Working Woman or Superwoman: An Empirical Approach to Study the Work-Life Balance among Working Women in India

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Abstract  
In present time everybody expect working women to be super perfect as they expect to balance every aspects of life very well by making a balance between roles and responsibilities. But with the changing time the thought process is still the traditional one that if women are contributing in household income still they expect to be equally attentive towards their family related roles and responsibilities like household jobs: cleaning, washing clothes, etc. along with spouse, child and elder care responsibility. With the demanding and competitive work environment working women have to devote more hours at their work place which left them with fewer hours for their household related task. So, this study is an attempt to see how aptly they juggle and manage between the multiple roles and the way family and work related variables affect their work-life balance. The tools used in the study like descriptive statistics, Z-test, etc. the findings of the study conclude that there is a negative impact of both the variables (working hours and child care responsibility) on work-life balance of working women in India.

Keywords: work-life balance, child care, working hours

INTRODUCTION

‘Women who works for his family and face lot of problems, she face all difficulties just to help her family is called Working Women’. (www.wikianswer.com)

Work-life balance has been considered as one the important issue of the life of working women and now organizations are also taking it seriously because they want to retain best women workforce. Many women thought they work best when they strike a balance between work and the rest of their lives. Meeting the expectations of work and family is not only tiring for women employees but can be stressful which leads to sickness and absenteeism. By the rapid changes in technology, business environment, economy, traditions, culture and the demographic of the workforce, balance between work and other domains of life has been made difficult. It has been a challenge for women employees to achieve work-life balance without jeopardizing their well-being and satisfaction with aspects of their lives and their overall quality of life.

Work-Life Balance have been defined as, “a satisfying, healthy and productive life that includes work, play, and love; that integrates a range of life activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person’s unique wishes, interest and values. It contrasts with the imbalance of a life dominated by work, focused on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in a conflict with a person’s true desire” (Kofodimos, 1993). For working women balancing a challenging career with life outside work is a multifaceted task. Working women has to maintain a balance between family, career, personal and social. There is no single model that’s right for everyone, and no single approach is right for anyone for their whole life.

PHASES TO ACHIEVE BALANCE:
Struggle Stage- people might not even know and understand what is missing. They just know that they feel out of control.

Juggle Stage-where people begins to understand what is missing and try to develop tricks and techniques that allow them to create a sense control in their life.

Work-Life Balance-where people actually begin to fulfill multiple responsibilities, where they have a sense of equilibrium, a sense of control, but they focus all their energies on today and getting through the day-to-day, and they really do not have enough energy, resources or time to look at in the future.

Work-Life Integration-where people are not only able to fulfill all their work responsibilities but you also have energy and resources that they can put towards career planning, career development, personal growth and development. They have a sense of where they are going as well as where others are.

Work-Life Harmony-where people got a sense of control of all aspects of their life. They are managing their physical wellbeing, their career, their household, their finances, their relationships. As well, they have the energy and resources to harmonize their community involvement, their sense of spirituality, and their sense of wellbeing, at home and in the community at large.

Work-Life Balance of working women suggests that one of the most important reasons inhibiting women rise to the top positions in management is the balance in life that women professionals are experience because of their strong commitment towards their family responsibilities. Women have always been expected to be the heart of the family. In the era of 40s-50s they stayed home cleaned houses, cooked food, looked after their children and on top take care of the social aspect of life. If a woman's children were in school and she had a little more time on her hands and wanted to work even part-time many of the husbands refused to allow as they think that they are earning enough and if women will work than she will neglect household responsibilities. Their wives to work because it made them look like a dead-beat in those days.

There is a reason behind every happening, so as in case of women participating in work. There are multidimensional reasons–social, economic, cultural, political, economic and psychological because of which women are entering into the workforce are discussed below:-

- **Social Reasons**-The facts that influence individual’s personality, attitudes and style. Rise in girl’s education, demand of dowry from in-laws, support of husband, equal treatment at workplace to both genders, cheat by the husband, status in the society, increase in divorce cases, death of spouse, etc. can be included in social reasons.

- **Economic Reasons**-The facts that influence a person everyday life. Women have sound financial base to start/or run the business, globalization, increase in rates of vacancy for women, easy loans, good rebates on interest rates, FDI, poverty, entry of foreign traders, recession, inflation, Good salary packages, salary of spouse /family member is not enough to fulfill the family requirements, etc. are comes under the economic reasons.

