professionals is greatest when they have an influential male mentor, especially in a male dominated sector or profession.

Furthermore, studying the impact of mentoring using technology Leck et al. (2012) suggested that e-mentoring can be effective in developing trust in a virtual environment (online work setting) , and also help in effective matching of mentors and mentees. In a recent study which compared mentored and non-mentored female managers, French & Eskridge (2021) found that non-mentored female managers perceived more personal challenges while executing administrative duties, and balancing their work and non-work roles. In sum, mentoring is a crucial career support and career management practice which aids career development of women professionals.

Work-life balance practices: Work-life balance practices are one of the most widely used OCM practices that organizations provide to women professionals to support and develop their careers. While there is a lack of agreement about the accepted definition of these practices, it usually relates to one or more of the following: flexible work practices, organizational support for childcare, elderly care; option for family and personal leaves, extended maternity leaves etc. (Estes & Michael, 2005). Other terms are also used in the literature for work-life balance practices e.g. family-friendly policies, work family practices, flexible practices to support family needs etc.

These practices involve a wide array of practices and policies that include Flextime options, compressed work weeks, job sharing, work from home, teleworking, parental leave, extended leaves for child and elderly care, adoption leave, onsite care for children, and day care support. Several studies have presented a business case of providing work-life balance practices to women professionals. Scholars argue that by offering these practices by offering these practices organizations are able to provided work-life balance support to existing employees and also attract new employees (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Similarly, Hegewisch & Gornick (2011) notes that job protected paid maternity leaves increases the likelihood of women returning to work after the leave, thus, having a positive outcome both for organizations as well as women professionals.

While most scholars report the benefits of work-family practices, some authors have mainly been interested in questions concerning the availability versus usage of these practices. Allen (2001) suggests that although work-family practices benefits employees, the availability of such practices does not address the problem linked with work-family culture of an organization. Thus, indicating that apart from organizational career management and support practices a work-family culture is also needed to support women's career. von Hippel et al. (2017) draws on stereotype threat and perception linked with the usage of family- friendly policies among

women professionals. They conclude that these negative sentiments may discourage women from availing such benefits, refuting the purpose of these practices. More recently, Shauman et al. (2018), reported the underuse of work-life programs due to risk of stigmatized program participation and unsupportive workplace norms.

The review of organizational career management practices for women professional indicates that women require a wide range of supportive practices for a sustainable development of their careers. The complexities involve in women's career demands a customised approach, thus, requiring a gamut of OCMs. However, the effectiveness of such benefits is only possible in a supportive work-family culture.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH GAP, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND

OBJECTIVES

RESEARCH GAP, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

3. Research Gap, research questions and objectives

This chapter builds on the literature review chapter and highlights the research gaps related to three key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals ie. workplace flexibility bias and women's career, career reentry after a career break, and organizational career management practices. Further, in this chapter, the research questions and research objectives linked to all three aspects are also formulated based on the research gaps.

Drawing on the literature review pertaining to three key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals ie. workplace flexibility bias and women's career, career reentry after a career break, and organizational career management practices the gaps in the literature were identified. These gaps were the missing link in the existing literature and required scholarly attention. Further, based on the literature gap, research questions were formulated which guided the formulation of research objectives in the next step. The next section presents the gaps in the literature.

3.1 Research Gap

Research gaps in the literature were identified based on the Miles's (2017) taxonomy of research gaps. Miles suggested a theoretical model on research gaps and identified seven types of research gaps which can be spotted in a literature to advance the existing body of research. The seven research gaps proposed in the model are - (a) evidence gap; (b) knowledge gap; (c) practical-knowledge conflict gap; (d) methodological gap; (e) empirical gap; and (f) theoretical gap; and (g) population gap.

As the literature review was carried out on three key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals, the research gaps were also identified pertaining to each aspect

separately. The research gaps identified for each aspect guided to research questions and research objectives. The research gaps pertaining to workplace flexibility bias and women's career, career re-entry after a career break, and organizational career management practices are discussed in the following section in detail.

3.1.1 Workplace flexibility bias

The literature review on workplace flexibility bias indicated the existence of three types of research gaps. These gaps pertained to the issues of methodology, theory, and the context related to workplace flexibility bias and work behaviour of women professionals.

- a) **Methodological gap** – Most of the studies followed a research design that used the published secondary data sources or qualitative data gathered through interviews. There were only a few studies which followed a survey research method. Such a study can be useful in validating the research findings of qualitative and secondary data-based studies.
- b) **Theoretical gap** – In majority of studies direct relationship between workplace flexibility bias and its antecedents or consequences have been explored. There was a dearth of studies focusing on the underlying mechanism explaining such relationship. Thus, a study focusing on the mediating variables to explain nomological relationship between workplace flexibility bias and its antecedent or consequences could be important.
- c) **Population /Contextual gap** – Most of the studies were carried out in the western context. Further, as most studies used secondary data set, the context was specific pertaining to the country or a region. Thus, the generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic. Hence, a study with a key focus on women professionals (who seek flexibility to manage work and family effectively) in IT sector

(which is known for providing flexibility) in Indian context can be compelling. As literature revealed that workplace flexibility bias links positively to turnover intentions, exploring this relationship may explain the hidden/covert issues relating to the drop out of women professionals from IT sector.

Based on three types of gaps evidenced in the literature, it was found that a study on workplace flexibility bias and its effect on turnover intentions among women professionals in Indian IT sector was required. Furthermore, identifying the potential mediating variables explaining this relationship was also important. Based on these research gaps, research questions and objectives were formulated which are discussed in detail in the section 3.2 and 3.3. The research gaps related to career re-entry of women professionals, and organizational career management practices are discussed below.

3.1.2 Career re-entry after a career break

The literature review of career re-entry after a career break among women professionals indicated the existence of two types of research gaps. These gaps pertain to the issues of lack of knowledge on career return to a particular sector and lack of research in the Indian context.

- a) **Knowledge gap** – Majority of research in career re-entry has been general in nature. Most scholars have studied career returnship as a phenomenon which focus on general re-entry after the career break regardless of the change in job type, sector, or the nature of the profession. The existing research is valuable in understanding the issues and challenges women face while returning to paid work. However, there has been little discussion on re-entry in the same career post career break. This assumes significance with respect to a sector like IT where knowledge and skills changes very fast. Consequently, a study on re-entry of women professionals in IT sector after a career break is apparently important.

- b) **Population /Contextual gap** - Most of the studies were carried out in the western context. Indian culture is distinct from west, and the heteronormative gender role expectations has been long acknowledged in the literature. Accordingly, a study in the Indian context may bring valuable insights and add to the existing stock of knowledge on career re-entry of women professionals.

3.1.3 Organizational career management practices and women's career

The review of existing research on Organizational career management (OCM) practices for women's career advancement revealed the existence of two types of research gaps. These gaps signified the lack of adequate evidence pertaining to verifiable evidence related to the influence of OCM practices on women's career, and lack of in-depth study of OCM practices. Based on this, the following gaps were identified

- a) **Evidence gap** - Majority of studies on OCM practices for women's career advancement have reported a positive impact of OCM practices on women's career advancement. However, there are contradictions reported in the literature such that the results from most of studies allow for conclusions, but the contradictions raised in the literature remains unresolved. It is hence vital to conduct a study on OCM practices to study the practices and its impact in detail.
- b) **Methodological gap** - Most studies on OCM practices for women's career advancement have been cross sectional, secondary data based, and qualitative in nature. These studies provide a plethora of knowledge about the OCM practices and its influence on women and women's perception towards these practices. However, there is a clear dearth of studies which focused on the in-depth analysis of OCM practices for women's career specially to understand best practices. Consequently, it was observed

that the best practices can be studied by the in-depth analysis of OCM practices of an organization that has successfully managed women's careers.

After the research gaps pertaining to three key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals (ie. workplace flexibility bias and women's career, career reentry after a career break, and organizational career management practices) were identified, the research questions and objectives were formulated. In the next section research questions and objectives of all the three aspects are discussed in detail in separate sub-sections.

3.2 Research questions and objectives – key variables and conceptual framework

3.2.1 Workplace flexibility bias

The research on workplace flexibility bias indicates that the negative sentiments related use of flexible work arrangements leads to intention to leave the organization among the employees. Stone & Hernandez (2013) reported that women who opted for flexible work experienced various forms of stigma at workplace, which led to their decision to opt-out of their careers. Furthermore, if women perceive a high level of stigma, the intention to suspend their careers is enhanced. Similarly, Cech & Blair-Loy (2014) studied the consequences of stigma linked to the use workplace flexibility practices and reported that those who perceived a higher level of flexibility bias exhibited lower intentions to persist. In the same vein, O'Connor & Cech (2018a) found that perception of flexibility bias enhanced turnover intentions among the employees. This signifies that the perception of workplace flexibility bias leads to turnover intentions among the employees. A study of this nature exploring the relationship could be valuable in the Indian IT context, where voluntary drop-out among women employees is a challenge. The findings thus may expand the understanding of the antecedents of voluntary drop out or opt out of women professionals from the IT sector.

In addition, the literature survey also indicated that there was a dearth of studies which explored the mediating variables explaining the relationship of workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions. To this end, a literature survey was carried out to identify the mediating variables to be included in the study.

Mediating variables

The literature on workplace flexibility bias indicates that it reduces positive work outcomes like job satisfaction, engagement etc. and enhances negative work outcomes like turnover intentions, stress, and burnout. So far, there has been little discussion about the mediating variables explaining these relationships. More recently, however, literature has emerged that offers the understanding of underlying mechanism explain the consequences of workplace flexibility bias. Ferdous et al. (2020) discussed the link between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention with the mediating effect of flexibility usage.

Cech & O'Connor (2017) studied the intervening effect of stress and negative work-life spill-over to understand the link between workplace flexibility bias and health issues of employees. Negative work-life spill over was found to be significant mediator in the study. A similar construct job-to-home spill over was studied by (O'Connor & Cech, 2018b) as an outcome of perceived workplace flexibility bias and found to be significant. These studies reveal that when there is perceived workplace flexibility bias, employees carry their work home if they avail flexible work arrangements. This signifies that due to perceived workplace flexibility bias there is a spill over from work domain to family domain, which explained negative health outcomes in a study conducted by Cech & O'Connor (2017). Based on this literature, the concept of negative work-family spill over was studied and the literature related to it was explored.

a)Negative work-family spill over (NWFS)

Negative work-family spill over relates to the extent in which participation in one domain (work) negatively impacts participation in another domain (family). NWFS occurs when “the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer et al., 1996, p.401). An example of a job-demand might result in NWFS is the requirement to work late in the night, getting up late, and end up getting less time for family needs. NWFS is found to positively linked with negative work behaviours (Liu et al., 2013), negative health outcomes (Tsukerman et al., 2020), and turnover intentions (Aboobaker & Edward, 2020).

Research on NWFS indicate that women experience greater conflict in managing work-life domains due to increased work demands eg. longer working hours (Maume & Houston, 2001). Similarly, Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Ting-Ding (2017) in a study conducted in hospitality industry among hotel managers found that women managers were among the group that experienced the highest levels of NWFS as compared to the other respondents. In the same vein, (Offer, 2014) reported that women experience greater emotional stress as compared to men due to negative work-family spill over.

The research findings assume significance for the current study. In the IT sector work is highly dynamic, knowledge driven, and demanding. In such a scenario, employees are expected to work in odd hours, work late or work in extended hours. (Kanwar et al., 2009). This work context is challenging for women professionals, and they seek flexibility to manage work and family effectively. If women perceive flexibility bias at their workplace they may be forced to bring work at home as a compensatory mechanism (Adler, 1930) to compensate for flexibility availed by them. However, a higher perception of flexibility bias and/or a higher level of negative work-family spill over may lead to a decision to suspend careers, quit jobs or intention to leave their organization. Accordingly, it is posited that negative work-family spill over may

mediate the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women working in IT sector.

b) Work Alienation: A further review of literature pertaining to workplace flexibility bias revealed that a feeling of estrangement was associated with the use of flexibility when employees perceived flexibility bias at the workplace. In this connection, Williams et al. (2013) explored the gendered implications of workplace flexibility bias and found that the flexibility bias for women stems from gender-conforming behavior, and women who work flexibly felt isolated at the workplace, while those who quit were lauded. Women who worked part-time or opted for job-sharing were considered less committed and poor performers; these stigmas resulted in a feeling of alienation among women working flexibly. Similarly, Stone & Hernandez (2013) carried out a qualitative study and found out that workplaces work culture may trigger flexibility bias which results in alienation and eventually leads to a decision to suspend their careers. Based on the findings of these studies, literature related to work alienation was explored.

The concept of work alienation is rooted in the work of Karl Marx pertaining to alienation from work (Shantz et al., 2015,) which was propounded in a industrialized economic setting, discussed in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (Fay, 1979). Marx conceptualized alienation as the estrangement of a worker from the product that was produced, the process by which it was created and from other individuals who were involved in the production of the product. The concept of work alienation is central to sociological and psychological studies (Kanungo, 1979), recently, however, the concept has gained popularity in organizational studies and those conducted by management theorists. Consequently, the concept has been adopted, adapted, and expanded in the organizational context. Blauner (1964), described work alienation as a negative emotion that an employee experiences since work/organization are unable to provide work conditions in which one can reveal one's own

value. Work alienation is often linked with an inability of an organization to provide conditions that value the individual (Shantz et al., 2015) e.g. autonomy, responsibility, social interaction, and self-realization.

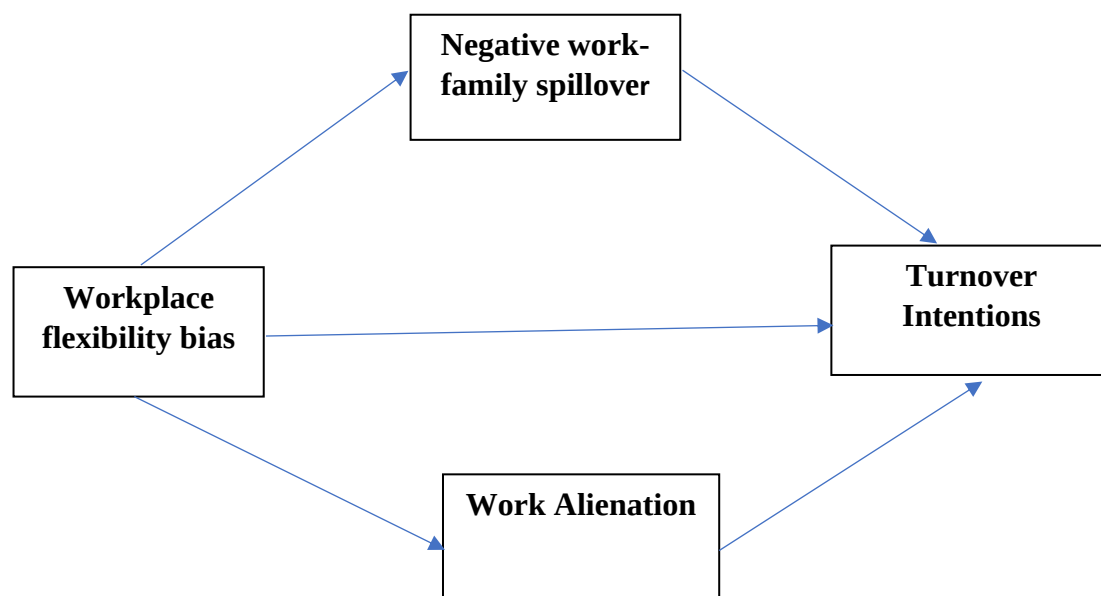
In the light of existing literature on workplace flexibility bias and stigma linked with the usage of flexibility, work alienation as a concept merit attention. The perception of bias and stigma can be linked to the feeling of estrangement and isolation among women employees who avail flexibility. Alongside, the existing literature on workplace alienation suggests that work alienation is positively linked with counter productive work behavior (Shantz et al., 2015), exhaustion and intention to leave (Chiaburu et al., 2014). Given this, it can be deduced that in a perceived workplace flexibility bias situation, employees availing flexibility may experience work alienation and that may lead to turnover intentions. Moreover, with the women experiencing flexibility stigma due to the usage of flexible work arrangement (Williams et al., 2013), it can be inferred that work alienation may explain the linkage between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women working in IT sector.

