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A Review on Work Family Conflict of Women Employees in IT Industries

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ABSTRACT: Married women employees experience lots of problems while attempting to balance their work and family lives. Women are required to perform an accumulation of disparate roles simultaneously, each one with its unique pressures. Multiple role-playing has been found to have both positive and negative effects on the mental health and well-being of professional women. Various challenges are faced by women to establish a balance between work and family life. It is necessary to explore multiple waves of data collection over a longer period of time to better understand the changing nature of work family roles over time. Many social researchers have investigated this work-family relationship and turned to various theories to explain the consequences that follow from work-family conflicts, and these can also be applied to the correlation between longer work hours and family life. This paper mainly focuses on making a literature review of the attributes that majorly affect women employees and the problems faced by them. Thus, organizations can formulate guidelines for the management of work family conflicts since they are related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

KEYWORDS: Work-family conflict, job-satisfaction, stress, psychology.

I. INTRODUCTION

Simultaneously performing the role of an employee, parent, and spouse have resulted in stress and conflict among women. Traditionally, women were looked upon as home keepers. Today's women have made their mark in every field. In almost all sectors, most of the key positions are taken by women. They are ready to take up challenges. Women as a multi role player has to face many challenges during their life. In fact, challenge to meet these demands makes work-family conflict almost unavoidable. Work-Family conflict occurs when work related demands interfere with family responsibilities. It includes both the impact of workplace on home responsibilities and vice versa. Many issues have arisen in addressing the balance between work and family responsibilities. Various factors such as time management, long working hours, lack of child care facilities, lack of support from dependants and many other factors have been identified by researchers through different types of study and surveys. In this fast growing and competitive world, as every possible opportunity for employment is increased, the organizations need to create a good working environment where employees can balance their professional and personal life. Only when an employer is happy, he can be productive and give the best to the organization. Hence industries are working out schemes which can attract as well as retain their employees. Being part of a supportive workplace that values and trusts staff, fulfills the needs of the employees. A balanced life is one where we spread our energy and effort like emotional, intellectual, imaginative, spiritual and physical – between key areas of importance [21]. If an organization integrates work-life balance, it will be a good tool to retain the employees and increase their quality of life. Improving relationship with family and friends and more leisure time to spend time with the family makes employees satisfied. A good balance in work and life can play a phenomenal role in the attainment of personal and professional goals. The objective is to understand the various issues that have come to the forefront due to the dynamicity of work. Work-life 'imbalance' has over a period of time attracted concern because of increasing problems related to employee health, monotony at workplace, declining levels of productivity and efficiency at the employee level.



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The main aim of this study is to identify the factors which primarily affect women employees and thereby bringing out the occupational health hazards, social as well as psychological problems of women working in various IT sectors such as software development, BPO's and other firms. Odd timing of work at night with dual burden of work and family has an adverse impact on women's mental and physical health. The responsibility of balancing work and family leads to high levels of stress. Though attractive in pay packages, most women employees suffer health hazards and psychological disorders. Thus, organizations can formulate guidelines for the management of work family conflicts since they are related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees.

II. RELATED WORK

Jost and Banaji's [17] explains the phenomenon of Work-Family Conflict with the System Justification Theory which suggests that women are the primary supporters of traditional gender roles to justify the prevailing inequalities in the social system, which they feel powerless to change. Women who internalize the traditional gender roles feel guilty for not fulfilling their wifely and motherly duties. Therefore, in cultures characterized by traditional gender role stereotypes, support from the male spouse or partner is not sought by men, women, and the society at large. Thus, support from the male spouse or partner to women is more likely in cultures high, compared to low, on gender egalitarianism. Support from the female spouse or partner to the men is more likely in cultures low, compared to high, on gender egalitarianism. Cardenas[19] after his study concluded that women employees consisting mainly of African, American and Caucasian women, reveals that their traditional gender role expectations are positively related to family distractions experienced at work. Aminah Ahmad [18] conducted a study among female nurses and their husbands and found that nurses experienced varying degrees of conflict in trying to meet the demands of work and family roles. About two-thirds of the nurses experienced moderate to high intensity of conflict. Husbands' gender role orientation ranged from traditional to egalitarian with slightly less than three-quarters of them holding traditional to moderately egalitarian orientation and slightly more than a quarter holding egalitarian orientation. Significant negative relationship was found between husbands' gender role orientation and wives' work-family conflict. This indicates that women whose husbands hold more egalitarian orientation tend to experience less work-family conflict. In addition to husbands' gender role orientation, women's own traditional orientation or expectation of gender roles has also been studied. Carnicer [20] studied the influence of job-related and non-job-related factors and concluded that there was a positive association with job category level and work family conflict. Related to the job category level, employee's education level was taken. Managers suffered more work family conflict when compared to other level of employees.

