



Journal Homepage: -[www.journalijar.com](http://www.journalijar.com)  
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
 ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)**

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/4765  
 DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/4765>



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

## WOMEN EMPLOYEES AND WORKPLACE CONFLICT: AN ISSUE IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT A RESEARCH STUDY CONDUCTED ON EMPLOYEES OF NTPC.

**Kirti.**

Senior Research Fellow, Department of Applied Economics and Commerce, Patna University Ashok Raj Path (Patna-800005).

#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 6 May 2017  
 Final Accepted: 8 June 2017  
 Published: July 2017

##### Key words:-

Conflict, Conflict Management, Women Empowerment, Stress

#### Abstract

Individuals in this globalisation era are inclined to believe that women are affected by conflict negatively and have difficulty working with one another this thought makes 'Woman Employees and Workplace conflict' an emerging issues in Women empowerment. This research aims to understand the behaviour of women employees when they are in a conflict situation. The study reveals that rather to confront the situation they avoid the situation as to protect their self-image to be judged by colleagues. This research also contributes to the body of existing literature; specifically, it will inspire the women employees to understand and manage conflict in the organisations. A survey of 60 employees of NTPC, Patna (ER-HQ1) a Public Sector Company was made to test the hypothesis. The results of this study suggest that woman employees get affected by conflict leading to stress, tension and further it was found that male observers are inclined to problematize conflict among women at work relative to conflict among men and leading to the tendency of thought that might be partly responsible for perception that women have difficulty working with one another. This research provides empirical evidence to support this notion and for this purpose the review of literature was made on workplace conflict among women and suggestions are made to address the problems faced by women employees in the context of conflict study.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2017., All rights reserved.

#### Introduction:-

"A strong woman understands that the gifts such as logic, decisiveness, and strength are just as feminine as intuition and emotional connection. She values and uses all of her gifts." —Nancy Rathburn

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build stronger economies, achieve internationally agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities. The Indian culture with regard to economic independency, participation in country's economy and career development of women is undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of Women Empowerment in every field specially in the corporate world. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. At the present time, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban setting. This has opened new vistas, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. Conflict is ubiquitous so it is impossible that women

**Corresponding Author:-Kirti.**

Address:-Senior Research Scholar Fellow, Department of Applied Economics and Commerce, Patna University, Ashok Raj Path (Patna-800005).

empowerment will remain untouched by its effects. The Workplace conflict has a negative rather than positive effect on woman employee. Generally it affects woman and their work relations and work attitudes. The result revealed that women employees are negatively affected as Conflicts among male is considered healthy, and necessary evil to channelize energy but on the other hand female to female conflict is viewed as an unexpected behaviour, feeling of jealousy, and often the conflict are termed as 'cat fight', and 'queen bee syndrome'. Further it leads to work related stress and tension and suppression of real emotions as woman try to pretend normal and happy with their female workers even if they perceive the existence of conflict so as to escape the prejudgments of their colleagues.

#### **Research Objectives:-**

1. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:
2. To understand effect of workplace conflict on woman employees and they perceive workplace conflict
3. To find out how women employees behave when they encounter workplace conflict
4. To analyse the relation between workplace conflict and job stress.
5. To find out the opinion of male employees about female-female conflict at workplace
6. To help Women employees learn and understand conflict in a better way and help them to gain from conflict rather to get affected by it negatively.
7. The nature of relationship existing between role expectations and intra-personal conflict.

#### **Research Hypothesis:-**

A hypothesis statement is typically an educated guess as to the relationship between factors, and serves as the basis for an experiment to test whether the relationship holds true, for this research study following hypotheses were developed:

Ho: Workplace conflict does not affect Woman employees.

H1: Workplace Conflict significantly affects Woman Employees.

