EMERGING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF EMPOWERMENT AND VIOLENCE

FINAL REPORT

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The Information Technology (IT) industry has transformed quiet towns and cities into centres of innovation, technologies, and new forms of gainful employment. This dramatic change has been accompanied by changes in lifestyles, including and not limited to mega malls and mega salaries. It has allowed men and women from small towns to interact with the increasingly globalised world, leading to the expansion of opportunities of social mobility and cultural capital on one hand, and an increasing marginalisation and exacerbation of income and social inequalities on the other (Belliappa, 2013). Women are often at the center of these massive shifts in the social landscape, especially given women's labour and women's bodies are often cultural and social products of this larger globalising force.

The IT industry allows for a space to recruit talented, well-educated, English-speaking overwhelmingly middle-class women and transform them into valued and valuable workers for the Indian economy. However, regardless of working in "*luxurious environments and enjoy[ing] higher incomes*" (p.3), they still have limited resources to negotiate flexible working conditions, are subject to wide wage gaps compared to their male counterparts, and have limited resources to negotiate with their families to transform their duties and identities (Belliappa, 2013). So, even while women enjoy status of a new global transnational worker (Radhakrishnan, 2012), they still have to navigate the complex spaces between expectations at work and expectations at home, and these, as previous research has indicated, is often antithetical to one another (Belliappa, 2013).

One of the major factors that contribute to the dissonance between workplace expectations and family expectations is the increasingly contested understanding of women's "place" in the workplace and in the home. This 'place' is influenced by two major factors that dominate women's experiences: care work and experience of violence. Both are often part of and a result of the tensions that women experience in the workplace and in their own home. Care work can be seen as a form of benign way in which women's identities in the household are being contested by both women and men, whereas the experience of violence is tied to the changing dynamics of power within the household, women's ability to harness different forms of power to negotiate relationships at home, and the nature of their presence in public and private spaces. So, as participating economic agents in the information technology, both care work and violence can be used as analytical lenses to capture gender dynamics in the IT industry in India.

In order to examine these dynamics, we administered an online survey with IT workers and examined the comparative experience of men and women within the IT industry, the forms of care work provided by them, their experience of violence, and the coping strategies that they employed. The online survey was primarily taken by employees of a single IT firm that had call centers all over India. In addition to this firm, headquartered in Amritsar, the online survey was also distributed to the wider community of IT workers, and participation in the online survey was solicited in various venues. In addition to presenting the results of this online survey, we have also documented the manner in which

the IT industry as an important economic and institutional structure resist efforts to access and document the experiences of their workers.

This report is organised in the following manner: The following section documents other studies and bodies of research that has examined the impact of the IT industry in the Indian social sphere including the gender dynamics that function in the industry. The third section describes the methods employed to access information from IT workers, and the methodology used to frame and execute our research study. The fourth section discusses the results of our online survey and the fifteen follow-up telephonic conversations with some of the participants of the online survey. The final section will examine the research implications of our study as well as concrete ideas for future work.

BACKGROUND

THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGYINDUSTRY IN INDIA

Since the 1990s, India's Information Technology (IT) industry has put India on the global map. The IT industry has grown at a phenomenal rate (Kelkar, Shreshtha & Veena, 2005), amounting to USD 47 million today in export revenues from a mere USD 2 billion in 1998, employing about two million people (NASSCOM, 2014). It accounts for 65 percent of the global market for offshore IT services and 46 percent of global business process off-shoring (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). The IT industry employs more than two million at last count, and it has been growing steadily at the rate of 25% on an average (Upadhya and Vasavi, 2008). While the term 'IT' is synonymous with 'software' in common parlance, the industry is actually made up of the software and hardware sectors (ibid). Even though they form very different kinds of work, for historical and ideological reasons (Upadhya and Vasavi, 2006), the IT Enabled Services (ITES), Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) industries and call centres all function under the ambit of 'IT' in India, and are controlled by the same industry body, NASSCOM. Thus, the IT industry consists of a range of professions, organisations, types of employment, working conditions, various degrees of mobility, flexibility and casuality of employment, and a diverse range and segment of workers despite the appearance of homogeneity it presents (Ahuja, 2002; Gillard, Howcroft, Mitev, & Richardson, 2008; Radhakrishnan, 2012; Remesh, 2004; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006).

The most visible feature of the IT industry is the image of modernity, economic and social mobility, and success that it presents when compared with other services and professions. In popular imagination, it represents a new India that has leapfrogged into a technologically-advanced future leaving behind the economic stagnation, and social disparities and unrest of the 1970s-1980s. At the time, IT was increasingly seen as a panacea to all problems, especially with the IT industry conjuring up simple, idealistic, and influential images of a new India in which the global and the Indian are powerfully reconciled with one another in a way "*...that is compatible with the economic and geographic mobility of the global economy*" (Radhakrishnan, 2012, p.3). With IT being seen as a leveller of previous differences, predominately young people and women aspired to enter the middle class by escaping the older social trappings of caste and ethnicity, and this has translated into the formation of a new transnational class of IT workers (Biao, 2008; Radhakrishnan, 2012)[1].

THE IT INDUSTRY AS A WORKSPACE

From the outside, the IT industry offers a picture of unlimited possibilities, abundant opportunities, choice, flexibility and an upwardly mobile status and lifestyle (Biao, 2008; Radhakrishnan, 2012;

[1] *While the middle class, white-collar IT work space may be seen from the outside, by aspirants, as a 'casteless' space, in reality as several studies show caste-specific cultural capital in fact become significant factors for entry into this space itself. Thus, the IT industry is also reproductive of the larger social structure itself (see Antony & Gayathri, 2008; Biao, 2008)*

Shankar 2008). Mukherjee (2008) notes that "*the rhetoric around work culture in this [software] industry emphasises a flat organisational structure, camaraderie at the workplace and meritocracy. Work is redefined as 'intellectual and disembodied labour and workplaces as flexible and fun'*" (p. 50). This dominant perception of work, work culture, and lifestyle of the IT industry has helped attract a large proportion of youth that are attracted to the higher remuneration (comparatively speaking) and are willing to adapt to the requirements of employers, the industry, and capital. Having the added advantage of having English language skills that allows them to be identified as a transnational labour force, Indian workers constitute the "*lion's share in the global IT labour market*" (Biao, 2005).

Beyond this optimistic picture of Indian IT industry's success and its workers' self-reported advantages of working in the industry, several scholars have shown that the conditions of employment and needs of capital sustain and reinstate social inequities and disadvantages, despite the rhetoric of being an equal-opportunity or gender-neutral employer (Antony and Gayathri, 2008; Belliappa, 2013; D'Mello, 2006). Explaining the dynamics through which India's IT industry has taken off, Biao argues that *"...the IT industry relies on not only labour, but on cheap, internationally mobile, and highly qualified labour who can be hired and fired at anytime*" (Biao, 2008, p. 348). What this implies is that the IT industry has necessarily profited from the creation of insecure and instable conditions of work for its employees. Further, a new transnational division of labour has been created based on inexpensive and qualified labour that some countries are producing as a "*special commodity*" (Biao, 2008, p. 350-351). India, to a large extent, is an exemplar for this process.

Producing disembodied and de-territorialised workers (Upadhya and Vasavi, 2008) who can be hired and flexibly placed by global capital anywhere, (thus, making them a 'transnational' workforce), India's IT industry has seen much success due its role in aiding global capital's flexible accumulation strategies (Biao, 2008; Upadhya and Vasavi, 2008). Risk, temporality, causality and alienation are thus characteristics that are integrally built into work contracts of IT professionals that has led to significant stress, competitiveness, personal insecurity and mental instability for IT workers (Biao, 2008; Mukerjee, 2008; Upadhya and Vasavi, 2006). In contrast to the alluring culture of flat, flexible workplace that is first visible to the outsider, the industry has in fact has put into place "*...new regimes of work and workplace control*", essential to the reproduction of capital, that is *"...leading to a heightened sense of alienation*" (Mukherjee, 2008, p. 51).

The policies of IT companies provide labour flexibility and create a new corporate culture that is based on values of individualisation and self-control, aimed to extract maximum work out of employees (Upadhya and Vasavi, 2008). While many of the cultural entrenched practices of management are considered to be a result of the 'new economy', they also reconfigure these practices, especially the values of self-responsibility, in the context of the Indian culture and achievement. A few of these include the emphasis placed on customer service and shoring up the bottom line, which leads to long and extracting conditions of work.

Calling attention to the new ways in which work is restructured under the regime of flexible capital accumulation in which the IT industry participates, the identity of the 'worker' loses its "collective

identity" and creates a professional in its place that allows for the IT industry to create very exploitative relationships (Kelkar, 2005, p.112). Given the construction of the 'professional' moves them away from collective bargaining to an individual-based negotiation, moving up in the career ladder becomes an individualised responsibility (Kelkar et al., 2005; Remesh, 2008; D'Mello, 2006). What this often results in is also a toxic environment where competition and animosity against a worker is cultivated as an organisational strategy, through reward mechanisms that rely on arbitrary appraisal criteria (Mukherjee, 2008).

More importantly, the chief positioning of Indian IT workers as mobile, 'transnational' labour cannot be understated, and is vital to the functioning of the IT industry (Biao, 2008). It is also a part that Indian IT workers consciously play, for it is this very mobility that allows for the availability of cheap, flexible labour to transnational capital (ibid). A key technology for ensuring this transnational mobility, through which individual and industry competitiveness is sustained is the practice of 'body shopping'. Body shopping is a uniquely Indian phenomena through which an Indian IT professional typically enters the global labour market (Biao, 2008). It entails a highly developed system of contract labour in which IT workers are recruited in India and are "*farmed out to clients for a particular project*"(Biao,2008, p.351). Together with the instability of a given job along with individualised, impersonal relationships with employees, this adds to the burden of silence that employees have to maintain.

So, part of the reason for the persistence of the worker-friendly image in public discourses despite ground realities is that researchers do not always have access to organisational structures and processes. Almost every study that has examined IT companies have documented a lot of difficulty in accessing information from software companies, especially about their organisational structures and employee profiles (Mukherjee, 2008; Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007; D'Mello, 2006; Belliappa, 2013; Patel, 2010). As will be elaborated in the methodology section, this experience has also been true for our own study, wherein employers and employees were reluctant to speak about the workspace, work conditions and experience of violence. It was only through critical and extended qualitative work by a number of scholars, obtained through small samples that we have been able to examine deeply inequitable relations and extracting conditions of work that characterise IT work.

Thus, under the veneer of a close-knit work environment within which teamwork and personal connections are emphasised (and are specifically tied to career mobility), everyday work is characterised by an intense atmosphere of competition, "*selling oneself*", and impersonal, 'virtual' networks of employers, peers and clients with little personal accountability to each other (Mukherjee, 2008). The industry, therefore, is structured in a manner that personal adaptability, global mobility, flexibility, long hours and blurred work-home boundaries, individual insecure relations with companies, etc, and a culture of competitiveness, self-responsibility and maximisation, and silence become key values for IT workers. This, in turn, has implications and consequences for women's participation and work in the industry (Raghuram, 2004).

THE GENDERED IT INDUSTRY

One of the defining characteristics of the discursive image of equal opportunity and neutrality circulated by the industry is that they have particularly sought to present IT as a women-friendly industry, specifically attuned to addressing gender concerns. As several scholars (e.g., Antony & Gayathri, 2008; Kelkar et al., 2005; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006; Shankar, 2008; Upadhya, 2009) have noted, work in the IT industry has received social approval and is seen as appropriate for women because of the non-manual/physical nature of labour, the high social value and perception of the IT industry, and because of the supposed flexible and progressive work environment, the comfort and safety of the office and high pay. Yet, it is through this very image that the IT industry also succeeds in masking the deeply unequal and problematic social relations and conditions of patriarchy, which intersect with the new economic and cultural conditions of work and manifest in new forms (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2008).

