CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an overview of the important aspects of the investigation, the major findings, suggestions and conclusion are presented. Data was collected from women lawyers in select districts of Tamil Nadu. Consequently, the collected data was analyzed and interpreted with the aim of finding out the impact of gender on the career of women lawyers. The objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the impact of gender on career of women law professionals.
2. To examine the prevalence of sexual harassment of women lawyers.
3. To identify whether women law professionals suffer from work–life imbalance.
4. To determine whether women law professionals experience stress and related illness.
5. To find out the level of satisfaction of women lawyers towards their profession.

This section attempts to summarize the main findings, suggestions and conclusion based on the detailed analysis presented in the previous chapter.
5.2 FINDINGS

5.2.1 Demographics

The findings regarding the demographic details and professional work history of women lawyers are as follows:

- Majority of the respondents, (39.7 percentage) are in the age group of 26-35 years followed by 29.9 percentage in 36-45 years. Most of them, (78.9 percentage) are married. (56.8 percentage) have 4-6 members in their family. (75.6 percentage) were not from family with law profession as their family background.

- Majority of the respondents, (68.8 percentage) belong to upper economic class group, followed by (28.2 percentage) middle economic class group. Most of the respondents, (50.7 percentage) have monthly income below Rs.1,00,000 – Rs.2,00,000 derived from the practice of law, followed by 32.5 percentage who have income below Rs.1,00,000. Majority of the respondents, (34.9 percentage) have family income between Rs.2,00,000 - 3,00,000 followed by 33.6 percentage whose family income ranged between Rs.1,00,000 to 2,00,000.

- Majority of the respondents (82.1 percentage) were lawyers, followed by 10.1 percentage of public prosecutors. Majority of the respondents (46.1 percentage) have 5 to 10 years of experience, followed by 32.3 percentage having less than 5 years of experience. Most of the respondents, (47.9 percentage) have handled 10-50 cases so far, followed by 31.9 percentage respondents who have handled less than 10 cases.
Fields of law practiced by the respondents were identified based on their preference. The ranks from most to least are as follows: Family Law, Civil Law, Labour Law, Criminal Law, Corporate Law, Administrative Law, Banker’s Law, Consumer Law, Constitution Law, Law of Taxation, Debt Recovery Law and Intellectual Property Law. Thus, women lawyers are found to take cases that are less complicated, easy going, that don’t require field visits. This is also confirmed by the findings of MacMillan et al (2005).

5.2.2 Gender Discrimination

The first research objective was to examine the impact of gender on career of women law professionals. Thus, to identify the impact of gender discrimination, four statistical tools were applied, namely Descriptive Statistics, Chi-Square Analysis, Weighted Average and ANOVA and the following results were derived:

- Respondents who were between 36-45 years felt higher discrimination. Thus, it can be interpreted that, women lawyers are discriminated even after gaining considerable years of experience.

- Gender discrimination is perceived in the same manner among all the respondents irrespective of their marital status.

- Respondents, whose family members did not belong to law profession, undergo high level of gender discrimination than the respondents whose family members are in law profession.

- Gender discrimination is felt high among the respondents whose income level is between Rs.1,00,000 to Rs.2,00,000. Women
lawyers, who earn better than the lawyers who just started their career, are found to be discriminated than respondents in other income groups, which show that, discrimination starts with the establishment of women lawyers in their earlier career.

- Women lawyers who have a moderate income are found to be highly discriminated than other income group of respondents.

- Gender discrimination is perceived in the same manner among all the respondents irrespective of their designation.

- Gender discrimination is felt high among the respondents who have 5 – 10 years of experience in this profession which shows that, women lawyers are found to be discriminated even after obtaining considerable years of experience. The more the experience, less is the discrimination being experienced. The discrimination based on the income levels also supports this view.

- The respondents’ opinion to which extent they were discriminated was high among the respondents who are in “Middle Class” category. Thus, it can be stated that, women lawyers whose earnings are necessary to support their family are harassed more. Thus, a highly significant association is found between the economic class and the extent to which the respondents are discriminated.