#### **Literature Review:-**

Few things are as inevitable and unavoidable at the workplace than misunderstandings and conflicts. As the office becomes an ever more rapid-paced, multi-tasking and globalized environment the pressure to deliver quality and reach targets on time and in-budget dramatically increases, as does the potential for conflict. In India, the position of women has always been rather ambivalent. On the one side, she has been raised to the status of divinity, and on the other side, she has been exploited as somebody lower in status to men in every walk of life. Fortunately, from the middle of the nineteenth century, consciousness rose in our country to eradicate this dichotomy in her existence. Social reformers rose especially in Bengal, like Vidya Sagar and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, founder of the Brahma Samaj who advocated education for girls, marriage after adolescence and the right to widow marriage. In the North, the Arya Samaj movement led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati also wanted to purify Hinduism by preaching education of girl children as well as improvement in the status of women. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, women have started coming out of their homes for education.

The ways in which women employees deal with conflict and our preconceived notions of how the genders approach conflict situations differs for a variety of societal, psychological and emotional reasons. Moreover, a mixture of learned behavioural patterns and entrenched assumptions presents higher hurdles for women employees than for male employees when coping with conflict. In this research study the literature has been reviewed from the below mentioned topics:

- i) Empowerment
- ii) Conflict
- iii) Conflict Management
- iv) Conflict and stress
- v) Conflict between women employees and how it is perceived.

#### **Empowerment:-**

Empowerment is derived from the traditional definition of power -"possession of control or influence over others", legal or official authority, capacity, right or physical might (Webster's Ninth New collegiate Dictionary). Empowerment has been defined as a process (Gutierrz, 1990), an intervention (Parsons & Cox 1989, Solomon, 1976) and skill (Mandell & Schram, 1985). Power is often used synonymously with force strength authority jurisdiction, control and command. Van Den Bergh and Cooper (1986) noted that in most traditional models, power is seen as a finite commodity to be controlled particularly in determining the distribution of rights, resource and opportunities.

Empowerment is thus viewed as both the possessions of control authority, or influence over others and as the help provided to assist a person to gain control over his or her life (Colette V Browne, 1995). The basic understanding principle is that empowerment is often conceptualized as an individual experience primarily promoting individual, not collective good or political power for individual gain.

**Conflict:-**

Conflict is an awareness of the parties involved of discrepancies, incompatible wishes, or irreconcilable desires (Boulding, 1963<sup>1</sup>; Jehn & Mannix, 2001<sup>2</sup>). It is ubiquitous across teams with a high level of task interdependence (Jehn, 1995<sup>3</sup>). Past research has observed that conflict emerges when team members have developed opposing values and goals (Cosier & Rose, 1977<sup>4</sup>; Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990<sup>5</sup>). Recent studies have further found that conflict may still dominate the team decision making process even when team members share the same goals because people with different knowledge bases and experiences may approach the team's tasks from diverse and even opposing perspectives (Amason, 1996<sup>6</sup>; Jehn et al., 1999<sup>7</sup>). The observed effects of conflict are not uniform. On the one hand, much of the previous literature on conflict has generally viewed conflict as detrimental to team and firm performance because it hurts team cohesiveness, slows the decision making process, and undermines job satisfaction (e.g., Gladstein, 1984<sup>8</sup>; March & Simon, 1958<sup>9</sup>). On the other hand, recent studies have claimed conflict to be a beneficial phenomenon for team and firm outcomes in that it may improve understanding of information, uncover flawed assumptions, and enhance decision quality (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1997<sup>10</sup>). Therefore, conflict is a double-edged sword, with both beneficial and detrimental effects (Amason & Schweiger, 1994).

Recent research has attributed such double-edged effects to the multidimensional nature of conflict (Amason, 1996; Jehn, 1994; 1995). The cognitive dimension of conflict (e.g., Amason, 1996), also labeled as task conflict (Eisenhardt et al., 1997b<sup>11</sup>; Simons & Peterson, 2000<sup>12</sup>), issue conflict (Hammer & Organ, 1978), or substantive conflict (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954; Rahim, 2001), is a perception of disagreements among team members regarding the content of their decisions and involves differences in viewpoints, ideas, and opinions (Simons & Peterson, 2000). The affective dimension of conflict (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954; Amason, 1996), also labeled as relationship conflict (Simons & Peterson, 2000), emotional conflict (Pelled et al, 1999), or interpersonal conflict (Eisenhardt et al, 1997a), however, is a perception of interpersonal clashes and typically includes anger, frustration, tension, annoyance, and animosity among team members (Simons & Peterson, 2000). Cognitive conflict is task-related and arises from differences in judgment or perspectives among team members; affective conflict, however, is emotional and arises from personalized incompatibility (Amason, 1996).

