

THEME

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A way towards Sustainability in Corporate World”

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ABSTRACT

Years ago, the scene of our surrounding was totally different. Men were the sole bread earner and women cater to the needs of their families and fully occupied with their kids and household activities. Earning was never in their purview but totally the headache of men. Exceptions were there but never a countable figure. Scenario changed rapidly in the last decade. Today, women are not only going out and working for their own self but support their respective families. They have entered into the so called male bastion and prove their ability also. Supremacy of the female in many fields is no longer a dream but a hard earned endeavor. All these facts are the brighter side of women's success. Hindrances are no less in their life. The age old tradition of looking after the families is still their responsibility. Rigidity and flexibility are part and parcel in women's personal and professional lives. Hence the concept of Work life balance is mainly to balance the in-basket acts of the women employee.

The Work life balance may be defined as the degree to which an individual is able to seamlessly balance between paid work and family responsibilities and impart justification to both. The concept work life balance is getting attention both in national and international level. Balance here we mean monetary earning with caring responsibilities. The current work scenario is competitive with immense work load, adjustments, invariable deadlines, and time constraints apart from life's routine responsibilities. Hence my intentions are to find out how far married working women will be flexible or rigid and perform smoothly in their personal and professional lives.

Setting priorities are the essence of work life balance. According to Scott Caan, "Good things happen when you set your priorities straight". The concept applies in work life balance too. With multiple work in mind women have to priorities thing and act accordingly. Hence managing time, setting priorities, focus, rigidity and flexibility are the pillars of work life balance.

TOPIC: - FLEXIBILITY AND RIGIDITY – THE KEY FACTORS FOR WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WORKING WOMEN

INTRODUCTION

“Good things happen when you set your priorities straight”. The concept applies in Work Life Balance too.

In 1970s the expression Work-Life Balance was first used in the United Kingdom to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. In 1986 this phrase was first used in the United States and subsequently to the other countries also. Presently, the concept is getting attention everywhere. The Work Life Balance may be defined as the degree to which an individual is able to seamlessly balance between paid work and family responsibilities and impart justification to both. As Bowswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) stated, "increasingly sophisticated and affordable technologies have made it more feasible for employees to keep contact with work". Today we see companies distribute smart- phones and trendy laptops to enable and encourage their employees to stay connected to their business even when they are not in the office. Hence when one puts both work and family on a weighing scale then work supersedes life and hence confusion and conflict arises. The act of balancing sometimes becomes problematic especially for the working women employees as they have to keep so many things into their mind. The current work scenario is competitive with immense work load, adjustments, invariable deadlines, and time constraints apart from life's routine responsibilities which are more demanding in the present world because of the nuclear family concept and limited helping hands. With multiple work in mind women have to prioritize thing and act accordingly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Deepak Chawla and Neena Sondhi (October 2011) in their study have focused that Indian professional look for supportive work places that help them to manage their multiple roles. This would have a spillover effect on the commitment and low attrition rate and at the same time enhance an individual's Work-Life Balance. The results which they highlighted in their article are as follows. 1) Organizations need to reconsider whether mere compensation and benefits are sufficient to attract and retain their workforce. 2) Organizations need to be supportive and empathetic towards their employees multiple roles and responsibilities.3) Employee expectations

today are more in terms of supportive work places that help manage time. However, the futuristic organizations might need to provide roles definitions that permit more control over work schedules and tasks.

Professor Mina Westman (2009) in an interview with Paula Brough and Thomas Kalliath (guest editors), clarifies the nature of two related constructs: Work-life balance and crossover. Work-life balance is the perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual's current life priorities. Crossover focuses on how stress experienced by the individual influences strain experienced by the individual's spouse or team member. In this expert commentary, Professor Westman discusses the philosophical underpinnings of work-life balance, the significance of crossover of emotions and experiences for organizations and individuals, current advances in the field and sets out the new directions for this research.

OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight some work place family supportive program for working professors.
2. To understand the concept of spillover effect on commitment and low attrition rate
3. To find out the role of flexibility and rigidity in making balance between personal and professional lives.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on both primary and secondary data. A questionnaire is prepared and passed on to the respondents. A survey is conducted at St. Agnes College which is one of the Autonomous colleges affiliated to Mangalore University, Karnataka.

This research paper is also based on secondary data for finalization of views and opinions which have been sourced from some printed literature, journals, published documents etc. .

CONCEPT OF BALANCE AND WORK PLACE FAMILY SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS

Here by Balance, we mean monetary earnings with caring responsibilities. Years ago, the scene of our surrounding was totally different. Men were the sole bread earner and women cater to the needs of their families and fully occupied with their kids and household activities. Earning was never in their purview but totally the headache of men. Exceptions were there but never a countable figure.

Scenario changed rapidly in the last decade. Today, women are not only going out and working for their own self but support their respective families. They have entered into the so called male bastion and proved their ability also. Supremacy of the female in many fields is no longer a dream but a hard earned endeavor or attempt. Women in India now participate fully in areas such as education, sports, politics, media, art, culture, service sectors, science, technology and what not. The Government of India declared 2001 as the Year of Women's Empowerment. All these facts are the brighter side of women's success.

Hindrances are no less in their life. The age old tradition of looking after the families is still their responsibility. Rigidity and flexibility are part and parcel in women's personal and professional lives. Hence the concept of Work life balance is mainly to balance the in-basket acts of the women employee.

Frone & V'ardley (1996) found that offering work place family supportive programs such as flexi time, child care assistance could be extremely helpful in reducing individual stress and help manage the work and family roles effectively. Work place supportive program in today's working environment is playing a very important role because today when we talk about families it is mostly nuclear families and career oriented parents who want to work for various reasons like a) to lead a better lifestyle b) most of the parent are well educated, so they do not want their educational achievement to be wasted by just sitting at home c) they want to place themselves in a respectable position in the society and d) mostly the women they do not want to waste their time simply sitting at home watching daily soap opera and cook food. Hence when we see these working women in nuclear families they are stuck in performing their duties both at their work place as well at their respective homes where they give priority to their kids. In this perspective if organization comes up with work life family supportive programs then it would reduce the stress

of working women to a quite extend. Women would be motivated to work both in their professional life as well as in their personal life and hence their quality of work life will improve. Organization should also involve in job enrichment program where the employees get some sort of driving force towards their work. To name some includes attending conferences and seminars, publish papers with ISBN numbers, working on minor and major research with UGC or any other bodies, or some interdisciplinary projects which really motivates the working women in colleges.

CONCEPT OF SPILLOVER EFFECT ON COMMITMENT AND LOW ATTRITION RATE

Generally the concept of spillover effect means a tendency of one person's emotion to affect how other people around them feel. According to Deepak Chawla and Neena Sondhi (2011), supportive work places have a spillover effect on the commitment and low attrition rate and at the same time enhance an individual's Work-Life Balance. High commitments and low attrition rate are some of the positive aspects with which Work Life Balance can be enhanced. Basically commitment means dedication, devotion, loyalty, faithfulness, fidelity or bonding. So if the institutions provide the staff adequate supportive work environment, then of course employee's commitment towards the institution will increase and with that working women work life balance will also increase. So here we are getting a positive correlation between supportive work environment and employees spillover effect on commitment.

On the other hand let us understand the concept of attrition and how it has an impact on Work Life Balance. Attrition rate is also called as churn rate which is a measure of the number of individuals moving out of an organization or an institution over a specific period of time. If more number of employees is moving out of the organization then it will have a negative impact on the organization's well being because of number of reasons which are as follows.

