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Work Life Balance Of Female Employees

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Introduction:

Human resource of the organization is an important asset considered for sustainable competitive advantage, survival and the success of the organization. Organizational goals are the main motive of each and every employee who is working in an organization. Certain factors influence the behavior of the employees and it is necessary for the organization to look after these factors which affect the behaviors of the employees so that the productivity and profitability of the organization can be maintained and improved. Quality of work life is related to welfare of the employees at workplace, and it also affects the lives outside the workplace of employees such as family, leisure and social needs. The psychological needs of the employees can be met through the use of quality work-life techniques.

Work life balance is of growing concern in every workplace, and that it forms an important parameter during job search process. Interference between work life and family life is a common phenomenon. People differ in their perceptions, lifestyles, exceptions, likes, dislikes, societal and cultural backgrounds, and so forth. They differ widely in their attitudes towards their professions and responsibilities for family including children and other members of the family and society. A person performs variety of roles throughout a day, and while performing them he/she likely to get more involved in some roles. However, he/she must execute all the roles. Thus striking a balance among all these roles emerges as an inescapable need.

An unhealthy work life balance affects not only the productivity of the employee but also creates negative impact on his or her relationship with employer, colleagues and family. Indeed today, the need of the hour is to find appropriate balancing techniques that match the ever changing dynamic corporate scenario. In view of this, several companies through their HRM are devising policies and programs to boost Work-life balance from all horizons that include spending quality time with family and friends, improving lifestyles, allowing work from home, flexi timings, pursuing hobbies, having outreach and similar stress busting activities to make environment conducive to work. But in practice, it has been observed that with all policies and programs in place, balancing work and life has become a stressful task as the boundary between them is becoming blurry.

Work Life balance and Women Employees:

The twenty first century promises to be an era of equal opportunities for all, particularly men and women in political, economic, social and personal areas. India has remained largely agrarian and traditional, despite decades of modernization efforts since its independence in 1947. In recent years, with the increased pace of urbanization and modernization, Indian society is undergoing rapid changes. In addition other factors like demographic and social changes, increased

female literacy rate focus on higher education, exposure through media and increasing work opportunities and the widespread acceptance of women working outside the home have also resulted in women taking up employment. Indian women irrespective of their social and economic classes have entered into paid occupations.

Why Work Life Balance is Important to Women?

Today's career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments to home. The majority of women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% are struggling to achieve work/life balance. Women reported that their lives were a juggling act that included multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips, on top of managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. "Successfully achieving work/life balance will ultimately create a more satisfied workforce that contributes to productivity and success in the workplace." Employers can facilitate WLB with many schemes that can attract women employees and satisfy their needs.

Changes in the social, political and economic fabric of societies have influenced and continue to influence both the nature of employment and its relationship to life outside work. Work life balance has emerged as a hot topic in recent years– fuelled in part by changing trends in women's social roles. Whilst labor market participation has increased for women of all ages, women continue to shoulder the main responsibility for organizing and undertaking unpaid caring work.

In India, it is taken for granted that economic activities are exclusively the prerogative of males while domestic work, child bearing and child rearing are the sole occupations of women. Historically, women in India have not enjoyed a good status in workplace settings whether in managerial or operative roles. Since times immemorial, women have been burdened with work of all sorts all through their lives. From reproduction to all household chores and outside, their role as worker is significant, unique and burdensome. But they are discriminated and exploited all over.

Significance of the study:

Work life balance is dynamic phenomenon; it is not a simple structure but an ongoing process. Constant struggles in the effort to maintain a balance between work and personal lives can have serious implications on an individual. This gets aggravated because use of technology and increasing competition among organizations. By nature, it is also individual based, although there are several common issues across different types of people. It stands established that job affect and creates job holders. The pressure of work or personal lives can lead to stress. It has been found that stressful situations can take a toll on a person's health, both physiologically and psychologically. Pressure, stress, or tension in work life can also lead to bad social life and vice versa. Employees should maintain a healthy balance between work and their private life.

