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Exploring Challenges for Women in Mumbai's IT Sector: Insights from Demographic Perspectives

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Abstract:

The gender disparity in Mumbai's IT workforce is a pressing issue that needs to be addressed. By analyzing cultural norms, organizational practices, and individual experiences. Overcoming these challenges will not only advance gender equality but also maximize the sector's potential for innovation and economic prosperity. The researcher conducted a mixed-methods approach to analyze the challenges faced by women working in Mumbai's IT sector and propose strategies for promoting gender equality. While quantitative research was used to test hypotheses and examine relationships, the questionnaire consisted of 16 questions, including demographic and challenge-related questions. And the demographic profile served as the independent variable. Bar charts and ANOVA were used for data analysis. The study reveals that age, marital status, education level, employment status, years of experience, and job title all play significant roles in shaping these challenges. While gender stereotypes do not show statistical significance across different age groups, there are intriguing trends that warrant further exploration. Marital status has a notable impact on perceived challenges related to gender issues and organizational support. On the other hand, work-life balance challenges are not notably affected by marital status. Education level influences challenges related to gender issues and organizational support, but has less impact on unequal pay and gender stereotypes. But it has less influence on gender bias, organizational culture, and gender stereotypes. Years of experience within the IT industry also shape perceived challenges, with unequal pay becoming a more significant concern as tenure increases. These findings provide valuable insights for organizations and policymakers aiming to address gender-related challenges and create inclusive environments for women employees in Mumbai's IT industry.

Keywords: *Gender disparity, IT workforce, Cultural norms, Organizational practices, Work-life balance*

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the information technology (IT) sector has emerged as a cornerstone of the modern economy, driving innovation, economic growth, and social progress. However, despite significant progress, gender disparities remain in this dynamic industry, posing major challenges to the full participation and development of female professionals. This study aims to highlight the diverse hurdles faced by women in the IT sector by focusing on the city of Mumbai, a vibrant hub of innovation and economic activity. The underrepresentation of women in the IT workforce is a well-documented

phenomenon that reflects systemic barriers that prevent women from entering, retaining, and advancing in the Information technology sector. Although efforts to promote gender diversity and inclusion have increased in recent years, the persistence of gender-based barriers highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by women professionals.

The city of Mumbai provides an attractive backdrop for this study as a hub for corporate headquarters, start-ups, and technology. Mumbai, India's financial capital has a robust IT ecosystem characterized by a mix of multinationals, domestic companies, and a burgeoning startup culture. However, the gender disparity within the city's IT workforce remains significant, raising serious questions about the factors contributing to this inequality. This study takes a comprehensive approach to investigate the barriers faced by women professionals in her IT sector in Mumbai. Researcher combines quantitative data analysis, qualitative interviews, and literature reviews to uncover the intersecting factors that shape the career trajectories of women in this field, from cultural norms and organizational practices to individual experiences. Researcher aim to do so. By analyzing these challenges, this study aims to provide evidence-based interventions and policy recommendations aimed at fostering a more inclusive and equitable IT workforce in the city of Mumbai. Researcher aiming for ultimately, collective efforts to overcome these hurdles will not only advance gender equality but also maximize the IT sector's potential as a driver of innovation and economic prosperity.

2. Importance of the Study

This study highlights the unique challenges faced by women in the IT industry in Mumbai, enabling targeted interventions. Identifying factors that contribute to workplace challenges can help develop tailored strategies to promote inclusivity and gender equality. Understanding the impact on career trajectories and job satisfaction helps create supportive environments for women's professional development. Developing strategies to address challenges can help industry stakeholders create a more equitable and diverse workforce, leading to improved organizational performance and social progress. The study promotes gender equality in the IT sector, aligning with societal goals of reducing gender disparities and fostering inclusive economic growth.

3. Problem Statement

Despite notable advancements, women within Mumbai's IT sector encounter formidable impediments hampering their professional progression and job satisfaction. Understanding the intricacies underlying these challenges is imperative to cultivate an environment inclusive of all genders. This study aims to delve into the nuanced factors contributing to these obstacles and their broader impact on industry-wide gender parity and individual career trajectories. Effectively addressing these challenges is paramount in fostering diversity and ensuring equitable opportunities for women within the IT domain.

