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Work Life Balance –Major Challenges and Possible Resolutions

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Abstract - Corporate are now putting their concern for their workers well-being. Simple reason behind this is employees and their skills cannot be replaced like other physical resources. It's basically the creative ideas, their correct implementations and very focused and strong leadership behind every successful company. This all is possible because of right set of work force and conducive work environment given to them. Whatever performance an employee gives to his organisation depends on his mental well-being. Work life balance is a very important aspect of employees 'mental health. Work life balance represents balance between personal as well as professional responsibilities. If employee neglects any of these two, eventually this negligence lead to stress in employees' life. Long working hours to complete assignments, focusing more on job than family to grab promotions, conflicts with co-workers, imbalanced management of time are few of the main causes of poor work life balance. For female employee, responsibility at home increases much in comparison with male worker. This deepens the issue of work life imbalance for female employee. It is tremendously important for employees to understand how to create equilibrium between family and work. But along with that, organisations should also take care not to intrude in employees' personal life, rather such policies should be made which may help employees to get better balance between personal and professional life. This balance in employees life will not only help to increase their work efficiency but also upsurge their engagement and loyalty with organisation. In this paper, major hurdles of work life balance have been discussed aong with possible solutions to them which employees and their organisation may adapt.

Key Words – Work Life Balance, Burnout, Flexible Timings, Time Management

Introduction –

Concept of Work life balance –

Earlier, Employees in US used to work 100 hours in a week. This long hour working was leading to physical and mental fatigue for them. Many workers came together to lead movements against this over burden. Robert Owen A Welsh manufacturer and labour activist, was the first person to use the phrase "8 hours labour, 8 hours recreation, 8 hours rest" in 1817. Owen was the one to propose the idea of segregating 24 hours of a day into three equivalent parts. In 1920s, Henry Ford made the "9 to 5" workday was adopted first by Henry Ford. Eventually on 24th October 1940, 40hours working in a week was accepted by government of United states. These revolutionary changes were steps to reduce employees stress related to their work and ensuring their health and general wellbeing. Many companies in 1980, started to offer child care facilities which resulted extremely helpful especially for female workers.

Importance of Human resources and their Work Life Balance –

Competent employees are backbone of organisation. It is the people who run business not the Planning and policies. The more skilful and willing an employee will be to work for organisation, the more organisations will succeed. Former CEO of General Electric Jack Welch, once stated in one of his articles that "Any company trying to compete with competitors should figure out a way to engage the mind of every employee".

Employee should not be treated as machinery part which can be used anywhere anytime according to the requirement. Employees should be nurtured. They should be given the correct environment to come out with their capabilities. Having right and stress-free mind set is very essential for good performance of employee. Though employee is responsible and answerable for his task completion but at the same time management should also contribute in creating stress free work environment.

Today, human resource management is acknowledging the fact that employee is human being with full of emotions. Employee of a company has many roles in his personal life as well. Along with carrying responsibilities on a certain designation in an organisation, an employee carries responsibilities on his personal front as well.

Work–life balance, can be understood as individual's control and autonomy over where, when and how he works to fulfil his personal and professional duties. The time an employee spends outside his work place has significant impact on his job performance and overall life. If employee spends the time well on his hobbies as cooking, sports, music etc. or with family and friends, it helps him to come out of mental stress. But, opposite to that, if employee does not get sufficient time to spend with his close ones or for the things he likes to do, it

gradually decreases his productivity. Similarly, difficulties in family life which ask for time from working period puts another major challenge In front of employee. Generally whenever employee gets engaged with his organisation and gets ambitious for his career growth, gives less time to himself and family. One who cannot resolve problems in relationship or need to give priority to family responsibility face set back in career. Both these situations get challenging over the time

So, it is obvious that maintaining a balance between these two sets of responsibilities is extremely essential. Company cannot make his employee work efficiently if his personal life is not sorted. Hence, it becomes management's responsibility to make sure that professional life of employee is not hampering personal life or vice versa.

It may sound impractical for an organisation to invest in employees' personal well-being. But at the same time, it should be understood that if company takes care of their work force, behave empathetic and play their part in securing their work life balance, employees get emotionally involved with company. It increases employees' engagement not only with the work place but also with team members and his assigned task. Researches on organisations policies and work life balance of employees have revealed that leaves policies, work schedule, workload, workplace environment and incentive structure are the major factors which play crucial role in maintaining equilibrium between job and family.