In the public discourse, women have been acknowledged to play an important role within the Indian IT industry. Special provisions have even been made by the Indian state in the Millennium IT Policy in order to attract women, who have come to stand as a "*symbol of modernity*" for the Indian state and corporations, for whom women have become the key to "*...attracting foreign multinationals and justifying a neoliberal reform agenda*" (Mukherjee, 2008, p. 51). The development of IT in Asia has had a clear impact on women (Kelkar et al., 2005) in that it has led to an increase in household income, and women's mobility and say in the family. However, in spite of this, research has indicated gender-based division of labour at home has been maintained and in some cases, even magnified (ibid), a growing concern that will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

In terms of representation of women within the industry, women comprise 19% of the IT workforce and 37% of employees in ITES industry in India (Gillard, et al., 2008). This participation of women is not uniform across the various forms of employment. Studies note that majority of women tend to be concentrated in lower level "process" jobs, or lower skilled IT jobs like data entry, rather than technical functions that have high pay (Antony & Gayathri, 2008; Gillard et al., 2008; Remesh, 2004; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006; D'Mello, 2006). In fact, very few women are found at the higher levels of the industry, in managerial, design or software functions (Antony & Gayathri, 2008; Gillard et al., 2008; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). The overall underrepresentation is not because of the lack of talent available in the country. The percentage of women in science has increased from 7% to almost 40% from 1951 to 2001 (D'Mello, 2006), and software engineering has proved to be very open to women (Raghuram, 2004). While it is predicted that the proportion of men is likely to reduce by 65% (NASSCOM, 2003), there is no expected change in the representation of women in the leadership roles in the IT industry.

Part of the reason for this difference is that women's work is related to specific roles and positions within the industry, particularly influenced by the perception of their better "*soft*" skills as opposed to 'hard' or 'technical' skills (Mukherjee, 2008). This is resultant from the reification of certain feminine traits such as patience, perseverance, and a softer, sweeter voice that sets the standard for a

'preference' for women (Antony and Gayathri, 2008). Further, Upadhya and Vasavi (2006) also state that "... *the firms are found capitalising on [this] gender divisions by actively recruiting women that they perceive will not be interested in promotion*" (p. 138).

One of the primary reasons for the disjointed gender representation in the IT industry is the institutional framework of the IT industry which creates conditions that push women out at a time when they become eligible for promotions, as they coincide with life course events of marriage and reproduction (Upadhya and Vasavi, 2006). So, despite women entering high skilled jobs in the technical aspects of the IT industry, they are disproportionately disadvantaged with respect to contracts, wages, training, and safety (Patel and Parmentier, 2005, citing Mansell and Wehn, 1998). With domesticity still continuing to be the primary responsibility of women and the gendered identity imposed upon and adopted by a majority of the women, there is a large drop out of the workforce in the IT industry after marriage or childbirth owing to the long hours, night shifts and the blurred work and non-work boundaries (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). The ability to remain globally mobile and to cultivate informal social networks for advancement within this industry also often works as a disadvantage for women (Gillard et al., 2008) who have several social restrictions placed upon them in terms of mobility as well as relations.

Even as early as 2002, researchers have documented that women in the IT industry are unable to compete in the same playing field as the men largely because of the networks that they employ (Kelkar et al., 2002; Shankar, 2008). Networking opportunities in the form of taking clients out for dinner, hosting of parties, and spending time with colleagues post work hours is considered to be important social lubrication for career advancement. However, women are constrained not just because of the unsustainability of long hours because of care work responsibilities, but because social roles constructed within patriarchal families that do not provide space for career advancements. In fact, interaction of the IT industry with traditional Indian patriarchal structures creates a particularly restrictive configuration of conditions that systematically devalues and restricts women's participation in the IT industry.

INTERACTION OF THE IT INDUSTRY WITH PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES

There are five traditional discourses that are relevant for this study: transience in parental home, marriage as destiny, motherhood as a source of legitimacy, inferior positions of wives and daughters-in-law and the hierarchy between bride takers and bride givers (Belliappa, 2013). All of these powerful discourses are linked not only in the nationalist discourse of the 'Good Indian Woman', but also is resurrected in complex ways in the role expectations of women in the workplace and in their home (Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007). For example, for every religious function, women are expected to provide to her community of family and friends, a performance and provision of care, through the reproductions of traditional rituals. So, women are often expected to provide foundations of reciprocal kinship relationships, even while their husbands are exempt from it (Belliappa2013; Patel and Parmentier, 2005). These kinship obligations are often strongly tied with moral responsibilities

that provide the basic foundation for reciprocal kinship and social relationships within the family. The cementing of this social glue is expected of women, regardless of their working status.

While women do enjoy a modicum of their role in creating a community and forming close emotional bonds through kinship relationships (Belliappa, 2013), there are often many constraints in doing so. Women, for example, are not just obliged to create and maintain these relationships, along their families, they are often penalised, if the women are unable to form emotional bonds with their communities. In having to so, some women have to 'hide their real personalities' and have to function in these roles with social groups whose value systems they do not necessarily endorse.

Another form of a social role that women internalise and have to engage with is that of the wife (Tara and Vigneshwara, 2011). Given that marriage is often obligatory with high stigma attached to both sexes, if they do not get married, taking on the role of a 'good wife' is a life course event that severely impacts the role of the working women in the IT industry (Shankar, 2008). This is because if one treats marriage as an inevitability, with 'appropriate' times for women at a much younger age than men, women have to take into consideration their duties as a wife to plan their career. Despite the fact that realities are much more complex than the dichotomous relationship of a good vs. evil mother-in-law, women's role definitions and obligations as a wife are often primary in the choice and advancement of their participation in the IT industry (Belliappa, 2013).

These role definitions also have implications in the way that women frame their career in the context of their larger life goals. For example, even if women have fulfilling careers, they have reported having to do 'a certain amount of things' in order to keep 'peace' (Belliappa, 2013). These 'certain amount of things, however, are never well defined, so that women are constantly attempting to match their self-identities with an idealised identity of the modern working Indian woman, without having any concrete pathway to convert these ideals into lived practices (Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007). This is exacerbated especially when motherhood is introduced, where women have to battle not only expectations are not just tied to themselves, but also to the child. So, regardless of the gender of the child, the 'good Indian mother' is reflected only in terms of the performance (in many ways, academic) and behaviour of the child.

These expectations are often in conflict with the expectations of being a good worker in the IT industry, especially for women. In the middle and upper middle class, women's work is often considered as a 'pastime' or a supplement to the family income. Even when women take their career seriously, they often have to work for long periods without expectations for promotion or personal development in terms of particular 'marketable' skills, because they have to ensure that their work does not interfere with their domestic routine duties (Antony & Gayathri, 2008; Remesh, 2004; Singh & Pandey, 2005; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). These expectations are also reflected in the attitudes of HR professionals who also feel that women are more passive compared to men. This sometimes translates into their perception of women as 'good employees', and not as mobile as men. So, while women are perceived to be 'safe' in that they are not as mobile (in changing jobs) as men are, they have no real bargaining power, even with the increased visibility within the industry.

Another way in which women are disadvantaged because of mobility is their inability to relocate or travel because of their domestic responsibilities. Mobility is not necessarily tied to international or even national travel; it can be as local as the travel to work (Kelkar et al., 2002). For example, research has indicated that transportation systems available to the place of work do affect the way in which *families* perceive the suitability of the job (D'Mello, 2006). So, often women move away from the upper management jobs, by shifting towards more stable jobs in the public sector that may pay vary, but little which allows them to be flexible and mobile, while they care for and support the family (Biao, 2008). Mobility is further ensured by the industry itself that provides for spouse allowance, and prefers that spouses of employees are not employed, in order to keep them mobile (Raghuram, 2004).

These conversations on the lack of mobility of women is especially surprising in the context of the IT industry since flexibility is considered to be the cornerstone of the IT industry, where employees are given the freedom to determine their own hours. So, often when women move into more contractual part-time positions, they are often termed to be 'opting' for these jobs. However, in order to establish such a full-time position, women have to bear the brunt of having to shoulder family responsibilities while also negotiating cultural, familial and social roles that push them towards prioritizing their roles as wives and mothers. This does not mean, however, that women are *not* working to negotiate these spaces. By transferring abilities learned in the industry, women feel that they are able to bring up their children, manage the house, and understand the finances, and feel empowered enough to contribute to the welfare of their families (Belliappa, 2013). More importantly, they feel that they have a stake in creating another generation that does not look to women as only care-givers, and can provide positive role models for their own children. So, caring for their families is one of the major ways in which women's experiences in the IT industry is coloured.

CAREWORK IN RELATION TO THE IT INDUSTRY

Unpaid carework can be defined as the care of persons and families that occurs in homes and communities, that is not compensated in monetary terms (Budlender, 2008). The bulk of unpaid carework and the burden, regardless of their participation in formal or informal labour force fall overwhelmingly on women and girls. What this means in social terms is that women and girls are overburdened and do not have the time available to them for contributing to the productive and paid work. The stilted gendered difference of unpaid carework is often attributed to the traditional division of labour, which often exacerbates the invisibility and undervaluation of women's work and its effect on women's time and their ability to contribute to and benefit from paid productive work (Chakrabarti, 2009; Suriya, 2003).

Traditionally, the gendered construction of paid work is that it is primary responsibility of the man, while the woman is primarily responsible for care work at home, either doing the bulk of the care work, or managing it (Patel and Parmentier, 2005). The shifts in the workspace have not really relieved women's burden or primary responsibilities in the home, creating a second shift for women. According to a United Nations Gender and Development Programme Paper in 2008, the average time spent on

care work is twice as much for women compared to men (Budlender, 2008). Closely aligned with this is the time spent on work that contributes to the accountable productive labour, which is about twice as much for men than for women. The difference in the care work in India is much more stark with women spending about 10 times as time on care work compared to men. This, in turn, reflects in the productive labour with men spending more than twice as much time on productive labour, compared to women in India.

Spousal support for women also seems to be dismal (Desai et al, 2011). For example, in their study, (Desai et al, 2011) report that only one third of the husbands were able to extend voluntary assistance, and this was limited at large. But a great majority of them were bound by traditional stereotypes and assume that women in their households would take care of the tasks at home. So, it is of no surprise that women are much more likely to be more distressed at having to balance work-life responsibilities (Desai et al, 2011), compared to men, often affecting their productivity and their sense of well-being.

When we examine women's experience in the IT industry, we find that in addition to the unacknowledged additional work put in by women, they also experience the blurring of the work and non-work boundaries (Mukherjee, 2008) that can result in social alienation and strain on family and other social ties for IT workers (Upadhya & Vasavi, 2008). This is a particularly significant concern for women at all levels in the IT industry (Kelkar, et al., 2005). Work and non-wok boundaries are reconfigured due to the nature of work in the industry, characterised by the need to frequently work in teams that cut across different time zones, and often on crisis mode with tight project deadlines (D'Mello, 2006).

With work hours that can stretch up to 18-20 hours, and may include meetings scheduled anywhere between 8 am -9pm, phone calls from home, and emails at night, 'work-life balance' is crucially affected, despite this forming an important rhetoric of IT organisations (ibid). However the individualisation of work and the work culture itself contributes to this being normalised and seen as an essential part of the IT culture, against which no complaints are raised (ibid). So, often high absteeism in the workplace, compromises in the quality of productivity, morale, and job completion is often attributed to women's individual performance, rather than the structural factors that create the uneven playing field.