III. WORK FAMILY CONFLICT

A. Significance of the study of Work Family Conflict

Work-family conflict can have an overwhelming impact on the functioning and well-being of individuals, families, organizations, and societies. It may negatively impact the satisfaction, health, and behavior of an individual in both the work and family domains. The well-being of women may be affected to a greater extent than that of men, given that women experience significantly greater levels of work-family conflict than their male counterparts. Female employees are more likely to experience strain associated with conflicting roles than men. Moreover, marital status seems to have an effect on the experience of work-family conflict, with married women facing higher work-family conflict than their unmarried counterparts. Mothers are also more likely to experience work-family conflict as they progress up the corporate ladder, which suggests that assuming a managerial position may further increase work-family conflict. The main aim of this study is to identify the factors which primarily affect women employees and to bring out the occupational health hazards, social as well as psychological problems of women working in various IT sectors such as software development, BPO's and other firms. Odd timing of work at night with dual burden of work and family has an adverse impact on women's mental and physical health. The responsibility of balancing work and family leads to high levels of stress. Though attractive in pay packages, most women employees suffer health hazards and psychological disorders.

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B. Scope of Work Family Conflict

Work-life balance policies and practices can assist all people, not just women or those with young children. It can assist people who are responsible to care elderly parents, people who have study commitments, those older employees who simply want to ease themselves into retirement or people with other personal and lifestyle commitments.

IV. FACTOR ANALYSIS: LITERATURE REVIEW

The various attributes which contribute to work family conflict could be **job-related** (job type, work time commitment, job involvement, role overload, job flexibility) and **family-related** (number of children, life-cycle stage, family involvement, child care arrangements).

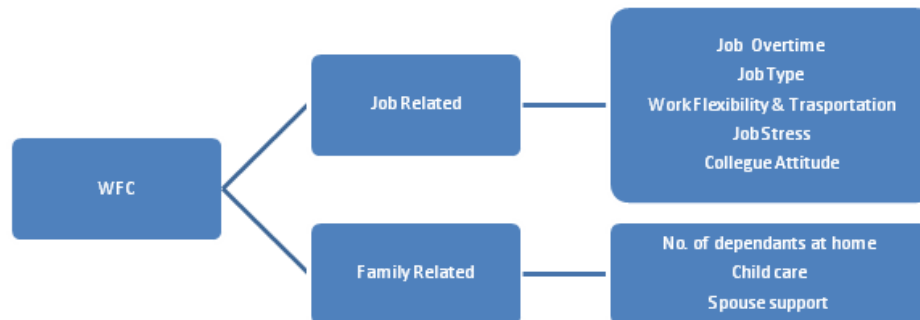


Fig. A conceptual diagram of work-family conflict

V. JOB RELATED ATTRIBUTES

A. Job Overtime

In [1] it is clear that it is the volume and length of working hours which distort the work life balance. In this paper, Chi-square test yielded a result confirming that overtime work is a factor for work life balance among married women. Additional working hours at the organizational level deny them the time required to attend their children and the other dependents. In [2] authors have proved that married working female employees are affected by the workload at workplace and it results in fatigue in the family responsibilities. In [5] Dr. B. Aiswarya and G. Ramasundaram studied on Working Hours as an Influencing Factor towards Work Family Conflict of women employees in IT Sector in Chennai City and pointed out that there is a direct proportional relationship between the working hours and the Work Life Balance. Out of the sample size of 598 respondents, majority of the high conflict segment comprised of respondents who work ten hours per day while very few respondents who work eight hours per day were found to have high conflict. The study was conducted on women employees in IT sector and it shows a wide gap between Work Life Conflict levels of females who work for 8 hours and those who work for 10 hours. In [15] Lingard and Francis observed that the construction industry not only has a culture of working long hours, but also weekend working. The situation is similar in many industries, which include IT, travel and hospitality. It is quite obvious that people who work in those industries may experience work-life imbalance as spending time on one domain reduces available time for the other, namely, personal life. In [7] P. Kavitha, Dr. V. Kavitha and P. Arulmurugan in their study on Role Of



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Stress Among Women Employees Forming Majority Workforce At IT Sector in Chennai and Coimbatore, Tier I and Tier II centers. Married females also reported higher stress due to Role Overload i.e. too much is expected from the role than they can cope with.

B. Job Type

In [7] P. Kavitha, Dr. V. Kavitha and P. Arulmurugan in their study on Role Of Stress Among Women Employees Forming Majority Workforce At IT Sector in Chennai and Coimbatore, Tier I and Tier II centres concluded that women professionals in IT Sector are experiencing high Organizational Role Stress. Significant difference was observed between married (mean score of 9.14) and unmarried females (mean score of 6.59) on Inter Role Distance i.e. conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles, especially relevant for dual career couples. In [8] designation wise differences was studied in the various parameters of work family conflict and it was concluded that higher designation respondents had much more need to extend duty hours. Lower designation employees spent maximum time in their work (45% of respondents agree to this) while higher designation members spent maximum time in their work (50% respondents agree to this). In [18] Carnicer, proved that there was a positive association with job category level and work family conflict. Related to the job category level, employee's education level was taken. Managers suffered more work family conflict when compared to other level of employees. Among Spanish employees, it was found that there was a positive association between job category level and work- family conflict whereby managers experienced greater work-to-family conflict than lower category employees. In [18], a study on the employees education level was done and it was concluded that employees with a master's or doctoral degree experienced greater work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict than employees with high school education. A study of female Malaysian operators, clerks, secretaries, nurses and physicians found that physicians experienced the greatest intensity of work-to-family conflict.

