

## **Work Life Balance of Women Employees**

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### **Abstract**

*Work –life Balance of women employees has become an important subject since the time has changed from men earning the family living in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility of earning for the betterment of their family life. Hence, it is for the betterment of their family life. An increasing number of articles have promoted the importance of work–life balance. This highlights the current concern within society and organizations about the impact of multiple roles on the health and well-being of professional women and its implications regarding work and family performance, and women's role in society. Stress at work, the stress of raising children, the stresses that come with aging parents -- any of these situations could provide a moderately high amount of stress. When women are faced with multiple roles, all of which carry heavy demands, they face levels of stress that are high enough to contribute to health problems, missed work, and a diminished capacity to take on more. . Stressed workers have an elevated risk of mental health problems, ranging from anxiety and substance abuse, and perhaps, the most significant, depression. Stressed people exhibit "fight or flight" response. The stressed individual may display either aggressive behaviour or avoidance.*

**Key words:** *Stress, Work life Balance, Job Stress*

### **Introduction**

Work –life Balance of women employees has become an important subject since the time has changed from men earning the family living in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility of earning for the betterment of their family life. Hence, it is for the betterment of their family life. Hence, it is very necessary to know how the women balance very professional and domestic life. In the initial stages, women had to struggle a lot to establish their identity in this competitive world, both in the society as well as in the professional life. Today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments to home. The majority of women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% are struggling to achieve work/life balance. Women reported that their lives were a juggling act that included multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips, on top of managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. "Successfully achieving work/life balance will ultimately create a more satisfied workforce that contributes to productivity and success in the workplace." Employers can facilitate WLB with many schemes that can attract women employees and satisfy their needs.

Working Women of today fulfill family responsibilities and also try to remain fully involved in their careers coping up with the competing demands of their multiple roles. This lays a heavy stress on them when it is combined with their professional duties. The attempt of working women to integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles simultaneously puts them under tremendous pressure. As a result, the family becomes an organizational stakeholder and this led to the beginning of the work/life balance paradigm shift.

### **Work-Life Balance**

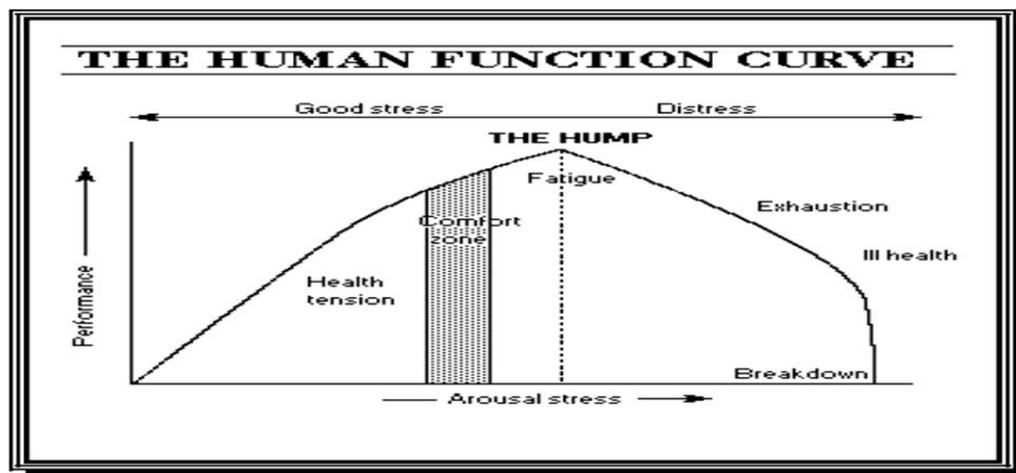
Work-life balance is considered to be the prime factor as nowadays people getting deviated from their goal is becoming a common criteris. External environment temptation is making them to lose their basic culture and common sense, which they are supposed to have as human beings. An increasing number of articles have promoted the importance of work–life balance. This highlights the current concern within society and organizations about the impact of multiple roles on the health and well-

being of professional women and its implications regarding work and family performance, and women's role in society. Role strain experienced because of multiple roles, i.e., role conflict and role overload.

### Classification of Stress

The two main classifications of stress are Eustress and Distress. This classification is shown clearly in fig 1, below. Eustress is a positive stress. It is caused by continuous success and when expectations become higher. This develops the sense of urgency and alertness needed for survival when confronting threatening situations. In addition, stresses to hold their position becomes more.

Distress is a negative stress. It is caused due to disappointments, failures, threats, embarrassment and other negative experiences. This can result is distrust, rejection, anger and depression which eventually may turn out to get headaches, stomach upsets, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressures, etc. In addition, this can have harmful effects over one's physical, mental and spiritual health.



### Women and Workplace Stress

Stress at work, the stress of raising children, the stresses that come with aging parents -- any of these situations could provide a moderately high amount of stress. When women are faced with multiple roles, all of which carry heavy demands, they face levels of stress that are high enough to contribute to health problems, missed work, and a diminished capacity to take on more. Research also shows that women in relationships do greater than 60% of household maintenance and childcare. Divorced and single women, living alone, more than likely have 80-100% of childcare responsibilities as well as the household chores. Consequently, women are likely to have obstacles finding time for their own stress reducing self-care. Women are more likely to arrive to work, stressed before their workplace demands begin. Perceived locus of control is one area proven to be a predictor of stress. Perceived locus of control is one area proven to be a predictor of stress. Therefore a woman working in an environment with little flexibility or choice would be a greater risk of distress than a climate of no-voice. Would it stand to reason that women therefore, with their own businesses would be less stressed than those working for someone else? Interestingly, women's stress issues do not vary significantly. Women are multi-taskers by nature and enfold tasks within tasks. Work, family and home are not separate and the issues around balance prevail regardless of working for yourself or someone else. Women who own their own business have the same childcare and home issues as their sisters who are working for someone else. However, women, working in their own business are likely to be pursuing a passion and adopt a mindset that allows a positive attitude.