- Women lawyers are given cases based on their gender and thus they are discriminated with regard to gender. A highly significant association is found between number of cases handled by the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are discriminated.
Women lawyers were given various factors on which they felt discriminated based on their gender. Their mean scores were summed up and ranked. The ranking from most to least is as follows: Law profession doesn’t have a gender inclusive culture, I am treated differently because of my gender, I have not been properly recognized in my profession because of my gender, I have been gossiped by others because of my gender, I have been denied opportunities in various levels in my profession because of my gender, I lack in professional communication because of my gender and I have faced harassment because of my gender. Therefore, it can be concluded that, women are found to be harassed because of their gender and it is observed that, law profession doesn’t treat men and women at par.

A highly significant relationship is found between the demographics of the respondents and the gender discrimination.

### 5.2.3 Sexual Harassment

The second objective is to examine whether women law professionals undergo sexual harassment. Thus, to study about sexual harassment, three statistical tools were applied, namely Chi-square Analysis, Weighted Average and ANOVA and the following results were derived:

- The respondents’ opinion to which extent they were sexually harassed was high among the respondents who are in “26 - 35 Years” age group. Thus, it is clear that women lawyers are harassed even after initial years of service. A highly significant association is found between age group of the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are harassed.
Women lawyers in middle class economic group are found to be harassed more than other economic groups. Thus, it is can be concluded that, women lawyers who have moderate income are harassed more. A highly significant association is also found between economic class and the extent to which the respondents are sexually harassed.

Sexual harassment was felt high among the respondents who have “5 - 10 Years” of experience. Thus it is clear that women lawyers are harassed even after consistent years of service. Thus, it can be concluded that, a highly significant association is found between experience and the extent to which the respondents are sexually harassed. As the years of experience increase, harassment tends to fall down. Thus, it can be inferred that, prevalence of harassment is high during the initial period of their career.

Respondents were given 11 variables of sexual harassment. These variables were ranked based on their mean scores. The ranking from most to least is as follows: Women cannot stay in this profession because of sexual harassment, Verbal behavior of opposite sex hurts me, There is a provision for reporting of inappropriate behavior, In my profession females undergo sexual harassment in one way or other, Sexual harassment affects mental behavior, In my profession sexual harassment is inevitable, Verbal behavior and forcible physical touch gives stress, Sexual harassment hinders my professional life, I have clear knowledge about sexual harassment, In my profession sexual harassment is intentional, Sexual harassment hinders my personal life. Therefore, it can be concluded that, women lawyers couldn’t
continue in the profession due to sexual harassment and harassment in professional life also hinders their personal life.

- A highly significant relationship is found between the demographics of the respondents and sexual harassment.

5.2.4 Work Life Balance

The third objective is to identify whether women law professionals suffer from work – life imbalance. Thus, to identify the work life balance of women lawyers, four statistical tools were applied, namely Weighted Average, ANOVA and Discriminant Function Analysis and the following results were derived:

- The respondents were provided with seven work life balance parameters and their answers were ranked based on their mean scores. The ranking from most to least is as follows: My job allows me to balance my work and personal life, I generally feel I am able to balance my work and life, I am feeling healthy and happy at home as well as at work, The control that I have over the scheduling of my own work is satisfactory, I miss out quality time with my family/ friend’s because of pressure of work, My family plays a significant role in my career, I am satisfied with the amount of time I spend at work. Therefore, it can be concluded that, women lawyers were able to manage their work and life and found to be satisfied with their personal and professional roles.

- The results of the Discriminant Function are significant at one percentage level. Thus, women lawyers are found to manage their work and life without any conflict.
A highly significant relationship is found between the age, economic class, annual income, family income and years of practice of the respondents and work life balance. Whereas there is no significant relationship between marital status of the respondents and work life balances.

5.2.5 Stress

The next objective is to determine whether women law professionals experience stress and related illness. Thus, to identify the level of stress experienced by the women lawyers, five statistical tools were applied, namely Chi-square Analysis, Weighted Average, ANOVA, Factor Analysis and Regression Analysis and the following results were derived:

- Respondents’ opinion to what extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who are between “26 – 35 Years” age group. Thus it is clear that woman lawyers who are in mid age group and in the initial period of their career are stressed more. The age is more crucial in their family life cycle and also profession. Hence, a highly significant association is found between age group and the extent to which the respondents are stressed.