4. Challenges Women Facing in IT Sector

Women in the information technology (IT) industry face a variety of challenges that hinder career advancement and contribute to gender inequality within the industry. Women are significantly underrepresented in the IT workforce, particularly in technical roles such as software development and engineering. This underrepresentation starts from educational institutions and persists throughout their careers, leading to a lack of diversity within IT teams. Gender bias and stereotypes create hostile work environments where women may face discrimination, micro aggressions, and unconscious bias. This can manifest in hiring practices, performance evaluations, and opportunities for advancement, contributing to feelings of isolation and imposter syndrome among women professionals. The demanding

nature of IT roles, characterized by long hours, tight deadlines, and on-call responsibilities, can pose significant challenges for women balancing career aspirations with family responsibilities. The lack of supportive policies, such as flexible working hours and parental leave, exacerbates this issue. Despite making initial inroads into entry-level positions, women often encounter barriers when seeking advancement to leadership roles within IT organizations. The "glass ceiling" phenomenon reflects systemic barriers, including limited access to mentorship, sponsorship, and opportunities for leadership development. The scarcity of female role models and mentors within the IT sector deprives women of critical support networks and professional guidance. This absence of representation can undermine confidence and aspirations among women professionals, hindering their career progression. Some IT workplaces foster a culture of competitiveness, aggressiveness, and hyper-masculinity, which may alienate women and perpetuate a hostile work environment. Instances of harassment, sexism, and exclusion further compound the challenges faced by women in IT.

Women may encounter barriers to acquiring the technical skills and expertise necessary for career advancement within the IT sector. Limited access to training programs, professional development opportunities, and networking events can perpetuate the skills gap between male and female professionals. Gender pay gaps persist within the IT sector, with women often earning less than their male counterparts for comparable roles and levels of experience. This disparity reflects both overt discrimination and systemic factors, such as negotiation biases and inequitable salary structures.

5. Review of Literature

In the study conducted by Monika Jindal (2016), that yielded significant findings pertaining to the work-life balance of women in the workforce. Her research suggested that women who earn higher salaries exhibit a greater ability to effectively manage their work and personal lives in comparison to their counterparts with lower incomes. The rationale behind this phenomenon, as elucidated by Jindal's study, lies in the fact that women with higher incomes have the means to support their domestic responsibilities more effortlessly, thereby reducing the stressors associated with juggling professional and personal roles. In essence, the study underscores the crucial role that income plays in shaping the work-life equilibrium for women, with higher earnings equating to a more harmonious blend of their professional and personal spheres, thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

In their scholarly endeavors, Minitha V Raj and A Mahalakshmi (2016) conducted a comprehensive investigation focused on identifying the various factors contributing to stress among women employed in the IT industry in Bangalore, India. The study's findings illuminated a significant aspect of the work environment in this industry, specifically related to the impact of stress on working women. One key revelation from their research was that the relaxation activities introduced by IT companies in Bangalore, ostensibly aimed at mitigating the stress experienced by female employees, were not effectively achieving their intended goals. This observation prompted an exploration into the root causes of stress in this context. The study's outcomes shed light on a prominent factor contributing to the stress experienced by these working women, namely, the irregular and often unpredictable working hours within the IT industry. This irregularity in work hours was found to disrupt the sleeping patterns of women, resulting in inadequate and poor-quality rest. Furthermore, the absence of fixed working hours also posed challenges in

terms of time management, making it increasingly difficult for women to strike a satisfactory balance between their personal and professional lives.

Dr. Payal Mahida & Ms. Suchita Chauhan (2023) observed that Indian women professionals were undeniably rising, serving as trailblazers for future generations by increasingly attaining visibility and notable success in both professional and public realms. Nevertheless, amidst this progress, the issue of work-life balance emerged as a formidable challenge for women employees in the 21st century. This challenge is particularly pronounced due to the multifaceted roles they fulfill at home, leading to a notable overlap between their personal and professional spheres. Attaining work-life balance is paramount for women employees, as the absence of job satisfaction and consistency can engender profound internal dilemmas. The pursuit of this equilibrium necessitates effectively managing both professional duties and personal commitments, thereby mitigating potential conflicts between the two domains. Ultimately, the success of any organization hinges upon the performance of its employees, a facet influenced by a myriad of factors encompassing both personal and professional realms. Thus, the present study delves into the contemporary issue of work-life balance among working women, offering insights into its intricate dynamics and far-reaching implications.

