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Work-Life Balance among Women Police in Coimbatore District – An Empirical Study

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Abstract: There is increasing evidence that work-Life Balance has a direct impact on societal issues such as delayed parenting, declining fertility rates, ageing populations and decreasing labor supply. It is documented that work-life balance policies are beneficial for individuals, their families, organizations, and society. However, other evidence demonstrates that the associated benefits are not always realized and work –life imbalance policies can result in reinforced gender inequities and increased levels of work –life conflict. Though women have made their entry into the labor market they still face obstacles at their workplace which are related to (a) the hazards or risks which are common to all the workers; and (b) the risks which working women face in their families and in the society. The multiple roles in work and family can be the source of multiple satisfactions for employed women but the combination of career and family roles is often associated with conflict, overload and stress. Therefore, the study attempted in identifying the factors that cause work-family challenges among women police personnel. Convenient sampling technique was adopted to select a sample of 200 respondents comprising of women police personnel. Through personal interview method data pertaining to the study was collected from Coimbatore Corporation area. Factor analysis was used to identify the factors which cause dissatisfaction among women police personnel. The findings of the study revealed that the women police personnel were dissatisfied with the quality of work life and faced family related issues and personal problems.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Women Police, Occupational stress.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance is fundamental to sustainable business which is ultimately about improving the quality of life for everyone .It results in win-win situation because people will be more productive if they are happy in their jobs and this is more likely if they are able to balance work commitments with family life. Work-life balance (WLB) is an issue increasingly recognized as of strategic importance to organizations and of significance to employees. Work-life Balance is Human Resource Strategy, which is already recognized as the ultimate key for Human Resource Development among all the work systems .WLB addresses the concerns of improving employee satisfaction and motivation levels, strengthen work place learning and development for betterment in managing the change and adopting alien practices in the event of change .One of the important strategies to improve WLB is to create work culture and conduct which helps in maintaining an amicable good atmosphere where employees are treated with reasonable dignity and respect. The status of women in the society has an important bearing on their participation in economic activity, which is common in developed and developing countries. In developing countries the family income are by and large low and that can best be supplemented by women's work. Various studies also point out that today the educated women of India are no more contented in carrying out only the traditional female roles of a wife and mother. The main reason why most women work was the low income of their men folk.

The married working woman when forced to combine her two major roles-marriage and work, faces additional socio-psychological problems and difficulties, the first of them being role-conflict. This was the most important obstacle to the woman achieving a high position in occupations and professions, since both these roles are equally demanding and important. Studies on educated working women and role-conflict found that educated working women, even while holding very responsible posts, continue to be over-conscious of their duties and obligations at home; duties towards their husband, children and home. Inner conflict and tension was experienced particularly if they are very keen to play both their roles very efficiently and are desirous of paying equal attention to their home and work.

Problems are then faced particularly in those cases where the wife has to devote more time and energy to her too absorbing job or profession because of its immediate compulsion and she feels guilty that she has not been able to do justice to her husband, home and children. Role-conflict was felt mainly because the perception of the married woman to herself and of the society as a whole, as a mother and home-maker, has not undergone much change as a consequence of her contributing economically to her family.

She still feels that her home and children are her prime responsibilities, and she continues to be predominantly governed by this role since that was also the social norm. Wife's work participation can create a potential status problem for husband. Husbands can feel threatened by the fact that they no longer were solely responsible for the support of their families and that their wives were no longer dependent on them. Time apportionment of a working woman was related to the type of responsibilities at home and at work place. There was no doubt that it would be a fundamental factor advancing the circumstances of the working mothers of young children and especially those from the lower income sectors.

II. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Women thus, are facing conflicting situation due to (i) inner conflict of dual commitment and (ii) the practical difficulty of combining work with their household activities. The conflicting situation of working women could be solved only if the traditional notion of society towards women changes. While simultaneously recognizing the contribution of women to economic development, it is essential to examine the environment where women work and the conditions under which they become significant members contributing to economic growth. Hence there is a need to monitor the issues and challenges the women face at work.

In this context, this study attempted to examine the work-family challenges faced by Women police. Women police personnel should be ready for work at any time of the day. The irregular hours of work performed by them cause additional strain and work-family imbalance, which in turn affects their career. The researcher attempts to study the different types of challenges faced by women police personnel.