This has major implications for women's career advancement as the double burden allows less room tonegotiate for higher pay and better working conditions (Gillard et al., 2008;as w Remesh, 2004; Upadhya & Vasavi, 2006). One of the other options is to remain unmarried, which is often stigmatised even within the IT industry. So, the consequences of these social trends mean that " ...*material circumstances work against women and, consequently, the majority of women IT workers carry out routine work, while their male counterparts are appointed to analytical and managerial positions*"(Gillard et al., 2008, p.271). The reluctance of organisations to recognise the dynamics of the family in the way that women are heavily burdened, and men become an unexamined ideal, upon which performance measurements are mapped onto, has a significant impact on women's experience and continuation with the job (Desai et al., 2011; Fuller and Narsimhan, 2007). What this implies is

that women experience tremendous amounts of invisible and unacknowledged physical and emotional stress. Further,the conditions of uncertainty and mobility created by practices such as 'body shopping' which sustains the Indian software industry also creates specific threats in terms of physical and emotional violence for women, from their families as well as from their work context.

EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE IT INDUSTRY

The culture of exploitation in the IT industry through the practices of secrecy, instability of the job, and the individuation of the 'model worker', non-traditional hours, lack of formal contract or security often increase the changes of risk, violence, and harassment for women (Biao, 2008), and also facilitate conditions by which these become difficult to address and rectify. So, this leads to a culture so that when incidents of violence occurs in the domestic violence are always 'dealt' with on an individual basis, rather than a collective cohesive institutional manner. One of the examples that exemplify this is illustrated in a research study by Biao (2008). A female Indian worker who had gone to Australia on assignment was raped by a fellow Indian IT worker. Instead of concrete steps being taken, not only was the woman harassed, fellow informants of the women *"... held that it is simply foolish for a young woman to move alone like this, and therefore, the [incident] was more a lesson to young women than a crime to be condemned*" (Biao, 2008, p.368).

These kinds of judgments that are written onto the bodies of womenare not just related to the behavior of women within the industry (as in, who she is speaking to, how is she dressed etc), it can also extend to living arrangements of the woman and her marital status. Because social life within the IT industry, therefore, is often a strategic move, any personal or social information about the IT worker can significantly impact women's choice and experience of employment within the industry (Raghuram, 2004). This means that not only can fairly benign forms of transgressions (such as cohabitation without marriage to a co-worker) lead to extreme forms of violence, avenues of social support are also closed because of a fear of loss of one's own position and social standing within the IT industry.

Secrecy is especially problematic, as the contours of the problem within the industry are largely unknown. While data on sexual and other forms of gender-related violence and redressal related to the nature of work or organisational structure of the IT industry is hard to come by, and is in fact largely absent from the literature, this single instance is a significant indicator of the ways in which gender-related discriminations and violence are in fact being reinstated and reproduced in new ways through its functioning.

These new forms are also being reflected within the social-familial context. Providing another clue to this dark underside of the industry, Biao (2008) has also noted how dowry practices have been reinstated in the context of the IT industry. Because of the high social and economic mobility harnessed by a largely male IT work force, the practice of dowry has re-emerged in some parts of the country, as the male IT professional is able to link the prestige conferred by the IT industry as a material gain from his spouse's family (Biao, 2008). What this entails is that unless women's position in the

marriage market is buffeted by their own educational qualifications and high-prestige career, there is a definite regression of women's value in the context of marriage and family (Shankar 2008).

Another prominent way in which violence is further implicated in the family dynamics related to the IT industry is through the contestation of women's position, working hours, and changing identities. For example, we know that violence is often used as a coercive manner through which cultural codes of honour can be upheld and enforced. Given prevailing value systems does not endorse violence completely, it does provide loopholes to the use of violence when women are judged to have not honoured or fulfilled their familial duties, especially those related to their husband, their mother-in-law, and even their own children.

In addition, shifts in power relationships, especially if the wife is participating in the IT industry and earns a high salary, can lead to conflicts and instances of violence within the marital relationships (Shankar, 2008). Research has also indicated that women often downplay their achievements in relation to their husband, to preserve his 'honor', and even though no violence may take place, the coercive nature of the social role ensures women's acquiescence to the familial endorsement of male superiority (Shankar, 2008; Tara and Vigneshwara, 2011). So, while in many instances, participation in the workplace might not give rise to direct instances of anger and violence, the transgressions of traditional social roles within the family can trigger coercive control, with the threat of physical violence.

Apart from the threat of violence in the workplace, and at home, women also face extensive physical, sexual, and verbal harassment while commuting. While sexual harassment is fairly rampant in public spaces in India, this is often used by families to highlight the sexual vulnerability of women while traversing in public space, this can often be used to curb their physical mobility in the name of 'protection' (Sircar, 2007). This further restricts women's engagement with their work, and creates avenues of disengagement with the workspace. Because travelling in public spaces are often very problematic for women, "special" arrangements are often made to accommodate women. This means women are often unable to function fully in the IT industry, as their inability to move within the city safely is used against them by justifying their lack of progress on their non-participation, instead of a largely coercive and sexist infrastructure, very much outside their control (Kelkar et al., 2002).

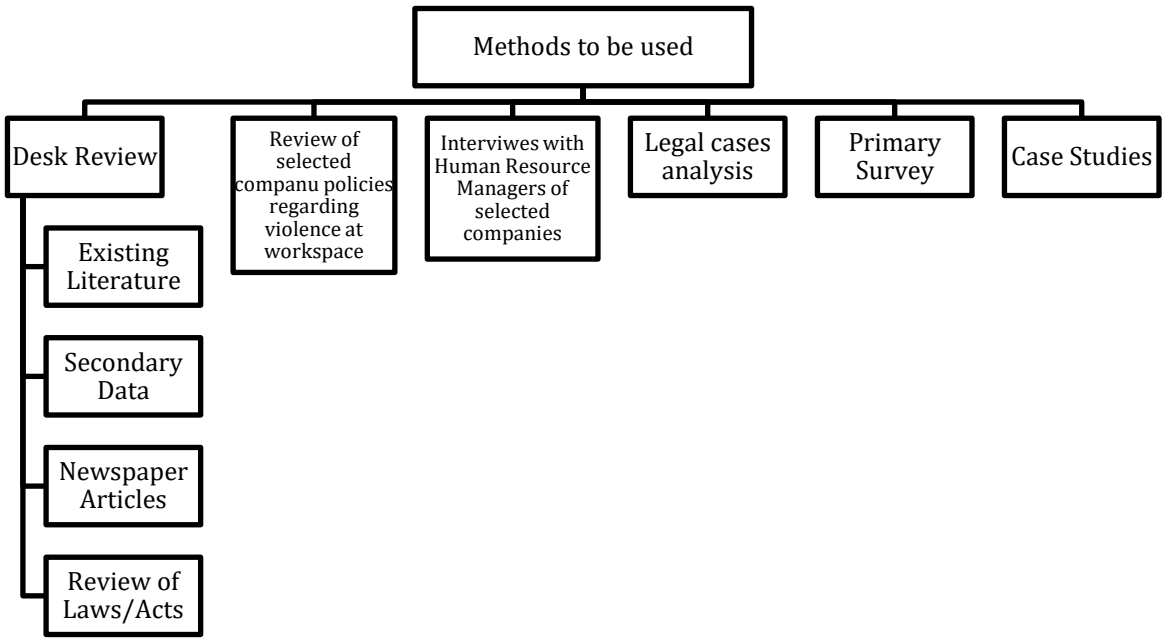
Thus, one of the critical ways in which to understand women's experiences in the IT industry can be seen by the conflict of the vocabulary of individual choice and the realities of structural transgressions (Belliappa, 2013, p.158). So, our study aims to understand the way in which an IT worker is experiencing a self "*that is shifting and contingent on circumstances*" (Belliappa, 2013, p.159), and its implications for gendered behaviour and outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

REDESIGNING THE STUDY

When we conceptualised the study, we assumed cooperation and facilitation for collecting data through various women's organisations, companies, as well as the state department. So, a detailed methodology (described below) was conceptualised. However, applying the outlined methods for the study became the biggest challenge in the study. Due to the complete lack of cooperation provided to us by many parties, we had to modify and change the approach of our original study as well as our use of methods. For example, our study was initiated with the idea that we would use a combination of methods, namely, key informant interviews with companies/NASSCOM/State Department, a survey of women working in the ITeS sector to understand their experiences of violence in different spaces, combined with interviews with men working in ITeS sector to explore their knowledge and understanding of issues related to domestic violence. These interviews were planned as self-administered faced-to-face questionnaires. The study had also proposed in-depth interviews with women to understand their experiences and relationship of empowerment with incidence of violence in a greater detail. It was also expected that case studies could be developed using some of the in-depth interviews as well as analysis of legal cases filed under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act 2013. Diagram 1 captures the different methods proposed to ensure a comprehensive 360 degree analysis.

Diagram 1: Methods to be used Proposed at the Beginning of the Study

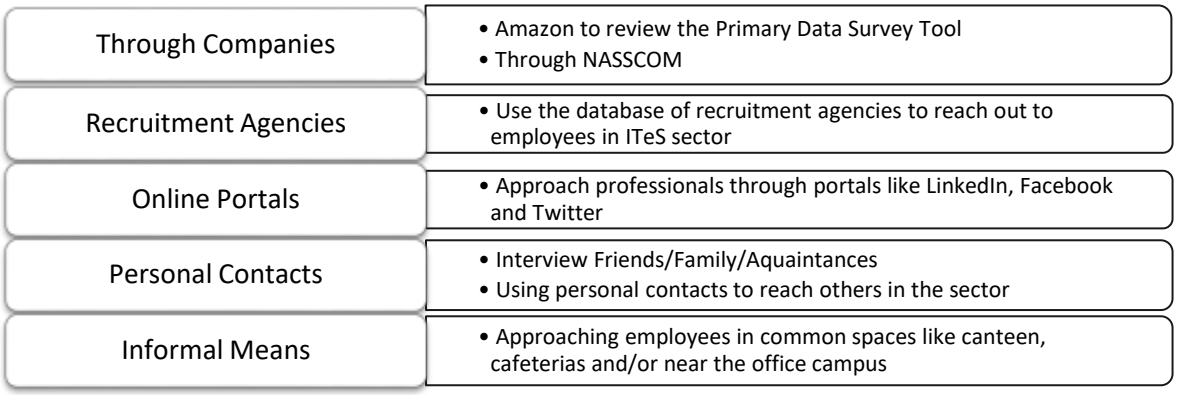


During the initial stage, a detailed desk review of books and scholarly articles related to gender and IT industry was compiled. This review explored IT as a working space for women and how different aspects of empowerment and the double burden of care work in addition to long hours, shifts in working hours can affect women's participation in the workplace. The review also tried to understand the interactions of new employment opportunities along with incidences of violence (physical, mental, economic and/or sexual). However, most studies (except a prominent few)were silent about incidences of violence within the IT industry, and this was extremely troubling for us. As a measure to understand the prevalence of the discourse of gender equity within the IT industry, we also conducted a brief online search for companies who had publicised their commitment to women's safety within the company. We also examined whether these companies were able to include the Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013 on their website.

As a part of the desk review, we also tried to get access to legal cases filed under Sexual Harassment Prevention Act (2013). For this purpose, we contacted Ms. Shakun from Vimochana (a women's advocacy group) and a lawyer (Mrs. Ambika) working with sexual harassment in Bangalore. Both were very insistent that the incidence of sexual harassment and other forms of violence were prevalent in the context of the IT industry. However, they were unable to provide any more leads, primarily because of confidentiality issues. Although Vimochana gave various insights about the extent of incidence of sexual violence and other forms of physical violence, they were unable to share actual case-studies, primarily due to non-maintenance of records and inaccessibility of the victims after the case is closed. They elaborated on how the issue of violence within the IT industry has a culture of silence around it so that even when women have experienced violence, they are extremely reluctant to report it. In addition, even before women approach Vimochana and lawyers, they usually have gone through the internal process of the companies. So, Vimochana and lawyers tend to get these cases only when companies are unable to resolve it internally. They estimate that companies are likely to get a lot more cases, and are often motivated to ensure that they are resolved so as to avoid bad publicity.