- Costly affair
- Reputation hampers
- Negative impact on productivity and performance
- Quality compromise
- Time consuming

- More energy involvement
- Limited employees to perform work
- Lot of adjustment in the workplace
- Synchronization problem

Moreover if the employees are behaving in this way that means they are not happy on certain matters or maybe getting more opportunities outside which are lacking in their own organization. But supportive work places have a negative correlation with attrition rate which ultimately is good for the organization because of certain reasons. The organization spends a lot of money and time to nurture an employee through off the job and on the job training, faculty development programs, counseling, arranging conferences etc. When the attrition rate is high, and employees are moving out of the organization, new recruitment is an utmost necessity. The total recruitment process requires a lot of time, money and energy which the organization again has to invest to start afresh. So increasing rate of attrition is not good for the company. Hence the organization has to play strategic role in dealing with the employees.

One theoretical framework that has been used to explain negative spillover is called the role scarcity hypothesis. The main argument here is that since women have a limited and fixed amount of resources with them in terms of energy, time, and finances and helping hands, problems may arise when different roles draw on these same resources. For example, when both family and work roles draw on the scarce resource of time, it is likely that one of these roles is compromised due to a lack of available time. On the other hand if we talk about helping hands when dealing with both family and work roles, it is obvious that one of these roles have to be compromised because there is a restriction on the number of helping hands in a family.

A different framework, the role expansion hypothesis, has been used to explain positive spillover. According to this hypothesis, women generate resources like positive mood, skills, hard work, interest and opportunities from the multiple roles they are engaged in. These, in turn, can be used in both life and work to improve functioning, promote growth and prosperity in their respective lives.

FLEXIBILITY OR RIGIDITY IN WORK LIFE BALANCE

Flexibility and rigidity are two sides of a coin. Situation makes one to act on a rigid way or on a flexible way. When we are dealing with working women employees in institutions we find that their brains are more taxed than their counterpart since they are continuously on the process of balancing their life and work. During the process, quite reasonably, they are not always successful; hence conflict and commotion are part and parcel of their life. To adjust the situation flexibility and rigidity play an important role in their life. A fair application of these attributes can reduce their struggle considerably. Prioritizing the work on their importance whether at work place or at home can control the stress level.

CHALLENGES

Flexibility and rigidity leads too many challenges in Work Life Balance of working women employees. Everyone including the working women have a responsibility to apply effective and efficient service in moving the institution forward, both in terms of its bottom line and also in terms of its processes and procedures. Two common methods -- flexibility and rigidity -- describes how working women approach in developing organizational strategies.

Flexibility

Flexibility means suppleness i.e. being open to adapting an institution's strategies to suit varying internal and external factors that can affect one's day-to-day operations. This can take many forms such as transportation and canteen facilities provided by the institution. Many times the organization itself needs to show some level of flexibility to move in this competitive world. Work without flexibility is difficult because new challenges always persist in a competitive world.

Rigidity

Rigidity is a management approach that is the exact opposite of flexibility. Rigidity means firmness. The idea of rigidity is to "ride out the storm" by creating some stable and secure policies and practices that can survive any challenge.

Stress prevails at all levels. Some organizations play a large part in how their employees deal with work-life balance. But some organizations just overlook the situation and compensate the

employees monetarily and with fringe benefits. Yet there are certain other companies who take proactive measures in providing programs and initiatives to help their employees cope with work-life balance. And again there are certain companies who all do not care of balancing work and life of women employees' altogether.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A sample of 56 women faculties was collected from St. Agnes College Mangalore (P.G and U.G). The college comprise of primary school, secondary school, PUC, under graduate degree and Post Graduate degree. But here I have concentrated only on U.G and P.G. The degree departments include Political Science, BBM, Zoology, Computer Science, Micro Biology, Mathematics, Statistics, Zoology, English, Economics, Chemistry and Physics. On the other hand in Post Graduate centre the departments include English, Commerce, Chemistry and Psychology. Out of 56 respondents which were randomly selected, 32 faculties i.e. 57% were married and 24 faculties i.e. 43% were unmarried. Both married and unmarried in UG and PG were committed to their work. More than 50% respondents think that they are sacrificing family responsibilities against work. The college also comes with various supportive programs for the staff which the respondents really like. 79% believe that family, superiors, colleagues or students are not the main obstacles for commitments at work, though they all say that they are committed to their work. More than 50 % realize that their constraint is time, 71% thinks only flexibility should persist in the institution and 27% thinks both rigidity and flexibility should persist.

