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Work life Balance of women employees: an effective retention tool

*Dr. Ashwini A. Kotnis (Dr.Ashwini Nitesh Patel)

* Assistant Professor, Mahavir Mahavidyalaya, Kolhapur

Work-life-balance has evidently becomes the most complex issue going through women professionals in any sector. Maintaining optimal balance persuades most favourable working hours that eventually increases effectiveness. Conversely, imbalance in women's work-life might bring about absenteeism, turnover rate, and discontent with job, lack of work commitment and disorders like trauma, hypertension, and stroke in certain set of circumstances. Researches related to women's work-life balance in manufacturing sector are limited. The study throws new light on the perceptive of the previous circumstances of work–life balance and has specific implications for organizations who desire to promote a culture that respects work–life balance across all career phases for all women employees. The study reinforces the perceived significance of balance between both career and individual aspects of women employee's life to facilitate greater success to be accomplished in every aspect of life – including career matters.

Work life balance has become one of the most challenging issues tackled particularly by women employees and employers these days. With the increased stress in work and development in technology working demands have largely been intensified. Work-life balance is an effort of having an encouraging stability between employee's personal and professional life. In this difficult and stressful era, it is extremely very hard to balance the two as requirements have intensified resulting in work pressure. Employees are required to make strong choices to accomplish this balance. Aggarwal (2012) explored the link between work-life balance schemes and employee's behaviour towards work-life inconsistency and the workplace by and large. Study figured out employees observes work life balance facilitates them to perform better and recommended it must be a shared responsibility of employer and employee (Pahuja, 2016).

The demand to friendly conditions wherein employees could balance work with their individual needs become a factor that organizations have to notice both to keep them and also to increase productivity. Today's working women are repeatedly challenged by the needs of around the clock work and once the work is completed at the workplace, they bear more of the errands and commitments to family. There are number of factors influencing WLB for example stress, inconsistency, increased workload, work-life quality, family support and emotional intelligence. Factors like psychological pressure and extricating strategy influence the work-life balance particularly of women employees. Psychological stress is what female employees feel once they are under stress or having complicatedness handle a situation or factors. Extricating strategy is an approach or plan for rescuing women employees from a detrimental situation (Renuka and Kanagalakshmi 2015).

Work-life balance is a conception that endorses the strengths of employees to divide their time and power between work and other essential elements of their lives. Work-life balance is an everyday effort to have time for family, friends,

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individual growth, self-care, and other individual activities besides the requirements of the workplace. Baral and Bhargava (2011) in her research put forward that organizations should integrate work-life balance advantages and programs and persuade a culture that supports using them to make sure employee commitment and output. Baral and Bhargava (2010) emphasize that job nature, work-life benefits and methods, organizational encouragement and work-family culture have a positive impact on job effects like work satisfaction, affective commitment, etc (Shankar, et al 2016).

WLB is a formation of inter-relationship between career and personal life. The contractual working hours, such as increased long working hours is considered to be a significant factor that influences WLB (Chan, 2015). Chan (2015) emphasized that employees continually faced increased workload in a high responsibility work requirement influences WLB, which ends up in high turnover ratio that have an effect on the growth in the long run. Clark, (2000) stated that the leave policies can be used and encouraged by superiors so as to accomplish positive impact on the work-life balance. The length of time required by work and timing of work-related incidents are amongst the most obvious and significant ways professional life influences family life. Work-life stresses have been compounded by factors for example work amplification that results in long working period (Hyman and Summers, 2007). Rantanen et al. (2008) mentioned that long working hours might give rise to work-family conflict, more stress and let down psychological well-being (Nizam and Kam 2018).

Work life unevenness could result in absenteeism from job, giving rise to stress and short of focus at work. The problem of work-life balance is progressively becoming more significant as families are progressively becoming nuclear and dual earners. Heavy work burden and demand to stretch out working hours obstructed employee's potential to accomplish sustainable work-life balance in practice. Organizations in current era are portrayed by unrelenting changes, qualms and extreme pressure to intensify productivity. These variations disturb the stability in the survival of employees creating mystification and stress. This is as well increased by excessive levels of competitiveness in the workplace creating new challenges and issues to women employees (Jha and Sharma 2016).