Neha Poddar and Dr. Prakash Divakaran (2020) assessd the ongoing enhancement of women managers' capabilities in effectively navigating the complex issues and obstacles encountered when balancing their careers with family responsibilities. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, this study gathered data from secondary sources such as research journals, books, magazines, and peer-reviewed publications. The investigation identified a myriad of variables influencing the role of women in addressing the diverse challenges associated with balancing career and family commitments. These variables are critical in discerning the key challenges faced by women managers as they strive to manage their dual roles effectively.

Ms. Priyanka & Dr. Khem Chand (2022) found that the female participation in the industry continues to rise, the evolving landscape of advanced technology plays a pivotal role. However, female employees encounter notable challenges amidst this progress, particularly in navigating heightened work stress and technological advancements. Balancing professional commitments with personal responsibilities becomes increasingly arduous for them, especially in light of financial constraints and changing environmental conditions. This review paper aims to comprehensively explore various dimensions of the professional and personal lives of female employees, encompassing aspects such as work stress, work-family conflict, career advancement, and the complexities of managing childcare and family obligations. By examining these multifaceted factors, the researcher endeavors to gain deeper insights into their collective impact on the work performance of female employees within the industry.

Vasumathi (2018) reviewed the literature regarding the work-life balance (WLB) of women employees has been outlined with the primary objective of fostering societal prosperity. WLB emerges as a critical concern for women in contemporary times, as the pervasive culture of extended work hours within organizations encroaches upon the productivity and personal time of female employees, which they ideally seek to allocate to their familial responsibilities. The researcher has meticulously examined the existing literature on

various facets of WLB, including its significance, theoretical frameworks, determinants, facilitators, coping strategies, impact on performance, and resultant consequences. Through a thorough review of diverse sources such as journals, books, doctoral theses, working papers, reports, magazines, and online resources, this article comprehensively explores the multifaceted dimensions of WLB, thereby providing valuable insights for further research and practice in this domain.

6. Objectives of the study

- To analyze and identify the demographic factors contributing to the challenges faced by women working in Mumbai's IT sector
- To Propose Strategies for Addressing the Identified Challenges and Promoting Gender Equality in the IT Industry in Mumbai City

7. Research Methodology

1. Research Design: Types: A mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Exploratory Research: Qualitative researches were studied to Obstacles Confronting Women Professionals in the Information Technology Sector in Mumbai City.

Confirmatory research: Quantitative research was used to test hypotheses and examine relationships.

2. Sampling: Sampling method: Snowfall sampling Technique was used to collect data. Data were collected from 144 respondents.

3. Data Collection:

Qualitative Phase: In-depth interviews focus group discussions, and content analysis.

Variables: Include demographic information, challenges.

Scale: Utilized 7 Pointer Likert scales and closed-ended questions for standardized responses.

4. Questionnaire design: The questionnaire consists of 16 questions, six of which are demographic, social, or economic in nature. The other ten questions assess women's challenges. The questionnaire is divided into 2 parts: demographic profile (Age, Marital Status, Education Level, Employment Status, Years of Experience in the IT Industry, Position/Job Title and the second part identifies the challenges women faces which includes (Gender Bias**,** Unequal Pay**,** Limited Access to Leadership Roles**,** Work-Life Balance **,** Opportunities for Skill Development**,** Supportive Organizational Culture**,** Workplace Discrimination**,** Opportunities for Professional Growth**,** Access to Flexible Work Arrangements**,** Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes).

- **Variables of the Study**

Dependent variables	**Independent variables**
Challenges women faces in IT Sector 1. Gender Bias 2. Unequal Pay 3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles 4. Work-Life Balance 5. Opportunities for Skill Development 6. Supportive Organizational Culture 7. Workplace Discrimination 8. Opportunities for Professional Growth 9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements 10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes	Demographic profile 1. Age 2. Marital Status 3. Education Level 4. Employment Status 5. Years of Experience in the IT Industry 6. Position/Job Title.

