

# Work-Life Balance: A Real Difficulty

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## Abstract

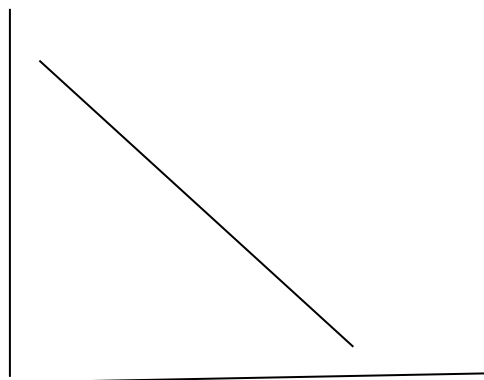
Work and Life both are important for any human being. Work is an activity which keeps somebody engaged and helps him or her to earn livelihood. Some can get it through own business or somebody for his own business. Here we are discussing about the second one. Life is a some part of life which somebody loves to do or just fulfil his or her duty. There is always a trade-off between work and leisure. The term work can be treated as money and leisure is that life which all want. But the problem of the modern society is to have a balance between these two. Everybody is trying to achieve the balance but unfortunately very few people can enjoy the balance position. In this paper an attempt has been made to understand the different reasons for imbalances. The data has been collected from secondary sources and I have put my own views to explain the different factors. The readers can relate the different factors with their personal life.

**Keywords:** Trade-off, Work-life balance, Mental piece, workload, modern society.

## Introduction

Work-life balance is a very attractive concept in the modern society. Society is changing with all

Work



Leisure

Work-Life Trade off

possible changes in the society. Some people can adopt it and some become failure and quit. Before I go into the depth of the term, I want to define the term 'work' and 'life' separately in my point of view.

Work is an activity which keeps somebody engaged and helps him or her to earn livelihood. Some can get it through own business or somebody for his own business. Here we are discussing about the second one.

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So obviously we can understand that when someone starts earning, for him money is more important and leisure time is less. This trade off between work and leisure is shown in the following diagram.

In this diagram, we can see the Work-life trade off, higher is the work, lesser is the time for leisure or life. As I have said before a person at his young age always wants more money through work but in the later stage people want more leisure or life than work.

## Literature Review

1. Goyal K.A, Agrawal A (2015) in the paper titled " Issues and challenges of Work life balance in banking industry of India" explained that Work life balance policies and programs are an investment in an organisation for improving productivity, reducing absenteeism, achieving improved customer services, better health, flexible working as well as satisfied and motivated workforce especially in banking industry. 2. Singh S. (2013) mentioned Role stress theory in his paper Titled "Work- Life Balance : A Literature Review" wherein the negative side of the work- family interaction has been put under the spotlight. Recently, the emphasis has shifted towards the investigation of the positive interaction between work and family role as well as roles outside work and family lives, and scholars have started to deliberate on the essence of work- life balance. 3. Jang (2008), studied "The relationship between work-life balance resources and the well- being of working parents" which aimed to study how working parents cope with work- life demands. The study used 27 working parents with either ill or disabled children in New Jersey. It was mixed research with both qualitative and quantitative results. The result talks about the effect of formal and informal workplace support in enhancing the well being of employees with the children in general and those with a chronically ill or disabled child in particular. 4. Murthy M. and Shastri S. (2015) observed various issues in Work Life Balance of Parents in the paper titled "A Qualitative Study on Work Life Balance of Employees working in private sector", like parenting issues: Need more time for children, Showing work frustration on children. Marital issues: Need more time of spouse, not able to give time to spouse. Role conflict/ Role guilt: Doubtful about how good they are in the roles that they play at home... eg. as a mother or as a daughter in law. 5. Phyllis and Yun (2002) mentioned strategies in paper titled "Effective work life strategies, working couples, work conditions, gender and life quality" focuses on dual earner families. It was concluded

