

Stress Levels Among Women Employees in It Companies and Legal Remedies- An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Workplace stress in the IT industry is driven by a blend of factors, including high work pressure, tight deadlines, rapid technological changes, and the constant need to upskill. For women employees, these challenges are compounded by gender-specific stressors such as work-family conflict, gender discrimination, and the lack of adequate organizational support. A notable proportion attributing to the difficulties in achieving work-life balance, unequal opportunities, and the expectation to excel in both professional and personal spheres. This empirical paper analyses the stress among women employees in IT companies in Hyderabad, hypothesis has been set for analyzing the objectives by applying statistical tools such as correlation and Chi Square test, the results of the same are interpreted and concluded accordingly.

Keywords: women, stress level, technological changes, work family conflict, IT Companies

I. Introduction

Workplace stress in the IT industry is driven by a combination of factors, including high work pressure, tight deadlines, rapid technological changes, and the constant need to upskill. For women employees, these challenges are compounded by gender-specific stressors such as work-family conflict, gender discrimination, and the lack of adequate organizational support. Studies indicate that women in the IT sector frequently report higher stress levels compared to their male counterparts, with a notable proportion attributing this to difficulties in achieving work-life balance, unequal opportunities, and the expectation to excel in both professional and personal spheres. Recent research in Hyderabad has highlighted that the transition to remote and hybrid work models, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has further intensified stress among women IT professionals. The blurring of boundaries between work and home life, increased workload, and reduced support from management have contributed to rising anxiety and burnout. Furthermore, the lack of downtime and the fear of job insecurity have added to the psychological burden, making stress management a critical area of focus for both employees and organizations. Despite the growing recognition of workplace stress as a major issue, there remains a gap in comprehensive studies that specifically address the experiences of women employees in the IT sector in Hyderabad. Understanding the demographic and contextual factors that influence stress, as well as the effectiveness of various coping mechanisms and organizational interventions, is essential for developing targeted strategies to enhance employee well-being and productivity

II. Review OF Literature

1. **Bharathi, T. & Ashok Mammen, V., (2023)** identified key stressors such as work pressure, role conflict, and work-life imbalance. It emphasized that occupational stress adversely affects women's mental and physical health, suggesting the need for organizational stress management programs tailored to women's needs.
2. **Gunaseelaprabhu & Jayachitra (2023)** highlighted work pressure, work-family conflict, and lack of supervisor support as major stressors. The study found stress negatively impacts work performance and personal life. It recommended stress management strategies including support systems, flexible work arrangements, and workshops to improve well-being.
3. **Prasad et al. (2023)** focused on the impact of remote working on occupational stress among IT employees in Hyderabad. It reported that remote working increased anxiety and stress, particularly among women, due to blurred boundaries between work and home and fear of job insecurity. The research confirmed that occupational stress significantly influences job satisfaction and performance.
4. **Vani, V., 2019. (2017)** found a negative correlation between job stress and productivity. It concluded that increased stress leads to decreased productivity and that demographic factors did not significantly affect stress levels.
5. **Subha, Madhusudhanan & Thomas (2021)** examined occupational stress factors such as workload, job insecurity, and poor work environment affecting mental health of women IT professionals working remotely

during the COVID-19 pandemic. It found a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and psychological well-being, emphasizing the challenges of work-from-home setups for women.

6. Kavita, Rajeshwari, Adithya et al.,(2016) highlighted family-related stress as a major contributor to overall stress among women IT employees, with 36% of respondents reporting stress due to family problems. It underscored the importance of balancing work and family life to reduce stress.

7. **Meraj, vinodhini et al.,(2023)** reviewed and identified various stressors including workload, gender discrimination, and lack of career growth. It called for organizational policies to address these stressors and promote women's well-being.

Research Gap

Limited regional focus, legal remedies awareness and utilization, impact of remote and hybrid work models, gender-specific stressors and organizational support, comprehensive measurement tools, and many studies use general stress scales; however, integrating workplace stress assessment with legal awareness and coping mechanisms in one instrument remains underexplored, which this study aims to address.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the levels and sources of workplace stress among women employees in IT companies in Hyderabad.
2. To identify gender-specific stressors such as work-family conflict, discrimination, and harassment affecting women in the IT sector.
3. To evaluate the awareness, perception, and utilization of legal remedies available to women employees for workplace stress and harassment.
4. To analyze the impact of organizational support and work arrangements (including remote work) on women's stress levels.

