

A Study of Work-Life Balance of Women Employee in India

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Abstract:- Work-life balance is an old concept which has evolved over time. With growing opportunities in terms of education and employment for both man and women, most families are having working women to maintain the standard of living and having a stable and secure household. Work-life balance is a concept of maintaining work life and personal life altogether. The companies need to acknowledge the importance of work-life balance as it improves organisational productivity. Work-life balance is the equilibrium of work-life and non-work life. Employees perform better and in favourable ways when they are having work-life balance. Especially for working women work-life balance is very much important so that they can perform their job at the office and take care of their families at home. In the modern and changing era employees are being provided with facilities regarding management of their work as well as non-work life. Benefits such as Work From Home, flexible working hours, paid leaves and so on are being provided by the organisation to their employees. But the question is, are these benefits enough? The present paper is made to understand the present situation of the work-life balance of women in India and the future aspects of the same. The work-life balance in India still has to walk a long way and the management has to take initiatives regarding the work-life balance of women in the organisation.

Keywords:- Work-Life Balance, WLB, Stress Management, Work-Life Stress.

I. INTRODUCTION

An individual needs times for self, family, friends, society and other needs. An employee spends most of his/her day at the office and remaining time with friends and family. Very little time is available for himself/herself. People are working really hard in today's competitive environment that they rarely get time to fulfil their personal needs. The work-life imbalance is often there in most of the working people's life, especially for working women. Times have changed, from the time when the husband used to earn and the wife stayed at home, to the time when both earns but women still have to take care of the family at the same time. Maintaining a balance between work life and non-work life is quite difficult for women.

Organisations recognising this issue are providing measures to improve the working life of women employee. Employers have innovative practices that allow employees

to find greater work-life balance. Initiatives such as alternative work arrangements, leave policies, paid leaves, flexible working hours have become an important part of most of the company benefit programme and compensation packages. Work-life balance programmes help employees manage their work and personal life and affect their behaviour and attitude towards the organisation. Work-life balance programmes provide job satisfaction and contribute to organisational effectiveness and performance.

Since industrialization employers have been providing various welfare measures such as good working conditions, health and safety, security and other benefits to employees. Benefits to women have been provided such as maternity benefits, child care facilities and some other benefits.

A. Meaning of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a method which helps employees of an organisation to balance their personal and professional lives. Work-life balance encourages employees to divide their time on the basis of priorities and maintain a balance by devoting time to family, health, vacations along with making a career, business travel etc. it motivates the employee and increases their loyalty towards the organisation.

B. Work-Life Balance of Women

Women have more responsibilities of home as compared to man, they have to work at the office and after that have to handle the household. Having a work-life balance is really an important aspect for women. Women juggle between these two worlds, on one hand, responsibilities at work and on the other, responsibilities at home.

Women abandon their careers at a stage where they have to raise children, as women do the majority of domestic and childcare work. If organisations want to retain highly skilled talent, they need to create a supportive working environment and provide measures for women employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

C. Causes of Work-Life Imbalance

There are various causes of having a work-life imbalance. Majorly it can be classified into three categories:

- Gender
- Family characteristics
- Time spent at work

Men prioritize their work for financial assistance, whereas women prioritize family. This is the reason why women cannot give enough time to build their career and face work-life imbalance. Family characteristics such as dual earning parents face dissatisfaction regarding family responsibilities. Women face dissatisfaction as they cannot give their best at both the areas of their responsibilities. Spending long hours at work due to "inflexibility, shifting in work requirements, overtime or evening work duties" lead to an imbalance between work and family duties.

In addition to these factors, many people want high social recognition, this aspect can also lead to imbalance as an individual spends most of his/her time socializing. The pressure of imbalance in work and personal life is experienced differently by different individuals. These differences are based on an individual's age, marital status, number of children, level of employment etc.

