

A STUDY ON STRESS & EMOTIONAL CRISIS WHAT WORKING WOMEN ARE FACING

Dr.S.Suganthi Damodaran,
Assistant professor,
Dr.M.G.R Educational and Research Institute University,
Chennai²

Dr. P. Priya
Jothi Nivas College,
Bangalore

Dr. S.P. Kanaga Anbuselvam
former Prof. & HoD Dept. of
Laour Management, Madurai
Kamaraj University

Abstract: The times are changing. Women contribute equally like men for the society. Any industry we have, we find women playing a role over there. Starting from Security, house-keeping to CEO & MD of an organization, we find women all over. But compared to men, women face lots of challenges & they have to handle multiple things unlike men. They take equal responsibilities at home as well at office. They have to balance both. When they do that, they get physically & mentally down. When it comes to physical self, they can manage very well. But when it comes to emotional self, they break-down & needs some support.

Key Words:Health Problems, Family Problems, Psychological Problems, Sustaining Jobs

Introduction: Lot of studies show that women go through rough patch when they are not honoured properly from the work front & also on the personal front. They do not mind working hard or harder or hardest. But when the recognition is not given, they get emotionally down. All they wanted is support, respect & recognition. If these three are given to them, they would love working & prove themselves time & again. Stress is a very strong factor for them. It helps them to become a super performer or it makes them a failure. The persistence what women show is predominantly very high. Every woman wanted to prove themselves & go high. But very few get those opportunities.

According to —Women of Tomorrow^l, survey showed that out of 21 nations and 6500 women, India is leading nation when it comes to stress for women. About 87% of women were stressed most of their time and 82% claimed that they did not find time to relax. The reason behind it is that Indian women have to play different roles in daily life i.e. work and home related activities. Career opportunities for Indian women are increasing but social norms and family expectations are the root cause of this stress.

WHO ARE MOST AFFECTED?

Women aging from 22 years to 55 years are the most stressed and struggling hard to balance their home lives, social activities and job. Out-dated family structures have an uneven effect on the lives of Indian women. This also includes women from urban areas who are highly educated and probably the first one in their family to go for professional career. The research conducted revealed that most of the women woke up as early as 4:30am in the morning, preparing breakfast for in-laws, children and husband and going for work, all day long. After returning home, they have to prepare dinner for family and clean up their home.

The three problems Which WOMEN face are:

- a. Health problems
- b. Family related problems
- c. Psychological problems

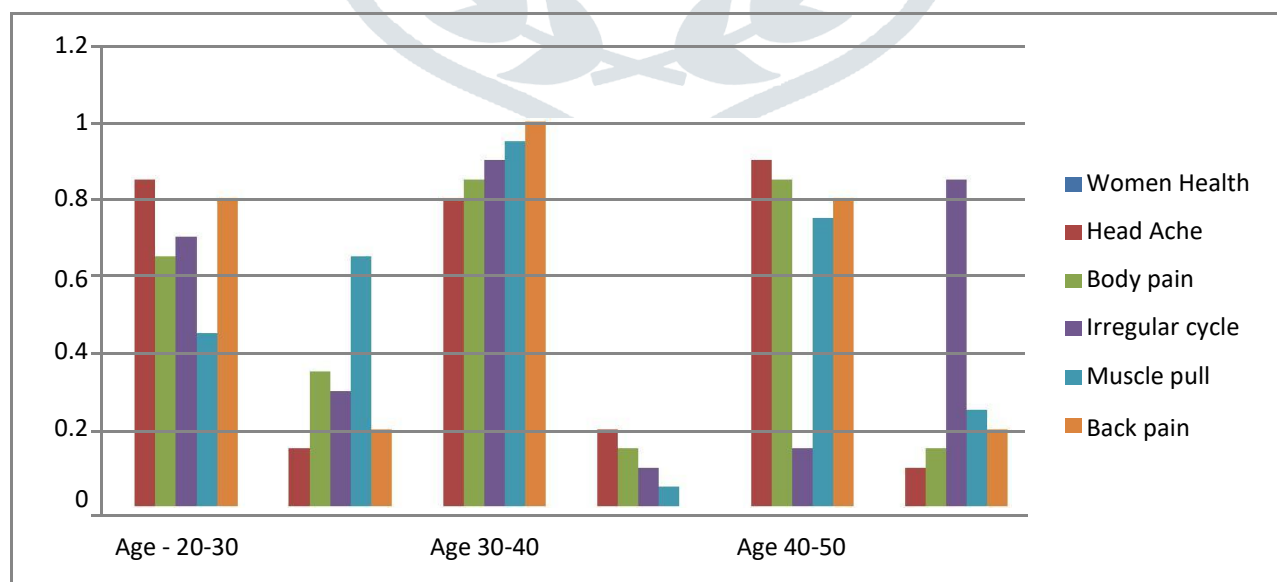
Health Problems

World Health organization (WHO, 1946) defines —Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is true that a healthy woman builds a healthy community and health status of Indian women is much better than the national average. Woman's multiple roles affect not only her own health and well-being but affect the overall health and well-being of the family. The heavy stress and strain they face while combining the outside work and domestic work, child care, care for elderly make her more tiresome and she gain less leisure. Working woman's total hours of work increases at the expense of her leisure time.

Table 1: Health Related Problems What Women Employees Go Through

Women Health	Age - 20-30		Age 30-40		Age 40-50	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Head Ache	85%	15%	80%	20%	90%	10%
Body pain	65%	35%	85%	15%	85%	15%
Irregular cycle	70%	30%	90%	10%	15%	85%
Muscle pull	45%	65%	95%	5%	75%	25%
Back pain	80%	20%	100%	0%	80%	20%

Here the table 1 clearly indicates,

Graph 1: Health Related Problems What Women Employees Go Through

Family Related Problems

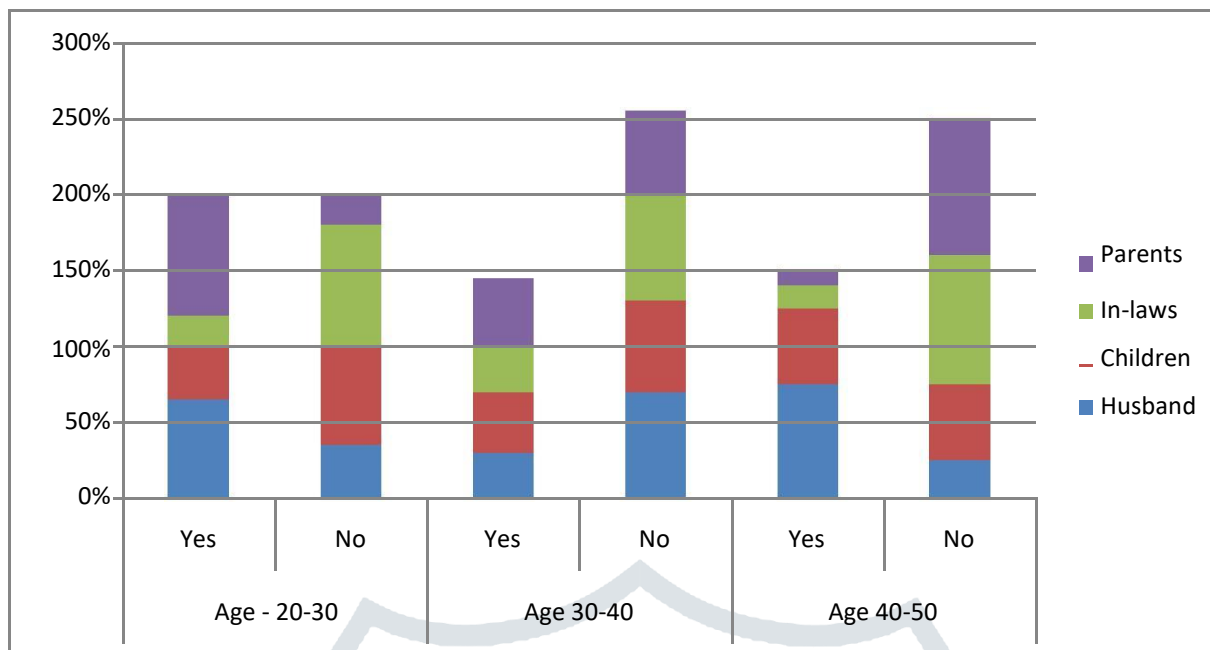
Anthropologists and sociologists hail that family is a universal social institution. In 1949, George Peter Murdock defined family as —a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. Thus family constitute the most fundamental and basic unit where the seeds of love and care are sown and brought up. In every family mother's role is so significant and Engle(1983) pointed out that mothers can more efficiently allocate resources to children than the fathers, because they are more attached to their children. A similar idea related to child care and role of woman is given by Dwyer (1983). Disintegration of joint families and development of nuclear families often put heavy stress on the time allocation of working women. Working women with preschool children often pose a heavy strain on their time allocation and to solve this problem is to give more attention to parents and grandparents and thus it will lead to a shift in favour of joint families. Such a change in the outlook of the society will surely reduce the inmates in the old age home and they will enjoy the care and love of their children and grand-children. Full-time working mothers still do a second shift at home, and they have less free time than their husbands, but the disparity has begun to decline until recent decades, men and women adopted distinct economic roles.