**Conflict Management:-**

Conflict management is the way to handle conflict and through which the manager not only maintain cordiality in the organizational environment as well as ensure the increased work place cohesion but also in maintaining efficient work performances and team work solidarity, harmony and enhance creative as well as healthy competitiveness. Conflict is part of organizational life. Managers spend up to 20% of their time in the workplace dealing with conflict or its aftermath (Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn, 1998; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976). Conflict is considered to be a "natural process between people and, as such, is an inevitable aspect of a manager's job" (Markowich & Farber, 1987: 140).

Conflict management implies integration of all factors which can contribute to conflict resolution or its prevention. Those factors are improvement of communication and practicing discipline in the organization, as well as having in mind the life phases of parties included. "Conflict Management" is defined by the American Management Association "as recognizing the potential value of conflict for driving change and innovation. This means knowing when to confront, and when to avoid a conflict and understanding the issues around which conflict revolve". It means looking for those win/win solutions and seeking agreement on a solution while eliciting commitment to making it work effectively in points).

Furthermore, conflict management as according to Hellriegel and Slocum (1996) state, consists of the interventions designed to reduce conflict, or in some instances, to increase insufficient conflict. It is a process whereby managers design plans, and implement policies and procedures to ensure that conflict situations are resolved effectively.

Conflict management broadens understanding of the problem, increases the resolutions and tend to work towards consensus and to seek a genuine commitment to decision making. Because there is a broader, stronger element of disagreement and discord within the conflict process, a considerable amount of mental and psychological energy is

generated. The ability to divert this energy into productive achievement for both parties involved in the conflict can result in the conversion of conflict into a joint finding and problem solving solution.

In order to maintain and positively influence the organizational work performance, conflict can be managed in different ways. Robinson et.al, advocates that administering conflict toward 'constructive action' is the best technique in combating conflict in organization. When conflict emerges, we required to be able to administer them correctly, so that it can become an optimistic force, instead of a pessimistic force, which would likely to harm the individuals or groups.

Mary Parker Follete contended that if conflicts emerge and are not appropriately taken into consideration, they will lead to work pending, lack of concern and lack of action and in extreme situations it might lead to complete collapse of the groups.

Inappropriately managed conflicts may result in abandonment of employees and disinclination on their part to contribute in other groups or assist with various group action activities in the workplace. Hence, conflict management has the capability to handle conflict efficiently; conflict handling refers to the methods used by any one or mutually groups to deal with conflict (Gordon, 2003)<sup>13</sup>.

Various researchers know about numerous techniques to managing conflicts. Along with five typical techniques and/or strategies on conflict management which will be shown and explained, it is essential to point out that a significant role bears also the organization itself acting as a third party in conflict management.

The organization tends to appear as a mediator between 'adversaries' or as 'arbitrator'. This third party in organizations are those managers which by using their experiences have to continuously develop new strategies and techniques for conflict resolution by utilizing their experiences.

Additionally, it is commonly acknowledged that conflict presents the most severe test of managers' interpersonal skills. Thus, some of the various conflicting management strategies that are extensively adopted by the members of work force include the following:

- ❖ Dominance - it occurs when the cooperation is extremely low, and the persistence in satisfying of personal interests high. By this strategy conflict is resolved in a way to satisfy the needs of one party damaging the other party involved in the conflict.
- ❖ Integration – cooperation is high, as well as the persistence in satisfying of one's own needs, so there is to be sought for the appropriate solution for all parties involved in the conflict.
- ❖ Compromise – there is an equal wish for medium level of cooperation and persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs, so the conflict is resolved so that each party involved in conflict gives up the part of the value.
- ❖ Avoiding – when the cooperation as well as persistence in satisfying of one's personal needs is very low. In that case the conflict resolution will be solved by withdrawal or repression of conflict.
- ❖ Cooperativeness/Obliging – the readiness for cooperation is extremely high, and the conflict is resolved by putting the other party's interests before its own.