Simultaneously, we also tried contacting about 5-6 large-sized companies in Bangalore, including the big names such as Wipro and Amazon, to facilitate the administration of a survey that would help us to capture the experience of violence in the IT industry. The Human Resource Departments were contacted; however, apart from Amazon India, none of the companies contacted responded positively. Amazon India agreed to review the survey tool before circulating it among their employees. But they did not follow up on this agreement. Conducting focus group discussions with men and women are difficult without access to companies' employee pool In the wake of non-response from companies, we decided to convert the survey into an online survey that would potentially reach a larger sample, without the restrictions imposed on by the companies. In addition, we hoped that based on the consent of the participants of the online survey, we could interview a few men and women as the basis for in-depth case studies. Diagram 2 summarises the second attempt to redesigning the approach.

Diagram 2: Redesigned Approach for Primary Data Collection



In accordance with the second plan, NASSCOM was approached to introduce the study to different companies, assuming that the companies would respect NASSCOM's reference. Approaching NASSCOM was a challenge in itself. Repeated attempts to get appointments with the officials was in vain as they gave many subtle indication that they do not encourage such studies that investigate incidence of violence against women in the industry. Recruitment agencies also denied access to their database and were skeptical about the response from the individuals if they circulate such surveys. Despite these setbacks, after the finalisation of the online survey tool, the link was circulated through LinkedIn profile of CBPS, which was especially designed for this purpose. The link was also shared through the Facebook page of the organization. Since the organisation is based in Bangalore, personal contacts were also utilised to contact employees working in the ITeS sector. Despite desperate attempts and extensive outreach via online portals and through CBPS employees, the rate of response was quite low and data collected was not sufficient for analysis.

Based on the slow response of the online survey, we asked a few of those who had participated in the survey to give a feedback on the form and content of the survey. One of the feedback received was that the survey questionnaire, originally separate for both men and women, was too was too elaborate, asking too many details about financial status, and it required a lot of questions related to the violence experienced / witnessed / inflected. All in all, it was considered very lengthy to complete, almost 30 minutes on an average, and so many individuals were very likely to abandon the process before completing it. We also realised that it would be more useful to extend the survey to other parts of India to get more responses.

While redesigning the approach and editing the online survey so that it can be completed within 10 minutes, we also approached UNITES Professionals[2] , an informal labour collective composed of ITeS workers. Discussions with Mr. Karthik Shekhar, National Secretary UNITES Professional, indicated that in the Indian context, both IT and ITeS sectors do not have separate entities. These are often considered as a single sector. He also suggested that we extend the definition of the ITeS sector in the study to represent the current context. This was also reflected in the literature review conducted

[2] *The only union of employees working in IT and ITeS sector in India (www.unitesprofessionals.org).*

wherein others studies discussed the merging of the two sectors in the Indian context. This suggestion was incorporated for the second round of online survey circulated.

At this stage, the biggest challenge was to get approval from companies to circulate the online form amongst their employees. CBPS approached Hengasara Hakkina Sangha (HHS)[3] as they have been involved with conducting sexual harassment trainings for various companies in Bangalore. They shared their experience regarding creating awareness about sexual harassment at work along with the silence around such incidences. They also felt that obtaining information regarding this aspect is very difficult and could not really help out in any way. At our request, Sandhya Rao[4] introduced us to a few IT companies, for whom she had conducted sexual harassment trainings. Other personal contacts were also explored. All of these contacts, including Wipro, did not respond to our request. Finally, a IT/ITeS company (based in Amritsar with pan-India operations) agreed to circulate the survey link amongst their employees in different cities. This company agreed to the administration of the survey, through the strength of a personal contact, and after understanding the urgency of obtaining a sample size that would enable us to analyse the question.

The cooperation of this one company allowed us to put together a fairly large sample size, so that we could carry out the required analysis. We had also invited individuals to share their email addresses with us for a further detailing of their responses, given the truncated questionnaire. Out of the 436, we received 21 email ids and 39 phone numbers. We contacted all of these individuals, out of which only 13 gave us some time to talk to them. Because of time-constraints, they were unable to participate in an in-depth interview. This means that we can only engage with the broad base of questions, instead of understanding the dynamics of the trends found in the online survey.

CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODS USED

Although the minimum sample size for respondents have been met, because of the lack of diversity of the sample, the trends of the sample are not generalisable to the IT industry. The reason is primarily because the findings are primarily based on the concentration of respondents in two to three companies. Additionally, given the second round of the online survey had to be edited drastically to ensure completed responses, a large number of variables were eliminated making detailed analysis problematic. It was also noted that even after indicating that they had experienced some variant of violence (physical, mental, sexual, economic), a number of respondents did not answer sensitive questions regarding the perpetrator, onus of responsibility and the mechanisms that they used to cope with the situation. Therefore, we are limited not only by the diversity in the sample, but also the social context through which some of the responses could be better understood. However, it is still useful to examine these trends, especially if the findings of our survey (as described below) are situated in the context of the larger research already conducted in this area.

3 This is a feminist activist women's rights organisation (www.hhsonline.org).
4 Formerly with HSS; She conducts sexual harassment trainings in IT companies in Bangalore.

FINDINGS

ABOUT THE SAMPLE

A total of 435 individuals took our online survey, out of which 286 (66%) are self-identified women and 149 (34%) are self identified men (Table 1). Consistent with the findings of the literature, our sample is highly educated (Upadhaya, 2009). Out of the 435 people, about 50% have completed their Bachelors and 17% (78) have completed their post-graduate degree (Table 2). One of the characteristic features of the IT industry is that in the past 15 years, the cohort in the IT industry has been very young, with the average not going beyond 35 years in the last 15 years (Kelkar et al.,2002). So, they often consist of single men and women who are often living with their parents or living as paying guests, especially if they are living away from their parents.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Males and Females in the Survey

	Total Number	%
Females	286	65.75
Males	149	34.25
Total	435	

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 2: Sex-Wise Education Qualification of Respondents (%)

	Up to Class X	Class XII	Diploma	Graduate	Post - graduate	Others
Females	0	24.13	2.45	50.00	20.28	3.15
Males	0	26.85	5.37	51.68	13.42	2.68
Total	0	25.06	3.45	50.57	17.93	2.99

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 3: Sex-Wise Marital Status of Respondents (%)

	Never Married	Married	Divorced	Separated	Widowed	Others
Females	77.62	16.78	0.70	3.50	0.00	1.40
Males	62.42	33.56	0.00	1.34	0.00	2.68
Total	72.41	22.53	0.46	2.76	0.00	1.84

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Our sample is very similar in that about 72% of the sample is not married (Table 3). A larger proportion of the women in our sample seem to be unmarried compared to the men (Table 3: 78% vs. 62%). The percentage of men and women who are married tend to slightly different for men and women. About 17% of the women in our sample is married as compared with 33% of the men who are married (Table 3). Only (3%) individuals reported being either divorced, separated and in other arrangements. About 39% of the individuals in our sample live with their parents, with almost half of the women living with their parents (Table 4: 44%).

Table 4: Sex-Wise Living Arrangements of Respondents (%)

	Living alone	Living in nuclear family	Living in joint family	Living with partner	Living with own parents	Friends	Hostel / PG	Others	Total
Females	11.19	16.08	16.78	5.94	44.76	0.35	2.45	2.45	100
Males	20.13	13.42	24.83	6.04	25.50	5.37	0.00	4.70	100

Total	14.25	15.17	19.54	5.98	38.16	2.07	1.61	3.22	100

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

As indicated above, given most unmarried children tend to live with their parents, it is not surprising that about 60% of the people who have never married either live in joint families (14%) or live with their own parents (Table 5). In our sample, more than one-third (39%) of the sample is evenly distributed between living in joint families and nuclear families (Table 5). This is consistent with the larger finding that older forms of family structure are being resurrected to take on the burden of child care responsibilities when both male and female members of a family are earning (Belliappa, 2013).

Table 5: Living Arrangements by Marital Status (%)

	Living alone	Living in nuclear family	Living in joint or extended family	Living with partner	Living with parents	Friends	Hostel / PG	Total
Never Married	18.57	7.82	14.33	8.47	45.93	2.61	2.28	100.00
Married	4.12	39.18	39.18	0.00	17.53	0.00	0.00	100.00
Divroced	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Separated	8.33	16.67	25.00	0.00	41.67	8.33	0.00	100.00
Widowed	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	14.73	15.68	20.19	6.18	39.43	2.14	1.66	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Given that we have such a young sample which is largely single, it is not likely that examining care work and violence is likely to give us strong indications of the larger trends. This is primarily because single women and men do not always feel any constraints in the household, and often responsibilities are often taken over the women members of their parental homes (Kelkar et al., 2002). The most disadvantaged in the sample are likely to be married women whose "*socially informed responsibility in childcare and housework*" (Kelkar et al., 2002, p.73) mean that they find the structure of the IT industry to be very restrictive and difficult to function with. However, given we only have 48 women in our sample of 435, we assume that we will only be able to see a sliver of the larger trends that have been documented in the literature.

EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

The sample is largely distributed between individuals who are in technical or support positions in the company (34% for both, Table 6). Almost 300 of the 435 are in the technical and support positions, with about 80 individuals (18%) in management positions (Table 7). About 40% of the women report being in technical positions, and 26% in support positions (Table 6). We have about 2% in senior management positions, and 10% and 6% are in lower and middle management respectively.

Table 6: Sex-wise Current Position in the Company (%)

	Administrative	Technical	Support	Lower Management	Middle management	Senior Management	Others
Females	3.15	40.56	26.22	10.49	6.29	2.10	4.20
Males	4.70	22.82	47.65	4.03	9.40	4.03	3.36
Total	3.68	34.48	33.56	8.28	7.36	2.76	3.91

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 7: Sex-wise Current Position in the Company (Number)

	Administrative	Technical	Support	Lower Management	Middle management	Senior Management
Females	9	116	75	30	18	6
Males	7	34	71	6	14	6
Total	16	150	146	36	32	12

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

About 120 individuals had moved to their current location because of their job (22%) or a promotion in their job (5%). There seems to be small variations in the gender differences in movement. While 15% of the women moved to their current location to join a job, about 35% of the men did so (Table 8). These statistics reverse slightly when we examine the reasons for moving to their current location because of their marriage or because their spouse relocated. About 6% of women moved after their marriage, compared to 2% of men, and about 3% of the women relocated with their partners, as compared with 1% of the men (Table 8). These trends do not give us a lot of information related to the interaction of gender with the family forms, primarily because as observed above, a larger percentage of our sample is married. But even within that small sample, it seems somewhat indicative (although not conclusive in any manner) that it seems that more women tend to move for a job for a spouse compared to men (Table 8).

Table 8: Sex-wise Reason for Moving to Current Location (%)

	I have always lived here	Parents / siblings / relatives live here	I moved here after my marriage	Spouse / partner relocated and I moved with them	To join a job	Promotion at my job
Females	48.60	12.94	6.29	3.15	15.38	4.90
Males	40.94	7.38	2.01	1.34	34.90	6.71
Total	45.98	11.03	4.83	2.53	22.07	5.52

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

If we examine the reasons cited for joining the IT sector, we find that close to a majority of men cite salary as the reason (Table 9). While it is still a prominent feature for women (51%), it seems that flexibility of work hours (15% of all women) seem to prefer it compared to the men (10% of all men). The nature of work is also a draw for both men and women (48% and 41% respectively: Table 8). With respect to what they dislike, this falls along the same categories, with about 44% of men and 33% disliking their salary (Table 10).

