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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	ROBOT MANIPULATOR CONTROL USING INTELLIGENT CONTROL SCHEME <i>HIMANSHU CHAUDHARY, DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD & DR. N. SUKAVANUM</i>	1
2.	SECURITIZATION AS A FACTOR OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION <i>DIVVIO GALLEGOS PANIAGUA & JOSE G. VARGAS-HERNANDEZ</i>	7
3.	E-GOVERNMENT - TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPING NATIONS WITH FOCUS ON PAKISTAN <i>SHAKEEL IQBAL & DR. IJAZ A. QURESHI</i>	15
4.	INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN BANGLADESH <i>MD. MORSHED HOSSAIN, MD. ZAHIR UDDIN ARIF & MD. NASIR UDDIN</i>	21
5.	APPLICATION OF SYSTEMATIC INNOVATION IN TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT (RCA AND TOPSIS MODELS PRESENTATION TO DETERMINE PROBLEM SOLVING STRATEGIES) <i>DR. YOUNOS VAKIL ALROAIA, JAVAD SOFIYABADI & ELAHEH BAKHSHIZADEH</i>	27
6.	FINANCIAL FLEXIBILITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT <i>MOZAFFAR A CHOWDHURY</i>	35
7.	BOARD DEPENDENCE, INTERNAL AUDITORS AND EARNINGS MANAGEMENT: AN EMERICAL RESEARCH OF IRAN <i>MOHAMMADREZA ABDOLI, MARYAM SHAHRI & MOHSEN RAHMANI</i>	39
8.	CHILD LABOUR CONDITION IN RESTAURANT SECTOR OF BANGLADESH <i>JASMINE JAIM</i>	44
9.	FISCAL DEFICITS AND OUTPUT GROWTH IN NIGERIA <i>DR. FREDRICK ONYEBUCHI ASOGWA & MUSA SHERIFF URAMA</i>	47
10.	MEASURING THE QUALITY OF TEHRAN'S MUNICIPALITY SERVICES FROM THE VIEW POINT OF THE CLIENT <i>DR. AMIR HOSSEIN AMIRKHANI, SAYD MEHDI VEISEH, MARYAM GHASEMI & HAMIDEH SHEKARI</i>	52
11.	ATTITUDES OF INDIANS TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY FOR LIFE INSURANCE IN INDIA <i>ANAND PRAKASH, SANJAY KUMAR JHA & S. P. KALLURKAR</i>	57
12.	PROFITABILITY PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF PANYAM CEMENTS AND MINERAL INDUSTRIES (AP), INDIA <i>N. VENKATA RAMANA, S. MD. AZASH & K. RAMA KRISHNAIAH</i>	64
13.	THE AUDIT EXPECTATION GAP: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN JORDAN <i>SULTAN HASSAN MOHAMMED AHMED & DR. D. RAGHUNATHA REDDY</i>	68
14.	DIFFUSION OF MOTOR VEHICLE SALES IN DELHI <i>DR. DEBABRATA DAS</i>	77
15.	AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION ON EFFECTIVE RISK HANDLING ATTITUDES OF TOP BUSINESS LEADERS IN RELATION TO THEIR APPROACHES TOWARDS INNOVATION <i>DR. PUSHP LATA & ABHISHEK SYAL</i>	84
16.	AUTOMATIC INFORMATION COLLECTION & TEXT CLASSIFICATION FOR TELUGU CORPUS USING K-NN ALGORITHM <i>NADIMAPALLI V GANAPATHI RAJU, VIDYA RANI V, BHAVYA SUKAVASI & SAI RAMA KRISHNA CHAVA</i>	88
17.	RE-ATTEMPT CONNECTIVITY TO INTERNET ANALYSIS OF USER BY MARKOV CHAIN MODEL <i>DIWAKAR SHUKLA, KAPIL VERMA & SHARAD GANGELE</i>	94
18.	FACTORIAL STUDY OF STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS TECHNOLOGY ENABLED ACADEMIC LEARNING <i>SHARMILA.C & DR. R. RAJENDRAN</i>	100
19.	ATTITUDE AND PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE TOWARDS WORK-LIFE BALANCE POLICIES: A COMPARATIVE EMPLOYEE ANALYSIS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS <i>S.M. SHARIQ ABBAS & VANDANA PREMI</i>	103
20.	AUDIENCE AWARENESS AND MULTICULTURAL COMMUNICATION <i>DR. DIVYA WALIA</i>	109
21.	FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF INDIAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY <i>DR. NISHI SHARMA</i>	112
22.	ANALYTICAL STUDY OF VARIOUS APPROACHES IN SERVICE QUALITY, DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENTS <i>DR. RAJESH N. PAHURKAR</i>	117
23.	WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT <i>DR. M. YASMIN & FAYAZ AHAMED .M.A.</i>	121
24.	INTERROGATION OF PACKAGING AND ADVERTISING <i>A.NITHYA</i>	125
25.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DOT.COM CRISIS AND THE SUB-PRIME CRISIS <i>DR. T.GEETHA</i>	130
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	136

