

Work Life Balance: How Stressful Is It For Indian Women

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Abstract

Finding a healthy balance between work and personal life is one of the most important things that female employee can do to advance their careers. Each sector has its own unique set of strategies, rules, procedures, practises, and programmes designed to assist workers in striking a healthy balance between the demands of their jobs and the responsibilities they have at home. While some policies are mandated by law, others are followed only on a voluntary basis. The primary purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of how changes in technology, increased work pressure coupled with constant deadlines, the co-existence of a virtual workplace, and changing demographic profiles (including gender, experience), an increase in disposable income inflation, and an improvement in living standards have encouraged the importance of the provision of a work-life balance in the industrial sector. In our day and age, it is very necessary, and more so for women because of the multiple roles that they perform. The research paper illustrates the path that work-life balance should take for female employees in the Indian sector.

Keywords: Women, Work-Life Balance, Business Organization, Jobs, and Workplace

Introduction

Because of the tremendous speed of technological advancement, working environments all over the globe are experiencing a rapid shift. As a result of rising awareness as well as improved purchasing power, employees would really like to spend quality time doing things they enjoy outside of work. As a result, there is a greater focus than there has ever been placed on maintaining a work-life balance (WLB).

More than half of the working professionals in India who participated in a poll by Monster in India assessed their current work-life balance as "average" or "poor." The purpose of this study was to get a better understanding of the pulse of the Indian workforce about work-life balance. When it came to striking a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives, it seemed that males were happier and under less stress than women. According to the results of

the poll by Monster, men and women share comparable worries and ideas about the appropriate combination of work and personal life, but in different amounts.

Because the time has changed from making a decent living for the family to earning for the greater good of family life in today's world, the topic of women employees has become an important one in the 21st century. This is due to the fact that both men & women have equal responsibilities for earning money to improve their family structure. Achieving goals and having fun outside of work are at the heart of the concept of "work-life balance." A healthy work-life balance is not the result of a single person's efforts; rather, it is the result of the combined efforts of the employee's company, the employee's family, and the society in which all of these groups are entrenched. Female workers' lives have become unbalanced because they need to grow in all parts of their

lives, from a personal to an organizational level. This imbalance is due to the fact that technological advancements and new inventions have had an impact on the sociocultural lifestyles that are practised in Indian homes. Women have shown that they are present in every thought. Women have made important contributions in almost every sphere, from sports to aeronautics, from politics to engineering, from the medical professions to academia. It has come to the attention of scholars over the last several decades that the work-life balance of female employees is an essential topic for debate. Additional expectations placed on female academic workers could be a contributor to the occupational stress that they experience and the work-life imbalance that they experience. This might, in the long run, lead to unfavourable outcomes with regard to the accomplishment of corporate objectives and the fulfilment of the requirements of the personnel working with them. The importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance cannot be overstated. What do workers consider crucial when it comes to striking a balance between their personal and professional lives, as well as the efficacy of workplace practises and regulations in helping them accomplish this goal.

Meaning of Work-Life Balance

According to Jim Bird, the chief executive officer of the website worklifebalance.com, "work-life balance" does not indicate that one's personal and professional lives are in perfect equilibrium with one another. It is the meticulous coordination of a person's many different priorities in life, such as their family, job, leisure, social duties, health, career, and spirituality. While some of the activities require more concentration, others may require less emphasis on your time and energy. Work-life harmony may be achieved by giving importance to a variety of human pursuits and achieving a delicate equilibrium. It varies from person to person and adapts to new circumstances throughout time. According to Stewart Friedman, who is both a professor of management and the "founding director of the Leadership Program and the Work-Life Integration Project at the Wharton School," work-life integration is one of the most important factors in an employee's success. "The mentality that "one size fits all" prevails in the management of human resources frequently

contributes to employee frustration. Because although everyone's life is distinct, everybody has different requirements in terms of how to incorporate the various pieces of their lives. This is a frequent issue in many organisational settings where there is a typical practise that is executed in a way that is widely acceptable. This is done for the sake of equality. It is not an uncommon problem in many HR areas. It has to be tailored to the employee's needs. According to Friedman's study, the answer lies in taking an all-encompassing approach to the aspects of life that include work, family, community, and one's own identity.

