

A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS FACED BY STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN KANNIYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT:

The challenges encountered by working women in Kanniyakumari district are multifaceted and rooted in the intersection of gender, socio-economic factors, and cultural norms. This study aims to explore and analyze the unique set of issues faced by working women in this region, shedding light on the complexities that impact their professional and personal lives. Key areas of concern include workplace discrimination, limited access to opportunities for career advancement, and the persistence of traditional gender roles. The study also examines the role of cultural expectations and societal norms that often place additional burdens on working women, making it challenging for them to balance their professional and domestic responsibilities. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study seeks to identify specific barriers that hinder the progress of working women in Kanniyakumari district. By understanding these challenges, policymakers, employers, and community leaders can develop targeted strategies to address and mitigate these issues, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for working women. The findings of this research can contribute to the development of effective policies and initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality in the workplace and creating an environment where working women can thrive both personally and professionally. Additionally, the study may serve as a foundation for future research on the broader issue of gender equity in different geographical and cultural contexts.

INTRODUCTION:

The role of women in the workforce has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, with an increasing number of women actively participating in various professional fields. While this shift signifies progress towards gender equality, working women continue to face a range of challenges that impact their professional and personal lives. These challenges are complex and multifaceted, rooted in societal norms, organizational structures, and individual

expectations. This discussion aims to explore some of the prominent problems faced by working women, shedding light on the barriers that persist despite advancements in gender equality.

As women navigate their careers, they often encounter hurdles that can impede their professional growth and well-being. From systemic issues such as gender bias and unequal pay to more personal challenges like work-life balance and societal expectations, the experiences of working women are shaped by a myriad of factors. This exploration will delve into some of these challenges, seeking to foster a better understanding of the obstacles that women encounter in the workplace and beyond.

In the subsequent sections, we will examine key issues such as gender discrimination, the glass ceiling effect, unequal pay, work-life balance, and societal expectations. Each of these challenges contributes to a complex web of obstacles that working women must navigate, highlighting the need for ongoing efforts to create a more equitable and supportive environment for women in the workforce.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Xavior Selvakumar & S. Lawrence Immanuel (2015) The job stress is an increasing problem in present day organizations; it does not affect the employees work life only, but has far reaching impact on employees' family life as well. Stress refers to the pressure or tension people feel in life. The total sample size of 160 respondents comprising of 80 branches of SBI were taken for the study. Both descriptive and explanatory research methodologies are adopted in this study. As such, self-administered standardized questionnaire is used to gather all relevant information on the subject matter. The study is descriptive in nature and Normative Survey method is chosen by the researcher. The researcher had chosen the stratified random sampling method for the present study. Under stratified sampling the population is divided into three sub-populations that are individually more homogeneous than the total population which are called stratum and then to select items from each stratum to constitute a sample. There is significant relation between the work stress and family life. Therefore, it is recommended to reduce the stressful conditions and to improve job satisfaction more attention should be given on the roles and the support that they receive.

Khodabakshi, M. (2013) aimed to predict work-related pressure among female working in the bank through the evaluation of their managerial obligation and individuality sort. Descriptive statistics method like frequency table, graphs, mean, standard deviation, correlation and multiple variable. Questionnaire developed by Mayers-Bridge and Philip, L.Rice (1991) were used to determine occupational stress level of bank staff. Questionnaire developed by Allen and Mayer was used to evaluate occupational commitment to staff. It was found that there is significant inverse association between occupational obligation and occupational stress. It was also found that due to occupational stress women face lower organizational commitment and they are willing to leave the job.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Working women often encounter a myriad of challenges that impact their professional and personal lives. Balancing the demands of a career with family responsibilities poses a significant hurdle, as societal expectations and traditional gender roles persist. Issues such as unequal pay, limited career advancement opportunities, and workplace discrimination further compound these difficulties, hindering the full realization of women's potential in the workforce. Additionally, inadequate support systems, including childcare facilities and flexible work arrangements, contribute to the strain on working women. These multifaceted problems not only affect individual women but also have broader implications for societal progress towards gender equality and inclusive workplaces.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the socio-economic conditions of the working women in Kanniyakumari District.
- To analyze the problems faced by working women in Kanniyakumari District

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The present study is limited to working women identified within Kanyakumari district.
- ❖ The identification of working women relied solely on reviews and expertise in the related field.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample design for this study in Kanyakumari District involved the collection of primary data from 300 respondents of working women. Secondary data were gathered from various published books, articles in different journals, periodicals, conference papers, working papers, and websites. 'Stratified Random Sampling' was employed for this study, with a total sample size of 300 working women selected randomly.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