D. Consequences Of Work-Life Imbalance For Women

The workplace has become the single greatest source of stress. Due to the increased pressure of modern life and to cope up with it despite the adverse effects, one tends to get less sleep and work more. Long hours of work and mental pressure it causes lead to so many negative consequences for women employee. These consequences can be put down as follows-

- The increased stress level in daily life
- Sleeping disorders
- Dissatisfaction towards family and personal life
- Anxiety and depression
- Declining career
- Health-related issues
- Lower life satisfaction
- Growing problems with parenting and supervision of children and adolescents

Other than these issues there are many consequences related to a work-life imbalance to the organisation also such as higher rates of absenteeism, increased labour turnover, lower organisational loyalty and commitment, raising health care cost and many more aspects. Organisations should take steps towards these issues as it affects both, the employee and the employer.

E. Improving Work-Life Balance

Most experts believe that the chief responsibility for reducing stress and improving work-life balance should be of management. Women employee in India faces biasness because of their gender. They are considered less productive because of their roles in the family. This conception is now changing and management is taking steps to improve flexibility in work-life of a women employee.

➤ *Stress Management*

Stress is often termed as a twentieth-century syndrome, born out of man's race towards modern progress and its ensuing complexities. Work-related stress is very common in employees and it affects the organisational

workings too. This situation can be transformed from no-win to win-win if organisations choose to make an investment in the wellbeing of their workforce. Many organisations do this by providing stress management programmes such as stress management workshops, management training, quiet rooms and walking groups.

➤ *Flexible Working*

Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs. It can benefit employers, employees and their families. Most employers now recognise that it makes good business sense to provide flexible working opportunities to their staff. Management offers flexible and part-time working arrangements such as variable hours to complete work related to home, care of elderly relatives and children, and a gradual change in working hours to facilitate full time working.

➤ *Maternity Benefits and Childcare Facilities*

Organisations provide facilities and benefits regarding maternity. Women employees are having paid maternity leaves and after childbirth facilities in the organisations so that they can take care of themselves as well as their child during this period.

Organisations should ensure to create a support group to link women planning maternity leave with those who have recently returned from maternity. (University of Reading)

Organisations ensure a lighter workload for women returning from maternity leave and help them to achieve a work-life balance and re-establish their base. (University of Nottingham and University of Bristol)

Organisations ensure childcare facilities at the workplace so that the women who returned from maternity can take care of their newborn.

II. WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN INDIAN ORGANISATIONS

A. Organisational Policies Related to Work-Life Balance in India

Organisations continuously focusing on developing work-life balance policies for employees. The strategies which organisations are adopting can be classified into the following-

- Flexible working
- Paid leaves
- Child and dependent care facilities

These aspects include policies and practices which help an employee to maintain work-life balance. These are such as part-time work, work from home, compressed work weeks, shorter working days for women, maternity leaves, health care programmes.

Organisations now recognise the need for having work-life balance as the imbalance of the same will lead to

reduced productivity and increased labour turnover and absenteeism. For addressing this issue organisations are renewing their policies and procedures to help women employee maintain their work and personal life and at the same time work efficiently to improve organisational productivity.

B. Recommendations for Indian Organisations to Facilitate Work-Life Balance of Women

To promote a supportive workplace for women, organisations should make appropriate changes in their workplace. Following are the recommendations to make an organisation "women-friendly".

- Create training and development programmes for women.
- Develop policies which support a women-friendly working environment.
- Include women in business strategies.
- Reduce biases regarding gender.
- Hire and promote women.
- Provide necessary accommodations to women.

The work-life balance of women employee can get so much better if organisations take necessary steps to facilitate maintenance of balance between work and personal life.

III. CONCLUSION

Both, the family and the work-life of an individual are important. maintaining both in the modern world where women perform the role of provider as well as take care of the household is a very difficult task. For working women, this is an ongoing challenge. Careful planning and personal efforts can make an individual's life balanced. It is accomplished when an individual feel satisfied with her personal life as well as working life. Management and the society collectively should take steps regarding a women's work-life balance so that they can perform their best at both ends.

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