

IMPLICATIONS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG FEMALE EMPLOYEES AT ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES

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ABSTRACT

The fast developing knowledge economy has given place for more number of women to be enlightened by higher education. Education has not only empowered them but also has given them robust careers. With brain power being the requisite skill in this knowledge era, rather than endurance or physical strength, the women workers seem to flood into every industry at par with men. But this has indeed become a tough challenge for women as they have to perform a lot of duties at home and office as well. Balancing work and life is an important factor to each working woman. External environmental aspects force them to lose their temper and analytical sense which they must have as human beings. This creates the concern within society and organizations about the impact of multiple roles of women on their health wellbeing and the role of work and family performance as well as role in the society.

Keywords: Women, Challenges, Work, Family, Performance

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the traditional era, women were confined to household chores - cooking, washing, cleaning, taking care of children, etc. They were considered as home makers and were deprived of the right or opportunity to go outside home. In India, it is taken for granted that economic activities are exclusively the prerogative of males while domestic work, child rearing is the sole occupations of women. Historically, women in India, have not much enjoyed a good status in workplace settings whether managerial or operative roles.

But now the story is different the Indian culture in regard to career development of women is undergoing rapid changes due to increase pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. At present, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was few decades ago, especially in the urban setting. This has open new vistas, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth. This coupled with economic pressure, has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the workforce.

Economic need is considered to be the first criteria for married woman to work in India. Working women's employment has generally had a positive effect on marriage, the effects of family life on women's job performance and work attitudes. The result revealed that women with children were significantly lower in occupational commitment relative to women without children contrary to expectation, women with younger children outperformed women with older children. The significance of the work related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function, although the relationship between family functioning, stress and well-being was also significant.

Changes in social political and economic fabric of societies have influenced and continue to influence both the nature of employment and its relationship to life outside work. Work life balance has emerged as a hot topic in recent years fuelled in part by changing trends in women's social roles. Whilst labour market participation has increased for women of all ages, women continue to shoulder the main responsibility for organizing and undertaking unpaid caring work. The concept of work life balance is becoming more and more relevant in an ever dynamic working environment.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present scenario, due to many changes happening in the work place and family systems, majority of the women's are finding it difficult to achieve desired Work – Life –Balance. In comparison with men, women have more responsibilities at home. Though there are studies on Work Life balance, relatively there are fewer studies on work life balance amongst women employees and confined to sectors like IT/BPO. Therefore there is a need to study how women are balancing their work and family life in engineering industries.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the determinants of work life balance of women employees in the organization.
- To find out present practices followed by women employees in order to maintain a good work life balance.
- To determine family support plays an important role in maintain work life balance
- To find out the stress related diseases among female employees

- To suggest ways for improving Work Life Balance.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The study was limited only to engineering industry
- ❖ The study was conducted based on the prediction of the information given by the respondents is authentic and there is minimum bias in responding to the questionnaire.
- ❖ The outcome of the study cannot be generalized as the data was collected a section of employees in a particular industry.
- ❖ The time factor was a challenge to restrict the scope and sample size for this study.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kakkar, Jyoti, Bhandari, Anuradha (2016)¹ highlighted numerous studies on work- life balance issues faced by women at workplace, yet studies on this topic that focus on men are limited in number. Studies on gender differences are available in huge numbers, however, there are few studies that talk of work- life balance with reference to men, and for either they have been ignored or have been taken for granted for being the stronger sex, be it at home or at work.

Bhatia Y. and Srilatha. S (2015)² indicated that women are more affected than men due to work-family conflict because they traditionally spend more hours in household work than men. Women managers consistently report significantly higher job, family role conflict, which is accompanied by higher mental and physiological strains than men.

Madipelli S., Sarma, Veluri V.S., Y. Chinnappaiah (2013)³ says that it is believed that male employees have more level of balance than female employees. To test this opinion, analysis was conducted on the basis of opinions of the employees and it was found that working women are better in coping with her changing roles, than male employees. This is so because women are good in managing their domestic and career responsibilities. The young employees are successfully balancing their work and family, than the aged employees due to their different role conflicts.

Purohit M. (2013)⁴ explained that realities with respect to work-life balance are segmentation of work and life domains of employees, inequality in work-life orientation of organizations. The implementation of work- life programs has both individual and organizational benefits. Effective work- life programs facilitate a symbiotic relationship between the employee and employer for mutual benefits. Employees who are better able to balance the demands on their time are more satisfied and content. In turn they are able to perform better.

Kumari L. (2012)⁵ emphasized that each of the Work life balance factors on its own is a salient predictor of job satisfaction and there is a significant gap between male and female respondents with the job

satisfaction with reference to various factors of Work life balance. The result of the study had practical significance for human resource managers of especially banks to improve staff commitments and productivity along with designing recruitment and retention employees.