The one way analysis of variance has been applied when the criterion variable is in interval scale and the groups of sample are more than two. In order to find out the significant difference among the different groups of sample of the criterion variable, the F- statistics is calculated with the help of AVOVA

$$F \text{ statistics} = \frac{\text{variance between group}}{\text{Variance within in group}}$$

The table value of F is computed by $(n-1) / (n-k+1)$ degree of freedom at the required level of significant.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**Table -1**
Age of the respondents

Sl. No	Age	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1.	21 - 30	10	3
2.	31 - 40	124	41
3.	41 - 50	102	34
4.	51 - 60	47	16
5.	61 and above	19	6
	Total	300	100

Table 1 shows that 41 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-40 years. Further, about 3 per cent of the respondents belong to 21- 30 years of age group, 34 per cent of the respondents are in the 41-50 years of age group, 16 per cent of the respondents are in the 51-60 years of age group and 6per cent of the respondents are in the 61 and above years of age group.

Table -2
Background of the respondents

Sl. No	Background	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Urban	183	61
2.	Rural	117	39
	Total	300	100

Table 2 reveals that majority about 61 per cent of the respondents described themselves as coming from an urban background. A little over 39 per cent of the respondents perceived themselves to be having a rural background.

Table -3
Educational Status

Sl. No	Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below Higher Secondary	9	3
2.	Diploma	23	8
3.	Higher Secondary	15	5
4.	Graduate	131	44
5.	Post graduate	115	38
6.	Professional	7	2
	Total	300	100

Table 3 shows the details of education qualifications of the sample of respondents. It is found that 44 percent are graduates, 38 percent are post graduate level, 8 percent are Diploma, 5

percent are higher secondary, 3 percentages are below higher secondary and 2 percent is professional.

Table -4
Annual Income of the Respondents

Sl. No	Annual Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below Rs.2,00,000	102	34
2.	Rs.2,00,000 - Rs.4,00,000	76	25
3.	Rs.4,00,000 - Rs.6,00,000	65	22
4.	Rs.6,00,000 - Rs.8,00,000	44	15
5.	Above Rs. 8,00,000	13	4
	Total	300	100

Table 4 shows the details of annual income of the respondents in Kanyakumari district. Table shows that 34 percent earned below Rs. 2,00,000, 25 percent are earned Rs. 2,00,000 – 4,00,000, 22 percent are earned Rs. 4,00,000 – 6,00,000, 15 percent are earned Rs. 6,00,000 – 8,00,000 and 4 percent are earned more than Rs. 8,00,000.

Table – 5
Nature of work

Sl. No	Nature of work	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Government	56	19
2.	Private	123	41
3.	Business	82	27
4.	Others	39	13
	Total	300	100

Nature of work reveals that the majority 32% of the respondents belong to private office followed by 21% of the respondents belong to factory, 15% of the respondents belong to educational institution teaching, 8% of the respondents belong to Government office, 7% of the respondents belong to educational institution non-teaching, another 5% of the respondents belong to insurance company and 4% of the respondents belong to banking sector.

Table – 6
Year of Experience

Sl. No	Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 3 years	98	33
2.	3 - 5 Years	81	27
3.	5 - 7 Years	54	18
4.	7 - 10 Years	45	15
5.	10 - 15 Years	22	7
	Total	300	100

Table 6 shows that 33% of the respondents have less than 3 years of experience, 27% have 3 - 5 years of experience, 18% have 5 - 7 years of experience, 15% have 7 - 10 years of experience, and 7% have 10- 15 years of experience.

Table – 7

Problems among working women vary according to their income levels

Sl. No	Variable	Income Level					Total	F	Sig.
		Below Rs.2,00,000	Rs.2,00,000 - Rs.4,00,000	Rs.4,00,000 - Rs.6,00,000	Rs.6,00,000 - Rs.8,00,000	Above Rs. 8,00,000			
1.	Gender Pay Gap Disparity	4	4.25	3.98	3	2.5	4.05	9.10	0.000*
2.	Wage Discrimination in the Workplace	2.4	2.52	2.52	1.5	1.2	2.48	4.029	0.008*
3.	Lack of Equal Opportunities for Advancement	2.2	2.4	2.3	1.5	1.11	2.31	4.371	0.005*
4.	Unequal Distribution of Family Responsibilities	2.6	2.22	2.48	2	1.82	2.38	4.594	0.003*
5.	Limited Access to Flexible Work Arrangements	2.8	2.43	2.64	3	2.54	2.59	3.333	0.031*
6.	Insufficient Support for Childcare and Eldercare	3	2.62	2.92	4.5	2.98	2.87	15.548	0.000*
7.	Gender Stereotyping in Career Choices	2.4	2.45	3.14	1.5	1.34	2.77	2.756	0.042*
8.	Disproportionate Representation in Leadership Positions	3	2.84	2.8	3	2.58	2.84	0.477	0.698
9.	Challenges in Negotiating Salary and Benefits	3.6	3.31	3.07	3	2.32	3.2	3.59	0.015*
10.	Economic Impacts of Occupational Segregation	3.2	2.35	2.36	2.5	2.12	2.43	8.541	0.000*
11.	Intersectional Challenges for Women of Color	3.2	2.59	2.96	3	2.25	2.84	14.580	0.000*
12.	Retirement and Pension Disparities	2.8	2.62	2.66	2.5	1.8	2.65	0.833	0.476
13.	Mental Health and Well-being Concerns	2.4	2.57	2.84	3	2.56	2.71	10.935	0.000*

