

## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF EXECUTIVES AND THEIR SPOUSE IN INDIAN CONTEXT WITH REFERENCE TO MUMBAI CITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Globalisation, privatization and liberalization at workplaces have changed the socio-cultural environment and creates imbalance in the work life and personal life of employees. Coupled with increasing demand from the organization, rising expectations from the spouse and growing stress levels etc., have also made difficult for people to adjust with their work and family lives. Therefore, the present day, organizations are required to create the understanding about value of work life balance and introduce effective and efficient measures to balance their work and family together. At the same time the perception of executives and their spouse towards work life balance in Indian context may differ at various stages of life. This is much more interesting to understand the dual perspective of working couples about the Work life balance as maximum such cases are part of the population of the present scenario.*

*Hence, this paper is an attempt to bring out such issues and practices prevailing in Indian context. The materials reviewed were obtained through searches of academic, business and sociological data base containing generalized research evidences and case study findings.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Quality of Work, Work-Life Balance, Workplace Challenges, Socio-Cultural Aspects, Indian Professionals*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Human resource is the most valuable and unique asset of any organization. In the present diversified, ever changing and competitive world managing people is more complex and critical as innovation and creativity are the need of the hour. People are required to be aligned with the demand of the organization and necessity of the economy. LPG (Liberalized, Privatized and Globalized) has brought this diversification in the work group and created the task much more difficult than ever before. Human Resource Management is conceived to be different from the traditional and conventional notion of Personnel Management. Subsequently, Human Resource Management (HRM) has become the central concern of any organization either in Central Government, Public sector, Private sector, or Co-operative sector.

A country may be rich with natural and physical resources, but these resources are of no use unless quality human resources are available. Quality people can produce quality product. Managing, developing and motivating human resources are not only difficult but also challenging task for any manager in today's changing and highly competitive environment. Of all the tasks of management, Likert (1967) says "Managing the human component is the central and most

important task According to Ginzburg(1990) the growth, surveillance and development of any organisation is dependent upon the moral values, attitude and thinking process of the employees and directly related to the decision-making competencies of the executives. “Motivated people are productive “is the mantra of the hour. Involvement, commitment and loyalty are the outcome of motivation. All said and done, this is possible from a healthy and peaceful mind both at home and workplace. To have that healthy body and mind of employees, most of the organizations are trying to revolutionize the setting where they can work at ease and comfort.

The government of India has also endorsed many Laws for work life balance for the employees i.e. Factory Act 1948 for health, safety, working condition, provision of paid leaves, provision of crèches and limited working hours. Maternity Benefit Act 1961 has provisions for maternity and Childcare leaves for the working women in any organisation. But, at the ground level, all these facilities depend upon the top management and the situation where they can and cannot be implemented. Never the less, welfare measures are implemented mostly in Government organisations and for workmen only. Hence, the interest arises to understand the coverage of such facilities in private sectors where people spend their maximum time and contribute more for the benefit of the organization. But at the same time due to excess workload, huge responsibilities, long working hours, extended commuting time and cutthroat competition for survival they go through high stress and negative feelings which damage the individual’s personal life.

When we are discussing about “work life balance” the present paper considers perception of people in different ways, like, some of the executives(male) consider work life balance is the timely coming back to home, sleeping at scheduled time, sharing quality time with spouse and children and doing yoga and exercise daily to keep them happy and healthy. At the same time work life balance for some other executives (females) is participation of spouse in household chores, coming home at scheduled time, week end outing and living together. Unmarried executives (both male and female) consider the work life balance is social security, recognition, development and growth of themselves.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Doble and Supriya (2010) pointed out that that in IT companies in India, both men and women prefer flexible working hours and working from home as options to improve their work –life balance. In fact, it is true for women as they see value more when they get the flexibility in their timing, child-care provisions at workplace and consideration by their managers at the time of emergency at home. Most of the time the “spill over effect” of the professional work harm the personal life of both the genders. Hence, the need is a good working environment with supportive boss. In Indian context only IT companies provide for telecommuting and somewhat of flexible working options and the rest of the policies are widely used in the developed countries Singh (2013) . It is not only about policies it is also about the perception of employees.