- The respondents’ opinion to what extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who have “One Child” than “Two Children”. Therefore, it can be concluded that, women lawyers are found to be stressed, irrespective of number of children.

- Respondents’ opinion to what extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who belong to “Middle Class” economic group. Thus, it is clear that, women lawyers who fall in middle class category are stressed more than women lawyers of upper and
lower class. A highly significant association is also found between economic class of the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are stressed.

- The respondents’ opinion to which extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who earn between “Rs.1,00,000 – Rs.2,00,000”. It can be interpreted that, middle class people are found to be stressed, more. A highly significant association is found between annual income of the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are stressed.

- Respondents’ opinion to what extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who have “5 - 10 Years” of experience. Thus, women lawyers having considerable years of experience are found to be more stressed as they are neither new-comer nor well established. A highly significant association is found between experience of the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are stressed.

- Respondents’ opinion to what extent they were stressed was high among the respondents who have handled “10 – 50 Cases”. Thus, women lawyers who have handled fewer cases are found to be stressed more. A highly significant association is found between number of cases handled by the respondents and the extent to which the respondents are stressed.

- Respondents were provided 13 statements related to stress and they were rank based on their mean scores. The ranking from most to least is as follows: Job insecurity, Lack of communication, Overwork, Working with the public, Lack of recognition for the work I do, Impersonal treatment, Too much pressure to complete
tasks, Age discrimination, I feel nervous while meeting people of the opposite sex, Poor relations with workmates, Harassment and/or discrimination, Lack of control over my job and Poor relations with supervisor. Therefore, it can be concluded that, women lawyers experience stress in their workplace which hinders their growth in the profession.

- Respondents were given 13 stress factors and the mean score for their responses were summed up and ranked accordingly. Among the factors, important components were extracted using principal component method from the Factor Analysis. The selected components were abstracted into four dimensions. In order to reduce the number of factors and enhance the interpretability, the factors are rotated. Out of the 13 agreeability statements, 4 factors have been extracted and these 4 factors put together explained the total variance of these statements to the extent of 90.79%.

- A highly significant relationship is found only between the age and stress of the respondents. Whereas, there is no significant relationship between marital status, economic class, annual income, family income, designation, years of practice and number of cases handled by the respondents and level of stress.

5.2.6 Job Satisfaction

The final objective is to find out the level of satisfaction of women lawyers towards their profession. Thus, to identify the level of job satisfaction among women lawyers three statistical tools were applied, namely Weighted Average, ANOVA and Regression Analysis and the following results were derived:
The respondents were provided with seven job satisfaction related statements and their mean scores were summed up and ranked according to their preference. The ranking from most to least is as follows: How satisfied are you with your current income?, How satisfied are you about the relationships with your co-workers?, How satisfied are you with your job?, To which degree do you feel comfortable at work?, To what extent are you happy with the way with the way your job utilizes your skills and talents?, To what extent you are happy with the accomplishment and pride you get from your job?, and To what extent do you enjoy the work that you do? Therefore, it can be concluded that, women lawyers are found to be dissatisfied with their job.

A highly significant relationship is found only between the economic class of the respondents and job satisfaction. Whereas there is no significant relationship between age, marital status, annual income, family income, designation, years of practice and number of cases handled by the respondents.

5.3 RESULTS OF THE HYPOTHESES TESTING

The following are the summary of the hypotheses testing:


Table 5.1 Results of the Hypotheses Testing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>H₀₁ Scope of career remains the same irrespective of the gender.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>H₀₂ Economic class of the respondents and gender discrimination are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>H₀₃ Number of cases handled by the respondents and gender discrimination are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>H₀₄ Profession and sexual harassment are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>H₀₅ The age of the respondents and sexual harassment are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>H₀₆ Economic class of the respondents and sexual harassment are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>H₀₇ Experience of the respondents and sexual harassment are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>H₀₈ Gender of the respondents and work and life balance are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>H₀₉ Gender of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>H₀₁₀ The age of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>H₀₁₁ Number of children of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>H₀₁₂ Economic class of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>H₀₁₃ Annual income of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>H₀₁₄ Experience of the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>H₀₁₅ Number of cases handled by the respondents and stress are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>H₀₁₆ Gender of the respondents and level of job satisfaction are independent of each other.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 SUGGESTIONS

