

## **Work Life Balance – An Enigma for women employees in Indian Scenario?**

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### **Preamble:**

*Achieving a balance between work and life is one of the most unassuming problems haunting working fraternity. The modern, fast paced life is entwined with an enormous increase in working hours and work issues consuming personal lives. Life styles of working people as a result of the work spill over are acquiring gigantic changes.*

*The study, aptly titled as “Work – Life Balance – An Enigma for women employees in Indian Scenario?” a probe initiated with the intention of observing, identifying analyzing the impacts of work spill over on employed women in the banking sector. The researcher identified Visakhapatnam as one of the best locations to conduct the study and used two prominent techniques such as Non conscious measurement and attribution analytics – one of the latest techniques used in studying and identifying behavioral patterns of the respondents and converting the responses into meaningful data.*

*The researcher felt the need to use this technique as the number of women working in public and private sector banks are very less and found to be increasingly conservative.*

*The second technique used by the Researcher is to depend on the information sources used by the industry. The researcher developed a chat room template, a model for conveying the grievances and requested respondents to express their free and uninhibited opinions. Since the template allowed respondents to discuss, they participated and offered their free opinions. Chat room transcripts were used to collect and collate the data and analyzed using Dr. Udai Pareek’s 6 point scale.*

*The study took 40 days to complete and around 225 respondents engaged in the chat room discussions. The data pertaining to the study is kept confidential and their privacy is ensured. Also, the researcher referred to a number of scholarly articles for data pertaining to issues in work life balance and referred to news paper articles on current issues in work life balance in India.*

*The data gathered from the study is analyzed using Google analytics tools and findings are developed by observing the patterns generated from the analytics. The study is aimed to analyze the respondent’s opinions and the patterns in their behavior regarding work life conflict and work spill over.*

**Keywords:** *Work – life balance, spillover, work – life conflict.*

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Date of Submission: 20-03-2022

Date of acceptance: 02-04-2022

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### **I. Introduction:**

The study of Work life balance and issues, challenges connected with work life balance are much in vogue today. Articles pertaining to the study are read and discussed among employees with a growing degree of contempt and less curiosity.

Work cultures in Japan, India and U.S, to a certain extent have degraded so much that work life imbalance issues hardly raises an eye brow. The situation is much worse in a country like India where employees are forced to compromise work place comforts and work life balance for a meager monthly salary. The security of having a job at the cost of compromise with work life imbalance is throwing many lies in disarray.

Many careers are ending in an immature and in improper circumstances; many enthusiastic beginnings are coming to an impromptu end, many promising starts have flattered to deceive. Disgraceful actions such as Glass Ceilings, work place discrimination, gender discrimination, harassment are also adding fuel to the fire.

Out of curiosity, the researcher had taken great pains to traverse along the study of work life imbalance from its very inception till date. Many of the revealing of the study is startling and scary.

The researcher divided the sample on the basis of geographic segmentation, behavioral segmentation and skill set segmentation. She chose the locations “Visakhapatnam” and “Bhimavaram” as the study regions. The sample is chosen from women employees working in public and private sector banks.

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The researcher had taken all the care to see that the sample is chosen from all the cross sections of the society. In the chat room transcript a white board is used to obtain information from the participants. The white board contained pre-framed questions regarding their salary range, their age, gender, social status, educational qualification and nature of location etc.

Her study reveals that around 25% of the women employees taking up “BANKING” as a career option have left the job within 5 years after taking up the job; the reasons cited by the employees are the high level of intensive work, lack of private time, job insecurity and anxiety due to extreme stress situations.

Interestingly, not many of them opined that marriage and relocation have hindered their career growth. Many of them, sadly, do not want to take up a job in near future. The study is done by using Dr. Udai Pareek’s six point scale. The scale developed by the researcher took into count aspects such as Management, Support system and Expectations.

### **Research Gap:**

The Researcher chose the study of work life balance among women employees in banking sector primarily because the area has largely been ignored. The researcher feels that plenty of potential scope is there for studying this topic because the study deals with the work life balance among women employees.

The study can be done in real time situations.

### **Challenges faced during the study:**

The Researcher faced an arduous task of obtaining the accurate and authentic information regarding the study. For example, the researcher designed an instrument to study and understanding the nature of expectations from the researcher.

