EMERGING SCENARIO OF WORK LIFE BALANCE IN INDIAN CONTEXT – A REVIEW

[1]Arun Kumar Walia, [2]Professor Ayesha Farooq

ABSTRACT : After the liberalisation policy of 1990 and with the subsequent removal of cap on FDI, MNC's entered Indian industrial circle tremendously. This resulted in increase in pressure for all the industries of the sector to work with greater thrust to maintain the survival by increasing the production levels along with maintaining quality. In order to attain these targets with the existing infrastructure, employees had to work after the normal working hours to complete the day's work. The hours in a day remaining the same i.e. 24, the employees have to save time from other activities which are mainly of their home and social circle which has resulted in the allocation of more time on work and less towards home/ society. As such the work front has sustained the external threat and the home front has suffered and come to back foot and as such disturbed the work life balance.

Key words: Work life balance; psychological contract; job satisfaction

Literature review on work life balance:

Ransome, 2007 defined Work-Life Balance as a notion which has been given vast number of meanings since the popularity of the term in 1959. Crooker, et al., 2002 remarked that the modern literature criticises the vagueness, puzzling ambiguity and misleading significance of the term, as this phrase comprises of two words put together i.e. 'work' and 'life', involving two disconnected words but having an individual at the centre. Harris & Pringle, 2007 wrote that many academicians have suggested other alternatives to this phrase also viz., "work-life integration" and "work-life mosaic". These alternate phrases have tried to remove the disparity between 'work' and 'life', favouring the assimilation. Therefore, it is evident that, "work-life balance" is not a static term, but one which is changing rapidly for relevance to a larger number of people. As the demand for higher productivity by the employer from the employees is increasing, the employees are under a constantly increasing pressure / stress to meet this demand of the employer. The moment the employees are unable to tolerate this stress, the life in general and personal life in particular gets disturbed. Thus to remain in a harmonious state, a balance has to be maintained between work and life. Lazarus, 1966 and Landsbergis, 1988 termed stress as intervening variable between work and life. The level up to which an employee can tolerate the stress is termed as Stress Tolerance Level (STL). A balanced state of STL , which is most desirable , is represented in Figure 1.
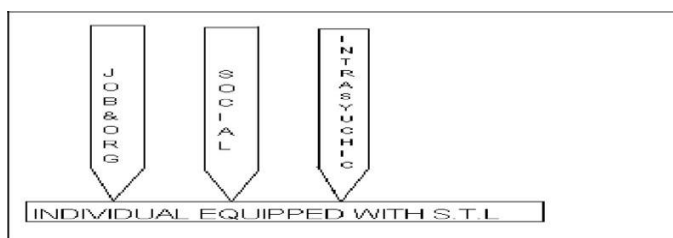
Figure 1: Organisation Individual Normal Interaction Pattern

However, if the stress level goes on increasing, then certainly a breakdown occurs which is shown in Figure 2.
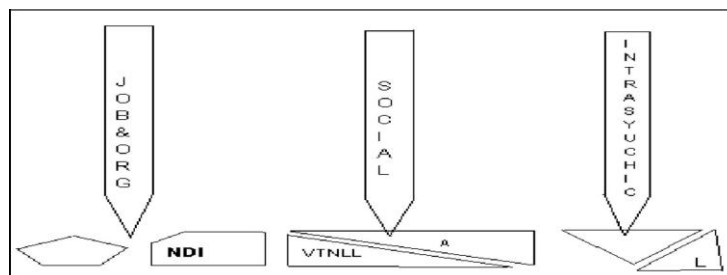
Figure 2: Breakdowns and Cracks: Failure in Coping

Raghvan, 1978, Ex-Chairman of BHEL, a public sector organisation, highlighted on the need of employee's participation in management and cited, "Equal participation of employees both in the work and life brings more satisfaction both at the job and the family life". Rice, 1985 emphasised on the rapport between satisfaction at job and the quality of people's life. The study conducted put forth the confronting opinion, that experiences at work and their outcome affect the normal life quality of the individual , directly as well as indirectly and has impact on family synergy , recreation exercises and health and energy standards.

Galinsky et al., 1991 while reviewing the balance between work and life, said "work life balance policies are ethical values for retaining competent employees and are excellent tools for employee's motivation". Their study revealed that the employees of younger generations benchmark their career progression not solely on attractive monetary job assignments but also on capability to upkeep a healthy balance between the work and personal life.

Landsman, 1994 disclosed in his study on working women, that "the facilities provided by the employer can help a lot in maintaining work life balance". These include provision of onsite child care or crèche , to diffuse tension on the minds of females regarding the care of their children , provision for the availability of good food for taking home will ease the life of women at home along with availability of exercise equipment / yoga tutor in the organisational premises which can be used by the employees to lessen their stress level as the reduction in the stress level results in increasing the work life balance .

