



Research Paper

Investigation of Work and Life Balance of Women Employees and its Effects on Emotional and Social Well-Being

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Abstract

The role of working women has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. This has resulted in a scenario in which working women have tremendous pressure to develop a career as robust as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in personal life. Work life balance refers to maintaining the balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work life balance is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the women employees in the 21st century because of the type of roles they play at home and the spill over of personal life over work life. This affects the person's physical, emotional and social well-being. Thus, achieving work life balance is a necessity for working women to have a good quality of life. This paper is an attempt to explore the tough challenges faced by working women in maintaining a balance between their personal and professional life.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Women Employees, Family, Career

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1. Introduction

Work-Life Balance of women employees has become an important subject since the time has changed from men earning the family living in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility for earning for in order to improve their family life. Hence, it is of essential importance to know how women balance their professional and domestic lives. In the initial stages, women had to struggle a lot to establish their identity in this competitive world, both in the society as well as in the professional life. But the conditions have improved to a great extent due to the advancement of educational and training institutions [1-3].

Historical data from an employment survey in India indicates that the employment rate of women has remarkably increased by 3.6% per year from the year 1991 to 2001. Women in India have overcome barriers and built bridges in the professional flat forms. Work-Life Balance focuses on two main

aspects called Achievement and enjoyment. This means that a woman should be able to have job satisfaction (Enjoyment), and at the same time she should be able to grow up in his career (Achievement). When a working woman is able to achieve and enjoy her professional and personal lives, it means that she has a positive Work-Life Balance [4].

The rapid development of economical knowledge has given place for a large number of women to be enlightened by higher education. Education has not only empowered them, but also has given them robust careers. With brain power being the requisite skill in this knowledge era, rather than endurance or physical strength, the women workers seem to flood into every industry on par with men. But this has indeed become a tough challenge for women as they have to perform a lot of duties both in home and in office. As working women get married, they have additional responsibilities and when they become mothers, they have to manage the primary care of children

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and extended family, and are thus, under greater pressure to continue on a career path. Today's working mothers fulfil family responsibilities, and also try to remain fully involved in their careers, coping up with the competing demands of their multiple roles. The caring responsibilities that working mothers have inflicted a great deal of stress on them when it is combined with their professional duties. The attempt of working women to simultaneously integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles puts them under tremendous pressure [4-6].

1.1 Work life balance

Work life balance is the proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on one hand and "life" (pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance". There is a large individual component in that meaning which includes each individual's needs, experiences, and goals, define the balance and there is not a one size which fits all solution. Also, what work-life balance does not mean is an equal balance in units of time between work and life. Work life balance has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organizations as well as for the lives of employees. A balance between work and life is supposed to exist when there is a proper functioning at work and also at home [4-7].

1.2 Objective of the study

- 1) To study the cross tabulation of demographic details and WLB level.
- 2) To identify the determinants of WLB and satisfaction level of employees.
- 3) To evaluate the strategies to achieve WLB.
- 4) To offer suggestions based on findings of the study.

1.3 Scope of the study

The present study analyzes the work-life balance of women employees. Palakkad district and data were analyzed based on information gathered from the women employees. The data were collected from 80 women employees in Mannarkkad municipality, Palakkad district.

1.4 Data collection

The required data of this study are collected from Primary and Secondary sources. Primary data are collected from questionnaires administered to various respondents such as women employees. Secondary data are obtained from various published reports, journals, research articles, etc.

2. Positive work-life balance

To achieve a positive Work-Life Balance, women should be pro-active and plan their professional and personal schedules well in advance so that both are equally balanced and the end result is satisfaction. Figure 1 represents few strategies to achieve a positive WLB:

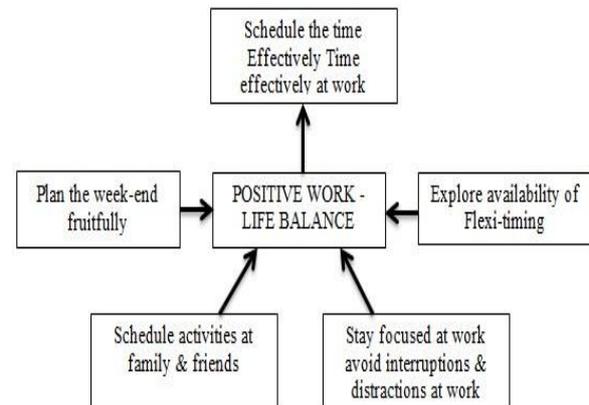


Figure 1. Strategies to achieve a positive WLB

When a woman follows the above strategies regularly, she would be a successful professional as well as an outstanding family maker.

3. Policy on work-life-balance in organizations

If an organization needs to be successful with committed and productive women, it needs to not only lay down schemes and strategies, but also needs to formulate policies and guidelines to monitor these schemes.