Review of literature –

Pahuja S., 2016, Research highlighted that globalisation and information technology has intensified competition among organisations. This increased competition has upsurge work responsibilities of employees and heightened their performance targets. This situation is leading to requirement of long working hour. In case of banking industry of India, this is leading to more work stress on bankers. Most of the employees find it challenging to maintain work life balance while doing banking job and accepted that there is no separate policy in Indian banks to support employees on personal front. Regular need of overtime, inflexible working hours has worsened the situation. Employees acknowledged that they get extremely exhausted that they cannot handle responsibility towards their family. **Deshmukh K.K., 2018**Today females have higher opportunities for study and work in comparison with the past. Most of the families have dual income system where husband and wife both are working. But the fact should be acknowledged that family responsibilities are not equally divided among male and female members of family. Even in today's modern era, female is supposed to be more responsible towards the wellbeing of family even if she is working. Hence, most of the working women in India find it difficult to maintain balance between personal and professional life. It causes mental stress. There is a serious requirement for health and wellness programs for female employees where they should be taught to manage their time and take care of their health. Awareness about equal responsibility towards family should be increased among male family members. **Mohanty A & Jena L.K., 2016**work-life conflict occurs when the time and energy demands imposed by the many roles a person plays, become incompatible with one another. More responsibilities to be taken care in insufficient time (role Overload) and incompatible demands from a person which do not match with his capabilities (Role interference) are two major causes of imbalance between personal and professional life. Urbanites in contemporary India are experiencing weakening in quality of personal and community life due to over demanding jobs and high career expectations of youth from themselves. Although some organisations are offering recreation centres, gymnasiums, child care, cafes at their work place to put an ease up to some extent in employees life but there is requirement of concrete policies and technologies to offer better leave systems, flexible working hours, work from home facilities and other such facilities which can contribute for better work life balance. **Parida S.S., 2016** India has two categories of WLB practices namely statutory and non-statutory. Statutory practices are the minimum benefit an employee receives under labour law. Factory act, 1948, Maternity benefit Act 1961 and Indian Penal Code 1869 are the norms which ensure statutory practices in organisations. On the other hand, non-statutory benefits are not compulsory but optional. Flexible working hours, paid maternity leave, flexible leaves, part time employment, compressed workweeks are some of non statutory WLB practices private organisations such as IBM opt. **N & Rimo S.,2020** during COVID 19 pandemic, WLB of employees got weaken due to faded working hours. During covid, house helps were unavailable so responsibilities towards house also increased. Late hour meetings, management's expectations for all time availability of employees, invaded in personal timings of employees. **Magotra C. 2019,** studied on work life balance of employees working in private and public sector banks. Research aided to understand that government policies such as mandatory to open bank account for everyone, demonetisation, GST etc have overloaded bank employees. Because of high workload at bank, it is getting difficult for bank employees to fundamentally achieve harmony amongst work and family life. This imbalance is resulting as lower efficiency, weakness, medical issues and awkwardness in work-life arena. **Murthy T.P.R, 2016,** In managing Human resources, Work life balance plays important role. It affects performance and growth of employees. Overtime, travelling for job related task, meeting and training after working hour's cause's disturbance in personal life of employees. Workers at Bosch accepted that they get their seniors support in managing their personal and professional responsibilities. Apart from that organisation arranges family days to let the family members enjoy get together. It also helps employees to maintain good relations with their

colleagues and family members. It has been come up that while policies drafting, input of employees is essential to make it more acceptable among workers.

Objective of Study – Main objective of the study is

- To understand the concept of work life balance and main participants who can contribute to maintain it.
- To identify major reasons which may disturb this equilibrium and the possible ways to keep the balance between professional and personal life intact
- To Compare WLB between male and female employees in Private Banks in Jaipur

On the basis of objectives mentioned above, the following hypothesis has been drafted –

H_0 – There is no significant difference in Work life balance of Male and female employees working in private sector banks in Jaipur.

H_A- There is significant difference in Work life balance of Male and female employees working in private sector banks in Jaipur.

Data And Methodology–Present study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Study is based on primary as well as secondary data. Primary Data has been collected through a structured questionnaire. **Sample size of 200** Employees (Males and Females) working in private banks (Axis, ICICI and HDFC) **Sample Frame** – Jaipur, have been selected through **Stratified random sampling.** Respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire. Out of total respondents 120 were female and 80 were male. Secondary data has been collected through various research articles and content related to work life balance in newspaper, magazines, journals etc. research work present on internet sources as Shodhganga has also been studies to get better insight about the subject.

Method – Cronbach's Alpha has been applied for reliability check of data and hypothesis has been tested using Independent t test which allow comparison of means of two independent groups (Males and Females)

Assessing Work Life Balance -

To assess work life balance of employees working in private banks, 15 measures have been taken into consideration. These factors have been identified by developed by Fisher (2001) and adapted by Jeremy Hayman (2005). These 15 factors of Work life balance can be broadly classified in 3 categories

(a) Work interference with personal life – 7 item measures is included in this category. These are –

1. My personal life suffers due to office work
2. My job makes personal life tough
3. I neglect personal needs due to work
4. I keep personal life on hold for work
5. I miss personal activities due to work
6. I try hard to juggle work and non-work
7. I am not happy with the time I get for non-work activities.