- **Cultural reasons**-Backwardness, harassing and molestation, women empowerment rights, schooling for schedule tribes girls, change in Indian culture perspective, respectable femininity work from home culture in corporate, women empowerment schemes by corporate, want to change the women traditional image, change in organizational culture, modernization, part-time employment, flexible core business hours, etc. are included in cultural reasons.

- **Political Reasons**-The facts influenced by politics. Reservations for women in job, working NGOs for women, women self-help groups, women welfare plans by government, etc. comes under the political reasons.

- **Psychological Reasons**-The facts influenced by the mind thoughts. To be respectful in front of spouse, to be famous, mental independence, get bored with the daily routine, competition in friends, want to face challenges, get recognition, motivation from famous women leader, ego, to be a fashion icon, mental satisfaction, want to prove them as supermoms, to show the level of intelligence in front of others, etc. comes under the psychological reasons.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

Women are facing problem in balancing the dual role responsibility in India but due to economic pressure no other option left with them. They are trying to perform their roles by applying their best skills but they are unable to do so which indicates that there are some other variables which are affecting their work-life balance in a certain way. In the latest article in one newspaper,a confession by the CEO of a company while an
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Interview that on applying every best strategy and policy on work-life balance for women employees still they are losing nearly 12% of women workforce every year. So, a study has been conducted to conclude the impact of certain variables on work-life balance and find out that are they really affecting the work-life balance of working women and reason for the same.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**
- To study the work-life balance in context of various work and family related variables.
- To suggest ways to organizations help to retain women workforce.

**METHODOLOGY**
In order to achieve the objectives, study is based on primary and secondary data, which includes conducting the survey through well designed questionnaires/ interview and observation. A self-structured questionnaire was being used to collect the data.

**Hypothesis Testing**
In order to confirm accuracy of the findings related to study the researcher would test the validity of the following hypotheses.

Ha1: Long working hours at office hinders the work-life balance of working women.
Ha2: Child care responsibility stops women professional growth.

**Geographical Area Covered For the Study**
The primary data for the study covered from National Capital Region (NCR) and Agra region. Researcher collected data through self-structured questionnaire including questions on work-life balance and its related variables. The questions were mostly multiple choice and few descriptive questions were also added to have more clear results about women suggestions in context of improving their work-life balance.

**Sampling Techniques**
The sampling techniques used for collecting the data were judgmental and convenience sampling.

**Sample size**
The sample size for the study was 35 working women from Agra and national capital region. The sample included women working in jobs, freelancers and entrepreneurs.

**Tools used**
The responses of respondents were analyzed by using the SPSS version 22.0. The research tools used to interpret the data were like descriptive statistics, z-test, etc.

**Data analysis**

**Hypothesis 1**

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Descriptive Statistics of hypothesis statements 1 of work related variable (Working Hours). The value of Z-test was 2.36 coming well under the acceptance region of the test, found to reject the null hypothesis, i.e. accepted. On the basis of collected data it can be concluded that long working hours at office affect the work-life balance negatively as most of the respondents. If they work for long hours than they will left with very less time for their household work which create problem for them. They are not able to spend time with their spouse, focus on child and elders properly and moreover not able to wind up house work on time like cooking, washing and cleaning.
Hypothesis 2

Table No. 1 (N=35)

Descriptive Statistics

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Descriptive Statistics of Hypothesis Statements 2 of family related variable (Child Care Responsibility). The value of z-test was 7.08 coming well under the acceptance region of the test, found to be failed to reject the null hypothesis, i.e. Accepted. On the basis of collected data it can be concluded that child care responsibility affects the professional career of working women and stops their growth that affects their work-life balance negatively. Due to child care responsibility women are facing problem in continuing with their professional career and have to leave their careers in the mid.

**CONCLUSION**

The issue concluded that the working hours and child care responsibilities are among prominent issues facing by working women in balancing their work-life balance. Long working hours make women stuck at office for long duration and women with child are not able to do so. So, companies must try to have some flexibility in context of married women especially women with children. On the other hand, families should understand the situation of women when they are working. Importantly in-laws must try to share the burden of household task like taking the responsibility of child care when women are not at home, complete little house work like chopping vegetables, etc. Lastly whether women is at office or at home never expect her to be super woman, she is a normal being and can’t manage home and work until she will not supported by the people at home and office like husband, in-laws, children, colleagues, friends and seniors especially. It’s really not an impossible task for a woman to balance home and work but alone she can’t do anything, she always needs a helping hand who can share her responsibilities whenever she needed.

**References**

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