and discussed in the study that the work life strategies and work conditions are different among genders. For example, some families prefer husbands working for a long hour and women to work part time or fewer hours. Women report more stress and overload and lower levels of coping when compared to men. Job insecurity is similar in both men and women. 6. Kumaraswamy M., Ashwini S.(2015) in paper titled "Challenges in WLB of Married working Women" studied that it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives. Generally those employees who have better work-life balance contribute more towards the success of the organization. The organization can render better service to the customers by having productive and efficient employees. Family sphere changes that have impacted the work life balance of individuals in today's context include nuclear families, single parent households, and dual earning parents, parents working at different locations and increasing household work. 7. Kumari L. (2012) in her study "Employees Perception on Work Life Balance and its relation with job satisfaction in Indian Public Sector Banks" emphasized that each of the Work life balance factors on its own is a salient predictor of job satisfaction and there is a significant gap between male and female respondents with the job satisfaction with reference to various factors of Work life balance. The result of the study had practical significance for human resource managers of especially banks to improve staff commitments and productivity along with designing recruitment and retention employees. 8. Shalini and Bhawna (2012) reported in their study, "Quality of work life balance" is being used by the organizations as a strategic tool to attract and retain the employees and more importantly to help them to maintain work life balance with equal attention on performance and commitment at work. 9. Santosh R. S., Jain R. (2016) in their paper "Study of Effect of Commuting & Working Hours on Work Life Balance of Working Fathers in Mumbai" proved that Long working hours and long commuting hours are seriously affecting the Work Life Balance of working fathers in metro cities. There is need to research and investigate further on this subject in order to improve lives and productivity of working men in metro cities of India. 10. Lazar I. (2010) in paper titled "The Role of Work Life Balance Practices in Order to Improve Organizational Performance", showcased

that everyone benefits from good practice in work-life balance. For instance: business through easier recruitment, improved retention, and easier service delivery, as the labour market grows more skilled and experienced people are available to work; parents and careers, who can spend quality time at home as well as providing financial support through work; people with disabilities, through improved access to work; and the workforce generally where they are better able to balance their work with other aspects of their lives. 11. Holly S. and Mohnen A. (2012) in the paper titled "Impact of working hours on work-life balance" connected working hours and satisfaction with desirable work-life balance. This balance is specific to each person and relates to satisfaction with a job and all other parts in life, especially family life and free time. Therefore, a good work-life balance results in high satisfaction. Their results show diverse perceptions and influences of job conditions on employees. 12. Isamu Y. and Toshiyuki M. (2012) in paper titled "Effect of Work -Life Balance Practices on Firm Productivity: Evidence from Japanese firm- level panel data" examined how firm practices contributing to worker attainment of Work life balance in Japanese firms from the 1990s. They have observed a positive Correlation between firm WLB practices and Firm's productivity. However, it is likely that this positive correlation results from the reverse causality in which firms with higher productivity tend to implement WLB practices because these firms can afford to introduce WLB practices and/or they face social pressure to fulfil Corporate Social Responsibility. 13. White M. et. al. highlighted the parameters in their paper titled 'High-performance Management Practices, Working Hours and Work-Life Balance' regarding selected high-performance practices and working hours on work-life balance, analysed with data from national surveys of British employees in 1992 and 2000. Alongside long hours, which are a constant source of negative job-to-home spillover, certain 'high- performance' practices have become more strongly related to negative spillover during this period. 14. Drew E. et.al (2005) in paper titled "Work/Life balance: senior management champions or laggards?" represented a major contribution to our understanding of the factors that inhibit the adoption and promotion of work/life balance by senior managers in other organisations/sectors. It also demonstrates that while there is a willingness

to discuss and countenance more flexibility there are serious negative perceptions about such arrangements that might contribute to work/life balance for managers and staff. There were generally negative views about WLB expressed by men and women in senior management. Men referred to the possible disruption caused by, and difficulty in balancing, WLB against business imperatives. 15. Gregory A. and Milner S. (2011) in paper titled "Fathers and work-life balance in France and the U.K : policy and practice" explored the impact of national institutional frameworks for work-life balance- within the broader context of national fatherhood regimes- on work organizations and on fathers' take-up of such measures, and the ways in which organizational (and sectoral) constraints shape. WLB policy provision and delivery, particularly as they relate to fathers. In the U.K, despite a discourse of gender neutrality, a tension between family law and employment law has been noted in this respect, while in France gendered assumptions about the provision of childcare mean that work-life balance policies are framed, sometimes explicitly, in terms of mother's need to reconcile home and family life. 16. Jonathon R. B. Halbesleben and Anthony R. Wheeler (2015) in paper titled "The costs and benefits of working with those you love: a demand/resource perspective on working with family" depicted that the role of working with family in the process of employee stress and well-being has been largely ignored in the research literature. This paper attempted to present a model, based on Edwards & Rothbard's (2000) writing in work-family linkages, to describe the role of working with family on employee stress and well-being. The model suggests that working with family leads to high levels of work-family role integration, which changes the manner in which work-family linkages function and provides unique demands and resources that shape the employees' stress experiences.