Work-life balance is facilitated by employers to engage in more balanced life with no trouble. Retaining an effective work-life balance, in view of its complicated nature, is a more difficult act particularly in case of women employees. A good work-life balance presumes great importance for working women specifically in the present setting in which both, the personal and the workplace have created number of challenges and issues for women. In general, it becomes quite complicated for the working woman to collide with the right balance since all roles demand her attention all together. Figure1 represented the role analysis model. Work-life imbalance of a working woman is instigated on account of role burden in individual life and role interference in career. In Women employee's career, role interdependence facilitates role legitimization in consequence of diagnosis. This creates accord between personal life and professional life by role transparency in the former and role incorporation in the later (Sundaresan, 2014).

ROLE ANALYSIS MODEL
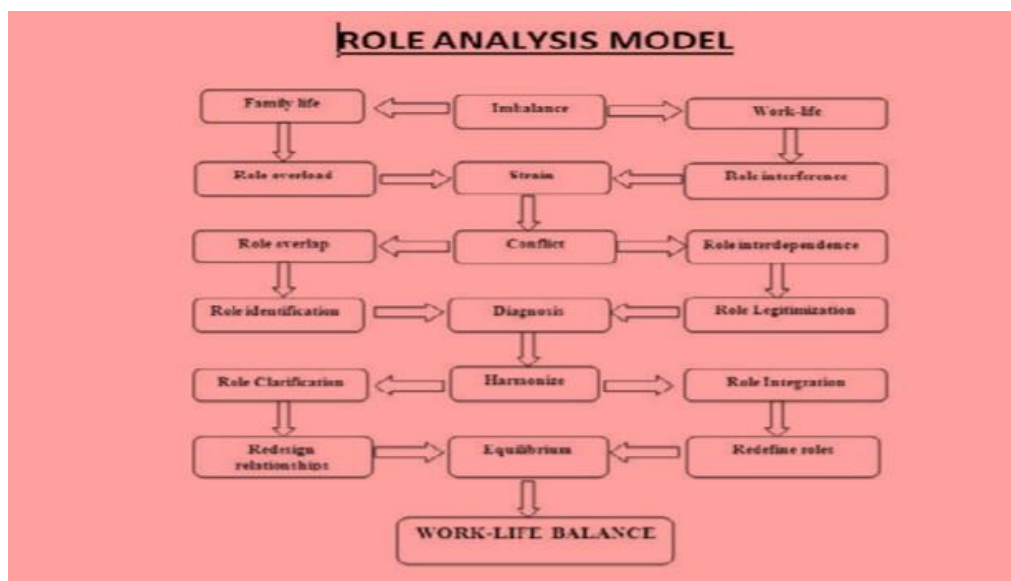
Source: (Sundaresan, 2014).

Work-life-balance has evidently becomes the most complex issue going through women professionals in any sector. Maintaining optimal balance persuades most favorable working hours that eventually increases effectiveness. Conversely, imbalance in women's work-life might bring about absenteeism, turnover rate, and discontent with job, lack of work commitment and disorders like trauma, hypertension, and stroke in certain set of circumstances. It could also end up in inadequate coping skills, bad temper, and lack of confidence, and work exhaustion. Frequent extent work schedule, roles and responsibilities overload, taking work-home continually, non-supportive behavior of supervisors/managers/leaders, discrimination by fellow employees, night shifts, home identity role established by women, etc. are some of the major factors that influence the work-life balance of women (Jeyarathnam, 2017).

The fluctuating scenario of the work environment have posed vast pressure on working women since it is essential for them to deal with almost two restless jobs – one at the workplace and certainly the other at family. Most of the working women face job extension into the home since they are required to invest longer hours. Major effects of weak work-life balance are increased levels of pressure and anxiety, dissonance at family, facing job burnout and incapability to recognize full potential. They become cantankerous and indignant often on account of their incapability to stay poised at work and personal life. Technological developments and other new inventiveness have influenced the socio-cultural setting by bringing in multi-cultural lifestyles in working families. In the middle of all these, the persuasive need for development in all fields, for employees and also for organizations has caused unevenness in the lives of the women employees (Kumari, 2012).

