



WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

To lead quality life, every individual irrespective of his profession should maintain balance between work life and personal life. These two domains in every one's life are very important as both are interrelated with mutual influence. Coping up with the situations that are encountered in the work life in the covid - 19 scenarios has become more challenging. Every individual has compelled to adopt new normal conditions in the workplace. In the course of delivering the responsibilities in the changed patterns of works in the present covid conditions, there is a possibility of arising role conflict among intra personal behaviors of an individual. In these circumstances, it is very important to attain harmony in life with physical, emotional, and spiritual health. There is a need of spiritual component in both personal & professional life to avoid role conflict. Spirituality at Workplace describes more on employees complete selves at work by finding meaningfulness in their work by connecting themselves with Organization and community rather work just for their survival. These opinions had sown a thought to conduct study on concept of workplace spirituality and Work-life Balance. The present study has been carried out to understand the importance of Work-life Balance in every individual life and how Workplace spirituality can help Individuals to maintain balance in his both work and personal life.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality, Work-life Balance, Quality of life, Covid-19, Spiritual component

INTRODUCTION

The present pandemic condition has forced the working professionals to adapt various patterns of work styles. Drastic changes have been taken place because of long term lock downs, restricted lifestyles both in personal and professional lives. The consequences of these changes have result in negative influence on employee performance, productivity and overall satisfaction. The outbreak of covid 19 pandemic compelled the organizations to obligate their employees to perform work from home by adopting different online modes. Employees working in the sector in which involved in delivering perishable services has faced more challenges. Professionals in the service sector has to maintain face to face communication, in-person dealings in order to satisfy the clients to whom so ever they are obligated to deliver their services. But pandemic restricted their work environment and forced to adopt online platforms to deliver services. In this process professionals of various sectors fell stressful as they were unable to deliver their services to the extent of their customers' satisfaction. To deliver services through digital mode, professionals are required with tech equipment such as Laptops, uninterrupted internet connections, VPN connection, digital platforms which ensure continuity of operations even in the remote conditions. All these are financial constraints that are putting professionals in more stress as everyone is facing cuts in their revenues due to slow down in the economy in pandemic which in turn results in to negative effects in the lives.

Though circumstances are turning in to normal, individual, to some extent are still in distress and loosing quality in life. To come back to normal conditions of mind state and become psychologically, physically and emotionally strong, every individual should learn to maintain balance in work life and personal life. Attaining balance in life is very important to have quality in it. This can be possible when there is proper functioning on the roles, an individual holds by avoiding conflict among them. Everyone come in to dilemma of how to fulfill all the demands that encounter in both personal and professional domains. He/she should maintain balance in order achieve heights in every aspect of life. These views stimulate an opinion on importance of maintaining work Life Balance. But practically maintaining balance in life is not possible all the time, as we all may undergo emotional or psychological constraints. In this context, spirituality at workplace helps individuals to maintain balance in life. Spirituality has various perspective and some perceive spirituality with religious connotations. Spirituality is not confined to any particular religion but it is all about integrating energies that are part of us to self and society well being (Mitroff 1999). Spirituality interconnects inward (Krishna kumar 2002) and outward worlds of humans and allows to connected and feel passionate at work (Kinjerski 2004) without stressing out. These views make us clear that workplace spirituality can become one of the important factors that helps to maintain balance in life without pressurizing ourselves.

LITERATURE REVIEW

WORK LIFE BALANCE (WLB)

Work life Balance is a part of sociology research which begins around 1950s. In 1954, Caplow (1954) defined Work life balance as work relationship with the determination of individual prestige in the allocation of social privileges (Caplow 1954). Max Weber worded concept as maintaining occupation and prestige according to the social status. According to Rapopont & Rapopont (1965), work life balance is a structure of inter relationship between work and family. When individuals, irrespective of gender, started prioritized their work over family life, the research towards WLB has gained importance between 1970s and 1980s (Mansour 2009).

The WLB concept gained importance in research in academics in 1986.