Objectives of the Study:

The study has been done keeping in view the specific objectives which constitutes the frame work for the entire enquiry.

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of the selected women police force.
2. To know whether the respondents are able to balance the work life and family life.
3. To examine the problems faced by women police force in their work environment and at home.
4. To assess the various factors (training inputs, shift timing, extended annual leave, recreational opportunities etc.,) contributing to improve respondent's performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

Selection of Sample

The Coimbatore district has been selected for the study. Coimbatore district has 70 police stations including 10 women police stations. A Convenient sampling technique has been used to select the police stations and sample respondents. Out of 10 women police stations five women police stations has been randomly selected covering the places Kattur, R.S.Puram, Coimbatore central, Thudiyalur and Podanur. Fifteen other police stations in and around Coimbatore district has been selected. From each police station 10 women police were randomly selected. A total of 200 women police has been selected for the purpose of the study.

Tool for Data Collection

In this study convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from the available samples. Accordingly a questionnaire was designed to gather relevant feedback on "Work-Life Balance" from the women police force. The statements of the questionnaire are so designed that to keep ambiguity at lower levels avoiding paradox meaning. Data was collected both from the primary and secondary sources. Apart from collecting first information through questionnaire, secondary sources of data used to include records, reports, brochures and other published & unpublished material relevant to the topic.

Tool for Analysis

Percentage analysis and chi-square test were used for analyzing the data collected for the present study.

Findings of the Study

The study was intended to identify the difficulties faced by the women police and its association with selected demographic variables. In the present study the obtained data were tabulated, organized, analyzed and interpreted by using descriptive and inferential statistics based on the objectives of the study. The findings were presented on tables as follows:

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents by Age, designation, days of work in a week, hours of work in a day, marital status, shift work and time spend in travelling to work place

N = 200

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORY	RESPONDENTS	
		Number	Percent
Age (Years)	21 – 26	96	48.00
	27 – 35	62	31.00
	36 – 42	14	7.00
	43 - 50	22	11.00
	above 50	6	3.00
Designation	Constable	144	72.00
	Sub – Inspector	30	15.00
	Inspector	26	13.00
Days of work in a week	Less than 5 days	-	-
	5 days	-	-
	6 days	-	-
	7 days	200	100.00
Hours of work in a day	7 – 8 hours	10	5.00
	8 – 9 hours	19	9.50
	9 – 10 hours	12	6.00
	10 – 12 hours	15	7.50
	More than 12 hours	144	72.00
Marital status	Single	28	14.00
	Married	172	86.00

Shift work	General/day shift	140	70.00
	Night shift	30	15.00
	Alternative shift	30	15.00
Time spend in travelling to work place	Less than half an hour	13	6.50
	Nearly one hour	150	75.00
	Nearly two hours	22	11.00
	More than two hours	15	7.50
Total		200	100.00

The result indicates that 48 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 21 – 26 years followed by 31 percent in the age group of 27 – 35 years, 7 percent in the age group of 36 – 42 years, 11 percent in the age group of 43 – 50 years and 3 percent of the respondents were in the age group of above 50 years. Regarding designation, 72 percent of the respondents were police constables, 15 percent were sub-inspectors and 13 percent were inspectors. All the respondents (100 percent) work for seven days of the week. Majority of the respondents (72 percent) work for more than twelve hours a day, 7.5 percent of the respondents work 10 – 12 hours a day, 6 percent of them work 9 – 10 hours a day, 9.5 percent of the respondents work 8 – 9 hours a day and 5 percent of the respondents work for 7 – 8 hours a day. The study indicates that 86 percent of the respondents were married and 14 percent of the respondents were unmarried. Majority of the respondents (70 percent) work in general/day shifts, 15 percent of the respondents work in night shifts and 15 percent of them work in alternative shifts.

Regarding the time spend in travelling to work place, 75 percent of the respondents spend nearly one hour to reach their work place, 11 percent of them travel nearly two hours to reach their work place, 7.5 percent of them spend more than two hours in travel to reach the work place and 6.5 percent of them spend less than half an hour to reach their work place.

Table –2

Distribution of Respondents by balance of work life

N = 200

	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percent
Yes	10	5.00
No	190	95.00
Total	200	100.00

The result indicates that 95 percent of the respondents are unable to balance their work life and only 5 percent of them were able to balance their work life.