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WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

"The myth of separate worlds" to describe a widely held assumption that work life and family life constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds. Work and the family connected in many subtle and non-subtle, social, economic and psychological ways. The conflicts arising out of women performing double role in the home and at place of work makes sense only on the backdrop of this patriarchal-bourgeois concept of society according to which woman is defined by her biological functions. This is more true in the case of women employees in engineering colleges. In the modern world, the women employees in engineering colleges play an active role not only within their homes but also in society by taking up full-time carriers. The extra-role they play is either to meet their financial needs or to satisfy their inner urge to gain 'social identity'. The burden on the women employees in engineering colleges as a care taker of the family and as a full-time worker leads to conflict and problems. Work-family conflict has ever been the concern of individuals and Government as it leads to negative consequences like increased health risks, unsatisfactory parent roles, decreased productivity, tardiness, absenteeism, poor morale and the like. These negative consequences highlight the need for understanding the type of relationships that exists between work and family among women employees in engineering colleges. This study examines how the work-family conflict can lead to cause problems among women employees in engineering colleges. The impact of work – family conflict is analysed with the help of work-family conflict constructs like work involvement, work-expectations, family involvement, family expectations, work conflict, family conflict, work-family conflict, quality of work-life, quality of family-life and life satisfaction. The 200 women employees in engineering colleges in Tiruchirappalli City are selected on the basis of Random Sampling method to identify the work family conflict for the purpose this study. Each of the constructs is measured with the help of responses to relevant questions by adopting four point scaling technique. These questions are presented in the Questionnaire to elicit the work family conflict of the women employees in engineering colleges. After measuring the score value of each construct of work-family conflict, mean score value of each construct has been calculated for this purpose. In order to study internal consistency of 10 constructs of work-family conflict, Standard Deviation Technique has been applied. The values of Standard Deviation of each construct have been calculated and compared with different level of work family role conflict. Further, an attempt has been made to analyse the relationship among the constructs, Correlation Coefficient Technique has been adopted and compared with different levels of work family conflict under study. The work-family conflict is analysed by comparing the mean score values of work-family conflict constructs and by comparing the internal consistency of work-family conflict constructs. On the basis of the findings of the study, suitable suggestions for reducing work family conflict are made.

KEYWORDS

Work - Family Role Conflict, Women and Work Conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

A working woman has to perform the duties of a wife and a mother at home and perform the role of a superior, a peer or a sub-ordinate outside the home. The working women are required to perform multiple and at times, conflicting roles. Being simultaneously confronted with the multiple demands of home and outside, women have to face the problem of role conflict. At home in addition to biological functions, there are other duties, which they have to perform because of the prevailing cultural norms and value. They are required at the same time to undertake responsibilities, duties and certain commitment connected with their employment. Difficulty arises because often divergent and conflicting roles make demands on the women without taking into consideration their physical capability, energy, endurance and time, which are certainly finite.

The conflicts arising out of women performing double role in the home and at place of work makes sense only on the backdrop of this patriarchal-bourgeois concept of society according to which woman is defined by her biological functions. This is more true in the case of women who are working in the organized sector. With the two contradictory roles which demand her time and energy, often put her in conflicts.

CONCEPT OF WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT

"The myth of separate worlds" to describe a widely held assumption that work life and family life constitute two separate and non-overlapping worlds. Work and the family connected in many subtle and non-subtle, social, economic and psychological ways. A women's life pattern has a unique time of hibernation, reward postponement and actualization on account of dual role played by them. A woman's self-identification is delayed because of the conflicting expectations faced by her from the different roles she performs in home and office.

