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Study of Work Life Balance of Women Employees of Ramtek Area

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Abstract: Work-life balance is one of the most challenging issues being faced by the women employees in this global era. This problem is more for women employees because for her, both personal and office roles are demanding. As a result, such pressure affects her health thereby leading to absenteeism from office. Hence it becomes essential to help working women to maintain a balance between their personal and professional lives. If the personal & professional life roles are properly balanced it leads to maximizing the performance of employees. But due to increased working hours, the individuals are left with less time for themselves. As a result the personal and spiritual growth of an individual is also hindered. The growth of Information technology also had a serious impact on the life style of individuals. Due to consistent exposure to the lavish lifestyle of the people of developed countries, the aspirations of the individuals in developing countries also have increased. The increased aspirations and also the increased cost of living have necessitated both husband and wife to do job for having a normal life. This research attempts to gain insight into women employees employed in different occupations, in balancing work and life. It aims at establishing whether work-life balance initiatives and practices can be considered as a strategic human resource management decisions that can translate into improved individual and organizational performance.

Keywords: work life balance; WLB, gender difference; chi-square; stress; supportive work environment, satisfaction.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this global era Work Life Balance of Women employee has become an important issue due to the fact that the women are equally sharing the earning responsibility for her family. Women are getting into jobs and they continue to work even after marriage. A married woman has more responsibility than man in taking care of children and family. The working women efficiently overcome difficult situations by their commitment and perseverance. Career and goals are the most important factors in life. Most of the women are coming forward to work in order to support their family. This change is quite natural and dynamic due to change of environment and economic conditions. In these days the biggest challenge for women is how to balance the demands of family and career.

II. DEFINITION

The relationship between the amount of time and effort that someone gives to work and the amount that they give to other aspects of life, such as their family, is called as, Work-Life Balance. Thus, Work-life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between “work” (career and ambition) and “lifestyle” (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation). This is related to the idea of “lifestyle choice”.

Various studies have shown that the majority of women are working 40-45 hrs/week out of which almost 53% of them struggle to achieve work-life-balance. It is due to the fact that they are being challenged by the demands of their organization as well as the commitments of their family members. They need to manage the daily requirements of their family on one side and the multiple schedules, meetings, business requirements and other routine responsibilities at work. Hence, Women at work needs a special treatment by their employers. Employers should work out schemes that should attract and retain the employees

for a longer period and also make them highly productive. Organizations have many such facilities like, Transport, Canteen, Day care centers, Postal/saving schemes, Flexi-working hours, part-time working, provide the information about work-life balance policies and special leave arrangement such as Annual leave & public holiday leave, Leave for Health care centers, rewards & recognition, career growth, Insurance plans, Job rotation, Incentives, Performance related pays, Rest rooms and other government schemes like maternity, marriage, sick leave benefits etc. In addition to that other Work life balance options like Staff counseling, Organizational psychology unit, Workplace Health Promotion, Social clubs, Pre-retirement club, Women's network, Breast feeding support groups etc. These schemes help the women employees to work peacefully without any family, children tension so that they able to give their best at work. Moreover, organizations have women empowerment schemes like Forums, Committees, Grievance redresses system, suggestion schemes where a women is empowered to share her views, complaints and suggestions with the Top Management and derive solutions for the same.

Work life balance helps in describing a balance between person's person and working life. The term work life balance is given preference as it includes the experiences of working mothers and helps in exploring new ways of working and living for them. Managing a balance between family and work life is the biggest Challenge for both working people and the organization. The key areas that are affected by work-life balance are namely retention of employees, increase in motivation and employee productivity, decrease in Healthcare costs, reduced absenteeism and stress-related illness etc. Work life balance is associated with quality of life when there is substantial time involvement or satisfaction to distribute across roles. For leading a healthy life, it is essential to schedule the hours of family and work life. When a women is able to manage her personal and professional life she becomes more committed to her office work. As a result, she is able to achieve success in her career. Further, it will also help her in leading a healthy and peaceful life.

III. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Striking a perfect balance between personal life and professional life is becoming near to impossible. There is real balance only when the individual feels that she has done justice to all her roles and is satisfied about it. Work-life balance problems can be really serious and needs to be addressed in due time.