Table 2: Family Related Problems What Women Employees Go Through

Support	Age - 20-30		Age 30-40		Age 40-50	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Husband	65%	35%	30%	70%	75%	25%
Children	35%	65%	40%	60%	50%	50%
In-laws	20%	80%	30%	70%	15%	85%
Parents	80%	20%	45%	55%	10%	90%

The table clearly indicates, what women go through when it comes to support. Here most of the women were expecting for the support from the husband who are in the age of 20-30. Few were unmarried, few were newly married & few were married with kids. Here out of 35%, there were 20% who were unmarried, weren't having much issue as they weren't having big commitments. 15% of women said, they do not face much problems as they are supporting them in the work & thus they are in a position to manage. But when it comes to women at the age of 30-40, 30% of women are having support from their husband but the remaining are not having it & they face issues in balancing the work, family, husband & children. In this time children would be small & they expect a lot from their mother. And finally when it comes to the age of 40-50, they have responded that 75% of women are having support from their husband & 25% feel they are becoming even more troublesome.

When it comes to children, every mother wanted to do justice for the role they wish & would like to give 100%. Women, who do not have kids, do not face this issue. But women who have children, feels good of being a mother but at the same time taking care of them in their health, studies etc..., they get extremely exhausted. If they take the help of parents or in-laws, they feel certain amount of relaxation. But if they leave their small kids in the day care or child care centres, they do not get 100% satisfaction. Thus many take a call of being a home-maker just for their kids & their security.

Graph 2: Family Related Problems What Women Employees Go Through

When the survey was conducted with women who are working in the different fields & from different industries who quit the job before & after marriage & how many quit & continue the job before, during & after child birth. It shows a good result & how family helps them in the support of their carrier being built.

