

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS & MANAGEMENT

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## WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN FACULTY WORKING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

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### ABSTRACT

*Work life balance is not a new phenomenon. It takes into account the four quadrants like work, family, community/friends and self. To make one's life happy it is important in today's world to maintain a right balance of all these four quadrants. As there is more development in the educational field women are showing more passion and interest towards the education field and they are in a position that they are unable to balance the personal life and professional life. In this context, the paper analyses the work life balance issues and problems being faced by women working in educational institutions and suggests measures to overcome work life imbalance by using secondary data.*

### KEYWORDS

Work life balance, Issues, Problems, and Measures.

### INTRODUCTION

The expression 'work life balance' was first used in United Kingdom in the late 1950's to describe balance between individuals work and personal life. Work life balance is a concept which is capable of making miracles in the life of many. Work life balance is a major concern now-a-days. The term work life balance is used to refer to the policies that strive to achieve a greater balance between work and home responsibilities. It is the most important critical factor for getting individual as well as organizational success. Women faculty working in educational institutions faces a major problem of work life imbalance. Creating and managing a balance between work and personal life is considered as a work life balance issue. Personal life and professional life are interdependent and interconnected. In this interdependence and interconnection many problems are being faced by women employees.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**A.K.M.Mominul Haque Talukder (2011)** studied work life balance in service context and made attempts to identify how employees are balancing their work life by considering variables such as work culture, job satisfaction, employee benefits, work environment, flexible work time, work load and discrimination. He identified that work life balance is influenced by all these variables.

**Anna Beninger worked(2010)** on 80 academic women working at US, UK, Australia and Sweden and revealed that female academicians are experiencing a series of universal challenges to work life balance despite radically different government policies and cultural attitudes towards work. Women's ability to cope up with the challenges varies cross culturally with the degree of support provided by formal policies and social norms.

**A.G.V.Narayanan & R.Lakshmi Narayanan(2012)** worked, on 200 human resources working in Tamilnadu IT organizations and found that work timings, excess work load, long travel, routine meetings, work on holidays are strongly influencing work life balance of employees.

**Duxbury and Higgins (2007)** found that women are more likely than men to report high levels of role overload and caregiver strain. This is because women devote more hours per week than men to nonwork activities such as child care, elder care and more likely to have primary responsibility for unpaid labour such as domestic work.

**Fisher (2001)** work life balance comprises of four components. The first component is time, i.e., howmuch time is spent at work, and compared to how much time is spent engaged in otheractivities. The second component is related to behavior, such as, work goalaccomplishment, as work life balance is based on ones' belief that he is able toaccomplish what he would like at work and in his personal life. Two additional issues or components are Strain and Energy.

**Haruko Noguchi (2009)** explored the effects of work life balance measures and work place flexibility on female workers choice and timing of being reinstated after first child birth.

**Hill et al (2001)** A study conducted on 6,451 employees of IBM in USA observes how perceived flexible work timings and location of work place impact work-life balance. The study showed that individuals with the same workload and with perceived job flexibility enjoy good work-life balance and are capable of working longer hours before workload negatively impacts their work-life balance.

**Rana Zehra Masood & Seema Mahalwat (2012)** worked on 300 employees working in different banks and insurance companies in Haryana region and suggested that work place flexibility, reduction of work time, leave and benefits, dependent care initiatives and work life stress management reflect the importance of nurturing a supportive culture in terms of embarrassing work life balance concepts. They also advised that the organizations which neglect the recent trends and changes regarding demographic variables related to employee work life balance will end up with employee lower productivity.

**Santha Lakshmi.k &Dr.N.Santhosh Kumar (2011)** studied 250 women employees at SRM University and found that working women undergo severe stress as they try to balance their domestic life and professional life. They revealed that continued work under pressure would result in poor performance at the institution as well as domestic life.

**Suchet and Barling (1986)** in a study of interrole conflict, spouse support and marital functioning found that support from one's husband may assist employed mothers cope with their own interrole conflict, as husbands' supportive behavior and attitude might help in reducing the opposing role demands on, and unrealistic role expectations of employed mothers.

**Zimmerman (2003)** studied the strategies that dual earner couples adopt in balancing family and work. In a study of 47 middle-class, dual earner couples with children, who see themselves as successful in balancing family and work, their thought is classified into six general partnership themes such as shared housework, mutual and active involvement in childcare, joint decision making, equal access to and influence over finances, value placed on both partners work life goals and shared emotion work. Couples who are successful tend to share housework and emotion work. Naturally wives perform slightly more childcare and are primarily responsible for organizing family life. Further Zimmerman notes that wives perceive that husband's careers are slightly more prioritized.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To know the work life balance issues and problems of women faculty working in educational institutions.
2. To suggest measures for reducing work life balance issues and problems of women faculty working in educational institutions.

**METHODOLOGY**

The secondary data in a published form in various forms is used to trace the issues and problems of work life balance of women faculty in educational institutions.