Work-life balance and Female worker & employees

Women have historically been seen as primary caregivers as well as nurturers, therefore they have been given all of the responsibilities that are associated with the upkeep and management of a family. Men often see themselves as the primary providers for their families, and society generally encourages men to fulfill positions in the workforce that enable them to make a living and provide for their households. Nevertheless, the structure of the workforce has been shifting, and the proportion of men who earn wages and women who stay at home to care for their families has been steadily decreasing. The number of couples in metropolitan India with two incomes is progressively growing, and the majority of women and men in today's society consider their place of employment and their family to be the two most significant institutions in their lives. A new focus has been placed on striking a healthy balance between one's professional and personal responsibilities, as a result of changes in values that have occurred concurrently with shifts in the workforce. The concept of striking a healthy balance between work and personal life is particularly important for women, who often have the equivalent of two full-time jobs, one at home and the other outside the house. Working moms are often required to combat the misconceptions and prejudices that emerge when a working woman gives birth to a child while she is still employed. When a woman pursues a position of authority inside an organization, she has to take into account the toll that this will have on the other aspects of her life, such as her interests, her personal connections, and her family. The vast majority of executive roles need a significant amount of

time and effort, which a working mother may not be able to commit owing to the demands of her family responsibilities. A woman who is employed full-time and in a position of high management may find it very difficult, if not impossible, to fulfill the role of primary caregiver for her kid. Because of the conflicting pressures of work as well as the duties at home, women typically find it much more challenging to achieve a healthy balance in their lives. In order to reach their full capacity in all aspects of life, women who have paid jobs need to maintain a careful balance in their personal lives and deftly juggle the many roles they play. Women in today's workforce face unending obstacles in the form of the requirements of full-time jobs, and when their workdays are done, they return home to find that they have taken on an increased share of the domestic tasks and commitments. When a poll was carried out at Osmania University in Hyderabad, it was found that the majority of women work between 40 and 45 hours per week, and that 53 percent of the respondents feel that they are unable to strike a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives.

Women claim that their lives are a constant balancing act consisting of a multitude of tasks at work, an intense meeting schedule, and business travels, in addition to the everyday responsibilities of life and family. "Successfully achieving work/life balance will ultimately create a more satisfied workforce that contributes to productivity and success in the workplace."

Factors affecting work life balance

The burden of an excessive amount of work: Majority percent of those who responded acknowledged that they feel overwhelmed by the amount of work that is expected of them. Women who have jobs often have responsibilities regarding their children, their homes, their in-laws, their parents, and their social circles. In addition to this, they are expected to balance a variety of responsibilities in their private lives. Because of the rising expectations placed on them at work, working women are often required to put in long hours at the office and even bring their work home with them. As a result, the vast majority of people have an excessive amount of work to do

in both their personal and professional spheres. This is a factor that contributes to an imbalance between work and personal life and may lead to tension.

Interference of workplace with family life: The majority of responses were of the opinion that there was interference between work and family life. This may be attributable to the fact that most work hours are not confined to 7 or 8 hours a day, and workers in the private sector spend anywhere from 12 to 16 hours a day at their place of employment. Because of this, they have very little time to spend with their family. Because more than half of the respondents had jobs in the private sector, there is a possibility that people's jobs, which require them to put in long hours, interfere with their ability to spend quality time with their families.

Live up to the expectations of others: An overwhelming majority of responses agree that they feel pressured to meet the expectations of others. There is a lot of work pressure, which results in work-life conflict, since working women are always hopping between two full-time jobs and taking on many duties in both domains. This causes a lot of stress. Both the family and the organisation require working women to perform efficiently, and since both domains demand working women to do full justice to all of their tasks, this results in a significant amount of stress and strain on their bodies and minds. According to the research presented above, it seems that working women often find themselves with very little room to pursue their own personal interests since they are so focused on meeting the expectations of others.

