



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2015; 1(7): 625-627
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 12-04-2015
Accepted: 15-05-2015

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Women and work life balance- rationale behind imbalance- an Empirical study

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Abstract

Women play a vital role in the lives of people around them. The time and efforts they spend for their family and their work place exploit their physical, psychological, emotional and social components. So it is essential for women to balance their between their family and work. This paper aims at analyzing the difference between level of Work Life Balance among male and female middle level employees and the main reason behind the difference.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, women, Family type, Difference.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Performance of multiple roles is part and parcel of an individual's professional life. As employees perform multiple roles, they have to face multiple demands put on them by others –both within and outside the organization (ShailajaKarve and Kumar Nair, 2011) [3]. The pressures of work, for those in work, have been intensifying in recent decades. Factors such as the advances in information technology and information load, the need for speed of response, the importance attached to quality of customer service and its implications for constant availability and the pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustments all demand our time and can be sources of pressure (Aravind Kumar & Paramashiviah 2011) [4]. A variety of antecedents including role ambiguity, role conflict, time demands and involvement in both the work and family domains are directly and indirectly and positively related to their work and family conflict. The most common problem that working women suffered with was intense psychological stress (Daultzen Bert *et al.* 1998) [2]. In cities the long distance from home to work place, late working hours *etc* pose a great problem in balancing between work and life. As a social worker the researcher has lots of questions regarding the growing number of old age homes, increase in juvenile delinquents, junk food culture followed by various health problems. When the employees are deficient in spending quality time with their families, the above said problems crop up. Today, professionals working in corporate sectors have long working hours. Overtime the process of working long hours disturbs the balance between work and non work life. Low level of work life balance not only affects the individual but also his organization.

Work-life balance definition helps employees to split their time and energy wisely between work and other aspects of their lives. This concept has to be assisted by employers. Their policies, procedures, expectations and actions should enable employees to achieve the necessary balance. A proper work-life balance helps reduce stress in most employees, since stress and unhappiness occur when they spend a major portion of their time on work-related activities and neglect other meaningful components of their lives like family, friends, personal growth, spirituality, self-care, community participation, and other personal activities. Work-life balance enables workers to feel that they pay proper attention to all the different important aspects of their lives.

2. Objectives

- To study the level of WLB among the women middle level employees of BHEL, Ranipet
- To study the level of WLB among the employees from Nuclear and joint family
- To analyze the difference between the level of WLB among male and female employees.

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3. Tools for Data Collection

3.1 Work Life Balance was measured by the scale invented by UdaiPareek (2010). Work-Life Balance Scale is meant to diagnose the level and areas of W-L balance in an organization, as perceived by its employees. It has 36 items-18 positive statements and 18 negative statements and they were responded by the employees who were selected as samples for the study. The instrument was used to diagnose and develop interventions for improving W-L Balance. Based on the cumulative responses of employees in the department, weak aspects, as indicated by low scores, were identified. The dimensions of the instrument are;

1. Social Needs
2. Personal Needs
3. Time Management
4. Team Work
5. Compensation Benefits
6. Work.

4. Scoring

1. The ratings (responses) must be transferred from the instrument to the scoring sheet. The original responses of the starred (*) items will be reversed (0 becomes 4, 4 becomes 0, 1 becomes 3 and 2 remains 2).
2. Each row should be added. 39
3. Each total should be multiplied by 4.17. It will range from 0 to 100. This is work life balance Index.
4. Total of all the row totals makes the overall Work life Balance Index.

The researcher conducted the study in BHEL, Ranipet and the respondents were from tools, commercial, safety engineering and operations departments. The researcher used stratified proportionate random sampling in order to select the samples from different technical departments of the universe.

5. Need for the Study

In order to maintain an effective, productive and mentally healthy labour force, management should create an atmosphere that will enable people to actualize their full potential. The organizations need to consider the employees as human beings who have the other side of lives apart from employment. When their personal and social lives are taken care of the employees will contribute their full potential to the organization. This contribution will benefit both the employee as well as the employer. This study intends to analyze the association between family type and the number of promotions of an employee and his/her level of work life balance. Hence the researcher intends to portray the level of work life balance among the middle level employees of BHEL, Ranipet, the difference between the level of WLB between male and female employee and analyze the factors responsible for the difference and come out with possible solutions.