The past two decades have witnessed remarkable changes in both workplaces and families. Women have stepped into the labor force in unparalleled numbers and increased their earnings as men. Various sectors and other companies that wish to last to attract and keep hold of superior talent-men and also women-need

to establish policies and practices, which facilitate their employees to be effective both at family and at workplace. The implication that work-life balance is women's problem not just acts as a gross generality that impairs the image of otherwise reliable, driven female employees – it's also untrue. Before starting a work-life balance strategy it is critical to distinguish the primary requirements of the business, for instance, help desk service might call for a presence of employees between certain hours. It is considered imperative and helpful to discuss with employees at this stage so as to understand their views (Meenakshi, et al 2013).

In general, women have been regarded as care givers and delegated all roles about maintaining and dealing with a family. Men identify themselves as earners and society as well looks forward them to carry out job roles to be paid and encourage the family. Though, the nature of personnel has been fluctuating and the proportion of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers has been declining promptly. Changes in the employees are associated with variations in values, establishing a new stress on the stability between personal and professional life. Women frequently find it more complicated to keep up balance because of the challenging pressures of work and needs at home. Working women should precisely deal with their personal balance and adeptly combine their roles, in order to optimize their capability in every aspects of life (Bharathi, et al 2015).

The conception of work-life balance is derived from the concept that paid work and individual life must be observed less as challenging priorities than as harmonizing aspects of a full life. The way to accomplish this is to take on a method that is "conceptualized as a mutual process entailing a contemplation of the demands of workers and also those of employers. The recent report (Department of labour survey, 2006) figured out a strong relationship between ease discussing professional issues with organization and entire work life balance, and amongst positive workplace culture and professional life balance, wherein constructive workplace culture integrated lack of unconstructive impact on professional life and lack of antipathy by fellow employees. Work arrangement like flexi-time, is considered as a significant element of an employee's work preference towards job time and work arrangements contribute to support the employee accomplish an enhanced blend between their professional and non-professional activities (Kumari, 2012).

Given that women empowerment has been rising significantly, it creates more interests on work-life balance since it is professed that women are extremely receptive to the factors influencing the status of work-life balance. WLB integrates three forms of balance, which include time balance- time given to both work and family on a par, contribution balance-equal level of contribution to both, and satisfaction balance-right scale of satisfaction for both aspects (Greenhaus, et al 2003). Working fewer hours, a lesser amount of job stress, increased pleasure and enthusiasm in work, intentions to stay within the organization and life satisfaction, lesser emotional signs and increased care on physical wellbeing are some of the factors contribute positively to the women's work-life balance. When women professionals are likely to give more time to work, it results in more job stress; which also negatively influence work-life balance (Akter, 2013).

Workplace characteristics play an important role in increasing higher levels of work-life balance to women employees. Hours spent every day at work, the quantity and occurrence of overtime, a stiff work schedule, uncooperative managers/leaders and organization as whole, and an unwelcoming work culture for balancing work and family raise the probability of women employees to go through conflict between their job and family responsibilities, which negatively pave the way for their work-family life balance. In certain cases, experience of job role demands depressingly influenced family role in more cases than personal demands that predisposed work roles. Dual role

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demands and increased expectation from women employee by husbands and families might associate with high work-life balance. Job nature, job satisfaction and support from members of family and number of working hours also considered as some notable factors that essentially influence the work-life balance of women employees (Balaji, 2014).