Theory and conceptual framework

Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) formed the theoretical underpinning of the relationship between the constructs i.e. workplace flexibility bias, turnover intentions, negative work-family spillover, and work alienation. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model proposes that every job involves demands and resources. Resources link to positive work and health outcomes and demands relate to negative health and well-being outcomes. Job demands relates to physical, social, or organizational features of the job that call for sustained physical or mental effort. These efforts hence result in certain physiological and/ or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Psychological costs refer to the mental energy and stress related to a process, any aspect of a process in which an individual is involved (O’Neil, 2015). As workplace flexibility bias involves stigmatization and negative sentiments towards the person who avails flexible work arrangements, the perception of workplace flexibility bias is expected to have a psychological cost. Further, based on Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model it can be inferred that the perception of workplace flexibility bias will enhance the job demands that may result in negative organizational, health and well-being outcomes eg. Negative work-family spillover, work alienation and turnover intentions. That is, perception of workplace flexibility bias will enhance the level of negative work-family spillover, work alienation and turnover intentions, and work alienation and negative work-family spillover will explain the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention. Based on it a conceptual framework was developed (Fig. 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Conceptual Framework



Research questions and Research objectives – Workplace flexibility bias

Based on the literature review, theoretical underpinning, and conceptual framework, following research questions were formulated with respect to workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women professionals working in IT sector.

RQ1a. What is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women professionals in IT sector?

RQ1b. How is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention mediated by negative work to family spill-over?

RQ1c. How is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention mediated by work alienation?

Based on above research questions, research objectives pertaining to workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women professionals were formulated. The objectives are -

Objective 1a: To study the relationship between workplace flexibility bias (WFB) and turnover intentions (TI).

Objective 1b: To study the mediating role of negative work to family spill-over on the relationship between WFB and turnover intentions among women in IT sector.

Objective 1 c: To study the mediating role of work alienation on the relationship between WFB and turnover intentions among women in IT sector

Similarly, the research gaps identified with respect to career reentry after the career break and OCM practices for women's career advancement guided the research question and research objective formulation for these aspects. The research questions and research objectives related to these two aspects are discussed in next sub-sections.

3.2.2 Research questions and Research objectives – Career Reentry among women professionals in IT

Based on the literature review and research gaps, the following research questions were formulated with respect to career reentry among women professionals working in IT sector.

The questions are -

RQ2a. Why do women return to IT sector after a career break?

RQ2b. What are the enablers of career re-entry of women professionals in a dynamic and demanding IT sector?

Based on above research questions research objectives pertaining to career reentry among women professionals in IT sector were formulated, the objectives are -

Objective 2a: To study the reasons of career re-entry among women professionals in IT sector.

Objective 2b: To study the enablers of career re-entry among women professionals in IT sector.

3.2.3 Research questions and Research objectives – Organizational career management practices for sustainable career of women professionals

Based on the literature review and research gaps, the following research questions were formulated with respect to organizational career management (OCM) practices for sustainable career of women professionals working in IT sector, The research question is -

RQ3. How do OCM practices of an organization impact the sustainable career development of women professionals?

Based on above research question, the research objective pertaining to OCM practices was formulated. The objective is -

Objective 3. To identify and study career management practices of an organization that has best practices for sustainable career development of women professionals.

3.3 Research objectives and corresponding studies

Building on the literature review of three key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals three research questions were formulated with respect to each key aspect. Further, these research questions guided the formulation of research objectives for different aspects of sustainable careers of women. It was observed that different studies were required to accomplish the research objectives. Consequently, three different studies were conceived pertaining to three research objectives. Table.3.1 provides a summary of research questions, research objectives and the corresponding studies. The research methodology for each study is discussed in the next chapter.

Table 3.1- Summary of research questions, research objectives and corresponding studies

Research Questions	Research Objectives	Study (Research Focus)
RQ1	Objective 1	Study I Workplace flexibility Bias
RQ1a. What is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women professionals in IT sector?	Objective 1a: To study the relationship between workplace flexibility bias (WFB) and turnover intentions (TI).	
RQ1b. How is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias	Objective 1b: To study the mediating effect of negative work to family spill-over on the relationship between WFB	

and turnover intention mediated by negative work to family spill-over?	and turnover intentions among women in IT sector.	
RQ1c. How is the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention mediated by work alienation?	Objective 1 c: To study the mediating effect of work alienation on the relationship between WFB and turnover intentions among women in IT sector	
RQ2	Objective 2	Study II Career Reentry
RQ2a. Why do women return to IT sector after a career break?	Objective 2a: To study the reasons of career reentry among women professionals in IT sector.	
RQ2b. What are the enablers of career reentry of women professionals in a dynamic and demanding IT sector?	Objective 2b: To study the enablers of career reentry among women professionals in IT sector	
RQ3	Objective 3	Study III OCM practices
How to OCM practices of an organization impact the sustainable career development of women professionals?	To identify and study career management practices of an organization that has best practices for sustainable career development of women professionals	

The table 3.1 provides a summary of research questions, research objectives and studies which were conceived corresponding to each of the research objectives. The table highlights those three different studies were conceived to accomplish the research objectives formulated with respect to three different aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals which also signifies the research focus of each study. In the next chapter highlights the research methodology for each study.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. Research methodology

The research methodology adopted for each study (Study I, II, and III) is discussed in this chapter. As described in the previous chapter a separate study was conducted corresponding to three key aspects of sustainable careers of women- workplace flexibility, career re-entry, and OCM practices. A distinct research methodology was employed for each study to accomplish the research objectives pertaining to different aspects of sustainable careers of women professionals.

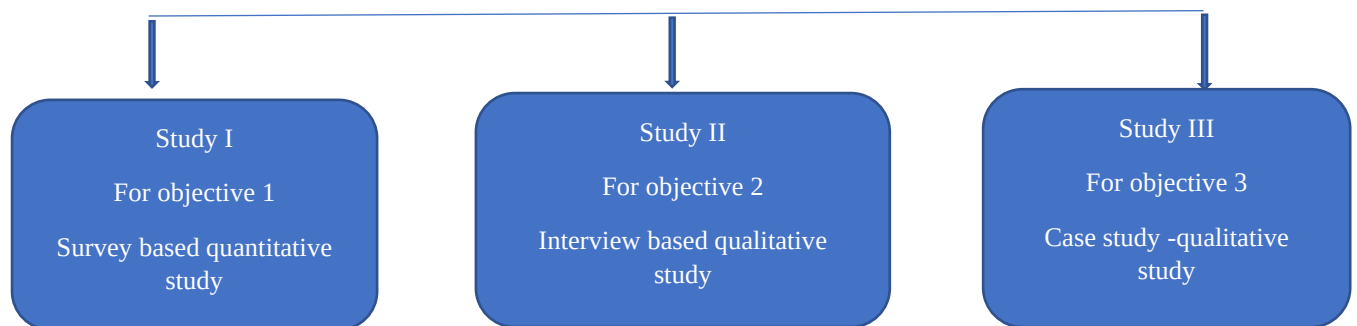
The first study (Study I) was conducted to understand the impact of workplace flexibility bias on turnover intention among women professionals working in IT sector. Further, an attempt was made to study the mediating relationship of negative work-to-family spill over and work alienation. A survey was conducted to analyse the above relationships and hence, this study employed a quantitative research method.

Study II was conducted to understand why and how women returned to same career after their career break (ie. IT) after a career break. A qualitative research design was adopted in this study. The study included the interviews of 40 reentry women understand the motivation and reason behind their career restart.

Study III was conducted to understand how the best OCM practices influenced sustainable career development of women professionals in an organization. This study discusses the importance of clear understanding of women's career needs and matching career practices with

the help of a case study. A case study on the OCM practices of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was developed. TCS was identified for the case study, as it is a top employer of women in IT sector, a company widely known and acknowledged for its practices of career advancement of women professionals. Hence, study III used a qualitative research method. Figure (4.1) provides a snapshot of broad research methodology adopted in each study.

Figure 4.1- Overview of research methodology

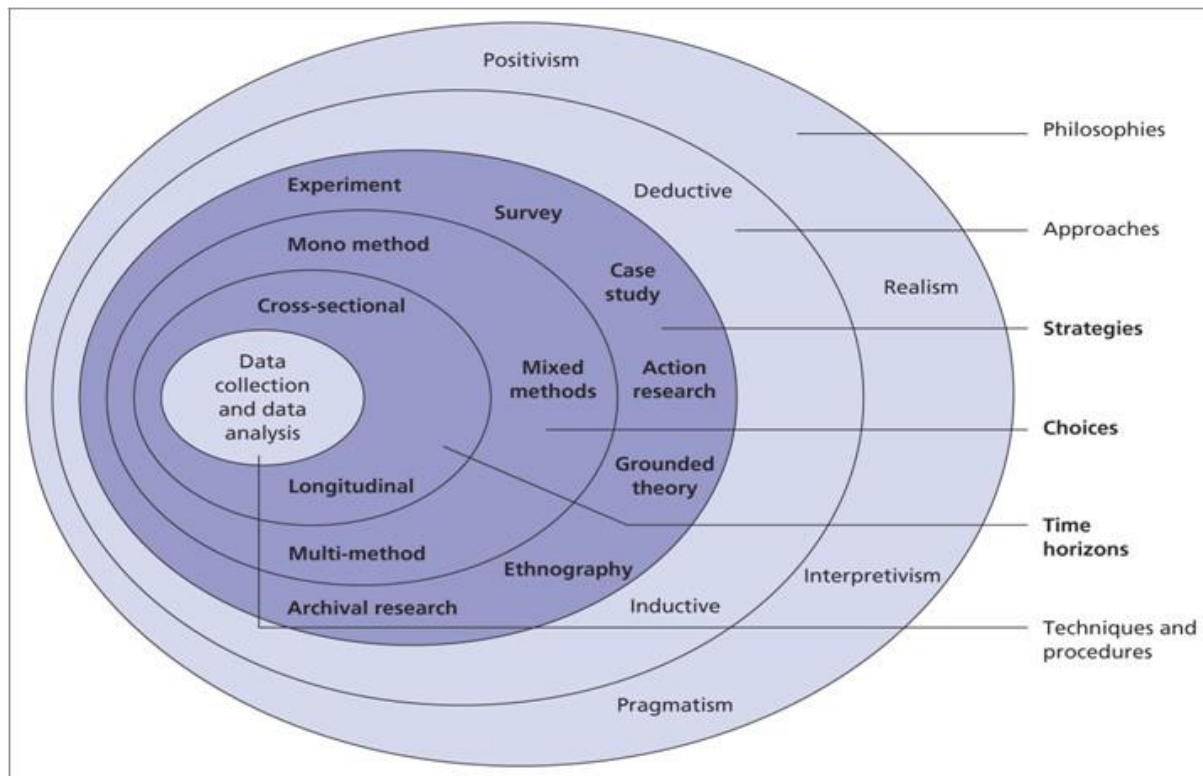


4.1 Study wise overview of research methodology

The “research onion” perspective to research methodology was adopted in this research throughout. The research onion approach (Saunders et al., 2018) provides a detailed step by step procedure to conduct research in the management domain. This perspective distinctly emphasises on the adequate understanding of research philosophy, research type, research approach, methodological choice, strategies, time horizon, data collection and data analysis. Scholars propose that it is vital to have an understanding of these important aspects of research methodology (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; please see figure. 4.2).

Saunders et al. (2018) proposes that a proper understanding of above-mentioned aspect of research methodology helps researchers in efficient research design and execution. The current research followed the research onion perspective for each of the three studies.

Figure 4.2. Research onion model



Source: *The research 'onion' (Saunders et al. 2018 p. 130)*

This study builds on the positivist research philosophy. The positivist research philosophy ie. an objective reality can be analysed through an empirical enquiry following rational and systemic approach (Guba & Lincoln 1994). This philosophy guided all three studies undertaken in this thesis. Further, all three studies were descriptive in nature, as the major objective of all three studies was to describe and explain one or the other phenomenon related to career sustainability of women.

The research approach however, varied from one study to the other. Study I employed a deductive research approach. Study II and study III adopted inductive research approach. Studies under this research also varied on the methodological choices. Study I used a survey based quantitative research method. Study II and III employed a qualitative research method.

Based on the methodological choices, research strategies were devised which were appropriate for the research questions. Study I included a quantitative research survey. For study II, narrative inquiry was adopted. Narrative inquiry is considered as the most appropriate method to understand the experience of respondents (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As the study II attempted to understand the reasons and enablers of career reentry, this strategy appeared most appropriate. The research strategy used in the Study III was case study. The case study on Tata Consultancy Services was based on the information related to gender diversity and women's career published in the company's annual reports. This strategy provided a comprehensive understanding about the influence and impact of OCM practices on the sustainable career development for women professionals.

Time horizons also varied from study to study. Study I and study II were cross-sectional studies where the data was collected from a sample representing the population, at a particular point in time (Kothari, 2004). Study III, however, adopted a longitudinal time horizon. To develop the case study of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) data were collected from the annual reports of TCS from FY 2016 to FY 2020. The longitudinal time horizon provided rich data for analysis and extended robustness to the findings. Further, based on the appropriateness to the research questions and objectives, data collection tools were adopted. For the study I, a survey was conducted to test a theory driven conceptual model and hence, data were collected through a pre-tested instrument. For the study II, data were collected through interviews from women who re-entered their career. For study-III, data was collected from the annual reports of TCS

from FY 2016 to FY2020. Content analysis was done to cull out meaningful information from the annual report of the company for five years.

Data analysis tools also varied from one study to the other. In study I, data collected through the survey was analysed with the help of structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS. Further, the mediation analysis was performed through Hayes Process Macro (Hayes, 2013). As the second study was an interview based qualitative study, the data were analysed through qualitative analysis software, Atlas.ti. In addition, text analysis was carried out with the help of Voyant tools, an open-source analysis platform (Dickerson,2018). Study III was a case study. Content analysis method was adopted to cull out relevant data from the annual reports of TCS for 5 years. Data were manually coded and simultaneously analysed for case study development (Yin, 1981). The table 4.1 provides a comparative analysis of research methodology used in the three different studies based on the research onion model.