All these 7 statements show extend of work interference on employee's personal life

(b) Personal life interference with work –4 measures are included in this category to illustrate the extent to which one'spersonal life interferes with his professional work. These are –

1. My personal life drains me of energy for work
2. I am very exhaust tired to be effective at work
3. My work suffers due to my personal life
4. It is difficult to work due to personal matters.

(c) Personal Life/ Work Enhancement- this category involves 4 item measures which highlight positive impact of one's personal life on office work or impact of work on personal life. These are

1. I get energy for my job from my personal life.
2. I get energy for my personal activities from my job
3. I have a better mood at work due to personal life
4. I have a better mood due to my job.

Respondents were asked to mark their response on all these 15 measures on Likert 5 point scale where on 1 to 5 score, 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree.

Statistical Analysis -

To check Reliability data, Chronbacks' Alpha method has been applied with sample size 35.Comparison of the calculated alpha value with the set rangeshows satisfactory reliability with all three categories of Work life balance namely Work interference with personal life, Personal life interference with work and Personal life/Work enhancement.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Dimensions	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**No. of Measures**
Work interference with personal life	.859	7
Personal life interference with work	.841	4

Personal life/Work enhancement	.796	4

Source: Processing of Primary Data in SPSS

Table 2: Independent t test for comparing Level of Work interference with personal life between Male and Female Employees

Group Statistics					Independent Sample t Test						
					Levene's Test for Equality of variances		T – Test for Equality of Means				
Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Male	**80**	**3.7517**	**1.14373**	**.05848**	**4.310**	**.041**	**1.314**	**194.634**	**.002**	**-0.9822**	**.08232**
Female	**120**	**4.7339**	**1.15801**	**.06427**							

Result of independent t test shows p value of test is 0.002 which is less than priori alpha level ($\propto = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$)It indicates that there is There is significant difference in level of work interference with personal life between male and female bank employees. Hence, we retain the alternate hypothesis against rejection of null hypothesis.

Table 3: Independent t test for comparing Level of Personal life interference with work between Male and Female Employees

Group Statistics					Independent Sample t Test						
					Levene's Test for Equality of variances		T – Test for Equality of Means				
State	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Male	**80**	**3.5668**	**.82153**	**.04198**	**12.698**	**.382**	**.705**	**196.334**	**.042**	**0.0441**	**.08281**
Female	**120**	**3.5227**	**.91876**	**.04694**							

Result of independent t test shows p value of test is 0.042 which is more than priori alpha level ($\propto = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$). It indicates that there is no significant difference in level of personal life interference with work between male and female bank employees; hence we retain the null hypothesis against rejection of Alternate hypothesis.

Table 4: Independent t test for comparing Level of Personal Life/ Work enhancement between Male and Female Employees

Group Statistics					Independent Sample t Test						
					Levene's Test for Equality of variances		T – Test for Equality of Means				
State	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Male	**80**	**2.1951**	**1.0071**	**.05814**	**4.520**	**.000**	**.424**	**196.783**	**.036**	**0.0768**	**.07833**
Female	**120**	**2.1183**	**1.4897**	**.06824**							

Result of independent t test shows p value of test is 0.036 which is more than priori alpha level ($\propto = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$)It indicates that there is There is no significant difference of personal life/Work enhancement between male and female bank employees. Hence, we retain the null hypothesis against rejection of Alternate hypothesis.

Table 5: Independent t test for comparing Level of Work Life Balance between Male and Female Employees

Group Statistics					Independent Sample t Test						
					Levene's Test for Equality of variances		T – Test for Equality of Means				
State	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	F	Sig	t	df	Sig (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Male	80	3.2712	1.14073	.05338	6.320	.018	.773	192.634	.004	-0.1866	.05872
Female	120	3.4583	1.18112	.06408							

Result of independent t test shows p value of test is 0.004 which is less than priori alpha level ($\propto = 0.05$, $p < 0.05$)It indicates that there is There is significant difference in level of work life balance between male and female bank employees. Hence, we retain the alternate hypothesis against rejection of null hypothesis.

Work life Balance Models-

1. Working Hours Models –Alem, et al. (2009) proposed working hours model which says that if working hours increases, personal life of employees gets negatively affected. Long hours of working causes conflict in family. this model also proposed that five to seven hours working finds to be most suitable for female employees which allow them to fulfil their responsibilities towards family members.
2. Career Progression Model –Asiedu- Appian, et al. proposed this model in 2014 mentioning that inclination of female lecturers towards their family life hampers their career progression. If organisation may support females in child bearing and child care activities, better work life balance may be achieved. Better WLB may reduce attrition rate and increase loyalty of employees towards organisation.
3. Emotional Exhaustion Model –Yuvas, et al developed this model in 2008. This model reveals that dual responsibility of employee towards his work place and family causes emotional exhaustion. This exhaustion leads to declining performance and increased leaves. The organizations can reduce the emotional exhaustion of employees by developing and implementing gender specific mechanisms.
4. Work Commitment Model – Azeem and Akhtar proposed this model in 2014. Their model suggests that WLB is essential for job satisfaction. It increases employees' commitment towards their organisation. Job of health care workers is very hectic and demanding. Management is required to take care of employees WLB.

