

GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF WORKPLACE STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN IN SIKAR DISTRICT, RAJASTHAN, INDIA

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Abstract: *Women in India have demonstrated exceptional capabilities in the workforce, achieving success despite significant struggles and the pursuit of freedom within a traditional social framework. Despite their evolving roles, working women continue to uphold traditional household responsibilities. This research seeks to identify the root causes of the challenges faced by working women and aims to find practical solutions that have been successfully implemented in other contexts and can be adopted more broadly. The study focuses on examining the stress experienced by working women, identifying various factors contributing to this stress. To uncover the realities, both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed, with questionnaires distributed to 100 working women. The participants include doctors, professors, teachers, bankers, laborers, engineers, administrative officers, police officers, politicians, advocates, and nurses.*

Key words: Stress, Working Women, Modern Life, Socio-Economic Complexity, Negative Perceptions.

Introduction

Stress is a natural and adaptive response that individuals experience when they perceive challenges or threats to their well-being. In today's world, stress has become pervasive, exacerbated by the complexities of modern life and the evolving dynamics within organizations. Factors such as urbanization, industrialization, and the expansion of business operations contribute significantly to heightened stress levels among individuals. Despite its negative connotations, stress can also serve as a motivator, prompting individuals to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. In the field of health psychology, stress is broadly defined as a spectrum of negative perceptions and responses that arise when pressures exceed an individual's ability to cope effectively. This includes feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, and physical manifestations of stress such as increased heart rate or muscle tension. Understanding the causes and effects of stress is crucial, as prolonged exposure can lead to detrimental health outcomes and reduced overall well-being. As organizations grow more complex, the management of stress becomes increasingly vital. Recognizing and addressing stress factors within the workplace not only enhances employee satisfaction and productivity but also contributes to a healthier organizational culture. This study focuses on examining the geographical aspects of stress among women employees in Sikar District, Rajasthan, India, shedding light on how socio-economic factors influence stress levels and exploring strategies to mitigate its impact effectively.

Study Area

The district is located in the north eastern Rajasthan between 27° 21' to 28° 12' north latitudes and 74° 44' to 75° 25' east longitudes. It is bounded by Churu and Jhunjhunu districts in the north, by Jaipur district in the east, by Nagaur and Jaipur districts in the south and in the west by Churu and Nagaur districts of Rajasthan. Sikar is situated midway between Bikaner and Jaipur on national highway number 11. Sikar is in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan. There is still no broad-gauge railway track in the district. It is connected through meter gauge to Delhi, Jaipur, Rewari, Bikaner, Sri Ganganagar, Churu, and Jhunjhunu. The district is divided in six administrative tehsils viz. Sikar, Fatehpur, Laxmangarh, Neem Ka Thana, Danta Ramgarh, and Sri Madhopur.

Objective

- The main aim of the study was to examine for factors that are responsible for generating entrepreneurial role stress among women those who are working.
- To identify impact of stress on job performance of working women.
- To suggest the techniques to manage the stress and reducing managerial problems.
- To Measure action taken by the working women for relieving stress in the organization.