The respondents were asked to give suggestions in the questionnaire provided. The following were the suggestions given by women lawyers:

1. Procedures and provisions related to women lawyers are not practically applied. Many rules aren’t enacted strictly.

2. Counseling should be given on ways to manage stress.

3. More laws are to be enacted to promote gender equality.

4. Women students in law school shall be given scholarship in order to promote women getting into law profession.

5. Moral education should be given to students from their school level. Hence, it helps in building up confidence.

Apart from the above, the analysis highlighted certain areas of concern. They are discussed here:

1. Women lawyers are found to be discriminated on the grounds of age, family background, annual income, family income, designation, experience, and economic class. Thus, it is necessary to promote gender equality in the profession of law, where women should be given equal opportunity irrespective of their age, family background etc.,

2. Number of cases handled by the women lawyers is highly dependent on their gender. They are not given cases for the only reason of being women. The way of looking at women should change in order to eliminate discrimination based on gender.
Efforts should be taken by the male counterparts and clients to break this glass ceiling.

3. On reviewing the experience of women lawyers, they are not given the space what they deserve, though they are talented and experienced, equally as men, Thus, law profession should treat men and women at par.

4. On analyzing the type of cases and pay, it is clear that, gender plays a significant role in deciding the success of women lawyers. The type of cases given, their pay, and their promotion depends on their gender and they are denied equal opportunity on the same grounds. This profession is said to attain real growth only if it is inclusive of all the members, i.e. both men and women.

5. Bar Council and the Government should take necessary measures against sexual harassment and make the workplace safer for women lawyers.

6. A committee consisting of women lawyers and former judges should be setup in all the courts to resolve the issues faced by women lawyers.

7. Crèches can be setup in court campuses to help women lawyers with children. Thus, it helps the women lawyers to manage both their personal and professional work simultaneously.

8. Counseling centers should be setup in all the courts to assist lawyers in stressful situations.

9. Programs on handling stress can be organized once in a month.
10. Yoga classes should be conducted twice a month as it helps in handling stress.

11. An association shall be formed by women lawyers in each district, so that they can join hands in any grievances against their women colleagues. They shall meet once in every quarter and organize programs on stress, personality development, communication skills etc.,

12. Women lawyers can use social websites and open a page to discuss on their case matters and get opinions of their colleagues and also can setup separate blog and assist public in law related queries and issues.

Income is a major cause of stress for women lawyers. Though women lawyers are equally experienced and talented as men lawyers, women lawyers are paid less as there is no fixed pay for lawyers. Thus, Bar Council shall setup standards on the pay based on experience and type of cases handled by lawyers.

5.5 IMPLICATIONS

In terms of implications, all the stake holders must join hands in building the law profession as a gender neutral, harassment free work place.

Initially the law system should take measures to promote gender equality at all the levels of law profession. It can be done by creating more job opportunities for women lawyers. As the proverb says “Justice delayed is Justice denied”, the pending cases should be sorted out with the help of human resources effectively.
Next, the Government can create job opportunities for women in law profession by setting up mobile courts and family courts in all districts and taluks, additional to courts already in existence. Women judges can be appointed as in such courts and other possible vacancies can be filled up using women lawyers. An agency can be setup in all villages, and small and possible disputes can be solved then and there. This not only provides job opportunities for women lawyers, but also reduces the number of cases getting filed in the court and also reduces pending cases in courts.

It is necessary to provide proper cabins, rest rooms and retiring rooms for women lawyers for their better comfort. The Bar Council and the Government should take necessary measures to improve the infrastructure facilities in courts.

State Government and Central Government shall provide some incentives to new coming lawyers, as they might not get cases in their initial period of practise. This can minimize the attrition of women lawyers who decide to quit the profession in their initial stage due to lack of income.