5. Research Hypothesis

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_{01})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different age groups.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{11}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different age groups.
2. **Null Hypothesis (H_{02})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different marital status.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{12}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different marital status.
3. **Null Hypothesis (H_{03})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Education Level.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{13}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Education Level.
4. **Null Hypothesis (H_{04})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Employment Status.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{14}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Employment Status.
5. **Null Hypothesis (H_{05})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different **Years of Experience in the IT Industry.**
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{15}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different **Years of Experience in the IT Industry.**
6. **Null Hypothesis (H_{06})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Position/Job Title.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{16}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Position/Job Title.

Limitations of the Study:

- The specific context of Mumbai's IT industry may limit the generalizability of the study's findings. Constraints on data collection, such as sample size and accessibility, may have an impact on how comprehensive the study's insights are.
- Time and resource constraints may limit the scope of analysis and recommendations;
- External factors, such as industry dynamics or economic conditions, may affect the applicability of suggested strategies beyond the study's timeframe and context;
- Difficulties may arise in capturing the full spectrum of women's experiences and perspectives within the industry.
- The study exclusively examined 10 parameter factors that led to identified challenges, with other notable challenges left unexplored. Furthermore, the study

did not delve into further exploration or subdivision, particularly concerning challenges in relation to the demographic profiles of respondents.

- The study focused solely on women in the IT sector, neglecting women employed in other sectors such as banking, insurance, and manufacturing.

8. Data Analysis:

Test applied: Bar chart, ANOVA.

8.1 Analysis and Result

- **The basic details of survey respondents**

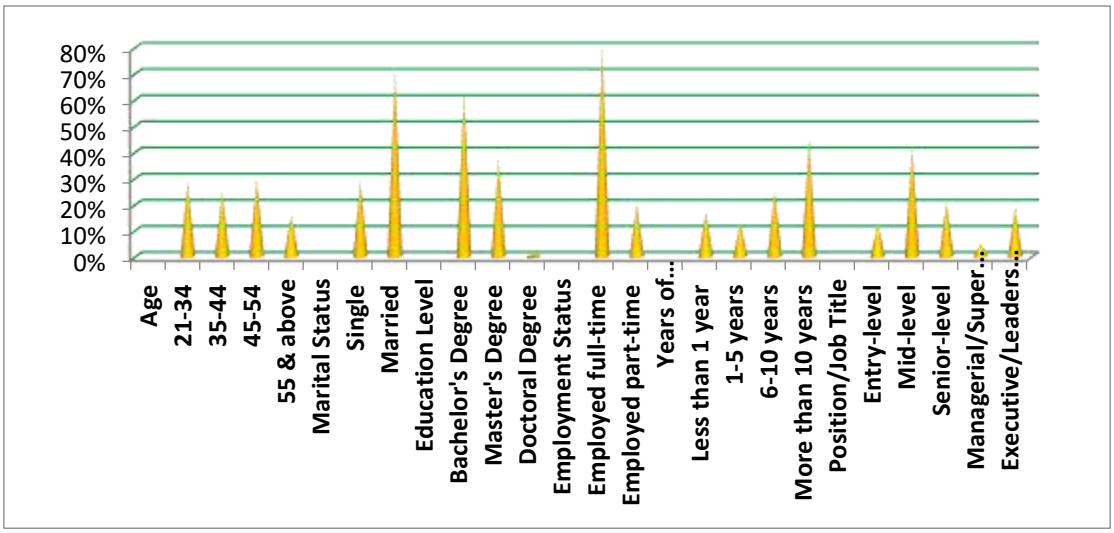

Diagram 1: Demographic composition of the respondents.
(Source: Field Survey)

8.2 Finding based Interpretation:

The demographic profile of female respondents working in the IT sector reveals several noteworthy insights.

- Firstly, a close look at the Diagram 1 shows that the age distribution indicates a diverse representation, with the majority falling within the age range of 21-54 years old. This depict a balanced mix of experienced professionals and those in the early or middle stages of their careers, with a notable proportion aged 55 and above, reflecting the presence of seasoned individuals in the workforce.
- Secondly, marital status indicates that a significant majority of respondents are married, highlighting the potential influence of familial responsibilities and commitments among women in the IT sector.
- Thirdly, the educational attainment of respondents is predominantly at the bachelor's degree level, with a notable minority holding master's degrees. The absence of doctoral degrees suggests potential areas for further academic advancement within the field.
- Fourthly, the vast majority of respondents are employed full-time, indicating a high level of dedication and commitment to their careers in the IT industry.
- Fifthly, regarding years of experience, a considerable proportion of respondents have more than a decade of experience in the IT industry, indicating a wealth of knowledge and expertise among this cohort. However, it's notable that there's a

significant representation of those with less than one year of experience, present a continuous influx of new talent into the sector.

