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A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG WOMEN TEACHERS IN MUMBAI CITY

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ABSTRACT
The issue of work-life balance is increasingly becoming important in India as more and more women with children are joining the workforce; and there are more and more working professionals feel the need to balance their work and family life. The purpose of present study is to highlight the necessity of adopting work-life-balance(WLB) policies for teachers teaching at college(degree) level. The paper examines different elements of WLB, especially with reference to teachers working in government and private institutes. Based on empirical evidence the study proposes that there is a need for adopting WLB policies for teachers. The data for the study was collected from 50(fifty) teachers working for government and private colleges for both academic and professional courses. The findings of the study indicate that there is a need for designing WLB policies and programmes for the teaching community to enable them to balance their work and life needs. Through this study an attempt has been made to identify different personal motives and its priority among different demographic groups which could become the basis for designing WLB policies for teachers.

KEY WORDS: Work life balance, Family issues, Life style limitations.

Introduction

As an outcome of economic reforms there is a substantial increase of the women workforce in the service sector both at the junior and the middle level. The women income is no more restricted to her but constitutes a family income; it is because of the absence of the unionized wage negotiation system , there is sharp decline in men's wage too. This problem get multiplied because of lot of ambiguity in providing leaves like maternity, parental etc. As a result both partners try to become very much workaholic and their life revolves around working a shift at office and to divide the work of raising a family and making a home. With this the concept of work life balance emerged to provide a family friendly work place policies that people actually use and that lead a major cultural shift towards value on care.

In a global work environment it has been essential of adopting work life balance(WLB) strategies for every class of employees at all types of organizations. The human resource

management function has to continuously plan and execute such policies which enable their employees to balance their personal and professional life. This is quite necessary to enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism, enable retention and increase employee satisfaction, which can lead to enhanced employee commitment. Further the increasing number of Dual Income Single Kid(DISK) couples and members from the nuclear families at organizations has made WLB practices all the more necessary. Teachers are being the intellectual capital of the nation play a vital role in development of future generation. Therefore it is essential to see that their work is not affected by their personal necessities and hence the need for WLB. Some institutions having the provision of flexible working hours, job sharing, telecommuting, video conferencing, virtual class room facilities to enable their employees to balance their personal work with professional work. The policies relating to WLB may not match the requirements of teachers from various facilities as well as from varied demographic and cultural background.

This study is an attempt to understand and identify the goal (i.e. personal motives and priorities) of teachers (belonging to different demographic profiles) working with educational institutions and their way of effectively balancing family obligations and work commitment .Based on this understanding, it is proposed that the present study might also provide suggestions for institutions regarding the issue of WLB policies.

Literature Review

Work life balance is considered for the study because it is one of the work related issues affecting productivity of employees in an organization.

With increasing concern by employees for managing the boundary and the interaction between their work and non work lives, the provision for effective work life initiatives is fast becoming a priority for organizations and for HRM practitioners throughout the corporate world. Previous researchers have shown that people are made attached to organizations that offer family friendly policies, regardless to the extent to which they might personally benefit from such policies**(Grover and Karen 1995)**.Many changes in the workplace and in employee demographics in the past few decades have led to an increased concern for understanding the boundary and the interaction between employee, work and non–work lives **(Hochschild 1997 and Hayman 2005)**.More women are joining the workforce and dual career couple are becoming increasingly common(**Moorhead et.al,1997**).Also more employees are telecommuting(work from home) or bringing work home thus blurring the boundaries between work and non-work life **(Hill et al. 1998).** One of the major reason for this increasing concern for work life balance is due to technological advancement which has morphed the work and personal lives of working professionals into a single whole. **Lester (1999)** argued that technology can help and hinder work-life balance by making work more accessible at all times of the day and night; and also in terms of enabling a more flexible approach to when and where to work. India being a growing economy has to deal with the concept of work life balance. Most of these work life policies are primarily aimed at employees with a family(**Young ,1999**).Such focus tend to lead to a feeling of exclusion and unfairness amongst employees who are single and employees who are without children(**Greandey, 2001**)The term WLB includes a number of aspects such as i. how many people work ,ii. when people work iii. where people work **(Glynn et**