It is stated that different people employ distinct strategies for managing conflicts. Such strategies are learned, usually in childhood, and seem to function automatically. Sometimes individuals are not aware at the time of how they must act in conflict situations. They usually do whatever seems to come naturally.

Individuals do have a personal strategy; and because it was learned, they can always change it by learning new and more effective ways of managing conflicts. Whenever one becomes engaged in a conflict, there are two major concerns one has to take into consideration:

1. Achieving the personal goals – one is involved in a conflict because he/she has a goal that conflicts with another person's goal. His/her goal may be highly important to him/her, or it may be of little importance.
2. Maintaining good relationship with the other person - one may require to be able to interact effectively with the other person in the future. The relationship may be very important to the individual, or it may be of little importance. The importance of these two areas will influence the ways in which one act in any given conflict.

**Conflict and stress:-**

Stress comes in many ways and can also mean many things. This discussion is therefore limited to Occupational Stress. Occupational stress is stress involving work. According to the current World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, occupational or work-related stress "is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope." (Susic, 2013)<sup>14</sup> There are several factors associated with occupational stress. The Journal of the Canadian Medical Association outlines the following factors:

Factors unique to the job

- ❖ Role in the organization
- ❖ Career development
- ❖ Interpersonal work relationships and Conflicts
- ❖ Organizational structure/climate.

These individual factors demonstrate that stress can occur specifically when a conflict arises from the job demands of the employee and the employee itself. If not handled properly, the stress can become distress (Robertson, 2012)<sup>15</sup>. Workplace conflict Interpersonal conflict among people at work has been shown to be one of the most frequently noted stressors for employees (Keenan & Newton<sup>16</sup>; Liu, Spector & Shi, 2007<sup>17</sup>). Conflict has been noted to be an indicator of the broader concept of workplace harassment (Bowling & Beehr, 2006). It relates to other stressors that might co-occur, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and workload. It also relates to strains such as anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, and low levels of job satisfaction (Bowling & Beehr, 2006)<sup>18</sup>.

**Conflict between women employees and how it is perceived.**

A broad selection of books on the subject with dramatic titles emblazoned across their covers, ranging from *Catfight: Women & Competition* (Tanenbaum, 2002)<sup>19</sup> to *Mean Girls, Meaner Women: Understanding Why Women Betray, Backstab, and Trash-Talk Each Other and How to Heal* (Holiday & Rosenberg, 2009)<sup>20</sup>. Curiously, the depiction of women as catty and backstabbing is at odds with the "women are wonderful" stereotype, which characterizes women as supportive and warm nurturers (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994<sup>21</sup>; Goodwin & Fiske, 2001<sup>22</sup>). It is also challenged by empirical findings suggesting that women have stronger in-group biases than men (Rudman & Goodwin, 2004)<sup>23</sup>, meaning that they tend to favour and identify with other women to a greater degree than men favour and identify with other men. And yet the notion that women dislike one another and have difficulty working together has persisted, likely to the detriment of women's reputations and relationships with one another (Epstein, 1980)<sup>24</sup>.

Management researchers have produced a small body of theoretical and empirical work that has hinted at strained and competitive relations between women at work. For example, the term 'queen bee syndrome' was coined to refer to the apparent tendency of token women in senior organizational positions to dissociate from members of their own gender and block other women's ascension in organizations (Derks, Ellemers, van Laar, & De Groot<sup>25</sup>, 2011; Staines, Tavis, & Jayaratne, 1974). Unfortunately, because the number of empirical studies is limited, it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions about the prevalence of women's competitive relations at work, when these relations are more or less likely to occur, and whether similar phenomena can be found among males.

Nevertheless, such comparative investigations would allow us to better assess whether the types of intra-sexual difficulties that are often associated with women by the media and popular culture are, in reality, a more general fact of life faced by both men and women in particular organizational contexts.

