

**Organizational Determinants of Women Employee's Retention  
in IT Sector with special reference to Chennai City**

Minothi. J<sup>1</sup>, Dr. J. Arul Suresh<sup>2</sup>

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Commerce ,  
Loyola College, University of Madras, minothititus@gmail.com  
Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce  
Loyola College, University of Madras, jarulsuresh@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

Employees are the greatest assets that distinguish one organisation from the other. Investing in human capital gives a competitive edge in achieving the organisation's objectives. Retaining key employees is essential for the smooth functioning of the organisation. With the increase in opportunities for the employees, retaining talent has become a challenging function. But, when these key employees are women, many organisations are befuddled as to how to retain this valuable talent. Framing of retention strategies is no magic pill for the organisation's retention issues, but successful implementation of the strategy is needed to see the change in the retention climate. Retention cannot be accomplished just by monetary benefits but includes a host of other factors to motivate the employees to stay in the same organisation. Women employees definitely need a set of tailor-made retention strategies to suit them. A few simple strategies can make a vast difference in the retention of female employees. The benefits of maintaining a women-friendly environment far outweigh the costs. The benefits do not just pertain to the productivity of the organisation but spell economic growth for the country also. Work-life conflicts, gender imbalance in senior management positions, inflexible schedules, safety and other challenges continue to plague companies large and small. IT sectors have been battling with alarming retention rates for decades due to their varied shift timings, burnouts, job instability and intense competition. With women force entering the IT sectors, various changes are made in the form of work from home options, childcare facilities, secured workplace, transport facilities, etc. Hence the research aims in finding the retention factors which attract women employees and the retention strategies followed in present to suit women employees. These outcomes would result in finding ways to increase the retention rate of women employees.

**Keywords:** Retention, Women employees, IT sector

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Women employees entering the workforce is one of the greatest revolutions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women have battled discrimination, lack of access to education, various social and cultural evils over the years. Today in the modern era, it can be said that there is no field of work inaccessible to women. The evolution of the women workforce is undoubtedly a great and silent revolution. Even with all these achievements, the percentage of women dropping from work is still high. The World Bank report quotes that an impressive one hundred and thirty-three million Indians rose out of poverty between 1994 and 2012, a proud achievement for India. While worthy of celebration, success would have been even more dramatic if a higher number of women could contribute to the workforce. India ranks 120 among 131 countries in female labour force participation rates. This

alarming ranking how that retention of women employees can play an essential part in boosting the economic growth of the country.

The current era is witnessing a rapid shift from traditional manufacturing companies to knowledge and service-based companies; as a result, there is a transformation in the nature of employment and management practices. Employee exploitation was a key area of discussion a few decades back, and now the scenario has taken a complete turn into employee retention. Talented employees are the need of the hour, and the war for talents have commenced in the corporate world

Women today are equipped with education and various skills that make them indispensable in workplaces. Along with this, developments like gender diversity, The Equal Remuneration Act, setting up of National Commission of Women and SEBI's regulation of having one women director on the board, etc. has made retention of women employees an integral part of corporate India today.

## **2. MAJOR FACTORS INFLUENCING RETENTION OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES**

Each employee is different; the factors of retention vary based on their age, marital status, personality, the stage of their career, gender, and so on. Hence retention factors will definitely vary for women and men. Around the world, women are the primary caretakers of children and elders. International studies demonstrate that when the economy and political organisation of a society change, women take the lead in helping the family adjust to new realities and challenges. Hence given their important roles women play at home, and the cultural and social beliefs in a country like India, the retention factors for women will differ from that of men.

The following are the top-rated factors influencing retention of women employees in an organisation. They are

- Attractive and equal compensation package
- Work-life balance
- Supportive supervisors
- Equivalent training and career development opportunities
- Recognition and appreciation for efforts taken
- A safe and secure work environment
- Flexible work timings with work from home option
- Anti-harassment policies
- Effective grievance redressal forum
- Autonomy in decision making
- Maternity benefits
- Childcare facilities
- Health care benefits
- Performance appraisal without gender bias
- Mentoring programs
- A Reasonable workload with limited overtime schedules
- Job security
- Organisations that embrace gender equality and avoids stereotyping of women
- Positive interpersonal relationships at the workplace

- Strong work ethics in the workplace
- Stress-free work environment

### 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women employees have proved their capability in almost every field today. Despite their exceptional achievements and advancements, women still encounter various obstacles and challenges on their path to development. Right from recruitment until a promotion women face inequalities and gender bias. With women's education and awareness acts coming in the organisations have started taking note of the challenges women face and formulate strategies to retain them. The research aims to study the various factors and policies in the retention of women employees and offer improvements and suggestion for future employment prospects.