Table 4.1 A snapshot of research methodology employed for different studies

Study	Study I	Study II	Study III
Overviews			
Research philosophy	Post- Positivism	Post- Positivism	Post- Positivism
Research Type	Descriptive	Descriptive	Descriptive
Research Approach	Deduction	Induction	Induction
Methodological Choice	Quantitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
Research Strategy (ies)	Survey	Narrative Inquiry	Case study
Time horizon	Cross sectional	Cross sectional	Longitudinal
Data collection	Survey instrument	Interviews	Annual Reports
Data Analysis	Structural Equation modelling (AMOS & Process Macro)	Atlas ti, Voyant tools & NVivo	Manual coding, Content Analysis

4.2 Sampling Procedure and Technique

The career issues addressed in this study required the use of different sampling procedures and techniques for all three studies. The sampling procedures adopted in all three studies were based on the scientific appropriateness. The details of sampling procedure and techniques followed in each study is presented below:

4.2.1 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study I

Study I was carried out to understand the workplace flexibility dynamics in Indian IT sector and its impact on women's career. It was, hence, vital to understand the flexibility related initiatives of IT organizations in IT. The reports published by National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), an apex association of IT companies, were referred to understand the initiatives. These reports provided a broad understanding about the availability of flexibility arrangements to the IT employees. These reports also highlighted that flexibility played a vital role in the way work was organized in the IT sector. Further, NASSCOM (2018) members listing were used for the selection of the IT companies. In the next step, the top IT destinations (hubs) in India were identified. The top three IT cities, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune were included in the sample (IBEF, 2018). These three cities are the hub of IT organizations in India. Additionally, as per the India Skills Report, 2018 these three cities were among cities with top employability and most preferred for work by women (Barua, 2018). Hence, these three cities were included in the study.

Purposeful sampling technique using snowball process (Collins, et. al, 2007) was adopted in the study. Similar technique has been employed in the literature by scholars to study age bias (Schwartz et al., 2003) and weight bias (Henry et al., 2015). Furthermore, following the steps suggested by Biernacki & Waldorf (1981) for snowball sampling, the study identified key referents to ensure diversity in the potential respondents. In addition, the study followed

exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling that helped in controlling the number of chains and number of cases in each chain.

This technique allowed to connect with more potential women participants working in IT companies where they were involved in a wide range of activities and projects. Scholars strongly recommend the importance of diversity in the sample (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018). Attention was thus given to the respondents of different age groups, educational qualifications, work experience and marital status. The study also used an inclusion criterion to reach out to adequate respondents. Only those who availed flexible work arrangement (flexitime/ flexplace, or both) were included as the respondents. The purpose of the research was explained. Further their participation was solicited. Upon their consent, a hardcopy version of the survey was administered to them directly.

Sample Size Determination & Justification

The calculation of sample size for the study was difficult considering the issue of unknown population size, high level variability and heterogeneity amongst the respondents due to varied level of qualification, experience, and exposure. Hence, the recommendations provided in the literature were followed for the sample size determination. Nunnally (1978, pg.421) suggested a subject to item ratio of at 10:1 ie. for every item in the survey instrument ten respondents should be approached. Other scholars have proposed a subject to item ratio of at 5:1 (Hair et al 1998); Bryant & Yarnold; 1995; Costello & Osborne,2005). Boomsma (1982) suggested a minimum sample size of 200 for conducting structural equation modelling. Further, similar studies have included a sample size of 293 (Ferdous et al., 2020), and 266 (Cech & Balir-Loy, 2014). Consequently, it was observed that a sample size of 300 was adequate. Hence, a minimum sample size of 300 was aimed at, for the study I.

4.2.2 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study II

Study II was carried out to understand how and why women return to IT careers after a career break. This study attempted to analyse the factors that drive women professionals to return to the IT sector which changes very rapidly. As this study was linked with the investigation of women's opinion and experiences, a qualitative method was used.

The study examined a focused research question related to re-entry women to the same sector. Hence, women professional who have returned to the IT sector after the career break were the target sample for this study. Understandably identifying, approaching, and convincing re-entry to participate in the study was a difficult task. To reach out to the target respondents, women who re-entered to the IT sector, were approached through social media. Further, the websites and online platforms for women's career were searched and subscribed. The seminars and conferences focused on career restart were attended. These steps helped the researcher in reaching out to re-entry women. Further, purposive sampling and snowball sampling was used to reach out to potential respondents.

Purposive sampling was used to reach out to those participants who would have diverse and valuable views (Charmaz, 2008). Additionally, snowball sampling was adopted to reach out to potential participants. This method is generally adopted when reaching out to potential candidates is difficult (Heckathorn, 2011).

Once the potential candidates for the study were identified, they were approached through different social media platforms and email. The purpose of the research was shared with them. The target candidates were requested to participate in the study. They were conveyed about the academic nature of the study and confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent was taken from the candidates for their participation in the study. The respondents of the study were from top three IT cities of India ie. Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Pune.

Scholarly opinion varies on the adequate number of respondents needed to carry out qualitative studies. Different scholars suggest different numbers to be appropriate eg. 6-20 and above (Guest et. al, 2006). Most recently, scholars have emphasised the importance of theoretical saturation as a guide to adequate number of respondents to be interviewed for a qualitative study (Creswell et al., 2007, p. 160). Thus, the objective was to attain theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation for the Study II was reached at 40 interviews, after which no more interviews were conducted.

4.2.3 Sampling Procedure and Technique- Study III

The research design, sampling procedure and technique for study III was built upon the research case design and method as proposed by Yin (2012). Case study research provides a comprehensive analysis of contemporary phenomenon based on the investigation in the real-world context (Yin, 1981). It is suggested to adopt a single case research design when the phenomenon being studied is exclusive to the case (e.g. a particular organization). Bennett and Elman (2010, p. 505-506) signify the benefits of single case studies that can be implicitly illuminating by explaining the phenomenon or relationships whose outcome vary from previous theoretical assumptions or well-known empirical patterns.

Drawing on it, a single case study design was conceived for study III. The selection of the IT organization for the case was done based on the exclusivity of the organization with respect to the phenomenon being studied. The phenomenon of voluntary drop-out of women professionals from the talent pool is widely known in Information Technology (IT) sector. Hence, women usually remain under-represented in IT organizations. However, there are a few organizations globally, which have shown a consistent increase in gender diversity at all levels of occupation. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is one such organization from India (Business

Insider, 2020). Based on this criteria, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was selected for the case study.

Further, as the objective of the study related to the organizational career management (OCM) practices in detail, the annual reports of TCS were used for data collection. The annual reports were selected as the source of data for the authenticity of the information. Additionally, the annual reports also provided the impact of career management practices with details of gender diversity in the organization. Thus, a five-year data on OCM practices and gender diversity at TCS was collected through the annual reports of FY 2016 to FY2020. This provided an in-depth information on the OCM practices and gender diversity at all levels of occupation at TCS over the years. The longitudinal data was then mapped to bring about a comprehensive picture of OCM practices and their impact on careers of women professionals with improved gender diversity.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5. Analysis and Results

5.1 Study I

This chapter highlights the analysis and results of the study. As discussed in the earlier chapter, three studies were included in this thesis, the details of which are presented as Study-I, II, and III. The relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention among women professionals in Indian IT sector is discussed in study I. Further, this study also included the mediating effect of negative work-family spillover and work alienation. The research objectives and the hypotheses pertaining to workplace flexibility bias, turnover intention, negative work-family spillover (NWFS), and work alienation are presented in this chapter for study I. The objectives are -

Objective 1a: To study the relationship between workplace flexibility bias (WFB) and turnover intentions (TI).

Objective 1b: To study the mediating role of negative work to family spill-over on the relationship between WFB and turnover intentions among women in IT sector.

Objective 1c: To study the mediating role of work alienation on the relationship between WFB and turnover intentions among women in IT sector.

Based on the above objectives, the following hypothesis were formulated,

H1: Workplace flexibility bias will be positively related to Turnover Intentions.

H2: Workplace flexibility bias will be positively related to Negative Work-family spill over.

H3: Workplace flexibility bias will be positively related to work alienation.

H4 : Negative Work-family spill over will be positively related to Turnover Intentions.

H5: Work alienation will be positively related to Turnover Intentions.

H6: Negative Work-family spill over will mediate the relationship between Workplace flexibility bias and Turnover Intentions.

H7: Work alienation will mediate the relationship between Workplace flexibility bias and Turnover Intentions.

These hypotheses were tested in Study I with structural equation modeling technique. In the next section, the details of variables, measures, instrument, and analysis is presented.

5.1.1 Procedures and Participants

Variables, Measures, and Instrument

Dependent variable- Turnover Intentions relates to individual's own evaluation of likelihood (subjective) of permanently leaving the organization at a certain point in future (Cohen et al., 2016). Turnover intention was measured using a three-item scale adopted from (Brough et al., 2014).

Independent variable - Workplace flexibility bias (WFB) is defined as- a general negative sentiment toward people who avail workplace flexible arrangement for personal and family needs. The measure of workplace flexibility bias was adapted from (Cech & O'Connor, 2017b).

Mediating variables

i)**Negative work-family spill over (NWFS)** relates to the extent in which participation in one domain (work) negatively impacts participation in another domain (family). NWFS occurs

when “the general demands of, time devoted to, and strain created by job interfere with performing family-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer et al., 1996, p.401). NWFS was measured using a four-item scale adopted from Kinnunen et. al (2006).

ii)**Work alienation (WA)** relates to the feeling of estrangement among workers about their work roles, future course of action and contribution of their work to organization (Nair & Vohra, 2010). work alienation refers to an attitude towards the work domain, which represents a tendency to be psychologically disengaged from the organization. Work alienation was measured using eight-item scale developed by (Nair & Vohra, 2009).

Pilot testing and instrument validation

A pilot study was conducted to assess the reliability of scales before using it for the main study. Teijlingen & Hundley (2001) suggest that pilot study is helpful in ascertaining whether the proposed instrument is adequate for the measurement of desired constructs. As the scales were adapted from different studies, it is desirable to test these scales together.

First, the instrument was developed, and expert opinion was taken for the sequence of questions and clarity. Based on the suggestions provided, changes were made in the instrument. Further, the instrument was shown to 30 women professionals working in IT for their review. The responses suggested that there were certain changes required with respect to wording of questions for better clarity. This was done to remove double barrelled question and complexity linked to response latency when a long question is used in survey (Bassili & Scott, 1996). The changes were made accordingly, and expert opinion was taken again to finalise the instrument.

Once the instrument was finalised, the pilot test was carried out on a sample of 161 women professionals working in IT sector. The data adequacy for factor reduction was tested using Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity. The KMO value was 0.795, and

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (sig. = 0.00) depicting that data was suitable for exploratory factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed using principal axis factoring (PAF) method as the purpose was to study the latent structure of the constructs. Factor loadings for all the constructs were found satisfactory. Cronbach's alpha values of the measures were more than 0.7 (Hair et al. 2006, p. 102) depicting a good reliability for all the scales.

Further, the preliminary validation of the questionnaire was carried out. The sample size was sufficient for conducting structural equation modelling through AMOS, as per Boomsma (1982) i.e 100 or 200 as per the case and 5 or 10 observations per estimated parameter (Bollen, 1990). Hence, the analysis was carried out using AMOS. The measurement model using all four constructs was analysed. The analysis revealed a satisfactory fit with following values of indices - CFI = 0.956; GFI = 0.891; TLI = 0.949; CMIN/DF = 1.428; RMSEA = .052. Although, GFI (which is sensitive to sample size) value was less than 0.90, it was considered satisfactory, since the value was greater than 0.85 and other model fit indices showed a very good fit (Byrne & Campbell, 1999; Kline, 2011). Consequently, it was decided not to covary items based the result of modification indices to improve the model fit. Further, the reliability assessment was carried out. Table 5.1 depicts the reliability assessment for the pilot sample. The values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) were (>0.70) which was per the recommended cut-off values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et. al, 2006).

Table 5.1 Construct reliability and validity for pilot sample

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	(CR)	AVE
Negative work to family Spillover (NWFS)	0.856	0.718	0.560
Turnover Intention (TI)	0.896	0.898	0.746
Work Alienation (WA)	0.879	0.881	0.488
Workplace flexibility bias (WFB)	0.818	0.822	0.538

Note: values significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5.2 Discriminant validity for the pilot sample

	NWFS	WA	WFB	TI
NWFS	0.748			
WA	0.205	0.863		
WFB	0.232	0.141	0.698	
TI	0.281	0.379	0.32	0.733

Note. Values in bold are square root of AVE of constructs, other values are inter -construct correlations

The AVE values for three constructs were greater than the recommended cut-off of 0.50. As can be seen from the Table 5.1, AVE value for WA is slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.5. However, since the composite reliability was 0.881 (ie. >0.70), and cronbach's alpha value was also 0.879 (ie. >0.70), AVE being a stricter measure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), construct reliability was established.

Further, the discriminant validity for the construct was also established. Table 5.2 depicts the discriminant validity for constructs for the pilot sample. As the square root of AVE values for each construct was greater than the correlations among constructs, it was concluded that the constructs are truly distinct (Hair et. al, 2006). Based on the results of pilot testing scales were found reliable and valid for the further use in the final study. Hence, the research proceeded forward.

5.1.2 Data collection and sample characteristics

Data for the main study were collected from women working in Indian IT sector. As discussed in chapter four, a purposive sampling technique using snowball process was followed to reach

out to the potential respondents. A total of 765 women professionals were approached for the study through chain referrals out of which 362 gave their consent for the participation in the study thus resulting in a sample size of 362 respondents.

The data collected from the respondents were put to initial data cleansing process. Outliers with extreme values ($Z > 3.29$ or < -3.29) were detected. Four such data points were identified and eliminated. Hence, the final sample size for further analysis was 358. Out of final sample of 358, 39.7% of the respondents were from Hyderabad, 32% of the respondents were from Bengaluru, and 28.3% of the respondents were from Pune. Further, descriptive analysis provided the information on demographic profile of respondents. Table 5.3 provides the details of demographic profile and sample characteristics of the respondents.

Table 5.3 Sample characteristics

Demographic parameters	Details
Daily working hours	[8-10 hours = 66.5%] [11-12 hours = 33.5 %]
Occupation type	[Core IT = 63.4 %] [Support IT = 36.6%]
Marital Status	[Married with children = 67. 6%] [Married = 20.1%] [Other =12.3%]
Family Type	[Nuclear = 77.9 %] [Joint =22.1]
Educational Qualification	[B.Tech/ B.E =55.9%] [Postgraduate = 37.9%] [Other = 6.2%]
Total work Experience	[0-6 years = 68%] [> 6years = 32%]

5.1.3 Common method variance

Common method variance (CMV) is a systematic error. It effects the variance shared among the variables in the study, it is usually a result of using same method or same source for data collection at a same point of time (Richardson et al. 2009). Cross-sectional studies suffer from common method variance, and it is required to use procedural remedies to control CMV before

the analysis is done on the data. To statistically test for the presence of CMV, Harman's single factor test was carried out using EFA and limiting number of factors to 1. The common factor explained only 38.39 % variance. As the variance explained by the common factor is less than 50%, it can be inferred that there was no indication of common method bias (Scott & Bruce, 1994).

5.3.4 Descriptive statistics

Mean, standard deviation (SD), intercorrelation, and average variance extracted (AVE) for all the construct is shown in the Table 5.4. As shown in the table, all values fall under the accepted threshold.

Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	WFB	NWFS	WA	TI
WFB	4.33	1.53	0.668			
NWFS	3.49	1.21	0.392***	0.809		
WA	4.41	1.39	0.437***	0.315***	0.619	
TI	3.78	1.04	0.572***	0.492***	0.508***	0.613

Note- Descriptive statistics, Inter-construct correlation, AVE represented in bold fonts, $p < 0.05$

= ***

5.3.5 Structural Equation modelling (SEM)

Structural equation modelling is comprised of the measurement and the structural model. A measurement model measures the latent variables to check for the adequacy of the proposed model. The structural model tests all hypothesised relationships through path analysis (Kline, 2011). Structural equation modelling was carried out through AMOS 21.