Methodology

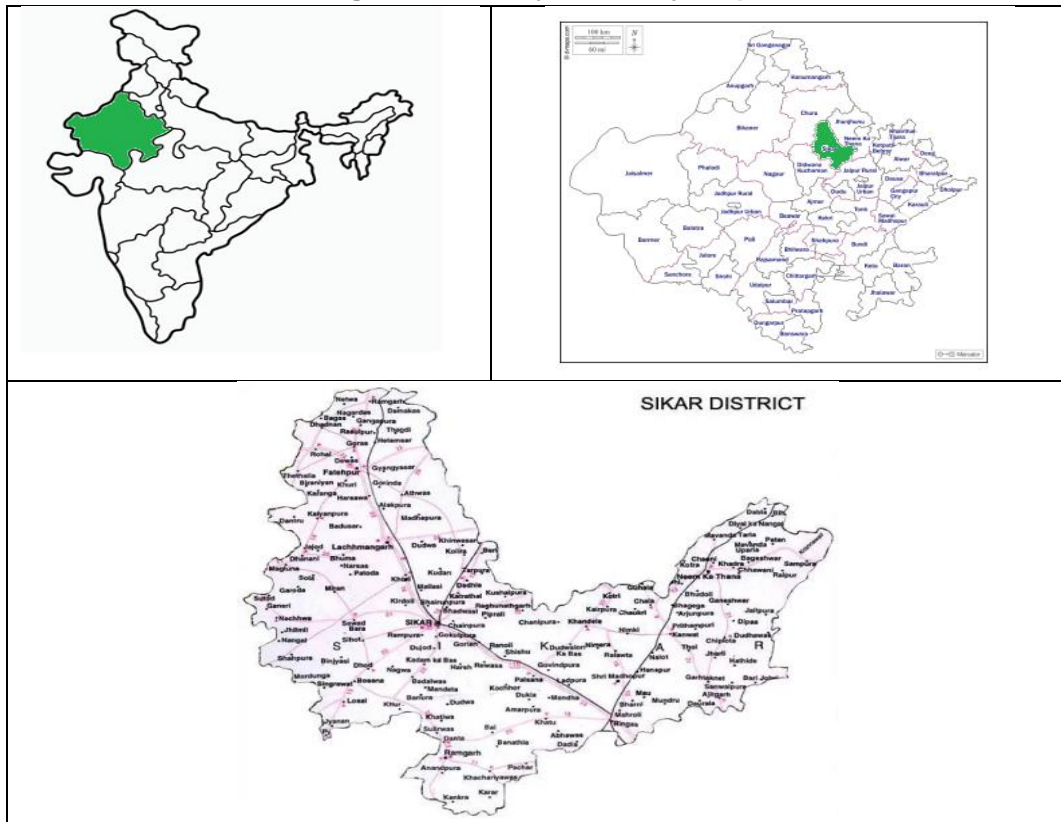
The research made use of primary data, which was collected using structured questionnaire distributed to the 100 respondents. The questionnaire had both open-ended questions to enable guide the respondent through filling of the questionnaire as well as probe them for more information. The data collection method used in this research is questionnaire method. Here the data are systematically recorded from the respondents

In this research, the sampling methods used are Random sampling, Convenience sampling.

- Random sampling is the purest form of probability sampling. Each member of the population has an equal and known chance of being selected. When there are very large populations, it is often difficult or impossible to identify every member of the population, so the pool of available subjects becomes biased.
- Judgment sampling is a common non-probability method. The researcher selects the sample based on judgment. This is usually an extension of convenience sampling. For

example, a researcher may decide to draw the entire sample from one "representative" city, even though the population includes all cities. When using this method, the researcher must be confident that the chosen sample is truly representative of the entire population.

Figure 01: Study Area Key Map



Significance of the Proposed Research Study

The proposed research study holds significant importance as it investigates the impact of stress levels on the performance of female employees in the workplace. This research aims to benefit both institutions and female employees by identifying effective strategies to alleviate stress, thereby enhancing work performance and achieving higher levels of proficiency. By raising awareness about stress management among female employees, the study also contributes to organizational strategies aimed at developing interventions tailored to effectively mitigate workplace stress.

Stress - A Challenging Concept for Scientists

The term "stress" is often considered inadequate for scientific purposes due to its highly subjective nature, which makes it difficult to define and measure. The concept of "stress" as we understand it today was introduced by Hans Selye in 1936, who described it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change." In numerous experiments, Selye observed that laboratory animals subjected to various acute physical and emotional stressors—such as blaring light, deafening noise, extreme temperatures, and constant frustration—exhibited similar pathological changes, including stomach ulcers, lymphoid tissue shrinkage, and adrenal gland enlargement. Selye further demonstrated that chronic stress could lead to the development of diseases in these animals akin to those seen in humans, such as heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, and rheumatoid arthritis. At the time, the prevailing belief was that most diseases were caused by specific pathogens—tuberculosis by the tubercle bacillus, anthrax by the anthrax bacillus, syphilis by a spirochete, etc. Selye's

groundbreaking proposal was the opposite: he suggested that various stressors could lead to the same disease outcomes, not only in animals but also in humans.