- Finally, in terms of positions or job titles, the distribution is varied, with significant proportions at mid-level and senior-level positions, indicating both upward mobility and opportunities for career advancement within the IT sector.
- Overall, this demographic profile underscores the diversity and depth of experience among female professionals in the IT sector, highlighting both areas of strength and opportunities for further development and advancement.

8.3 Testing of hypothesis

A) Null Hypothesis (H_{01}): There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Age groups.
Alternative Hypothesis (H_{11}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Age groups.

Table 1: Perceived challenges across different Age groups.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	512.683	3	170.894	209.679	.000
	Within Groups	114.919	141	.815		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Between Groups	144.555	3	48.185	238.112	.000
	Within Groups	28.533	141	.202		
	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	97.188	3	32.396	136.509	.000
	Within Groups	33.462	141	.237		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	32.291	3	10.764	28.286	.000
	Within Groups	53.655	141	.381		
	Total	85.946	144			
5 Opportunities for Skill Development Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Between Groups	98.425	3	32.808	67.127	.000
	Within Groups	68.913	141	.489		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	33.592	3	11.197	13.832	.000
	Within Groups	114.142	141	.810		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	24.334	3	8.111	9.407	.000
	Within Groups	121.576	141	.862		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	186.036	3	62.012	149.156	.000
	Within Groups	58.621	141	.416		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements	Between Groups	232.719	3	77.573	147.885	.000
	Within Groups	73.961	141	.525		

Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Total	306.680	144			
10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	5.476	3	1.825	2.656	.051
	Within Groups	96.922	141	.687		
	Total	102.399	144			

Source: *Authors' Compilation*

Interpretation:

- **Gender Bias, Unequal Pay, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Work-Life Balance, Opportunities for Skill Development, Supportive Organizational Culture, Workplace Discrimination, Opportunities for Professional Growth, and Access to Flexible Work Arrangements** For all these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different age groups. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between age and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.
- **Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes:** The p-value for this factor is 0.051, which is marginally above the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude there is no significant relation between age and the perceptions of gender stereotypes. While not meeting the conventional threshold for statistical significance, this result suggests a potential trend towards a difference in perceived challenges across age groups regarding gender stereotypes.

B) Null Hypothesis (H_{02}): There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different marital status.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{12}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different marital status.

Table 2: Perceived challenges across different Marital Status.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	42.022	2	21.011	5.095	.007
	Within Groups	585.580	142	4.124		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Between Groups	8.214	2	4.107	3.537	.032
	Within Groups	164.874	142	1.161		
	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	16.095	2	8.047	9.975	.000
	Within Groups	114.555	142	.807		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	1.946	2	.973	1.645	.197
	Within Groups	84.000	142	.592		
	Total	85.946	144			

5 Opportunities for Skill Development Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Between Groups	28.178	2	14.089	14.377	.000
	Within Groups	139.160	142	.980		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	15.028	2	7.514	8.040	.000
	Within Groups	132.706	142	.935		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	36.498	2	18.249	23.685	.000
	Within Groups	109.412	142	.771		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	136.658	2	68.329	89.840	.000
	Within Groups	108.000	142	.761		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Between Groups	132.932	2	66.466	54.321	.000
	Within Groups	173.748	142	1.224		
	Total	306.680	144			
10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	7.105	2	3.552	5.293	.006
	Within Groups	95.294	142	.671		
	Total	102.399	144			

Source: *Authors' Compilation*

Interpretation:

- **Gender Bias, Unequal Pay, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Opportunities for Skill Development, Supportive Organizational Culture, Workplace Discrimination, Opportunities for Professional Growth, Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, and Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes:** For all these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different marital statuses. Therefore, researcher reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between marital status and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.
- **Work-Life Balance,** the p-value for this factor is 0.197, which is above the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, researcher fail to reject the null hypothesis for this factor, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the perceived challenges related to work-life balance across different marital status.

C) **Null Hypothesis (H_{03})**: There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Education Level.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{13}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Education Level.

