



A PILOT STUDY ON THE SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF “WORK - LIFE BALANCE”; DONE AMONG MARRIED WORKING WOMEN WORKING IN THE BANKING, IT AND ACADEMIC SECTORS.

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Abstract

Work- Life balance is an important factor considered for surveys in many organizations. The ability of a person to maintain balance between one's career and their personal life reflects on their output. But this is not a matter of concern of the employee alone. The organization where the employee works has a very important role in helping the employee to maintain the equilibrium. This report gives the major findings of a pilot study conducted among selected married working women working in Banking, IT and Academic sectors to identify the sector where further studies on the topic need to be done.

Key Words: *Work- Life Balance, Organization, Banking, IT and Academic Sectors.*

INTRODUCTION

Work- Life balance means the balance that a person can strike between his work and his personal life. Neither the work nor the family can be given too much importance if a person has to continue with both in the long run. If it was a time bound activity to work, means, during that time his/ her full attention can be concentrated to the work that has been committed because once the target is achieved or the time span is finished then he/she can come back to the family chores in full swing. But this is not possible in most cases where the career is taken up with a long term goal. The problem mainly arises after the marriage and when both the couples have their career and none knows to strike a balance between their workload and domestic affairs.

Then sprout confusions leading to chaos and even resulting in legal cases. The matter may end up in divorces or one among them may decide to quit the job. The problem becomes worst when there are situations where the couples themselves have to manage all the matters at home and does not have their parents or relatives with them for their support. This is also because of the increase in number of nuclear families in the place of old joint family system where there were elders to take care of majority of domestic affairs.

Also, during the ancient times, in Kerala, women with higher education and professional education were less in number. Mostly men went for work and women had to manage the house hold tasks. Then, the problem of striking a Work- Life balance was not a major issue. There could easily be set, a bifurcation between personal affairs and career and women did not feel much urge to get employed and built up a career. Even the cost of living was manageable with a single person's salary. But the system is entirely different now days. Joint family system has paved way to nuclear families. The number of women getting higher education and professional education are increasing in number in Kerala. The parents are spending same amount of fees for educating their children, whether it is a boy or a girl. The cost of living has gone so high that it is very difficult to manage with a single individual's income. Women prefer to work hand in hand with men and they wish to go to heights in their career.

Slowly starts the problems of occupational stress, ego clashes, lack of care takers for managing kids etc. Issues become worst when couples were from the same field with strenuous work load. The ego that none can give up his/her job for looking after the kids and managing the house hold chores makes issues much worse. Those who are employed start searching for employer concerns which can provide them with family friendly benefits like flexi timings, work- from- home facilities etc. Those persons, who get much help from their family as well as from the concerns where they worked, could easily strike a Work- Life balance and this would result in a positive organizational behavior from their part.

Those who do not get needed support from their employer concerns (and those who do not get the same from family) find it difficult to set the equilibrium between their career and personal life. This lack of balancing will show its effect at the work place of the infected person also. This will cause distress in employee and the organization cannot reap the best from him/her. This matter has aroused the attention of employer concerns as well and many of them have now started taking steps to retain their major assets (the efficient human resources). The present study is done among the married working women in Banking, IT and Academic sectors and is purely a pilot study to identify the key area for further studies on the topic.



RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Maintenance of Work- Life balance is very important to a person that will help him at his work place and at the same time, at his family. It reduces distress and increases one's enthusiasm to work. The positivity of having a stable work-life balance will create remarkable results when it comes to his productivity in the organization where he works. Every organization now a day find it difficult to retain its efficient staff force just because of the staff's inability to feel a balance between work relating to his designation in the organization and his/her household chores. Main problem develops among female staff especially after their marriage and they start settling in their family. Lack of flexi timings, work overload, result-reward mismatch, problems connected with spouse's job, maternity related leave matters, etc results in affecting the equilibrium of Work- Life Balance.

Women are getting educated at present just like men and women wish to go for work rather than sitting inside the home and doing only household chores. Their demand cannot be disrespected because even they have their spend money in getting higher education and they also feel the need to explore and utilize their caliber apart from the financial security that they get. But their inability to strike a balance between their career and personal life have put them in dilemma, which results in increased number of divorces and increased number of married women quitting their job during their initial stages of family life. Both the employers and the family members of married working women play their role in helping them to strike a good Work- Life balance.

The topic is of relevance now days because of the increase in job opportunities for efficient human resource. For any concern, the presence of an employee with a remarkable sincerity and dedication to his organization and who has got high level of EQ and IQ is an invaluable asset. The human resources are the only assets in the organization who can remain with the concern or quit at their will. Those concerns who are not able to retain their efficient work force, will find themselves in a difficult position sooner or later. There are ample opportunities for the employees in this global village and neither region nor language is a barrier for them to join another employer leaving the ones who do not allow them to have and maintain a peaceful work-life.

Here in this study the respondent's views are taken into consideration in a general way neither giving too much stress on employer organization's features nor on their family matters. This study reflects the sector where further studies are to be done on the topic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study mainly aims at identifying the sector where married working women find it difficult to maintain Work-Life balance. This study being a pilot study shows the sector which needs further studies on the topic.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted mainly using primary data collected through telephonic interviews with the selected sample size using a structured schedule. For the purpose, married working women working in the Banking, IT and Academic sectors in the district of Ernakulam in Kerala were the Universe out of which 300 respondents were chosen at random taking 100 from each sector. The analysis was done with the help of percentages and comparisons were made on the basis of results obtained.