Longer work hours: In order to compete with their male co-workers in their respective fields, working women are required to put in longer hours of work. It is necessary for them to do so if they want to stay in the running for advancement and promotions. In the context of India, women continue to be the only caregivers of children and elderly dependents, which will require them to put in greater hours of labour at home, putting their ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance at risk. It is a common observation that working women have very little time left over to pursue their own personal interests.

Nobody has time for themselves: The majority of responders shared the sentiment that they had very little time to devote to themselves. Despite the fact that the vast majority of respondents (84 percent) did not have to travel regularly for work and that more than 50 percent of them also had family support, they were required to journey considerable distances each and every day in order to go to work. This caused them to lose valuable time that they might have used to make positive strides in their own development or to pursue spiritual endeavours. In addition, the working women chosen for this research weren't always stressed out by financial concerns, according to the analysis of responses to much research on what affects work-life balance. This was determined by looking at the responses to questions about factors affecting work life balance. Over forty percent of those who responded dispute this assertion, saying that they are unable to fulfill their social commitments due to a lack of time. Women who have jobs in India are not free from the responsibility to fulfil their social responsibilities. Women may be more likely to intentionally set aside time to meet their social commitments now that they are more aware of the fact that these obligations must be addressed regardless of whether or not they are employed. Despite the fact that younger generations of Men in India nowadays are more open to working women's unconventional lives, yet these men are still conservative as well as prefer women to take on domestic & child-rearing duties. This was discovered through discussions with respondents. In many cases, it is expected of working women that they will make a professional sacrifice by delegating less work to themselves at their place of employment. This may give rise to feelings of rage and irritation, both of which have the potential to spread to the many other roles that women perform in their professional and personal lives.

The repercussions of an unbalanced workload and personal life

Anxiety and stress levels that are unusually high: The vast majority of working women agree that a lack of work-life balance contributes to high levels of stress and anxiety in their lives. Women who hold down jobs not

only have to cope with the stresses that come with carrying and raising children, but they also have to manage high levels of anxiety because they have to compete in a society that is dominated by males. In addition to this, they are required to continually balance the needs of their families with those of their careers, which prevents them from aiming to advance their careers beyond a certain level. There are some working women who may decide that their careers are more important than their families. When this occurs, they could feel frustrated and guilty since they have to make sacrifices regarding the amount of time they spend with their families. Working women are put in a position where they are compelled to make a tough decision or compromise, which may lead to stress and worry, which in turn can have a negative impact on their physical health.

Discord within the family: The vast majority of working women are of the opinion that conflict in the home is the result of an unhealthy work-life balance. Regardless of whether or not they have paid employment, women in Indian society are expected to carry out a number of prescribed domestic responsibilities. In the case of working women, the duties they have at work may prohibit them from complying with the standards of society, which may cause discontentment among their family members and lead to disharmony and disagreement in the household. Working women are put under additional stress since other members of their families are unwilling to pitch in and help with household chores. In addition, there is a trend toward demeaning the profession of a working woman and toward elevating the position of the major earner for the family, both of which result in the woman being expected to take on all of the obligations associated with running the family. This discriminatory treatment of working women results in an imbalance, which has the potential to cause irritation and discord in the household. The majority of those who responded to this survey had more than ten years of professional experience and fell into the age group of 35 to 55 years old. They reported feeling burned out by their jobs. As a result, it is probable that they will be promoted to a position in the middle management cadre, where they will be required to lead teams and carry out higher-level tasks. They may also be involved in the rearing of teenagers or the care of elderly dependents at

this point in their lives, both of which are common responsibilities for people in their position in life. All of this puts a significant amount of pressure on working women since they are often divided between the needs of their home life and the demands of their professional lives. They need to be able to compete with younger coworkers and be abreast of the latest advancements in their respective fields of work in order to be successful in the workplace. After a certain point, it becomes quite difficult for working women to deal with the demands that they face on the job. A good number of them are also struggling with poor health, which makes their challenges both at work and at home much more difficult to manage. Burnout on the job is identified by a huge majority of the respondents as one of the effects of not having a healthy work-life balance. The findings of the study make it abundantly evident that job burnout is a direct consequence of excessive work and the imbalance that this produces.