Research Hypotheses

1. **H₁:** There is a significant positive relationship between workload and stress levels among women employees in Hyderabad's IT sector.
2. **H₂:** Work-family conflict significantly contributes to increased stress among women IT professionals.
3. **H₃:** Gender discrimination and harassment are significant predictors of workplace stress for women employees.
4. **H₄:** Awareness of legal remedies is low among women employees in Hyderabad's IT companies.
5. **H₅:** Utilization of legal remedies is negatively influenced by fear of retaliation and stigma.
6. **H₆:** Organizational support (such as flexible work arrangements and counseling) significantly reduces stress levels among women employees.
7. **H₇:** Women employees working remotely experience higher stress levels compared to those working on-site

III. Research Methodology

Type of study descriptive

Sources of data: Both and primary sources have been adopted

- Primary Data was gathered using a structured questionnaire comprising Likert-scale items measuring stress levels, causes of stress, psychological and physical symptoms, and perceptions of workplace support. Additional questions assessed awareness and utilization of legal remedies related to workplace harassment, discrimination, and stress.
- Secondary data was gathered from journal text books, websites

Sample and Sampling Technique:

- The study was conducted with a **sample size of 214 women employees** working in various IT companies in Hyderabad.
- **convenient sampling technique** was used to select participants across different hierarchical levels.

Data Analysis:

- Quantitative analysis was performed using statistical tools including descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis to understand relationships between stressors and outcomes. The study also analyzed the effectiveness of existing legal protections and organizational policies.

IV. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table: Demographic Divide

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	20-30 years	98	45.8
	31-40 years	85	39.7
	41-50 years	31	14.5
Marital Status	Single	102	47.7
	Married	112	52.3
Educational Level	Graduate	76	35.5
	Postgraduate	138	64.5
Experience	Less than 3 years	70	32.7
	Between 3-7 years	95	44.4
	More than 7 years	49	22.9

Analysis The majority of respondents are young women aged between 20-40 years, with slightly more married than single employees. Most have postgraduate qualifications and 3-7 years of work experience, representing a relatively experienced workforce.

Table: Descriptive statistics of Workplace Stress

Stress Dimension	Mean Score (1-5 scale)	Std. Deviation
Workload	3.85	0.78
Work-Family Conflict	3.70	0.82
Gender Discrimination	3.40	0.90
Lack of Organizational Support	3.25	0.85
Job Insecurity	3.10	0.88
Overall Stress Level	3.66	0.74

Analysis: Respondents report moderate to high stress levels overall, with workload and work-family conflict being the highest stressors. Gender discrimination and organizational support also contribute significantly to stress.

Table: Chi-Square Test: Association between Demographics and Stress Levels

Demographic Variable	Chi-Square (χ^2)	df	p-value	Interpretation
Age	12.45	4	0.014*	Significant association with stress
Marital Status	9.20	2	0.010*	Significant association with stress
Educational Level	3.85	2	0.146	No significant association
Experience	7.90	4	0.093	No significant association

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

Analysis: 1. Age and Stress Levels ($\chi^2 = 12.45$, $p = 0.014$)

- The p-value is less than 0.05, indicating a significant association between age and stress levels.
- This means that stress levels vary significantly across different age groups.
- Younger women (20-30 years) and possibly middle-aged groups may experience different stress intensities compared to older employees. This could be due to factors such as career stage, family responsibilities, or adaptation to workplace demands.

2. Marital Status and Stress Levels ($\chi^2 = 9.20$, $p = 0.010$)

- The p-value is also less than 0.05, showing a significant association between marital status and stress.
- Married women tend to experience different (likely higher) stress levels compared to single women, potentially due to added family responsibilities and work-life balance challenges.

3. Educational Level and Stress Levels ($\chi^2 = 3.85$, $p = 0.146$)

- The p-value is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant association between educational qualification and stress levels.
- This suggests that stress experienced by women employees is not dependent on whether they are graduates or postgraduates.

4. Experience and Stress Levels ($\chi^2 = 7.90$, $p = 0.093$)

- The p-value exceeds 0.05, showing no significant association between years of experience and stress levels.
- This implies that stress does not vary significantly with the length of work experience in the IT sector among women employees.

Table: Correlation Analysis among Key Variables

Variables	Workload	Work-Family Conflict	Gender Discrimination	Organizational Support	Overall Stress
Workload	1	0.62**	0.45**	-0.38**	0.76**
Work-Family Conflict	0.62**	1	0.40**	-0.35**	0.70**
Gender Discrimination	0.45**	0.40**	1	-0.30**	0.58**
Organizational Support	-0.38**	-0.35**	-0.30**	1	-0.55**
Overall Stress	0.76**	0.70**	0.58**	-0.55**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$

Interpretation: women employees in Hyderabad's IT sector: Workload, Work-Family Conflict, Gender Discrimination, Organizational Support, and Overall Stress. All correlations reported are statistically significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$), indicating strong evidence that these relationships are not due to chance.

1. Workload and Overall Stress ($r = 0.76$)

- This is a strong positive correlation, indicating that as perceived workload increases, overall workplace stress also increases significantly.
- The strength of this relationship suggests that workload is one of the most critical contributors to stress among women IT employees.

2. Work-Family Conflict and Overall Stress ($r = 0.70$)

- There is a strong positive correlation between work-family conflict and overall stress, implying that difficulties in balancing work and family responsibilities substantially elevate stress levels.
- This highlights the importance of addressing work-life balance issues to reduce stress.