Measurement model

The measurement model uses latent variables and their indicators to ensure the extent of measurement of unobserved variable through observed variable. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is carried out for this purpose. Confirmatory factor analysis includes development of measurement model, reliability, and validity assessment for constructs. The measurement model is shown in Figure 5.1.

Reliability assessment of all constructs are depicted in the Table 5.5. The values suggests that the item loadings, AVE, composite reliability, and Cronbach's alpha values of constructs are as per the accepted threshold. Further, the model fit indices (**CFI = 0.964; GFI = 0.919; TLI = 0.957; CMIN/DF = 2.224; RMSEA = .059**) also suggested a good fit. Further the discriminant validity of the constructs was evaluated by comparing square root of AVE with inter-construct correlations. Analysis revealed AVE was greater than maximum shared variance and average shared variance for all constructs, suggesting a good discriminant validity. The discriminant analysis is shown in the Table 5.6.

Figure 5.1 Measurement model

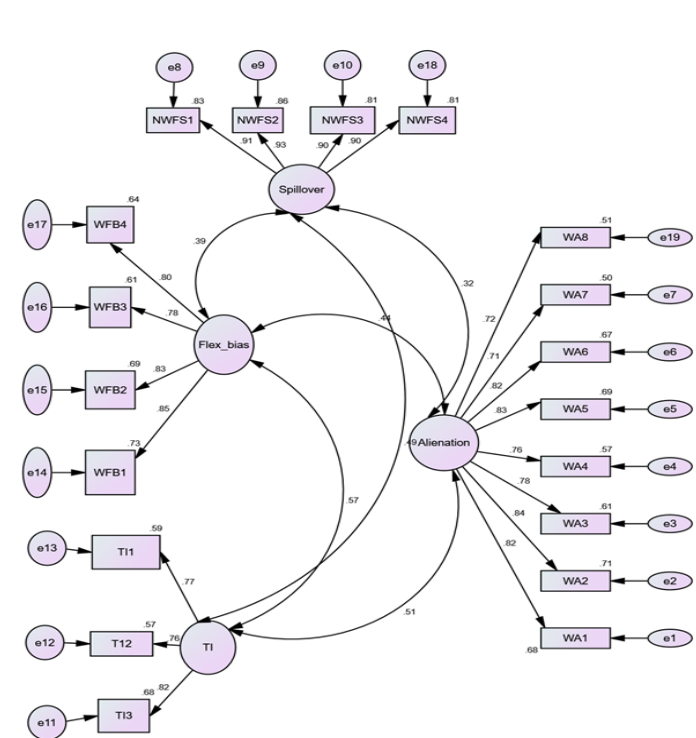


Table 5.5 CFA- Reliability assessment

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Alienation					
	WA1	.825	0.619	0.928	0.928
	WA2	.844			
	WA3	.782			
	WA4	.757			
	WA5	.829			
	WA6	.821			
	WA7	.707			
	WA8	.717			
Turnover Intentions					
	TI1	.823	0.613	0.826	0.826
	TI2	.756			
	TI3	.769			
Negative work to family Spill-over					
	NWFSI	.899	0.809	0.894	0.950
	NWFS2	.900			
	NWFS3	.926			
	NWFS4	.911			
Workplace flexibility bias					
	WFB1	.803	0.668	0.889	0.889
	WFB2	.783			
	WFB3	.830			
	WFB4	.852			

Note- Model fit Indices: CFI = 0.964; GFI = 0.919; TLI = 0.957; CMIN/DF = 2.224; RMSEA = .059, all values significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5.6 Discriminant Validity

	WFB	NWFS	WA	TI
WFB	0.817			
NWFS	0.392	0.899		
WA	0.437	0.315	0.786	
TI	0.572	0.492	0.508	0.782

Note. Values in bold are square root of AVE, other values are inter-construct correlations, values significant at $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis testing

The research model consisted of seven hypotheses. The model can be divided into direct and indirect model. Direct model included all direct hypothesis – H1 to H5, and indirect model included mediation hypothesis – H6 & H7. Direct hypotheses were tested through path analysis in SEM using AMOS and indirect hypothesis were tested using Process Macro v2.

Structural model was developed in AMOS and tested for the model fit. Model fit indices were within the recommended range; CFI = 0.962; GFI = 0.917; TLI = 0.956; CMIN/DF = 2.270; RMSEA = .059. Next, the direct relationship between the constructs were analysed. Results of hypothesis testing is given in the Table 5.7. The structural model and path analysis is shown in figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 – Structural model and path analysis

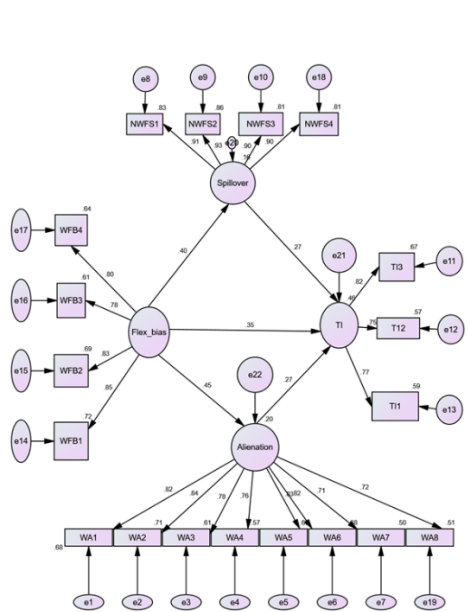


Table 5.7 Hypothesis testing- direct relationship

Hypotheses	Estimate	SE	CR	Decision
H1 WFB – TI	0.35***	.044	5.494	Supported
H2 WFB-----→NWFS	0.40***	.047	7.100	Supported
H3 WFB ----→ WA	0.45***	.059	7.684	Supported
H4 NWFS-----→ TI	0.27***	.045	5.043	Supported
H5 WA -→ TI	0.27***	.038	4.824	Supported

*Notes- ***= $p < 0.05$, R square = 0.46, N= 358*

H1 stated that workplace flexibility bias will be positively related to turnover intentions. Hypothesis testing depicted a significant relationship ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$), providing support to H1. The relationship between WFB and NWFS was also found significant ($\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.05$), hence H2 was supported. H3 posited a positive relationship between WFB and WA. H3 was also supported with $\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$. H4 stated that NWFS will be positively related to turnover intentions, the study found support with $\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$. H5 posited a positive relationship between work alienation and turnover intention, H5 was also supported with $\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.05$.

Mediation analysis

Process macro v.2.11(Hayes 2013) was used to analyse mediation hypotheses. The analysis was controlled for demographic variables. Analysis was conducted using model no. 4.

Results of mediation are provided in the Table 5.8. The indirect effect of negative work-family spillover was found significant ($\beta = 0.078$ ***, C.I = 0.039 - 0.128). It was inferred based on the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (at 1000 samples), which did not include zero. It can

be said that negative work-family spillover mediates the positive relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions. Hence, hypothesis 6 was supported.

Further, the indirect effect of work alienation on the relationship of workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions was found significant ($\beta = 0.083$ ***, C.I = 0.040 - 0.136). As the 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (at 1000 samples) did not include zero, it can be said that work

Table 5.8 – Mediation analysis

	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect of NWFS on WFB→TI	Indirect Effect of WA On WFB→TI	Total Indirect Effect
Beta	0.286***	0.078***	0.083***	0.160***
SE/ Boot SE	0.048	0.022	0.025	0.027
t -value	5.928	-	-	
P- value	0.000	-	-	-
LLCI-ULCI	0.191 - 0.381	0.039 - 0.128	0.040 - 0.136	0.113 - 0.217
Hypothesis 6		Supported		
Hypothesis 7			Supported	

alienation mediates the positive relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions. Hence, hypothesis 7 was supported.

5.1.6 Key findings – Study I

The results of study I depict that workplace flexibility bias was positively related to the turnover intentions of women working in IT sector. Results also depict that workplace flexibility bias links positively to negative work to family spillover, indicating that existence of bias increases the job demands resulting in such spillover. Workplace flexibility bias also linked positively to work alienation, suggesting that women who avail flexibility and have a perception of flexibility bias at work experience alienation at workplace. Furthermore, the study confirmed that negative work to family spillover and work alienation explained the positive relationship

between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intention. Study I explained the psycho-social angle and influence of workplace flexibility bias beyond the usage-impact of flexibility.

STUDY II

5.4 Study II

The issue of flexibility bias discussed in study I revealed that women's career gets effected by several covert and overt issues. The phenomenon of career breaks in women's career are therefore not uncommon. Career reentry after the career break is an important decision in women's career which is affected by several factors. Study II focuses on the reasons and enablers of career reentry. Study II is a qualitative study based on the interview of 40 reentry women who resumed their careers in IT sector after a career break.

The term 'reentry women' is used with respect to women professionals who resumed their careers in IT after a career break that extended beyond six months. Only those who worked in IT sector and returned to the same sector were included in the study. Women professionals returning to other sectors, other jobs, or those who opted for self-employment were not included in the study. The following objectives were set out for study-II.

Objective 2a: To study the reasons of career reentry among women professionals in IT sector.

Objective 2b: To study the enablers of career reentry among women professionals in IT sector.

5.2.1 Procedure and participants

This study focused on reentry women who form a distinct category of women professionals. To reach out potential respondents purposive sampling and snowball sampling was used. The participants of the study belonged to Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Pune. Data for the study were collected through interviews. For the interview a pre-interview questionnaire was designed. Further, an interview manual was also developed for the study. The pre-interview questionnaire consisted of questions on demographic profile of respondents. It included questions on family,

age, reasons of career break, work experience, span of career break etc. The pre-interview questionnaire included demographic information about the participants which guided the interview process. Interview setting was kept informal and average time for the interview was around 40 minutes. Interviews were conducted till the theoretical saturation was reached and no new themes emerged. Theoretical saturation was observed at 40th interview, after that no more interviews were taken.

Sample characteristics

Participants of the study were the reentry women resuming their career in IT sector after a career break. The reasons of career break varied from marriage, motherhood, elderly care, relocation etc. The span of career break ranged from 9 months to 8.5 years. Most of the respondents worked in core IT functions before the career break. Majority of respondents lived in nuclear families, and all were mothers. Most of the respondents were postgraduates. As far as age of the respondents are concerned, most of them were above 35 years of age. Table 5.9 depicts the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 5.9 Demographic profile of respondents

Family Type	Number of children	Age	Education	Occupation type
Joint =12	One = 25	25-30 years = 5	Undergraduate = 16	Support IT function = 14
Nuclear = 28	Two = 15	30-35 years =9	Postgraduate = 24	Core IT function = 26
		Above 35 years =26		

Note: Total number of respondents = 40

5.2.2 Data analysis and results

Data analysis was carried out using ATLAS.ti version 8. Further, Voyant tools was used to carry out text analysis. Text analysis helped in initial segregation of themes and provided clarity. The word clouds, quotes, and bubbles analysed with the help of Voyant tools is given in appendix. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Analysis was done based on the six steps of thematic analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six steps included i) getting familiarised with data, ii) developing initial codes, iii) generating themes, iv) reviewing themes, v) confirming and defining themes, vi) producing the report. The first five steps include searching for themes and confirming it after coding. The sixth and the last step pertains to weaving out a coherent story linking the themes that emerged from the data.

5.2.3 Reasons for career re-entry

Analysis revealed four distinct categories of reasons of career reentry of women professionals. The categories were name i) self / individual factors, ii) need for financial independence, iii) career orientation, and iv) favourable life events. The thematic analysis of reasons of career reentry are shown in table 5.9a. Below, each category is described in detail.

Self/ individual factors – Self/ individual factor emerged as a prominent reason of career reentry. Respondents shared that career reentry was an opportunity for them to prove their self-worth. It was observed that career break was not only related to the loss of paid work and human capital, but it also impacted self-esteem of reentry women to a large extent. While on career break they felt that their talent was getting wasted and they felt low on self-confidence. They viewed career reentry as a mechanism to rebuild their self-esteem and self-confidence. While talking about their reentry, most of the respondents emphasised that during their career break they felt that getting back to work was needed to preserve their self-worth for themselves. This signified that for reentry women, their careers were crucial to their self-concept.

Respondents highlighted that working made them happy and they wanted to do it for themselves, as noted in one of the excerpts-

“Going to work made me happy, I wanted to do it for myself not others”

Respondents also shared that during their career break they felt stagnated, gripped in a feeling of inferiority. They felt that career resumption was an opportunity to come out of this inferiority feeling which was lowering their self-esteem. The excerpt given below highlights this aspect more clearly,

“Sitting at home I was stuck....stagnated. I had an inferiority feeling, low confidence.... it was also showing in my personality...working again I feel self-confident and happy.”

This indicates that self/individual factors were the trigger that motivated women for reentry. Analysis also revealed that self/individual factors were crucial in driving women to prepare for career resumption process. As they viewed career resumption as an opportunity to regain their self-confidence, self-worth, and self -esteem, consequently they prepared for the same.

Moreover, self/ individual factors were intrinsic factors that signified the importance of individual self-agency in career development, driving women on career break to restart their careers. Being intrinsic to the individual, the patterns of self/ individual factors of reentry of varied amongst the respondent. Yet, they converged with respect to the motivation it provided to the women to return to their careers.

ii) Need for financial independence – The analysis revealed that the urge to become financially independent was another key reason behind career reentry among women professionals. Respondents revealed that they were earning a good salary before the career break, and they missed that while being on the break. The excerpt given below highlights the respondent’s urge to regain financial independence-

“IT pays so well. I was earning a good amount. Had to take a break after marriage as I relocated, had baby immediately after it. But I missed my pay-check. I knew its only about restarting my career and I can earn again. You see money drives....”

Apart from the monetary benefits that triggered the decision to restart their careers. Most respondents also discussed about the urge to be free from financial dependence on others in their family. The excerpt below describes it well

“...When you have your own money, ...you can take decisions. When you are financially dependent you can't. Returning back to work was important to come out of this financial dependence on others”.

Although, need for financial independence emerged as an important reason for career reentry, diverse opinions and thoughts emerged with respect to it. Analysis revealed that most of respondents wanted to be financially independent, but their choice was anchored around family needs. In short, urge to regain financial independence was being driven by decision to support their families.

Thus, it was evident that drive for financial independence varied amongst the respondent being rooted in different anchors – money (ie. to earn again), regain financial self-reliance (come out of financial dependence), and family (provide financial support to family).

iii) Career orientation – Analysis reveals that reentry women had a distinct career orientation towards their career in IT sector. This was reflected in their strong career identity. Further, reentry also displayed a high degree of work centrality. Career identity relates to individual's commitment towards specific career or occupation (Praskova et al., 2015). It also revealed the reason behind the re-entry to the same career after the career break. Respondents narrated that their career was their identity.

“My career was my reflection, my asset”.. .

Further, respondents revealed that they had invested a lot of time, energy, and finances to build their career in IT. Hence, when they planned for reentry IT was the obvious choice for them. Since, reentry women recognized strongly with their IT careers they decided to resume it after the career break.

Furthermore, a high degree of work centrality was also found among the respondents. They attached a high value to their paid work and career. Work centrality relates to individual's belief regarding the value and priority they give to work in their life (Moura & Oliveira-Silva, 2019). High work centrality in an individual signifies that work is a central to his/ her life. Respondents expressed their work centrality in terms of “proud of their work”, and “felt a void, when not working”, these expressions indicated that ‘work’ was a central domain to their lives, which was driving their career orientation and hence the return to the same career. The excerpt provides a glimpse of work- centrality

“I worked throughout my both pregnancies. Returned to work after 12 weeks of break...But, had to take a long break to take care of my father-in-law. But work was never out of my mind, I always thought of it, thought of restarting my career ...”