Karrir and Khurana, 1996 in the study conducted by them on quality of work life of Managers in the three different sectors of work i.e. Public sector , Co-operative sector and Private sector put forward the results that some of the latent variables viz. qualification, migrant or non-migrant status along with pay along with physically or psychologically visible variables responsible for employee's motivation ,which include job satisfaction and job involvement, have impact on the work life balance.

Reynolds, 1999 while establishing the reasons for work life benefits to go meaningless , identified a link according to which it is of significance to know that organisational culture is open book and is always ready to support the programmes being initiated to enhance work- life balance programmes. As these changes require support from senior management so, it is desirable to have a "corporate culture which motivates employees to have a glance at the business in an entirely different way which supports and approves employees as individuals with preferences beyond the workplace".

Hom and Kinicki, 2001 said that organisations keep on considering and framing policies which manage a balance between the employee's work and life and always keep an enhanced intention to implement these policies since the application of these policies reduces the turnover of employees. Burke, 2002 was able to establish a gender specific importance of work life balance and said that, "Men feel more satisfied if they are in a position to achieve more at work even at the cost of their family". While on the other side, "Stress of females is equally important for work as well as life and both the phases i.e. life at work and away from work, are sources of satisfaction for them". For them, work is also of immense importance but if the work is a hindrance in taking due care of their family, they feel depressed, discontented and discouraged.

Burke and Collinson, 2004 in their study indicated that professionals consider flexi time working pattern / schedule as key to sticking of employees to the present organisation as with this system they can balance their time well between work and home. Felsteadetal, 2006 in the concluding remarks of the research said that, "Management's policy of work from home and flexi time working is preferred by both the genders, as it facilitates enhancing of the work life balance".

Nathwani.A, 2007 while studying the work life conflict problems, analysed and stated that individuals take up variety of grappling tendencies like joining sports club in order to remain fit , socialising with people having same tastes etc. The study established that employees of Chinese origin spend more time in going ahead with their hobbies as compared to employees of Indian origin and are curious to leave the employment if they feel that the work pressure is high. All these measures are adopted by employees to undo the impact of higher stress level because of the work life unbalancing to be re-adjusted to work life balance.

Anup Kumar Singh and Richaawasthy, 2009 studied different reasons and after effects of Work Life Balance and found sociological, organisational and individual drivers to be the root causes . As the professional prosperity and personal well being of managers is largely affected by the work life balance, so they have to be compassionate for maintaining it and have to adopt certain skills which are helpful in having a better work life balance. These skills include, management of time, delegation of authority, mediation, grappling with stress, faith etc. which aids in
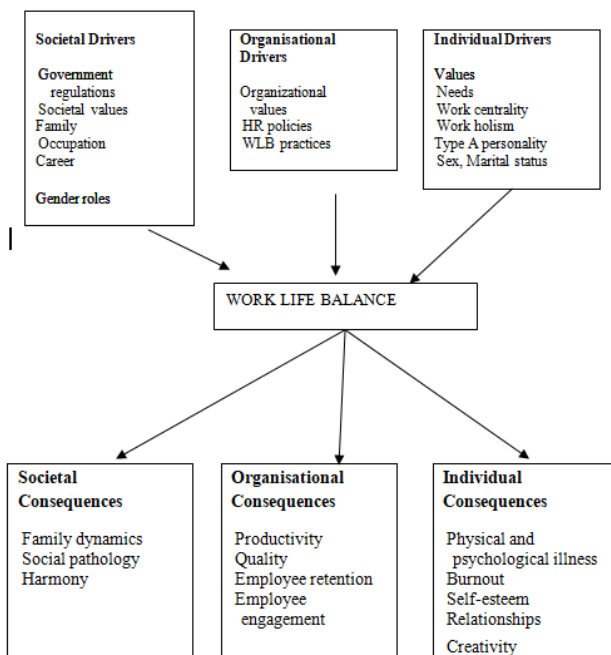
administering matters both at work and in family. The model showing causes and consequences of work-life balance is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Model showing causes and consequences of work life balance

Adopted from: Work-Life Balance: Causes, Consequences Andinterventions By
Anup Kumar Singh And Richa Awasthy, NHRD Journal , July , 2009.

A.K.M.Mominul Haque Talukder, 2011 studied how work life balance is getting effected and determined how the employees are balancing their work life with variables like work culture , job satisfaction , benefits being given to employees by employer , work environment , flexible work timings , work load distribution etc. He identified that work life balance is influenced by all these variables.

Rana Zehra Masood & Seema Mahalwat, 2012 in their research findings based on 300 employees of banks and insurance companies in Haryana , India , concluded that "work life balance concept is supported by flexibility at work place, decrease in overtime, leave and other benefits, measures for the care of dependents (like opening of crèches near the work place for the small children of working women, providing meals when employees are kept on overtime etc.)". They also advised that the organisations which ignore the modern trends and changes in demographic variables related to employee's work life balance will end up with lower productivity and lesser sticking of employees in the present organisation.

