

# An Empirical Study on Problems Faced By Women Employees in Information Technology Industry with Special Reference to Coimbatore City

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**Abstract:** This paper outlines the various problems faced by women employees in Information Technology industry with special reference to Coimbatore city. The introduction of computer-based technology into clerical work can build on women's skills, and may have given them new opportunities to enhance human skills. But in today's world where a woman wants to support her family financially and is trying to balance her personal and professional life she is facing a lot of problems related to work, their kids and lot of personal problems. There is lot of physical, psychological, medical effects, discrimination at the work and it affects her work as well as family. For the purpose of research the sample of 120 people, who are working in Information Technology industry in Coimbatore has been considered. The primary data has been collected using the questionnaires. Descriptive type of research design & Convenience sampling method has been used. The research work reveals that most of the respondents are facing various physical and psychological problems due to their nature of work. Suggestions have been given, which would help the women employees to overcome their problems.

**Keywords:** Information Technology Industry, Physical problems, Psychological problems.

## 1. Introduction

During the last quarter of this century Information Technology (IT) has transformed the way of human life as no other technology has. Now, there is no area of human life, which is not affected by information technology in one way or the other.

This industry has succeeded not only in achieving global competitiveness but also raising awareness of the benefit of Information Technology within the country thereby laying the platform for future growth. In highly skilled intensive and knowledge intensive industries like information technology industry, human resources play a vital role. This industry is highly competitive, dynamic and technical industry, whose growth and development depends upon its human resources much more strongly than other resources.

## 2. Problem Faced by Women Employees in Information Technology Industry

It is an open truth that working women have to face problems just by virtue of their being women. The age old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work. Working in Information Technology industry inevitably puts strains on women to greater extent as compared to men. Women in Information Technology industry suffer from physical discomfort, psychological problems and mental tension. The physical problems were mostly in the form of musculoskeletal disorders, digestive disorders, eye, voice and hearing problems. In spite of this there are certain other consequences of sedentary lifestyle such as anxiety, depression, faulty eating habits, mental tension, sleep disturbance, nightmares. Late working hours, long working hours at the desk, job related pressure, deadlines and problem of balancing work at home and office are some of the mental tensions that resist women employees to stay in the job.

### 2.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the physical problems faced by women employees in Information Technology industry.
2. To identify the psychological problems faced by women employees in Information Technology industry.
3. To find out the major reasons cited for quitting the job by women employees in Information Technology industry.

### 3. Review of Literature

Gallivant (2002) and Moore (2002) found that women reported higher levels of stress and work exhaustion, relative to men in IT sector.

**Table-1 Physical Problems**

S.No	Description	No of respondents	%age
1	<b>Backaches</b>		
	a)Yes	67	56
	b)No	53	44
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
2	<b>Frequent Cold &amp; Headache</b>		
	a)Yes	37	31
	b)No	83	69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
3	<b>Continual Tiredness</b>		
	a)Yes	66	55
	b)No	54	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
4	<b>Throat Infection</b>		
	a)Yes	39	33
	b)No	81	67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
5	<b>Digestive Disorder</b>		
	a)Yes	60	50
	b)No	60	50
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
6	<b>High Blood Pressure</b>		
	a)Yes	72	60
	b)No	48	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
7	<b>Feeling Angry Irritable</b>		
	a)Yes	75	63
	b)No	45	37
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
8	<b>Eye</b>		

	<b>Problem</b>		
	a)Yes	72	60
	b)No	48	40
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>Respiratory Illness</b>		
	a)Yes	54	45
	b)No	66	55
<b>9</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
	<b>Sprains Strains</b>		
	a)Yes	52	43
	b)No	68	57
<b>10</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Halford V, Cohen HH (2003) concluded that the importance of psychosocial and organizational factors and employee welfare in the women call center-working environment. Musculo-skeletal disorders, ocular disorders and psycho-social problems were some of the key health problems observed among women IT professionals. There is a need for implementation of the programs that include the concepts of ergonomics, health education, training of personnel to prevent and overcome the morbidity, as well as psycho-social problems among women workers in ITES.

Parekh et al (2006) found that the symptoms increased with duration of span of computer use and with use of improper furniture. The symptoms were also more in spectacle-wearers, compared to non-spectacle users. The visual strain is also related to musculo-skeletal complaints and work stress.

#### 4. Research Methodology

Descriptive Research has been adopted for the present study. The information is obtained from primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data is in the questionnaire form and it is collected from the women employees at Information Technology industry in Coimbatore city. The sources for secondary data include books, journals and websites. Area of the study is confined to the Coimbatore city. Samples are collected from 120 women employees in Information Technology industry. Convenient sampling method is adopted for collecting primary data.