Table 9: Sex-Wise Percentage of What Respondents Like about IT Sector

	Salary	Nature of work	Flexibility at work	Work load	Relations at work with supervisor and/or colleagues	Employee benefits	Perks, such as availability of canteen facility, transportation to the job etc	Prestige	Timings
Females	51.40	40.91	15.73	0.00	12.24	5.94	0.35	1.75	5.94
Males	79.87	48.32	10.74	0.00	17.45	4.70	2.01	2.01	0.67
Total	61.15	43.45	14.02	0.00	14.02	5.52	0.92	1.84	4.14

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

The other factor that about a third of all individuals dislike is the workload, (30% for men and 27% for women). There does seem to be a small gender difference with respect to the timings. For instance, about 20% of all women do not like the timing, but that seems to bother only 10% of the men (10%) (Table 10).

Table 10: Sex-Wise Percentage of What Respondents Dislike about IT Sector

	Salary	Nature of work	Flexibility at work	Work load	Relations at work with supervisor and/or colleagues	Employee benefits	Perks, such as availability of canteen facility, transportation to the job etc	Prestige	Timings
Females	33.22	2.45	6.29	26.92	2.80	4.55	5.59	0.00	19.93
Males	44.30	12.08	4.03	30.87	3.36	8.72	8.05	0.00	10.07
Total	37.01	5.75	5.52	28.28	2.99	5.98	6.44	0.00	16.55

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

When asked about their opinion related to the gendered treatment of the IT towards them, about 65% of the people who participated in our survey feel that their company is supportive and responsive to concerns of women employees (Table 11). In fact, almost 70% of the women in our sample think that their company is supportive and responsive to their needs. About 5% of the individuals working in these companies do not agree. With respect to career advancement, about half of all individuals believe that everyone gets fair and equal treatment, although more men (50%) think this way, as compared with women (40%) (Table 12). More proportion of women (18%) think that in order to advance, one has to be more compliant towards the management, whether male or female, compared to 13% of the men. In terms of whether men get more opportunities, the gender difference is minimal, with approximately 6% of the men and women feeling that men get more opportunities (Table 12).

Table 11: Sex-Wise Response to Kind of Office Environment (%)

	Supportive and responsive to concerns of women employees	Not very supportive and responsive to women employees	Indifferent to women employees – all employees are treated the same	Don't know
Females	69.23	4.55	14.34	6.29
Males	57.72	6.71	18.79	9.40
Total	65.29	5.29	15.86	7.36

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 12: Sex-Wise Opinion about Career Advancement at Work (%)

	No, men get more opportunities and benefits	No, women get more opportunities and benefits	Men who are compliant towards management get more opportunities and benefits	Women who are compliant towards management get more opportunities and benefits	Both men and women who are compliant towards management get more opportunities and benefits	Yes, everyone gets equal and fair chance for advancement and it is linked with performance	I don't know
Females	5.59	3.85	2.45	1.05	18.18	39.51	24.48
Males	6.71	2.01	3.36	0.67	13.42	49.66	16.11
Total	5.98	3.22	2.76	0.92	16.55	42.99	21.61

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

These are unexpected findings especially given research indicates that the IT industry does "*little to promote or retain its female workforce*" (D'Mello, 2006, p.7). We argue that this might be because the IT industry invests in cultivating an image of being a caring employer, especially for women. A lot of women believe in the industry's "*egalitarian and meritocratic*" (p.14) image that allows for women to be both *good Indian woman* and the productive worker (Belliappa, 2013). So, often the trimmings of a healthy work environment such as gyms and transportation for their employees are seen to be enough instead of a facilitative environment that allows for greater equity and flexibility in terms of work and transition into upper management (Belliappa, 2013; Radhakrishnan, 2011). The perception of equality with the underlying experience of inequality can be a huge problem for researchers without access to the companies, as it is not clear whether the findings of satisfaction and endorsement are a product of the perception of the IT industry, heavily promoted by the industry or is a product of their actual experience.

CONCERNS AND EXPERIENCE OF MOBILITY

One of the prominent conversations around women's experience in the IT industry revolves around the mobility-morality narrative (Patel, 2010). The mobility of the women are often integrally tied to their reputation, and by extension, their family's reputation. The idea that women's mobility in the night is deeply implicated in inviting gossip, opposition, and inquiries from strangers is part of lived experience for any woman participating in the service side of the industry. We examined the experience of safety during commute time for our sample, and found the following results.

Table 13: Sex-Wise Mode of Commute (%)

	Company arranges transport for pick up and drop off	I own and travel in my own vehicle	I use public transport	I carpool with my colleagues
Females	7.34	23.78	59.44	1.40
Males	7.38	46.31	34.90	2.01
Total	7.36	31.49	51.03	1.61

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

With respect to their commute to work, about half of the people in the survey seem to be using the public transportations system to commute to work (51%, Table 13). There is some gender difference in the sample. About 59% of the women report using public transportation, compared with 35% of the men. Compared to women (24%), 46% of men also seem to own and travel in their transportation (Table 12). A minority of individuals (7%, for both men and women) are travelling with the transportation arranged by their company. With respect to feeling safe, most of the sample seems to feel safe during their commute (73%, Table 14). Surprisingly, a higher percentage of the men report feeling unsafe while commuting (11%), compared to 7% of the women (Table 13). We do not believe that this is representative of the population, as every other study indicates that experience of violence is significantly higher for women compared to those for men. However, it must be noted that the feeling of being unsafe in public space is also prevalent among the men, and this also has to be taken into consideration.

When we examined if people would report an incident if they are travelling, just over half of the individuals reported that they would report it (61%, Table 15). Very few people seem likely to report an incident if they are travelling by themselves (6%, Table 16). We argue that this might be partly might due to the idea that employees feel that their company might not be concerned over the partly due to the idea that employees feel that their company might not be concerned over the experiences they have during their commute to travel.

Table 14: Sex-Wise Feeling of Safety during Commute (%)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Never thought about it
Females	74.13	6.99	5.24	10.49
Males	70.47	11.41	1.34	10.07
Total	72.87	8.51	3.91	10.34

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 15: Sex-wise Response to whether they are comfortable in reporting an incident that occurs during their commute (%)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Never thought about it
Females	60.84	8.39	12.94	12.59
Males	63.09	11.41	6.04	11.41
Total	61.61	9.43	10.57	12.18

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

This is especially true if employees are also concerned about the impression that they create with their supervisors if they report any problems. For example, in a telephonic interview, one of the participants reported an incident when he was penalised for reaching his office late. He was ten minutes late because the roads to his office were blocked because of massive floods in his office. So, he had to take a detour that look a longer route and reached late. His supervisor was unsympathetic to his plight, and he felt that in these circumstances, explaining these circumstances makes no sense ("*koi matlab nahi hain*"), given the company is unlikely to understand and empathise. Given this is the work culture for a fairly benign incident, it is very likely that employees are likely to shy away from reporting more serious incidents to their employers.

Table 16: Based on the type of commute, whether they are comfortable in reporting an incident during commute (%)

	Yes	No	Don't know	Never thought about it
Company arranges transport for pick up and drop off	46.67	26.67	6.67	20.00
I own and travel in my own vehicle	72.39	11.19	5.22	11.19
I use public transport	65.90	5.53	15.67	12.90
I carpool with my colleagues	66.67	16.67	16.67	0.00
Others	62.50	25.00	12.50	0.00
Total	65.69	10.05	11.27	12.99

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

INTERACTION WITH CAREWORK

Time is often the enemy of women's work. The IT industry routinely requires 12 to 14 hours a day, but with the time that women are working, the working day often extends to 20 hours a day, which

includes working from home and attending to calls (Kelkar et al., 2002). We tried to examine this aspect by enquiring about men and women's care work in the study.

Table 17: Sex-wise Number of Hours Spent for Domestic Work during Weekdays (%)

	I don't do any domestic work	Less than 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	4 to 6 hours	6 or more hours
Females	12.24	23.08	30.77	12.94	16.78
Males	15.44	34.23	18.12	8.05	16.78
Total	13.33	26.90	26.44	11.26	16.78

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

With respect to housework, it seems that about a little more than 66% of the individuals work less than 4 hours of care work during weekdays, with about 13% doing no domestic work at all (Table 17). So, about 1/3rd of all individuals working in the IT industry spend more than 4 hours of their time doing care work at home. There are some differences with respect to men and women working in the week. While there is not a huge difference between men and women doing absolutely no domestic work, about 30% of the women work about 2 to 4 hours, compared to 18% of men who work those hours. The difference between men and women doing more than 4 hours of care work does not seem to be very great compared to men and women with respect to care work (24% and 30% respectively, Table 15). We must keep in mind while examining these results that we have a predominately young sample who are unmarried and living with their parents. The research indicates that women start to really experience conflict in their homes, after they are married and have children.

Table 17a: Sex-wise Number of Hours Spent for Domestic Work during Weekdays for Married Respondents (%)

	Married Females	Married Males	Total
I don't do any domestic work	20.00	80.00	100.00
Less than 2 hours	15.38	84.62	100.00
2 to 4 hours	71.88	28.13	100.00
4 to 6 hours	81.82	18.18	100.00
6 or more hours	43.75	56.25	100.00
Total	47.37	52.63	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

We find some evidence of this when we examine the house of carework for only married men and women. Even though the numbers are small (45 married women and 50 married men), we find that except for the last category of more than 6 hours, there is a gendered division of labour (Table 17a). of the people who have reported doing no domestic work, 80% are male. As we move down the table, we find that men's contribution to labour goes down. For example, when we examine the gendered division of labour of individuals doing more than 4 to 6 hours of work, only 18% of them are male. So, it is very likely that with a larger sample of married men and women, we would be able to discern clear patterns of the ways in which unpaid carework heavily burdens women.

Table 18: Sex-wise Number of Hours Spent for Domestic Work during Weekends (%)

	I don't do any domestic work	Less than 2 hours	2 to 4 hours	4 to 6 hours	6 or more hours
Females	9.44	16.43	21.68	17.13	29.72
Males	12.08	20.81	22.82	15.44	20.13
Total	10.34	17.93	22.07	16.55	26.44

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 19: Sex-Wise Child Work shared with other member of the Family (%)

	Females	Males
Me	52.74	47.26
Partner	25.00	75.00
In-laws	44.44	55.56
Parents / Siblings	74.52	25.48
Paid Help	85.71	14.29
Total	62.94	37.06

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

When we compare the weekend with the weekday, we find some shifts in the gendered distribution (Table 17 and Table 18). We find that while both men and women do seem to be working longer hours in domestic work during the weekends, about a third of the women report spending more than 6 hours on the weekend doing domestic chores (30%), compared to 20% of the men. Again, we must consider that these numbers must be considered in the context of our sample, where 44% of the women are living with their own parents. Even in this skewed sample, we find that women are much more likely to take primary responsibility of their children compared to men (Table 19). If we break these numbers down, we find that for 24% of the men who are married, their wives are responsible for childcare, compared to women (6%) whose husbands take care of their children (Table 20).

Table 20: Sex-wise Child Work Responsibility and Marital Status (%)

	Females						Males					
	Me	Partner	In-laws	Parent/Sibling	Paid Help	Total	Me	Partner	In-laws	Parents/Sibling	Paid Help	Total
Never Married	22.34	1.60	0.53	73.40	2.13	100	41.03	2.56	2.56	53.85	0.00	100
Married	66.00	6.00	6.00	18.00	4.00	100	56.06	24.24	4.55	15.15	0.00	100
Divorced	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Separated	14.29	0.00	0.00	85.71	0.00	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Widowed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	31.30	2.44	1.63	62.20	2.44	100	47.59	12.41	3.45	36.55	0.00	100

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

When we examine the distribution of care work within a particular family structure, especially for women, we find that women do seem to find some forms of support in the extended family system (Table 21). In nuclear families, 16% of the women are able to take the support of their parents. It is even greater in join family system where about 40% of the women report that their parents take care of their children. In fact, across the board, parents seem to be shouldering the care giving of the

children (Table 18). In the context of this, we find it extremely odd that when we ask if work life has ever interfered with their domestic life (Table 22), over half of the women (64%) feel that domestic life does not interfere with their work life, as compared with men (42%). In fact, about half of the men (50%) feel that their work life has interfered with their domestic life, as compared with one-third of the women. This is surprising given the hours of work that women put in at home.

