

A Study On The Obstacles Experienced By Women In Managing Work-Life Balance.

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Abstract - The study was primarily aimed to examine the barriers faced by females in balancing work and life aspects. It emerges from a thorough literature review and analysis of a prior studies that there are a few of the major barriers which women encounter during this area.

The most vital aspect is the unequal division of home responsibilities, childcare along with households takes maximum workload on women which may leave more stress, tiredness and balancing difficulty with job duties.

The other major area becomes the existences of harsh and indirect discriminatory treatment along with gender bias in offices. Women are constantly subjected to indirect or direct discrimination in form of limited promotion in career, low compensation and non-facilitating environments within an organization. This makes women to have relatively hard times towards making progress in their careers and balancing their lives at workplaces.

The study, therefore, concludes with the deep complexity women face in attaining a true work-life balance. A multi-dimensional approach, combining corporate, societal, and individual initiatives will be needed to eradicate such a situation. Gender equality, flexible work practices, and promotion into workplace cultures will allow for the improvement of a more balancing and equal work environment for women.

Key Words: work-life balance, gender bias, discrimination, low compensation, limited promotion, flexible work practices

1. INTRODUCTION

Like everybody, women wanted to have time for their friends, families, and themselves to continue with life. Female employee is spending almost all her time for work and very little with her friends and family. Working women have almost no time in their hands. They all work in this cut-throat competition, and they do not even spare time for personal things. Work-life balance has become something very unrealistic for a lot of people, especially working women.

Everybody can see that woman has to work plus do all the home chores obligatory for the family. Work-life balance is a basis for survival among women. Each one of them is hanging on a razor's edge, balancing personal obligations against business commitments, and putting up a strong woman image in society. A woman is being expected to take on the count of responsibilities of raising children in a business environment, with the assumption that she has the strength of a man. To attract the best and brightest workforce, a company must create a sound workplace environment and actively promote policies to help its female workforce achieve a healthy work-life balance.

Building a healthy work-life balance is considered one of the major factors since it has become the norm for a lot of people to stray from their goals. The outside world is full of promises and has such a powerful allure that it causes many people to forsake their sacred values and common sense, which are hallmarks of humanity. This indicates the very profound heed brought in the society and organization concerning juggling multiple roles is going to impact one's health and well-being of professional women. The pain of living with multiple roles brings conflict and overload. More than ever before, the literature has started to bring out the importance of work-life balance.

2. CHALLENGES

Research shows that social conditioning is seen as paramount during early life, absolutely outweighing education and large income in confining women to traditional roles. Male-focused ways or rather, male-centric ideologies in essence actively contribute toward maintaining that subordinate status for women. Also shown is that patriarchal family structures give priority to men in such a way that their interests ultimately subvert the chances of women attaining anything in education and employment. Many changes have been documented in India regarding marriage and inheritance practices and succession owing to changes in the structure and dynamics of family. Gender inequalities and job segregation still remain persistent within Indian society. No matter how many changes have taken place regarding education and professions, a large share of women are still at the bottom tier of the job hierarchy with less salary for the same jobs performed alongside their male counterparts.

Today, the burden of balancing responsibilities between home and work is tremendously heavy on professional women, many of whom are increasingly expected to carry added responsibilities after work hours at home. Results published from a survey conducted by Osmania University in Hyderabad, indicate that most women

work for 40 to 45 hours a week; and 53% of the respondents admitted they face great difficulty in keeping a work-life balance. The report went on to say that women's lives are tightrope walks to meet daily life and home chores along with merging obligations in multiple work roles with tight meeting schedules and business travels.

Work-life balance refers to the proper management of both professional and domestic situations. Work and Family are increasingly emerging as oppositional spheres each consuming a lot of time and energy causing work-family conflict. These contradictions have been aggravated by Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood whereby women are being made to feel that while they develop their careers, they are now faced with this additional burden of intensive parenting, meaning their kids should be involved and engaged with their lives and developments as much as they can. WFC (Work Family Conflict) is generally recognized as a specific example of inter-role conflict where incompatible pressures of work and family are realized to have adverse repercussions on the employee's work situation. Family-work conflict (FWC) is another form of inter-role conflict where family and work obligations clash. Prior research indicates that FWC tends to have a more pronounced negative impact in the home environment, leading to decreased life satisfaction and heightened internal family conflict. However, FWC is also associated with perceptions regarding the job or workplace. Both WFC and FWC essentially stem from individuals striving to meet an overwhelming array of conflicting demands across various areas in which women are engaged.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper reviews existing literature. The papers were searched through using key words such as: work-life balance, obstacles, gender equality, workplace discrimination, domestic responsibilities, flexible work arrangements, career progression, work-life integration, gender bias.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The last decades of modern education have improved much better opportunities afforded for Indian women to advance their education. This generated consciousness about the scenario, made opportunities available, and opened up personal growth-desiring spaces for women.

Much of the pressure, which has often been attributed to the economic contributions of women entering into the working environment, has had most studies looking at working married women in India established on economic need as the main reason for leaving home to work. Marriages enjoy the positive influence of working women. Most women face these challenges in trying to balance work and family, especially caring for the child. There are insights to be given to future working mothers about establishing a work-life balance through studying the challenges that women experience, coping mechanisms they adopt, and support structures they use. In this light, Armstead (2015) provides an overview of related theories. The theory of self-determination holds that they engage on understanding in motivations behind human behavior. This is of relevance to changing health behaviors and to understanding social behaviors such as volunteering, as well as its impact on work and stress. One particular study looked at passion and work-life issues concerning job satisfaction. Application of self-determination theory by Thorgren, Wincent and Siren(2013) supported their ideas concerning the sources of inspiration that are cultivated by people over time. An activity of any type can be internalized as a part of the self-concept, which then allows one to develop either fun or obsessive passion towards the activity, depending on an individual's internalization process. This study sought to expand work-life conflict theory with passion. Results show that obsessive passion brings about negative outcomes, while fun passion results in job satisfaction. They concluded that excessive passion has typically loud but ineffective demands on work of life, normally weighing it down against other responsibilities in life. Thus they mentioned that they hardly get any time to themselves with long working hours, which take a toll on their relations with family members, especially children and spouses.