##### 4.1 Tools Used For Analysis

- Simple percentage analysis
- Chi- square test
- Correlation

##### 4.2 Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to find the problems faced by women employees working in Information Technology industry and the results are not generalized to other industries.

#### 5. Results And Discussion

The table-1 shows the results related to physical problems faced by the women employees in Information Technology industry, 56% of the respondents experience backache, 31% experiences frequent cold & headache, continual tiredness is common among 55%, 33% are suffering from throat infection, 50% talk about minor and major digestive disorder, a major chunk is suffering from high blood pressure i.e. 60%, 63% of the respondents complaint about feel angry & irritable, 60% experiences eye problem, 45% are diagnosed for respiratory illness and sprains & strains are experienced by 43%. Although these findings are consistent with already conducted studies, however from this study it was found that people unanimously felt that they should be given mandatory in-house medical check-ups for all employees.

The table- 2 depicts the psychological problems faced by the women employees. Some of the psychological problems identified in the study coincide with the previous studies conducted by Kumuda Tripathy (2005) who identified issues such as loss of identity, drug abuse and health related problems such as eye problems due to long hours of work, permanent night shifts, and high work targets), in this study also it was identified that most of the psychological problems are due to long hours of work, incredibly high work targets, loss of identity, inconvenience of shifts, increased stress, and lack of career prospects.

**Table-2 Psychological Problems**

S.No	Description	No of respondents	%age
1	<b>Anxiety</b>		
	a)Yes	66	55
	b)No	54	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
2	<b>Depression</b>		
	a)Yes	67	56
	b)No	53	44
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
3	<b>Faulty Eating Habits</b>		
	a)Yes	54	45
	b)No	66	55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
4	<b>Mental Tension</b>		
	a)Yes	71	59
	b)No	49	41
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
5	<b>Mental Illness</b>		
	a)Yes	47	39
	b)No	73	61
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
6	<b>Sleep Disturbance</b>		
	a)Yes	66	55
	b)No	54	45
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>
7	<b>Nightmares</b>		
	a)Yes	39	33
	b)No	81	67
	<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is identified from table-3 that a little less than half of the respondents (45%) want to quit their job for increased stress. Stress is the major issue that makes the women employees in the Information Technology sector to quit their job. Stress reactions may result when people are exposed to risk factors at work. These reactions are emotional, cognitive, behavioural and/or physiological in nature. When stress reactions persist

over a longer period of time, they develop into more permanent, less reversible health outcomes, such as chronic fatigue, burnout, musculoskeletal problems or cardiovascular disease Hoogendoorn et al, (2000).

**Table-3 Reasons for Quitting the Job by Employees**

S.No	Description	No of respondents	%age
1	Inconvenience of shifts	21	17
2	Increased stress	54	45
3	Lack of career prospects	45	38
	Total	120	100

The table-4 shows that there is a significant relationship between marital status and feeling angry & irritable. The married women employees feel angry & irritable which is less among the unmarried. When the worker perceives an imbalance between demands and environmental or personal resources, this can cause a number of possible reactions. This include emotional responses (e.g. feeling nervous or irritated), when people are in a state of stress, they often feel concerned, less vigilant and less efficient in performing tasks (Barling et al, 2004).

**Table-4 Relationship between Marital Status and Feeling Angry & Irritable**

Marital status	Yes	No	Total
Married	30	18	48
Unmarried	45	27	72
Total	75	45	120

Null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between marital status and feeling angry & irritable.

Alternative hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between marital status and feeling angry & irritable.

The table-5 interprets that there is a positive correlation between health affected by work and reason to quit the job. Therefore employees quit their job if their health is been affected.

**Table-5 Relationship between Health Affected By Work and Reason to Quit the Job**

S.No	X	Y	$X = X - \bar{X}$	$y = Y - \bar{Y}$	$x^2$	$y^2$	XY
1	33	21	-7	-19	49	361	133
2	68	54	28	14	784	196	392
3	19	45	21	5	441	25	105
<b>Total</b>	$\sum X = 120$	$\sum Y = 120$	$\sum x = 0$	$\sum y = 0$	$\sum x^2 = 1274$	$\sum y^2 = 582$	$\sum xy = 630$

## 6. Suggestions

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. Women employees should upgrade their skills with technological advancement which would help them to overcome the mental harassment at their work place.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus it can be concluded that in information technology industry, the participation of women employees is affected by socio constraints, night- shift, long- working hours and highly challengeable nature of jobs. The research wok identified various physical and psychological problems faced by women employees in Information Technology industry. The suggestions have been provided if followed may help the women employees and also Information Technology industry to overcome their problems.

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