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Stress management among women employees in it sector industry: A study in Visakhapatnam

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Abstract
Information Technology (IT) sector is one of the major employee generation industry in the global environment where both men and women are taking part. In this sector women made their way into the corporate workforce, but without priority of full development of their talents and rise for leadership positions due to stress. Globalization of economy have forced our IT workforce to concern more in winning the talent individual and India's educated IT professional women are a significant asset that should no longer be undervalued and under-utilized. This paper is based on findings from research studies on Indian Information Technology Industry. It provides an overview of the challenges and stress observed by women who are working in IT sector organizations in Visakhapatnam city. Changing social expectations both at work and at home have made this more complex. Here discussion is about what changes are required to manage stress among women and what is being done to get the best practices for Information Technology industry in India. Paper highlights the coping strategies that can be selected to further continue corporate journey to gender inclusion and the advancement of women in the organizations.

Keywords: Stress management, IT sector, competitive factors.

Introduction
Stress is a wide phenomenon as it seems to have universal spread. Stress exists in human beings, animals and even in metals. Stress is also related with providing quality services to human beings depend upon their stress levels. However, this study is about women stress with special focus on the work stress in Information Technology sector. Many people think they understand stress, but in reality stress is complex and often misunderstood. Our Information Technology industry has a name for it 'Burn out stress syndrome', which is seen very commonly among women working in IT sector. Technological and regulatory changes in the IT sector in India created a sharp and fairly sudden increase in the demand for female workers, Therefore stress among women employees in Information Technology industry is a contemporary issue to discuss and to hit upon on elucidation of this problem.

Stress
As far as stress is concerned, there is no universal definition of stress. Interestingly, most of the mechanical devices/structures are tested for stress levels in laboratories and manufacturing places for their prolonged life and efficient working. Both physical and psychological stressors have a tremendous impact on not only the employees' health, but also the organization's wealth. Stress has become a major concern of the modern times as it can cause harm to employee's health and performance. However the present paper encloses the human stress, especially among women in Information Technology industry.

Information Technology Sector
Outsourcing began in the early eighties when organizations started delegating their non-core functions to an external organization that was specialized in providing a particular service or product. The jobs in Information Technology industry are fairly well-paid in relative to other sectors. At the turn of the millennium, India can be rightly called the foster-child of globalization. The liberalization in 1994 gave an unexpected boost to the IT industry. According to the research firm Gartner the Indian IT industry has grown from $1.2 billion market in 2011 to $1.8 billion in 2013.

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In India, the IT industry experienced 30-40% average annual growth rates from 2000 to 2010 (NASSCOM 2010). In the present scenario many UK and US based companies are looking at India, to outsource the IT professionals. The global Information Technology industry will be worth $250 billion by 2015 and India stands to gain around $75 billion of that global pie. So one can say that currently IT industry is at explosion and number of employees keeps on increasing day-by-day.

Status of women in the IT sector in India

In the contemporary world, women no longer lag behind in terms of career. It has been noticed that Information Technology is one of the industry, which has witnessed high growth for women and helped them more. However, even today women are expected to do multi tasking. One can say that 'Nature has given women too much power, the law gives them too little' as there is no separate rules (except in case of maternity phase, that to some extent only) in support of women to fill the gap during their innate responsibilities. Earlier The Factories Act, 1948, under Section 66, banned working of women in night shifts but later The High Court of Mumbai in its judgment dated 10th June 1999 passed an interim order allowing deployment of women in Santa Cruz Electronic in the nightshift. The Factories (Amendment) Bill, was introduced by on August 2005, which envisage that the employer ensures occupational safety and adequate protections to the women employed. The owner of the factory has to ensure, equal opportunity for women workers, adequate protection to their dignity, honor and safety and their transportation from factory to the nearest point of their residence. Reports says that Information Technology industry prefer women, due to more pleasant voice and demeanor when interacting with customers. Thus, technological and regulatory changes in the Information Technology sector in India created a fairly sudden increase in the demand for female workers.

Stress generator factors for women employees in IT sector

Employees of Information Technology work 24 hours in a day, seven days a week. More often than not, Zealous Information Technology take on more work than they can handle, forcing employees to work round the clock. Especially in case of working women, situation is worst because her responsibilities are divided in to two parts - Household activities and the Office.

Significance of the study

As we witness an increasing number of women work force in the information technology sector. This paper focuses on women employees in IT sectors in Visakhapatnam city. The women employees in this sector experience a lot of stress due to various problems like glass ceiling, 24 X 7 work pressure, prolonged working shifts, work-life balance, gender biasness, social constraints, security problem, lack of training and development opportunities, sexual harassment at workplace etc. in addition to these they also face same problems like work, family, conflict, hostile environment at home, children and elderly care etc.

Objectives

1. To identify level of stress among the women employees in information technology sector

2. To study the association between level of stress and level of work load among women employees in IT sector

Methodology

In order to determine the level of stress faced by women employees in the IT sector in Visakhapatnam city. The data relating to the women employees were collected from IT sector units. The researcher randomly selected 100 women employees from the IT companies and the response details towards their stress at different work and environmental conditions are shown in the tables below.