Strategies adopted by various industries in terms of work life balance

The management strategies in terms of work-life balance could be categorized into four spheres: operations, monitoring, objectives and motivations. The operations concentrate on the techniques and procedures which are recognized to progress on operations (Gomez-Mejia and Balkin & Cardy, 2008). The monitoring refers to the evaluating the performance of employees, assessing performance, and value management. Motivations consist of promotion policy, wage and bonuses, and organizational performance, wherein best practice is considered to be a practice that acknowledges strong performers by means of bonus rewards by a performance based pay program (Freeman & Shaw, 2006). In this case, the organizational practices comprise: organizational encouragement of workers' work-life balance, work-life advantages and communication with workers on job-related issues (Njeri, 2014). Demographic changes such as the intensification in the quantity of females in the workplace, dual roles of women employees and also single parent families have created a more and more diverse employees and a larger demand of women workforce to balance work and family life. Employees might consider work-life balance strategies as empowering them to balance their job and family commitments, whilst employers are likely to consider these measures as key strategies, which facilitate organizations to employ and retain employees. The application of strategies for work-life balance by industries differs according to the needs and requirements. WLB strategies such as sequential flexibility in leave allowances, and interpersonal relationships have the prospect to lessen stress on workers with life responsibilities. The arrangement of WLB strategies could provide a beneficial and direct impact on a worker's decision to stay within an organization (Nithya, 2013).

WLB initiatives such as flexible work arrangements and leave settings and general services for example employee assistant programs and programs associated with family requirements (Frone, 2003). Organizations could change hours worked by the timing of meetings, targets, the planning of training and holidays, and reducing long hours at work. From the insights of workers, family-friendly policies can grant relief for non-work affairs by means of work flexibility. On the contrary, family-supportive managers might give employees with the flexibility to address external commitments or might develop good work-life balance. Management behavior could therefore impact the usage of accessible initiatives or deliver the adaptability to balance work and family commitments without employing these measures (Smith and Gardner 2007).

The first important strategy in increasing work-life balance is working conditions- such as creating positive environment like flexible working hours and facilitates employees to achieve targets, less overtime assuring appropriate balance between work and personal life. The second strategy is access to facilities like day nursery for employees' children, medical etc. making sure to offer proper respite with no work while women employees on leave, to provide appropriate interval to fulfil family and work responsibilities for increased performance at work, allotting time to own life after work hours and less travelling for employees who look after dependents. Timely promotions, reducing conflicts at workplace and reward for the performance also can act as a factor that encourages work-life balance of employees given that it creates positive vibes among employees. Support, independence and satisfaction are considered to reduce work-life imbalance of employees (Kundnani and Mehta 2015).

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Work-life balance practices are being acted as a sign of enlightened yet strategic tool, and almost every organization in the different sector firms wish to be established as family-friendly organizations, as those practices increase their organizational attempts to employ, retain, and encouraged their most treasured employees. As the name suggests, it helps employees to keep them balanced between work and personal life in a certain way. Employees are working longer hours to deal with the rapidity of globalization and to muddling through the strong requirements of the workplace. This inclination is all-encompassing. Work less, live stronger" (Fagnani & Letablier, 2004) is the policy that intended at lessening the time spent in the workplace in most of the French organizations. It is broadly considered that the diminution at working hours could result in an increased balance in the job and personal life (Khan and Agha 2013).

Comparatively, the impact of work on personal commitments and personal commitments on work is experienced extremely by women employees than men. In sectors of banking, manufacturing and IT/ITES, the work stress and work culture, job nature of women employees have strong impact on their family, structure of family, financial wellbeing and caring. Separation, integration and respect are some notable strategies that organizations implement to facilitate the work-life balance. Separation" is a factor that concerned largely with employees satisfying their work responsibilities, and considered workers' non professional activities as exclusively the concern of employees themselves. In terms of "integration", employers viewed work and non-work as connected worlds that influenced one another and taken action to lessen the gap between them in order to facilitate workers cope with their multiple domains. "Respect" referred to the organization recognizing and respecting the non-work contribution of employees, and committing to encourage it (Vanitha, 2015).

Work life and personal life are strongly interrelated and considered as two faces of the same coin. Creating and coping with a balance between the job and individual life is regarded as a work-life balance issue. The service sector is one such which is experiencing the force of the risk of work- life discrepancy. Work deadlines are increasingly getting tougher and the employee's jobs are not just to correspond with deadlines but as well to provide quality outputs. On account of this work stress, it becomes exceptionally hard to keep up work – family life. The increasing working period leave the employees with a lesser amount of time for themselves and to follow their leisure activities. This obstructs the growth of the employees as an individual with regards to their personal and professional life (Rao, 2016).

