

Work-Life-Balance: Implications for Women Entrepreneurs

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Abstract

Work life balance is used to describe the balance between an individual's personal life and professional life. A healthy work-life balance assumes great significance for working women particularly in the current context in which both, the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for women. The dynamics of the work environment have exerted enormous pressure on working women as they need to cope with virtually two full time jobs – one at the office and the other at home. Review of literature related to the subject has revealed that working women experience greater difficulty than men in balancing work and family. It is also found that they experience conflict as there is job spill over into the home more frequently than home spill over into work. Besides to succeed in one environment, working women are often called upon to make sacrifices in another as each of the environments makes different demands on them and have distinct norms to adhere to.

Key words: *Role analysis, Work life balance, working women, Work pressure, Government policies*

Introduction

Women of the 21st centuries can be easily referred as superwomen! They not only manage a total 9-5 job but also make sure that their home is not falling apart. Women are considered not only as fairer sex but also as weaker sex and always to depend on men in their family and outside, throughout their life. Entrepreneur is the key factor of entrepreneurship and now women are successful in this as they have qualities desirable for entrepreneurship development. To an economist, an entrepreneur is a person who brings together resources, material, labor, and other assets into combinations so that their value can be greater than before, and, also one who introduces change, innovations, and inventions to fulfill the need and demand of customers. In rural areas, female participation in employment outside the home is in fact viewed as slightly inappropriate, subtly wrong and definitely dangerous to chastity and womanly virtue (Dube & Palriwala, 1990). Entrepreneurship is a suitable profession for women than regular employment.

What is Work–Life Balance?

Work-life balance refers to the level of prioritisation between personal and professional activities in an individual's life and the level to which activities related to their job are present in the home. Stress is a common feature of a poor work-life balance. In the information economy mental stress has been identified as a significant economic and health problem, causing by a perceived need of employees to do more in less time.

Research Studies

A woman entrepreneur is defined as a woman who has started or inherited a business alone or with one or more partners and is willing to bear financial, administrative, and social risks and responsibilities, and involve herself in the day-to-day management affairs of the business (ILO (2006). As women are economically and socially lagged behind than men, so it very challenging to develop women entrepreneurship (Haque and Itohara, 2009; Rahman, 2009). Women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh have been contributing significantly in all segments of the economy. But, the situation prevailing in the country is not conducive to female entrepreneurship (Rahman, Muhammad Ali Mian, Bhattacharjee, & Khan, 1979). A close and critical analysis reveals that women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in such developed nations as Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and the United States. Additionally, a good number of studies regarding the entrepreneurial initiatives of women have been reported worldwide (Key, Gunterberg, Holz, & Wolter, 2003; CIBC, 2004; Jahanshashi, Pitamber, & Nawaser, 2010). However, the situation prevailing in developing and underdeveloped nations is not as conducive to female entrepreneurship.

Rationale of the Study

Women in our country always remained a victim of neglect and discrimination and were not allowed to perform their due roles in the economic or social life of the society. Recognizing the injustice meted out to women in the past, the architects of our Constitution took special care to guarantee equality of rights and opportunities for women in political and social fields and to specifically prohibit any discrimination particularly in matters of employment, wages and human conditions of work. The plight of women in India and especially in Punjab is of great concern. Women are moving towards entrepreneurship by taking successful women entrepreneurs as their role models and the problems they encounter. This study can be a guiding tool for those women who want to start with entrepreneurial activities and make them aware of the challenges they can encounter and also make them aware of the various government and non government support.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

A study on 400 women entrepreneurs engaged in small scale registered units in four selected districts of Punjab. The required data were collected using questionnaire. Keeping first objective into consideration the critical success factors were analyzed. Various hypotheses have been designed, formulated and analyzed from different perspective. The scope of present study restricted only to the four selected districts of Punjab viz., Ludhiana, Patiala, Bathinda, and Sangrur. The universe of the study consists of women entrepreneurs of small scale registered units.

As per the responses of the respondents on how they think whether it is easy for them to balance their business and family life then 77.8 percent of the women entrepreneurs feel that they can easily balance their business and family life as compared to male entrepreneurs. On the other hand 22.2 percent of the respondents feel that it is difficult for them to balance their business life with family life. women entrepreneurs who are not having any child so far were 17.7 percent

nvolved in decision making in family while those who were having one child were 63.2 percent nvolved and women entrepreneurs with two children were 19.1 percent involved in family ecision making. The Chi square value calculated comes out to be 4.529 with df=2. As the alculated value is more than the table value null hypothesis is rejected

**Time spend for home making activities.
On a working day**

| Time | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 3-4 hrs | 150 | 37.5 |
| 4- 5 hrs | 116 | 29.0 |
| 5-6 hrs | 134 | 33.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

On holiday

| Time | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| 4-5 hrs | 120 | 30 |
| 5-6 hrs | 116 | 29 |
| 5-7 hrs | 26 | 6.5 |
| 6-7 hrs | 138 | 34.5 |
| Total | 400 | 100 |

Women entrepreneurs in Punjab devote time in home making activities along with their business related activities. On working days, as reported by respondents, 3-4 hrs is spend by 37.5 percent spondents on home making activities. 116 respondents spend 4-5 hrs on home making activities on working days. 5-6 hrs is spent by 33.5 percent of the women entrepreneurs on their

home making activities. On the other hand, on holiday's women entrepreneurs, as responses percent of the respondents spend 4-5 hrs on home making activities. 29 percent responder spend 5-6 hrs, 6.5 percent respondents spend 5-7 hrs, and 34.5 percent of the respondents spe 6-7 hrs on home making activities.

Work Life Balance (WLB) Issues of Women Entrepreneurs

After overcoming many inherent disadvantages related to the deeply embedded tradition mindset and stringent etiquette, today we find Indian women engaged in different types traditional (e.g., garment-making, beauty care, fashion design) as well as non-traditional (e. founding financial institutions, educational institutions, entertainment companies entrepreneurial activities. In addition to their challenging entrepreneurial work, many of the women must also perform several roles in their families (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Roles of Women Entrepreneurs



Recommendations for Indian Organizations

- Formulats

Conclusion

Work/life programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, red absenteeism, and retain organizaing policies to create congenial women friendly work environment.

- Establish training programs for women like mentorships, career guidance and leaders development.
- Promote awareness programs that highlight the value of women managers.
- Active involvement of women employees in making policies, promotion and performa review processes.

Make accommodations for women in areas such as need-based postings. That is, as done in civil services, have a policy to post both spouses to the same district or state.

Have a true commitment to hire and promote women and include women in the annual business strategy. Gain knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. In today's global marketplace, as companies aim to reduce costs, it falls to the human resource professional to understand the critical issues of work/life balance and champion work/life programs. Classify the working women based on age (25-35, 35-45 and above) the organization concentrate on 25-35 age group because in that age women's have more responsibilities in home as well as in working place. Work life balance programmes create win – win situation for employees as well as employer.

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