### 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Balaji Mathimaran&.Ananda Kumar. A (2017)** claimed that the employee's unique skills, knowledge, talents and experience are the strength of an organisation. An active retention policy can safeguard valuable employees to remain in the same organisation by creating strategies and practices that address their diverse needs. Retaining the best employees ensured customer satisfaction, increased sales, satisfied colleagues and reporting staff.

**Singh .S, et al. (2017)** divided the factors influencing the retention of women employees as intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic are those pertaining to work-life balance, motherhood and childcare benefits. Extrinsic factors included work pressure, faulty performance appraisal and less cooperative colleagues.

**Sonia Tanuja, et al. (2012)** suggested hiring and retaining women employees as a tool for organisational growth. Gender equality was a smart decision to make, and organisations were proactive in framing strategies for long-term success. A diverse workplace provided more ideas and capabilities to capture various markets.

### 5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research will, therefore, seek to explore and investigate the following

1. To identify the organisational factors that influences the retention of women employees.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the retention strategies and their impact on women employee's satisfaction.

### 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Primary data has been collected from 420 respondents through questionnaires from various IT sectors within Chennai city. Convenient sampling method has been utilised for the study. Secondary data has been compiled from books, journals and e-sources. Percentage analysis and T-test method are the statistical tools used for analysing the data.

### SCOPE & EXPECTED LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research is undertaken to study the various determinants of women employee's retention in IT sectors within Chennai city. The sample size is restricted to the IT companies in only one city. Chennai being a metropolitan city, the sample respondents will include highly educated urban women.

The study includes only the organisational determinants of women employee's retention. It does not consider the personal, societal and other determinants of retention. It limits itself to only women employees.

## 7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE EMPLOYEES

<b>SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS</b>	<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENT</b>
Age	Below 30 years	127	30.2
	30-40 years	193	46.0
	40-50 years	77	18.3
	Above 50 years	23	5.5
Marital Status	Married	297	70.7
	Single	98	23.3
	Divorcee	19	4.5
	Widow	6	1.5
Qualification	U.G	135	32.1
	P.G	239	56.9
	Other	46	11.0
Work experience	1-5 years	119	28.3
	5 - 10 years	122	29.0
	10-15 years	113	26.9
	Above 15 years	66	15.8
Monthly income	Less than ▪ 20,000	53	12.6
	▪ 20,001 - ▪ 35,000	116	27.6

	▪ 35,001 - ▪ 50,000	82	19.5
	▪ 50,000- ▪ 70,000	98	23.3
	Above ▪ 75, 000	71	17.0
Designation	Team member	146	34.8
	Team leader	111	26.4
	Managerial level	131	31.2
	Executive level	32	7.6

Source: Primary Data

**TABLE NO 1**

From the above table, it is interpreted that most of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-40 years(46%), and are mostly married ( 70.7%). Regarding their educational qualification, 56.9% are postgraduates, with 29% having 5-10 years of work experience and 28.3 % having 1-5 years experience.27.6% of the respondents earn between ▪ 20,000 - ▪ 35,000 per month and 34.8% holding the designation as a team member.

**T-TEST FOR RETENTION FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN EMPLOYEES**

S.NO	FACTORS	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	STD. ERROR MEAN	T-VALUE	SIG	RANK
1	Compensation	420	3.3167	1.10853	.05409	5.854	.000	XIII
2	Fringe Benefits, Allowances	420	3.4262	1.23851	.06043	7.052	.000	IX
3	Unbiased Performance Appraisal	420	3.7738	1.17401	.05729	13.508	.000	IV
4	Recognition And Appreciation	420	3.7690	1.21702	.05938	12.950	.000	V
5	Need-Based Training	420	3.4024	1.11723	.05452	7.381	.000	X
6	Equal Opportunity For Career Growth	420	3.7357	1.14118	.05568	13.212	.000	VI
7	Supportive Leader /Supervisor	420	3.8167	1.27663	.06229	13.110	.000	III
8	Motivating	420	3.6524	1.29553	.06322	10.320	.000	VII