**WORK LIFE BALANCE – ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

- 1. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND FACILITIES:** Positive emotions are central to an individual's growth and development enabling the people to become more proactive. Work life benefits and facilities include that sending a message that the institution cares about its employees, enough to provide a benefit package that they use or value and that contributes to the positive attitude at the work place.
- 2. DISCRIMINATION:** One common threat in work life balance conversation is discrimination. Work place discrimination refers to a work environment that creates differences among the employees. The discrimination factors could be gender, marriage, disability, race, color, nationality, religion and so on. But the gender discrimination and the status discrimination are the most common in many organizations. Often due to discrimination employees cannot balance their work life.
- 3. BALANCE BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH:** Some of the employees in the educational institutions irrespective of their job want to improve their career. During this process they go for higher education or they go for research activities. Balancing both teaching career and educational career is a little bit difficult task. They need to put more efforts on both the aspects which disturbs work life balance.
- 4. WORK ENVIRONMENT:** work environment refers to the social-psychological characteristics of work settings. It includes employee-employer relationships, motivation and advancement, job demands, social support and so on. so the environment which can provide a good balance of all the factors is said to be a good environment. A poor work environment is associated with reduced job satisfaction, absenteeism, somatic complaints, burn out and depression.
- 5. FLEXIBLE WORK TIME:** Flexible working hour's means flexibility to use small amounts of time to meet the demands of events and emergencies for work and family. The more the flexibility to work the more will be the satisfaction levels in the employees. Flexible work arrangements include flextime, reduced hours, compressed work weeks, job sharing and compressed work weeks. Flextime gives benefits to the employees as well as to the employers.
- 6. WORK LOAD:** There will be negative relationship between work load and organizational commitment. Long work hours increases work family conflict, psychological distress, health problems and so on. The more the work load the more will be the work to family interference. This creates dissatisfaction in the employees mind which results in poor performance in the classroom.
- 7. PRESSURE OF ACCREDITATIONS:** Now-a-days many of the educational institutions are striving to get accreditations of AICTE, NACC, UGC e.t.c and in order to get that the institutions are pressuring the employees to put more and more efforts, work overtime, take the academic work to home. This decreases the time to spend with the family members.
- 8. GOAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION:** At present women inspite of multichallenges at family and at work place they are setting the goals of higher education. In order to reach those goals women needs to sacrifice or give break to either the personal life or professional life which automatically causes disturbance to the work life balance.
- 9. JOB SATISFACTION:** Work life balance has a direct relationship with the job satisfaction. If a particular employee is going to have a good atmosphere at the work place and in the family she will be able to put maximum efforts at the personal jobs and as well as at the professional jobs. Ultimately there will be utmost satisfaction in her life.
- 10. CARE GIVER STRAIN:** Women need to take care of their children and dependents. She needs to give high priority for them. While prioritizing their needs there may be disturbance to the work or less time may be allotted to the profession. She needs to manage all her total family needs and strive hard to satisfy them which obstruct the professional life.
- 11. ROLE OVERLOAD:** Role overload means having over burden in the work place or at the family. Many times when one role becomes excess it shows its effects on the other roles. It causes disturbance to the personal and professional life.
- 12. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE:** Organizational culture includes the rules and regulations, policies and procedures, work atmosphere, superiors' cooperation and so on which focus on the work life balance of the employees. When individuals perceive that their superiors are unsupportive over their efforts to balance work and family responsibilities, they perceive that there is work family interference and leads to work family conflict.
- 13. MULTIPLE ROLES:** Women need to perform multiple roles such as the role of wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, mother, as an employee to her employer. She tries to satisfy everyone with utmost care and concern. While managing these multiple roles sometimes priority may not be equally distributed to everyone. Due to this there will be disturbance in the work life balance of women.
- 14. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS:** Financial problems are more closely related to the personal life. If women want to join in an educational institution due to financial problems in her family or if the husband's income is not sufficient to the family needs, she cannot balance her personal and professional life as the priority is given to the personal needs only. Irrespective of financial problems there should be zeal and passion towards the work life of an individual towards her profession in order to have an effective work life balance.
- 15. FAMILY COMMITMENTS:** Family commitments of women include taking care of children, managing disabled persons in the home, focusing on aged persons and so on. When women are more committed to the family she cannot put maximum efforts at the work place. Due to this quality guidelines cannot be given to the students.