MEANING

The core meaning of WLB is maintaining stability or steadiness among professional obligations and personal responsibilities without effecting to productivity in both the domains. Maintaining the equilibrium is the main essence of the concept of WLB.

There is no single meaning or definition of WLB as every one of us has different priorities and different lives and it subject to vary over time, often on daily basis. Sometimes the steadiness we adopted in our thoughts and work today may be varied or different for tomorrow's requirements. Demand for the fulfillment of multiple roles in the personal & professional lives is erasing an opportunity to have quality life that he/she really enjoys. These situations created lack of distinction between work and family time. But it is important to maintain distinction to have quality life. In general, Work life Balance can be explained as – ‘The amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing thing you enjoy.’ WLB is a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between employees’ primary priorities of their employment position and their private life style. Individuals constantly tied with the job roles for the consistent period of time may suffer stress and burnout and that eventually effects their personal life also. This also results in to decrease in the performance in the job roles.

Kanter (1989) opined that work and family life are not considered as separate world as these are overlapped in nature. Gutek et al (1991) perceived WLB as the relationship between hours spent in paid and family work without conflict. Clark (2000) defined as the ‘ satisfaction and smooth operational at work and at home with a minimum role conflict’. Hill et al (2001) defined WLB as ‘ the extent to which an individual can concurrently balance the emotional, behavioral and time demands of both paid work , personal and family responsibilities.’ The definition given by Hill et al (2001) has been supported by Green haus (2002) and he defined WLB as ‘satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with minimum of role

conflict. It means the extent of an individual is equally engaged and equally satisfied with his or her work and family role

It has been identified from the study conducted by Lowe (2005) that one of the four employees experience high levels of conflict between work and family. Among 60% of employees surveyed, experienced work family conflict, if roles are overloaded. Aycan et al (2007) explained the concept of Life balance from the perspective of family and work . some other researchers define WLB as the relationship between the institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour market (Felstead et al 2002). WLB is all about fulfilling demands satisfactorily in the three basic areas of like namely, Work, Family & Private (White et al 2003)

DETERMINANTS OF WLB

There are many determinants which decides the extent which decides the extent of life balance and it varies from individual to individual. Variation in maintaining the level balance depends on situations that individual passes through and the factors which that individual prioritize. From the literature, it has identified some set of determinants of work life balances as Individual, Social Environment, Work & Organization, and Family. The following table provides important determinants WLB identified in the literature

SNo	RESEARCHER	FOCUS	VARIABLES
1	Caplow (1954)	The research focus on one's occupation positioning according to society's social class system. In addition, the difficulties of married women faced to integrates with family and occupation roles. Linking workfamily domain has perceived as an issue for women but not to men.	Work and family conflict
2	Kanter (1989)	The dominant influence of occupation from occupation's structure and organization affects work-family domain.	Work and family spill-over
3	Kahn et.al. (1964)	Inter-role conflict (work-family) in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible.	Work and family conflict
4	Rapoport and Rapoport (1965)	Family and individual behaviours affected by work domain. Family structure, organisation, and functioning depended entirely organisation and work domain.	Work and family spheres mutual interdependence
5	Greenhaus and Beutell (1985)	Work-family conflict exists when: 1) Time dedicated to the requirements of one role makes it challenging to fulfil requirements of another. 2) Constraint from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfil requirements of another. 3) Specific behaviors required by one role make it difficult to fulfil the requirements of another.	Role pressure (time, strain, behavior) from work and family conflict.
6	Gutek et.al (1991)	Extensive time commitment to work domain was found positively correlated with work-family conflict.	Work-family conflict
7	Clark (2000)	Work satisfaction and effective functioning at home minimises conflict.	Work-family integration
8	Hill et.al. (2001)	Flexibility in work location and time affects balance on work-family.	Flexibility work time

			and location
9	Guest (2002)	Descriptive theories explaining WLB model (compensation, conflict and instrumental, border and enrichment)	Positive thinking approach
10	Greenhaus et.al. (2003)	WLB were constructed from time balance, satisfaction balance and involvement balance.	Equal balance and satisfaction between work and life
11	Byrne (2005)	WLB were defined as eight(8) important of determinants life - Work, Family, Self, Finances, Hobbies, Social, Health and Spiritual	Achieve a balance amongst these eight different segment of life
12	Muna and Mansour (2009)	Juggling work and personal life dimensions is dynamic and gradual process; varies from one individual to the other; and thus is not easily replicated.	Balanced scorecard of work and family
13	Kossek et.al. (2012)	Work-family policies implementation through tele-work. Women may have the flexibility to be involved in both work and their family lives, giving a higher sense of well-being.	Work Family polices

WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY

To cope up with the changes in the business and the economic world, numerous management theories are evolved since last century. These theories and practices are in the form of paradigm shifts at work environments like adopting open end systems rather to closed end systems (Dooley 1997), changing work environments which includes care, trust and support (Kanungo & Conger, 1988), change in leadership styles i.e. from Autocratic, Beurocratic, transactional to Transformational leadership ; directing focus on quality of life, social responsibility from profit-centered (Renesch 1995; Deefoore 1995; Margolis, Walsh, & Weber 2003), flexible work arrangements (Barham, Kelloway, Gottlieb 1998),encouraging employees participation and involvement in organizational activities (Cotton 1993, Hyman & Mason, 1995). These shifts help the organizations to make their employees come out with their full potentials at their work. But increasing complexities, dynamic changes in the process of conducting business, diverse work environments leads to increase the stress levels, poor engagement levels at work among the employees. This paves ways for researching and adopting new paradigm ‘spirituality’ in the academic literature.

This is a new dimension which includes Employees’ search for meaning (Ashmos & Duchon 2001), interconnectedness (Marques, Dhiman & King 2007). The word ‘spirituality’ has been given with a meaning in dictionaries as “disposition of mind which can be observed through individual’s assertiveness”. Howard (2002) mentions spirituality dimension as a most significant dimension in the management studies. Since 1990s, interest has grown drastically towards the studies on spirituality in secular context. We can find more than 3000 books in the famous virtual bookstore Amazon which are related to spirituality in organization or work context. Books like “*Liberating the corporate soul*” (Barrett, 1998),”*Spirit at work*” (Conger 1994), “*Leading with soul*” (Bolman & Deal, 1995); “*The heart aroused: poverty and preservation of the soul in corporate America*” (Whyte 1994); “*The soul of a Business: managing for profit and the common good*”

(Chappell 1993) have been among the best sellers. The present section provides the extant of literature that exists under following headings.

MEANING AND MEASURABLE DIMENSIONS OF WORK PLACE SPIRITUALITY

The concept of spirituality has extended from individual point of view to organizational point of view and explained that organization should frame its values so that employees can experience transcendence in their progress and also facilitate the environments in which they are connected to others with the feeling of joy and completeness. (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz 2004). Ashmos & Duchon (2003) conducted study on 696 employees working in various health care organizations with the dimensions as inner life,. The scale has been developed to measure spirituality from both individual and organizational point of view with the dimensions of “*inner life, meaningful work and sense of community*”. They defined workplace spirituality as “*The recognition that every employees has an inner life that nourishes and can be nourished by meaningful work which takes place in the context of community*” (Ashmos & Duchon, (2000).

Milliman and his colleagues has conducted their study on the basis of Ashmos & Duchon work and came out with one more dimension as ‘Alignment with organizational values’. They conducted survey on 167 part time M.B.A students in southeast U.S.A with the dimensions – work meaningful, community sense, alignment of organizational value.