The opinions of the respondents were generated by using a 10 point scale marked by the respondents. Some of the key factors studied by the researcher are such as

- Designing a suitable instrument for checking and analyzing the respondents opinions.
- Obtaining facts from respondents regarding personal life expectations and work expectations.
- While studying management aspect, the researcher faced great difficulty in designing a unambiguous instrument to obtain the key essentials such as Child care and support management, self management and financial management.
- The researcher faced a tough time in identifying the components which can facilitate support to the employee in the form of work place support, work place balance support.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To know about the information from the respondents regarding their personal life expectations and work expectations in the organization.
- To know about the facilities provided by the organization to the employees at the time of work place support and how they are able to balance the work.
- To study about the Dr. Udai Pareek 6 components those are used by the organization.
- To study about the difficulties faced by the respondents in child care and dependent care, self and financial management.

### **Scope of the study**

The study is not based on the work life balance but also to about the respondents how they are able to manage their problems about their personal life.

### **Methodology Used for the study**

Study methodology involves preparation of selecting a sample, preparing a survey instrument, collection of data from respondents and data analysis. The sample for the study is of 100 respondents. The respondents are chosen in the ratio of 58: 42 male to female ratio. Also, the respondents are chosen from a starting age of 21 to 55 years.

### **Research instruments used**

A questionnaire prepared in Telugu as well as English is used to collect data from various respondents. However, in some cases, where, the employees did not have the time to fill up the questionnaire, interview technique is used and the answers for the questions were filled up by the researcher. Also, the study is done primarily using a technique called gathering data from chat room transcripts.

Since the respondents can engage in unofficial banter they participate in such chat rooms and data is gathered from these chat rooms and processed for analysis.

**Collection of primary data:**

Primary data is collected by administering the questionnaire and the study is conducted in a stress free environment during Tea breaks and during the employee's journey back home, in the office bus. It is done primarily with the intention to obtain the correct information.

Collection of primary data is done from the chat room transcripts and also from questionnaire filled by the respondents.

**Collection of secondary data:**

Collection of secondary data is done primarily from News paper articles and two scholarly articles which highlight the importance of the study topic "Work life balance" also concept regarding HRM and work life balance are collected from Text books on HRM.

**II. Review of Literature**

The Researcher referred to several research articles and other research works published in international and national journals. While doing so, the researcher referred to articles on work life imbalance in private and public sector organizations.

The researcher referred to an article written by Dr. Divya Negi, Seema Singh (2012), survey was conducted on 200 employees from both private and public sector banks in Dendhradun city. Stratified random sampling technique has been used to collect the primary data. Questionnaire method is used to measure work - life balance namely gender, demographic structure, welfare policies and level of hierarchy. 68% of the employees in public sector banks feel stressed out most of time. Suggestions were given to the executives to manage work life balance is spending time with loved ones, leisure activities and time out for hobbies can help to beat the stress. They should also utilize the flexible working hours to get some free time. Time management is the best solution to reduce the imbalance between personal life and work life.

Also, the researcher referred to an article written by Dr. Obianuju Mary Chiekezie, et.al. (2016), statement of the problem is lack of work flexibility, high work pressure and longer working hours may be stressing out many Nigerian workers, reducing their job performances and productivities as well as causing broken homes. The study found that management support for work life balance program was not satisfactory. The reason for this is that commercial banks do not consider work life balance as vital factor towards the productivity of employees. They have recommended that organizations should promote work life balance by presenting a variety of programmes and schemes like flexibility, telecommuting, compulsory leave, strict maximum hours and cultivation of an atmosphere that does not promote overtime to help efficiency and effectiveness of their employees. By including work life balance policies in strategic plans of organizations it helps organizations to gain competitive edge through being able to attract and retain individuals with great skills and experience.

The researcher referred to Dr. Saloni Pahuja (2016), survey was conducted on 100 employees of Axis Bank. The researchers have found that majority of the respondents expressed that there is no separate policy for work life balance in their organization and many people are doing work overtime. The employees in Axis Bank have medium level of work life balance. The researcher found that some employees feel stressed due to long working hours so that they are unable to handle family responsibilities even after coming from workplace as they feel so tired and exhausted. They also found that due to inflexible work schedule and frequency of overtime employees are facing conflicts between work and family roles. So that they are unable to spend time with their family related activities. They suggested that the bank should focus on the policies so that it can help the female employees to balance both work and life.