Table 3: Women who quit & continue before & after marriage & childbirth

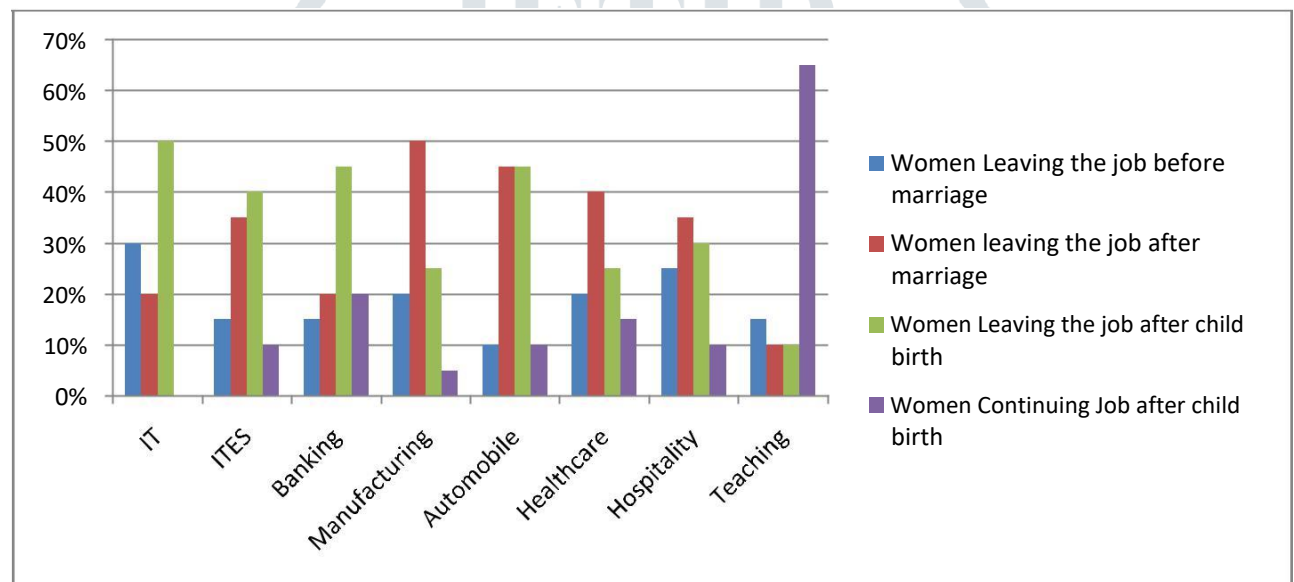
Sectors	Women Leaving the job before marriage	Women leaving the job after marriage	Women Leaving the job after child birth	Women Continuing Job after child birth
IT	30%	20%	50%	0%
ITES	15%	35%	40%	10%
Banking	15%	20%	45%	20%
Manufacturing	20%	50%	25%	5%
Automobile	10%	45%	45%	10%
Healthcare	20%	40%	25%	15%
Hospitality	25%	35%	30%	10%
Teaching	15%	10%	10%	65%

This table clearly indicates that many IT industry women employees who quit their job as they are not in a position to balance work & home. Few who were in a very good position & getting very good salary quit their job due to this issue. Few even quit as the shift timings would be erratic which will not be leading them to have a healthy family. If at all they work after marriage, they quit their job immediately they become a mother or after their pregnancy.

In the above survey, there are only two industries where women join post-delivery or marriages are banking & educational institutions. The graph will clearly show the comfort level of women employees in the industry levels & also the stress what they go through during these phases

Many women don't want to quit their high paying jobs. But due to preference for the child, they do compromise. Few take a call on that & they continue to work to support the family financially & also to be financially independent

Graph 3: Women who quit & continue before & after marriage & childbirth



Psychological problems: Mental health is described by World Health Organisation as —a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Good mental health is essential for the wellbeing of individuals, their families, and the community. Mental, physical and social health is interdependent. (WHO, 2005). People living with mental problems may experience poorer health—placing individuals at an increased risk of chronic disease. The status of women is directly connected with their economic position, which in turn depends on opportunities for participation in socio-economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as one of the main indicators of society's development. The World Health Report (2001) stated that women face so many physical and mental illnesses including behavioural disorders and these are the result of a complex interaction between biological, psychological and social factors. Shift work (those work which is scheduled after the normal daylight hours like 9-5) often create so much stress upon women working in such work schedules. Such shift in day and night work adversely affects working women both physically and mentally. It will also have adverse effects on their concentration, memory, alertness etc.