Rohini Shivananda and Dr. Ashok H. S. (2012)⁶ showed that married women mechanics have relatively a higher degree of psychological well-being, work life balance but also tend to have a higher degree of stress compared to those unmarried. Unmarried mechanics on the other hand tend to have external locus of control and a greater degree of family life satisfaction. It is found that a lower degree of stress has led to a higher degree of work-life balance and higher degree of psychological well-being and family life satisfaction accounts for the higher degree of work-life balance.

3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE - 1
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN A FAMILY AND OPINION REGARDING WORK – LIFE BALANCE ISSUES

S.No.	Number of members in your family		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
1	3	Freq	17	25	37	35	28	142
		%	3.4%	5.0%	7.4%	7.0%	5.6%	28.4%
2	4	Freq	62	47	26	44	39	218
		%	12.4%	9.4%	5.2%	8.8%	7.8%	43.6%
3	5	Freq	15	17	7	12	21	72
		%	3.0%	3.4%	1.4%	2.4%	4.2%	14.4%
4	Above 5	Freq	13	7	15	14	19	68
		%	2.6%	1.4%	3.0%	2.8%	3.8%	13.6%
TOTAL		Freq	107	96	85	105	107	500
		%	21.4%	19.2%	17.0%	21.0%	21.4%	100.0%

Source: Primary data

It is found from the table 1, an association between number of members in the family and opinion regarding work – life balance issues. From the 500 samples, in the 3 member family, the majority (Often & Always: 12.6 percent) say they have work-life balance issues. In 4 member family type, majority (Never & Rarely: 21.8 percent) of the respondents face issues. In 5 member family, (Never & Rarely: 6.4 percent and Often & Always: 6.6 percent) have problems. Finally in the above 5 member in family, majority (Often & Always: 6.6 percent) of the respondents face problem.

TABLE – 1A
CHI-SQUARE TEST

Pearson Chi-Square	Calculated value	Df	P-value	S/NS	Remarks
	35.352	12	.000**	S	Rejected

**P<0.05 S-Significant

H₀ : There is no significant association between members in the family and opinion regarding work –life balance issues.

It is clear that, $P < 0.05$, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected at 5% significance level and H_0 is disproved. Hence, it is found that there is a significant association between members in the family and opinion on Work – Life balance Issues.

TABLE - 2

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN NUMBER OF EARNING MEMBERS IN A FAMILY AND OPINION REGARDING WORK – LIFE BALANCE ISSUES

S.No.	Number of earning members in family		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
1	1	Freq	5	14	17	14	9	59
		%	1.0%	2.8%	3.4%	2.8%	1.8%	11.8%
2	2	Freq	84	64	58	77	82	365
		%	16.8%	12.8%	11.6%	15.4%	16.4%	73.0%
3	Above 2	Freq	18	18	10	14	16	76
		%	3.6%	3.6%	2.0%	2.8%	3.2%	15.2%
	TOTAL	Freq	107	96	85	105	107	500
		%	21.4%	19.2%	17.0%	21.0%	21.4%	100.0%

Source: Primary data

It is portrayed from the table 2 an association between number of earning members in a family and opinion regarding work – life balance issues. In 1 member earning family, majority (Often & Always: 4.6 percent) have problems, in 2 member earning family, most (Often & Always: 31.8 percent) of the respondents feel that they have issues. And in above 2 member earning family, only on (Never & Rarely: 7.2 percent) these occasions they have issues.

TABLE – 2A

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Pearson Chi-Square	Calculated value	Df	P-value	S/NS	Remarks
	14.648	8	.066	NS	Accepted

** $P < 0.05$ S-Significant

H₀ : There is a significant relationship between number of earning members in a family and opinion regarding work – life balance issues.

It is clear that, $P > 0.05$, the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is accepted at 5% significance level and H_0 is proved. Hence, it is found that there is no significant relationship between number of earning members in the family and opinion regarding Work – Life balance Issues.

TABLE - 3

ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PERSON WHO TAKES CARE THE CHILDREN AND OPINION REGARDING WORK – LIFE BALANCE ISSUES

S.No.			Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
1	Spouse	Freq	43	22	15	23	14	117
		%	8.6%	4.4%	3.0%	4.6%	2.8%	23.4%
2	In-Laws	Freq	16	9	6	13	14	58
		%	3.2%	1.8%	1.2%	2.6%	2.8%	11.6%
3	Parents	Freq	25	33	28	26	39	151
		%	5.0%	6.6%	5.6%	5.2%	7.8%	30.2%
4	Servants	Freq	7	5	10	5	6	33
		%	1.4%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	1.2%	6.6%
5	Day care centers	Freq	6	5	5	13	10	39
		%	1.2%	1.0%	1.0%	2.6%	2.0%	7.8%
6	None	Freq	10	22	21	25	24	102
		%	2.0%	4.4%	4.2%	5.0%	4.8%	20.4%
	Total	Freq	107	96	85	105	107	500
		%	21.4%	19.2%	17.0%	21.0%	21.4%	100.0%

Source: Primary data

The table 3 gives the details of the association between care taker of children and opinion regarding work – life balance issues. From the 500 samples, in the family where the spouse caring the children majority (Never & Rarely: 13 percent) feel that they don't have much of issues. Where In-laws are taking care, majority (Often & Always: 5.4 percent) have issues, where the parents are taking care equally (Never & Rarely: 11.6 % and Often & Always: 13 percent) have issues. In the family where servants are taking care of the children, all the categories have equal importance in opinioned about the issues. Where the children are in day care centers, majority (Often & Always: 4.6 percent) they face problems. Finally, where there in no one to take care of the children the most (Often & Always: 9.8 percent) face issues.