The researcher referred to an article written by D. Kasthuri, M. Daniel Rajkumar(2011), researcher recommended that if the company provides employee benefits like child care facilities, video conferencing to reduce travel and not scheduling work events during school holidays. The researcher concluded that many companies in India are implementing intranets and virtual private networks. By using this technologies employees can be able work from home from non - work related purposes such as tending to a sick child or parents. Initiatives taken by the employee for the better work - life balance are utilizing mobility and technology in their daily work schedule.

Apart from the above mentioned articles the researcher also referred to other works which highlight the issues and challenges in work life and balancing work and personal life.

**Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data collected from the chat room transcripts, questionnaire filled by the respondents, interviews noted by the researcher are arranged in the form of tables. The tables are arranged in the form of personal life expectations, work expectations, self management and Child care and dependent care.

The data is arranged in the form of tables based on demographical classification based on several factors such as marital status, age, experience, education etc.

The tables are analyzed as shown below:

**Table 1.1**  
**Division of the sample respondents based on demographic factors**

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
Below 30	25	50%
30 - 40	10	20%
41 - 50	10	20%
Above 50	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Marital Status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	15	30%
Married	35	70%
Total	50	100%

Cadre	Number of respondents	Percentage
Manager	15	30%
Assistant Manager	10	20%
Clerk	25	50%
Total	50	100%

**Inference:** Data from the above table is noted and observations are classified into two categories favorable and threats.

Demographical classification is done on many factors such as marital status, cadre and age. One of the limitations of the study is the number of employees chosen for the study; it is limited because of the limited number of respondents available in the study area.

**Contribution from IT & Manufacturing sector towards work – life balance practices:**

The researcher studied work – life balance practices of HP, Bangalore. The company is facilitating job sharing & telecommuting option. The company is also providing facilities such as lactation rooms, medical care for family members etc. The company is known for providing innovative work practices to balance work life. The company is providing 8 confidential counseling sessions to resolve private and personal work – life practices.

The researcher also studied work practices in Accenture limited, Bangalore. The company is providing facilities such as flexible working hours to reduce work life stress. The company is also allowing job rotation to reduce work stress and is having an innovation hub. The company is allowing maternity benefits for women employees working in the organization.

**HR Practices in NTPC:**

The company is providing employee beneficial programs in the form of performance bonus, sales incentives, and dental care plans. The company is providing benefits for even part – time employees.

The company is providing career planning opportunities for employees, career planning and retention bonus for the employees. The company is also providing referral bonus and hiring bonus for all the new comers into the company.

**HR Practices observed in Britannia:**

The company is facilitating knowledge sharing, allowing cross functional teams. The company is conducting leadership and ownership programs. The management feels that with the induction of these programs employees will be at a better advantage and they will be able to handle work pressure.

**Table 1.2**  
**Personal Life Expectations**

Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
a) I need time for refreshment.	19	15	8	5	3
b) I need time for a good sleep.	20	10	13	3	4
c) I want to go for family trips during vacation at least once in year.	15	16	10	6	3
d) I want some personal time to spend with my family.	18	17	8	4	3
e) I want to spend some time with my kids.	19	19	6	4	2
f) I want to spend quality time for myself.	13	14	15	7	1
g) I love to indulge in social engagement.	8	10	23	8	1
h) I hate to be a 'loner' and love to live among other	9	11	13	7	10

people.					
MEAN	15.125	14	12	5.5	3.375
S.D	4.703722	3.380617	5.398412	1.772811	2.875388

**Inference:**

Data from the above table is noted and observations are classified into two categories favorable and threats.

Favorable: Around 60 percent of the people are able to find time for their sleep, kids and family time and they are the positives.

Threats: When questioned about the availability of time for refreshment, good sleep, family trips and time for the kids, around 65% respondents expressed displeasure because they were not able to include any time in their work schedule for the above mentioned activities.

One of the major weaknesses identified among the respondents with regards to their participation in social engagement and their intention to mix with other people is despite their interest to indulge in these activities they are not having the time to engage in social activities or time to spend with their family. As a result of that their work life balance is missing.