Table 4: Psychological Problems What Women Employees Go Through

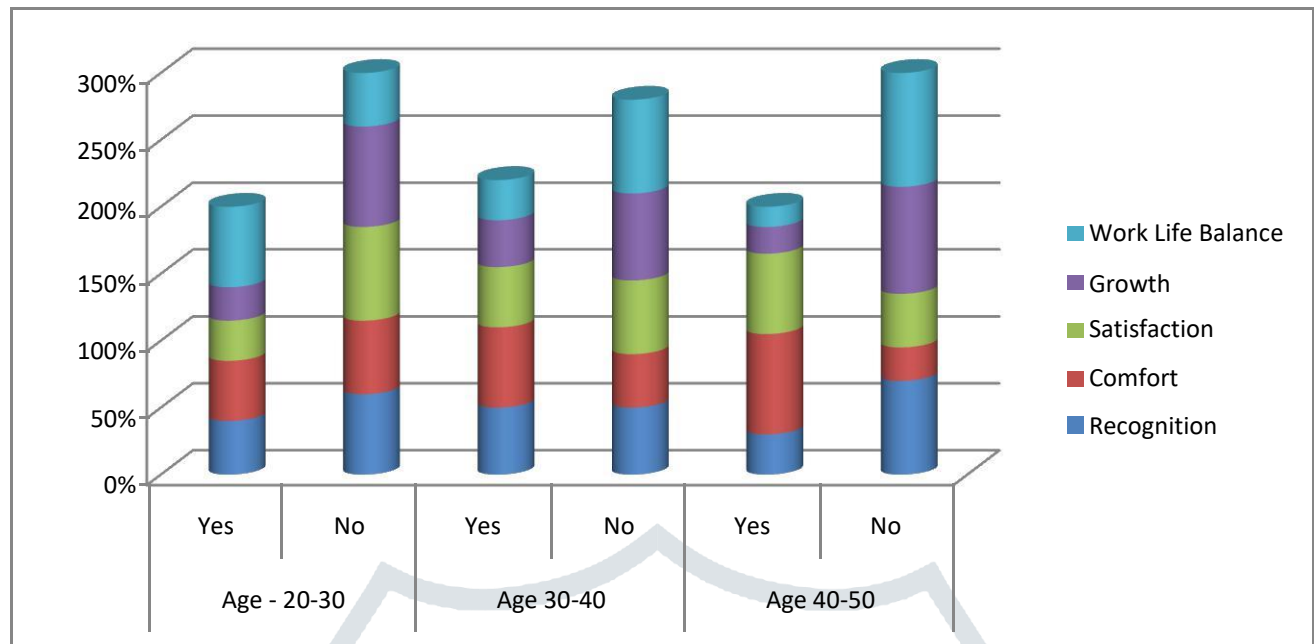
Crisis	Age - 20-30		Age 30-40		Age 40-50	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Recognition	40%	60%	50%	50%	30%	70%
Comfort	45%	55%	60%	40%	75%	25%
Satisfaction	30%	70%	45%	55%	60%	40%
Growth	25%	75%	35%	65%	20%	80%
Work Life Balance	60%	40%	30%	70%	15%	85%

The table clearly explains that every woman needs some amount of emotional comfort which will help them to move on. The one which men cannot do which woman can do is Multi-Tasking. They are clever to manage home & also office very professionally. They take the role of Daughter, Wife, Daughter-in-law, Mother, Sister, Sister-In-Law. They do all these roles with at most sincerity & they do it with lot of ownership. For Working Professional, they take up all the roles in the management like Boss, Executive, Manager, Security, Staff, House-Keeping, Front-Desk etc..., All the expect from men is recognition & respect. They do not mind doing more work. But all they expect is taking them into consideration.