Major Factors behind Poor Work Life balance –

1. Work Overload -overload of work or unreasonable demand pressure on person either from workplace or from family causes mental stress. Weekend trainings, post office hours meetings, squeezed deadlines for completion of project may end up giving tension and burden to employee. On the other side, family functions on working days, many dependents to take care, guests at home for long duration may hamper professional life of person.
2. Inflexible working hours – rigid working hours do not leave cushion for employee to meet the contingencies or emergencies in life. It leaves no space for adjustment of timings. Employee gets bound to choose one task at cost of other which causes guilt and stress.
3. Poor management of time – if employee do not manage his time properly, it leads to failure of task completions. Usually new employees are found wasting their precious time wasting unnecessarily on social media or having parties late night. This kind of undisciplined schedule leads to many challenges in both personal and professional life.
4. Health issues – Employee suffering with poor health performs less at his workplace than physically fit person. Poor health does not allow the person to fulfil responsibilities of family either. Some times, due to work pressure, people ignore symptoms of health issues and try to keep on working which leads to even worse health situation. In such case instead of pushing oneself more, break should be taken for taking proper care of health.

5. Family Hindrance – sometimes situation occurs where employee has to devote his time and focus towards his profession. But if person do not get support from his family in such duration, he tends to get unnecessary mental stress which eventually weaken his performance.
6. Rigid HR policies – life is unpredictable. Emergency may come to anyone anytime. Employee may require days off for some urgent work in family. some unavoidable incidence may occure which may require employees time and focus towards his family. in such situation, if HR policies do not support employee, major imbalance takes place between his work and personal life. Policies related to working hours, leaves, half day etc. play significant role in maintaining equilibrium between work and family.

Possible Solutions-

1. Transparent Communication – it is very essential that person keeps transparency with management and family. one should clearly discuss his capabilities and limitations to both ends so that no one remains under any false impression. Exaggeration about working skills may result in over burden of task. So one should always be honest at his work place and personal life to avoid any miscommunication generated stress.
2. Prioritise task– it is nearly impossible for person to complete all task simultaneously. So to avoid any stress of incompletion of work, one should always prioritise and schedule the task accordingly.proper scheduling may help to complete all task without any hustle bustle. This will surely help to maintain equilibrium between professional and personal life.
3. Mental health resources - Organisations may put relaxation sessions, meditation hours, chair massage, counselling, mentoring to employees which may help him to come out of any kind of stress. This will help employee to increase their productivity as well.
4. Support employees with making social connections - Organisations should encourage social connect among all workers. Such connect or get together will not only help employees to release their stress but also result in better team bonding. Get together with family members may strengthen the bonds between employees even more and can help them to maintain better work life balance.
5. Create boundaries – One should know where to put limitation on responsibilities. Employees should take care to keep family and profession separate since the beginning of their career. Although responsibilities towards both ends of job and family are unended but their timings should decide and strictly followed. Such separation of time will always help employee to avoid any kind of stress.
6. Selecting Job of Interest – the most effective way of avoiding job related stress and maintaining WLB is that one should always select the field as profession in which he or she is interested. If person finds his job interesting, he will not feel tired of doing it. Such job will encourage employee to be more creative and will make him feel content. Job matching with interest leads to job satisfaction and satisfied employee will be able to maintain better Work life balance.

Conclusion – Comparison of Work life balance between male and female bank employees clarify that female employees have less WLB in comparison with their male colleagues. It can be understood from statistical analysis that high level of work interference can be seen in personal lives of employees but its comparatively higher for females. Both male and female respondents had almost similar opinion for interference of personal life with work and personal life/ Work enhancement. But the overall WLB showed significant difference between these two groups. Stress at many points of life in unavoidable. New assignments, conflict of opinion with team members at office or with family members at home, health problem of employee or may be some other reason may disturb employee's work life balance. Such problems cannot be removed but can be managed. To maintain proper work Balance, employee has to manage his time very efficiently. But along with that, support of management and family is also required to employee. Flexible working hours, flexible leaves policies, child care facilities, mental health resources are few steps which an organisation can take to contribute its parts towards employees' WLB. On the other hand, understanding and supporting career goals, scheduling activities majorly on weekends or according to official leaves can be done at family's end to support WLB. Such support at both ends may help employee to feel confident and stress free. It will upsurge his willingness to fulfil his responsibilities more efficiently.

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