FINDINGS

Findings by survey

1. All the faculties, both married and unmarried are committed to their work.
2. Out of total 56 respondent 51.79% respondents believe that they are sacrificing family responsibilities for work, 42.85% said No and 5.35% said sometimes they sacrifice their family responsibilities for work.
3. The college basically does not provide the facility of crèche which is one of the supports to the working women employees. 9% of employees are happy with counseling program which mentally gives them support and to balance their work and life. 41% of

respondents are happy with the supportive program the college provides in terms of research. 29% believe that because of flexi-time support system they can balance their work and life properly and rest 21% came up with open ended answers that they are happy with the other supportive program which the institution is giving them like training programs, up-gradation of different skills and also conducting various workshops.

4. Out of 56 respondents 79% are satisfied with the supportive program and 21% are not happy.
5. Out of 56 respondent 79% said that their main obstacle for commitment at work are not because of family, superiors, colleagues or students, 13% of the respondent believe that superior are the cause for their obstacle, 2% believe that the colleagues are the obstacle, 5% believe that the obstacles are from students and 2% believe that the main obstacle are from family, superiors, colleagues as well as from students.
6. 64% says that none of the factors are obstacle at home (i.e. work, spouse, children, relatives), 35% respondent believe that work is the obstacle at home and 1% says children are main obstacle for commitment at home.
7. Out of 56 faculties, 54% believe that their constraint is time, 25% says it is helping hands, 14% says the constraint is energy, 5% says it is finances, 2% says it is none of these.
8. 71% thinks flexibility only should persist in the institution, 27% thinks both rigidity and flexibility should persist and 2% thinks only rigidity should persists.
9. 50% respondents are overloaded and 50% are not overloaded.
10. 31% strongly disagree that they are stressed out throughout the day, 23% disagree that they are stressed out throughout the day, 14% agree that they are stressed out in a day, 14% strongly agree that they are stressed out in a day and 18% neither agree nor disagree.
11. 30% respondent strongly disagree that they cope with stress through yoga and meditation, again 30% disagree 21% agree 12% strongly agree and 7% neither agree nor disagree.

Finding by observation

Spillover from family to work:-

1. Women with young children at home are most likely to report high levels of negative spillover, in contrast to mothers of older children.
2. Women in nuclear families have high level of negative spillovers as compared to women in joint families.
3. Women who have single child have more negative spillover than women who have more than one child.

Spillover from work to family:-

1. Women working under too many bosses are most likely to report high levels of negative spillover, in contrast to women working under single boss.
2. Women working under unsystematic work environment are most likely to report high level of negative spillover, in contrast to women working under systematic work environment.

CONCLUSION

Work place family supportive program have immense help to faculties in St. Agnes College. The college only does not provide the facility of crèche which is an important supports to the working women employees but the institution goes with different counseling programs, research, flexi-time and also training programs, up gradation of different skills and conducts various workshops.

Secondly because of the work family supportive programs there is flexibility at workplace, fewer loads, less stress level hence the spillover effect on commitment is high and the spillover effect on attrition is low. Some faculties even come out of stress through yoga and meditation.

Flexibility and rigidity are the key factors for Work Life Balance of Working women. Women while prioritizing things in both their work and life have to deal with flexibility and rigidity. The concept of flexibility and rigidity has correlation with Work life balance. Setting priorities are the essence of work life balance. According to Scott Caan, “Good things happen when you set

your priorities straight". The concept applies in work life balance too. With multiple work in mind women have to priorities thing and act accordingly. Hence managing time, setting priorities, focus, rigidity and flexibility are the pillars of work life balance.

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