A high degree of career identity and work centrality explained the reason behind women's resuming their careers in IT after the career break.

iv) Favourable life events- Analysis showed that women chose to return to their career when the life events turned favourable to the returnship. Respondents shared that they went on a career break due to certain life events e.g. relocation, marriage, motherhood etc. Similarly, when life events became conducive to career re-entry, they decided to resume their careers. In this regard, respondents shared different experiences. Favourable events cited by most of the respondents included children attaining school going age, returning to the country where they could work, parents coming to live with them (after a certain age) etc. This showed that

favourable life events triggered the career reentry decision among women returnees. Life events are the context that influence the way one's career is shaped. Specially, for women life events play a vital role in career start, career transition, career break, and career restart. This indicates how women's career are influenced by different life events around her.

Excerpts give below provide details about the favourable life events.

“When my son started going to school, I felt I have an opportunity to get back to work. Before that it was just impossible.

“.... My father retired, and then he decided to shift to the city I live with my mother. This was a boon for my career. My kids got the care and safety, I got the support to rebuild my career...”

Results thus evidence that favourable life provided a conducive context for career returnship. Importance of context has been highlighted in the concept of sustainable careers (De Vos et al, 2020), indicating that careers are not built in a vacuum but are shaped with the forces of micro and macro context. For women who plan for the career reentry, context plays a crucial role. These women are disadvantaged due to a career break and while reentry they look for a favourable life event. This was evident in the accounts shared by the respondents.

Table 5.9a- Thematic analysis- Reasons of career reentry

Illustrative quotes	Initial themes	Potential themes	Final themes
<i>‘Going to work made me happy, I wanted to do it for myself not others’</i> <i>‘Sitting at home I was stuck....stagnated. I had an inferiority feeling, low confidence.... it was also showing in my personality...working</i>	Desire to regain confidence, desire to come out of inferiority, desire to gain self esteem	Self-confidence, self-worth, self-esteem	Self/ individual factor

<i>again I feel self-confident and happy.'</i>			
<i>"...When you have your own money, ...you can take decisions. When you are financially dependent you can't. Returning back to work was important to come out of this financial dependence on others".</i>	Urge to financial independent, desire to come out of financial dependence on others, own money, spend as per wish	Financial self-reliance, financial independence, Earnings	Need for financial independence
<i>"My career was my reflection, my asset"..</i> <i>"I worked throughout my both pregnancies. Returned to work after 12 weeks of break...But, had to take a long break to take care of my father-in-law. But work was never out of my mind, I always thought of it, thought of restarting my career ...</i>	Career as an asset, career as an identity, career, and self-concept, work central to their lives, work as a dominant domain	Career focus, career identity, work-centrality, career oriented	Career orientation
<i>When my son started going to school, I felt I have an opportunity to get back to work. Before that it was just impossible.</i> <i>".... My father retired, and then he decided to shift to the city I live with my mother. This was a boon for my career. My kids got the care and safety, I got the support to rebuild my career..."</i>	Time was conducive to return when it became favourable to restart the career	Time and context, favourable scenario, life events, conducive context	Favourable life events

5.2.4 Enablers of career reentry

Analysis of accounts of women revealed several themes with respect to the enablers of career reentry. First, the accounts were coded to get the initial themes, through which potential themes emerged which were eventually clubbed into final themes that depicted enablers. As many as seven enablers of career reentry emerged after the analysis. The enablers are discussed below, and the thematic analysis of enablers are provided in the table 5.9b.

Self-development and continuous learning – The importance of continuous learning and self-development for career re-entry was mentioned by all the respondents. Participants highlighted the role of continuous learning to return to IT careers, as technology changes quickly. A career restart in IT requires reskilling and upskilling. The experiences of respondents revealed that they availed every possible opportunity to update their technological knowledge and behavioural skills. Respondents revealed that self -development activities like bootcamps, technical certifications, and advance courses helped them to mellowed down the adverse effect of the career break on their resumes.

Developmental networks – Analysis revealed that approaching developmental networks played a crucial role in career reentry. Developmental networks refer to the constellation of people who are actively involved in supporting a person's career (Dobrow et al., 2012). Respondents revealed that it was vital to connect strategically to colleagues, co-workers and supervisors to resume their career. Respondents unanimously emphasised the importance of building a developmental network and efforts required in it. They also mentioned its benefits in terms of referrals, crucial information, and career guidance to the respondents.

Family support – Family support played a crucial role in career resumption of respondents. Respondents narrated their experiences about the instrumental and emotional support they

received from different family members – in-laws, husband, mother, father, sibling, and extended family. Participants highlighted that their family members provided emotional support while they planned for career restart that boosted their self-confidence. Furthermore, family members also provided instrumental support in terms of taking care of kids, attending to household chores, among others.

Friend’s support- Friend’s support emerged distinctly as a social support enabling reentry of women professionals. Accounts revealed that friends provided crucial information that helped respondents in career reentry. Friends also provided emotional support to the respondents. Most importantly friends gave appraisal support. It helped in potent self-evaluation to understand the areas of improvement required for career resumption.

Digital platforms – Digital community platforms, women-only social networks, career accelerator platforms, and connecting platforms emerged as one of the key enablers of career re-entry. These platforms accelerate, help restart women on career break through reskilling programs, developmental networks, webinars, mentoring, job referrals, job postings, and motivational sessions. Every participant was an active member of one or more digital platforms. These platforms were source of inspiration and empowerment for women participants which helped them in career reentry.

Return to work corporate programmes – Analysis revealed that corporate career restart programmes played a crucial role in career resumption of some respondents. These programmes are launched by IT organizations to bring back women on career break to the workforce. Respondents who participated in these programmes informed that corporate programmes were structured programmes designed to impart key technical skills to women on career break. Additionally, these programmes also included motivational sessions and success stories of women who returned to work after attending such programmes. Respondents shared

that these programmes provided them with an opportunity to have first-hand experiences which helped them in their career resumption.

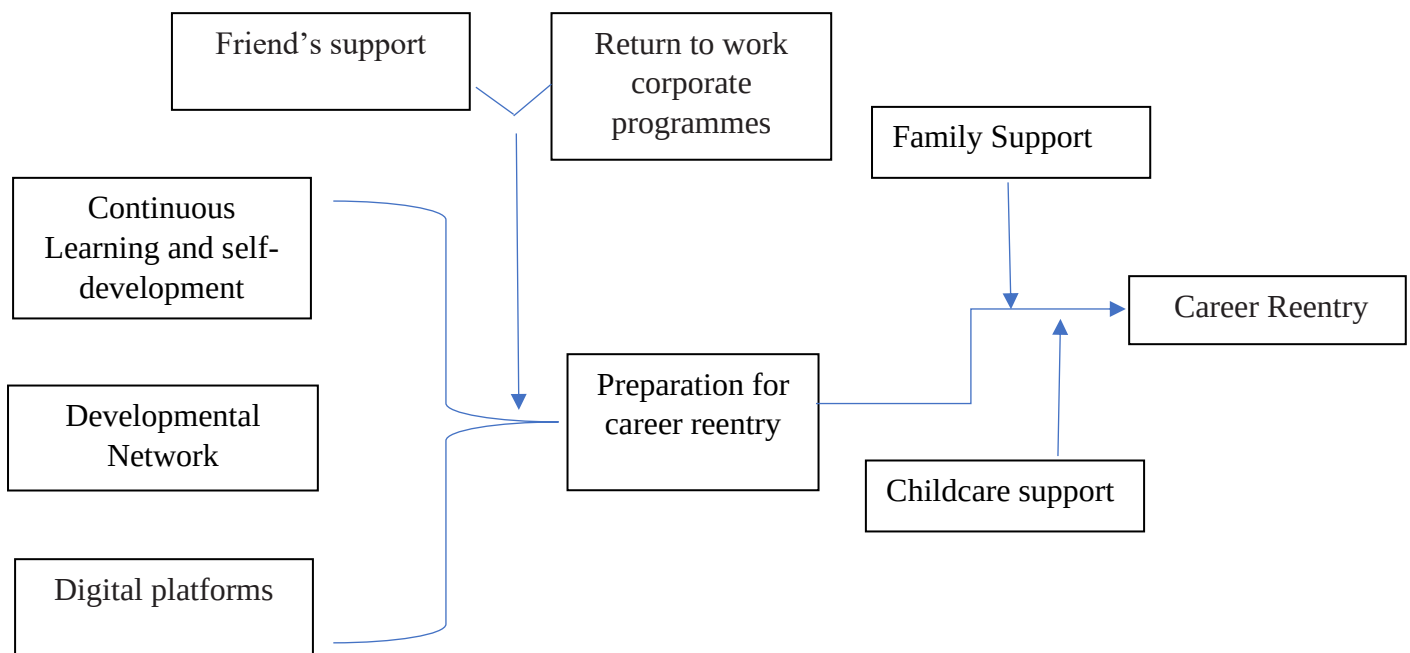
Childcare support – Respondents mentioned the importance of organized childcare support e.g. creche and day care centres in their career resumption. Respondents’ accounts revealed that day care and creche provided instrumental support to them which helped them return to their careers. Moreover, in the absence of family support for childcare, childcare support from day cares and creche became a reliable support to women returnees. Women also shared that due a holistic childcare support provided by these centres i.e., care, food, safety, along with activity classes, their returnship became easy. Additionally, most of these centres are technology enabled, respondents could track the activity of their kids in real time. It gave them a sense of security that helped them focus on their career returnship.

Table 5.9b Thematic analysis- Enablers of career reentry

Illustrative quotes	Initial themes	Potential themes	Final themes
<i>“Career restart is impossible without continuous learning, I knew that....so I kept learning”</i>	Inclination to reskills, update technical skills needed for IT roles, gather knowledge about upcoming IT technologies and join certifications, courses, and short-term programs	Upskilling, learning, self-improvement, reskilling, self-development	Continuous learning and self-development
<i>“...Reaching out to old colleagues, supervisor, all contacts are needed, ... telling them that you are ready to return...”</i>	Reach out to contacts, develop professional network, active engagement with people for career advice and suggestions, requesting referrals	Meeting, Contacting Networking, Engaging for career returnship	Developmental networks
<i>“My decision to return to work was a joint</i>	Support by family members, emotional	Instrumental support by family members,	Family support

<i>decision by me and my husband...I needed support; he changed his office timings... to suit my office time.... ”</i>	support, motivation to return, active participation in career resumption of women	emotional support family, constant help	
<i>“My friends believed in my ability... sometimes more than me...they gave crucial information on skills needed, new technology etc.... ”</i>	Friend’s support in enhancing self-confidence, self-esteem, information sharing for career reentry	Informational support, emotional support, and appraisal support by friends	Friend’s support
<i>“I got so many things at one place after joining, my mentors were just amazing they suggested several courses, webinars for career reentry...”</i>	Learning through people on platforms, opportunity to connect, seek mentoring, and upskill	Technology enabled support for reskilling, mentoring, networking, resume development, online courses	Digital platforms
<i>“I applied for a career start program by a leading IT company, it was a great learning opportunity... coming from a leading firm, it equipped me of all required skill to return to IT career”</i>	Corporate support to train women on career break on technical skills, providing boot camps, internship, new courses, and certification	structured program by corporates for career reentry- technical skill support, behavioural skills, corporate restart programs	Return to work corporate programmes
<i>“...I cannot imagine my career restart without the day care... they have been very supportive...my kid is now settled there...I feel that he is safe there and at feel at peace...”</i>	Institutional support for childcare, organised support for taking care of kids, holistic childcare, pick and drop for kids	organized care for children, Day care centres, creche, flexible support for childcare	Childcare support

Fig 5.3 Career reentry framework based on career enablers identified in the study



Analysis revealed seven types of enablers. Based on these enablers a framework for career reentry was developed. The framework is presented in figure 5.3. The figure depicts that continuous learning, self-development, digital platforms, and developmental network helped in preparation for career reentry. Friend's support and corporate restart programs strengthened the process of career reentry preparation. That is in the presence/ availability of friend's support and corporate restart programs career reentry preparation was reinforced. The next step after career reentry preparation was actual reentry to the IT sector. The framework depicts that the actual reentry was not possible without the instrumental support of family and availability of childcare support.

It is evident that reentry women require different type of support from different enablers to return to IT careers. Self-development, networking, and joining digital community platforms provided much needed upskilling opportunity, career advice, informational and appraisal

support for career reentry preparation. The journey from preparation stage to actual reentry was possible in the presence of instrumental support provided by family members and childcare support providers. It also signifies the importance of instrumental support that help a women return to work after a career break.

STUDY III

5.3 Study III

Study III was conducted to understand how the best OCM practices influence sustainable career development of women professionals in an organization. This study discusses the importance of clear understanding of women's career needs and matching career practices with the help of a case study. A case study on the OCM practices of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is developed. TCS was identified for case as it is a top employer of women in IT sector and widely known and acknowledged for its practices of career advancement of women professionals. The procedure of case development is discussed in detail in the next section.

Tata Consultancy Services – The case

5.3.1 Procedure

The case study approach as suggested by Yin (2012) was followed to develop the case study. A single case study was found appropriate as per the research objective. Furthermore, a descriptive research case was considered appropriate as it presents a complete description of a particular phenomenon in a specific context. Tata consultancy services was identified for the case study as it is a leading IT organization which provided highest employment to women professionals. TCS employed 1 lakh women professionals in 2014, while two other leading IT organizations together employed less than that. TCS has also been able to consistently improve gender diversity over the years (Times of India, 2014). Moreover, the diversity initiatives of TCS have been recognised worldwide eg. U.K, South Africa (Indian Express, 2021). TCS,

thus, was identified for studying the practices it employs for developing sustainable careers of women professionals.

Collection of case data was done through the content analysis of annual reports of TCS. Organizations reveal detailed information in their annual reports about the policies and practices framed by them for women professionals. Further, the information provided in annual reports are considered credible. Similar methodology has been used by Previts & Samson (2000) and Hanson & White (2004) to study single companies/ organizations. Further, the use of annual report data to study a single organization has also been recommended by Claire (1945) and utilized by several scholars. The data were collected from TCS annual reports from FY 2016-2020. The TCS OCM practices for women's career advancement were followed for five years of continuously. This provided an in-depth information about OCM practices of TCS. Based on the data, analysis was conducted, and the case study was developed.

5.3.2 Case Study

In 2017, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was recognised as one of the top 10 organization to work for women in India. The journey of TCS to become a dream organization for women to work has been incredible, especially in the context of the challenges it faced. Like every other IT organization TCS also faced a daring challenge of maintaining healthy gender diversity at the workplace. In the IT sector the issue of women under representation is widely known, the problem however is not as simple as it looks. It is a multifarious issue.

Women world-wide, are seen to less likely enter and more likely leave science and IT careers at a relatively higher rate. It is also true that women evidence the highest rate of dropping out during the mid-career stage leaving very few women at the top. The situation was not much different in India, females formed 51% of total IT workforce at entry level, 34% at mid-level and have meagre single digit representation at top level. It clearly indicated a leaky talent pipeline of women professionals (NASSCOM, 2018). TCS faced the same problem, a high rate of women talent dropout at mid-level and a meagre representation of women in leadership roles. Amidst this, TCS devised and implemented series of innovative practices and policies to

combat the challenge. With strategies in place, TCS was aiming to become a diversity champion in the Indian IT sector.