**WORK LIFE BALANCE – PROBLEMS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. PROBLEMS RELATED TO HEALTH:** Work life balance causes severe health problems to women. The health problems may be long term or short term. Long term health problems include cardiac problems, high blood pressure, diabetes and psychiatric problems. Short term health problems include headache, gastritis, body ache and so on.
- 2. PROBLEM OF OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY OF SPOUSE:** In traditional India as the husband moves from one location to another location due to his occupation women needs to go along with him. During this movement women employee face severe psychological and physiological stress which leads to work life imbalance.
- 3. PROBLEM OF SOCIO-PERSONAL ASPECTS:** Socio-personal aspects may include managing domestic commitments, child care support, old caring, maintaining good relations at the work place, support from superiors, and cooperation of peer's e.t.c. If any of these things don't run in a proper way it deviates the mood of the employee.
- 4. PROBLEM OF REACHING TARGETS OF THE INSTITUTION:** Whenever the institutions sets stiff targets, vision, mission, and goals to reach, it pressurizes women to put additional effort at work place. Women need to work with more efforts and work over time which cause discomfort to the personal life.
- 5. PROBLEM OF MEETING SCHEDULES:** Institutions have strict time tables and schedules. On violation of these schedules there will be extra rules imposed on the employees, sometimes reduction in the salaries, demotion can be experienced which leads to distress in the employees.
- 6. PROBLEM OF CHILDCARE:** Whenever the institutions are not providing any policies and practices towards the child care facilities at the work place, the women faculty members cannot concentrate on the work. Due to this they cannot put maximum efforts in the classroom to educate the students.
- 7. PROBLEM OF HARRASEMENTS:** Women faculty feels harassed at the work place by the superiors or by the opposite gender peers. There may be ill-treatment of women employees, lack of proper support from them, treating them as inferior which leads to work life imbalance.



**8. LACK OF FAMILY SUPPORT:** If there is lack of mother-in-law's or parents or husband supports then she cannot do her professional work in a pleasant mood which decreases her efficiency at the work place.

**9. LACK OF MATERNITY LEAVE:** Many mothers are forced to return to the work only weeks after having given birth to children, missing out important bonding time with their child. Often children are sent to day cares or being cared by non family members. This disturbs the mental stamina of women.

**10. LACK OF EMOTIONAL STABILITY:** Women are so sensitive that they will get disturbed to small problems even though they can be able to handle that problem. Due to this her concentration will be deviated which leads to reduced job satisfaction and productivity.

### TIPS/MEASURES TO HAVE EFFECTIVE WORK LIFE BALANCE

**1. USE YOUR CALENDER:** Fix a time table for your personal and non personal activities. By this you will be committed to your schedule and follow through that only.

**2. GIVE RELAXATION TO MIND:** Everyone needs to relax and enjoy the time fully. For this the activities include playing sports, meditation, fishing, swimming, sitting in your yard, watching the birds which refresh your mind. By this your mental and physical stamina enhances. It creates space for problem solving and creativity.

**3. REDUCE FAMILY TIME STRESS:** Spending time with your family is not a complex thing. There are many ways to spend with your family like playing with your children, having a ride with your partner, going to a restaurant with your friends, cooking a special dish for your ones.

**4. BE GENTLE, DON'T GET DISAPPOINTED BY FAILURES:** If you set a new goal in your work or family, work out to get success. If failure occurs don't get disappointed by that. Try it once to get success.

**5. BALANCE UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS:** Try to have a stamina and will power to balance the unexpected situations that comes to your rescue.

**6. WORK OUT TO REDUCE STRESS:** Do meditation, yoga or go for a morning walk in order to overcome stress which helps in reducing your tensions and makes your work go in a pleasant way.

**7. PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES BY THE EMPLOYEES:** Employers need to take the initiatives like flexible working arrangements, compulsory leave, maximum hours, foster an environment that encourage employees not to continue work after working hours.

**8. EXTENSION OF THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:** New benefit programmes have to be added by the management like paid parental leave, domestic partner benefits and so on.

**9. ONSITE CHILD CARE FACILITIES:** Provide facilities like onsite crèches, medical facilities, seasonal child care programmes in order to make the women employees feel comfort and dedicated to the work place.

**10. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS:** Provide flexible working hours to the women employees especially to the women who has a new born child.

**11. CHOOSE PART-TIME WORK:** Part time work is beneficial for those employees who are the parents for younger children, who has to take care of elders and who want to spend less time on their work.

### RESULTS

Results out of this discussion are:

1. Working women undergo severe stress as they try to balance their domestic life and professional life. Continued work under pressure would result in poor performance in the institution as well as domestic life.

2. Working women is striving to improve the life of both their family members as well as their students. In this task, if they are neglecting their health and mind, both the family as well as the institution will suffer.

3. Time management is one of the best solutions which can help to reduce the imbalance between the personal and the work life of the employees.

4. Prioritizing the tasks and planning the activities can help to take out some free time which can be utilized for other purposes.

5. Taking some time out for hobbies and leisure activities, spending time with loved ones can help to beat the stress and manage perfect work life balance.

### CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is clear that the obligations towards the families and expectations of the institution and constant struggle to maintain a balance of work can have serious implications on the life of an individual. Work and personal life conflict occurs when the burden, obligations and responsibilities of work and family roles become incompatible. Therefore, it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between personal and their professional lives. This will help them achieve their personal and professional goals as well the organization they are working for. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that the modern organizations, especially educational institutions, should address the Work Life Balance related issues and problems among their staff, specifically women & take a holistic approach to design and implement policies to support the teaching staff to manage their work life balance which would add to the performance of these staff members.

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