al,2002). The concept of work life balance not only includes the family friendly perspective of earlier HR policies but also encompasses much wider perspective that seeks to help all employed people, irrespective of marital or parental status so that employees can experience a better fit between their professional and private lives **(White et.al 2003). Fiona(2004)** stated that flexible working practices are good for WLB and managers are better able to maintain a good WLB than workers; and that the development of an appropriate WLB policy assists in ensuring company loyalty and positive attitudes to work. **Liz(2004)** explored the main barriers to women's progression and highlights the long hours associated with managerial roles as a major problem. The research presents the business case which underpins diversity management and a voluntary approach to WLB may only deliver positive benefits to women when the labour market is tight, and even then , the benefits for women in management are far from demonstrated. A stronger equal opportunities approach is also shown to be problematic as it draws attention to women's difference to men and their need for special treatment. It is further argued that more work needs to be done with male managers in order to humanize the work place for men and women who wish to lead rounded lives. Work life balance is no longer only a women related issue, but an issue of today's workplace itself. Men are equally finding it difficult to balance their work and personal life. In 1991 in UK and Australia, women were more likely than men to work from home ,but in 2003 the situation was reversed, with 14% of men working from home compared to 8% of women(**Mc Ormond,2004**) . This gets reflected in the range of flexible work policies and procedures such as part time working, temporary working, working from home and tele-working, flexi timing and flexible working hours, compressed working weeks, annualized hours and career breaks. Keeping this broader perspective in mind, UK's department of trade and industry defines work life balance as being about adjusting working patterns regardless of age, race or gender. So everyone can find a rhythm to help themselves by combining work with their other responsibilities or aspirations (**Maxwell and McDougall,2004**). The concept of work life balance emerged in management in 1980s,largely as a result of the growing number of women with dependent children entering the workforce(Robbins 2005).Therefore though work life balance was initially recognized and constructed as a concern for working mothers, it now includes all classes of employees (**Bird,2006**).In organizational terms this translates into better talent attraction, enhanced productivity, better talent management ,reduced work stress, reduced absenteeism, better motivation, employer branding and efficient work practices(**Byrne 2005**).A mismatch between work and non work roles can be dysfunctional and disadvantageous for the both employee and the employers. It is because of this reason many organizations increasingly adopting work-life policies such as introducing greater work flexibility, providing child care facilities and offering emotional supports (**Lapzerre and Allen ,2006**). Rupashree and **Shivganesh (2010)**,in their study, reported that Supervisor support and work family culture are positively related to job satisfaction and effective commitments. No significance association was found between work life benefits and policies(WLBPS)and job outcome measures. Job characteristic and superior support were positively related to work to family enrichment. Work to family enrichment mediated the relationships between job characteristics and job outcomes and between supervisor support and effective commitment.

Literature have given various facet of work life balance scenario in corporate (service or manufacturing which are mostly mechanical in nature) sector. However scarce literature is

available on work life balance of intellectual job like teaching where the stake holders (parents, teachers, students and society as a whole) are vulnerable and sensitive to each one's action on other. Thus the present study is an attempt made by the researcher to examine the work and family life of the teachers who perform an intellectual & stressful job at their workplace along with their family commitment.

Objective

1. To understand and analyze the nature of work and identify the goal (i.e. personal motives and priorities) of female teachers engaged in tertiary education in and around Mumbai city.

2. To find out the stress level and its fallout on the performance at job and discharging the family and social responsibilities.

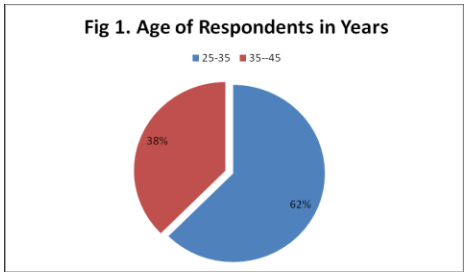
Methodology

The study was carried out on the basic observation that women prefer to take up teaching as a profession due to its inherent perceived benefit of relaxed working environment and abundance of leave facility. But with changing scenario this may hold good for a miniscule government institutes. Majority of tertiary education are now being owned by private bodies and have a different work culture which is more demanding. Careful observation can indicate that many young female teachers joining at junior level do not make it to top as compared to their male counterparts. In many cases the female gives prime importance to her commitment to family and children by compromising her professional growth.

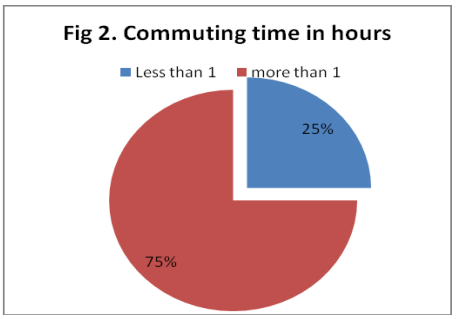
For conducting this study primary data was collected from 50 female teachers teaching at degree levels at the academic and professional courses both in government and private sector. The data was collected to understand their working hours, commuting time, household commitments and the challenges to fulfill expectations of spouse and kids. The data was analysed using simple bifurcation and using weighted average. A correlation between the age of the respondents and their working hour vis a vis overall lifestyle load was obtained. A comparative analysis was made to understand the age of employees to number of kids and its repercussion on work life balance.