### **Family Conflicts and Work Life**

Work–life balance is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work and family have increasingly become antagonist spheres, equally greedy of energy and time and responsible for work–family conflict (WFC). Family–work conflict (FWC) is also a type of inter-role conflict in which family and work responsibilities are not compatible. Previous research suggests that FWC is more likely to exert its negative influences in the home domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the family unit.

Workplace characteristics can also contribute to higher levels of WFC. Researchers have found that the number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of overtime required, an inflexible work schedule, unsupportive supervisor, and an inhospitable organizational culture increase the likelihood that women employees will experience conflict between their work and family role. It has been found that women who had multiple life roles (e.g., mother, wife, and employee) were less depressed and had higher self-esteem than women who were more satisfied in their marriages and jobs compared to women and men who were not married, unemployed, or childless. However, authors argued quality of role rather than the quantity of roles that matters. That is, there is a positive association between multiple roles and good mental health when a woman likes her job and likes her home life.

These conflicts are intensified by the “cultural contradictions of motherhood”, as women are increasingly encouraged to seek self-fulfillment in demanding careers, they also face intensified pressures to sacrifice themselves for their children by providing “intensive parenting”, highly involved childrearing and development. Additional problems faced by employed women are those associated with finding adequate, affordable access to child and elderly care.

Work life balance is a direct result of the amount of time and psychological resources an individual decides to commit to both domains. If the individual commits more time or psychological resources to work, then work-family conflict may increase. If an individual decides to commit more resources to family than work, but work requirements increase, then family-work conflict also increases. While the conflict between work and family may be inevitable, researchers such as Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) suggest alternative methods for reducing the stress. For example, more autonomy in the workplace and networking with peers can increase the quality of work life. Their studies show that individuals who work for organizations that allow individuals to spend more time at home, work in virtual employment, and make flexible time arrangements, tend to perform better as a parent than those who do not have these opportunities. Maintaining satisfaction on both fronts is important for reducing the feelings of conflict (Friedman and Greenhaus, 2000).

### **Work Pressure and its Effects**

Work stress is usually conceptualized as work-role conflict, work-role overload, and work-role ambiguity. Each has the potential to affect Work Family Conflict. With respect to work-role conflict, the more conflict among work roles, the greater the chances that stress will spill over and cause negative behaviors that interfere with fulfilling family roles. Role overload is the result of having too many things to do in a given time period.

### **Physical Effects**

Workers who report that they are stressed incur healthcare costs that are 46 percent higher than for non-stressed employees, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). In addition, 60 to 90 percent of doctor visits are attributed to stress-related illnesses and symptoms.

Left untreated, prolonged stress can raise the risk for developing chronic—and costly—diseases. Among them: heart disease, diabetes and even some cancers, which can collectively account for a vast amount of all healthcare costs. Diabetes alone cost business \$58 billion in 2007 in just indirect medical expenses such as 15 million work days lost to absenteeism and 120 million work days with reduced productivity.

Stress can also lower the immune system and play a role in a person's susceptibility to more colds, flu and other infectious diseases. Additionally, people who are stressed are more likely to experience pain-related conditions, and a host of other ailments, from teeth grinding and chest tightness to fatigue. In fact, an APA survey found that 53 percent of workers reported fatigue due to work stress.

### **Psychological Effects**

Hallmark signs that workers are experiencing mental duress include poor concentration, short temper, job dissatisfaction and low morale. Stressed workers have an elevated risk of mental health problems, ranging from anxiety and substance abuse, and perhaps, the most significant, depression. In fact, stress and clinical depression—the two often go hand-in-hand—trail family crisis as the second and third most significant problems in the workplace. The National Institutes of Mental Health estimates that depression has resulted in \$23 billion a year in lost workdays.

### **Behavioural Problems**

Behavioral problems linked with stress include under-eating or overeating, fatigue, increased smoking and drinking, and drug abuse (Luthans, 2002; Hogh, Borg, & Mikkelsen, 2003). It can also lead to accidents as his attention may be elsewhere due to high degree of stress and sometimes become violent Moorhead and Griffin (1989). People are also found taking high dose of Alcohol to deal with stress leading to absenteeism and job turnover (Luthans, 2002).

Stressed people exhibit “fight or flight” response. The stressed individual may display either aggressive behaviour or avoidance. The aggressive individual may tend to strike out, or at times be argumentative, stubborn, or confrontational. The avoidance behaviour is like becoming passive or may be avoiding stressful situations

### **Conclusion**

It becomes highly important to study what women undergo in their career path as they will be handling their family as well at the same time and the stress and work pressure is far more than others as a lot of time management, job management, kid management, house management everything is put under criteria. It is critical for work and family research to fully understand the conditions under which the married women employees experience conflict between their roles. There is a need to consider working environment, job satisfaction, family support and number of working hours in the future research. Future studies should also continue to refine the methodology used in the area of work-family research. In order to attain in-depth understanding of one's work and family life, researchers who study work-family roles should include multiple perspectives such as job stress, quality of life, mental health, and work demands. Frances and Patricia (200&) concluded that Family Policy, Welfare state provision and labour market structure behave jointly to determine distinct models of work family balance and the financial consequences associated with them.

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