



Work- life balance for Women employees in a Gandhian Organization – A Study

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Abstract: Work-life balance is the term used to describe those practices at workplace that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of employees in achieving a balance between the demands of their family (life) and work lives. It refers to the flexible working arrangements that allow both parents and non-parents to avail of working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities. It is to describe policies that have been previously termed 'family-friendly', but are now extended beyond the scope of the family. It is about helping staff to maintain healthy, rewarding lifestyles that will in turn lead to improvements in productivity and performance.

The researchers have conducted the study in Khadi and Village Industries Trust, (KVIT) Gandhigram, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, India. The main objectives of this study were to know about the level of work life balance among women employees in KVIT, to identify the gap between the work life and family life, to identify the factors to improve work life balance among women employees and to suggest strategies to maintain a healthy work life balance.

The study analyzed whether there was a balance between their work and everyday life, social life, health and family life such as comfortable working conditions, attending family works as well as personal work and improving the factors towards Work-life balance. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested Interview Schedule on a five – point Likert Scale. Convenient sampling method was used for data collection from 50 women respondents working in KVIT.

The collected data were analyzed by using appropriate statistical tools such as one way ANOVA 'f' test and chi-square test. The study also identified the existing barriers to Work- life balance in the organization, whether the management was taking any initiative to manage Work-life balance of women employees, the employees' perception about managing Work- life balance and the causes of stress affecting the Work- life balance and how to improve their performance and job satisfaction in the working organization.

The major findings of this study show that

- There is no significant difference between experience of respondents and their Work- life balance.
- There is no significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their job satisfaction.
- There is significant association between working environment and Work- life balance.

The study may be helpful to reduce sickness and absenteeism, to enhance working relationship among the co-workers, to increase the level of production and satisfaction and to decrease stress and burn out of the women employees. It may set as a model to similar Gandhian Organizations.

Key words: Work- life balance, Working Environment, Job Satisfaction, Gandhian Organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The term Work - life balance was coined in 1986 in response to the growing concerns by individuals and organizations alike that work can interrupt upon the quality of family life and vice-versa, emerging the concepts of "Family- Work Conflict" (FWC) and "Work-Family Conflict" (WFC). The former is also referred to as Work Interferes with Family" (WIF) while the latter is also known as "Family Interferes with Work" (FIW). Work-life programs existed in the 1930s. The policies and procedures established by an organization with the goal to enable employees to efficiently do their jobs and at the same time provide flexibility to handle personal concerns or problems at their family. Work-life balance is about helping staff to maintain healthy, rewarding lifestyles that will in turn lead to improvements in productivity and performance.

Need For Work- life Balance

According to psychotherapists and trainer-consultants in personal growth, human beings do not have just one drive, but many drives and needs. In order for them to have a sense of wellbeing, these needs are to be met adequately. Work is important and it gives a lot of meaning in life, but one must always remember that life is bigger than work. When our lives are only about work, other needs will not be met and which results in frustration.

When Work-life balance is not maintained, a person begins to experience a sense of emptiness and hollowness which is difficult to deal with. In addition, the person begins to experience loneliness, depression, despair and cynicism. A result of Work-life imbalance can be seen in a survey on career couples by Team Lease in February 2008. This study was conducted by International Research Journal of Management and Business Studies, New Delhi. It showed that 54 percent of the respondents said that they were merely “weekend parents. In addition, 34 percent of the working couples surveyed felt that since there were two careers the chances of a divorce were high. Moreover, most participants agreed that working in odd shift hours had a bearing on their marital relationships.

The psychotherapists believe that mid-career professionals are most prone to having Work-life imbalance. Since they believe that they need very little time to reach the position of desire, this crisis often leads to a tendency to overwork to achieve things faster, and the Work-life balance gets disturbed. One must not act while he or she is facing this anxiety. Being led by the feelings one can be disastrous. One must take time to understand the feelings and realize that it is natural to have those feelings. The Work- life balance is also essential for the professional growth of a person. Research has found that a healthy balance increases the individual's professional productivity. Due to a sense of greater self-confidence, it helps in the ability to communicate effectively, and it boosts morale – which ultimately helps the organization as well.

The Influencing Elements in Work- Life Balance

Many of the organizations have responded to the evolving set of issues and with the influencing elements related to Work-life balance by introducing a wide variety of its practices. These practices help the employees to balance both work and life equally where it supports the employer to increase the retention of the employee. Influencing factors include Working hours and Flexibility, Time bind, Job satisfaction, Job Autonomy and Organizational Commitment.

Profile of Khadi and Village Industries Trust

Gandhigram was founded by the famous Gandhian couple Dr.T.S. Soundram and Dr. G. Ramachandran in 1947. It is located in the Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, India. A formal Village Extension Unit was started in 1999 to increase its scope of work and interaction. Addressing the livelihood needs of the village community was one of the earliest priorities of Gandhigram. Today, Gandhigram Trust takes care of the health, welfare and educational initiatives, while the Lakshmi Seva Sangh and the Gandhigram Khadi Trust manage employment generation programmes through Khadi and Village Industries. The agricultural extension programme conceives various projects in agriculture and natural resource management to serve and strengthen the village community.

The Gandhigram KVIS started producing Khadi and Village Industries products in order to cater the demands of the local people and neighbourhood and other places across the state. The Trust provides direct and indirect employment opportunities to 2000 families. As a nucleus for rural industrialization KVIS restricts migration and encourages local skills, knowledge and entrepreneurship.