Table 1: Difference between Family Type and Work Life Balance

S.no	Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	't' value	Significant
1	Nuclear family	85	367.69	108.91	.691	P > 0.05 Not Significant
2	Joint family	24	350.25	110.07		

The level of work life balance for those who are in nuclear family (85) and those who are in joint family (24) have been analyzed it has been observed that for those who are in nuclear family have higher work life balance score 367.69 when compare to those who are joint family (350.25).this observed difference is statistically not significant. Since the 't' value is not significant, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in family type and work life balance. However there are literatures like that of "work Life Balance of Shift Workers (Cara Williams, 2014) which states that "For women, family type was a significant factor in both satisfaction with work-life balance and avoidance of role overload. Conversely for men, industry was a factor, but family type had little bearing. However, certain factors were significant for both men and women."

Table 2: Correlations between of Promotions and Work Life Balance

S.NO	VARIABLES	PROMOTION		r result
		N	r value	
1.	Work Life Balance	109	.046	P < 0.01 Significant

An attempt has been made to find the association two quantitative variables namely promotion and work life balance. It has been observed that Pearson's r value is positive ($r = .046 < 0.01$) which clearly indicates that when promotion increases the level of work life balance also increases. This statement is true at 0.01 level. Thus the formulated hypothesis namely higher the number of promotions higher will be the work life balance has been verified. It is obvious that as the number of promotion increases their income will also increase. As table 21 verifies, income is positively correlated with work life balance.

Table 3: Difference between Male and female Work Life Balance

S. No	Sex	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t Value	Significance
1	Male	96	377.50	100.07	3.769	p<0.05 Significant
2	Female	13	263.00	122.20		

The level of work life balance for those who are male (96) and those who are female (13) have been analyzed it has been observed that for those who are male have higher work life balance score 377.50 when compared to those who are female (263.00).this observed difference is statistically significant. Since the 't' value is significant at 0.05 level. It can be concluded that for those who are male have higher work life balance than who are female. Thus the formulated hypothesis has been verified. (DobleNihrika, Supriya M. V 2010) in their study found that 92% women and 76% men felt that child care facilities must be available as they believed that these will improve the work life balance. So there are differences in the work life balance perception across genders. Warren (2004) explained that women with domestic responsibilities have taken on part-time jobs as a beneficial way to maintain their labour market skills, as a secondary source of income and sustain interest outside of the home. However, there is also resulting conflict between their work and family commitments and responsibilities (Drew, 2005; Innstrand, Langballe, Falkum, 2010). The reason for this has been explained as women typically assume the majority of childbearing duties (Porter & Ayman, 2010). This responsibility can influence both role stress and

negative attitudes at work (e.g. role conflict, job burnout and dissatisfaction) and are positively associated with disruptions at home (Bacharach, Bamberger & Conley, 1991).

Table 1, on association between family type and Work life balance reveal that the level of WLB is not influenced by the family type. If it is a nuclear or joint family, women have the same type of household or domestic work which cannot be avoided. Leena and Sudhir (2012) ^[6] in their study revealed that, spending too much time on household chores disturb the thin line of balance between work and life, as females are generally more responsible for child care, elderly care and household responsibilities. The table no.2 reveal that number of promotions have positive correlation with work life balance, which means the hike in salary helps employees to afford for domestic helps. But the number of promotions is lesser among females due to breaks in their career. This has been proved by Elizabeth Krymis (2011) ^[9], in her study, stating that women also confessed that being a mother affects several aspects of work life. Hence it is apparent that domestic responsibilities affect women's career to a greater extent and the rate of progress in their career is slow when compared to male employees. It is clear that both family life whether nuclear or joint and career breaks affect the work life balance of women employees.

- Since female employees have low level of work life balance the different dimensions of Work life balance time management, team work at work place, sociability etc should be taken care of by the organization.
- Capability to Work under stress is an important component of Work life balance. In basket training and other such programmes will improve the level of role efficacy of the female employees. Hence less negative organizational stress improves the morale of the employees leading to increased productivity, accountability and commitment, which inturn will help women employees to get promotions
- Flexibility timing will be of help to women employees in balancing their work life.
- The organization can implement training based on 10 Life Skills of WHO (1997).
- Better Work Life Balance improves the Psychological and Physical wellbeing of employees and hence the important aspects of WLB including personal and social needs should be given due consideration.

6. Conclusion

Number of promotions and higher income are positively correlated with Work Life Balance. Here promotions are motivating factor that gives a sense of achievement and emotional satisfaction which in turn helps in the Work Life Balance of women employees. It is understood from the concept of Work Life Balance that fulfillment of social needs and personal needs are the important predictors of WLB. So if the organizations focus on Work Life Balance of women employees by enriching their role efficacy the productivity of the organization as well as the development of the employees will be ensured.

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