

A Study Navigating Professional Obligations and Personal Well-Being among Working Women.

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines how work-life balance has changed throughout time and compares it to the more recent idea of work-life integration. It looks at how flexible and remote work schedules affect juggling work and personal obligations. Important topics like time management, boundary-setting, and self-care are covered, emphasising how they may lower stress, avoid burnout, and increase productivity. Particularly in India, the report notes issues including heavy workloads, long hours, workaholism, childcare problems, and traditional gender norms. It also examines Indian laws that promote work-life balance, such as those pertaining to safe working conditions and maternity leave. However, implementation gaps still exist, particularly for women juggling work and family obligations, even while business policies encourage flexibility. The challenges of work-life balance are exacerbated by lengthy commutes in places like Bengaluru and Mumbai. The report recommends stronger workplace regulations, inclusive cultures, and upgraded infrastructure to help workers—particularly women—effectively manage their home and professional lives.

KEY WORDS: *Burnout, flexible work schedules, work-life balance, Indian workplaces, commuting, and the difficulties faced by women*

I. INTRODUCTION:

This study examines how work-life balance (WLB) has changed in Indian workplaces, with a move towards work-life integration brought about by globalisation, industrialisation, and the IT boom. Particularly in Bengaluru and Mumbai, it draws attention to issues like gender roles, long hours, strict schedules, and the stress of commuting. Women also struggle to balance domestic responsibilities and professional advancement. Despite efforts to promote WLB, there are still implementation gaps in Indian labour legislation (such as the Factories Act and the Maternity Benefit Act). HR is essential in advancing inclusive policies, flexible work arrangements, and mental health assistance; yet, there are still structural and cultural obstacles. Real WLB necessitates cultural shifts, improved infrastructure, and policy changes.

1.1 A History of Work-Life Balance

This section explores the evolution of work-life balance in India, starting from traditional agrarian societies where family and work were closely integrated. It discusses the impact of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization, which led to longer working hours and increased stress. The section also highlights the emergence of flexible work arrangements and legal frameworks, such as the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017, which improved work-life balance policies.

1.2 The Importance of Work-Life Balance

This part emphasizes why maintaining a balance between professional and personal life is crucial for working women. It discusses the negative effects of work-related stress, such as burnout, anxiety, and health issues, and how achieving a balanced life leads to better productivity and overall well-being. Strategies such as time management, flexible work arrangements, and setting boundaries are recommended to ensure a sustainable work-life balance.

1.3 Modern Work Culture and Work-Life Balance

This section highlights the changing expectations of the millennial workforce, who prioritize flexibility, mental well-being, and work-life integration. It explores corporate initiatives, such as employee support programs, paid leave, and remote work policies, aimed at improving work-life balance. However, it also points out challenges like long work hours, performance pressures, and the digital boundary between work and personal life, which continue to impact working women.

1.4 Current Trends and Challenges

This part discusses hybrid work models, increasing awareness of mental health, and societal shifts towards valuing personal time. It also examines how younger generations are demanding better work-life balance and how companies are responding by offering flexible schedules, wellness programs, and mental health resources. However, cultural norms, long work hours, and the competitive job market still pose significant challenges for women trying to balance their personal and professional lives.

II. OBJECTIVES:

- Explore the challenges faced by working women in balancing professional responsibilities and personal well-being.
- Identify the coping mechanisms employed by working women to manage stress and maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- Investigate the impact of organizational policies and workplace culture on the well-being of working women.
- Examine the role of social support networks in assisting working women to navigate their professional obligations while prioritizing personal wellness.
- Provide recommendations for employers and policymakers to create environments that support the holistic well-being of working women.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

- Chaudhuri, P. (2020) conducted a study titled "Work-Life Balance Among Working Women in India" to investigate the factors influencing the work-life balance of working women. The findings demonstrate that finding a balance between work and personal commitments requires flexible work schedules, supportive management, and availability to childcare facilities. Chaudhuri highlights the value of organisational support in creating a supportive workplace that enables women to successfully balance their roles in the home and at work. According to the report, businesses that offer childcare assistance and flexible work schedules show increases in working women's employee retention and happiness.

- Singh, S. (2019), The study, " The Impact of Workplace Policies on Women's Work-Life Balance evaluated the extent to which various workplace rules enhanced women's work-life balance. The study found that policies like maternity leave, flexible work hours, and telecommuting significantly improve women's ability to balance their home and professional lives. Singh argues that in addition to helping their female employees manage their dual duties, businesses that follow these rules see increased productivity and decreased turnover rates. The study highlights the need for comprehensive policy frameworks that consider the unique challenges encountered by women in the workforce.

- Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985) Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles" identified three primary causes of work-family conflict: issues based on behaviour, stress, and time. The study emphasises the need for organisational strategies that support work-life balance in order to reduce these conflicts. Greenhaus and Beutell's study highlight the need of understanding the different types of conflicts that might arise between work and family obligations and the need for targeted treatments to address these issues.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

- Research design: - The study employs a descriptive research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A structured, closed-ended questionnaire was used as the primary tool for systematically gathering numerical data on the challenges faced by working women in balancing their personal and professional responsibilities.

- Sampling design: - The research follows a simple random sampling method, ensuring an unbiased selection of participants.

- Source of data collection: - Primary Data collected through a structured questionnaire focusing on factors influencing work-life balance. Secondary Data derived from journals, books, case studies, websites, and reports on work-life balance, gender roles, and workplace policies.

- Sample size: - The study was conducted with a sample of 50 working women from Vadodara

- Tool of data collection: - A structured, non-disguised, closed-ended questionnaire was used to gather data. This questionnaire assessed various aspects such as stress levels, employer support, workplace policies, mental health concerns, and strategies for improving work-life balance.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The study analysed responses from 79 working women to understand their work-life balance challenges. The majority of respondents (80%) were aged 20-30, indicating that younger women face significant struggles in balancing professional and personal responsibilities. All respondents were female, reinforcing the study's focus on gender-specific issues. Regarding tenure, 46.8% had worked for 1-3 years, while 40.3% had been employed for less than a year, suggesting a relatively new workforce with potential concerns about long-term retention.

Stress management was a key concern, with 35.4% often feeling stressed and 44.3% sometimes experiencing stress when managing work and personal life. The most significant challenge for respondents was long working hours (40.5%), followed by high work pressure (19%) and lack of family support (13.9%). This highlights the difficulty in achieving work-life balance due to extended work commitments and insufficient personal support systems.

A significant portion (77.2%) reported that work-related stress affected their health, with 46.8% often experiencing health problems such as anxiety, fatigue, or burnout. Coping strategies varied, with 29.1% engaging in hobbies like reading or music, while 13.9% relied on exercise or physical activities. However, a lack of effective stress management was evident, suggesting the need for better organizational support.

Workplace policies also played a crucial role. 59% believed their workplace does not support work-life balance effectively, and 61% felt workplace culture does not support women's personal responsibilities. Additionally, family support was found to be crucial, with many respondents acknowledging its role in managing work and personal life. However, a considerable number lacked a strong social support system, further complicating their ability to balance responsibilities.

The study concludes that organizations must implement flexible work arrangements, mental health resources, and gender-sensitive workplace policies to improve work-life balance. Employers should focus on reducing long working hours, addressing work pressure, and fostering a supportive culture to enhance overall well-being and job satisfaction among working women.

VI. FINDINGS:

According to the study, working women have a difficult time juggling their personal and professional obligations, and the demands of the office frequently result in stress and health issues. Women find it challenging to maintain a healthy work-life balance due to a number of factors, including long work hours, high job pressure, and a lack of family support. Numerous respondents say they routinely deal with stress, and many of them say that stress at work has a detrimental impact on their wellbeing. According to the study, workplace policies and organisational culture have a significant impact on how women experience stress, even though some of them turn to hobbies, physical activity, or social support as coping mechanisms.

Many working women believe that current rules frequently fall short of meeting their demands and that their workplace does not offer enough assistance for work-life balance. In addition, women are still burdened by societal expectations and traditional gender roles, which makes juggling work and home obligations much more difficult.

In order to enhance work-life balance for women, the findings highlight the necessity for organisations to adopt supportive workplace policies, flexible work schedules, and mental health resources. Businesses may help improve working women's productivity, job happiness, and general well-being by tackling these issues.

VII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION:

Due to long hours, intense job pressure, and a lack of workplace assistance, working women continue to face significant obstacles in achieving work-life balance. Stress, burnout, and a decline in job satisfaction are frequently the results of trying to strike a balance between professional and personal obligations. These problems are made worse by the lack of formal workplace policies, so it is imperative that business take a more employee-centric stance.

Women can better balance their personal and professional obligations by implementing flexible work arrangements like paid leave, remote work, and family-friendly policies. This will lower stress levels and enhance their general well-being. In order to improve job satisfaction and productivity, organisations must also put employee well-being first by providing wellness programs, stress management courses, and mental health support.

Establishing an inclusive workplace is just as crucial. Promoting mentorship programs, teamwork, and open communication creates a positive atmosphere that improves employee engagement and retention. Furthermore, funding gender-sensitive projects, leadership training, and training programs helps women and advances equality in the workplace.

Policies promoting work-life balance should be vigorously implemented to guarantee that adaptability, compassion, and support are deeply embedded in business culture. Instead of forcing women to choose between their home and professional lives, organisations should implement rules that facilitate their harmonious coexistence. By emphasising adaptability, wellness, and inclusivity, companies may cultivate a more productive, equitable, and healthy workforce that benefits both workers and the success of the company.

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