Research revealing animosity and competitiveness between women in the workplace has typically identified gender inequality at work as the source of these tensions. Such inequality is well documented. For example, although women make up half of the workforce, they hold fewer than 15% of executive positions (Catalyst, 2012a)<sup>26</sup> and corporate board seats in Fortune 500 companies (Hillman & Cannella, 2007)<sup>27</sup>. This disparity has been explained by role congruity theory, which predicts that women will be perceived—by women and men alike—as less suitable than men for leadership roles and positions of power (Eagly & Karau, 2002)<sup>28</sup>. Organizations differ in the extent to which power is distributed unequally among men and women, but in general women tend to occupy lower status positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007)<sup>29</sup>, both at work and in society. It should be noted here that women's lower status at work might actually be one explanation for why the media and academics have focused on conflict or animosity among women at work, while ignoring conflicts that occur among men. More specifically, it might very well be that the queen bee syndrome has been offered as an explanation for why status differences between men and women are

perpetuated in organizations (Derks et al., 2011)<sup>30</sup>. For the purposes of this discussion, however, we focus on literature suggesting that gender inequality is a causal agent producing tensions among women at work, rather than an outcome produced by tensions among women at work (Sheppard and Aquino 2013).

### Research Methodology:-

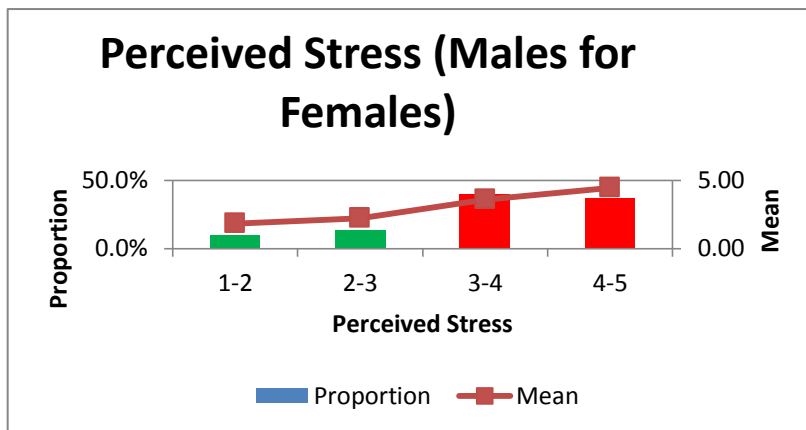
This research paper is based on empirical evidences for validating the facts. The Sample size is small (60, e. i. Female Employees- 30, Male Employees- 30). These 60 employees were selected from of National Thermal Power Co. Ltd., Patna (ER-HQ1) which a public sector Maharatna company. Further, a well-designed questionnaire was prepared to gather first hand responses, and the responses were classified and then the hypotheses were statistically tested using with the help of statistical tool that is 'ANOVA'.

### Data Analysis, Hypothesis Testing, Results

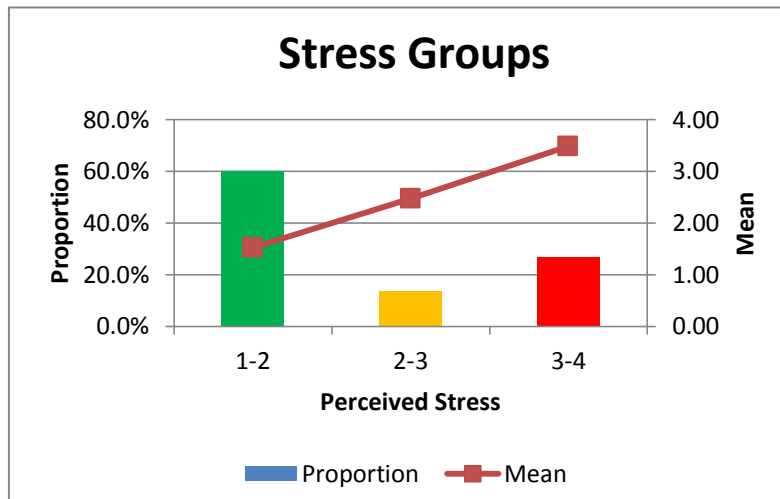
1. Workplace conflicts significantly affect women employees.								
<b>Method:</b> To test the significance of workplace conflict on women employees, we undertake the following approach.								
First of all the total perceived stress score is calculated for each respondent by averaging out all the 10 responses of Part-II								
Similarly, the average effect of conflict is scored, by taking a simple average of the 11 responses of Part-III								
For all female employees, a correlation and regression is run to analyze the effect.								
<b>Females</b>								
	<i>Perceive</i>	<i>Effect</i>						
Perceive	1							
Effect	-0.9206996	1						
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.9206996							
R Square	0.8476877							
Adjusted R Square	0.842248							
Standard Error	0.4013276							
Observations	30							
<b>ANOVA</b>								
	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	25.09902872	25.09903	155.8328	5.83566E-13			
Residual	28	4.509786711	0.161064					
Total	29	29.60881543						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	5.4924637	0.196818802	27.90619	5.59E-22	5.089298639	5.895628709	5.089298639	5.895628709
Perceive	-1.0492373	0.084051266	-12.4833	5.84E-13	1.221408541	0.877066117	1.221408541	0.877066117