This era which is signified by global competition, information technology revolution, materialistic culture , inflation etc. many changes are happening in the work place and family systems. Majority of women are finding it difficult to achieve a desired Work-Life Balance. In comparison with men, women have more responsibilities at home. Although there are many studies on Stress management of employees but very few studies are conducted for work life balance issues. Out of these studies there are fewer studies on work-life balance of women employees.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vijaya Mani (2013)³: has revealed the major factors influencing the Work Life Balance of Women professionals in India such as role conflict, lack of recognition, organizational politics, gender discrimination, elderly and children care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support.

K. Santhana Lakshmi et al, (2013)⁶: have examined that the Educational institutions should address the Work Life Balance related issues among their staff, specifically women and take a holistic approach to design and implement the policies to support the teaching staff to manage their WLB.

Konrad, A.M and Mangel, R., (2000)¹¹: said none of the known work-life policies has been consistently found as beneficial for job performance. No relationship could be established between a composite measure of 19 work-life initiatives and productivity. While there is not strong evidence for the universalistic approach for work-life policies regarding their effects on job performance.

Shalini and Bhawna, (2012)⁷: reported in study, Quality of work life is being used by the organizations as a strategic tool to attract and retain the employees and more importantly to help them to maintain work life balance with equal attention on performance and commitment at work.

Heather S. Mc Millan et al, (2011)²: suggested that the individual harmony and its effects has developed a new Harmony based on conflict and enrichment. N. Krishna Reddy et al, (2010) concluded that the married women employees indeed experience Work Family Conflict (WFC) while attempting to balance their work and family lives. Thus, Organization needs to formulate guidelines for the management of WFCs since they are related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

Niharika and Supriya, (2010)⁵: have studied the work based factors and family related factors that are considered to contribute to work life balance. Work based factors are flexi time, option to work part time and freedom to work from home and the family related factors are child care facility and flexibility to take care of emergencies at home.

Scherer (2009) & Wayman (2010)¹⁰: The wellbeing of workers who kept their employment can be negatively affected by job insecurity . Many individuals feel under pressure to work longer hours to keep their jobs , and to meet their family expenses. This study recognises that the main causes of poor WLB amongst Irish employees are excessive working hours and a lack of work schedule flexibility.

N. Gayathri & P. Karthikeyan, (2013)¹: said that Work Life balance is not something that just happens. It involves the efforts of a number of partners: the employee, the organization for which the employee works, the family with whom the employee lives and the society in which all are embedded. It involves mutual understanding and respect between all of these players.

K. Santhana Lakshmi & S. Sujatha Gopinath, (2013)⁸: said that Work Life Balance means the competence to schedule the hours of an individual Professional and Personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life.

Mahon et al.(1998)⁴: found that work-life balance considerations were a significant factor for women when deciding what to do about their unplanned pregnancy: In the eyes of these women, motherhood makes particular demands and in many cases is viewed as being incompatible with their present working lives and careers, though feasible at a later stage in their lives, provided they continue their education, training or careers. This was particularly so in the case of mothers without self-sufficient or financially viable partners .

V. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The role of working women has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. Majority of the working women are stretching themselves to discharge their roles at office and home and in the process experience work-life imbalance which will have undesirable consequences for individuals in the form of increased levels of stress complaints, depression, lower mental health, higher family conflicts, less life satisfaction, etc. At the same time the employers also incur losses due to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, reduced organizational commitment, reduced productivity, employee disengagement and high turnover intention.

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this research work are-

- (i) To study the WLB issue of working women in Ramtek area.
- (ii) To find out whether the work life balance of woman employees differ with their occupation.
- (iii) To find out the relationship between Work-Life Balance of women employees and Job experience.

Hypothesis :

H1₀: There is no significant difference between the WLB of woman employees across the professions/occupations.

H1_a: There is Significant difference between the WLB of woman employees across the professions/occupations.

H2₀: There is negative correlation between WLB & experience .

H2_a: There is positive correlation between WLB & experience.