Table 21: Sex-Wise Child Work responsibility and Living Arrangement (%)

	Females						Males					
	Me	Partner	In-laws	Parents /Sibling	Paid Help	Total	Me	Partner	In-laws	Parents /Siblings	Paid Help	Total
Living alone	30.43	4.35	4.35	60.87	0.00	100.00	30.43	4.35	4.35	60.87	0.00	100
Living in nuclear family	64.00	16.00	0.00	16.00	4.00	100.00	64.00	16.00	0.00	16.00	4.00	100
Living in joint or extended family	26.19	28.57	4.76	40.48	0.00	100.00	26.19	28.57	4.76	40.48	0.00	100
Living with partner	33.33	4.17	4.17	58.33	0.00	100.00	33.33	4.17	4.17	58.33	0.00	100.00
Living with parents	25.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	100.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	100
Friends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hostel / PG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	36.44	15.25	3.39	44.07	0.85	100.00	36.44	15.25	3.39	44.07	0.85	100

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Even in our telephonic interviews, it was clear that there was a gendered distribution of labour in care. For example, men tended to do "outside work" during the meeting. In fact, only one man spoke about the care work that he does at home. Because he works long hours, and he has very young children, his wife will not be able to cook dinner until he gets home to take care of the children. So, he told us that because there was no one else to look after them, he would look and play with his children after he got home, so that his wife could be free to prepare the meals. However, this was an exception to the rule. Most of the men that we interviewed did not do any care work, apart from the outside work. However, most of the women, even unmarried women, spoke of having to do 'cleaning and cooking' after they got home or during the weekends. A married woman was able to describe the transition from very limited care work to a lot of expectations around 'the house' after she got married.

Table 22: Sex-wise response whether Work Life has interfered with Domestic Life (%)

	Yes	No
Females	32.52	63.64
Males	49.66	42.28
Total	22.07	22.07

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

She told us that before marriage, she was living with her elder sister and brother-in-law. So, she didn't have any family obligations and didn't have to do a lot of the care work. After marriage, while there was no direct pressure, there seemed to be a marked difference in the expectations of people around her, and she felt that the pressures of her job were hampering these expectations at home. She felt that her manager could not understand these different issues, and so, she quit her position to move to a new place, where they seemed to understand these pressures. Obligations such as cooking in the morning were inbuilt into the role of the 'wife'. Because she was unable to cope with these expectations, she hired domestic help to ensure that she could complete her duties. She was also open about the pressures of relatives visiting, especially during the weekdays, because she would then be expected to cater to them after a long day of work. Weekends were often "very messy" because of the build of all the chores that are not completed during the weekdays. She felt that most of her family time with her husband was spent in fulfilling chores during the weekend.

This example is important to understand care work as a socially defined practice that combines an emotional and familial content that creates and maintains the fabric of basic social relations and interdependence (Minguez, 2012). As indicated by this example, often care work done by women is considered a private responsibility, even though it goes to sustain the emotional and physical health of families. The work that goes into the care, therefore, can routinely be undervalued within the micro context, and has consequences for women's quality of life in the long term.

ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE IT INDUSTRY

We first examined the general attitudes towards the acceptability of violence in the sample that we surveyed. The results are at once disheartening. When we examine the attitudes towards domestic violence, we find results that are at once disheartening and encouraging. While on an average, about 60% of the individuals surveyed resolutely say no to any justification of violence, about 15 to 26% still feel that the violence is either justified or sometimes justified (Table 23). In fact, the results are also highly gendered, with more men on an average believing that violence is sometimes justified, compared to women (Table 20). For example, about 21% of the men believe that violence is sometimes justified if the wife is unfaithful, compared to women (8% of all women). This is of concern mostly because when incidents of violence happen in the workplace or outside of it, if individuals in charge are not sensitised to the dynamics of violence (in that there is no justification for violence), there are more chances of victim-blaming.

Table 23: Sex-wise response to different reasons for acceptability of verbal/physical abuse of women by their partners (%)

Reason for acceptability of violence		Females	Males	Total
If she doesn't cook properly (%)	Yes	10.50	17.36	12.81
	No	70.59	53.72	64.90
	Sometimes	18.91	28.93	22.28
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
If she does something he has told her not to (%)	Yes	14.71	19.67	16.39
	No	71.43	50.82	64.44
	Sometimes	13.87	29.51	19.17
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Is she refuses to do something he has asked her to do	Yes	14.41	20.83	16.57
	No	69.92	52.50	64.04
	Sometimes	15.68	26.67	19.38
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

In order to examine if men and women are likely to report violence, if it occurs, we first asked if they were aware of the sexual harassment policies in their company. Awareness of sexual harassment policies indicates two things: firstly, the prevalence of an established process of addressing any form of violence in the workplace, and second, the naming and recognition of what is considered sexual harassment. The latter is especially important, given often behaviours that are actually harassment are so normalised that they are not even considered to be an act of emotional and physical violence.

Table 24: Sex-wise response to what is Sexual Harassment Legally (%)

	Protection against sexual harassment of women and men at the workplace	Protection against sexual harassment of women only (and not men) at the workplace	Don't know
Females	48.60	10.14	39.51
Males	61.07	8.05	24.16
Total	52.87	9.43	34.25

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

With respect to sexual harassment awareness policies, it seems that about a third of the individuals do not know the definition of sexual harassment, in strictly legal terms (40% for women, and 24% for men, Table 24). With respect to their own company, there does seem to be some level of awareness (Table 25). Close to half of the women (47%) and about 60% of the men seem to know of the sexual harassment policy. This can be seen in both positive and negative ways. While one can be inclined to be positive that about half of the individuals surveyed (51%) work in a company that has a sexual harassment policy, the other half work in a company that does not have a sexual harassment policy, or has not made it clear to its employees that it has a sexual harassment policy. This is even more disturbing when we look at the gendered distribution of the awareness. About one-third of all women (32%) report not knowing whether there is a harassment policy in their company (Table 22). This is especially troubling given it is more likely that women are likely to be sexual harassment, and they lack the knowledge with respect to how to address this if they are harassed.

Table 25: Sex-wise Response to whether their Current Company has an Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy (%)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Females	47.20	16.78	31.47
Males	59.06	14.09	20.13
Total	51.26	15.86	27.59

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

With respect to defining what sexual harassment is, we find some puzzling trends. About a third of the men (38%) believe that sending affectionate notes to a colleague is in fact sexual harassment, as compared to only 9% of the women (Table 26). These are similar to only 2% of the women thinking that winking at colleagues suggests a form of sexual harassment compared to 14% of the men. These results are puzzling at best, especially when we think about the ways in which men and women answer questions related to singing suggestive songs, or requesting colleagues for oral sex. Only 3% of the men think that singing suggestive songs can be constituted as sexual harassment, compared to 14% of the women. Similarly, 5% of the men think asking for oral sex can be considered sexual harassment compared to 24% of the women. So, there does seem to be a wide variation with both men and women with respect to their answers in relation to sexual harassment. However, it does seem that a greater percentage of men (31%) thought that everything we had listed was part of the sexual harassment spectrum, compared to the women (21%, Table 23). This suggests not a singular pattern, and we can only understand these trends if we have more contextual information regarding these trends.

Table 26: Sex-wise response to acceptability of violence on woman: If he suspects of her being unfaithful (%)

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Females	11.89	65.03	8.39
Males	14.77	47.65	21.48
Total	12.87	59.08	12.87

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

One of the most surprising results of the survey is that both men and women report experience of violence (22% of men, and 19% of women, Table 27). This is surprising mostly because women are much more likely to experience and report violence, because of the power differentials in gendered relationships. However, when we examine this in terms of sample size, we realise that out of the individuals reporting violence, 63% of them are women, as compared with 38%. This implies that there is definitely a gendered distribution of violence experience. At the same time, it does indicate that men are not immune to experiencing violence, and *do* report violence, when asked. In fact, when we asked participants to provide information about contacting them to discuss about their experiences of violence, more men volunteered to speak to us about it, than women. Of course, other research indicates that the kind of violence that is experienced by men and women are often not the same (Johnson, 2005). For example, often the violence experienced by men are by other other men, and through non-gendered power relationships.

Table 27: Sex-wise experience of Violence (%)

	Yes	No
Females	19.23	73.78
Males	22.15	69.13
Total	20.23	72.18

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Therefore, it must be taken into consideration that violence is often intimately tied to power structures, which are usually pitted against women (because of their historically lower positions in power), but our results clearly show that they can also be pitted against men (if they are lower in the power structures). For example, in one of our telephonic interviews, one of the male participants reported that he had been harassed by a female colleague (who was slightly senior to him at work). He told us that she had suddenly started sending him endless emails, and because he was afraid of being accused of being unprofessional at work, he had reported to his superiors. Action was taken, and the harassmentstopped. Even though we tried to get a few more details regarding the dynamics of this relationship, limited time on the telephone did not allow us to probe further. However, this provides us a window into the ways in which power relationships can often be implicated in the kinds of relationships that men and women form in the workplace, and it requires an in-depth study to flesh out the particular power dynamics that underwrite many of these complex relationships.

Table 28: Sex-wise experience of Physical Violence experienced (Slapping etc) (%)

	Females	Males	Total
Spouse	12.90	22.50	16.67
Family	24.19	40.00	30.39
Friends	24.19	15.00	20.59
Work Colleagues	3.23	2.50	2.94
Strangers	6.45	2.50	4.90
No One	29.03	17.50	24.51
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Table 29: Sex-Wise experience of Economic Violence (No access to self-Income etc) (%)

	Females	Males	Total
Spouse	11.11	21.05	15.22
Family	40.74	42.11	41.30
Friends	9.26	10.53	9.78
Work Colleagues	3.70	2.63	3.26
Strangers	5.56	5.26	5.43
No One	29.63	18.42	25.00
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

We attempted to understand some of these dynamics by asking women and men to identify the actors who perpetrated the violence. With respect to instances of slapping, we found that for women, a

quarter of them were likely to experience slapping from their family and friends (Table 28). When it comes to having no access to income, about 40% of both men and women feel that they are unable to obtain any access to their income (Table 29). We believe that this is the function of the demographics of our sample, given they are mostly young and unmarried, and are likely to be giving their income to their families as part of the family income. . When it comes to disparaging remarks, almost half of the women seem to be experience this form of violence, compared to 19% of the men (Table 30). As is evident in this data, specificities of the violence experienced and the social context in which these are used would shed much more light on why these incidents occurred. As such, this data is limited in providing us an insight into the dynamics of the household in the context of the IT industry.

Table 30: Sex-Wise experience of Verbal Abuse (Disregarding remarks etc) (%)

	Females	Males	Total
Spouse	7.69	22.22	13.64
Family	46.15	19.44	35.23
Friends	13.46	25.00	18.18
Work Colleagues	1.92	5.56	3.41
Strangers	3.85	8.33	5.68
No One	26.92	19.44	23.86
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

COPING STRATEGIES

Examining coping strategies in the context of violence is very important to assess the support mechanisms that exist in the social context of the employees in the IT industry. This provides us an intimate view of the ways in the IT industry deals with incidence of violence that is reported. With respect to the gendered distribution of knowing whom to approach if an incident of violence occurs during their commute to work, 16% of women do not know whom to approach as compared to 8% of the men (Table 31). While it is good news that 56% of women in the survey did know whom to approach (as compared to 64% of the men), the fact that about 24% of women had no idea as to whom to approach if something happens to them is slightly troubling. This is even more troubling, when we realise that out of the 16% of the women who have no idea whom to report to, 11% of them travel in public transportation systems, where the public harassment against women is considered to be most rampant (Table 28).