C. Work flexibility and Transportation

In[3], it was studied that in order to really manage and retain the women talent pool it is pertinent for organizations to address factors like work flexibility and transportation while designing their policies. The organizations must understand the needs of women employees and frame the policies incorporating the factors such as flexibility, transportation, career rooms, study leaves, paid maternity leaves etc. In [6] the authors collected opinion of working women in dual career families on work life balance variables and support required from employers. It concluded that working women perceive organizational policies that promote flexible work arrangements which have positive direct association with work life balance. Thus, time flexibility is the most important factor considered by women employees to balance their work and family life. Amita Singh (2010) in [10], based on their study on work-life balance in IT sector in India suggested that Flex time, home working, child care facilities, option to work part time are facilities that need to be introduced and recommended for building a supportive work environment in the organizations. In [16], flexible work schedules and work at home is more common among women. Therefore organisational policies should be focused to spread flexible work arrangements more towards those who value it and back it.

D. Job stress

In [8], author states that the stress from job spills over in the personal life of women employees and it is hard to take out time for self development and activities of self interest. Also, it has severe impact on their physical and mental health. In [9], a survey was undergone and it was concluded that, 71% agreed that stress arising out of multiple role demands affects their health and 80% agreed that such stress affected their family and personal life. On the contrary, only 38% agreed that it affected their work performance. The women confessed that it was a tough and challenging task to achieve a balance and some even admitted it being a weakness for them while others were striving to achieve it by new coping strategies.

E. Attitude of colleagues

In [3] , a study on the various factors which contribute to work life balance was done and it was concluded that apart from factors which came into highlight is Company Policy consisting of five components namely Telecommuting, Holidays, Cultural leaves, Pooling of leaves, and Paid Maternity. Another important factor which was deduced from the



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study was Attitude of people (at office) and includes Superior's attitude and Colleagues attitude without which it is difficult for a women to continue their work.

VI. FAMILY RELATED ATTRIBUTES

A. Number of Dependants at home

In [1] work life balance of married women gets affected with the number of dependents at home. This is worsened by the number of small children who need to be cared for and tended. If the dependents at home are able-bodied people but unemployed, at least by extending support in child care, the work life balance of the married women could remain tolerable. In [2], through ANOVA test it was concluded that there is a significant difference in the perception of working female employees on the basis of marital status (unmarried, married and divorced/separated) to the dimensions of work-life balance and they were not able to spend much time with family due to work problems. In [3], it was found that Work-life balance among working women varies with Age. In [12] the study concluded that women with dependent children are finding it more difficult to balance their life than those who do not have dependent children. Women who have dependent children would like to spend most of the time with them and their education. In [13] women are prone to be super mother or super manager in an effort to balance with both career and children and these demands diminish markedly when children reach school age. In [14], the study concluded that being married and having children have an

B. Child Care

In [4] G.Shiva explained the working women having small children are forced to leave their child in day care or in hands of maid. This creates more tension for them and less concentrate on their work and also not able to give proper care for them at times. He also stated in his study that the policies centred on extending parental leave and child care provision promotes a greater flexibility in employment.

C. Spouse support

In [1] a survey in the UK reveals that the majority of the women has had successful WLB, because their husbands shared an equal partnership both in professional and personal life. With the advancement in technology, and education and revolution in the industrial sector, there has been a little change in Indian men too. Both the partners need to schedule their working hours and personal hours so that they lead a professionally and personally healthy life. The women should also educate her children to share responsibilities to make life better and fruitful. The supportive functional head can always help to minimize the work life balance related consequences. In [17] authors explain with System Justification Theory that women are the primary supporters of traditional gender roles to justify the prevailing inequalities in the social system, which they feel powerless to change. Women who internalize the traditional gender roles feel guilty for not fulfilling their wifely and motherly duties. Therefore, in cultures characterized by traditional gender role stereotypes, support from the male spouse or partner is not sought by men, women, and the society at large. Thus, support from the male spouse or partner to women is more likely in cultures high, compared to low, on gender egalitarianism. Support from the female spouse or partner to the men is more likely in cultures low, compared to high, on gender egalitarianism.

VII. CONCLUSION

Work-Family Conflict is an inevitable term in recent life. The present situation of a large number of well qualified women with high positions in their jobs are increasing tremendously. At the same time a number of women have left out their jobs due to various circumstances. The issues faced by them arise out of motherhood and family problems. Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organizations. Hence organizations must introduce work-life balance policies for the welfare of their employees.



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