Rastogi and Bansal (2012) stated about the perception of roles of different genders. In Indian society particularly, spouse support plays a significant role in the career decision of married working women. As per the study, married Indian women professionals give family as their priority than their career. So, for them if they are coming out to have their career, they need support from spouse and from the organization. A few companies in India have started providing family – friendly policies, however still there is a long way to go in making work – life policies in application across all industries. With the rise of dual career couples in recent times the various work – life policies like flexi timing and childcare support would become the need of the hour. Therefore, Indian companies need to be more sensitive to the need to resolve work – life conflict and should improve their work – life balance practices. Huhtala et al (2012) in their study found out that mothers of very small children working in shift duties who have their spouse working in regular day job. This is because,

shift work gives them more opportunity to successfully balance their work and family life.

Kar and Misra (2013) reported that in IT sector, work – life balance helps in retention of employees in the organization. Conducive organization culture which is very supportive of implementation of work – life policies like, flexible timing and flexible working arrangements, leaves, career breaks and opportunities for childcare, help employees to be part of the system. Therefore, it can be said that good management practices and supportive organizational culture recognize work and life needs of its employees and provide policies which enhance employees' involvement and commitment resulting in loyal employees.

Thriveni and Rama (2012) stated that there is relationship between work – life balance issues and demography of employees in organizations. Thus, while designing suitable policies it is important to see the type of organizations, gender and marital status of maximum employees, as married women need flexi policies to have their work life balance. At the same time women employees at the top-level experience significant increase in the responsibilities at the work place which also creates considerable impact on both family and work front. Income level of the female employees is also a deciding factor for work – life balance because with increase in income the employees can meet certain needs of their family by engaging the service of domestic helpers and service providers which can significantly improve their balance and their ability to manage both homework and professional work with ease. The family structure also impacts the perception of work – life balance. Women living in joint family structure may have more responsibilities at home, but they do not have to worry about taking care of their children as parents, in laws and other family members give childcare support and manage the children in their absence.

Singh (2013) reported that in India family – friendly policies for managing work – life balance can be divided into two parts. The first part is called employees' benefit policies which consist of providing employees the facility of taking care of their dependents without causing any interruption to their career. The legislature provides for maternity benefits of six months, crèches for taking care of children and feeding breaks for nursing mothers. The second part of the family – friendly policies are called work reorganization programs and it consists of various job restructuring activities like telecommuting, flexible working hours, working part time or doing job sharing. Now, work-life balance is not a major issue only for female employees it is also a concern for male employees. The amount of time they spend for their career needs also special attention. Organizations in India do not provide noticeable work – life balance policies neither for male or female. However, employees often are provided informal support of co-workers and supervisors to decrease the stress resulting from overwork and work–life imbalance. So even though there is dearth of adequate formal work – life initiatives and legislation regarding it in Indian context, the employees can still manage to cope with the stress of work – life interface with the help of supportive work culture and also with the support of informal family – friendly policies of the seniors and colleagues. The research also pointed out that maintaining work – life balance was not only the responsibility of the employer in the Indian context, rather employees to have a bigger role in managing their work – life balance. It has been seen that employees from joint family structure do not face excessive stress of work life imbalance as they had their family members, parents and in laws support to help them with their responsibilities of childcare and domestic chores. The breaking up of joint family systems and westernization of the Indian values have increased the work – life imbalance of the employees. In addition, many dual working couples engage themselves in late- night parties which enhance the stress level and work – life imbalance. Now this has extended to academic Institutions also. A study conducted by Mearan et al (2013) reported that job satisfaction of school teachers had a negative relationship with both work family conflict and family work conflict. This meant that an increase in job satisfaction will result in decrease in employees' experiencing both work –

family conflict and family – work conflict. Majority of the teachers in the study were very satisfied with their work and did not want to change their job as they found the job exciting and interesting. However, teachers who had high level of job satisfaction were concerned about the ill effects of the strenuous teaching job over their health and felt their job was not well respected in the society. In addition, the research also found out that the length of service of an employee had a positive relationship with work – family conflict. This is because as the length of service of the employees increased, they became more experienced and were more competent to do their work. This enabled them to cope better with demands of both work and family and experienced less of work – family conflict. However, the teachers in the study were middle aged with mean age of forty-three and with average of eighteen years of service but they had small children or were divorced and single parents of their children. Therefore, the teachers in the study experienced work – family conflict with increase in the number of years of service.

Dulk and Peper (2007) stated that very often employees did not use work life policies offered by their organization because they thought it may hamper their career and they would be given less interesting work in future if they could not prove themselves in the assigned assignments.