Analysis: We can see a high correlation and a significant regression between the cause and effect of women employees.								
Hence workplace conflict has an effect on women employees.								
<b>2. It affects woman employees' more than male employees.</b>								
<b>Males</b>								
	<i>Perceive</i>	<i>Effect</i>						
Perceive	1							
Effect	-0.8201663	1						
<i>Regression Statistics</i>								
Multiple R	0.8201663							
R Square	0.6726727							
Adjusted R Square	0.6609824							
Standard Error	0.4115251							
Observations	30							
<i>ANOVA</i>								
	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>			
Regression	1	9.744785276	9.744785	57.54129	2.90761E-08			
Residual	28	4.741881391	0.169353					
Total	29	14.4866667						
	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	4.202045	0.207685339	20.23275	2.99E-18	3.776620864	4.627469115	3.776620864	4.627469115
Perceive	-0.5828221	0.076832717	-7.5856	2.91E-08	-0.74020677	0.425437402	-0.74020677	0.425437402
Analysis: We can see that the absolute value of correlation in males is lesser than that in females.								
Also the regression has milder slope, though it is significant for males too.								
Hence workplace conflict has more effect on women than on men employees.								
These results point out that woman take conflict more personally and see it as disruptive.								
<b>3. Many women chose conflict avoidance strategies because they do not want to be seen as aggressive or confrontational, qualities associated with men. For these reasons, some women even deny they are competitive.</b>								
<i>Group</i>	<i>Proportion</i>	<i>Mean</i>						
1-2	60.0%	1.52	18					
2-3	13.3%	2.48	4					
3-4	26.7%	3.49	8					
Overall	100%	2.17	30					

Less Stress							
Medium Stress							
High Stress							
Analysis: We can see that 73.3% of female employees avoid perceived stress situation.							
Also the single sample t-test value indicates at 95% confidence level, the mean of the sample is statistically different from							
test value of 2.5 ( $ t  > t\text{-critical} (1.96)$ ). Hence female employees prefer stress situation avoidance							
<b>4. These results point out that woman take conflict more personally and see it as disruptive.</b>							
Analysis: Please refer the analysis of second (2nd) point							
<b>5. Male co-workers expect women to display greater empathy towards the feelings of others and to be more supportive and nurturing -thus avoiding conflict rather than embracing it.</b>							
<i>Group</i>	<i>Proport ion</i>	<i>Mean</i>					
1-2	10.0%	1.82	3				
2-3	13.3%	2.23	4				
3-4	40.0%	3.59	12				
4-5	36.7%	4.45	11				
Overall	100%	3.55	30				
Less Stress							
Medium Stress							
High Stress							
Analysis: We can see that 76.7% of male employees do not consider stress and conflicts amongst women employees as good							
They expect female employees to be more supporting							
Also the single sample t-test value indicates at 95% confidence level, the mean of the sample is statistically different from							
test value of 3.0 ( $ t  > t\text{-critical} (1.96)$ ). Hence male employees expect female employees to be more supporting							