Inability to attain full potential: the majority of Indian women do not get encouragement to prioritize their careers above their families. As a result, they often pass up opportunities for professional development while they are still in the early phases of their working life. They miss out on a lot of possibilities as a result, and by the time they are in a position to take on more responsibility, there may not be any positions available that fit their qualifications. In addition, women who are given tasks that are of a repetitive or mundane nature are more likely to have their creative abilities stifled, which stops them from reaching their full potential. The result is that working women become more frustrated and resentful, which has a ripple effect on their numerous responsibilities and causes an imbalance. As a result, one may draw the conclusion that an unhealthy balance between work and personal life makes it more difficult for working women to reach their full potential. Because women often take on several responsibilities, those responsibilities frequently overlap, making it difficult for them to distinguish between their work area and their family space. As a result, working women are forced to make concessions in some aspects of their lives in order to successfully navigate challenging circumstances. As a result,

individuals are unable to reach their full potential in both areas at the same time. Over sixty percent of those surveyed reported having frequent feelings of irritability and resentment, despite the fact that more than one-half of them did not feel guilty of neglecting either their family or their job. However, the majority of people were not turning to behaviors such as binge eating, drinking, or smoking, nor were they losing interest in life as a consequence of not having a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. As a consequence, one might draw the conclusion that working women face job burnout as well as high levels of stress and anxiety since their work and personal lives are not well balanced. The fact that they are unable to reach their full potential not just at work but also at home may be very irritating and lead to anger and bad feelings toward their surroundings. It's possible that this is causing discord in their homes, which lowers the overall quality of their lives.

Suggestions to create a “Women-Friendly” Organization

As social mores evolve as well as Indian society as a whole begins to embrace the advancement of Indian women into executive positions, businesses will need to become more accepting of diverse perspectives and adapt their policies accordingly. Here are some ideas for Indian organizations to think about if they want to make their workplaces more welcoming to women.

- a) Create workplace policies that foster a welcoming environment for female employees.
- b) Create educational opportunities for women, such as mentorships, career assistance, and the development of leadership skills.
- c) Promote awareness campaigns emphasizing the importance of women in leadership positions.
- d) Solicit the feedback of female workers on the policies, promotion, and performance evaluation procedures that are in place.
- e) Make changes to ensure that women are not discriminated against in industries such as need-based placements. A procedure should be in place, similar to how it is in the civil

service, to assign couples to the very same district or state.

- f) Make a sincere commitment to hiring and promoting women, as well as including women in the development of the annual business plan.
- g) Top management involvement in gender issues.
- h) Women's career advancement initiatives
- i) The introduction of women to senior executive positions.
- j) Academic opportunities for women to develop their leadership skills.
- k) Rotating jobs for female employees.
- l) More women in upper-level administrative and managerial positions.
- m) Conduct periodic surveys of working women to gauge their level of contentment in their jobs.
- n) Programs designed to provide mentoring for women.
- o) Facilities for child care at the place of employment.

Conclusion

The purpose of the analyses of work life balance that are offered in this research is to make an effort to comprehend the elements that influence the balance between work and life of working women as well as the implications of having an unhealthy work life balance. In the setting of India, women continue to bear the primary responsibility for caring for their families, and their professional lives are seldom accorded the highest importance. According to the findings of many surveys, the most significant variables impacting the work-life balance of working women are the weight of excessive work, the desire to fulfill the expectations of others, and a lack of leisure for oneself.

As a direct result of this, many women are unable to fulfill their full potential, endure excessive anxiety symptoms, seem unable to work at their full performance, are unable to recover from job burnout, as well as do not have a pleasant home life. Informal talks with working women found that those who experienced a better work-life balance were those who had support from their families and a degree of flexibility in their work schedules. The work done above have significance for working women in terms of having a greater

awareness of the variables impacting work life balance as well as the repercussions of not maintaining a healthy work life balance. Additionally, it offers insights into the ways in which solutions may be found to maintain a good work-life balance. The fact that working women need to accept personal responsibility in order to strike a healthy work-life balance in both their professional and personal lives is made abundantly evident by the existence of a model that exemplifies work-life harmony that is equally at home in the workplace.

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