WORK LIFE BALANCE IN WOMEN: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Work life balance has become an issue of concern for employees working in all sectors, especially for women employees because of dual responsibility of their work and home, it becomes very difficult to maintain a proper balance between work and life and consequently they face work-life conflict. This paper focuses on various variables related to work-life conflict. A conceptual model has been drawn on the basis of comprehensive literature identifying the work demand and family demand and also enlighten the various problems arises as a result of work life imbalances. The paper has been concluded with special inference drawn from conceptual model and huge review of literature. It has been found that work demand is related to work-family conflict (WFC) and family demand is related to family-work conflict (FWC), all these conflicts majorly lead to work life imbalance and shows a negative impact on the performance of women employee at organization and at home.

Keywords: Work-life balance (WLB), Women employee, Performance, Work demand, Family demand.

INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and "lifestyle" (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation). This is related to the idea of lifestyle choice of every woman.

After the Industrial Revolution in the second half of the 18th century, there was a tremendous change in the pattern and concept of professionalism. This has given a new dimension to work-life balance. But there is not a single perfect shape to work-life balance. It varies from individual to individual because priorities differ according to individual life styles. It not only changes the priorities but also changes the status, like when one is unmarried, after marriage, after childbirth, when a new career begins and this keeps on changing till one's retirement.

With this increasing industrialization and education, employment opportunities for women have also increased. And with increasing economic conditions, it has now become necessary that both husband and wife need to work to have a normal life. In this fast growing and competitive world, as every possible opportunity for employment is increased, the organizations need to create a congenial atmosphere where employees can balance their professional and personal life. Only when an employer has a positive WLB, she can be productive and give her best to her organization. Hence industries are working out schemes which can attract as well as retain their employees.

It describes the balance between an individual's personal life and professional life. A healthy work-life balance assumes great significance for working women particularly in the current context in which both, the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for women. The
dynamics of the work environment have exerted enormous pressure on working women as they need to cope with virtually two full time jobs – one at the office and the other at home.

**WORK – LIFE BALANCE**

Work-Life Balance does not mean an equal balance. It means the capacity to schedule the hours of professional and personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It is not a new concept. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life. When a woman achieves a successful work-life balance, she has job satisfaction and becomes highly committed and productive and succeeds in her career. But, in certain cases the women is not able to succeed due to incapability in balancing her work and personal life. She is unable to set her priorities. As a result she withdraws from her work due to simple reasons like taking care of her children, aged in laws/parents, and other family pressures. If the man is able to share some of her responsibilities, she would be successful women. A survey in the UK reveals that the majority of the women has successful WLB, because their husbands shared an equal partnership both in professional and personal life. With the advancement in technology, and education and revolution in the industrial sector, there has been a little change in Indian men too. Both the partners need to schedule their working hours and personal hours so that they lead a professionally and personally healthy life. The women should also educate her children to share responsibilities to make life better and fruitful.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

For the purpose of systematic analysis and examination of the problem at hand, the studies by the several researchers have been reviewed and through their studies, highlighted that there is a strong correlation between work life balance and working women, if facilities are provided by the organisation.

Lavanya and Thangavel (2014) identified the impact of demographic factors in the usage of work-life balance practices in the organization. The study found that level of management and annual income influence the take up of flexible work practice and age, number of dependents and level of management influence the use of work-life balance practice related to career development practices.

Another famous author Sinha (2013) reveled the level of work-life balance practices at CCIL (Carbon Continental India Ltd, Noida) and the level of satisfaction among employees with work-life balance practice in the organization. He found that work-life balance practices in CCIL are between moderate to good. Employees are also satisfied with organizational practices and intend to spend many years of their life working for CCIL.

There have been varying opinion about work life imbalance Madipelli, Sarma and chinnappaiah (2013) identified the problems caused by work-life imbalance in life of the working women. They examined that most of the teachers feel stress with too many work demands, working conditions and long working hours. The multiple roles played by women at work place and home with frustration and stress lead to work-life imbalance. Martial relationship, attitude, cooperation of husband and family members were highly influencing factors which creates imbalance for working women.

One of the authors Pandu, Balu and Poorani (2013) suggested that the most significant factor to influence work-life balance was feeling about work. Thus increase in commitment, turnover intention and satisfaction help in achieving better work-life balance. Positive relationships were found between absence from work and work-life balance and family dependent and work-life balance.

**IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE Study**

When you increase a person’s satisfaction level, they will benefit mentally and physically, which will, in turn, cause the culture of your business to improve. Some examples include:

1. The individual is better responsive and can easily work in their paid work as well applying themselves fully to other aspects of their life like family commitments.
2. The self-esteem increases as well a health and other related aspects of one’s character like loyalty
3. The employee gets full control of their working life and can adapt better to any changes
4. The balance makes everyone at home happy and everyone at work happy
5. Employee-Employer relations will most likely improve
6. Turnover rates decrease while productivity increases
7. Employees are more likely to take a job that offers less money if there work-life balance is increased
8. Less sick days.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study is basically for assessing the prevalence of work life among married working women. The purpose is also to present and discuss specifically the problems married women face in the process of balancing their work and family life. The study also aims to through some light on the effect of work-life balance on the quality of life of married working women. Previously, the female workforce in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, subordinate or low-profile positions. Now, they occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. These changes in work culture have added to women’s duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society. The conflicts between competing work demands and personal and family needs seem to be the most probable reason for this scenario of work life conflicts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article is a conceptual study, based on Secondary Data from Books, Articles, journals and websites.

Variables influencing Work Life Balance

Work-Life Balance means the competence to schedule the hours of an individual Professional and Personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life. (K. Santhana Lakshmi & S. Sujatha Gopinath, March 2013).