Kapoor has opined; "Now she has two roles to perform, one as a house wife and the other as a wage earner. Both these roles make demand on her time and energy. She is quite often torn between the conflicting pulls of the dual role.¹The outer reality characterized by conflict in roles creates inner conflict in mind. Kapoor has rightly observed, "In the transitional era there is a role-confusion because of the absence of fitness between her roles as an employee and as a house wife because of the tension that is created due to her inner conflict."² This gets reflected overtly in many forms and creates conflicting social situations, thus further aggravating the intensity of conflict. Gerland R. Grace has explained the cause of conflict in the following manner: Role-Conflict, role-strain or role-stress are all concerned with problems for the individual which arise as the result of incapability.³ Among the women teachers role conflict arises out of the problems of differences in the expectations of the individuals. A women employee is emotionally, more evolved and socially aware of her rights and privileges and it increases the level of her role conflict.

Gandhiji had also pointed out the awakening of civil and political consciousness among Indian women creating a conflict between the traditional domestic duties and the duty towards the society.⁴ A state of confusion is created because of the contradictory nature of the dual role of the women employees. "Work-family conflict occurs when an individual has to perform multiple roles: worker, spouse and in many cases parent. Each of these roles imposes demands requiring time, energy and commitment. The cumulative demands of multiple roles can result in role strain of two types: overload and interference".⁵ Overload existing when the total demands of time and energy associated with the prescribed activity of multiple roles is too great for the roles to be performed adequately or

comfortably. Interference occurs when conflicting demands make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of multiple roles. "The vulnerability of the female work role to family demands ought to be a major source of work-family conflict because of the sex-role norm that women should take responsibility for the conflict with the norms of the work role".⁶

Under this context, the work-family conflict among Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges in Tiruchirappalli District is taken up for the purpose of this study.

WOMEN TEACHERS IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES

The era of Liberalisation and Globalisation in India has led to Privatisation and growth of self-financing private colleges particularly self-financing engineering colleges. In the changing economic scenario where the employment opportunities are dwindling, the mushroom growth of engineering colleges helps to create employment opportunities to technically educated women.

The jobs in the self-financing engineering colleges are often the easiest to seek. However, the women teachers face several problems due to male dominance in decision making, long working hours, poor salary and absence of job security. Though there is concentration of women teachers in self-financing engineering colleges, most of them are not employed on a regular basis. They perform more or less the same job as men do, but receive poor salary due to high turnover of women teachers. Furthermore, the women teachers play a dual role at home and college which causes the work-family conflict.

The women teachers play an active role not only within their homes but also in society by taking up full-time careers and participating in social activities. The extra-role they play is either to meet their financial needs or to satisfy their inner urge to gain 'social identity'. The burden on the women as a care taker of the family and as an employee leads to conflict and problems. Work-family conflict has ever been the concern of individuals and management of the college as it leads to negative consequences like increased health risks, unsatisfactory parent roles, stress, absenteeism, high turnover and the like. These negative consequences highlight the need for understanding the factors which are connected with the work – family conflict of the women teachers.

WORK – FAMILY CONFLICT CONSTRUCTS

The factors which are connected with work – family conflict are identified with the help of work-family conflict constructs. These constructs include work involvement, work-expectations, family involvement, family expectations, work conflict, family conflict, work-family conflict, quality of work-life, quality of family-life and life satisfaction. These work – family conflict constructs are explained in the following paragraphs.

INVOLVEMENT IN WORK

"Work involvement is conceptualized as a person's psychological response to his or her current work-role, the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with the work and the importance of the work to the person's self-image and self-concept".⁷

The work involvement of the women teachers depends on the number of hours spent in work. "These hours, in turn, have been linked to increased work and family conflict".⁸ High work involvement leads to more work-family conflict for Women Teachers because they are adding a non-traditional role to a traditional family role.