Ramadoss (2013) stated that demand for the job is related with Work family policies of the organization and the awareness of the employees about those policies. People are very much concerned about the facilities provided by the company with the salary they are going to get..Therefore research found out that the existence of work – family conflict in the employees’ life, the support of the supervisors regarding usage of work – life initiatives and the availability of compensation benefits impacted the employees’ knowledge of the availability of work –family initiatives available in their organization. On the other hand, a significant relationship existed between employees’ knowledge of work – family initiatives in the company and the usage of those initiatives to reduce the problems related to work – life imbalance. This indicated that the more knowledge the employees had regarding work –life balance policies operative in the organization, the more were the usage of those policies by the employees to enhance their work – life balance.

Thus, based on all above findings it is concluded that the responsibility of work life balance is not restricted to organizations only rather it goes to the employee’s awareness about the policies and family support which helps in a healthy work-life balance situation.

**Research Gaps:** -Many research studies have been undertaken in India on the topic mainly focusing of women employees and workers of IT sector, academicians, BPO, banking and public sectors. Few researchers have undertaken studies on gender perception and executive class employees. But studies have not been conducted on the spouse perception toward work life balance. After extensive literature review following gaps have been observed.

- There is no study where focus is on the Work- life balance from the Spouse perspective.
- None of the researchers have studied the perception of Executives class employees towards WLB in Indian context.

### **Purpose & Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the current research is to examine how the issue of work life balance is being perceived by executive class employees and their respective spouses. The reason for focusing on spouse perception of work life balance emerges from the literature review where no evidence was found on any study on how such an important concept, that impacts the life style of an entire family, is being perceived by the better half of the employee. Therefore, the objectives of this research are the following:

- To investigate how work life balance is being understood by employees and their spouse.
- To explore if there is any difference between employees and their spouse in experiencing various issues connected with work life balance.
- To figure out if any difference exists in the understanding and experience of work life balance among employees and their spouse based on various demographic parameters.
- To recommend strategies that organization can adopt to address the issue of work life balance from the lenses of both employees and their spouse.

### **Formulation of Hypotheses**

The hypothesis framed to undertake research is trying to find out the correlation of the perceptions toward work life balance of the executives and their spouse.

#### **Hypothesis-1**

**H 1o:** There is no difference in the understanding of the meaning of work life balance between employees and their spouse as there is rational trade -off between personal and professional satisfaction

**H1a:** There is significance difference in the understanding of the meaning of work life balance between employees and their spouse as there is rational trade -off between personal and professional satisfaction

#### **Hypothesis 2**

**H2o:** There exists a difference in the understanding of work life balance among employees and their spouse as Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front.

**H2a:** There is no difference in the understanding of work life balance among employees and their spouse as Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front.

#### **Hypothesis 3**

**H3o:** There is no difference in the perception of executives and their spouse as Work-life balance is about having control over your time.

**H3a:** There is significance difference in the perception of executives and their spouse as Work-life balance is about having control over your time.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

**H4o:** There exists a significant difference in understanding by the employees and their spouse towards Work-life balance is as about being satisfied both on personal and professional front.

**H4a:** There exists a significant difference in understanding by the employees and their spouse towards Work-life balance is as about being satisfied both on personal and professional front.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

**H5o:** There exists a significant difference in opinion as executives and their spouse are able to devote enough time to complete family responsibilities

**H5a:** There exists no difference in opinion as executives and their spouse are able to devote enough time to complete family responsibilities

### **SCOPE OF RESEARCH**

The research has been conducted to find out the different perception among executive class employees and their spouse with respect to work – life balance. Therefore, the scope of the research is limited to the following parameters:

The perception of executives and their spouses towards Work – life balance has been studied on the basis of following factors: -

- The area of study is confined to the city of Mumbai which is cosmopolitan in nature and has enough variability in the population to help in generalising the finding of the research.
- The research is limited to the employees working in the Government and Private sector undertakings.
- The research is limited to the executive class employees, who are defined as belonging to the management cadre and is not included the workmen class.
- The focus of the research is restricted to the employee and his/her spouse and is not extended to other family members.

### **IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH**

The purpose of the current research is to examine how the issues of work life balance is being perceived by executive class employees and their respective spouses. The reason for focusing on spouse perception of work life balance emerges from the literature review above where no evidence was found on any study on how such an important concept that impacts the life style of an entire family, is perceived by the better half of the employees.

The research focuses on employees and his/her spouse perceptions towards of work – life balance in the public and private sector where it can also be understood if work – life balance is considered an important factor for achieving a happy and prosperous life.