Table 3: Perceived challenges across different Education Level

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	34.268	2	17.134	4.101	.019
	Within Groups	593.333	142	4.178		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Between Groups	2.688	2	1.344	1.120	.329
	Within Groups	170.400	142	1.200		
	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	89.049	2	44.525	151.983	.000
	Within Groups	41.600	142	.293		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	28.613	2	14.307	35.434	.000
	Within Groups	57.333	142	.404		
	Total	85.946	144			
5 Opportunities for Skill Development Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Between Groups	24.938	2	12.469	12.434	.000
	Within Groups	142.400	142	1.003		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	10.134	2	5.067	5.229	.006
	Within Groups	137.600	142	.969		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	35.510	2	17.755	22.837	.000
	Within Groups	110.400	142	.777		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	152.658	2	76.329	117.812	.000
	Within Groups	92.000	142	.648		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Between Groups	210.947	2	105.473	156.447	.000
	Within Groups	95.733	142	.674		
	Total	306.680	144			
10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	3.999	2	1.999	2.885	.059
	Within Groups	98.400	142	.693		
	Total	102.399	144			

Source: *Authors' Compilation*

Interpretation:

- Gender Bias, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Work-Life Balance, Opportunities for Skill Development, Supportive Organizational Culture, Workplace Discrimination, Opportunities for Professional Growth, and Access to Flexible Work Arrangements: For these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different education levels. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between education level and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.

- Unequal Pay and Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes, for these factors, the p-values are above the significance threshold of 0.05 (0.329 and 0.059 respectively). Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for these factors, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the perceived challenges related to unequal pay and gender stereotypes across different education levels.

D) Null Hypothesis (H_{04}): There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Employment Status.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{14}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Employment Status.

Table 4: Perceived challenges across different Employment Status

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	7.770	2	3.885	.890	.413
	Within Groups	619.832	142	4.365		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Between Groups	52.204	2	26.102	30.661	.000
	Within Groups	120.884	142	.851		
	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	63.449	2	31.725	67.037	.000
	Within Groups	67.200	142	.473		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	39.841	2	19.921	61.354	.000
	Within Groups	46.105	142	.325		
	Total	85.946	144			
5 Opportunities for Skill Development Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Between Groups	27.380	2	13.690	13.890	.000
	Within Groups	139.958	142	.986		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	4.745	2	2.372	2.356	.099
	Within Groups	142.989	142	1.007		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	35.005	2	17.502	22.410	.000
	Within Groups	110.905	142	.781		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	112.658	2	56.329	60.596	.000
	Within Groups	132.000	142	.930		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Between Groups	148.533	2	74.266	66.684	.000
	Within Groups	158.147	142	1.114		
	Total	306.680	144			

10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	3.494	2	1.747	2.508	.085
	Within Groups	98.905	142	.697		
	Total	102.399	144			

***(Source:** Authors' Compilation)*

Interpretation:

- **Unequal Pay, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Work-Life Balance, and Opportunities for Skill Development, Workplace Discrimination, and Opportunities for Professional Growth, and Access to Flexible Work Arrangements:** For these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different employment statuses. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between employment status and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.
- **Gender Bias and Supportive Organizational Culture:** For these factors, the p-values are above the significance threshold of 0.05 (0.413 and 0.099 respectively).Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for these factors, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the perceived challenges related to gender bias and organizational culture across different employment statuses.
- **Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes:** The p-value for this factor is 0.085, which is marginally above the significance threshold of 0.05. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for this factor, suggesting that there is no significant difference in the perceived challenges related to gender stereotypes across different employment statuses.

E) Null Hypothesis (H_{05}): There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different **Years of Experience in the IT Industry.**

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{15}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different **Years of Experience in the IT Industry.**

Table 5: Perceived challenges across different **Years of Experience in the IT Industry**

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	505.147	4	126.287	144.381	.000
	Within Groups	122.455	140	.875		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Between Groups	11.633	4	2.908	2.522	.044
	Within Groups	161.455	140	1.153		
	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	81.195	4	20.299	57.463	.000
	Within Groups	49.455	140	.353		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	15.856	4	3.964	7.918	.000
	Within Groups	70.091	140	.501		
	Total	85.946	144			
5 Opportunities for Skill Development	Between Groups	48.883	4	12.221	14.444	.000

Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Within Groups	118.455	140	.846		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	18.643	4	4.661	5.055	.001
	Within Groups	129.091	140	.922		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	43.819	4	10.955	15.023	.000
	Within Groups	102.091	140	.729		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	192.294	4	48.074	128.530	.000
	Within Groups	52.364	140	.374		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Between Groups	221.680	4	55.420	91.280	.000
	Within Groups	85.000	140	.607		
	Total	306.680	144			
10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	9.035	4	2.259	3.387	.011
	Within Groups	93.364	140	.667		
	Total	102.399	144			

Source: *Authors' Compilation*

Interpretation: Gender Bias, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Work-Life Balance, Opportunities for Skill Development, Supportive Organizational Culture, Workplace Discrimination, Opportunities for Professional Growth, Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, and Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes: For these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different years of experience in the IT industry. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between years of experience in the IT industry and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.

Unequal Pay: For this factor, the p-value is 0.044, which is slightly below the significance threshold of 0.05.Therefore; we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between years of experience in the IT industry and the perceived challenges related to unequal pay.

F) Null Hypothesis (H_{06}): There is no significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Position/Job Title.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{16}): There is a significant difference in the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across different Position/Job Title.

Table 6: Perceived challenges across different Position/Job Title.

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
1. Gender Bias Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City face biases in hiring and promotion opportunities.	Between Groups	367.802	5	73.560	39.357	.000
	Within Groups	259.800	139	1.869		
	Total	627.602	144			
2. Unequal Pay	Between Groups	38.088	5	7.618	7.843	.000
	Within Groups	135.000	139	.971		

Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City receive lower compensation compared to their male counterparts for similar roles.	Total	173.088	144			
3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have limited opportunities to advance into leadership positions.	Between Groups	109.049	5	21.810	140.351	.000
	Within Groups	21.600	139	.155		
	Total	130.649	144			
4. Work-Life Balance Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City struggle to maintain a satisfactory work-life balance due to job demands.	Between Groups	59.546	5	11.909	62.704	.000
	Within Groups	26.400	139	.190		
	Total	85.946	144			
5 Opportunities for Skill Development Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal access to opportunities for skill development and career advancement.	Between Groups	49.138	5	9.828	11.557	.000
	Within Groups	118.200	139	.850		
	Total	167.338	144			
6. Supportive Organizational Culture The organizational culture in IT companies in Mumbai City is supportive of gender diversity and inclusion.	Between Groups	54.134	5	10.827	16.078	.000
	Within Groups	93.600	139	.673		
	Total	147.734	144			
7. Workplace Discrimination Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City experience discrimination or harassment in the workplace based on their gender.	Between Groups	47.510	5	9.502	13.423	.000
	Within Groups	98.400	139	.708		
	Total	145.910	144			
8. Opportunities for Professional Growth Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have equal opportunities for professional growth and career advancement.	Between Groups	167.858	5	33.572	60.761	.000
	Within Groups	76.800	139	.553		
	Total	244.658	144			
9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements Women in the IT industry in Mumbai City have access to flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) to accommodate their personal responsibilities.	Between Groups	169.880	5	33.976	34.522	.000
	Within Groups	136.800	139	.984		
	Total	306.680	144			
10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes Gender stereotypes impact the professional opportunities and treatment of women in the IT industry in Mumbai City.	Between Groups	37.599	5	7.520	16.130	.000
	Within Groups	64.800	139	.466		
	Total	102.399	144			

Source: *Authors' Compilation*

Interpretation: Gender Bias, Unequal Pay, Limited Access to Leadership Roles, Work-Life Balance, and Opportunities for Skill Development, Supportive Organizational Culture, Workplace Discrimination, Opportunities for Professional Growth, Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, and Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes: For all these factors, the p-values are less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference in perceived challenges across different Position/Job Titles. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant relationship between Position/Job Title and the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City for these factors.

- **Objective two based proposed Strategies for Addressing the Identified Challenges and Promoting Gender Equality in the IT Industry in Mumbai City:**

Addressing the identified challenges and promoting gender equality in the IT industry in Mumbai City requires a multifaceted approach. Here are some proposed strategies tailored to each challenge:

1. Gender Bias in Hiring and Promotion Opportunities: Implement unconscious bias training for hiring managers and decision-makers to mitigate biases in recruitment and promotion processes, establish clear and transparent criteria for hiring and promotion to

ensure fairness and equity, introduce diversity quotas or targets to increase the representation of women in leadership roles.