The following steps are mandatory to formulate the policy on WLB:

- 1) Identification of the need for introducing WLB Policy.
- 2) Creation of a Task-force that can lead this activity.
- 3) Formulate the policy on WLB based on the company's vision & mission's statement.
- 4) Form a committee that comprises of representatives from management as well as workers category.
- 5) Conduct workshops to enhance knowledge and the necessity of this policy.
- 6) Communicate the policy to all employees.
- 7) Implement the policy of maintaining regular feedbacks and suggestions.
- 8) Register and record each activity of the committees/taskforce.
- 9) Update any changes that have been made to all employees.
- 10) Make the policy accessible and understandable by all.

4. Data analysis & interpretation

Table 1. Cross tabulation of the demographic details and WLB level

Sl: No	Category	Frequency	%	WLB Level			
				Very High	High	Medium	Low
Age of respondents							
1	Below 30	22	27.5	7	9	4	2
	30-40	31	38.8	6	7	10	8
	Above 40	27	33.8	12	5	6	3
Spouse profession							
2	Business	15	18.8	2	3	5	10
	IT	13	16.3	2	2	4	5
	Academic	11	13.8	4	4	2	1
	Insurance	14	17.5	3	4	5	2
	Marketing	8	10.0	2	2	1	3
	Other	9	11.3	3	1	2	3
No. of children							
3	None	11	13.8	4	4	2	1
	One	12	15.0	3	2	4	3
	Two	52	65.0	7	9	16	20
	Three and more	15	3.0	1	1	4	9

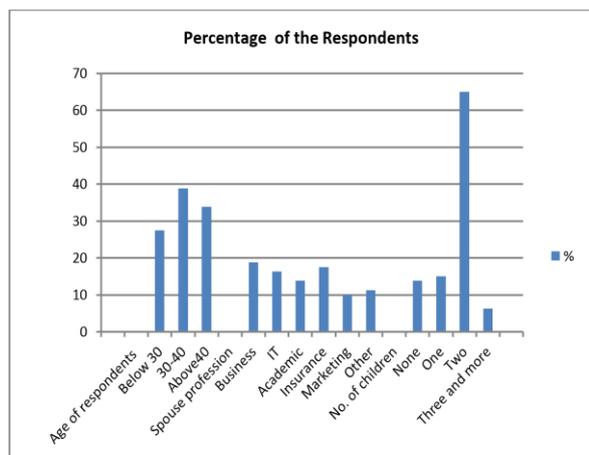


Figure 2. Percentage of the respondents

4.1 Interpretation

Among the 80 working women, more number of respondents belonged to the age group of 30-40 (38.8%). Many respondents (65.0%) had two children. In terms of Spouse's Profession, 18.8% were engaged in business, 16.3% in the IT sector, 13.8% in Academic sector, 17.5% in Insurance sector, 10% in Marketing sector and so on. WLB level is very high in below 30 age group and 40 age group and low in 30-40 age group, in between 30-40 age group WLB is very low. In terms of Spouse's Profession, WLB is very low in the case of Business and high in the case of

Academic. The maintenance of the WLB is highly depending upon the no. of the children (Figure 2).

Table 2. showing determinates of WLB & satisfaction level

Determinants of Work Life Balance	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Support system in the family	23	36	21
Child care	17	25	38
Working Environment	17	38	25
Alternate work option	10	15	55
Benefit awarded by the company	17	25	38

4.2 Interpretation

Among 80 respondents around 50% were satisfied with their family support. 48% were dissatisfied with child care and the benefits awarded by the company. Moreover, 69% were dissatisfied with alternative work option and 48% were satisfied with working environment (Table 1).

5. Findings

- 1) This study was able to measure the work-life balance of working women. It was found that working women find it very difficult to balance their work and personal lives irrespective of the sector they are into.
- 2) A greater number of respondents belonged to the age group of 30-40 (38.8%).
- 3) Above 65% of the respondents had two children.
- 4) In terms of Spouse's Profession, 18.8% were engaged in business, 16.3% in the IT sector, 13.8% in Academic sector, 17.5% in Insurance sector, and 10% in marketing sector and so on.
- 5) WLB level is very high below 30 age and 40 age group and low in 30-40 age group.
- 6) Among 80 respondents around 50% were satisfied with their family support. 48% were dissatisfied with child care and the benefits awarded by the company. 69% were dissatisfied with alternative work option and 48% were satisfied with working environment (table 2).

6. Suggestion

- 1) 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.

- 2) Health and wellness programs can certainly help working women in balancing their personal and professional lives.
- 3) Employees can plan and schedule the time properly as well as in professional and family lives.
- 4) At last but not the least, family support is very important in WLB of women employees.

7. Conclusion

Women constitute an important section of the workforce. However, the present situation of a large number of well-qualified women who due to various circumstances have been left out of their jobs needs to be addressed. The problems faced are several but, significantly, most often the "break in their careers" arises out of motherhood and family responsibilities. Work-life balance initiatives designed to help employees balance their work and personal lives are not only an option, but also a necessity for many employers today. There is a need for Critical reflections on the work life balance debate, organizations to adopt human resource strategies and policies that accommodate the work-life needs of a diverse workforce in the current business environment.

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