About the Company

TCS is an Indian MNC in the IT service and consultancy. TCS is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. TCS, a subsidiary of Tata group, operates in 147 locations in 46 countries. It is placed among top IT service companies in the world. Forbes ranked TCS as one of the world's most Innovative companies in 2013. In 2018, TCS became first Indian IT service organization to cross market capitalization of \$ 100 billion. TCS is amongst the top IT employment provider. As per the annual report (2018-19) the total employee strength of TCS was 4,24, 285 who work for different locations where TCS is located. TCS is also known for its sustainable practices. Its proactive approach towards sustainable development has received worldwide appreciation.

TCS Ltd. was founded by a division of Tata Sons limited in 1968. In the initial years TCS primarily worked on developing small solutions for its sister concerns (eg TESCO) and other domestic players (eg. Central Bank of India and Unit Trust of India). Later on TCS started to develop solutions for international clients also which included electronic depository for a Swiss company and trading system for a Canadian company. In 1980, TCS forayed into software development and research when it established India's first software development and research centre in Pune, the Tata Research Development and Design Centre (TRDDC). TCS continued to focus on developing software tools for domestic and international clients and diversified its presence in automation, implementation, and process-oriented tools. TCS became a public listed company on August 25th, 2004. By this time, TCS decided to enter new markets where it can offer software solutions. Thus, it entered the bioinformatics market in 2005. TCS was the first Indian IT organization to enter the bioinformatics market. In 2006, TCS developed and designed ERP system for Indian Railways. After this, TCS entered several markets where it offered cloud-based software tools. The same financial year TCS became the company with

highest market capitalization. TCS continued to enter new spaces by announcing a partnership with Aarus, Inc, in 2017, to develop a payment solution for retailers, for promoting omni channel payment with Omnistore. TCS grew robustly riding on the innovation, customised software solutions and digital revolution.

TCS is one of the largest organizations in India. It is also one of the top employment providers. In 2018-19, The total number of employees at TCS were 4,24,285, which included 147 nationalities. The gender diversity in 2018-19 was about 36% (exhibit3). The gender ratio at TCS had seen improvement in past few years. The gender ratio at TCS was around 27% in 2007-08 which grew to almost 33% in 2015-16. As far as leadership positions across the functions are concerned, TCS had 11% women in the top roles in 2014-15. As far as the board of directors is concerned, TCS introduced first woman into its board, as the executive director in 2015. In 2018-19, TCS had two women in the board of directors. With its innovative HR practices TCS improved the diversity scenario at workplace, TCS surely was moving forward to become a diverse organization. The gender diversity had improved but achieving the same was not easy.

TCS: In Pursuit of Diversity

Diversity is key to development. Hence, organizations have always embraced the idea of maintaining healthy diversity at the workplace. At the workplace, the gender diversity has been linked with better performance. Additionally, an inclusive workplace ensures a better environment for organizational learning. The diversity equation in the IT sector, however, is not easy to handle. Plagued by multifarious challenges, this sector is often listed as the least diverse sectors. The gender-based talent drain results into series of disadvantages. It leads to the loss of trained and talented professionals. The female talent drain at the mid-level career amasses into a loss of competitive advantage also. The sudden drop-out at the mid-level disrupts the talent pipeline for leadership position. TCS however chose to address the issues

one at a time. TCS recognised diversity as a matter of strategic importance in 2010 when it introduced the Diversity & Inclusion corporate function. This corporate function provided strategic guidance to the diversity programs of TCS.

The diversity stance

The problem was clearly multifaceted. The women professional's decision to voluntarily opt-out of employment was influenced by gamut of work as well as non-work factors. TCS adopted a comprehensive approach towards it. TCS introduced solution oriented, proactive, and supportive policies that took care of women's career in eternity. To plug the gender-based talent drain at mid-level, TCS introduced policies which tackled the work and non-work challenges that hindered the advancement of women's career (Table 5.9c). A brief of TCS policies is listed below-

Network to Win (nWin) – nWin was a mentoring program for women employees. Designed specially to cater the requirement of early and mid- career women. Through nWin women were mentored in a small group. The mentors guided, advised, and assisted mentees on professional and personal aspects. The mentees were provided guidance on career planning, stress, wellbeing, preparing for leadership roles, career stages, work life balance and organizational culture. Through nWin women networked formally, informally, in person and virtually.

Supportive policies: TCS launched a gamut of supportive policies which helped women professionals to manage their work and family aspects effectively. These policies included extended parental leaves post maternity, childcare support, and financial subsidy for childcare. TCS also has tie-ups with leading day care providers to arrange childcare facility in and around the campus. At the workplace TCS launched a virtual support platform called “*Workplace Parents Group*”, which provides virtual support on parenting and child psychology.

Reorientation to Reconnect: Reorientation programs were uniquely designed to ensure that employees who returned after a long leave or break did not feel isolated. These sessions included formal reorientation to help them begin from where they left off. The reorientation covered new policies, processes, and technological advances. This helped employees, especially mothers who returned after maternity leave, to reintegrate to the workplace seamlessly. Further, reorientation policy ensured that a senior handhold a returning junior if required to ensure effective reorientation.

Be Inspired: *Be inspired* - an initiative to promote women leaders internally. As a part of *Be inspired*, profiles of leading women professionals in TCS were shared through internal social networking platform. Through *Be inspired*, employees could connect to these leaders and ask about their challenges, endeavours, and journey.

iExcel: iExcel - a leadership development program for women at TCS. Under iExcel high potential women professionals at the middle and senior level were identified and groomed for future leadership roles. Uniquely designed, iExcel covered technical, business, strategic as well as management aspects. iExcel provided opportunity to women professionals to interact with top industry captains from TCS and from other companies. These leaders mentored women to become future leaders.

Managing diverse teams (MDT)- TCS introduced an e-learning module particularly for team leaders and managers to enable them to work in a diversity rich work environment. Through MDT managers were trained on issues in managing a diverse team. This initiative aimed at creating an unbiased and supportive work environment at the workplace.

Table 5.9c Orientation and Benefits of career management and support practices of TCS

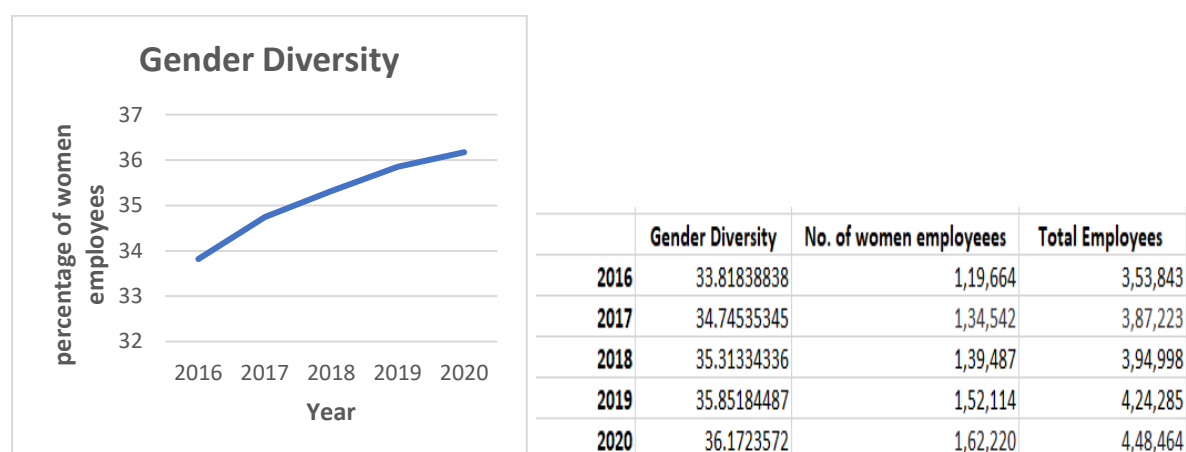
Practice	Orientation	Benefits to women employees
nWin	Early/ Mid-career – to mentor women on different aspect of career related issues	Network building Mentoring
Reconnect	Mid – career – to help women employees update their skills after a long break	Smooth reintegration at work after career break
Be-inspired	Mid/ Late career – to motivate women to take up leadership roles	Know about top women leaders Connect with role models
i-Excel	Mid/ Late career- to groom talented women for leadership roles	Handholding and sponsoring by leaders Developmental opportunities
Managing Diverse Teams	To sensitise and train managers on diversity issues	Unbiased work environment Managerial support Culture of fairness
Supportive policies	Mid- career – to help women balance work –non work domain	Work –life balance

The Impact

The women friendly policies introduced by TCS fetched results for the company. The impact showed up in year-on-year increase in women participation in the workforce. The TCS recorded a continuous increase in gender diversity from 2016-2020 (see figure 5.4). In 2020, TCS had more than 36% women in the workforce. The number of women professionals also increased at all levels of occupation (see figure 5.5). The ratio in leadership position also improved with women present in leading roles in several business functions. Further, report revealed that 63% of the participants in the iExcel program reported role movements after attending the program and 41% experienced upward mobility while 14% had lateral movements. Those who got mentored, eventually took mentoring. 228 iExcellers (who attended iExcell program) became active mentors, having mentored 1,825 associates by 2020, an average of 8 mentees per iExcel mentor (TCS, Annual report 2020, p.87).

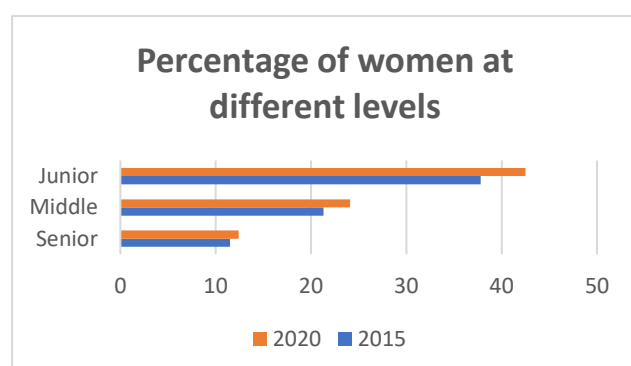
A wide range of organizational career management practices for women employees made TCS 'Best Companies to Work for Women in India' (Dilip,2017). Additionally, TCS introduced series of innovative practices for women professionals across the world. The award-winning strategies of TCS like all-women' Business Process Services (BPS) centre in Riyadh became some of the most widely acclaimed strategies (Shashidhar, 2014; Mahalingam, 2016). Building on innovative practices to retain talented women, TCS emerged as one of the top employers of women in India and world-wide.

Figure 5.4– Gender diversity at TCS



Source –Annual reports of TCS

Figure 5.5- Percentage of women professionals at different levels



Source –Annual report of TCS, 2020

5.3.3 Key findings

The TCS case reveals that organizational career management practices are crucial for sustainable career development of women professionals. Gamut of career management and career support practices are required to provide a holistic support to women working at different occupational levels and career stages.

The benefits of such organizational career management practices are multi-fold. It is seen in terms of improved diversity, availability of role models for women employees to follow, and chain of mentors who can mentor others. These OCM practices helped TCS become top employer of women in India with increased diversity at all levels. These practices can be considered best practices, to be benchmarked by other organization to follow to develop sustainable career for women employees in IT sector.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION

6.1 Discussion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore three important aspects related to sustainable career development of women professionals in the IT sector. To this end, three different studies were conducted. These studies together provide a comprehensive and balanced perspective on sustainable career development. It does so, by exploring flexibility bias-turnover intention link; reasons, and enablers of career reentry, and importance of dual-agency for sustainable career development. Findings of all three studies provide interesting insights about issues, challenges, and enablers of sustainable development of women's career across the lifespan.

Study I foregrounded the reason behind turnover among women professionals despite flexible work options. Study I highlighted of a positive association between workplace flexibility bias (WFB) and turnover intention among women who availed flexible work arrangements. Further, it also evidenced that workplace flexibility bias may result in negative work to family spillover and work alienation.

Recent studies on WFB have also attempted to understand the effect of WFB on turnover intentions (Ferdous et al. 2020), the underlined mechanism that explained this relationship was yet not known. The mediating effect negative work to family spillover and work alienation explains the underline mechanism of this relationship. Hence, this study explained and the nomological network of WFB. Furthermore, the link between WFB and negative work of family spillover was also found significant. A possible explanation for this result can be given with the help of “compensation” as a strategy (Adler, 1930). It is possible that due to the perception of flexibility bias women who avail flexibility bring more work to home (as a

compensatory mechanism) to prove their commitment. This attempt may in-turn lead to negative work to family spillover.

Study I also found the significant relationship between WFB and work alienation. The mediating effect of work alienation on WFB and turnover intention was also found significant. It signifies that the perception of bias and stigma in the organization may lead to a feeling of alienation which has been associated with several negative work outcomes e.g. counter productive work behavior (Shantz et al., 2015), exhaustion and intention to leave (Chiaburu et al., 2014). Furthermore, by extending the nomological network of the study responded the call to reinvigorate the research on work alienation (Khan et al., 2019) a concept rooted in the work of Karl Marx's "The Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844" (Fay, 1979). Additionally, study I evidenced that WFB may incur a psychological cost (O'Neil, 2015), resulting in enhanced work demands and lowering of work resources as proposed in the JD-R model Demerouti et al. (2001).

Study II explored the reasons and enablers of career-reentry among women professionals in IT sector. Consistent with prior studies, findings of the study revealed that women reenter technology careers to fulfil their need for financial independence (Cabrera, 2007). Furthermore, the findings with respect to the link of career reentry and high career centrality accords with earlier observations present in the literature (Herman, 2015). Further, the enablers of career reentry showed that reentry women found support from their family members. It indicated a departure from a traditional perspective of India as a highly patriarchal society (Rajadhyaksha, 2012; Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004) and highlights the changing socio-cultural milieu in India. Study II showed that friends and family members contributed distinctly to the re-entry. In the western context, friend and family support is viewed together as important social support (Sullivan, 2005). However, study revealed that family ties and friendship bonds are considered distinct in India (Koydemir et al., 2013).

Study II also evidence the importance of adopting a ‘life-course approach’ (Castaño & Webster, 2011; Xie & Shauman, 2003) while studying women’s career development. The findings of the study revealed although factors like ability, intention, networking, and skills are important, reentry largely depends upon favorable life events. Furthermore, it was observed that career reentry was difficult without the active agency of reentry women, as discussed in “Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead” by Sandberg (2013). The enablers of reentry were linked to the active agency of women. Simply put, women’s career re-entry was the function of active agency of women.

Study III explored the role of organizational career management in sustainable career development of women professionals. Distinct from the recent career theories that emphasise individual agency for career growth, this study focused on dual agency (De Vos et al. 2020). It evidenced the importance of OCM in effective career development of women professionals at different career stages. The case study of TCS signified the importance of gamut of OCM practices signifying the importance of customization as one size doesn’t fit all for career development.

Together these three studies added to the existing knowledge on sustainable career development of women professionals. Additionally, these studies attempted to extend the discussion on career sustainability of women in technology sector by a comprehensive study of different issues and challenges of women career. Thereby making several contributions to theory and practice which is discussed in next section.

CONTRIBUTIONS

6.2 Contributions

6.2.1 Theoretical Contributions

The three different studies carried out under this thesis add to the theoretical understanding of different aspects of sustainable career development. Firstly, study I add to the theoretical understanding of the factors that underpins workplace flexibility bias. It does so by adopting a pluralistic approach (i.e employee's interests are different from firm's interest) as a frame of reference (Fox, 1974, 1979) against the popular unitarist approach i.e., employees and firm hold a united interest. This theoretical underpinning provided a perspective to understand the negotiation required to avail workplace flexible practices despite its being available to the employees, and consequent bias attached to its usage thereof.