	Leaders							
9	Flexible Working Timings	420	3.4714	1.49355	.07288	6.469	.000	VIII
10	Maternity And Child Care Benefits	420	3.3286	1.48714	.07257	4.528	.000	XII
11	Supportive Grievance Redressal Forum	420	3.2524	1.27323	.06213	4.062	.000	XIV
12	Open Minded Discussion Of Grievances	420	3.3071	1.3084	.06385	4.811	.000	XV
13	Follow Up For The Complaints Given	420	3.3619	1.29345	.06311	5.734	.000	XI
14	Pleasant Work Environment	420	4.0524	1.09550	.05345	19.687	.000	I
15	Work Ethics & Brand Image	420	3.8357	1.13489	.05538	15.091	.000	II

**TABLE NO 2**

From the above table, it is found that the average mean values of all the statements range from the smallest value 3.5424 to the highest value of 4.054. Similarly, the respected t-values have the range 4.062to 19.687. This implies that the women employees in IT companies observed that pleasant working environment as an important factor influencing the retention to a very great extent. It is further noted the women employees to a greater extent agreed that work ethics and brand image curtail them from leaving the organisation and existence of supporting leaders in their companies are able to retain the women employees. The role of a supporting leader plays a significant role in retaining women employees to a great extent. An unbiased performance appraised without having any disparity is a crucial robust factor influencing the women employee's decision of staying with the same organisation. Recognition and appreciation of hard work are needed as an influencing factor for the women employee's retention. Career growth is a primary objective for many women employees; hence giving equal opportunity for training programs and promotions for advancing their career growth is needed to a great extent to retain the women employees. The next factor is motivating leaders who identify the talents of the employees and encourage them accordingly. These leaders play a significant part in retention to a great extent. Flexibility comes next in the order of factors. Women employees offered flexible work timings are positively impacted by it a great extent.

Fringe benefits, allowances which could include all components like a bonus, leave facilities; maternity benefits do contribute a great part in the retention role of women employees. Training according to the specific needs and roles of the employees is needed for the professional growth of the employees and hence is a vital factor to a great extent. Women employees would have specific complaints and suggestions when they are followed up with suitable actions; it would boost the retention desire to an extent. Childcare and maternity benefits like maternity leave are factors which pertain specifically to women employees. When organisations provide sufficient childcare

and maternity leave options, it would undoubtedly facilitate retention to a great extent. A perfect compensation plan with a suitable salary and monetary benefits is needed by all employees; it is a required factor to influence women employee's stay in the organisation. Both factors related to grievance have been ranked in the last factor by the women respondents in the study. Supportive grievance redressal forum with suitable people to solve the problems and to have an open-minded discussion of the grievance without any judgemental attitude has come in the last two ranks, though their mean score indicates they are needed to a great extent for formulating retention strategies.

**T-TEST FOR OVERALL SATISFACTION OF RETENTION STRATEGIES  
FOLLOWED IN THE ORGANISATIONS**

S.NO	RETENTION STRATEGY	N	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	STD. ERROR MEAN	T-VALUE	SIG	RANK
1	Compensation package	420	3.3238	1.18861	.05800	5.583	.000	III
2	Recognition Programs	420	3.2476	1.18286	.05772	4.290	.000	VI
3	Training /development programs	420	3.2381	1.13123	.05520	4.313	.000	VII
4	Promotion and career advancement opportunities	420	3.2738	1.22378	.05971	4.585	.000	V
5	Supervisory support	420	3.3024	1.34021	.06540	4.624	.000	IV
6	Grievance redressal cell /forum	420	2.8881	1.26994	.06197	-1.806	.072	X
7	Flexible work schedules	420	3.1429	1.41542	.06907	2.068	.039	VIII
8	Maternity/childcare benefits	420	3.0048	1.42094	.06933	.069	.945	IX
9	Safety and security arrangements	420	3.7262	1.20808	.05895	12.319	.000	I
10	Pleasant work culture	420	3.6690	1.17552	.05736	11.664	.000	II

**TABLE NO 3**

It can be studied from the above table that the average mean values of all the statements range from the smallest value 2.8881 to the highest value of 3.7262. Similarly, the respected t-values have the range -1.806 to 12.319. Accordingly to these values, the satisfaction level of the retention strategies as per the women employees are ranked, based on the mean scores. They are discussed as follows.