Sources of Stress

Currently, stress is the foremost issue for working women, escalating daily due to globalization and the global economic crisis. Stress triggers the fight-or-flight response in the brain, causing the release of stress hormones into the bloodstream. This results in an accelerated heart rate, narrowed arteries, and increased blood sugar levels. In daily life, we encounter various stressors, including biological, psychological, sociological, and philosophical. Regardless of the type of stressor, the body's response remains consistent (Greenberg, 1990). Hans Selye (1976), in his classic book "The Stress of Life," outlined stress reactivity as a three-phase process called the General Adaptation Syndrome:

Phase 1: Alarm Reaction: The body exhibits change characteristic of initial exposure to a stressor, diminishing resistance. If the stressor is intense enough (e.g., severe burns), it may result in death.

Phase 2: Stage of Resistance: If exposure to the stressor continues and adaptation is possible, the body's signs of alarm reaction diminish, and resistance increases beyond normal levels.

Phase 3: Stage of Exhaustion: Prolonged exposure to the stressor eventually depletes the body's adaptation energy. The symptoms of the alarm reaction reappear but become irreversible, leading to the individual's death.

Types of Stress Among Women

1. **Acute Stress:** Acute stress is your body's immediate reaction to a new challenge, event, or demand, triggering the fight-or-flight response. Examples include a near-miss automobile accident, an argument with a family member, or a costly mistake at work. Isolated episodes of acute stress typically do not have lingering health effects. In fact, these situations can be beneficial, as they help your body and brain practice responding to future stress.
2. **Chronic Stress:** When acute stress is not resolved and persists or increases over time, it becomes chronic stress. Chronic stress can seriously harm your health, potentially contributing to diseases or conditions like heart disease, cancer, lung disease, accidents, and cirrhosis of the liver.
3. **Emotional Stress:** Emotional stress can be particularly intense, often more so than other types of stress. Effective strategies to manage emotional stress involve processing, diffusing, and building resilience to cope with such challenges.
4. **Time Stress:** This type of stress arises from worries about time or the lack thereof. Concerns about the number of tasks to complete and fears of not achieving important goals can lead to feelings of being trapped, unhappy, or hopeless. Time stress is common in many aspects of life.
5. **Situational Stress:** Situational stress occurs in unexpected, frightening situations over which one has no control. This type of stress is sudden and unanticipated, often catching individuals off guard.

Consequences and Symptoms of Stress

Stress, as previously mentioned, is a reaction to external events that brings about changes in our responses and behaviors. Recognizing when stress levels become unmanageable is crucial. Stress affects the mind, body, and behavior in diverse ways, and its impact varies from person to person. The stress response, known as the fight or flight response and initially described by Cannon in 1918, involves physiological and emotional changes triggered by stress hormones in reaction to specific stressors or events. Stress associated with positive events can help us respond effectively during challenging times and enhance performance or

efficiency in normal circumstances. Conversely, distress can hinder performance, contribute to health issues, increase anxiety and depression, and reduce overall efficiency (Selye, 1976). The presence of stress can be divided into three different categories:

- i) Physiological,
- ii) Behavioural and
- iii) Psychological.