In these present times, balancing home and work life is becoming harder than ever. In the heart of a woman, she alone knows how well she has played all her parts and how satisfied she is with the efforts she has made toward fulfilling them. Issues concerning imbalance can be so grievous that they must be dealt with at once. Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) in their highly acclaimed book *Work and Family: Allies or Enemies*, have emphatically asserted that the tension between work and family really does have vast consequences. It tends to foster the family life quality and career advancement opportunities for both women and men. Those include debilitating career restrictions, diminished chances to grow and gain achievement in the job area, and the social turmoil of deciding between work on the one hand, an exhilarating and fulfilling career, or marriage, children, and a happy family on another. As to work-family balance, it mainly

concerns someone on very slight settings: maybe the equilibrium seriously tilted against work at home.

Most employee-oriented organizations have the availability of work-life balance programs (WLBP) as a countermeasure for employees facing work-life balance problems. WLBP have been found to increase employee flexibility regarding where and when to work (Thomas & Ganster, 1995), reduce family-work conflicts (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), and reduce stress (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). In Kirchmeyer's (2000) words, balance of life stands for "those lives that are rendering meaningful experiences in all life dimensions, which in turn demands personal resources such as energy, time and commitment to be fairly allocated among those dimensions". Among the reasons most married professional women strive to make their homes and workplaces promising and do so mostly at the cost of their health and well-being is, those women having such types of conditions in their lives get something missing in their lives. The sought-after quality of life mostly disturbed by work-life balance is significantly and negatively affected by it. There is some discontentment between work and family, which gives any person a chance of losing his or her quality of life. According to Greenhaus, H. Jeffrey, Karen M. Collins and Jason D. Shaw (2003), equal investments of time and commitment in both work and family would mitigate work-family conflict and stress. Thus, married working women nowadays can live a healthy quality life only if they have a work-life balance, emphasizing why it is a hot topic among working women.

Till now, the interrelationship as regards the work-life balance and psychological health amongst part-time educators and full-time female managers in the banking sector has been the subject of much research. One of these studies utilized Ryff's model of psychological well-being which reflected six dimensions as autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, personal growth, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. It revealed that female participants in full-time employment have a much higher stress level than others who only work part-time, thus resulting in lower psychological well-being.

Wilkison (2013) conducted an analysis on the difference regarding the type of work-life balance whereby its relationship with psychological well-being determines by gender. Such an analysis resulted in a finding that the two variables, work-life balance and psychological well-being, are closely related for women but not for men. So these findings essentially confirmed that the attempt to manage that triangle more so, the work-family-social life triad in the modern society held an issue especially now as more women find themselves in the employment arena.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Conflict has contributed towards attracting a new change in organizations. Such conflicts are more probable for women employees, and it has two main types, which is the result of work-related factors-interference of family life by things like long working hours, excessive work load, lack of supportive supervision, rigid work schedules, and compulsory overtime in the family. Family demands that can hinder work life include marital status, age of children, child care responsibilities, elder-care responsibilities, and lack of support from family members. Bad balance between work and family affects the organization performance of employees, which obviously is bound to disturb family life. Such negative effects include wasted costs on work-life imbalance in the workplace and family life, such as poor performance at work and absenteeism and turnover. A few examples are decreased job satisfaction and productivity in the workplace, poorer family relationships, anxiety, depression, family dissatisfaction, and deteriorating mental and physical health on individual and family levels.

The increased WFC and FWC by husbands' demands and expectations from working women in this study were significantly associated. According to Sharma, when husbands provide their support and involvement, it shows low levels of role conflict for married working women. Researchers have also identified that work demands unfavorably cause effects to family responsibilities rather than the

so-called reverse. The most prominent conflict was job-parent conflict as qualified most by these women.

Surveys from the West have indicated that women would balance a career with motherhood. In India, however, many women from the lower middle-class strata of society are entering the job market primarily as a means to augment the family income. Some are now looking to improve the standard of living of their families, pay for their children's tuition, and secure a better future for them. The study observed that women who worked purely from necessity complained more of work-family conflict (WFC) whereas women who were employed for other reasons reported lesser WFC. Schular had identified the financial need to be cited most often by women for joining jobs. Phillips and Imhoff confirmed that many women would find a job to be a necessity; nevertheless, they derive satisfaction from it.

The few women that entered the study had some reasons to believe that very few were in existence to pursue a career. If issues begin to crop up, it has been observed that sometimes women work only for satisfaction; therefore, on the balance of odds, the woman will drown her grievances and dissatisfaction with work and will never let it get into her home. Work-life balance begins when a woman has some clarity of her priorities on career versus personal life. She should also have some soothing activities that could clearly help keep distractions away from her daily routine. She deserves to honestly select achievables in life that promote her successes whilst finding assistance from others professionally over issues she faces. To achieve gratification, she ought to dedicate her time to the family, friends, and passionate interests. Again, achieving all this will certainly require good management of her career and personal responsibilities.

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