Balancing work and life depends on the person itself. There are many factors influencing the imbalances. The factors may be divided into two parts, Internal and External factors.

### **Internal factors:**

**1. Time Management:** Everybody gets 24x7 time in his or her life. But the person who can control his own activities (official or personal) can be a

king of his own life. Time management means balancing personal life, family responsibility and official work, life will be more smooth if a person can devote the time according to the requirement. But country like India, the scenario differs in case female workers. They generally don't manage the time but devote more time in family responsibility and official work, don't get time for own personal life. They sacrifice their own likingness and don't take care for her own health. For mothers it would be very difficult to manage time.

**2. Family responsibility:** At the young age in job, it is not so difficult to maintain work-life balance. But once the person get marriage and having kids, it would be difficult. So lesser the responsibility, higher is the involvement in work. Work gets more weightage than life. This phenomena is present irrespective of gender.

**3. Family support:** In a modern society, a general concept has come that to run a moderate life style, both the couple have to work. In this case two possibilities are there either, parents have to stay with the couple or no kids which is popularly known as DINK (Double Income, No Kids). A person irrespective of gender, family support can help to maintain balance between work and life.

**4. Mental Piece:** In this competitive world, every type of work gives more or less pressure on workers. That pressure on workers. That pressure sometimes makes the person to work at home. This brings irritation in personal and family life. According to APJ Abdul Kalam 'If a person cannot finish his work in time, that person would be treated as an inefficient'. But this is possible when a person enjoys mental piece and to make work-life balance. To maintain mental piece many people go for Meditation and Yoga.

**5. Source of Income:** Fearing for losing a job is a major problem in changing economic environment. This may occur in case of presence of Skill Gap at work place. But when a person thinks that his salary is not the only source of income, then he can enjoy the mental piece. He can be into a job which gives him flexibility and he can give more time to his family.

**6. Health Condition:** Health condition is the most important part of life whether it is devoted to professional work or in personal work. If health does not permit, a person cannot concentrate either

or person will be treated so called inefficient and mental piece cannot be maintained. If health does not support, he needs more support from family. In this case maintaining work-life balance would be difficult.

## External Factors

**1. Office Timing:** Many of the private organizations or corporate fixes up the time more than 9 hours. So workers have to spend around 10 hours in the office. So it is very difficult to spend time for himself or for family. But it is quite different in public sectors job. They have fixed time in office. So they can maintain the work-life balance.

**2. Transportation Facility:** In metro cities traffic is the major problem. After office one cannot reach home in home due to heavy traffic. Transportation is also an another problem. If a person depends on public transport, reaching destination would be difficult. If office provides vehicle then the person feel more secure and manage time.

**3. Position:** Higher is the position, higher is the responsibility and it leads to more work load. All leads to hamper the time for personal life. Generally they work at home till late night, leave the office late and it is expected by the higher authority. Some people also want higher position and give less time to family. For them maintaining work-life balance would be difficult.

**4. HR Policy:** Different corporate follows different HR Policy. Liberal policies gives flexibilities to employees specially educational Institutions are more liberal.

## Conclusion

Every human being has the right to live his life on his own way. But we are suppressed with the different social circumstances. We compare us with others and lead an artificial life. One should give at least 10 minutes to him or her to understand the reason for his or her own existence. Whatever he is doing, is he happy for that. If someone fulfil his responsibilities and satisfies others, ultimately he will be alone. This is the high time to understand own soul. He must understand the different reasons for work-life imbalances in his life.