Workplace Stress and Working Women

"Workplace stress" refers to the emotional response individuals may experience when faced with job demands and pressures that exceed their capabilities and challenge their ability to cope. It is characterized by feelings of nervousness, tension, and strain related to work factors. Job stress affects both men and women, although certain gender differences exist. A 2005 report highlighted higher odds of cumulative job stress associated with poor mental health conditions—such as anxiety, depression, and chronic fatigue—among women (1.4 to 7.1) compared to men (1.8 to 4.6). Women generally experience more physical symptoms of stress, including fatigue, irritability, headaches, and depression. They are also more likely to adopt unhealthy coping behaviors, such as poor eating habits for working women, caregiving responsibilities and the challenge of balancing work and life are significant stressors. Over half of caregivers in the United States are women, with 59 percent also employed. Women often bear primary responsibility for children, including those with chronic illnesses like asthma, which leads to school absences and impacts workplace productivity. Many working women who are caregivers face adjustments in their jobs, such as reduced hours, leaves of absence, or quitting altogether, according to a report by The National Alliance for Caregiving. Women are more than twice as likely as men to value employer-provided support systems offering counselling or support groups. Despite decades of progress in the workforce, women report feeling undervalued compared to men, particularly regarding salaries and opportunities for advancement, as noted in a recent APA survey on Workplace Stress. This disparity contributes to chronic work stress, which affects over one-third of Americans, with women increasingly feeling its impact.

Age Group Distribution of Working Women

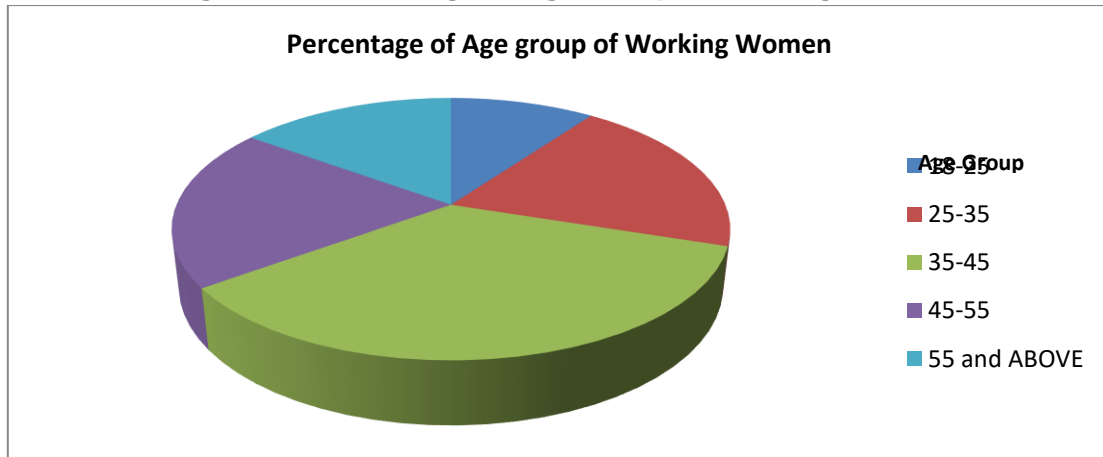
The following table presents the age distribution of working women categorized into five groups for better analysis. The largest age group in this study is between 35 to 45 years. Conversely, the smallest group comprises women aged 18 to 25 years, with a total of only 10 individuals. Typically, these younger women are self-employed, such as maids working in various households. Additionally, we have included a category for women aged 55 years and older, constituting 15 percent of the total sample.

Table 01: Age Group of Working Women

#	Age Group	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	18-25	10	10
2	25-35	20	20
3	35-45	35	35
4	45-55	20	20
5	55 and above	15	15
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 01: Percentage of Age Group of Working Women