**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
VAR00001	3.164	29	.004	.54967	.1944	.9050

**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 2.5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
VAR00001	-2.018	29	.053	-.32667	-.6577	.0044

**Conclusion and Suggestions:-**

On the basis of above analysis and findings here are the conclusions from the study:

1. Workplace conflicts significantly affect women employees.
2. It affects woman employees' more than male employees and moreover the it is evident from the results that woman take conflict more personally and see it as disruptive.
3. The Female to Female workplace conflict is viewed negatively then that of Male to Male Conflict.
4. Many women chose conflict avoidance strategies because they do not want to be seen as aggressive or confrontational, qualities which are mainly associated with men. For these reasons, some women even deny they are competitive.
5. Additionally, both female and male co-workers expect women to display greater empathy towards the feelings of others and to be more supportive and nurturing -thus avoiding conflict rather than embracing it as a challenge
6. Workplace Conflict leads to further stress and tension as, women are expected to be "nice," a subtly nefarious burden few men have to bear. This indirect yet powerful pressure forces woman employees to suppress their real and natural emotions which may include healthy feelings of frustration, anger and aggressiveness. Thus, their true emotions and attitudes go "underground" in an attempt to keep up appearances of how they "should" behave.

Here are Suggestions for the women employee:

- ❖ The workplace conflict is a challenge for woman empowerment and we should take it positively.

- ❖ The fact that women are more sensitive to harsh or sarcastic words than your male colleagues can't be changed but that's the beauty of being a woman and woman should embrace this as a quality. To combat these situations and harmful comment from male colleagues' woman employees should speak frankly about their real feeling and tell others what they don't like to hear.
- ❖ If words do leave a stronger impression on the female brain, then part of your self-management plan is finding ways to release the impact of those remarks that hurt.
- ❖ Women employees should do some exercise as an excellent remedy for letting go of toxins including statements that don't feel good.
- ❖ Further, it is suggested that harsh words may not mean the same thing to men. Studies show that men are used to letting out aggression in more direct ways than women. A man may yell to let off steam in the moment, not expecting to be held accountable for the words expressed at that time. It's not to condone abusive behaviour, but it is being recommended that women employees may want to give men a little wiggle room in the area of offensive remarks. If a statement really bothers the woman employee, they should go back later and ask that individual not to use that kind of language again. In most instances, he'll apologize and comply.
- ❖ If we can appreciate the differences in male- and female-speak, especially when one party accidentally hurts or offends another, we can heighten the level of mutual respect at work without either gender being held as the culprit.  
A few suggestions for Male Employees:
- ❖ Male employee should understand that women hear and listen to the statements made by you very closely and it leaves a long impression on their working. It's really true that the harsh words, personal judgements, and comments leave a stronger imprint and have a longer-term effect on the women employees. Even if it is only a joking, words like "slow," "stupid," "lazy," "difficult," "incompetent," "weak" or "loser" leave a lasting negative imprint with many women. To get the best performance and the greatest loyalty from female employees and co-workers, male employees should choose the words that they use carefully.
- ❖ Woman – Woman Conflict is just another regular phenomenon in the work place as male employees are subject to it too, so these conflict should be looked upon as healthy and competitive and not being named as 'cat fights', and the behaviour of women at higher level in the organisation the 'queen bee syndrome'.

---

<sup>1</sup>Boulding, K. 1963. Conflict and defence. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>2</sup>Jehn, K.A., & Mannix, E.A. 2001. The dynamic nature of conflict: A longitudinal study of intra-group conflict and group performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 44(2): 238-251.

<sup>3</sup>Jehn, K.A. 1995. A multi-method examination of the benefits and determinants of intra-group conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40, 256-282.

<sup>4</sup>Cosier, R., & Rose, G. 1977. Cognitive conflict and goal conflict effects on task performance. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Performance*, 19: 378-391.

<sup>5</sup>Eisenhardt, K.M., & Schoonhoven, C. 1990. Organizational growth: Linking founding team, strategy, environment, and growth among U.S. semiconductor ventures, 1978-1988. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35: 504-529.