Observations

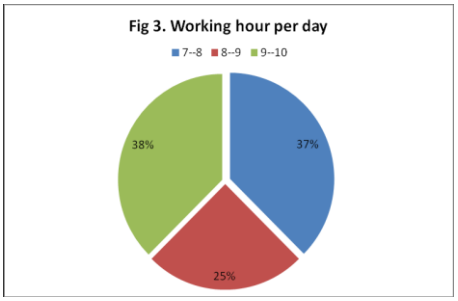
The study was conducted taking married working ladies of age group from 25 to 45 working as faculties in undergraduate colleges located in and around Mumbai. From the data collected following observations are made
i. 62% of respondents are of age group 25-35 and 38% of respondents are of age group 35-45 years (Fig.1).



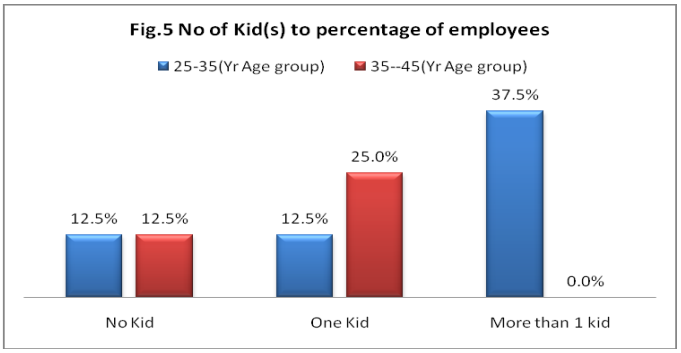
ii. 75% of teachers commute for more than a hour in one way to reach at their workplace. The commuting used to take place in multiple transport system (City Bus, Rickshaw, Local trains etc).In an average everybody make a travelling of 1 hour 45 minutes (Fig.2).



iii. A college teacher is expected to around 8.5 hrs of duty at the workplace for 6 days a week. A majority percentage of teachers are in their place of work for more than 9 hours (Fig 3).
iv. There happens to be very small negative correlation as far as age group to working hours of employees concerned indicating as age progresses the working hour at workplace reduces in a very small manner. (Fig 4)

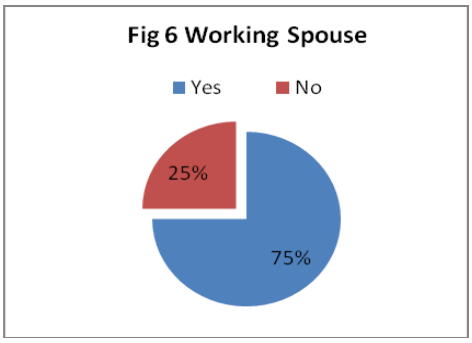


v.25% of the teachers are issueless.38% of them are having single kid whereas around 37% are having more than 1 kid. A typical observation is that the employees of the age group of 25to 35 years are having more than one kids (Fig 5).





Analysis



It is reaveled from the respondents information that the greatest impediment with the female college teachers is related to their job timing (which at times starts as early as 7 am) coupled up with commuting woes by using various means of transport which in an average takes 2 hours.In addition to that the respondents those who are female have to do household chores before leaving for work and to again do the same in a second phase after coming back from work.Almost having spending 12 hours in professional life it becomes very tiring and irritating to domestic assignments.By this they could not deliver quality output either at work place or at home front.

The respondents of the age group of 25to 35 are little more pressed at work place than those of the age group of 35 to 45.Most of them are concerned about kids and many of them put their kids in creches.Younger couple having more than one kid is restriicted to those who are staying in joint family.Most of the respondents are suffering from life style disease like anxiety,hypertention,acidity and loss of sexual appetite leading to friction between partners.

It is apparent from the fact that75% of respondents are having their spouse working (Fig 6) thereby mostly depending on housemaids for almost all their household needs.Any disturbance in this apparatus leads to conflict and irritation.And 25% spouse those are supposed to be not working in any regular job are mostly engaged in some hosehold or family business.Hence in reality they are also equally pressed in work.

Though there is no fashionable tag of working 24x7 attached to teaching profession as that of corporates but taking into consideration of lecture preparation,assignment evaluation and research activity(a pre requisite to promotion), it is much more than 24x7.Being assigned intellectual job, highly qualified but relatively lowly paid profession, led to much stress among college teachers as a whole.

Conclusion

In the professional excellence, an imperative need is to understand the ground reality and a balace between professional and personal life is essential.Without this the output will be only mediacore. Improper work life balance may lead to family conflict and inferior life style that would have a negative impact on qulaity ouput at the workplace.It is the general expectation that the employer to be sensitive towards the work life balance aspect of employees by incorporating flexible working scenario especially in teaching profession.In a city like Mumbai where it is mostly nuclear family system with both spouse working, work life balace being a biggest

challenge and unfortunately kids are being the biggest casuality.It is a matter of concern for both the employees and employer for building up a healthy and rational society.

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