Marital Status of Working Women

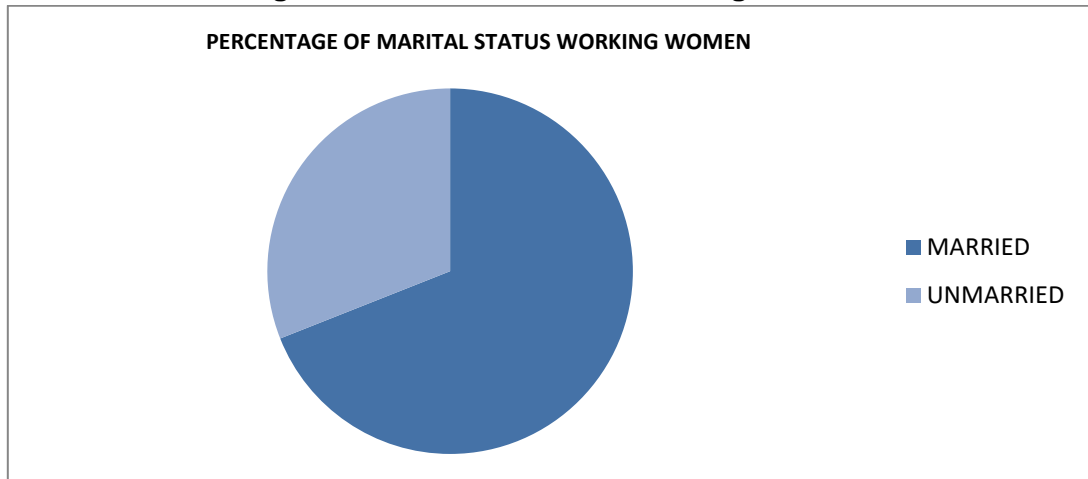
The following table illustrates the marital status of working women in this study. The largest category of working women is married, comprising 69 percent of the sample. Conversely, unmarried women constitute 31 percent of the total.

Table 02: Marital Status of Working Women

#	Marital Status	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	Married	69	69
2	Unmarried	31	31
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 02: Marital Status of Working Women



Family Type of Working Women

The following table provides insights into the family structures of working women in this study. Among the participants, 67 percent reside in nuclear families, while 33 percent live in joint families. Living in a **nuclear family** typically means that the woman and her immediate family members—such as spouse and children—reside independently, often in their own household. This arrangement can offer greater privacy and autonomy but may also entail increased responsibilities in managing household affairs and childcare without extended family support. Conversely, residing in a **joint family** involves sharing a home with extended family members, including parents, siblings, and sometimes grandparents or other relatives. This setup can provide emotional support, shared responsibilities, and a sense of community, but may also

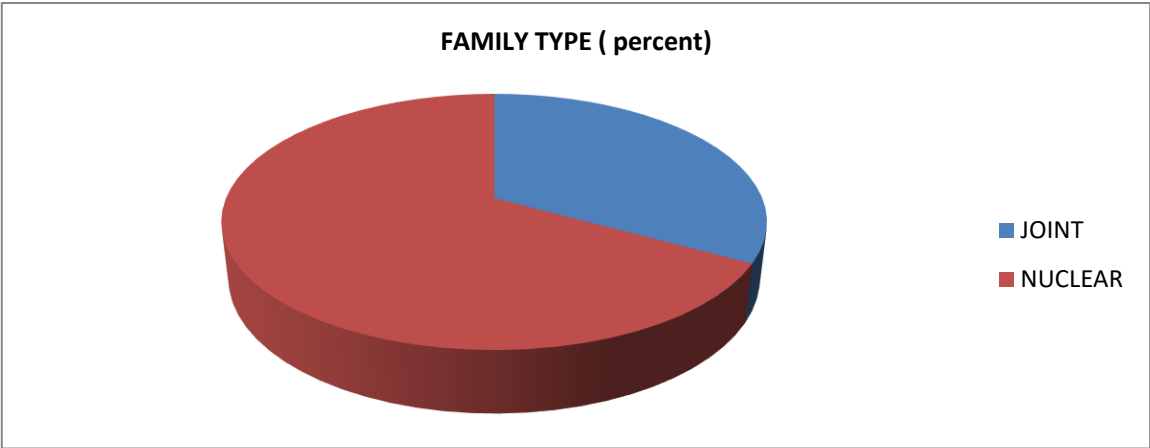
involve navigating interpersonal dynamics and collective decision-making processes. Understanding these family dynamics is crucial for assessing how they may impact a woman's work-life balance, stress levels, and overall well-being.