KVIS is a multi-product organization involved in the production of Khadi cloth and Village Industries products ranging from soaps, (ISI certified) shampoos, herbal products, food products etc.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Objectives of the Study

TABLE I. To know about the level of Work- life balance among women employees in KVIS.

TABLE II. To identify the gap between the Work - life and family life of the employees.

TABLE III. To find out the factors causing stress which affect the Work-life balance of women employees

TABLE IV. To suggest strategies to maintain a healthy Work- life balance among the employees.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There is a significant difference between experience of the respondents and the gap between the Work- life balances.
- There is a significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their job satisfaction in the organization.
- There is a significant association between Working environment and Work- life balance.

Research Design: Analytical Research Design was used for this study.

Method of study: Convenient Sampling method was adopted by the researchers. 50 women employees working in KVIS were interviewed.

Collection of data: The Primary data were collected from the respondents selected for the study with the help of pre-tested Interview Schedule on a five – point Likert Scale. The Secondary data were collected from the books, journals and internet articles.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the respondents working in KVIS, Gandhigram were put to analysis and interpreted. One way ANOVA 'f' test and Chi square test were used in the analysis to provide quantitative dimension to the study so as to test the hypotheses.

Table- 1

Classification of Respondents based on their Age and Experience

S.No	Demographic profile	Particulars	No: of Respondents n=50	Percentage 100%
1	Age	20-30	5	9
		31-40	20	36
		41-50	24	44
		Above 50	6	11
2	Experience	1-5 Years	12	24
		6-10 Years	20	40
		11 to 15 Years	10	20
		More than 15 Years	8	16

The above table shows that 9% of the respondents are between 20-30 age group, 36% of them are between 31-40 years, 44% of them are between 41-50 years and the remaining 11% of them are above 50 years. Among 50 respondents, 24% of them have 1-5 years of experience, 40% of them have experience between 6-10 years, 20% of them between 11to 15 years and the remaining 16% of them have more than 15 years of experience.

Table- 2

One way ANOVA difference between experience of respondents and their Work- life balance

Work- life balance of the employees	Mean	S.D	SS	Df	MS	Statistical Inference
Between Groups			17	1	17.008	F=24.684
Yes(N=39)	2.59	0.91				.003<0.07
No(N=11)	1.18	0.405				
Within Groups			33	48	0.689	Significant
Total			50	49		

Research Hypothesis (H₁)

There is a significant difference between experience of the respondents and the gap between the Work- life balances.

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant difference between experience of the respondents and their Work- life balance.

Statistical test

One way ANOVA 'f' test was used in the above table.

Findings: The result of above table shows that of value is 49, f value is 24.684 with p value is = .003. The calculated value (.003) is greater than table value (0.05.) There is no significant difference between experience of respondents and their Work- life balance. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected.

Table- 3**One way ANOVA difference between Stress affecting the Work- life balance and their Job satisfaction**

Stress affecting the Work- life balance	Mean	S.D	SS	Df	MS	Statistical Inference
Between Groups			6.316	3	2.105	F=16.517 .002<0.05 Significant
Work at home after office hours (N=8)	2.50	.535				
Attending work during holidays(N=2)	2.00	.000				
While travelling to reach work place(N=17)	2.00	.000				
While attending excessive household works(23)	2.77	.429				
Within Groups			5.864	46	.127	
Total			12.180	49		

Research Hypothesis (H₂)

There is a significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their job satisfaction in the organization.

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their Job satisfaction.

Statistical test

One way ANOVA 'f' test was used in the above table.

Findings: From the above table it is seen that the p value .002 is less than 0.05. There is no significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their Job satisfaction. Hence the research hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected.

Table- 4**Association between working environment and Work- life balance**

Particulars		Satisfaction about work environment			Total	Statistical Inference
Work- life balance of the respondents		Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral		P value
	Yes	0	25	14	39	X ² =8.375
	No	1	10	0	11	Df=2 .015<.005
Total		1	35	14	50	Not Significant

Research Hypothesis (H₃)

There is a significant association between Working environment and Work- life balance

Null Hypothesis (H₀)

There is no significant association between working environment and Work- life balance.

Statistical test

Chi square test was used for the above table.

Findings: The result of above table shows that there is significant association between working environment and Work- life balance. Because the calculated value (.015) is greater than 0.05. Hence the research hypothesis is rejected and null hypothesis is accepted.

Major Findings

- There is no significant difference between experience of respondents and their Work- life balance.
- There is no significant difference between stress affecting the Work- life balance and their job satisfaction.
- There is significant association between working environment and Work- life balance.

Suggestions

- Training in Yoga and Meditation may be imparted to maintain balanced mental makeup and to reduce stress.
- The management may provide separate rooms to employees to take lunch.
- Counselling programmes may be arranged to the employees to manage stress.
- The management may take steps to provide training on how to manage Work- life balance and in time management to all women employees.

- It may take efforts to increase a good relationship among the employees.

Conclusion

It is found that the Work- life balance among the women employees at KVIT, Gandhigram is satisfactory. In KVIT, the women employees are having mental and physical well-being to a certain extent. The administration may help the employees to manage their Work-life balance by way of reducing workload, occupational stress, sometimes allowing to share work burden among the employees, and not allowing to work during the holidays. This study identified the problems as well as suitable remedies related to Work-life balance of women employees of KVIT. These remedies may be helpful to the other Gandhian Organizations to increase productivity.

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