Table 7 showed the results of problems among working women. The calculated 'F' values of problems such as Gender Pay Gap Disparity, Wage Discrimination in the Workplace,

Lack of Equal Opportunities for Advancement, Unequal Distribution of Family Responsibilities, Limited Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, Insufficient Support for Childcare and Eldercare, Gender Stereotyping in Career Choices, Disproportionate Representation in Leadership Positions, Challenges in Negotiating Salary and Benefits, Economic Impacts of Occupational Segregation, Intersectional Challenges for Women of Color, Retirement and Pension Disparities and Mental Health and Well-being Concerns are 9.10, 4.029, 4.371, 4.594, 3.333, 15.548, 2.756, 0.477, 3.59, 8.541, 14.580, 0.833 and 10.935 which are significant at the 'P' value of 0.000, 0.008, 0.005, 0.003, 0.031, 0.000, 0.042, 0.698, 0.015, 0.000, 0.000, 0.476 and 0.000 respectively.

Since the respective 'P' value of Gender Pay Gap Disparity, Wage Discrimination in the Workplace, Lack of Equal Opportunities for Advancement, Unequal Distribution of Family Responsibilities, Limited Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, Insufficient Support for Childcare and Eldercare, Gender Stereotyping in Career Choices, Challenges in Negotiating Salary and Benefits, Economic Impacts of Occupational Segregation, Intersectional Challenges for Women of Color, Mental Health and Well-being Concerns are less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, it may be concluded that there is a significant difference in problems such as Gender Pay Gap Disparity, Wage Discrimination in the Workplace, Lack of Equal Opportunities for Advancement, Unequal Distribution of Family Responsibilities, Limited Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, Insufficient Support for Childcare and Eldercare, Gender Stereotyping in Career Choices, Disproportionate Representation in Leadership Positions, Challenges in Negotiating Salary and Benefits, Economic Impacts of Occupational Segregation, Intersectional Challenges for Women of Color, Retirement and Pension Disparities and Mental Health and Well-being Concerns among the problem faced by the working women.

SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ The working women should realize the advantage of joint family and wherever possible, they should live with their elders such as parent's in-law, so that their family work burden should be reduced by elders in joint family.
- ❖ Women should understand the new way to balance work and life.
- ❖ The working women should realize the gender equality and as such, they should develop their psychology that working women have also equal status with their husband in family.
- ❖ It is suggested to employers to provide promotions and incentives to working women timely, so that it motivates them towards more work and creates work interest and also reduces stress.
- ❖ It is suggested to working women to learn techniques to reduce occupational stress and practice the same to reduce their stress.
- ❖ It is suggested to working women to go for routine medical check-up at least twice in a year.

- ❖ It is suggested to working women to consume energizers, energy drinks, green vegetables, fruits, etc. so as to revive their energy and reduce stress.
- ❖ The women employees are mostly affected by the problem of lack of appreciation. This crucial problem could be solved by the management by providing counseling. The management should adopt more democratic attitudes towards the employees.

CONCLUSION

The result of the analysis indicates that working women are facing stress from the different factors like Organization, Work, Family and Self. The existence of stress is felt in all the three service sectors taken for the purpose of the study. Under different dimensions of the stress analyzed on the basis of the demographical profile, sector and managerial level of the working women, it is concluded that women working in the financial sector at middle-level face more stress. In the hospitality sector, women at the top level are more exposed towards the Family Related Stress as when they move to the higher ladder in managerial level, accountability towards work increases and they find lesser time for the family. Work Related Stress is a multifaceted problem that can be linked to the organization, physical and social characteristics of work and the work environment. Different ways to manage stress used by the respondents were also analyzed on the basis of demographic profile, sector and managerial level. Most of the respondents agree that positive outlook towards the life and work helps them in maintaining work-life balance. Life is challenging. Counseling and sharing problems with others are also considered to be the best way to handle the stress and it may offer solutions to the problems. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will help in managing the stress.

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