



Work Life Balance Among Married Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between “work” (career and ambition) on one hand and “life” (Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Work/life imbalance is when the pressures from one role make it difficult to comply with the demands of the other. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Dual career family has become the need of an hour, demographic profiles are changing, nowadays, people are moving from their home town to the place where they are getting work and obviously because of which they have less working hands to take care of children and family. And this is the reason why married working women facing a lot of problems. Especially in developing countries like India where work culture is not so organized, many times women are unable to set their boundaries between personal responsibilities and professional duties.

Work life balance is highly desirable for women employees in current circumstances as without job satisfaction and consistency in life, it creates a dilemma for working women. Since, work-life conflict downwards female employees' career progress as well as the productivity of the organization.

Key words: *Work Life Balance, Work Life Conflict, Women Empowerment, Career Progress.*

Introduction:

In today's fast paced life every individual is trying hard to balance their work life. In fact not only individuals, nowadays organizations are also working on work life balance so that their employees can give fullest to the organization. Since dual career family is the need of an hour in order to match the pace and standard of the society. And for this very purpose people are moving from their home town to the place where they are getting jobs, because of which we can say demographic profile of people are changing.

Most of the working individuals are familiar with the problem in maintaining a proper balance between their personal responsibilities and professional duties. Pressure or burden of one side effects the other, which creates imbalance between work/life.

Work Life Balance is highly desirable among married working women of developing country like India, since they are not able to set boundaries between their personal and professional life.

The concept of Work Life Balance is not a new thing, but with changing pace of life, increasing stress level of individuals which negatively affects the health and imbalances has made to maintain work life balance.

Historically, the women participation in Work Life has been increased than before. Even highly qualified women are also finding it difficult to maintain proper balance between personal and professional life. The concept of work-life balance is not a new thing, but with the changing pace of life and increase in stress levels and negatively affecting the quality of work, has made many organizations to think about the policies for maintaining a work-life balance.

Objective:

1. To review existing literature on Work Life Balance among working mothers.
2. To investigate work life balance challenges faced by working mothers.

Research Methodology:

The paper reviews existing literature. The papers were searched through using key words such as: Work Life Balance, Work Life Conflict, Women Empowerment, Career Progress etc.

Literature Review:

In today's changing environment, Indian women are more exposed to educational opportunities than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban areas. This has opened new options, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. This along with economic pressure has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the work force. Most studies of employed married women in India have reported economic need as being the primary reason given for working. Generally working women has positive effect rather than negative on their marriage.

As per the studies of Campbell *et al.* (1994), on the effects of family life on women's job performance and work attitudes. He found that the women with children were significantly lower in work participation compared to women without children; women with younger children outperformed women with older children, contrary to belief.

Makowska (1995), studied psychosocial determinants of stress and well-being among working women. The importance of work-related stressors was clearly greater than that family function related stressors, though the associated between family functioning, stress and well-being was also important.

Issues in balancing Work/Family has made Work Life Balance an area of interest especially women who are managing work with their family.

Balancing job and household responsibilities, including childcare demands has been recorded as a huge barrier that prevents women from achieving Work/Life Balance. By investigating the challenges women faced, the strategies implemented by them, and the support systems they were utilizing, may make future working women mothers better understand that how they can balance work and family life.

Amstead (2015) explained through his studies that according to social role theory, societal expectations say women must succeed in both that is their professional duties as well as in personal lives. Professional women especially working mothers face the challenges in meeting the demands of both work and home; although, this is not that easy to achieve since mostly they don't get time to fulfill roles appropriately. Gender roles have become stereotype because they are embedded in societal beliefs. The author concluded that gender stereotypes appeared to be the cause of many of the barriers women face in their work settings.

Armstead (2015) has also discussed about different theories that can be applied to the topic. According to the author, self-determination theory is built upon the idea of understanding the motivation that drives human behavior. Self-determination theory is beneficial in teaching about health behaviors as well as understanding the way how social behaviors work like volunteering and also the way it impacts on work and stress.

One study investigated the understanding on work satisfaction of the effects of passion and work/ life thoughts. Thorgren, Wincent, and Siren (2013) used self-determination theory of promoting their theories on the forms of inspiration that people develop over time. Whether the production of fun or obsessive passion is mostly dependent on the way individuals internalize these acts into their own self-concept, the researchers explained. The study focused on developing theory by relating the work / life conflict approach to passion. The results showed that, while obsessive passion had the opposite effect, a fun passion had positive effects on job satisfaction. Researchers concluded that excessive enthusiasm is more likely to result in an unbalanced emphasis on job roles, and thus may conflict with other life roles.

Haslam *et al.* (2015) reported in the study on the challenges which working mothers put up and also their support system. The researchers conduct a semi-structured interview through discussions, in which questions were asked like: "What are the challenges working parents face? What are the advantages of being working parent? Does working and being a parent effects their employments? Does work effects on parenting? What is the reason working parent attend support program? And results showed that 94% participants stated juggling work-family demands was difficult for them. 81% participants said they need support program and it will help them in achieving balance. This study presented 8 themes as: "the effects of guilt and the effects of work on family life, their support system, health, parental roles, career effects, and the well-being of their relationship and the requirement of support programs".