Table – 3

Association between work life balance and Age of Respondents

N = 200

AGE GROUP	RESPONDENTS ABILITY TO BALANCE WORK LIFE						χ^2 value
	Yes		No		Total		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
21 – 26	2	2.08	94	97.92	96	48.00	19.34*
27 - 35	1	1.61	61	98.39	62	31.00	
36 - 42	2	14.29	12	85.71	14	7.00	
43 – 50	3	13.64	19	86.36	22	11.00	
Above 50	2	33.33	4	66.67	6	3.00	
Combined	10	5.00	190	95.00	200	100.00	

*Significant at 5% level

 $\chi^2 (0.05, 4df) = 9.49$

It is seen from the findings that higher percentage of respondents (98.39percent) in the age group of 27 – 35 years are unable to balance their work life as compared to the respondents in the age group of above 50 years (66.67percent). The

respondents in the age group of above 50 years (33.33 percent) are able to balance their work life as compared to the respondents in the age group of 27 – 35 years (1.61 percent). However the data subjected for the statistical test ($\chi^2 = 19.34^*$ at $p < 0.05$ level) implies significant association between work life balance and age group of the respondents.

Table – 4

Association between work life balance and marital status of the Respondents

N = 200

MARITAL STATUS	RESPONDENTS ABILITY TO BALANCE WORK LIFE						χ^2 value
	Yes		No		Total		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Single	8	28.57	20	71.43	28	14.00	38.09*
Married	2	1.17	170	98.83	172	86.00	
Combined	10	5.00	190	95.00	200	100.00	

* Significant at 5% Level $\chi^2 (0.05, 1df) = 3.841$

The result indicates that higher percentage of married respondents (98.83 percent) were unable to balance the work life as compared to unmarried respondents (71.43 percent). However, the data subjected for the statistical test ($\chi^2 = 38.09^*$ at $p < 0.05$ level) implies significant association between work life balance and marital status of the respondents.

Table - 5

Association between work life balance and shift works

N = 200

SHIFTS	RESPONDENTS STRESS LEVEL						χ^2 value
	Yes		No		Total		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
General/day shifts	5	3.57	135	96.43	140	70.00	2.36NS
Night shifts	2	6.67	28	93.37	30	15.00	
Alternative shifts	3	10.00	27	90.00	30	15.00	
Combined	10	5.00	190	100.00	200	100.00	

NS: Non-Significant, $\chi^2 (0.05, 2df) = 5.991$

It is revealed from the findings that higher percentage of respondents (96.43 percent) who work in general / day shifts are unable to balance their work life. The data subjected to statistical analysis ($\chi^2 = 2.36$ NS at $p > 0.05$ level) implies non significant association between work life balance and shift work of the respondents.

Table – 6

Distribution of Respondents by problems faced at home

N = 200

PROBLEMS FACED	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percent
Hamper the family relationship	53	26.50
Hindrance to carry out the responsibility of a wife / daughter	33	16.50
Inadequate time to look after family affairs	43	21.50
Too much of responsibility	18	9.00
Inadequate time for personal work	18	9.00
No time to participate in social and religious functions	35	17.50
Total	200	100.00

From the view point of problems faced by the respondents at home, the study indicates that majority of the respondents (26.50 percent) find that their family relationship is hampered, 21.50 percent of the respondents find inadequate time to after family affairs, 17.50 percent of them find no time to participate in social and religious functions, 16.5 percent of them are unable to carry out their responsibility as a daughter / wife, 9 percent of the respondents are over burdened with responsibility and 9 percent of them find inadequate time for their personal work.

Table – 7
Distribution of Respondents by problems faced at work place

N = 200

PROBLEMS FACED	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percent
Unsatisfactory working conditions	18	9.00
Hard work	46	23.00
Bad atmosphere	22	11.00
Health hazard	13	6.50
Over work	20	10.00
Increased stress and burn out	81	40.50
Total	200	100.00

From the view point of problems faced by the respondents at work place, the study reveals that 40.50 percent of the respondents are left with increased stress and burn out, 23 percent of them are exposed to hard work, 11 percent of them find the working atmosphere as bad, 10 percent of the respondents are left with over work, 9 percent of them are not satisfied with the working conditions and 6.50 percent of the respondents are affected by health hazard.