2. Unequal Pay: Conduct regular pay equity audits to identify and address gender-based pay disparities, establish salary bands for roles to ensure transparency and fairness in compensation, provide negotiation training for women to empower them to advocate for fair pay.

3. Limited Access to Leadership Roles: Implement mentorship and sponsorship programs to support women in their career advancement, provide leadership development training and opportunities for women to enhance their skills and competencies, create pathways for career progression and succession planning that prioritize diversity and inclusion.

4. Work-Life Balance: Offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours, to accommodate employees' personal responsibilities, provide access to childcare facilities or subsidies to support working parents, encourage a culture of work-life balance by promoting boundaries around working hours and workload management.

5. Opportunities for Skill Development: Offer tailored training and development programs for women to enhance their technical and leadership skills, provide access to networking events, conferences, and industry certifications to support career growth, create opportunities for cross-functional collaboration and project assignments to broaden skill sets.

6. Supportive Organizational Culture: Foster a culture of inclusivity and respect through leadership communication and behavior modeling, establish employee resource groups or affinity networks for women to provide support and advocacy, implement zero-tolerance policies for discrimination, harassment, and bias incidents, with clear reporting and resolution procedures.

7. Workplace Discrimination: Provide training on diversity, equity, and inclusion for all employees to raise awareness and prevent discriminatory behavior, create safe reporting channels for employees to report incidents of discrimination or harassment confidentially, conduct regular climate surveys to assess the prevalence of discrimination and monitor progress in addressing it.

8. Opportunities for Professional Growth: Establish clear career pathways and development plans for employees, including mentoring, coaching, and stretch assignments. encourage continuous learning and skill-building through access to online courses, workshops, and seminars, recognize and reward employees for their contributions and achievements, irrespective of gender.

9. Access to Flexible Work Arrangements: Normalize flexible work arrangements by showcasing success stories and role modeling from leadership, provide training for managers on managing remote teams and fostering accountability in flexible work environments, ensure technology infrastructure supports remote work and provides seamless collaboration tools for virtual teams.

10. Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes: Challenge and debunk gender stereotypes through awareness campaigns, workshops, and educational initiatives, promote diverse role models and success stories to showcase the capabilities and achievements of women in the IT industry, encourage open dialogue and discussion around gender stereotypes in the workplace to foster understanding and empathy.

By implementing these strategies, IT companies in Mumbai City can create a more inclusive and equitable workplace environment, where women have equal opportunities for success and advancement in their careers. These efforts not only benefit individual employees but also contribute to the overall success and innovation of the industry.

9. Discussion and Conclusion

Researcher study reveals nuanced insights into the perceived challenges faced by women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City across various demographic and professional dimensions. Age emerges as a significant factor influencing these challenges, with notable differences observed in several areas. While perceptions of gender stereotypes may not show statistical significance across age groups, intriguing trends warrant further exploration. Marital status significantly impacts perceived challenges, particularly regarding gender-related issues and organizational support, yet does not notably affect perceptions of work-life balance challenges. This underscores the complexity of the relationship between marital status and workplace challenges for women in the IT industry. Similarly, education level plays a significant role in shaping perceived challenges, particularly in gender-related issues and organizational support, while showing less impact on challenges related to unequal pay and gender stereotypes. This underscores the need to consider educational backgrounds when addressing workplace challenges among women in the IT sector. Employment status significantly influences perceived challenges, particularly in areas such as unequal pay and work-life balance, while showing less impact on perceptions of gender bias, organizational culture, and gender stereotypes. This highlights the nuanced interplay between employment status and workplace challenges among women in the IT industry. Furthermore, years of experience within the IT industry significantly shape perceived challenges, with unequal pay identified as a significant concern varying with tenure. This emphasizes the importance of tenure considerations in addressing challenges such as pay equity among women in the IT sector. Lastly, the position or job title within the IT industry emerges as a critical factor influencing perceived challenges across various dimensions, highlighting the significance of job roles and hierarchies in shaping experiences and perceptions within the workplace for women in the IT industry. Overall, our findings offer valuable insights for organizations and policymakers seeking to address gender-related challenges and foster inclusive environments for women employees in the IT industry in Mumbai City.

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