Review of Literature: Work Life Balance can be achieved in different ways by different people. Hudson (2005) defines work-life balance (WLB), in his broadcast sense, as a satisfactory level of involvement or a 'fit' among the multiple roles in person's life.

'Our lives are becoming increasingly complex with every passing year. We have more choices, more opportunities, and more demands placed on us' says Clutterbuck (2003), author of 'Managing the work life balance'. One's work life and personal life are interconnected and interdependent.

The conflict begins when the burdens, obligations and responsibilities of work or the family roles become incompatible. Sometimes, complying with an obligation or favoring the other also results in a strenuous situation. There are various reasons for this imbalance and conflicts in one's life. The reasons may be individual carrier ambitions, pressure in work place; demands form family, or any other reason. Broadly, these reasons could be situation specific or individual specific.

Schermernhorn & John (1998) believes that in order to improve the quality of work life, the following factors must exist in the organization: fair and adequate pay, health and safety of workers, creating opportunities to learn, growth in the professionalism path, professional integrity in the organization, support of individual rights and proud of the job.

Work-life balance has always been a matter of concern for those who are interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). The success of any organization is highly dependent on how it attracts recruits, motivates, and retains its workforce. Today's organizations need to be more flexible so that they are equipped to develop their workforce and enjoy their commitment. Therefore, organizations are required to adopt a strategy to improve the employees' quality of work life to satisfy both the organizational objectives and employee needs.

Benefits of Work Life Balance:

Recognized benefits of work-life balance policies for employees include:

1. Improved work-life balance – a reduction in the impact of work on home and family life
2. Reduced stress levels
3. Control over time management in meeting work-life commitments
4. Autonomy to make decisions regarding work-life balance
5. Increased focus, motivation and job satisfaction knowing that family and work commitments are being met
6. Increased job security from the knowledge that an organisation understands and supports workers with family responsibilities
7. Decreased Health Care Costs and Stress-Related Illnesses :With increasing company focus on the high cost of health care, work/life programs are becoming an intelligent choice to help lower the number of health care claims.

Barriers or challenges to Work Life Balance :

1. **Only paper work no implementation:** Many organizations have the policies only on paper .There is very less concern for the implementation of the policies .
2. **Lack of communication:** Communication about work/life programs is essential. Although an organization may offer a rich menu of work/life benefits, the desired effect—yielding positive business results—is unlikely to occur if employees do not know about the programs or understand them.

3. **Team Work:** Introducing, operating and implementing work-life balance requires collaborative working and is very much an holistic process .
4. **Time Consuming:** Implementing a WLB strategy takes time. Timescales for implementation need to be realistic.

Conclusion:

The changing economic conditions and social demands have changed the nature of work throughout the world. The concept of Work life balance is becoming more and more relevant in an ever dynamic working environment.

Work-life balance remains an issue that requires considerable attention from society. The changing nature of the global economy, where organizations often operate on a 24/7 schedule and technological advances have made it possible for an employee to be connected at all times, has ushered the work-life balance issue into the forefront of the minds of many researchers.

The subject of how work-life balance can be achieved and enhanced has received significant and equal attention from both employers and employees. For future commercial sustainability, organizations need to ensure that they do not just encourage but mandate a practical and workable work-life balance policy, benefiting and meeting the needs of both, the organization and its employees. And importantly, organizations not providing real opportunity for employee work-life balance are opening themselves up to increasing numbers of dissatisfied and unproductive employees and hence increased attrition rates. Merely creating a work-life balance framework is not enough; fostering an organizational culture that supports the use of available policies is also of great importance. Work-life programs have the potential to significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism and retain organizational knowledge, particularly during difficult economic times. Thus work-life balance programs offer win-win situation for employers and employees. Employers have realized that a “burnt-out” employee is nearly useless, and that a satisfied employee is the key to the future success of an organization. To this end, many organizations have developed work-life programs to assist employees in handling the conflicts that may arise between work and the rest of life.

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