Safety and security arrangements for women employees like cab services, and safety issues like harassment policy are maintained well, and the women employees are satisfied with such strategies. It is followed by a pleasant work culture where the work environment is made suitable for the employees to work in, women employees in the sample study are satisfied with the steps taken to make their workplace pleasant. The compensation and other monetary packages given to

attract the retention of women employees also make the women employees satisfied in their organisations. The supervisory support in from of understanding leaders also makes a satisfactory retention strategy in this study. Promotion and career advancement opportunities to retain the talented women employees are done at a satisfactory level by the organisations taken for the study.

The last five ranked strategies as follows. Recognition programs in the way of non-monetary appreciations are supported to an extent by the organisations to retain their employees. Training and development programs to enrich the growth of women employees comes next in the order of satisfaction level, followed by flexible work schedules for women employees to have a work-life balance. The least ranked strategies in this study are maternity care and childcare benefits, followed by a grievance redressal forum to solve the issues faced by women employees. The t-values for the lowly ranked factors are less than 3 indicating that the women employees are not satisfied with them.

## **8. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

- The demographic profile of respondents for this study is limited to highly educated, married young women who are fairly experienced in the field of IT.
- Pleasant work environment, which is stress-free, is the first factor which attracts women employees in this study undertaken.
- Women employees give preference their first benefits non-monetary factors like work environment, supportive leaders, ethics and recognition. Hence, organisations should focus on the personal needs and expectations of their women employees.
- Women-centric factors like flexibility and maternity benefits come in the mid-range of factors. This shows that even if the organisation provides for flexibility without a pleasant work environment, it will not attract the retention of women employees.
- Open-minded discussion of grievances and a supportive grievance forum is among the last rank of factors influencing the employee's intention to stay in the organisation.
- Retention strategies followed by organisations can be divided as personal wellbeing strategies and professional growth strategies. Personal wellbeing would include strategies like flexibility, health checkups, counselling, safe and secure workplace. On the other hand, professional growth strategies would be compensation, recognition, career development and advancement strategies. Both are needed in a balanced way to retain women employees.
- Women employees in the study are extremely satisfied with the safety arrangements undertaken by the workplace, like cab services and anti-harassment policies. Most IT companies in the city have safe cab facilities with the number of women employees in the rise.
- Majority of the employees of the study were dissatisfied with the childcare programs like crèche or daycare centres. This would be the main reason for many married women to quit their jobs.
- The respondents in the study stated that flexibility and maternity care benefits are also not followed as per the promises made by the organisations when they join.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

- Women have a significant responsibility at home, hence a stress-free workplace where there is transparent communication, bias-free policies, supportive leader, and colleagues are their prime need to balance their work-life balance. Therefore, retention strategies should focus on a positive work environment for their women employees.
- Factors would differ based on the age group of women employees. Young unmarried women should be given career development programs and safety policies. Young mothers would prefer a gradual return to work programs and better childcare facilities. Women who are in their peak of career should be given mentoring programs to help them adjust to leadership and higher designations.
- Awareness programs should be arranged to educate the employees about the various acts and laws given for the development of women.
- The organisations should embrace gender diverse and inclusive strategies to make the workplace comfortable for their women employees.
- Informal meetings with groups of women employees can be conducted to get their feedback about the workplace and to know their challenges and issues they face. Such meetings would enable the management to understand their women employees better.
- The management should fulfil the flexibility and maternity benefits offered during the recruitment. Impending promises can increase the frustration of employees which would lead to poor retention of women employees.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Swami Vivekananda quoted that “There is no chance of the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on one wing”. With women employees constituting the equal part of the workforce, it is time for the organisations to focus on women-centric retention strategies as women employees are needed for the progress of the present-day IT organisations. The study revealed that a stress-free work environment, due recognition and appreciation, supportive leaders and team members, flexible work timings and maternity and childcare benefits are among the top strategies needed to attract and retain women employees.

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