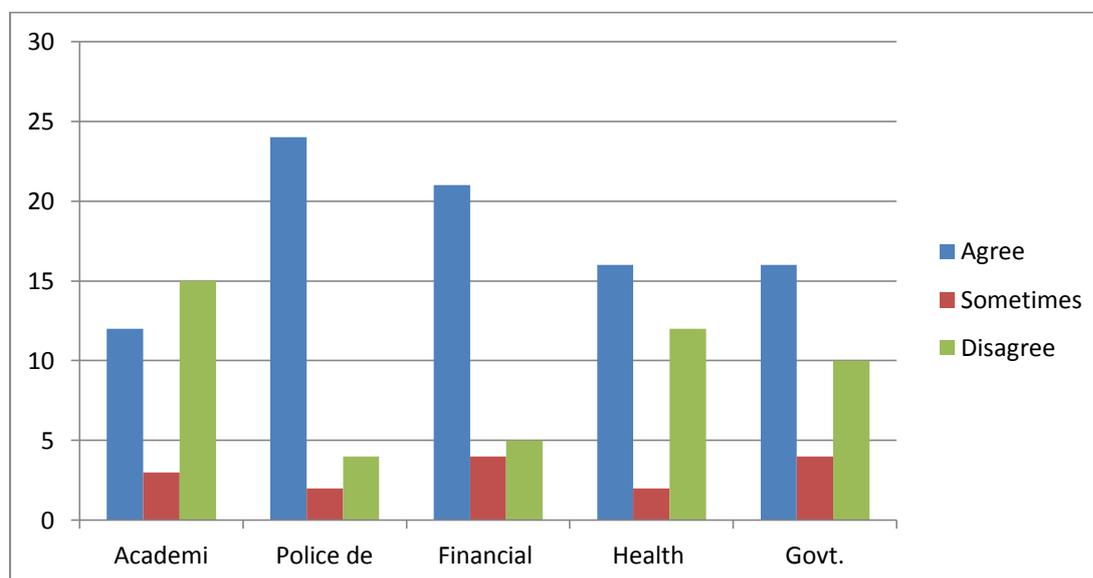
VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive study was used for this research work. Stratified sampling method was used wherein data was collected through a checklist by personal survey method from 120 women employees of Ramtek area from different occupations. The checklist manual developed by Daniels and McCarraher for the Industrial Society (2000) and the guidelines to check oneself with the manual on the balance between work and family was used for his study.

VIII. RESULTS

Table-1: Checklist responses of working women in Ramtek area.

	Academics	Police dept	Financial institution	Health care	Govt. Offices	Total
Agree	12*10=120	24*10=240	21*10=210	16*10=160	16*10=160	890
Sometimes	03*10=30	02*10=20	04*10=40	02*10=20	04*10=40	150
Disagree	15*10=150	04*10=40	05*10=50	12*10=120	10*10=100	460
Total	300	300	300	300	300	1500



It is found that there is a strong predominance of 'A' which signifies that work-life balance is out of control and is in need of attention. The strong predominance of 'A' for all the worklife balance related statements except taking work home in most evenings suggest that working women face the problems of work-life balance almost in every way in their daily life. Work-life balance problem is widely prevalent among the working women of Ramtek area. However, from the graph it is observed that Stress level (WL imbalance) is highest among the women employees of Police department & lowest among the employees of academic institutions. For the teaching profession it is observed that the employees have a sense of control over their work-life balance. In such cases they can be more productive and committed to their work and better prepared to manage the demands of today's rapidly changing workplace.

Table-2: Descriptive Statistics for each statement of checklist

S.N.	Statement	N	Mean	S.D.
Q-1	At the moment because the job demands it, I usually work long hours.	150	2.606667	0.722567
Q-2	There isn't much time to socialize or relax with my partner/see family in the week.	150	2.406667	0.786605
Q-3	I have to take work home most evenings	150	2.326667	0.764099
Q-4	I often work late or at weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions.	150	2.46	0.729346
Q-5	Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do	150	2.633333	0.669736
Q-6	I worry about the effect of work stress on my health	150	2.56	0.718686
Q-7	My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work	150	2.42	0.753248
Q-8	My family are missing out on my input either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired.	150	2.526667	0.711334
Q-9	Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult	150	2.666667	0.672236
Q-10	I would like to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but feel I have no control over the current situation	150	2.453333	0.747135