Society plays a vital role in shaping the career of a woman. Thus, the way of looking women should change. Women lawyers should be given all type of challenging cases. Talent and skill should be counted rather than their gender. It is the duty of the society to help women grow in a profession, that too in law profession, which directly has impact on the society.

The next important role is of their male counterparts. They should treat women equally and with respect. They shall join hands in building a hassle free workplace for women lawyers. They shall discuss sensitive issues related to women and children, as women lawyers can help on it more effectively than male lawyers.
Women lawyers themselves should change their attitude. They should start dealing all type of cases. Cases that require field investigation are not given to women lawyers, assuming they might not go. This thought should be changed by women lawyers, by doing so. And also women lawyers should not only work for making money, they should handle cases for free for the needy. They must take up cases of societal importance on volunteer basis. This helps in reputation of the women lawyers.

In order to succeed in law profession, women lawyers should possess and develop some of the essential skills to succeed in law profession. Thus, they should indulge themselves in improving the following to keep them competitive:

**Analytical skills:** Lawyers help their clients resolve problems and issues. As a result, they must be able to analyse large amounts of information, determine relevant facts, and propose viable solutions.

**Interpersonal skills:** Lawyers must win the respect and confidence of their clients by building a trusting relationship, so that clients feel comfortable and share personal information related to their case.

**Problem-solving skills:** Lawyers must separate their emotions and prejudice from their clients' problems and objectively evaluate the matter. Therefore, good problem-solving skills are important for lawyers, to prepare the best defence and recommendation.

**Research skills:** Preparing advice on law related matters or representation for a client commonly requires substantial research. All lawyers need to be able to find what applicable laws and regulations apply to a specific matter.
**Speaking skills:** Lawyers are hired by their clients to speak on their behalf. Lawyers must be able to clearly present and explain evidence to a judge and jury.

**Writing skills:** Lawyers need to be precise and specific when preparing documents, such as wills, trusts, and powers of attorney.

Improvising on these skills and effective use of technology for continuous learning and dissemination of law service to the clients will break the gender taboo over a period of time.

The law colleges are the first step in shaping the law career. They should teach their students to look at women and men in the same way. They should be trained against gender bias. Girl students should be motivated by giving scholarships, free education. Girl students should be trained on all the above mentioned skills in their law schools.

### 5.6 CONCLUSION

The study aimed at measuring the impact of gender on career of women lawyers in select districts of Tamil Nadu, India. The impact of gender on career was discussed under five components viz., a., viz., gender discrimination, sexual harassment, work life balance, stress and job satisfaction. The extent of agreeability to each component was measured.

The statistical analysis of data has given insight into the problems and prospects of women lawyers and also provided some solutions to solve those problems. Based on the research, suggestions were given to enhance the participation and equality of women lawyers and to attain progress.
The study has significant findings that proclaim the negative impact of the gender on career of women lawyers. As career is composed of the jobs held, titles earned and work accomplished over a long period of time, the findings of the study reveal that, there is a negative impact of gender on the career of women lawyers. They are not given equal opportunity in terms of power and promotions even after obtaining considerable years of experience.

From the findings of the study, it is clear that, women lawyers undergo gender discrimination, sexual harassment, stress and job dissatisfaction. Thus, it is necessary to promote gender equality in all spheres of the law profession. Proper measures are to be taken to eradicate harassment at workplace. However, it is noted that, women lawyers were able to manage their work and life which is in contrast to reviews quoted earlier. This might be due to the family setup in Indian culture. As mother and in laws offer their support to women in child rearing responsibilities, and household chores, women lawyers are found to balance their work and life without much conflict. A positive work environment should be offered that is stress free, and relaxation clubs are to be setup to burst the stress they undergo. Once the above mentioned issues are sorted out, it will probably boost up the job satisfaction among women lawyers.

Government and Bar Council must ensure that women lawyers have equal opportunities for professional growth and advancement commensurate with their male counterparts. It is necessary to implement changes that will stem attrition, foster inclusion, and help to retain and promote women lawyers.

Thus, the researcher concludes that, equality for women is a work in progress. Together, all the stakeholders can eliminate gender bias, equalize
pay and strengthen the pipeline now and for the future, so that all women have equal, unlimited opportunity for success and fulfilment in the law profession.