Table 31: Sex-wise and Type of Commute wise Knowledge about Whom to Approach to Report an Incident during Commute (%)

	Females				Males			
	Yes	No	Don't know	Never thought about it	Yes	No	Don't know	Never thought about it
Company arranges transport for pick up and drop off	3.85	1.05	1.05	1.05	2.01	4.03	0.00	0.67
I own and travel in my own vehicle	17.48	2.10	2.10	1.75	36.24	4.70	1.34	2.68
I use public transport	32.87	3.85	11.89	10.14	21.48	4.70	6.04	1.34

I carpool with my colleagues	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	1.34	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	0.70	0.00	0.35	0.35	1.34	0.00	0.00	1.34
Total	55.94	7.69	16.78	14.34	63.76	13.42	8.05	6.04

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

With respect to any form of violence, one of the primary coping techniques deployed by individuals seems to be telling their families, with about 58% of the women informing their families, and 45% of the men informing their families (Table 32). Avoidance seems to be a tactic commonly shared by both women and men (25% and 21% respectively). Suffering in silence, unlike popular perception seems to be a highly masculine tactic, with about 58% of men using this as a tactic, while only 20% of the women reporting that they suffered in silence. Now, we can examine this in two ways: (1) that stigmatisation of victims reporting violence, especially hurts men, given the notions of masculinity assumes that men have to cope on their own, especially if they are victims of violence, and (2) that the violence that they are reporting is not structured in the kind of power imbalances that they experience, enabling them to use this as an effective technique to cope. This implies that for men, it might appear that ignoring the problem *does* allow it to go away, given their positioning in the IT industry.

Table 32: Sex-Wise response to their Reaction to Violence Experienced (%)

	Didn't tell anyone; suffered in silence	Tried to avoid situation that might lead to another incident	Informed my family	Informed my friends	Sought police and/or legal help	Sought counseling services for self	Informally separated myself from the situation (or person)	Formally separated myself from the situation (or person)
Females	20.00	25.45	58.18	3.64	3.64	1.82	1.82	5.45
Males	57.58	21.21	45.45	6.06	6.06	0.00	6.06	0.00
Total	34.09	23.86	53.41	4.55	4.55	1.14	3.41	3.41

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

While these are two variants of the phenomena that can explain it, it goes to show that forms of masculinity that does not allow for victimhood to be part of their identity is extremely problematic. What is equally problematic is to ignore the severe power imbalances among men and women that colours the likelihood and form of violence experienced in that it allows men to cope with their experience in a very different manner compared to women. Again, it is extremely critical, therefore, to study these phenomena in-depth so that these relationships of power and victimhood can be clearly delineated.

Table 33: Sex-wise response of who they thought was responsible for the act of violence (%)

	The wrong doer is responsible	I feel responsible	Neither I nor my wrong doer, the circumstances were such	I do not feel responsible, but perhaps, I could have avoided the situation	I feel responsible, but the wrong doer was also at fault	Don't know
Females	23.64	29.09	7.27	7.27	29.09	0.00
Males	21.21	27.27	12.12	6.06	30.30	0.00
Total	22.73	28.41	9.09	6.82	29.55	0.00

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

Another finding that requires much more social context to understand is the question that enquires about the actor responsible for the violence (Table 33). About a quarter to one-third of all individuals seem to be evenly divided with respect to feeling that the perpetrator was responsible (22%), whether they themselves were responsible (28%), and whether they feel both parties are responsible (30%). There doesn't seem to be a lot of gender variation with respect to this, except when we look at variation of gender within these categories. For example, of the 25 people who feel responsible for the violence, 16 are women. However, we cannot make any form of gendered argument around this, as 13 of the 20 people who felt that the wrong-doer was responsible were also women.

Table 34: Response to Violence and Responsibility of the Violence (%)

	The wrong doer is responsible	I feel responsible	Neither I nor my wrong doer, the circumstances were such	I do not feel responsible, but perhaps, I could have avoided the situation	I feel responsible, but the wrong doer was also at fault	Total
Didn't tell anyone; suffered in silence	19.35	45.16	0.00	0.00	31.03	27.36
Tried to avoid situation that might lead to another incident	19.35	9.68	22.22	33.33	20.69	17.92
Informed my family	51.61	38.71	44.44	33.33	34.48	41.51
Informed my friends	0.00	0.00	22.22	0.00	3.45	2.83
Sought police and/or legal help	0.00	6.45	0.00	16.67	3.45	3.77
Sought counseling services for self	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67	0.00	0.94
Informally separated myself from the situation (or person)	3.23	0.00	11.11	0.00	3.45	2.83
Formally separated myself from the situation (or person)	6.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.45	2.83
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Compiled from Raw Data Collected

To understand these trends, we examined whether the feeling of responsibility taken on by the victim affected their coping strategy, and we found some indicative signs. Almost half of the individuals who felt responsible for the violence didn't tell anyone (Table 34). In some contrast, for those who felt that the perpetrator felt responsible did tell their family about it. It is very likely that unless the unique circumstances under which these broad patterns can be discerned, the exact gendered mechanisms

of the type of violence that they have experienced, as well as the ways in which they themselves view the violence cannot be fully understood.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Why is the study of women's experiences within the IT industry important? One of the primary reasons often cited is that women constitute about one-fourth of the world IT work force (D'Mello, 2006). Although there has historically been some premium of "feminine and relational strengths" of women within the IT industry, their contributions to the building of this young industry, both technically and administratively, have not translated into parity of pay, participation and recognition within teams, and greater decision-making abilities. We argue through this paper that while the focus on the identity of the woman in the IT industry is very important, especially the processes by which individuals chart out their own journey, it becomes imperative to recognise the massive influences of the structural institution of the IT industry. In order to summarise the learnings of the study, not just in terms of the data or literature derived from the online survey, but also the experience of opaqueness and resistance encountered within the IT industry, we explore the thematic contours of our study thus far: (1) the construction of the identity, (2) invisibility of care work, (3) the confluence of masculinity, mobility and violence and (4) the discursive impact of the IT industry.

CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY

One of the strongest forces that engage with the identity of a woman in the IT industry is the discourse of respectable modernity. It is a major construct that holds women to be responsive to traditional family roles and expectations (Belliappa, 2013). These roles often pull women in opposite directions. While, on the one hand, these roles are able to ground their daily practice into a modicum of emotional support, they also have to negotiate harder with these very constructs in order to emerge as a good transnational worker (Radhakrishnan, 2012). Respectability is, thus, negotiated on two fronts: one through the upholding of traditional often patriarchal social practices, and the other, through the exercising of 'agency' in creating an identity separate from the family.

The narrative discourse that competes and compliments this, to some degree, is the discourse of individual choice (Belliappa, 2013; Upadhaya and Vasavi, 2006). It allows for the workplace to pretend to care about individual goals, without allowing or enabling changes in the social structure that allow for any individual, especially a gendered classed individual, to prosper. It does not, for example, take into consideration the cultural differences with respect to family forms, religious practices, and other gendered structures before setting up institutions that regulate work commitment, income, and professional growth. As a result, only a certain kind of an individual, usually a single male, is ideally suited to fulfill these workplace expectations. One of the critical conflicts in understanding this space comes from the clash of the two discourses in the manner that "*the vocabulary of individual choice*

and responsibility is often used to describe collective responsibilities ((Belliappa, 2013, p.158). So, scholars have suggested that what women mostly tend to do is to "*create a self that is shifting and contingent on circumstances*"(Belliappa, 2013, p.159).

This construction especially disadvantages women, because a career and an occupation is an important aspect of a sense of self, and a major element of a person's self worth is often measured in the way that they contribute and are rewarded by their participation in the workforce (D'Mello, 2006). So, social roles, expectations and ideologies around the femininity and masculinity of these workers is an important aspect of understanding women's role in the workforce. For women, these identities are often characterised by ambivalence (D'Mello, 2006).

One of the most common findings in the literature regarding women and work is the concept of "working guilt", which plays a prominent part in working women's lives, and is resultant from the conflicting demands of their work identities, and their family identities. The discourses on family are primarily kinship-based, and are largely based on collective reciprocal relationships. However, the work discourse is highly individualised, and is based on completely different forms of reciprocation. At the same time, there is a strong link between the professional and the personal persona and space, in that the dynamics of power are often translated in very complex ways from one space to another (Belliappa, 2013). For example, the prestige of one's work does translate into a collective family prestige (Upadaya, 2009). So, while there are constant negotiations, there exist strong structural currents between the workspace and the home front that heavily influence a woman's ability to balance one discourse with the other. One of the factors that strongly influence these currents is the sheer burden of care work assigned to women, regardless of education, class, caste, and other stratification categories.

INVISIBILITY OF CAREWORK

The universal finding in almost all studies of IT industry and women is the preponderance of the conversations on care work. Regardless of the levels of education, training, and experience that women have, certain care work responsibilities and duties are culturally mandated, with very little negotiation power. So, in one of the studies that examined women's participation in the IT industry, women felt that regardless of their work identity and their own self confidence, social respectability and acceptability was heavily tied to their status as a married woman, and in the future, as a mother(D'Mello, 2006). Cooking, for example, is considered to be an innate responsibility of the woman, that often goes unquestioned in the household. So, making time for care work was not just a chore, it was bound to their identity as 'good' women. While some farming out of these responsibilities are often done by hiring cooks and domestic workers, women still had to organise, manage and be responsible for feeding their families. This duty is almost universally unchanged, regardless of the money women make, and persists, even if the women are earning more than the men (D'Mello, 2006). Even in our study that heavily skewed towards young unmarried women, we found trends that alluded to this burden.

In addition, the ambiguity, the formlessness, and the repeated nature of care work allows it to be completely invisible in the household, leading to greater physical strain, tension, and potential conflict with family (Desai et al, 2011). So, one of the ways that women cope is through their own techniques depending on individual circumstances. One of the things that they do is to compensate for their lack of ability to negotiate the work-life balance is by shifting their workload to the weekends. In our study, while men do shift their responsibilities to the weekend, even unmarried women in our sample report much higher rates of care work in the weekend periods, when they have more time to spend on this care work.

Another way that women cope with the burden of care work is by opting for the 'mommy track' that creates a pathway to be in the workforce, albeit without a lot of responsibilities and therefore, without any pathway for advancement. For example, some of the women interviewed in a study reported that they have "made a bad career move" by opting for a job with fewer responsibilities, but they also feel that they could not have helped it, because of the greater obligations for the kids (Kelkar et al., 2002).

One of the simpler ways to fix this problem is support from spouses. However, because of heavily entrenched rules of masculinity, these changes do not seem forthcoming. The other option that has been documented as having elevated tension in the work family conflict is structural support from the industry (Desai et al., 2011). For example, flexi-time has helped women and women have reported less conflict in the jobs where women are able to fix and manipulate the time for themselves (Desai et al, 2011). It is also negatively associated with marital happiness (Desai et al, 2011). However, these changes are strongly associated with larger gendered discourses around the construction of masculinity and its interaction within the IT industry and in the family.

CONFLUENCE OF MASCULINITY, MOBILITY AND VIOLENCE

The prominent feature of the IT industry is the highly masculine traditions and structure, so that participation of women in the IT industry, regardless of women's education in information sciences, is dismally low (D'Mello, 2006). As a consequence, despite their extensive contributions to innovations in the information technology, women are often rendered invisibility. This, in turn, creates a process of reification of masculinity in the institutional structure of the IT industry (Patel and Parmentier, 2005). When the cultural ideal of an IT worker is often a single (white) male, women often are seen and even see themselves as the Other, and do not always feel part of the 'system'. One of the problems of this is that women find themselves trapped into positions of femininity, so that even a small move out of their traditional feminine roles (such as prioritising work goals over family time) often backfire even in the workplace (Shankar, 2008).