EXPECTATIONS IN WORK

Expectations in work by the employer are goals of pressure on an individual's experiences when she assumes increased responsibilities. "High work expectations have been significantly linked to high levels of work-family conflict".⁹ "Women do not have mutually supportive work and family roles".¹⁰

Central to the traditional roles of wife and mother is the obligation to be available to the needs of the family. The work base is in terms of position rather than gender. So, the Women Teachers are unable to take time away from their family roles to satisfy work expectations.

INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY

"Family involvement is conceptualized as the degree to which a person identifies psychologically with family roles, the importance of the family to the person's self-image and self-concept and the individual's commitment to family roles".¹¹

"Women's self-concept has traditionally been associated with their performance of the parenting and spouse roles".¹²

The family involvement of the women teachers raises anxiety and guilt regarding their performance in non-traditional roles. High family involvement leads to more work-family conflict for Women Teachers because they are playing a traditionally family role along with a non-traditional role.

EXPECTATIONS IN FAMILY

High family expectations in family may be more among women teachers and these expectations lead to role overload for the individual within the family domain. Expectations surrounding the family role can evoke pressures that dominate the time of an individual. Family expectations are associated with performance of the work role.

So, high family expectations are linked to increased work-family conflict. The Women Teacher's lack of control in balancing family needs against the demands of their jobs leads to greater work-family conflict.

CONFLICT IN WORK

The work expectations may cause work conflict since the women teachers have to play two roles as mother and teacher. The work role characteristics, such as the amount and scheduling of work time, place demands and restrictions on an individual's work behaviour that must be accommodated by the Women Teachers. These requirements may contribute to work conflict. The conflict at work, drains and pre-occupies the individual, making it difficult for her to participate adequately in family. The inaccessibility of the Women Teachers to family members while she is working can create psychological problems in the family and lead to family conflicts.

CONFLICT IN FAMILY

The spread of satisfaction and stimulation at work influences her satisfaction at home. The women teachers are expected to manage their home domain and such family responsibilities are likely to enter their work life. Since, the Women Teachers have to take full responsibility for domestic work, their families are expected to make adjustments to accommodate the demands of her work-roles. The family conflict may highly influence the work-family conflict among the Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges.

QUALITY OF WORK LIFE

"Quality of work life is a comprehensive construct that includes an individual's work-related well-being to the extent to which work experiences are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences".¹³

There is a link between the quality of work life and work-family conflict of Women Teachers on account of the influence of quality of work life on work-family conflict.

QUALITY OF FAMILY LIFE

"Quality of family life is a construct that includes an individual's family-related

well-being and the extent to which his or her roles as parent and spouse are rewarding, fulfilling and devoid of stress and other negative personal consequences".¹⁴ Family conflict has been related with quality of family life and marital satisfaction of the Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges.

SATISFACTION IN LIFE

"Life satisfaction is conceptualised as deriving from satisfaction experienced through having a good work and family life".¹⁵ The women teachers receive more life satisfaction from family on account of their traditional roles. The life satisfaction also determines the work-family conflict constructs of the Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK – MEASUREMENT OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT CONSTRUCTS

The 200 Women Teachers who are working in 14 Self Financing Engineering Colleges in Tiruchirappalli District are selected on the basis of Random Sampling method to identify the causes for work family conflict for the purpose this study. They belong to different departments like Electronics & Communication, Electrical & Electronics, computer Science, Information Technology, Civil, Mechanical, Science, Humanities and Business Administration. Among these women teachers 138 are in the cadre of lecturer, 58 are in the cadre of assistant professor and only 4 in the cadre of professor.

Each of the work – family conflict constructs is measured with the help of responses to relevant questions by adopting four point scaling technique. These questions are presented in the Questionnaire to elicit the work family conflict of the Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges. Each statement incorporated in the Questionnaire had four alternative responses – 'Always', 'Usually', 'Sometimes' and 'Never'. A score of 0 was given to 'Always', 1 to 'Usually', 2 to 'Sometimes' and 3 to 'Never'. There are twenty four items in the work-family conflict constructs in the Questionnaire.

After measuring the score value of each construct of work-family conflict, an attempt has been made to ascertain the relationship between the constructs and work family conflict using co-efficient of correlation technique. The relationship between the work – family conflict constructs and work family conflict helps to ascertain the causes for work – family conflict of the Women Teachers in Engineering colleges.