LITERATURE REVIEW

¹(2009) Stephen P Robbins, Mary Coulter & Neharika Vohra, wrote in their book named *Management*, that smart managers have now a day's understood the fact that an individual coming for work in the concern has got their families and will in no case leave their personal life behind for achieving organizational goals. They also admit that the managers cannot be too much sympathetic towards the minute details of the employee's life but they can become more attuned to the facts that are presented by employees relating to their sick and depended parents, children and other family issues of concern. ²(2005) Surveys conducted by TeamLease on India's changing world of work reveal that around 87% of the respondents that they surveyed were satisfied with their work-life balance and about 70% felt that Indian organizations have flexible policies for

¹ Stephen,P,Robbins, Mary Coulter & Neharika Vohra 2009, *Management*, 10th edition, Pearson Education, Inc., Noida, India, ISBN: 9780132090711, p: 225 .

² C Farrel, "The Overworked, Networked family", *Business week*, October 3, 2005 , p:68 .

employees that help them to maintain the balance. ³ (2007), a study participant for a survey reported that being a mother and having got the time to watch their child grow has helped her to become a successful manager. The patience that she got during the growing stage of her child could be applied at the work place too in her relations with fellow staff colleagues and subordinates. ⁴(2001) Some of the respondents preferred to keep their work life and its chores separate from their family while some preferred that organization must take policies integrating both personal and work chores so that the balancing will be easy.⁵ (2014), Researchers have concluded that the organizations through the implementation or by investing on Work Life balance initiatives have to give a tremendous support for its employees for the betterment of individuals, organization and society. The Work- Life balance is not a matter of issue for those who have devoted their life completely for their career, research etc. For them, there is no family to take care of or they are not bothered about such ties of life. Also, the matter is not of much importance for those who have devoted their attention to the family when they needed the same and they might have started their career once they are settled in life.

Those who are confident about their strengths might take a leave from their career once when they are much needed by their family and after a gap, they might take up their own ventures. For these people also, balancing their career and life at that age will be perfect. The problems arise when one is very brilliant and he/ she is doing very well in his/her workplace and a time comes that their family demands them but they cannot take a leave from their workplace. Then they get tied up between the workload and family matters and they are not in a position to strike a perfect equilibrium between them. This problem is much common among married women especially in states where, still there are families with orthodox attitudes and demand the female workforce to make a sacrifice when the problem shoots up.

But studies show that in foreign countries even men are finding this imbalance problem and are taking steps to quit their organization which does not take care of their feelings.

FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR ANALYSIS

Different factors are to be considered while studying the satisfactory level of maintaining work-life balance. Selected major factors that were considered in the study are as follows:

Factor No:	At work place	At family
1	Support from superiors and colleagues	Support from spouse, parents and in laws
2	Co-operation from subordinates	Co-operation from kids
3	Time to complete allotted work	Effective Time to be spend with family
4	“Effort-Reward” Match	“Salary- Expense at home” Match
5	Perquisites at work place	Sufficient time to attend ceremonies, rituals etc with family
6	Stress management policies of employer concern	Stress management initiatives taken in the family
7	Increase in productivity as a result of stress management policies taken by the concern	Increase in enthusiasm and energy resulted by stress management initiatives taken at the family
8	Opportunities for career development	Opportunities for enriching the different roles in family life

³ K Palmer, “*The New Mommy Track*”, US News and World Report, September 3 , 2007, p: 40-45 and J H Greenhaus and G N Powell, “*When work and family are allies: A theory of Work- Family Enrichment*”, Academy of Management Review, January 2006, pp: 72-92

⁴ N P Rothbard, T L Dumas, and K W Phillips, *The long arm of the organization: Work- Family policies and Employee preferences for segmentation*, paper presented at the 61st Annual Academy of Management meeting, Washington, DC, August 2001.

⁵ Ashwini S & Dr. M Kumaraswamy, (2014), Research Paper, *Work Life balance with Special Reference to Public Sector Bank Employees in Karnataka*, Global Journal for Research Analysis (International) , Volume:3, Issue: 2, February 2014, ISSN No; 2277-8160



One final question was also asked about their overall satisfaction with respect to the Work- Life balance that they feel that they are able to maintain. The results of the analysis were as follows:

RESULTS

Majority of the people in Academic sector (85%) were, on a whole, satisfied with the Work- Life balance that they feel, followed by those in banking sector (80%) but still they are having some suggestions regarding flexi timings, work from home facilities etc (at least on those matters which does not too much demand their personal presence), though they are not highly clear about its practicality. The people in IT sector were the majority who were satisfied but only on an average form (80%) with the Work- Life balance that they feel, though these people have flexi timings and work from home facilities, they feel much loaded and are dissatisfied about the timings when it is like both the couples belong to the same field. Majority of the respondents in IT sector were satisfied about the individual factors that were studied but only on average basis (neither fully satisfied nor fully dissatisfied). But majority of those respondents in Banking sector and Academic sectors were highly satisfied with the support that they get from office and family, with the perquisites provided at work place, with the co-operation that they get from subordinates and kids at home, and the stress management policies opted by their concerns. It was the respondents (majority) from banking sector who said that they are satisfied with the effective time that they get to enrich their role as a family member. The respondents from Academic sector (majority) were satisfied with career development opportunities that they get, about the time that they get to attend to family functions, rituals etc, and about the time that is given to complete the work load. When it comes to the reward aspect again, respondents in banking sector appeared much happy and they were satisfied with the help they can extend to their spouse in family budget.

CONCLUSION

From this pilot study, it could be concluded that majority respondents in Banking and Academic sectors find it satisfied with the Work- Life balance that they are able to strike and majority from IT sector seems satisfied on an average scale about this balancing. The study points out that if further studies are to be proceeded, and then it is IT sector which must be studied first, followed by banking sector and academic sector. Only an employee who can strike a balance between his personal life and career can feel the harmony to the work he is doing and to the organization to which he belongs. Such contented employees would make a remarkable progress in their career and they would be able to lead a happy life as well.

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