Secondly, study I employed JD-R model to explain the theoretical connection between the constructs. It posited workplace flexibility bias as a psychological cost which can reduce job resources and enhance job demands. While existing studies majorly focused on usage-bias link, this study explained how the perception of workplace flexibility bias may result in psychological costs leading to negative work to family spillover, work alienation, and turnover intentions.

Furthermore, study I also responded to the scholarly call to reinvigorate research on work-alienation (Shantz et al., 2015). This study explained the relationship between workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions with the help of mediating effect of work alienation. Thus, extending the nomological network of work alienation.

Study II and study III adopted the life course view (De Vos et al. 2020) for sustainable career development of women professionals. This view emphasised the importance of adopting a long term perspective for career development over across the life-span.

This perspective highlights the importance of contexts in which careers are shaped. Study II that explored the reasons and enablers of career reentry signified the crucial role of different players/ actors/ factors that contribute to career reentry of women professionals in IT sector. This study provided a comprehensive picture of career development rather than a myopic view which over-emphasises individual's ability, achievements, and skill and underestimates life events and macro contexts.

Similarly, study III adopted and emphasised the importance of life course view by exploring the crucial OCM practices for sustainable career development of women professionals. The OCM practices identified with the help of TCS case study signified the importance of viewing women's career distinctly. Additionally, case also emphasised that the women's career requirements are also distinct at different career stages i.e early, mid, and late career stage. TCS case revealed that this comprehensive understanding of career needs across the life span is vital for a sustainable career development. Thus, establishing the importance of dual agency for sustainable career beyond individual's career self-management.

6.2.2 Practical Contributions

Studies also provide practical contributions. Study I revealed a flexibility paradox that may give rise to workplace flexibility bias. It was observed that even though organizations promote flexible work arrangements, women negotiate to avail it, and many a times availing such practices viewed with negative sentiment. Most recently, a Wharton business consultancy report (2020) revealed about the concerning biases towards those who take up flexible working arrangements, often unintentionally.

Study I highlighted that such an unintentional, implicit bias could go unattended but may have perilous impact for organizations. Furthermore, study I also revealed that practices in the HR charter may thus remain on paper if they are not adopted in practice. This signified the

importance to adopting HR practices from top management to establish it as an organizational culture rather than a policy on paper. Study II exhibited that reentry to IT sector is difficult and women require a support ecosystem for a successful reentry. These findings have practical implications for organizations which plan reentry programs for women professionals. The framework for reentry provides a snapshot of type of enablers women require for reentry preparation and actual reentry process. This framework can be valuable in understanding type of support women require at these stages of reentry.

Similarly, study II also has practical implications for reentry women. Study revealed that an active agency from the women on career break is most important to trigger the process of career reentry. This highlights the importance of efforts and endeavour women on career break need to return to IT sector after a career break. To this end, the women on career break are required to keep learning new skills, activate their professional networks, and reach out for instrumental support for career reentry. This study indicated that although enablers create a support system for reentry, women need to actively construct the space for those enablers for career reentry e.g. devoting time for learning new technical skill, reaching out and being in touch with professional networks, asking family members for help for career returnship etc.

Study III revealed that a gamut of organizational career management (OCM) practices is needed for sustainable career development of women professionals. Furthermore, the study foregrounded the importance of designing organizational career management practices with respect to the different career needs of women at different career stages. It has important practical implications for organizations and managers. A gamut of OCM practices signify the importance of understanding the need of women employees and allowing them to chose OCM practices that suits their requirement. It also reinforces the notion of customization of OCM practices as one size does not fit all for sustainable career development of women professionals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3 Recommendations

Findings of three different studies formed the basis of practical recommendations to organizations and managers. Further, based on study I, II, and III a framework for sustainable career development has been suggested for sustainable career development of women professionals in IT sector. Below, the recommendations are discussed in detail,

Actively establish mutual trust – Findings of study I indicated the existence of workplace flexibility in IT sector that may result in turnover intention among women professionals. This also highlights the fact that despite flexibility being a norm in the sector, usage of flexible work arrangement is viewed negatively. Hence, it is important for managers as well as women professionals to actively establish mutual trust. This two-way trust is vital for ensuring productivity without presenteeism and trust that the system will not be abused, and trust that standards will not slip. In the similar vein, trust is needed to ensure that the individual's using flexibility will not be stigmatized in any way.

Bias sensitization programs- Workplace flexibility is usually subtle and implicit. Many times it is also unintentional. Hence, it is vital for organizations to run bias sensitization programs at regular interval for their employees. Similarly, it is also recommended for managers to conduct such programs at team levels, because IT is a team-driven work culture. These sensitization programs may help employees analyze extent of bias at individual levels through introspection and situation-oriented sessions.

Top driven flexibility culture– The issue of stigma linked with flexible work arrangement is concerning as it refutes the core purpose of flexibility. It is vital for organization's top

executives and managers to embrace flexibility and walk the talk. This is required to instill a culture of flexibility in the organization rather than pushing it as a HR policy.

Knowing employee (situation) – Women’s career is unique. It is negotiated and constructed in a context which can be unique to every women employee. Hence, it is vital for managers to know employee’s situation to understand the work and non-work context in which she works. This will help the manager in understanding her requirements and predicting the kind of support she may require that can be provided without hampering the work requirements.

Support talented women professionals – Most organizations run mentoring programs to advice, support, and help women in their career advancement. However, mentoring being an advisory function, usually does not bring measurable results. Alternatively, originations can support talented women employee by sponsoring them through structured sponsorship programs. The TCS case revealed that sponsorship programs have several benefits. It helps career advancement of women professionals, helps improving gender diversity of organization. Further, it also has a multiplier effect as sponsored professionals sponsor others.

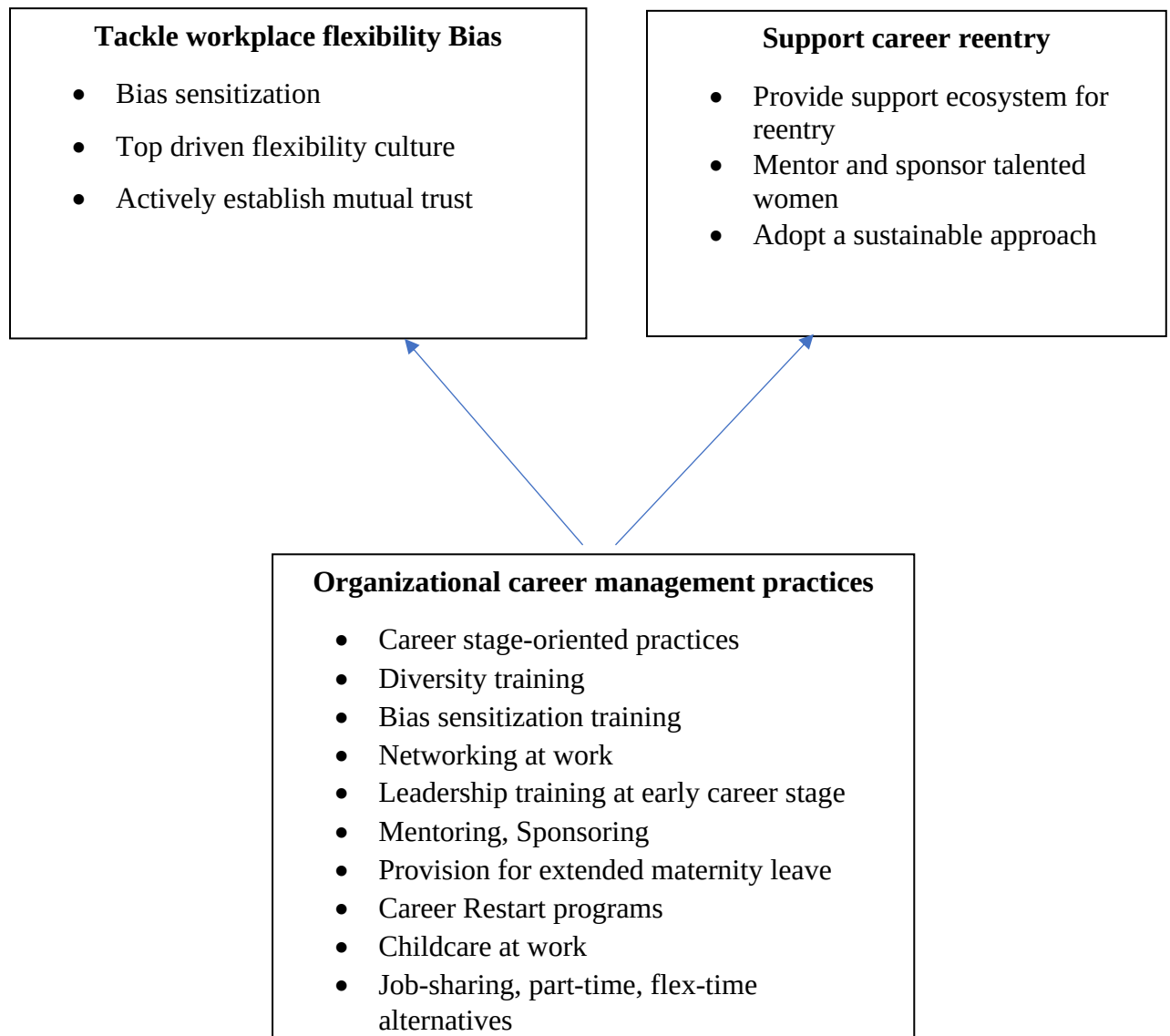
Adopting a sustainable approach – Most importantly it is important for organizations and managers to adopt a sustainable approach for career development of women professionals. This is vital to ensure that women do not voluntarily drop-out of talent pool. This is also vital to bring back women from career break and attracting potential women employees towards their organizations.

6.3.1 Framework for sustainable career development of women professionals

Based on the findings of the studies a framework for sustainable career development of women professionals in IT sector was developed. The framework is presented in figure 6.1. The figure represents that it is important to tackle workplace flexibility bias in organizations, as study I revealed it can lead to turnover intention among women professionals. It can be done through

bias sensitization, building a culture of flexibility, and actively establishing trust with women who avail or need flexibility.

Figure 6.1 Framework for sustainable career development of women professionals



Furthermore, the framework depicts that to develop a sustainable career, supporting career reentry is also crucial. To this end, providing a support eco-system of reentry is crucial. This may focus at enabling women through different ways e.g. imparting skills, providing networking support, certifications, among others. Providing a mentoring and sponsorship

programs are also crucial to help reentry women rebuild their careers effectively. Organizations, hence, are required to adopt a sustainable approach towards women's career keeping in mind careers needs of women professionals at different career stages.

The framework indicates that the objective of tackling workplace flexibility bias and supporting reentry can be achieved by designing adequate OCM practices towards it. To this end, career stage- oriented modules can be run to make employees aware of distinct needs of women at different career stages, so that their need for flexibility is not viewed with negative sentiment. Further, diversity training is required for making employees aware of benefits of diversity. Bias sensitization training is crucial for creating awareness about implicit, and unintentional bias that can adversely impact professional relationships, work environment (e.g. negative sentiment towards flexible working), and organizational culture.

Similarly, organizations can design a gamut of OCM practices to stop voluntary turnover among women and support their career reentry after a career break. To this end, organizations can design effective networking support at work, providing leadership training at early stages of women's career, and providing mentoring and sponsoring support. All these activities are crucial to support women in early stages so that she can visualise a long and a successful career, additionally organizations benefit in terms of enhanced gender diversity at all levels. To support career reentry after career a break, it is vital that organizations provide a structured restart program to women professionals. To make reentry smooth a provision of childcare support at workplace is desirable. Women returning to IT sector may face several challenges owing to discontinuous employment e.g. technical challenges. Hence, providing alternatives like job-sharing and part- time work may help women rebuild their confidence. These provisions can be given for a period to help women regain their confidence and acquaint with work settings. The framework built on findings of three different studies, hence, provide a approach to tackle flexibility bias, and support career reentry through effective OCM practices.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.4 Limitations and suggestions for further research

Like every study, studies conducted under this thesis are also not bereft of limitations. Firstly, study I adopted a cross-sectional research design, data pertaining to all variables were collected at the same time. It usually results in common method bias. However, to identify this bias, using Harman single-factor test and common latent factor test was conducted. Tests depicted that data was free from common method bias concern. Future studies may adopt a longitudinal research design. Secondly, as study I explored about workplace flexibility bias, responses being influenced by social desirability could be considered as a concern. However, to mitigate this concern, snowball sampling was adopted rather than the popular method of approaching employees through formal/ organizational channels.

Akin to study I, study II and III also had certain limitations. Study II was a qualitative study and the accounts shared by respondents were restricted to the individual's response and recall. The respondents self-reported about their career experiences and career decisions, which can be considered to be a limitation. Furthermore, the study focused only reentry women in IT sector, hence, the findings may only pertain to this setting. Future replication studies can be conducted in different sectors. Cross-cultural comparisons can also be done to understand the differences and similarities in reasons and enablers of women reentry.

As far as study III is concerned, it was a single case study, which can be seen as a limitation. However, as per the research objective, single was found to be the most appropriate and hence it was adopted. Future studies may include multiple cases for comparison and generalization. Further, study III used only a single data source of annual reports, this limitation was mitigated through a longitudinal data collection. Future studies may include lived experience of employees to understand the impact of OCM practices. Similarly interviews of top executives

can also be conducted while case development. Different data sources, hence, can be used for triangulation.

The findings of different studies underscore the need for future research. Study I explored the mediating effects of negative work to family spillover and work alienation in workplace flexibility bias and turnover intentions. Future studies may explore the boundary conditions of the mediating effect. To this end potential moderators can be studied and explored. Furthermore, as research indicates that flexibility bias is not only limited to women employees, hence, a replication study including a diverse set of employees as respondents could be valuable.

Study II explored the reasons and enablers of career reentry. A study exploring the post reentry challenges and experiences could bring valuable insight for organizations, and women on career break. Additionally, mapping a career trajectory of a few reentry women professionals over a specified period time, may unravel issues and challenges faced by reentry women professionals.

Study III focused on a single case in IT sector. Future studies may compare multiple cases in same sector or different sectors to compare the prevalent OCM practices. Furthermore, OCM practices of different sectors can also be illustrated to understand the boundary conditions and systemic challenges to women careers in a specific sector.

CONCLUSION

6.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the key aspects of sustainable career development of women professionals in IT sector. To this end three different studies were conducted that explored about workplace flexibility bias, career reentry, and organizational career management practices.

The first study explored the covert issue of flexibility bias and its impact on turnover intention of women professionals in IT sector. This study adds to the growing body of research on the effects of implicit bias on career outcomes of women professionals. The study also establishes the need to explore the issues and challenges of women professionals beyond socio-cultural factors.

Study II foregrounds the importance of context within which the career of women professionals shapes up. It signifies the gravity of support ecosystem for career reentry for women professionals. The findings of study II will be of interest to organizations, women professionals, and researchers. Study III provides a comprehensive assessment of organizational career management practices and its influence on sustainable career development. It also establishes the importance of dual agency in career advancement of women professionals. The findings of three studies have gone some way towards enhancing the understanding of different aspects of sustainable careers of women professionals. This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. It has also put forth meaningful insights that may ignite future research and discussion on women's career.

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APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Madam,

Greetings!