Table 03: Family Type of Working Women

#	Marital Status	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	Joint	33	33
2	Nuclear	67	67
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 03: Family Type of Working Women in Percent



Job Experience of Working Women

The table above provides information on the job experience of working women, categorized into four distinct groups for analysis. The highest proportion of women falls within the 10-15 years category, indicating significant tenure in their respective roles. Conversely, the smallest group consists of women with 0-5 years of experience, likely representing those newer to the workforce or recently employed in their current positions.

10-15 years of experience: Women in this category have accumulated a substantial amount of time in their professions, suggesting they have likely navigated various career milestones and acquired valuable skills and expertise.

0-5 years of experience: These women are at the beginning stages of their careers or have recently entered the workforce. They may still be establishing themselves in their roles, gaining experience, and developing their professional networks.

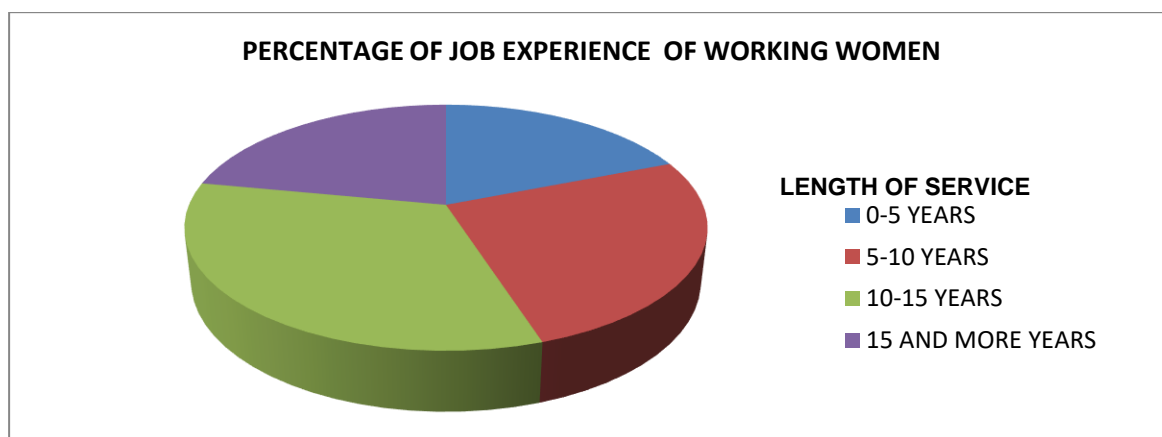
Understanding the distribution of job experience among working women helps assess career progression, retention rates, and the potential impact of experience on job satisfaction and performance.

Table 04: Job Experience of Working Women

#	Length of Service (Years)	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	0-5 Y	19	19
2	5-10	26	26
3	10-15	33	33
4	15 and More Years	22	22
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 04: Percentage of Job Experience of Working Women