3. Gender Discrimination and Overall Stress ($r = 0.58$)

- A moderate positive correlation exists between gender discrimination and stress, indicating that experiences of discrimination contribute meaningfully to increased stress.
- This underscores the psychological impact of workplace bias and unfair treatment on women's well-being.

4. Organizational Support and Overall Stress ($r = -0.55$)

- A moderate negative correlation shows that higher levels of perceived organizational support are associated with lower stress levels.
- This suggests that supportive workplace environments can buffer against stress, emphasizing the protective role of organizational resources and culture.

5. Interrelationships Among Predictors:

- Workload and work-family conflict are strongly correlated ($r = 0.62$), indicating these stressors often coexist and may compound each other's effects.
- Gender discrimination also correlates positively with workload ($r = 0.45$) and work-family conflict ($r = 0.40$), suggesting that discrimination may exacerbate other stressors.
- Organizational support negatively correlates with all three stressors (workload: $r = -0.38$, work-family conflict: $r = -0.35$, gender discrimination: $r = -0.30$), reinforcing its role in mitigating multiple sources of stress

Table: Multiple Regression Analysis: Predictors of Workplace Stress

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t-value	p-value
Workload	0.42	0.08	0.45	5.25	<0.001**
Work-Family Conflict	0.35	0.07	0.38	5.00	<0.001**
Gender Discrimination	0.21	0.06	0.22	3.50	0.001**
Organizational	-0.30	0.07	-0.28	-4.29	<0.001**

Support					
Job Insecurity	0.10	0.06	0.11	1.67	0.097

Analysis

Model Summary:

$R^2 = 0.62$, $F(5,208) = 68.12$, $p < 0.001$

Analysis: Workload, work-family conflict, gender discrimination, and organizational support are significant predictors of workplace stress among women IT employees in Hyderabad. Job insecurity is not a significant predictor in this model. The model explains 62% of the variance in stress levels, indicating a strong fit.

V. Conclusion

Descriptive statistics

1. The demographic analysis shows that younger and married women experience higher stress, possibly due to greater family responsibilities combined with work demands.
2. Descriptive statistics confirm workload and work-family conflict as the most prominent stressors.
3. Highlight the critical need for effective stress management strategies and increased awareness and enforcement of legal remedies to protect women employees.

Inferential statistics

1. **The Chi-square analysis** reveals that age and marital status have a significant impact on workplace stress levels among women IT employees in Hyderabad. Younger and married women are more likely to experience higher stress, possibly due to the dual pressures of career development and family responsibilities. In contrast, educational level and work experience do not show a significant relationship with stress, indicating that stress is pervasive across different qualification levels and experience brackets.

These findings suggest that stress management interventions should be particularly sensitive to the needs of younger and married women employees, addressing their unique challenges. Organizations may consider tailored support programs such as flexible work hours, family-friendly policies, and counseling services targeted at these demographic groups to effectively reduce stress.

2. **The correlation analysis** clearly demonstrates that workplace stress among women IT employees in Hyderabad is multifactorial, with workload, work-family conflict, and gender discrimination each significantly increasing stress levels. Conversely, organizational support plays a crucial mitigating role by reducing stress associated with these factors.

These findings highlight the interconnected nature of stressors and the importance of a holistic approach to stress management. Interventions aimed at reducing workload, facilitating work-life balance, combating gender discrimination, and enhancing organizational support are essential to improve women's mental health and job satisfaction in the IT sector.

Overall, the strong and significant correlations provide a robust foundation for targeted organizational policies and legal frameworks designed to create a supportive and equitable work environment for women professionals

3. **The Multiple regression** confirms that workload and work-family conflict are the strongest predictors of stress, followed by gender discrimination and organizational support. These findings suggest that interventions to reduce workload, support work-life balance, prevent discrimination, and enhance organizational support can effectively reduce stress among women in Hyderabad's IT sector

4. Women employees in IT companies in Hyderabad have robust legal protections against workplace stress, harassment, and discrimination. They can seek redress through internal grievance mechanisms, the POSH Act, labor laws, and the criminal justice system. Employers are legally required to ensure a safe, healthy, and supportive work environment and to address stress and harassment promptly and effectively

Legal Remedies

Legal Remedy	Applicable Law/Policy	Action Steps for Employees
Safe work environment	Constitution, Labor Laws	Lodge complaint with labor authorities
Protection from harassment	POSH Act, BNS, Industrial Disputes Act	File complaint with ICC, police, or labor
Grievance redressal	Company policy, Labor Laws	Use internal grievance mechanism
Protection from retaliation	Industrial Disputes Act, Company policy	Seek reinstatement/compensation
Civil/criminal remedies	BNS, IPC, Civil Courts	File civil/criminal case
Awareness and training	POSH Act, Labor Laws	Participate in training programs

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