The following variables influencing the experience of WLB were identified while reviewing the various literatures.

1. Women in various roles
2. Work Stress
3. Child care

ROLE OF WOMEN AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

Women are mostly into full time services and are working 8 hours per day and 5 days in a week minimum and are confronted by increasing workload every day. So, most of them carry work and responsibilities to home but balancing between these two complex situations in the present day fast life requires talent, tact, skill and caution. Women have to cope up with high work targets, office commitments, tight meeting schedules and the duties and responsibilities of life and home. Employers should concentrate on framing various policies and schemes to facilitate Work life balance to encourage and attract women employees. (Sayanti Ghosh, 2010)

According to Powell and Greenhaus (2006), women may have difficulties managing their own work/life balance, especially in work settings where they do not receive much formal support from their employer. If they want to strike any balance between work and their lives outside work, they
must set this as a goal and find their own ways of achieving it. Women must have a desire to take control of their own work/life balance and take initiative, representing their own individual effort aimed at securing this work/life balance.

According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2010), in order to gain control over work and their identity in the workplace, women need to clarify with their bosses’ the expectations about the workload that they can handle. They also need to manage spouses’ and friends’ ideas about how hard they need to work. A job includes components and requirements objectively defined by the organization; however, work/life balance must be constructed by an individual.

There are different kinds of unofficial techniques or behaviors that a woman, as an active manager of her own work/life balance, can use.

For example, depending on the job, a woman may be able to control the length and timing of her working day by managing when her work actually begins. Some individuals may be able to make choices about employer, job or work projects based on the hours they think they will have at work. A woman may be able to move closer to her workplace in order to reduce the amount of time she spends travelling to and from work every day. For jobs with less flexible schedules, a woman might want to discuss long-term job expectations, goals and pay with her employer, so that she can become an active participant in her company’s decisions about her career. Having these types of discussions with management might open up a positive dialogue and allow for more flexibility than assumed.

According to Roebuck and Smith (2011), the support from employers toward working women varies on a bossby-boss basis. Female bosses with families and young children tend to be more familiar with having to juggle many different roles and are generally more flexible. Male bosses, however, without children or who have older children, tend to be less forgiving and more demanding of time outside of work. The lack of relatedness or the “business first” mentality of jobs has caused many women to end up resigning from their jobs because they just do not provide the support they needed.

In order for any organization to retain talented women, they must continue to establish family-friendly human resource practices such as flexi time, job sharing, telecommuting, assistance in finding day care or providing onsite day care, as well as suitable nursing areas. Organizations can cope with the increase in stress by creating programs to promote work/life balance, especially for employees with families. Organizations can also make sure that mental health services are included in their health care plans and through employee assistance programs.

WORK STRESS AND WORK LIFE IMBALANCE

Stress at work, the stress of raising children, the stresses that come with aging parents -- any of these situations could provide a moderately high amount of stress. When women are faced with multiple roles, all of which carry heavy demands, they face levels of stress that are high enough to contribute to health problems, missed work, and a diminished capacity to take on more. Women are multi-taskers by nature and enfold tasks within tasks.

The Common causes of work place stress of women are:

1. Unreasonable demands for performance
2. Lack of interpersonal communication between the employer and the employees
3. Lack of interpersonal relationships among the employees
4. The fear of losing one's job
5. Long working hours
6. Less time to spend with the family
7. Harder to balance work and home demands
8. Treated inferiorly to your male colleagues

Vijaya Lakshmi et al (2013) have studied and find the issues and problems of women faculty working in educational institutions. Also found that women faculty members underwent severe stress in the process of attaining Work Life Balance. Continued work pressure resulted in poor performance. The result revealed that many female teachers have neglected their health in the process of improving the life of their family members and their students.

G. Shiva (2013) studied that “Women professionals in high position in their office have return from office in correct time, cook, clean and look after their family affairs. This makes them more stress and leads to some health problems. The leading cause of stress arises because of communication with Superior among married women employees of BPO companies, consequences of work life imbalance and interventions for work life balance. The study revealed that more than two third of the respondents reported work life imbalance primarily on account of work interference with personal life. Also concluded from this study, stress and burnout, ill-health and poor work performance are the consequences of work life imbalance.

CHILD CARE

G. Shiva (2013) explained the working women having small children are forced to leave their child in day care or in hands of maid. This creates more tension for them and less concentrate on their work and also not able to give proper care for them at times.

Lan Day (2006) stated in his study that the policies centered on extending parental leave and child care provision promotes a greater flexibility in employment.

WLB = Healthy life + Satisfactory lives both professionally and personally.

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<tr>
<th>Daily schedule of WLB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting ahead at Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completing the task within time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commuting to/from work</td>
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Work Life balance is a Pendulum. Pendulum is a rod with a weight that swings freely backward and forward and at the end it regulates the mechanisms of a clock. Like, Women employee has to satisfy both the work and family

CONCLUSION

To achieve WLB, every woman should set the goal and excel both in career and family. Some of the strategies and skills at work such as planning, organizing and setting limits can be used at home and work place for accomplishing a satisfying and fulfilling well balanced life both professionally and personally. Women employee should care the family both physically and financially to satisfy the family needs. Also work for the accomplishment of organizational objectives and individual upliftment to satisfy the career needs. Organizations need to adopt human resource strategies and policies to overcome the issues of the work life balance of women in the current business environment. Frances and Patricia (200&) concluded that Family Policy, Welfare state provision and labour market structure behave jointly to determine distinct models of work family balance and the financial consequences associated with them.

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