**Table 1.3  
Work Expectations**

Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
a) I get fair treatment from my superiors.	8	12	10	13	7
b) I want to work for a maximum of 9 hours.	17	10	8	9	6
c) I want to have flexible targets.	13	13	9	9	6
d) I want to have good relationship with colleagues.	18	14	8	6	4
e) I expect to receive adequate training when new systems are introduced in the organization.	17	18	6	7	2
MEAN	14.6	13.4	8.2	8.8	5
S.D	4.159327	2.966479	1.48324	2.683282	2

**Inference:**

Favorable: The favorable replies came for maintenance of good relations with other employees and receiving adequate training. Around 70 percent of the employees felt that they are able to satisfy the above factors.

Threats: The threats from the above table are maximum number of hours worked by the employee, flexi targets and fair treatment from the boss. Around 65% of the employees feel that these factors are missing.

Since employees are not getting flexible targets and they are expecting a fair treatment from their bosses, they are feeling stressed and it is impacting their work life balance negatively.

**Table 1.4  
Self Management**

Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
a) I can spend time to plan my daily activities.	11	17	9	9	4
b) I have time to think about my personal development.	10	13	11	10	6
c) I have time to engage in any leisure activities.	12	13	8	8	9
d) I have time to attend to prayers and religious meetings	8	14	9	14	5
e) I engage in exercise and yoga.	8	10	10	7	15
f) I have membership in cultural groups and associations.	6	6	10	12	16
g) I do find time to engage in social activities.	10	7	7	11	15
MEAN	9.285714	11.42857	9.142857	10.14286	10
S.D	2.058663	3.952094	1.345185	2.410295	5.228129

**Inference:**

Threats: From the above table it can be observed that not even 50 % of the respondents felt that any of these factors satisfied them. Many of them remained neutral because they were not able to decide their self management skills and chose not to answer.

The table reveals that respondents are not able to spend time on personal issues such as Yoga, engage in social groups and cultural meetings along with family and find time for social activities.

As a result, respondents are unable to free themselves from work related stress and it is causing work life imbalance.

**Table 1.5**  
**Child care and Dependent Care**

Statement	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
a) I take time to talk to my children every day.	14	10	10	11	5
b) I have patience to hear my kids conversation with me.	12	16	11	6	5
c) I find time to play with kids every day.	11	10	14	10	5
d) I never treat my kids in a harsh manner.	11	18	12	6	3
e) I can manage my elderly dependence efficiently.	12	13	10	9	6
f) I can cater them enough time when they are unwell (or) sick.	10	14	11	12	3
g) My job permits me to attend to my children / dependence when they are not well.	12	14	7	10	7
MEAN	11.71429	13.57143	10.71429	9.142857	4.857143
S.D	1.253566	2.935821	2.13809	2.340126	1.46385

**Inference:**

**Favorable:**

There are two factors for which respondents replied in the affirmative, they agreed they have the patience to play with the kids and they never treat the kids in a harsh manner.

**Threats:**

All the other factors, the respondents replied in negatively and opined that they were not able to fulfill their obligations with respect to playing with their children, addressing the needs of elderly at home and treating the kids in a harsh manner. A large number of respondents felt the other way with regards to the above mentioned issues and it is because the heavy work load they are bearing.

**III. Findings**

- 65% of the respondents are unhappy with some of personal life expectations like sleep, refreshments and family trips due to unavailability of time to spend during work schedule.
- One of the major threat is the number of working hours, flexi targets and fair treatment from the boss. Around 65 percent of the workers felt that they are not getting a fair treatment.
- Another major factor impacting the work life balance is the fact that the lack of self management. Many employees felt that they are not able to get the time for managing themselves properly.

**IV. Suggestions**

- There is a great need for the Government and the Academia to reframe work culture such that personal life expectations of employees can be met.
- \*. The Government and the Industrialists should recognize the fact that limited number of working hours actually improves the efficiency of the work force, also limited targets are to be set and fair treatment needs to be ensured.
- ^, Self management is an important aspect in building up the self esteem of employees, they can handle tasks much moiré competently with built up self esteem.

**V. Conclusion**

Thus it can be concluded that the study of work life balance issues haunting women employees in banking sector is a topic that is worthy of getting more attention. The subject at hand can be read at better length and across a broader cross section of the society.

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