Participants reported that they face difficulty in getting out from their worker's mode when they reach home, which had a negative impact while interacting with their children.

Working mothers on this research communicated having a difficult time disengaging from work-related issues while being at home primarily because of the expectations placed on them at work. They stated that they did not have enough personal time because of the long list of duties in their daily routine, which ultimately had negative effects on their relationship with their families, particularly their children and spouses.

Crowley and Kolenikov (2014) conducted a survey of 800 working mother over the phone. The questions of survey were based on workplace flexibility. And the criteria of choosing samples were participants should be working mothers, guardian, or stepmothers of atleast 18 years old child. The researchers reported that the if women had a spouse at home experienced less stress and less of a negative impact on their profession in

comparison to those who don't had a partner at home. The conclusion of study was, that the risk of experiencing negative career effect by 50.6% if working mother have a partner at home. The study also concluded in support of the hypothesis that if working mothers has their partner experiences less stress at work as well as home.

Crowley and Kolenikov (2014) analyses in their study that the control mothers had a significant time-off and were relevant to their perceptions of work and parenting requirements. This finding supported further research by Crowley and Weiner (as cited in Crowley and Kolenikov (2014), in which mothers ' control of their time-out flexibility was considered to be extremely important. Participants reported that options of time-off were important than flexibility at work arrangement, when asked to design an ideal job.

Armstead (2015) reported that the balance among work/life of women has based on the requirements and experiences of working mothers. Although without a second thought in past years, many females have entered largely in male-dominated industries, study shows that females are still responsible for most of the domestic labour in families and childcare (Tang & Cousins, 2005). Strazdins and Broom (2004) also studied this by expressing that the increased duties at the workplace correlates the emotional work required in families by women. Connell (2005) studied on the Australian Workers of public sector and the researcher found that women are responsible for household works along with their professional works. Getting these two major tasks desires them to balance between their work and home in order to live fulfilled lives. The author also stated in order to differentiate the work/life balance need for men and women as "Dropping dead from career-driven stress, or shivering emotionally from never seeing one's children, is a different issue from exhaustion because of double shift, or not getting promotion because of career interruptions" (p. 378)

Aumann, Galinsky & Matos (2011) has clearly shown explicitly that work/family balancing cycle can be physically, mentally and emotionally exhausting for women.

Smithson and Strokoe (2005) shared this idea by acknowledging that work/life balance prevails among working mothers with young children as a main concern.

Levy (2012) in his master research shared a review of work life balance studies. In the study, Marks and Macdermid (as cited in Levy, 2012) reported that women with good positions as mothers experience higher levels of well-being. The study showed that those whose lives were more balanced were not necessarily the ones who worked the fewest hours.

Work/family conflicts are a huge stressor for working mothers. Hantrais (1990) conducted a comparative study on British and French women highlighted the importance of women who are as available as possible for their children. The price paid in terms of lack of personal time and feeling of guilt if there was no free time with their kids. Most of the women stated that they would sacrifice their sleep, their own free time so that their kids would not suffer the negative effects of having a working mother.

Hoff and Mitchell (2008) found males tend to be more likely to be in a position to balance work and family, because social expectations place the pressure of domestic duties and parenting on women mostly. Although research suggests that work/family balance may be unachievable, there are stories of women leaders who are successful in balancing responsibilities at work and at home.

Marshall (2009) professional women reported personal benefits, such as enriching the lives of their children and being able to provide for them. They also had a deep gratitude for making their children proud. The researcher also identified the benefits of having a career. The women in the study recorded being fond of their profession because they were trained to be more patient, caring and sensitive and eventually make them better mothers. They clarified that it was important for these women to have a career because by supporting others, they had a positive impact on society. In short, mothers and professional loved these women. Even though there is no simple way of finding peace, in the study, women reported they were able to fulfill their positions as professionals and mothers. Their responses included being able to prioritize, make sacrifices and compromise and also being able to embrace their passion for the career and families by trusting in themselves and recognizing their strengths and abilities.

Conclusion:

The study addressed the problems faced by working married mothers trying to balance work and home obligations and the effects of their decision to work outside the home in full time. The importance of these women having mentors in their lives was also discussed. Generally, it was recognized that women need to find ways to cope with stress better. Support from their workplace would be one way in which women can find their way to work life balance. Since women have to make sacrifices if they choose to work outside their home, it is important to be able to balance work and family responsibilities; therefore a movement towards success is necessary both to work and to home.

Scope of future Work:

More research could be initiated to investigate the work life balance of women professionals in other fields like banking sectors, academics and their association with any other critical attitudes and behavior. (Like occupational stress, organizational citizenship behavior, perceived organizational support and absenteeism).

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