TABLE – 3A
CHI-SQUARE TEST

Pearson Chi-Square	Calculated value	Df	P-value	S/NS	Remarks
	44.862	20	.001**	S	Rejected

** $P < 0.05$ S-Significant

H₀ : There is no significant association between care taker of children and opinion regarding work –life balance issues.

It is clear that, $P < 0.05$, the Null Hypothesis (H₀) is rejected at 5% significance level and H₀ is disproved. Hence, it is found that there is no significant association between care taker of children and opinion regarding Work – Life balance Issues.

STRESS FACTORS AT HOME WHICH INFLUENCE WORK – LIFE BALANCE

TABLE- 4

RELIABILITY OF SCALES AND ITEM-CONSTRUCT LOADINGS- FACTORS RELATED TO STRESS AT HOME

S.NO.	ITEMS	SCALE MEAN IF ITEM DELETED	CRONBACH'S ALPHA IF ITEM DELETED
1	Staying away from family for a long time	26.39	.798
2	Misunderstanding among family members	26.26	.783
3	Conflict with family members	26.28	.790
4	Problem with children	26.05	.788
5	Less revenue and more dependence	26.47	.809
6	Feeling lonely at home	26.22	.791
7	Negative attitude of spouse/ family	25.95	.794
8	Heavy household work at home	26.58	.832
9	Tired with children's studies	26.39	.807
	MEAN		29.57
	VARIANCE		54.582
	STD. DEVIATION		7.388
	CRONBACH'S ALPHA		0.818
	NO. OF ITEMS		9

The table 4 reveals that all the nine measurement scale items are reliable as the Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.818. It is greater than the threshold level of 0.70. It has provided good estimates of internal consistency reliability and also coefficient alpha values ranged from 0.783 to 0.832 for all the constructs. It is indicating that the scales used in this study were reliable. It clearly indicates that above scale items are consistent with each other and they are reliable measure of factors related to stress factors at home, so that it can be used for next analysis.

FINDINGS

- The majority(48%) of the respondents often feel that they are missing out on quality time with family and friends.
- The majority (60%) of the respondents agree that if their organization had social functions at times suitable for their family it will help them to manage their Work Life Balance.
- The majority (56%) of the respondents strongly agree that support from family members would be helpful in maintaining work life balance.

- The majority (56%) of the respondents felt their family is rarely upset with the amount of time they spend at work.
- The majority of the respondents (44%) are often stressed due to office work.
- The majority (48%) of the respondents agree that if there was child care facility in the organization, it would be beneficial to the employees.
- The majority (48%) of the respondents agree with this statement flexible working hours will help them in their Work Life Balance.
- The majority (50%) of the respondents strongly agree that if employees had a good work life balance would help the organization to be effective and successful.
- The majority (40%) of the respondents agree that they are able to maintain a proper work life balance.

SUGGESTIONS

- The organization may create provision for flexible hours. The policy of giving Saturdays off (except last) has indeed helped employees enjoy weekends with families and friends. The women employees are suggested to spend available time with their friends and family so that they don't miss out on quality time with them due to work. The organization is suggested to make the workplace more women-friendly, avoid the long hours of work for employees
- The organization might consider Crèche facility as many feel that it would benefit in balancing work and family responsibilities. More over the women employees are suggested to not overbook themselves and prioritize their errands and say no to activities which sap too much energy and time and make use of technology, organize their work and leave it at the workplace.
- The company might also include work life balance policy in their policies as the employees agreed that if the employees could have a good work life balance it will enhance productivity of the productivity. The company may consider options towards health needs of employees facilitating long term loyalty to the company Despite annual health checkup available to employees, it was found that many employees are suffering from stress related diseases- obesity and frequent headaches. The office design, office workstation is also an important health promoting factor, the company may have more open bench seating arrangement than cubicles as it helps employees to be more physically active. The organization is suggested to conduct teambuilding activities to enhance understanding amongst employees and be supportive.

CONCLUSION

“Women” constitute an important section of the workforce. However, the present situation of a large number of well qualified women who due to various circumstances have been left out of their jobs needs to

be addressed. The problems faced are several but, significantly, most often the “break in their careers” arise out of motherhood and family responsibilities”.

Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organizations. There is now mounting evidence – linking work-life balance imbalance to reduced health and wellbeing among individuals and families. It is not surprising then that there is increased interest among stakeholders for introducing work-life balance policies in their organization

In addition, it is necessary to explore multiple waves of data collection over a longer period of time to better understand the changing nature of work family roles over time. Longitudinal studies need to be conducted to examine how stages of life affect work and family concerns

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