According to Ashforth and Pratt (2003), the three dimensions of are: ‘Transcendence’ which they define as connecting oneself with greater purpose; ‘holism and Harmony’ which they associate with authenticity, balance and perspective; ‘Growth’ which they mention as a realization of one’s aspirations and potentials. They stated that spirituality is a continuous process of transcendence with harmony in living for the purpose of growth in one’s life. Krishna Kumar & Neck (2002), suggested three views as – the feeling from inside that includes to be connected with one’s self that can be termed as ‘our consciousness’ (‘Intrinsic origin point of view’); following beliefs of a particular religion(‘The Religious point of view’); searching the meaning in work in which we are performing at workplace and It includes questions like – what is the meaning of the work I am doing; why am doing this work and where does this leads me; is there any reason for my existence and organizational existence? (‘Existentialist point of view’)

Guillory (2000) states that spirituality is far side of existed belief systems, all the formal and ceremonial connotations of religion as it is “non denominational, , non-hierarchical and non-ecclesiastical” which provides fulfillment in life (Graber (2001)) irrespective of mixed images, thoughts, feelings and perceptions based on particular objects (Heaton, Schmidt – Wilk & Travis (2004)). One more conceptual understanding of workplace spirituality has introduced by Kolodinsky, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2008) in 3 levels. According to the study, Spirituality at personal level is all about how individual’s spiritual values that he carries to his work place influences the work and its outcomes. Spirituality at organization level i.e. spiritual climate or spiritual culture of an organization reflects its values and perception of an individual towards those spiritual values present in organizational settings. Karakas (2010) conducted exploratory study by reviewing extant of literature of nearly 140 articles. The result of the study established the relation between spirituality and organizational performance. The three different perspectives of spirituality that enables performance of organization are “*Human resource, philosophical, and interpersonal perspectives, that deals with well being and quality life of employee, providing purposeful and meaningful work and providing a sense of being a part of work community*” Karakas, (2010). The study concluded by providing potential benefits suggested cautions on implementation of spiritual programs as these to be implemented carefully. Ashar & Lane-Maher (2004) explains, workplace spirituality is integrating one’s personal life with professional life for the service of greater good and be a part of principal community to serve others with meaningful work and experiencing the wholeness at work. Duchon & Plowman (2005), conducted study in six of U.S in the healthcare settings with 2033 informants by using a set of dimensions as – community, meaning at work, inner life, work unit community, and meaningful work. Adam and Csiernik (2010) states that spirituality at work directs the behavior of individual towards achieving meaningful goal and energies the people to be responsible for their own destiny. Spirituality enhances creativity and caring behaviors which results to positive sharing. Pawar (2016) carried on empirical examination to assess whether

employee's experience of workplace spirituality has positive relationships with employee wellbeing. He identified positive relationships with four form of emotional, psychological, social & spiritual wellbeing. Soder (2016), Pradhan et al (2016), assessed the association of workplace spirituality with work intentions mediated with ethical leadership and identified spiritual connectedness, compassion, meaningful work, alignment of values. LK Jena (2017), empirically assessed that workplace spirituality positively influencing HR effectiveness

Spirituality and Work life balance

According to Indian philosophy, Spirituality is an important and integral aspect as it stresses more on maintaining balance in every aspect of life. It has been mentioned in Upanishads that there are two types of knowledge – Logical knowledge and Spiritual knowledge. Perceiving the external forms of objects with senses and ability to understand them in the form of sciences has been identified as logical understanding. Maintaining knowledge about internal aspects i.e. soul is all about spiritual knowledge. In Upanishads these two are mentioned as vidya (spiritual knowledge), and avidya (logical knowledge). The knowledge which leads to more attachments, worldliness is considered as inferior one and knowledge which helps to perform self purification is considered as superior one. Upanishads states both (vidya & avidya) are important. But in the present modern world which is highly competitive, innovative, and includes with complex dynamism is concentrating more on Avidya (knowledge on worldly things) than on Vidya (knowledge of self). This is the reason for so many confusions illusions and dualistic opinions on each and every aspect, either in a business, society, relationships etc. which in turn leads to imbalances in lives.

we should understand an important point that, Logical knowledge is not underestimated but should not elude the importance of 'knowledge of maintaining balances'. The whole essence of Indian philosophy enunciates that every individual should make use of Avidya (worldly knowledge) in a strategic manner with the support of Vidya (spiritual knowledge or knowledge of self) for the betterment of society and establishing moral standards. Making use of spirituality can improve the quality of life. According to Swami Nikhilananda 'Spirituality allows in leading a highly rational, value based and active life that helps to culminates Balances in each and every domain of life '. The Metaphysics of Indian philosophy is to improve the people's quality of life which integrates the physical and spiritual dimensions of human existence through righteousness (dharma).