This, however, does not mean that men do not feel the stresses of the IT industry, and as our research has indicated, men do report significant hours of care work, and instances of violence. One of the ways to examine this is to explore the specificities of these instances, so that a more holistic picture of gendered relationships can emerge. While it is accepted that men feel strongly about their responsibilities and they also shoulder the pressure and responsibility of having to sustain a full

household on their salaries, they are very silent on the "*organisation of their domestic lives or duties*"(D'Mello, 2006, p.15). It is not always because men are unwilling to talk about it. In our study, we have found in clear terms that men take on care work, but the kind of care work, as explicated in the telephonic interviews seems to be sporadic, periodic, and often very well-defined, such as purchase of groceries or going to the bank.

When it comes to a regular regime of care work that includes cooking, cleaning, and childcare, they are absent (D'Mello, 2006). This has repercussions for women in an indirect way. When men forgo family responsibilities, including not being around for the delivery of their child in order to meet a work deadline (D'Mello, 2006), they set unrealistic standards for women in the workplace. At the same time that it renders invisible the care work of the wives of the men employed in the industry, it stigmatises the care work of their women employees. And although these standards are set by the 'neutral' industry, it is often the masculine standard that is established.

Another example of the masculine standard in the IT industry is the physical mobility of women. In the local context, women's safety is often integrally connected to the manner in which they transverse the public space. So, transportation is very critical for women in a way that it is not for men. Even though men in our study have reported greater problems with the transportation to work, women often have restricted timings with respect to when they can travel. For example, it is accepted social practice that women have to reach home before 'dark' (D'Mello, 2006). However, for women who work in non-traditional work hours navigate not just the absence of safe transportation, but also assignations to their 'character'. While the participation in the call center is getting normalised, women have to constantly negotiate with families to be able to travel to their work in the night (D'Mello, 2006).

These cultural and social impositions are not restricted to the local context. Even travel to another country for assignment before a woman is married is an actual consideration for many families, as these have implications on the 'honor' of women. Families are not the only social actors who are concerned about women's honour. A case study in D'Mello's research in 2006 describes an encounter of a single woman who was staying overseas when she was burgled. When conferring with her manager in India about how to proceed to tackle the burglary, her manager "responded by saying that he would have got his daughter married before sending her alone onsite" ((D'Mello, 2006, p.17). While this is an extreme example, these forms of thinking are so internalised that women often place their own careers below their husbands, and assume that if any sacrifice has to be made in the workplace, they will be the ones to make them (D'Mello, 2006).

This form of deliberate blindness also colours women's experiences of violence in the workplace, and affects their willingness to engage with redressal mechanisms. For example, earlier studies have documented that women often dismiss the idea of sexual harassment and sexual discrimination in the industry owing to the fact that the industry has "*educated and professional workforce*" (D'Mello, 2006, p.16). So, the discourse of violence predominately asserts that these forms of violence are often located elsewhere, or happen to someone else. However, as it is documented in our study, even with

a very skewed sample, instances of violence are not uncommon by any means. We argue that the reason for the under-reporting of violence in these contexts is that that when women do articulate these kinds of experience, they often believe it is their fault and do not bring up the issue. So, a larger part of our study, even while grappling with issues of violence and care work is really engaging with the discursive elements produced and propagated by the IT industry that allows for the veneer of egalitarian and meritocratic practices, even while being deeply exploitative and sexist.

THE DISCURSIVE IMPACT OF THE IT INDUSTRY

The IT industry has been considered to be one of the best spaces for women because it allows for high remuneration, provides challenging and rewarding work space, and has a meritocratic work ethic (Patel and Parmentier, 2005). There was an assumption that because this was a young industry without the baggage of the old boy networks, the structural impediments that have historically disadvantaged women and would no longer hold true for the IT industry. This discourse, however, sharply contrasts with the actual findings. While the service industry is overrepresented by women, there are very few women in the upper management, and these trends have not changed for the past twenty years (Patel and Parmentier, 2005). So, while IT is often considered to be a great equaliser, the participation of women in the IT industry has been historically low, even compared to spaces such as in banking or even publishing (Patel and Parmentier, 2005).

Then, what is the appeal of the industry? Research has indicated that a complex play of factors is responsible for the induction of women into the IT industry, especially in the ITeS sectors (Antony and Gayathri, 2008). For graduates, this is the only opportunity of being employed with their 'limited' qualifications, while professionally and technically qualified women perceive this as the last opportunity to remain in the IT sector. Women from other diverse education backgrounds find these jobs favourable with their families due to the media hype surrounding the industry and the eulogised social status. Socially, mothers see this as the only time that their daughters can enjoy themselves and enjoy some freedom away from patriarchal restrictions. In other cases, they see it as increasing the 'marriagability' of the girl (Antony & Gayathri, 2008). Often, women perceive their work life in the IT industry as a few hours of relief from the drudgery of house work, and an escape from domestic and social restrictions on their mobility through night shifts (Kelkar et al., 2005), while others note that that women also see their participation in the IT industry as 'empowering' as it gives them a higher pay and higher social status (Fuller and Narasimhan, 2008).

Thus, women continue to perceive value in the IT industry, even in their lower level jobs. One of the primary reasons, as stated above, is that it is considered suitable even to highly technically qualified women who may enjoy little career growth, but can avail of it in order to balance their family life and domestic roles better (Antony & Gayathri, 2008). Thus, even women themselves do not perceive any real disadvantage to the 'hire and fire' policies of the IT industry or the lack of other provisions and benefits such as Provident Fund, gratuity, group insurance, maternity leave, etc.

Part of the reason is the buy-in that IT workers have to make to the neoliberal economic discourse, so that 'slogging' or exploitation for long hours without adequate pay is considered to be productive. This has given rise to a highly defragmented work force, not attuned to the understanding of labour rights in the IT industry. For women, they are often burdened with the holding up of cultural values without losing out on dictums of modernity. So, women have to walk the thin rope between cosmopolitan global worker, and the modern Indian woman with traditional values. So, women are constantly negotiating, compromising and leveraging different power differentials to negotiate home and family life. Often, they have to do this alone without any help from the industry or their families.

From the point of view of the company, which refuses to see power differentials among its workers, performance becomes key. However, a necessary blindness has to be employed to reward men for the networks that they create, without recognizing that often these networks are formed outside of work time, a time that is particularly hard for women to find. One of the most visible cases of this is the overtime, and who gets rewarded for it (D'Mello, 2006). In general, bonuses for most companies are intimately related to the hours that employees put in and the kind of work that can be finished. Given there is an industry standard (often based on men's standards of work performance), work completion are set against unrealistic deadlines.

As a result, women who have extensive family responsibilities typically do not attain these same goals. So, in some ways, women are often set up in the system to fail. Even HR of companies recognise this, and assume that "*a guy will be available 100% for work unlike a woman*"((D'Mello, 2006, p.20). Even women have some understanding of this, as they often articulate in many studies that "*before marriage is the main time to learn*"((D'Mello, 2006, p.20). If they have these responsibilities, they often have to work in the night time to compensate for the hours lost due to the carework.

Given the system is often set up against fellow colleagues, daily anxieties can revolve around simple functions such as whom one can speak to or trust, genuine concerns around childcare (especially in the context of foreign assignments or projects), and domestic responsibilities. However, one is expected to cope with these tasks without bringing it to the notice of employers as it may result in individuals being understood as pricy or choosy (Raghuram, 2004). In addition, it often translates into a perception of loyalty. This creates a very high sense of understanding that women are more likely to be less wholly committed to their work, and are likely to be 'distracted' by their families as their "*primary focus is on raising children*" (Patel and Parmentier, 2005,p.39). In fact, almost all of the research material related to gender reflect the industry's understanding of the situation. For example, women in the industry were often asked about balancing work and family in their interviews, while men rarely reported the work-life balance issues (Patel and Parmentier, 2005).

Because of the secondary roles that women are often placed in, this is reflected in the workplace. Women are often pushed to the periphery of work, especially as life course events start to take place(Patel and Parmentier, 2005). There is a strong perpetuation of traditional gender roles. So, instead of moving away from traditional modes of femininity to being an emancipated woman,

women are often pushed back into patriarchal roles, both at work and in their home (Patel and Parmentier, 2005).

Some of these discordant discursive elements can be resolved, if the industry would invest in and implement its advertising. For example, many studies have shown that working from home for women was beneficial for them in certain circumstances, and allowed them to consolidate their position in the labour market, increase their economic independence, and were able to compete on an equal footing with their colleagues in the work place (Desai et al, 2011). They also report lower life and job satisfaction and greater stress than if the work is more flexible (Desai et al, 2011). However, given coordinating schedules and work places more responsibility for the organisation, they instead resort to measures that put the primary responsibility to reconcile work and life demands in a highly individualised manner. Thus, structural transformations, therefore, are needed within the industry itself, if it requires the full participation of its entire employee pool.

THE WAY FORWARD

One of the actors through which we can move forward is, of course, the women. Some measures can be undertaken to ensure that women are trained to examine the highly gendered mechanisms of exploitation. If women are organised enough to push companies to establish day care centers, to question gendered forms of work-family responsibilities, and to negotiate with spouses to create more room for productive carework to be part of their schedule, these can bring about a marked change in the way that IT industry treats its women employees. Given they have already started employed their power and translated them onto specific outcomes in their families, they can use these power to creating "*enabling possibilities for themselves*" (D'Mello, 2006, p.24).

These movements to ensure that women are able to contribute productively to the IT industry does not, in any manner, penalise the industry. It has been amply been demonstrated that organisations benefit from the participation of women (D'Mello, 2006). Just by including women into the payroll, an organisational equivalent of 'adding women and stir', women's contribution to the industry will not increase, unless a systematic and systemic study of their participation is studied. So, just analysing women's contribution in the same form as men will not help. Instead, a systemic approach that also includes women's realities in the design of processes, structures, team work, and other forms of functioning can contribute to create a more egalitarian and inclusive space. Emancipation in any fundamental sense is possible only when the social and economic freedom and empowerment that is evident in the workplace translates into the private sphere, so that women can move beyond "the loyal daughters, then adjusting wives, suppressed daughters-in-law, and sincere mothers"(Shankar, 2008,p.202).

Against this context, the question remains about whether we can see the IT industry as having truly emancipated or empowered women as many themselves seem to believe, or as having restructured patriarchal relationships, as popularly believed accepted.While there are avenues of negotiation, it does not always translate into breaking apart of the social roles and responsibilities. to understand

better this process at play, an in-depth qualitative research study that can provide a closer understanding of the dynamics of gender within the IT industry would be extremely useful. In addition, it is important to create conditions of cooperation within the IT companies, so that they are amenable to research studies. Along with NASSCOM, companies can start to foster an environment that would help them to design worker-friendly policies for their productive labour.

In conclusion, we attest that in order to understand the dynamics and experience of women in the IT industry, a more nuanced understanding of patriarchy which takes into consideration "*complex patterns of male and female relations at every level. .* ."is extremely important (Charmes and Weirenga, 2003, as cited in Patel and Parmentier, 2005, p.452). A significant point in understanding this is that the empowerment of women "...*'is not a linear process', and in fact, advances made in the status and well-being of women can mask the persistence of unequal power relations between the genders*" (ibid). Women's experience in these contexts necessitate the need to interrogate gender inequality and violence in its subtlest forms, beyond questions of outright violence, unequal access or oppression, to new forms of violence. So, in order for us to tackle this question, we require a concrete understanding of how patriarchy intersects in new ways with the new economy, workplace culture, and social and economic opportunities, reinforcing traditional gender-related concerns and subverting others. This, we argue, will take us to truly understanding women's diverse experiences in the IT industry.

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