Family-work, or job-family, practices have contributed in employment policies in work-life balance in many nations and in the different sectors (Wood & de Menezes, 2010). The focal point at job and in the family was usually on maternal leave and other means of supporting female employees become more engaged with their kids and also helping them with elder care responsibilities (Wood & de Menezes, 2010). Nevertheless, the social movements behind these increasing concerns are the ageing population, requirements for equal prospect, increased role of women in the labor force, and the need for an increased work-life balance (Wood & de Menezes, 2010). On the contrary, from the managerial perspective family-friendly strategies assist them in that the stresses of employees' individual life could directly influence their job performance, and employees who professed their organization as uncooperative on family issues exhibit increased levels of stress (Sheppard, 2016).

The major causes accountable for work-life balance are social, managerial and individual in general. Social drivers contribute in bringing new adaptations in women's work-life balance. They comprise factors like government, family unit, social principles, profession, livelihood, etc. Organizational drivers control the approach of individual employees, therefore creating structures and preferences for work-life balance. They include organizational principles, various HR

practices and techniques and work-life balance strategies. The Indian government has implemented legislative actions to encourage work-life balance by factory legislation (crèche, time allotment for breast feeding, and so on.) and schemes on maternity leave. Most of the IT companies encourage telecommuting work and include family-work relationship, pharmaceutical companies implement flexi-work practices, automobile sector seek for initiatives from senior women employees and education sector encourages long maternity leave (Singh, 2015).

Direct links between work-life interface and performance, efficiency or organizational productivity are more complicated, given the array of factors that influence these outcomes. It was found out that after salary, the factor that plays an important role in job satisfaction for employees in their 30s was flexible work opportunities for men employees, whilst women employees choose work-life balance which certainly as well include flexibility in their workplace (American Business Collaboration, 2006). Similarly, telecommuting is considered to offer number of benefits to employees and organizations as a whole. It lessens absenteeism and increases productivity and overall performance. It gives workers the flexibility to effectively balance career, family and non-work accountabilities. It is emphasized that number of organizations have found that coming up with various work-life balance practices to support women employees balance work with external needs, stresses and concern There are four broad policy areas, which initiate discussion in the domain of work-life strategies (Baird, 2011). The first is about employee-centered flexibility, for instance scheduling of official work to match personal circumstances. The second most important policy area associated with work-life interface is both paid and unpaid leave, for instance maternal leave or holidays. The third strategy that can implement is the stretch of working hours, with the majority of research emphasizing a direct link between work-life conflict and stretch at work or stress to work long hours (e.g. Holden et al. 2010). These gendered structures of working are most obvious for parents of kids, with women exhibiting more difference in actual and chosen working hours over the lifetime strongly associated with childcare needs (Pocock et al. 2012). This brings about the fourth main strategy, which associated with childcare and gain access to childcare (Skinner, 2014).

When organizations are supportive, women employees are likely to engage in available work-life balance practices. The panic of negative career effects as well dissuades women employees to use practices of work-life balance such as working flexi-time. Incongruence between personal work and family principles and organizational receptiveness towards work-personal concerns is obviously a challenge to efficiency of WLBPs. Thus, it is essential for organizations to formulate a plan accordingly (Glass and Finley 2002). The concept of work-family climate, or how helpful a managerial workgroup is of the incorporation of its employees' work and personal lives, has been denoted as culture, organizational perceptions and climate (Adams, et al 2005). An encouraging work-family climate is one kind of strategy wherein organizations recognize and keep up that an individual's family is their first main concern, even above the individual's work and the profession as a whole (Paryani, 2014).

Thus Flexibility in the timing and locality of work, whether around the clock or part-time, has been exhibited to encourage work-life balance in the employees' career. Implementing a strategy where an emotional intelligence turns out to be the main factor would facilitate accomplish stability of Work-Life Management. Time-shifting for employees and setting goals for their personal and organizational growth can be an important strategy to reduce the work-life imbalance. Organizations could implement strategies that reduce working hours of women employees, increase transportation service to make them feel safer and also to avoid hassle free life, leave facilities, increase flexible hours all through the day and support within in the organization for every steps taken by women employees. If used wisely, WLB will be an effective tool for employee retention.

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