According to Western society also, there are two perceptions in the pursuit of Individual well being which are Hedonic and Eudemonic approach (Fromm, 1976 Westman et.al, 2009). Fromm (1976) mentioned that the hedonic approach stating that the goal of life is to maximize self-interest pleasure and minimize pain. On the other hand, the eudemonic approach focused on self-expression, the degree to which an individual is fully functional, and lives in accordance with own self true values (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ryff, 1989 cited in Westman et.al. 2009). However, the eudemonic theory suggest that not all goals are worth pursuing because some may not yield well-being but gives only pleasure even when achieved (Westman et al., 2009). However the eudemonic theory suggest that not all goals are worth pursuing because some may not yield well-being but gives only pleasure even when achieved (Westman et al., 2009).

The journey to pursuit WLB is not part of hedonic approach of pleasure which often may lead an individual to feel discontented (Westman et al., 2009). Ryan and Deci (2001) suggested that achieving WLB should lead to the experience of eudemonic well-being which is associated with the three fundamental psychological needs (relatedness, competence and autonomy) that is necessary for individuals to thrive and grow psychologically (Westman et al., 2009). The fulfillment of basic psychological needs will act as mediator to facilitate the journey of achieving eudemonia goals and WLB that is conducive to individual development and growth in contrasts of pursuing materialistic and monetary goals. Effective behavioral interventions in the organization set up can be established by revitalizing the both the aspects of workplace spirituality and workplace balance (Jena & Pradhan ,2014).

Researchers of both Eastern and Western parts of the world, asserts that, unless until individuals adopts and inculcate the spiritual component which helps to nurture individual's intrapersonal ability, he/she cannot maintain equilibrium in the personal and professional life. From the views of extensive

literature, it is clear that spirituality Quotient definitely establishes stability and symmetry in each and everyone's life irrespective of his/her profession or way of life.

FUTURE RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the area of management research, mainly in the context of organization behavior, and Human Resource Management, Work place Spirituality occupies an important position as it proved its significance and nurturance towards employees' wellbeing. Measuring Spiritual competence in the organizational settings had strong foundation with the valid conceptual frameworks and empirical evidences with varied measurable variables of constructs. Workplace spirituality has been proved as prominent predictor of various organizational attitudinal variables like Job satisfaction, Employee Engagement, Organization citizenship behavior, commitment, Employee wellbeing, HR Effectiveness, Person- organization fit, and so on. Though, extensive empirical research has carried out to find out eminent predictors which will improve employee creativity psychological, physical and emotional involvement in work, still gap exists in attaining these outcomes and the reason is evolving continuous changes in the work environments with the restricted lifestyles.

By presuming this gap, the present conceptual study proposes future research to be carried out to identify Workplace spirituality as one of the prominent predictors which helps to improve employees' inter & Intra personal skills, psychological health in turn helps to maintain equilibrium in individual's life so that he/she can able to cope up with the unprecedented challenges.

CONCLUSION

Every Organization's success depends on its stake holders comprises of clients/ customers, Employees, Share holders, who are major pillars of every establishment. But it is generally observed that employees are given with least importance while taking crucial decisions in the board rooms (Jain 2011). It is an appreciated fact that fully engaged employees are the only means through which every organization can get customers/ clients with maximum satisfaction. Work environments with demanding long hours, Intrusion of work demands in to personal life heightened stress and emotional exhaustion among the employee professionals (Hyman et al, 2003).

According to Social Exchange theory, if employees are treated favorably by the organization, then in response, employees feel obliged to respond with positive attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964). However the primary objective of Management of every organization is to constantly get the work done through its human capital to meet the needs of their clients and customers. Hence organizations need to emphasize upon the HR strategies which are especially of employee centric that enhances psychological health and spiritual competence in order to balance themselves in the mounting external pressures.

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