When it comes to recognition women at the age of 40-50 are missing it badly. The responsibilities have increased from the time. They hold so many responsibilities at home & also at office. Their work life balance is also very less as they spend more time in kitchen & also house related jobs. At this point, they do not see any growth. But they are comfortable at their space & satisfied with what they are contributing to the family & organization

For the women who are ranging from 30-40, they are fairly fine with recognition. They are still in the process of growing in the organization. But their growth is fairly depends on how they project themselves in the work. Few industries have the practice of transferring their job from one location to other due to their experience & knowledge. Few women take up the responsibilities but many don't as they cannot leave the family especially their children. Few take up the call consulting with their family & do. They also have a fairly decent comfort but they lack in the satisfaction.

Women who are ranging at the age of 20-30 are slightly dwelling in a profitable position. Few in this crowd are yet to get married, few were newly married & few were recent mothers or in the process of motherhood. Since they are in the early 30s, they expect more recognition & comfort from the organization. Woman, who are ranging from 20-25, were unmarried & were ready to take up any challenges which were pertaining to the work, they were very happy to take things forward. They wanted to explore many things before marriage thus it gives them at most satisfaction of achieving something in the work front. They have a better work life balance compared to others & they enjoy this phase. But woman who are ranging from 25-30 were the one to compromise as they would be newly married or attaining motherhood or become a mother. Here they start the process of getting the actual stress of managing many things.

Graph 4: Psychological Problems What Women Employees Go Through

Working women face many problems related to health, psychology and family in association with their time allocation. It is true that with tight time schedule in between market work and domestic work, majority of working women even after realizing the significance of regular exercises can't do it due to lack of time. Another significant health problem faced by Indian women is associated with their life styles and we beautifully called it as life style diseases. Interview conducted with the working women revealed that after doing all domestic work including preparation of food and feeding young children, preparing them for school, they themselves doesn't gain enough time to take nutritious diet daily. Majority working women point out that they skip their breakfast. One sad reality found in the interview is that now too working women face lack of family support as one main problem in participating in income earning activities outside and this problem is mostly felt by those working women belongs to agriculture related activities, elementary occupations etc

Table 5: For Better Mental Health which Working Women Needs To Follow

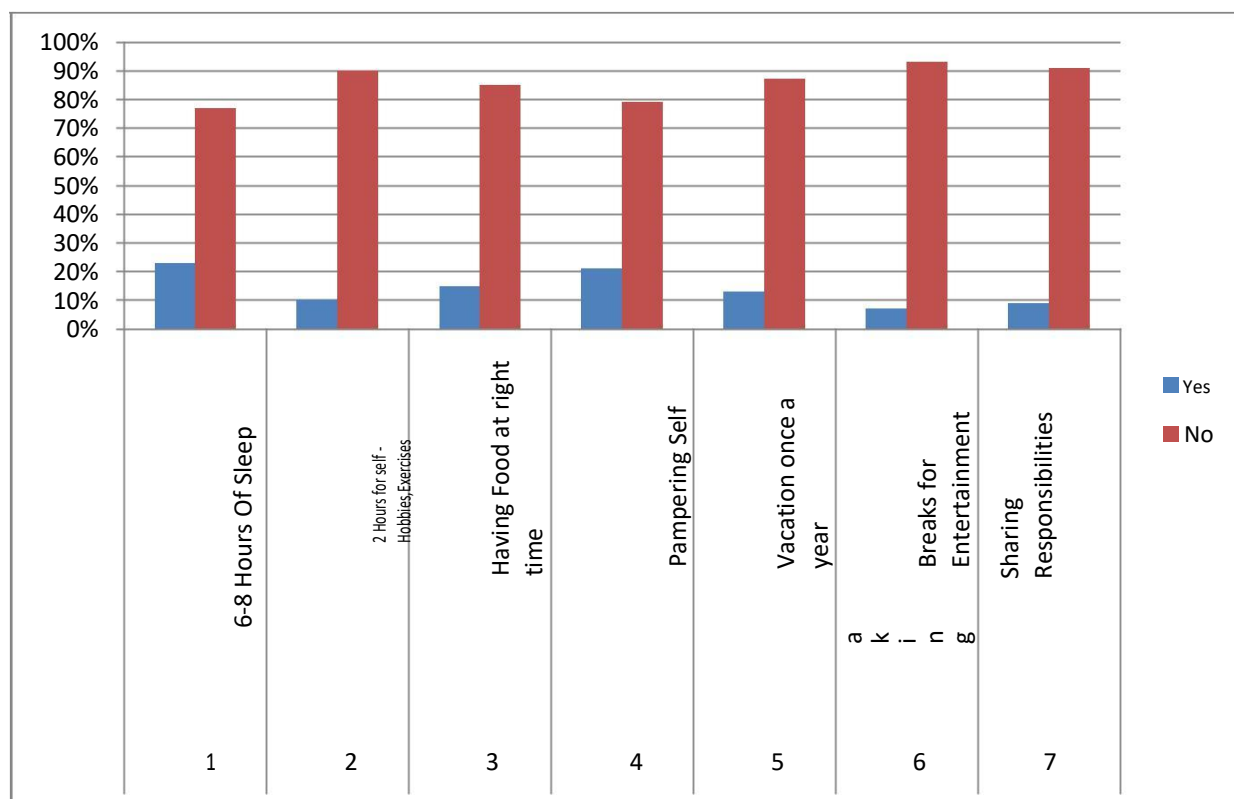
Sno	Work Life Balance Traits	Yes	No
1	6-8 Hours Of Sleep	23%	77%
2	2 Hours for self - Hobbies, Exercises	10%	90%
3	Having Food at right time	15%	85%
4	Pampering Self	21%	79%
5	Vacation once a year	13%	87%
6	Taking Breaks for Entertainment	7%	93%
7	Sharing Responsibilities	9%	91%