<sup>6</sup>Amason, A.C. 1996. Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 123-148.

<sup>7</sup>Jehn, K.A., Northcraft, G.B., & Neale, M.A. 1999. Why differences make a difference: A field study of diversity, conflict, and performance in workgroups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44: 741-763.

<sup>8</sup>Gladstein, D.L. 1984. A model of task group effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29, 499-517.

<sup>9</sup>March, J.G., & Simon, H.A. 1958. *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>10</sup>Jehn, K.A. 1997. A qualitative analysis of conflict types and dimensions in organizational groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42: 530-557.

<sup>11</sup>Eisenhardt, K.M., Kahwajy, J.L., & Bourgeois, L.G. 1997b. Conflict and strategic choice: How top management teams disagree. *California Management Review*, 39(2): 42-62.

<sup>12</sup> Simons, T.L., & Peterson, R.S. 2000. Task conflict and relationship conflict in top management teams: The pivotal role of intragroup trust. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(1): 102-111.

- <sup>13</sup> Gordon, J. (2003). Pfeiffer's classic activities for managing conflict at work. San Francisco, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- <sup>14</sup> Paul Susic MA Licensed Psychologist PhD Candidate. "Stress Management: What can you do?". St. Louis Psychologists and Counselling Information and Referral. Retrieved February 5, 2013.
- <sup>15</sup> Robertson, D (2012). Build your Resilience. London: Hodder. ISBN 978-1444168716
- <sup>16</sup> Keenan, A., & Newton, T. (1985). Stressful events, stressors and psychological strains in young professional engineers. *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, 6(2), 151-156.
- <sup>17</sup> Liu, C., Spector, P. E., & Shi, L. (2007). Cross-National Job Stress: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28(2), 209-239.
- <sup>18</sup> Bowling, N. A., & Beehr, T. A. (2006). Workplace harassment from the victim's perspective: A Theoretical Model and Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(5), 998-1012.
- <sup>19</sup> Tanenbaum, L. (2002). *Catfight: Women and competition*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- <sup>20</sup> Holiday, E., & Rosenberg, J. (2009). *Mean girls, meaner women: Understanding why women backstab, betray and trash-talk each other and how to heal*. Charleston, NC: Book Surge, LLC.
- <sup>21</sup> Eagly, A. H., & Mladinic, A. (1994). Are people prejudiced against women? Some answers from research on attitudes, gender stereotypes, and judgments of competence. *European Review of Social Psychology*, 5, 1-35.
- <sup>22</sup> Goodwin, S. A., & Fiske, S. (2001). Power and gender. The double-edged sword of ambivalence. In R. K. Unger (Ed.), *Handbook of the psychology of women and gender* (pp. 358-366). New York: Wiley.
- <sup>23</sup> Rudman, L. A., & Goodwin, S. A. (2004). Gender differences in automatic in-group bias: Why do women like women more than men like men? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(4), 494-509.
- <sup>24</sup> Epstein, C. F. (1980). Women's attitudes toward other women: Myths and their consequences. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 34(3), 322-333.
- <sup>25</sup> Derks, B., van Laar, C., Ellemers, N., & de Groot, K. (2011). Gender-bias primes elicit queen-bee responses among senior policewomen. *Psychological Science*, 22(10), 1243-1249.
- <sup>26</sup> Catalyst. (2012a). 2012 Catalyst Census: Fortune 500 women executive officers and top earners. Retrieved January 22, 2013, from <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/2012-catalyst-census-fortune-500-women-executive-officers-and-top-earners>
- <sup>27</sup> Hillman, A. J., & Cannella, A. A., Jr. (2007). Organizational predictors of women on corporate boards. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 941-952.
- <sup>28</sup> Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(10), 63-71.
- <sup>29</sup> Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598.
- <sup>30</sup> Derks, B., van Laar, C., Ellemers, N., & de Groot, K. (2011). Gender-bias primes elicit queen-bee re- 60 *Academy of Management Perspectives* February responses among senior policewomen. *Psychological Science*, 22(10), 1243-1249.