The importance of the research can be summarized as follows:

- Male employees and professionals have not been given much importance with respect to research on work – life balance in India. The transition from traditional gendered roles, emergence of nuclear families and rise in rate of divorce in India has resulted in work –life imbalances in male professional’s life as well. Therefore, the research includes both the male and the female perspectives on work –life balance.
- The outcome of this research will enable employees as well as employers and organizations to understand the importance of work – life balance as a strategic tool to achieve a happy a meaningful human life.
- The importance of the study may be significant toward improvement in the status of society in respect of healthy family relation.
- The research report may be useful and significant due to differences in perception of executives and their spouses being a reason for future research.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Data Collection: Data for research is collected by the help of self-structured questionnaires by personal interview and considered as primary data. Since the data is collected directly from the source thus chances of error is very negligible.

**Type of Research:** Research is based on primary data and the research is of diagnostic type to understand the perception of the executives and their spouse whether there is any difference exists or doesn't exist.

**The Sample Unit:** is collected from the executives and their spouses from the public and private sectors of Mumbai city.

**Sample Size:** Total 150 respondents each (executive and spouse) were approached for the requisite information.

**Type of Sampling:** Probability random sampling (stratified) is used for data collection.

**Data Analysis:** Data is analysed by the help of cross tabulation and non-Parametric test (Chi Square)

**Table 1: Wife Able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities \* Husband Able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities Cross Tabulation**

		Your Husband able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities(Wife)			
		Never	Rarely	Some Time	Often
Your Wife able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities(Self)	Rarely	1	0	1	1
	some time	0	6	10	1
	Often	0	3	9	18
	Always	0	4	35	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>39</b>

**Table 2: Your Wife Able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities \* Your Husband Able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities Cross tabulation**

		Your Husband Able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities(Wife)		Total
		Always		
Your Wife able to Devote Enough Time to Complete Family Responsibilities(Self)	Rarely	0		3
	Some Time	2		19
	Often	6		36
	Always	34		92
<b>Total</b>		<b>42</b>		<b>150</b>

**Analysis:** As per above table the wife perceived as their 22% approx husbands are always able to devote enough time to complete their family responsibilities whereas husband is perceiving 62 % husband are perceiving that they are devoting enough time to complete family responsibilities.

**Table 3: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	90.482 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	59.626	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.261	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 7 cells (43.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16



**Analysis**

As per above table report the calculated value of the respondent about devoting enough time to complete family responsibilities 59.62 is less than the tabulate value of Chi square at 9 Degree of freedom thus we can reject the null hypothesis saying that there is significant difference exist between the perception of executives and their spouse .

**Table 4: Work-Life Balance is about having a Rational Trade-Off between Personal and Professional Satisfaction [Self] \* Work-Life Balance is about having a Rational Trade-Off between Personal and Professional Satisfaction [Wife] Cross Tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about having a Rational Trade-off between Personal and Professional Satisfaction[Wife]		
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure
Work-life balance is about having a rational trade-off between personal and professional satisfaction[Self]	Strongly Disagree	0	1	0
	Disagree	0	3	5
	Not Sure	0	4	10
	Agree	2	9	31
	Strongly Agree	1	2	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>61</b>

**Table 5: Work-Life Balance is about Having a Rational Trade-Off Between Personal and Professional Satisfaction [Self] \* Work-Life Balance is about having a Rational Trade-Off between Personal and Professional Satisfaction[Wife] Cross Tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about having a Rational Trade-off between Personal and Professional Satisfaction[Wife]		Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	
Work-life balance is about having a rational trade-off between personal and professional satisfaction[Self]	Strongly Disagree	0	0	1
	Disagree	1	1	10
	Not Sure	11	1	26
	Agree	27	8	77
	Strongly Agree	7	11	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>150</b>

**Analysis:** Based on above table 24 % executives and 4% are strongly agreed further 51 % husband and 18 % spouse are agree that work life balance is about having trade-off between personnel and professional satisfaction. Majority of executives are perceived that Work life balance is about having trade-off between personal and professional front in compare to spouse very few are agreed upon. Thus we can conclude as there is significant difference between the perception of executives and their spouse towards work life balance.

**Table 6: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.437 <sup>a</sup>	16	.048
Likelihood Ratio	23.715	16	.096
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.031	1	.014
No of Valid Cases	150		

a. 16 cells (64.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.