Table 1: Level of Stress among Women employees in IT companies

S. No.	Stress level	Respondents	Percentage
1	High	65	65.0
2	Normal	35	35.0
3	Low	-	-
	Total	100	100.0

It is observed from the above table that as many as 65.0 percent of the women IT employees felt the stress level in the performance of their duty is high and the remaining 35.0 percent opined the stress level in the IT sector is normal. It can be noted from the above table and analysis that there is no respondent in the sample who told low stress in performance of their duty in the IT companies.

Table 2: Level of work overload

S. No.	Stress level	Respondents	Percentage
1	High	45	45.0
2	Normal	55	55.0
3	Low	-	-
	Total	100	100.0

According to the table it shows that even though more than half of the women respondents said the level of work load in the IT companies is normal, 45.0 percent of women employees said the work load in the IT companies is high. This infers that nearly fifty percent of the women in the IT companies observed that the work load is high.

Table 3: Stress due to lack of participation in decision making

S. No.	Lack of participation	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	60	60.0
2	Agree	35	35.0
3	Disagree	5	5.0
	Total	100	100.0

As per the table it shows that sixty percent of the women employees in IT companies strongly agreed and 35.0 percent agreed that they felt stress due to lack of participation in decision making matters in the IT companies, whereas remaining 5.0 percent felt disagreed with this. This indicates that most of the women employees do not participate in decision making matters of the IT companies.

Table 4: Stress due to regular technological changes

S. No.	Technological changes	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	70	70.0
2	Agree	30	30.0
3	Disagree	-	-
	Total	100	100.0

It is observed from the above table that 70.0 percent strongly agreed and 30.0 percent agreed that the women in IT companies experienced stress because of frequent technical changes brought as development process. This make them regular update of their skills and knowledge which need education and training. It is not possible every time to all the women.

Table 5: Does women employees in IT sectors have behavioral effects due to stress

S. No.	Level of work load	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	80	80.0
2	Agree	20	20.0
3	Disagree	-	-
	Total	100	100.0

Because of recent developments and changes in IT sector, every one depends on IT companies for technological services in their organisations. In this connection the workload of the IT staff has been increasing day-by-day. In this context the above table witness to say as many as eighty percent of the women employees in the IT sector strongly agreed and twenty percent agreed that they have behavioral effects due to stress.

Table 6: Most causative factors of stress expressed by the women employees in IT companies

S. No.	Causes of stress	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Poor working condition	25	25.0
2	Rotating shifts	25	25.0
3	Work load / pressure	50	50.0
	Total	100	100.0

The above table explains the most causative factors expressed by the sample women employees working at IT companies in Visakhapatnam city. According to the above table it shows that fifty percent of the women employees expressed work load / pressure make them more stress, and from the reaming 25.0 percent are feeling stress with rotating shifts and 25.0 percent of the employees felt stress due to poor working conditions in the company.

Hypothesis
Ho: There is no significant association in the level of stress and level of work load among women IT employees.

The association between level of stress and level of work load among women employees in IT sector

Level of work load	Level of stress		Total
	High	Normal	
High	32 (60.4)	18 (38.3)	50 (50.0)
Normal	21 (39.6)	29 (61.7)	50 (50.0)
Total	53 (100.0)	47 (100.0)	100 (100.0)
Chi-square value	4.86*		

It is observed from the table that out of the total women employees in the sample study, 60.4 percent having high work load and they are experienced high level of stress and 61.7 percent of women who observed normal stress experienced normal work load in the IT companies. In this level of distribution the calculated chi-square value 4.86 indicate 5% level of significance because the table value is 3.84 which is less than the tested value. So the hypothesis is rejected. There is significant association between level of stress and work load in women employees working in IT sector companies.

Discussion
The researcher concludes that there are various stressors among women employees in IT sector units such as poor working conditions relating work shifts, work overload, lack of participation in decision making, in appropriate leadership style, lack of social support, transfer, poor working relationship and technological changes in the organization. Excessive stress may result in bodily disturbances like peptic ulcers, migraine, headache; fever etc., High level of stress may affect self-confidence, lower self-esteem, lack in concentration and reduce job satisfaction. By testing the hypothesis, the researcher concludes that high level of stress is experienced by women employees due to factures like role ambiguity, role overload, lack of supervisory support, Technological changes.

Conclusion
The focus on women by the IT sector is an acknowledgement of their growing role in India's economy. Analysts state that there is a direct correlation between the employment of women and the economic wellbeing of a nation. IT companies must further refine their policies and processes to strongly influence the participation of women in key leading projects and must identify procedures that can be restructured to encourage participation of women in organizational decision making activities. Companies have to understand the requirement of managing stress among women to make the environment conducive which can retain skilled talented women. Management must provide continuous learning, mentoring, coaching, counseling, opportunities for self-development, time management to handle their responsibility at home along with office to encourage them to take higher responsibilities of onsite projects. Information Technology companies need to roll out today to give incentives to women workers and make the industry, as a whole an attractive and preferred carrier destination for them.

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