

Balancing Work Life – Women Employees in Academics

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Abstract:

The quality of working life has focused on the balance between work, leisure and home life. A particular focus has been around the problems associated with achieving a balance between paid work and domestic responsibilities. Women make up an equal ratio in the workforce and are equally competing with the male employees in all the sectors. In the past, women will attend primarily to one major role in their life (either working in the company or housekeeping) Today women are multi – tasked in taking up the job and also family care taker. She is overburdened with more number of commitments. Women are always with the tight schedule and playing two different roles (Home maker & Career maker) simultaneously. This has rooted to an imbalance in the work life which will deteriorate the quality of life.

Key words: *Work life balance, flexible environment, quality life*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work Life Balance enables sufficient time to meet commitments at both home and work. The fast moving world is expecting the dynamic role participation from female gender. The attitudes of female employees need to be very favorable for an organization's development. A smart organization is one which supports the women employees so that they can give their maximum to the organization. The Midland Bank raised its retention rate for women on maternity leave from 30 to 80 per cent by allowing them to work flexibly on their return.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

WLB policies implicitly target women, who are in charge on both childcare and unpaid household work(1) Part time work, is often understood by employees and employers as an opportunity to get more time to fulfill family duties. Women are the main users of Part-Time work. In the EU, one third of employed women work part-time, five times more than men (Hardy & Adnett, 2002). Studies reviewed concur that Part Time work was actually keeping most women in low status jobs (Whittock *et al*, 2002; Wise & Bond, 2003; Dainty, Bagilhole & Neale, 2000; Nadeem & Hendry, 2003, Marks, Huston, Johnson & MacDermid, 2001; Powell, 1998; Kimmel, 1997)

Moreover in a work environment where long hours and commitment to the organization are seen to be linked, managers see part-time workers as less committed to the organization: part time workers are thus given fewer opportunities, particularly women who are given fewer opportunities than male part-timers (Whittock *et al*, 2002). The usages of WL or family-friendly policies maintain their users, which are mainly women, at a low position in the organization. Similarly, Careers breaks (mostly for childcare reasons) contribute to women's disadvantage in career progression. This appears to apply in all professions, both male and female dominated. (Whittock *et al*, 2002). Wise & Bond (2003) agree and states that using policies that take women away from the workplace damages their career prospect. In their study of part-time policies effects on women in the nursing environment Whittock *et al*, (2002).argue that : "For women with dependent children, reaching their first nurse officer post can take up to 22.7 years. Women without dependants will achieve the same position in 11.4 years, while men take only 6.9 years"

Strikingly similar results are found in the very male dominated industry of construction (Dainty, Bagilhole, Neale, 2000). Here women are found to progress roughly one hierarchical level behind male colleagues with similar qualifications. The reason for this seems to be that women are less likely to remain in one site positions that involved national travel and would transfer to office, regional or part-time jobs because of home commitments. Such work was not highly valued. Additionally networking outside of office hours was a key to progression, thus women with home obligations were unable to progress in the context of an industry where 59 % of men had non-working partner who "took care of children and other domestic duties".(Dainty *et al*, 2000, p246)

Mavin (2001) drawing a literature review on the topic of women's career also concluded that to succeed, women have to comply with a male model of success, with career as a central life interest. She argues that "Continuous full-time employment appears to be a prerequisite for career success". That leaves little room for part-time work or maternity leaves. Powell (1998) corroborates this conclusion, finding that part-time experience increased the chance of permanent part time work and reduced the occupational mobility.

Marks & Houston (2002), through a quantitative analysis of a questionnaire survey, focus on UK school girls expectations. Their paper tends to show that school girls already are resigned to conform to a traditional woman role, prioritizing family role. That paper also examines the impact of the young women's values and the way they resent social pressure on their future orientation. The authors argue that perceived social pressure to give up work to care for their child was also a significant predictor of their plans to gain further educational qualifications. The more they felt that other people thought they should become a full-time mother, the more likely they were to be uncertain about their plan to gain further educational qualifications. It shows with convincing arguments that women career path are influenced early in life by gendered values and societal influences and that therefore those broader issues should be integrated in the WLB debate.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data has been collected with the structured questionnaire and the sampling is convenient Sampling with 25 respondents. The study has been conducted with 25 women employees (faculty) from the Academic Institution.

The Percentage analysis supported the following results:

1. 73% of employees are in the age group 31 – 40.
 2. 53% of employees have 5-10 yrs of experience in the teaching field.
 3. 60% of the employees feel that teaching job is highly suitable profession for ladies
 4. 68% of employees favour the quality balance work life in teaching profession.
 5. 58% of employees respond that family is very supportive in their career
 6. 78% of employees feel that it is very difficult to balance the mother role (less than 1yr child) & career life
 7. 82% employees respond that they are tired at the end of the day
 8. 64% employees feel that in the working environment they are working more when compared to male employees
 9. 88% of employees are expecting flexi hrs in the work environment
 10. 92% of the employees are happy with the vacations in the academic field.
- * The analysis has proved that employees in the age of 40yrs were able to balance the work and career. But the employees in the age of 30yrs were greatly affected since the family commitments were on their head without any chance for compromises.
 - * The women reported intense pressure with regard to having children, raising them, and also caring for aging parents. Some employees frankly declared that they plan their family way suitably to the vacation cycle.
 - * Women with children report greater obstacles to career advancement and less institutional support. Such differences not observed between male and female faculty members without children.
 - * So many "hats" to wear results in stress, exhaustion and guilt

The researcher has conducted face to face interview to find out their attitude towards work & home life. Majority of the women employees expect the institutional support by starting the crèche facility inside the campus which will make them to work comfortably. They are expecting the Management to provide them with flexi hrs (for employees who have infants) so that they can balance the work life. Some responses has assured that their male counterpart are not responsible in sharing the responsibilities in the home environment.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

- * The women employees have to select the right person as their mentor. It shall be better for them to seek the necessary help and guidance in the working environment.
- * Simplification in daily life and routines may support the balance graph.
- Time management is the right strategy to cope up with work & home. Plan ahead for major stress periods at work (e.g. grant and other deadlines, presentations. This is difficult to do but critically important and set up a good work space at home.
- The female employees can limit the town travel. They shall reside closer to the work environment.

- Prioritizing the assignments will help them to balance properly.
- Develop a standard routine for creating and dealing with family, friends and colleagues
- It will be better to drop activities that swap the time & energy without productive work.
- The women need to be transparent in discussing the official matters to the family members. Such an attitude will make the family to understand the role of women and it will nurture the balanced life.

V. CONCLUSION

Today the women do not want to just stay at home and do house work, but want to have their careers. In fact, women may lose their self-esteem and identities when they stay at home. There is no doubt that home is not a heavenly place where men and women can rest and feel comfort as before, but it is also an additional place for executing much more responsible work. The organizations need to act and support their employees with a healthy work life balance.

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