

## Motherhood Stress Among Working Mothers in India: A Thematic Analysis of Focus Group Discussions

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### **Abstract:**

Motherhood Stress is an important deterrent that hinders the careers of working women in India despite organizational policies like flexible options, maternity leave and child care to promote wellbeing among new mothers. This study aims to examine the viewpoint of working mothers who had to manage toddlers and their career on various aspects like work place dignity, family and social support and perceptions to facilitate a better understanding of the factors relating to motherhood stress. Two focus group discussions were held with working mothers in the IT sector in Bangalore who shared their experiences and associated stress levels. NVivo software was used to carry out the thematic analysis so as to arrive at the main codes, themes and subthemes relevant to the discussion. A total of 15 working mothers joined the discussion. The key themes that developed as part of the analysis included: Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems, Maternal Guilt and Self-Perception, Physical and Emotional Exhaustion, Work-Family Conflict and Stress, Workplace Environment and Policies. Guilt, feeling undervalued, career demands, family obligations and struggling with society perceptions all contribute to stress despite Human Resource policies to mitigate the same. The results from this study will help to promote understanding, guide policy making and creating better strategies to improve mental health for new mothers

### **Keywords:**

Flexibility, Human resource, organizational behaviour, Stress, thematic analysis, working not.