**Analysis**

Based on result from Chi square test the Chi square calculated value (23.7) at 16 Degree of Freedom of devotion of time to complete family responsibility is much less than tabulated value (26.437) hence we will reject the null hypothesis concluding as there is significant differences exists between the perception of executives and their spouse towards work life balance.

**Table 7: Work-Life Balance is about having Control Over Your Time [Wife] \* Work-Life Balance is about having Control Over Your Time[Self] Cross Tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about having Control over your Time[Self]			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree
Work-life balance is about having control over your time[Wife]	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1	5
	Not Sure	0	1	2	7
	Agree	0	5	12	48
	Strongly Agree	0	3	2	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>79</b>

**Table 8: Work-Life Balance is about having Control Over Your Time [Wife] \* Work-Life Balance is about having Control Over your Time [Self] Cross Tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about having Control over your Time[Self]	Total
		Strongly Agree	
Work-life balance is about having control over your time[Wife]	Strongly Disagree	0	1
	Disagree	2	9
	Not Sure	0	10
	Agree	21	86
	Strongly Agree	20	44
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>150</b>

**Analysis:** Based on the report from the above table majority of executives (57%) are agree and 29% are strongly agreed about Work-life balance is about having control over your time and at the same time only 14% spouse agree and 13.5% spouse are strongly agreed about Work-life balance is about having control over your time. Thus it is clear that the thinking about work life balance of executive and their spouse are different

**Table 9: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	162.857 <sup>a</sup>	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.417	16	.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.992	1	.002
No of Valid Cases	150		

**Analysis:** Based on result from Chi square test the Chi square calculated value (27.417) at 16 Degree of Freedom of WLB is control over your time much less than tabulated value (162.857) hence we will reject the null hypothesis concluding as there is significant differences exists between the perception of executives and their spouse.

**Table 10: Work-Life Balance is about being Satisfied both on Personal and Professional Front [Wife] \* Work-Life Balance is about being Satisfied both on Personal and Professional Front [Self] Cross Tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about being Satisfied both on Personal and Professional Front[Self]		
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure
Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front[wife]	Strongly Disagree	1	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0
	Not Sure	0	0	1
	Agree	0	1	0
	Strongly Agree	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**Table 11: Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front [wife] \* Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front [Self] Cross tabulation**

		Work-Life Balance is about being Satisfied both on Personal and Professional Front[Self]		Total
		Agree	Strongly Agree	
Work-life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front[wife]	Strongly Disagree	0	3	4
	Disagree	2	4	6
	Not Sure	9	15	25
	Agree	20	14	35
	Strongly Agree	19	57	80
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>150</b>

**Analysis:** Based on the result of above table it is understood that approx. 53% executives strongly agree and 23% agreed that work life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front whereas only 13% spouse are agreed and 12.5 % are strongly agreed about work life balance is about being satisfied both on personal and professional front .thus it is clearly indicates the differences between the perception of executives and their spouse are significantly difference.

**Table 12: Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-Sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	33.794 <sup>a</sup>	16	.006
Likelihood Ratio	23.792	16	.094
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.557	1	.212
No of Valid Cases	150		

a. 19 cells (76.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

**Analysis:** Based on result from Chi square test the Chi square calculated value (23.792) of WLB perceived as being satisfied at both personal and professional front is much less than tabulated value (33.794) hence we will reject the null hypothesis concluding as there is significant differences exists between the perception of executives and their spouse.

## FINDINGS SUMMARY

From the above study it is understood that the differences in perception about work-life balance in the views of executives and their spouse on the issues are to be understood in similar manner, so that work and life can be balanced by focusing appropriate attention at both places. Majority of executives believe that the work life balance is about control on your time, devoting enough time to complete family responsibilities, rational trade-off between personal and professional satisfaction and satisfaction at both places. At the same time the views of spouse are entirely different from the executives for all

issues. Now the time has come for both, organisation and the executives to put their effort in better way to balance the work and family life with the lances of spouse so that the family and organisation both become heaven.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

From the above analysis based on various issues, we can conclude that the perception toward work life balance of executives and their spouse are significantly different. At Some extent both are agreed with and some places their views are entirely different. Thus, we can conclude the perception of executives and their spouse are significantly different.

## **SCOPE FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH**

The researchers have still grey areas to investigate in the differences in understanding of work-life balance between executives and their spouse based on various demographic data. Most studies have been done on women employees in various sectors, Especially IT; there is scope to investigate work-life balance in other group i.e., executives/ officers of Arm forces, police services, doctors and NGOs with the lenses of their spouses.

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