Table 2 includes the statement - as " Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult "was rated highest, with a mean score of 2.66, which implies that married working women experience 'time squeeze' and hence find it really very hard to have time for themselves by means of hobbies/leisure activities or maintain friendships and extended family relationships. The statements "My family are missing out on my input either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired" and "I would like to reduce my working hours and stress levels, but feel I have no control over the current situation" had closer mean scores of 2.52 and 2.45 respectively which implies that married working women find it hard to give the desired input to their families because of their tight schedules or fatigue and they feel helpless as they feel they do not have any control over their working hours and stress levels. The next mean scores of 2.6 and 2.56 were for the statements "At the moment because the job demands it, I usually work long hours" and "I worry about the effect of work stress on my health" respectively, which implies that married working women work for long hours and they also feel worried about the effect of work stress on their health. The next statements to follow are "There isn't much time to socialize or relax with my partner/see family in the week" and "My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work" with the mean scores of 2.4 and 2.42 respectively. "Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do" and "I often work late or at weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions" have the mean scores of 2.6 and 2.46 respectively. On the other hand, "I have to take work home" scored the lowest mean score, 2.32, which implies that the majority of respondents didn't take work home in the evenings.

Chi-Square test: For testing the following hypothesis Chi-square test is used.

H₁₀: There is no significant difference between the WLB of woman employees across the professions/occupations.

Expected Frequency = Row Total X Column Total/Grand Total,

DOF=(No. of rows-1)X(No. of Columns-1)

	A-A	P-A	F-A	H-A	G-A	A-DA	P-DA	F-DA	H-DA	G-DA	Total
Observed Frequency		26	21	16	20	18	04	09	14	10	150
Expected Frequency	19	19	19	19	19	11	11	11	11	11	150
Chi-Square	2.57	2.57	0.21	0.47	0.05	4.45	4.45	0.36	0.81	0.09	16.07

(Chi Square)_{Calculated} = 16.07 (Chi Square)_{table} at 95% CL,4 DOF = 9.488

Since (Chi Square)_{Calculated} > (Chi Square)_{table}

Null hypothesis is Rejected . Thus it is found that there is significant difference between the WLB of woman employees across the professions.

Thus, it is clear that the WLB issues of working women are different for different professions.

Correlation between WLB, Job experience :

For testing the following hypothesis Correlation analysis is used.

H₂₀: There is negative correlation between WLB & experience .

Job Experience	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25
WLB Score	24	26	23	12	10

Calculation of Coefficient of Correlation (r):

	x	dx	dx ²	y	dy	Dy ²	dx.dy
0-5	2.5	-10	100	24	1	1	-10
5-10	7.5	-5	25	26	3	9	-15
10-15	12.5	0	0	23	0	0	0
15-20	17.5	5	25	12	-11	121	-55
20-25	22.5	10	100	10	-13	169	-130
	62.5	0	250	95	-20	300	-210

$$r = \frac{n\sum dx \cdot dy - (\sum dx \cdot \sum dy)}{\sqrt{n\sum dx^2 - (\sum dx)^2} \sqrt{n\sum dy^2 - (\sum dy)^2}} = -0.895$$

Thus, Null hypothesis is accepted.

From the above it is clear that there exists strong negative correlation between WLB and Job experience. Thus, it is concluded that the as the experience of working women increases their Job stress level comes down or the skill of ensuring WLB enhances as the experience of Job increases.

IX. LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

In this era of global competition Job stress has been increasing over the last few decades and has important implications for the employee performances. Despite its importance, there is lack of research conducted in various areas/sectors of the industrial world. Further research is required in the area of stress, health and work-life balance in order to better understand the relationships between these variables and help them on how to effectively improve work life.

The present study focused on a broader concept of work-life balance. Balance between work and a variety of roles should be considered, as individuals perform multi-roles at the same time through their complex relationships with neighbors, friends, and community. For example, studies on work-family balance, work-leisure balance, and work-community membership balance need to be conducted.

X. CONCLUSION

Work life balance is an emerging issue in of the industrial employees in this global era. Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for the employees and organisations. This research work concludes that the work-life balance of the working women in Ramtek area is out of control and is in need of attention. women faces the problems of work-life balance almost in every way in their daily life. It is found that Work-life balance problem is widely prevalent among the working women of Ramtek area. However , from the graph it is observed that Stress level (WL imbalance) is highest among the women employees of Police department & lowest among the employees of academic institutions. It is also concluded that there is significant difference between the WLB of woman employees across the professions. Further, it is concluded that

the as the experience of working women increases their Job stress level comes down or the skill of ensuring WLB enhances as the experience of Job increases.

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