This survey is conducted as part of my Doctoral programme in Management at the School of Management Studies, University of Hyderabad. The research is academic in nature. The information collected will be kept strictly confidential. The data collected will not be used for any other purpose and your anonymity is assured. Thank you for your time and support.

Swati Singh

Research Scholar,

School of Management Studies,

University of Hyderabad.

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A. Directions: Following statements relate to your feelings toward work and family. Kindly indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of these statements, by putting a tick

(√) mark in the appropriate box.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My job or career interferes with my responsibilities at home, such as cooking, shopping, childcare, yard work and house.					
2. The demands of my job interfere with my home and family life					
3. My job or career prevents me from spending the desired amount of time with your family					
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil my family duties					
5. I have considered leaving my job					
6. I think that if I were choosing my career again, I would not choose this career					
7. I think in the near future I will leave this career					

B. Directions: Following statements relate to your feelings toward work and work environment. Kindly indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each of these statements, by putting a tick(✓) mark in the appropriate box.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8.Facing my daily tasks is a painful and boring experience							
9.I do not enjoy my work							
10.Work to me is more like a chore or burden							
11. I feel estranged/disconnected from myself							
12.I often wish I were doing something else							
13.Over the years I have become disillusioned about my work							
14.I do not feel like putting in my best effort at work							
15.At the place where I work, employees who ask for time off for personal needs or family reasons are less likely to get ahead in their careers							
16.At the place where I work, employees who try to							

2. INTERVIEW GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOL

General Instructions

Only the respondents and the researcher are present during the interview. The interview is recorded using the audio recording device only after the informed consent of the respondent.

Interview setting & Behaviour strategies

Establish rapport with the respondent.

Create open and trustful relationship. Be calm and understanding to avoid any stressful atmosphere for the respondent.

Interviewing Strategies

1. Use narration-generation questions for elaboration and explanations

Could you please elaborate on...?

What did particularly refer to?

2. Use Comprehension- generating questions to avoid confusion and miscommunication

Eg. For any clarification – How to understand?

Eg. For conformity – Am I understanding this correctly.....?

3. Use constant comparison – Compare the informant's responses to already available insights from earlier interview.

Interview Procedure

1. Welcoming: welcome and thank for participation

2. Briefing: Brief about the research

3. Rapport: Making the participant comfortable and assurance of confidentiality

4. Request informants to fill a short questionnaire: about demographic and job related information

5. Request to be free and guided by their thoughts

6. Take permission for recording

7. Take permission to start the interview

8. Start the interview

Interview closing

Is there anything that you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time

Thanks for participating

Interview Process

Interviewee (Name): _____

Welcome,

Thank you for your time,

You have been requested to participate in the study as I identify you as someone who has a valuable experience to share with me on career re-entry after the career break. This research is an academic research, and it focusses on reasons and enablers of career re-entry. This study does not aim to evaluate/judge your experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn from your experiences.

With your permission, I would like to audio record our conversation for the ease of notetaking. The recordings will only be accessed by the researchers of this study and will be kept completely confidential. I would like to reassure that - all information will be held confidential, and your participation is voluntary, and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

Interview setting & Behaviour strategies

Establish rapport with the respondent.

Create open and trustful relationship. Be calm and understanding to avoid any stressful atmosphere for the respondent.

Interview Questions

1. **Please tell about yourself.**
2. **Please tell about your professional journey and your career.**
3. **When and why did you take a break in your career?**
4. How long was your career break?
5. What made you return to the same career?
Probe: Were you always sure about returning to the same career?
6. How do you describe your career return-ship journey?
7. What roles other played in your return ship.
Probe: Describe about the roles of different people/ factors that helped in your career resumption.

Respondents Information

Age:

Educational Qualification:

Type of Family:

Job role:

Number of children:

Interview closing

Is there anything that you would like to add?

Thank you very much for you time

Thanks for participating

Interviewing Strategies

1. Narration

Eg. Could you please elaborate on...?

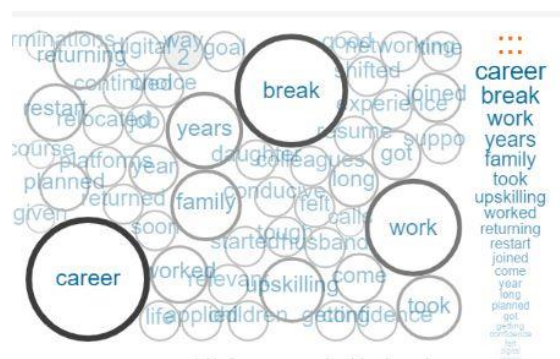
2. Comprehension

Eg. For any clarification – How to understand

Eg. For conformity – Am I understanding this correctly.....?

VOYANT TOOL RESULTS

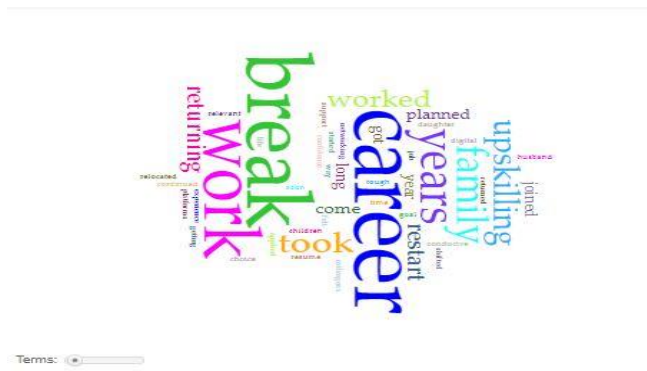
Word Bubble



Text Links

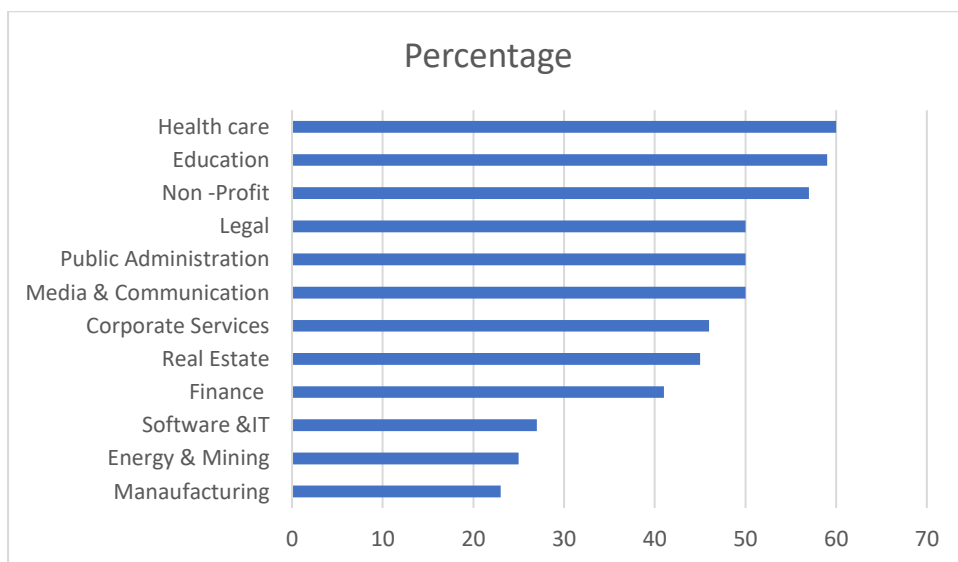
1. I took a seven	career	break to raise my two
and determinations to restart ...	career	. 3. My family needed me
needed me. I took a	career	break for them. All my
soon as possible. Due to	career	break I was getting apprehen...
a break from 20-years	career	in IT. Basically, we relocated
break. I felt low, my	career	was the fruit of my
analyst, doing well in my	career	. After marriage we shifted to
work. IT is a tough	career	, things change fast, so I
over again. I applied for	career	restart internship with..... and...
my husband. It was a	career	break already as soon I
serious work and rebuild my	career	. I always dreamt of returning
my 10 year long great	career	. It motivated me everyday. 9
hand, I had to. My	career	meant so much to me
big break was affecting my	career	. Networking and upskilling is...
work quickly and restart the	career	in IT.4 13. My

Word cloud



EXHIBITS

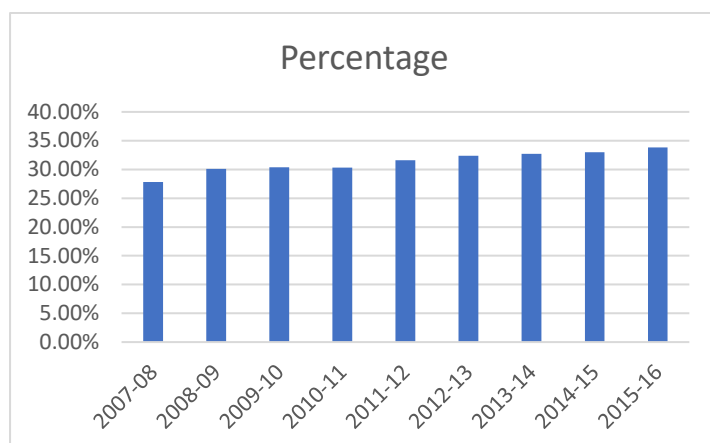
Exhibit 1. Female share of employment by Industry, 2017



Source: Created by author

Data : World Economic Forum (http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf)

Exhibit 2. Gender Diversity at TCS – a snapshot



Source – **Created by author** (Data : Annual Report TCS, 2015-16)

(<https://www.tcs.com/content/dam/tcs/investor-relations/financial-statements/2015-16/ar/TCS%20Annual%20Report%202015-2016.pdf>)

Exhibit 3. The TCS workforce, 2018-19

The TCS workforce - Global & Diverse	
Employees	4,24,285
Women	35.90%
Nationalities	147

Source: **Created by author**

Data : **Annual Report, 2018-19** (<https://www.tcs.com/content/dam/tcs/investor-relations/financial-statements/2018-19/ar/annual-report-2018-2019.pdf>)

DATA ANALYSIS OUTPUT

Harman Single Factor Test

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.894	41.550	41.550	7.295	38.395	38.395
2	3.004	15.812	57.362			
3	1.989	10.467	67.828			
4	1.223	6.436	74.264			
5	.627	3.299	77.563			
6	.514	2.706	80.269			
7	.466	2.454	82.722			
8	.439	2.313	85.035			
9	.414	2.179	87.214			
10	.372	1.958	89.172			
11	.355	1.869	91.040			
12	.309	1.624	92.664			
13	.270	1.421	94.085			
14	.249	1.313	95.398			
15	.230	1.210	96.608			
16	.187	.984	97.591			
17	.176	.926	98.517			
18	.145	.763	99.280			
19	.137	.720	100.000			

Descriptive Statistics – Skewness and Kurtosis

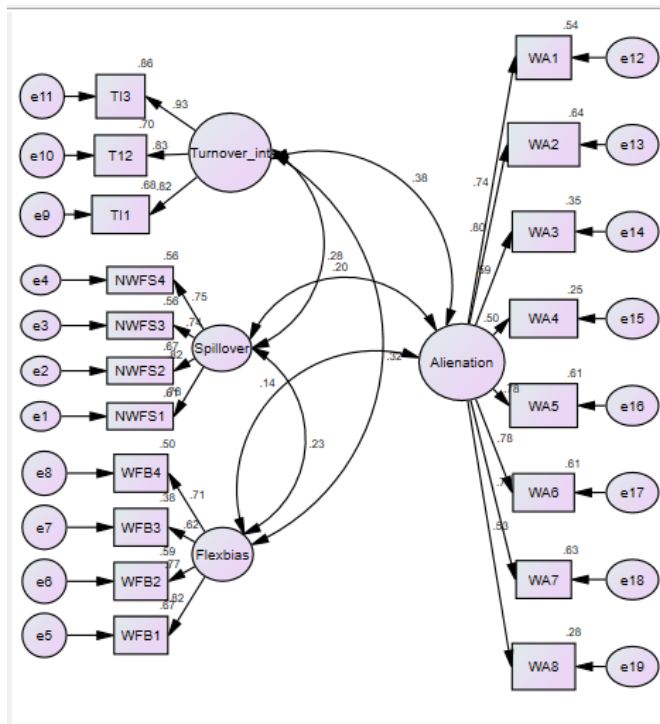
	N	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std.	Skewness	Kurtosis
		mum	mum		Deviation		
		Statistic	Statistic		Statistic		
TI1	358	1	5	3.75	1.170	-1.067	.421
TI2	358	1	5	3.78	1.244	-1.052	.144
TI3	358	1	5	3.82	1.208	-1.123	.395
NWFS1	358	1	5	3.51	1.307	-.723	-.589
NWFS2	358	1	5	3.51	1.302	-.724	-.573
NWFS3	358	1	5	3.50	1.307	-.729	-.590
NWFS4	358	1	5	3.48	1.309	-.706	-.632
WA1	358	1	7	4.16	1.763	-.067	-.730

WA2	358	1	7	4.37	1.682	-.259	-.477
WA3	358	1	7	4.42	1.666	-.262	-.630
WA4	358	1	7	4.46	1.714	-.348	-.569
WA5	358	1	7	4.44	1.757	-.248	-.783
WA6	358	1	7	4.39	1.732	-.207	-.744
WA7	358	1	7	4.63	1.711	-.281	-.780
WA8	358	1	7	4.44	1.660	-.201	-.571
WFB1	358	1	7	4.31	1.772	-.293	-.801
WFB2	358	1	7	4.33	1.758	-.229	-.796
WFB3	358	1	7	4.42	1.771	-.277	-.808
WFB4	358	1	7	4.25	1.774	-.228	-.796
Valid N (listwise)	358						

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.904
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4984.949
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

Pilot testing - Measurement model

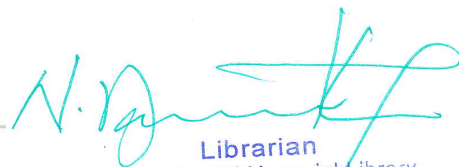


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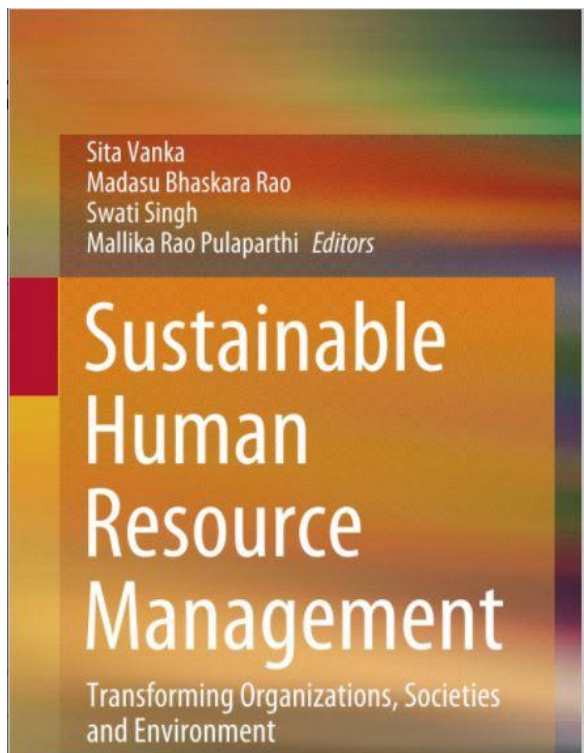
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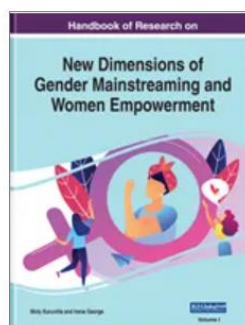
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