Table – 8
Distribution of Respondents by management of stress arising from work place

N = 200

MANAGEMENT OF STRESS	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percent
Counseling services	47	23.50
Health Program	24	12.00
Exercise facilities	26	13.00
Parenting or family support programs	103	51.50
Extended annual leave	28	14.00
Mutual adjustment among colleagues	35	17.50
Recreational facilities	50	25.00
Organsing a picnic or tour	45	22.50

IV. MULTIPLE RESPONSES

The study reveals that 51.50 percent of the respondents use parenting or family support program as a tool to manage the stress arising from work at office, 23.50 percent of them use counseling services as a tool to manage the stress arising from work at office, 13 percent of the respondents use exercise facilities as a tool to manage the stress arising from work at office, 12 percent of the respondents use health program offered by their organizations as a tool to manage stress arising from work at office, 14 percent of them use extended annual leave as a tool for managing stress arising from work at office, 17.50 percent of the respondents use mutual adjustment among colleagues as a tool to manage stress arising from work at office, 25 percent of them use recreational facilities offered by the organization as a tool for managing stress arising from work at office and 22.50 percent of the respondents

Table –9

Distribution of Respondents by management of stress arising from work at home

N = 200

MANAGEMENT OF STRESS	RESPONDENTS	
	Number	Percent
Yoga	78	39.00
Meditation	108	54.00
Entertainment	14	7.00
Total	200	100.00

The study indicates that majority of the respondents (54 percent) use meditation as a tool to manage their stress arising from work, 39 percent of them use yoga as a tool to manage their stress and 7 percent of them choose entertainment as a tool for managing the stress arising out from their work.

V. SUGGESTIONS

From the present study on “Work life balance among women police in Coimbatore district – An empirical analysis” the following suggestions can be revealed:

- » By providing counselling on work related and personal problems and extending support from a team of welfare health and counselling staff, the stress experienced by the women police could be reduced.
- » Counselling practices can be extended at family level including dependents and relatives for better results.
- » Support from family members should be given for effective work life balance.
- » In spite of the facilities offered to the women police personnel for balancing the work life; they find it difficult to manage their work life balance. Hence the government should take steps to set coping methodology for work life balance among women police personnel.

VI. CONCLUSION

Juggling between the obligations towards the families and expectations of the organization and constant struggle to maintain a balance of work can have serious implications on the life of an individual. Therefore it is important for women police to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives. This will help them to achieve their personal and professional goals. From individual career ambitions to pressure to cope up with family and work, the reasons can be the situation and individual specific. The speed of advancement of information technology, the increasing competition in the talent supply market has to lead to a technology to lead to a “Performance-Driven” culture creating pressures and expectation to performance more and better every time. Also, many times many people find it difficult to say “NO” to others especially their superiors. They usually end up over burdening themselves with work. The increasing responsibilities on the personnel front with age can also create stress on personal and professional fronts.

Constant struggle and effort to maintain a balance between the work and personal life can have serious implications on the life of an individual. Most of the respondents have admitted that their jobs are affecting and creating stress in their personal lives. The pressures of the work or personal life can lead to stress. According to studies it has been found that such situation can take toll on the person’s health both physiologically and psychologically. Heart ailments, cardiovascular problems, sleep disorders, depression, irritability, jumpiness, insecurity, poor concentration and even nerves break downs are becoming common among the victims of such imbalance.

Though women have made their entry into the labor market they still face some obstacles at their workplace and at home. The findings of the study reveal that the respondents were dissatisfied with the quality of work life and work environment.

Quality of work life has emerged as a common problem to all the respondents. There is a substantial increase in the number of professional, self-employed and educated women. This is due to the reasons that women in general do things systematically and in particular manage the resources effectively. Women have an inherent talent for multi-tasking - organizing household activities, managing available resources, maintaining relationships and making firm decisions. These qualities of women can be capitalized by identifying their potential and extending a favorable support to manage new ventures. Challenges persist in work places and it is how employees take up these problems are likely to vary. Few are unique to women while few are common to both the genders. Women need to prepare themselves to cope up with these challenges. Hence government can implement family-friendly approaches to encourage women police personnel to balance their work-family challenges. Dissatisfaction among the women police can be reduced by improving the quality of work life by providing an attractive system of reward and recognition of good work and by improving the working environment. Such measures are likely to help in harnessing the potential existing among the women police personnel thereby enabling them enhance their performance at the work.

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