The above table represents the essentials which a women needs to consider. Not everything but the basic seven traits are taken into consideration. The survey was taken in one of the best IT Company where nearly 150 women employees were taken into the survey. Initially they were hesitant but then they opened up. The survey was taken from all the levels in the

management. Starting from the entry level management to the senior level management, though the levels change, the crisis is the same.

In IT companies, the women are paid well & have a better stake in the organization. When they are in a position to handle more responsibilities at office & home, still they fail to take care of themselves.

Graph 5: Responses From IT Working Women



The graph clearly shows that women are not so happy with the way things are going on. Still, if we see most of the women undergo the same level of issues when it comes to balancing the work life & personal life. They are expected to do at office & also at home. Many burst out due to the pressure. It goes above the break-even point.

World over there are several studies indicative of 21st Century working women at a threshold of work-life challenge leading to inefficiency and rising cost for the employers.

A particular study last year, in fact, put the Indian Working Woman at the highest risk of stress, raising an alarm bell among the corporate sector which is increasingly trying to hire more women for good diversity. According to the Nielsen survey on 6500 women from 21 countries, 87% of the Indian women felt stressed most of the time, and 82% had no time to relax. Ironically the survey points a finger at Indian companies and workplaces for creating such condition.

Suggestions:

- Ideally spend some quality time for self thus it gives them some positive energy
- Share some responsibilities with husband & also to children, if they are in the process of growing up
- Learning the ART OF SAYING NO. Cannot do everything always.
- Sharing the work at office & delegating the tasks effectively
- Having minimum 6-7 hours of sleep daily
- Having helpers at home for cleaning & cooking thus it saves some quality time
- Preferring joint family system which will help in many ways. But that needs lots of adjustments
- Projecting & Branding well in the organization which is the need of the hour. Until it is not done, the work will not be noticed by the management
- Taking small breaks whenever possible
- Having a proper planning & prioritization of tasks are also equally important.

Conclusion: To conclude, every woman go through these phases. It is common for all the industries, departments & also sectors. Women may have to take the proactive steps & make things work. The stress will lead them to multiple issues which will take them for a toss. Work is important & family is equally important. More than that —CARING SELF is even more important. By compromising on that achieving will not be possible. In the organization front branding & projecting is very important. It will help in avoiding more stress for working women.

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