Educational Qualification of Working Women

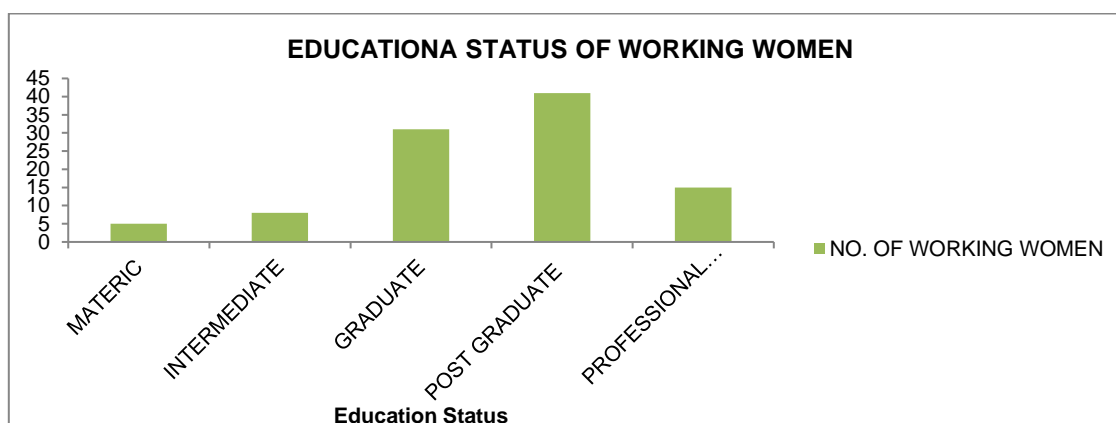
The following table shows the educational qualification of working women. For better result we have classified five categories of educational status. The maximum number of working women are postgraduate and the minimum number is metric.

Table 05: Educational Qualification of Working Women

#	Education Status	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	Matric	5	5
2	Intermediate	8	8
3	Graduate	31	31
4	Post Graduate	41	41
5	Professional Course	15	15
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 05: Education Status of Working Women



Nature of Job of Working Women

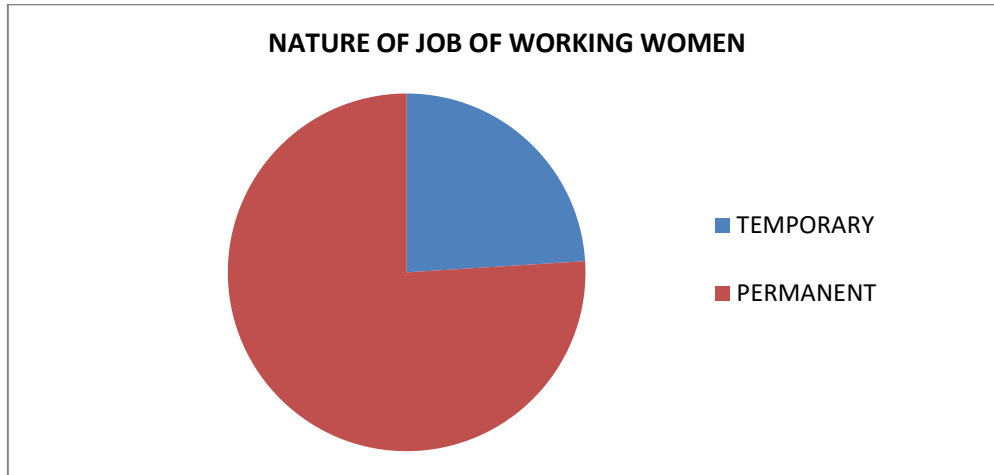
The data presented indicates that most working women are engaged in permanent positions, while a smaller percentage hold temporary jobs. This suggests a predominant trend towards stable, long-term employment among women in the workforce.

Table 06: Nature of Job of Working Women

#	Nature of Job	No. of Working Women	Percentage
1	Temporary	24	24
2	Permanent	76	76
Total		100	100

Source: Based on Field Survey Dec., 2023

Figure 05: Nature of Job of Working Women



Conclusion

Workplace stress has become a pervasive issue in the modern era. It is primarily caused by factors such as excessive workloads, time constraints, insufficient recognition and rewards, and most critically, a lack of autonomy in performing tasks. Organizations need to adopt a different approach to managing their workforce, focusing on improving the physical work environment, fostering a culture of respect, and acknowledging the contributions of employees. Enhancing the psychological well-being and health of employees not only boosts organizational productivity and revenue but also promotes employee retention. As the saying goes, "A Healthy Employee is a Productive Employee."

Employee

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