TABLE - 1: CORRELATION OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT CONSTRUCTS WITH WORK – FAMILY CONFLICT OF WOMEN TEACHERS

Factors	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)	(vi)	(vii)	(viii)	(ix)
Work Involvement	.207	-							
Family Involvement	.281	.327	-						
Work Expectations	.313	.419	.405	-					
Family Expectations	-.029	-.004	-.257	.056	-				
Work Conflict	-.300	-.285	-.319	-.369	.276	-			
Family Conflict	-.427	-.101	-.164	-.214	-.058	.056	-		
Quality of Work Life	.265	.353	.221	.188	-.159	-.248	.496	-	
Quality of Family Life	-.086	-.212	-.344	-.277	.196	.423	.090	.097	-
Life Satisfaction	-.047	-.009	-.099	-.046	.370	.234	.045	-.092	.109

Analysis of the Table – I reveals that the work-family conflict constructs: Work

Involvement, Family Involvement and Work Expectations are positively correlated with Work – Family Conflict. It indicates that these constructs are causes for work family conflict of the Women Teachers in the Engineering Colleges. Quality of Work life is most positively correlated with work family conflict and it shows that this construct causes much work family conflict. Further, Family Expectation, Work Conflict, Family Conflict, Quality of Family Life and Life Satisfaction are negatively correlated with work family conflict. It indicates that these constructs are not at all increasing the work family conflict of the Women Teachers in the Engineering Colleges. On the basis of these findings suggestions are made.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Looking for help outside the family for domestic, maintenance and child-care needs and seeking help from the management to make adjustments in the work setting are imperative for women teachers in Engineering Colleges. Since, the work-family conflict is found to be associated with the high quality of work life, work involvement, family involvement and work expectations, it is suggested that the management of the self financing engineering colleges should plan for instituting a comprehensive counselling programme specifically suitable for their Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges. Such a counselling programme aim at identifying the specific causes for such conflicts, providing expert counselling and helping in sorting out their problems.

Lack of co-operation from husband and a feeling of aloofness and divided attention between work and family responsibilities lead to work-family conflict. A tendency to dominate over the other members of the family and an impulse for extravagance also lead to Work family conflict. Hence, counselling particularly for the Women Teachers in Engineering Colleges is considered an essential step to be taken by the Government and Management for reducing the work-family conflict because women in our society play multi-faceted roles, often leading to inter-role conflict and consequent emotional imbalances. In order to overcome the practical difficulties of balancing a family and work and to improve and maximize human resource potentials, the Government and management must consider alternative work schedules such as virtual working and flexi time for the women teachers through proper legislation. If the above suggestions are carried out, it may go a long way in reducing the work – family role conflict of women teachers in Engineering Colleges.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX - I: WORK – FAMILY ROLE CONFLICT OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT - A SAMPLE SURVEY

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. Work Involvement				
a. Insufficient attention to work	()	()	()	()
b. Shirking responsibility for work	()	()	()	()
2. Work Expectations				
a. Job requires high level of energy	()	()	()	()
b. More time is required to complete the job	()	()	()	()
3. Family Involvement				
a. Attention to family inadequate	()	()	()	()
b. Conjugal relationship not satisfactory	()	()	()	()
4. Family Expectations				
a. No possibility of shifting domestic work	()	()	()	()
b. Adequate attention to children's education not possible	()	()	()	()
5. Work Conflict				
a. Easily provoked	()	()	()	()
b. Blaming others	()	()	()	()
6. Family Conflict				
a. Not co – operating with the husband	()	()	()	()
b. Aloofness preferred	()	()	()	()
7. Quality of Work Life				
a. Experiencing friction in the office daily	()	()	()	()
b. Feeling tired and bored with office work	()	()	()	()
c. Bad office environment as cause of tension	()	()	()	()
d. Not satisfied with the employers	()	()	()	()
8. Quality of Family Life				
a. Relationship with other family members poor	()	()	()	()
b. Tendency to dominate	()	()	()	()
c. Being extra – vagant	()	()	()	()
d. Bad home atmosphere	()	()	()	()
9. Life – satisfaction				
a. No interest in religion	()	()	()	()
b. No recognition in society	()	()	()	()
c. Feeling of no achievement in life	()	()	()	()
d. Friends not respecting job status	()	()	()	()

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