In the study conducted by Shalini and Bhawna in 2012 on work life balance remarked that , "Work life quality is being used as a critical device to acquire and keeping engaged the employees by the management and also to assist them in maintaining work life balance with equitable thinking on achievement and responsibility at the workplace ".

Vijaya Mani, 2013 in her study on the subject of work life balance of women professionals in India revealed that the factors which influence the work life Balance include " role clash , lack of appreciation , politics within organisation , discrimination on the basis of gender , children and elder family members care, health related issues and lack of societal / social support".

David Guest, 2003 presented a model depicting nature, causes and consequences of work life balance, which is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 : Nature , causes and consequences of work-life balance

Determinants	Nature Of the Balance	Consequences / Impact

Organisational factors
    Work requirements
    Working culture
    Requirements at home
    Home / Domestic Culture
	Subjective Indicators
	Balance–concentration equally at home and work.
	Balance –Centralised at home
	Balance –Centralised at workplace
	Spill over and or interference of work to home.
		Work Satisfaction
		Satisfaction of life
		Well being of mental health
		Stress / Illness
		Attitude / achievement at work
		Attitude / Achievement at home

Individual Factors
Direction of work
Temperament
Efficiency
Personal control and coping
Gender
	Objective Indicators
	    Working hours
	    Free time
	    Family roles
		Impact on others at home

| Age | | |
| Life and career stage | | |

ADOPTED FROM GUEST, 2003.

This model given by Guest shows a conventional structure for analysing work life balance. David Guest has suggested that, it is primitively designed to show the length and breadth and variables for consideration for carrying out factual analysis.

For illustrating the antecedents of work life balance, the term has been divided into two parts "Work Domain" and "Life Domain". The factors which come under work domain are, "Work Schedule" i.e. how many hours in a day the individual stays at work for his official work and for how many hours he/she spends with his / her family, "Wok Load" i.e. how much is the official work load allotted to the employee and whether he/ she is feeling fatigued after completing it or feeling relaxed , "Reward System ", i.e. whether there is a provision of giving rewards (monetary or non-monetary) for innovative work which makes the employee feel motivated , "Social Support" i.e. the support which the employee gets from his superiors , sub-ordinates and co-workers which makes the employee feel confidant and as such satisfied on the job , "Development" i.e. available opportunities for career growth and "Commuting " i.e. time spent in moving to and fro from home to work and back.

On the other hand, the factors which come under "Life Domain" include, "Household Responsibility" i.e. how much time and stress one has to devote for meeting his / her household responsibilities , "Domestic Help" is concerned with the fact that with the increase in household income because of the working of both the members , the cleaning and washing has been generally outsourced which makes the stress burden low , "Extended Family Support " i.e. while staying in a joint family , the work load at home is shared by all and as such the work load undertaken by each one is lowered , "Leisure Activities" i.e. with the availability of new entertainment sources like television , cable TV network , computer multimedia system etc. help in diverting the attention of all from work to a pleasure time and as such a change in mood.

Definitions of Work-Life Balance:

Thomas Kalliath and Paula Brough have reviewed the various definitions of the concept of Work-Life Balance as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Different perspectives of definitions of work-life balance
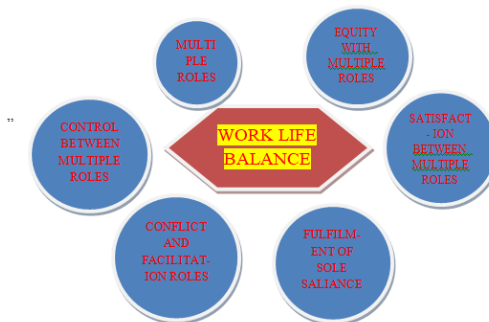
WORK LIFE BALANCE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

The work life imbalance incidents were quite common in western contexts , so maximum   researches were conducted in the western countries as stated by Voydanoff, 2004; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991. The reason for the same was that females in India and Asian sub-continent played the role of house wives in these countries and only males were the working hands. Moreover because of the prevalent "Joint Family" system in these countries, child care was by the females due to larger number of females and elderly non-working family members present in the house.   When women started working in India, they were mostly employed in education sector where workload is less and as such were able to maintain the work life balance. But with the increased trend of acquiring higher and professional education in India and their subsequent employment in Corporate / Banking / Insurance in which they have to stay for much longer working hours, the work life imbalance started emerging which resulted in many problems. Imbalance or poor work life balance reveals a wide variety of physical and psychological burdens, like irritation , depressiveness , lowering of self-confidence, relaxing inability , sleep disorder lack of sleep and increased illnesses, psycho-somatic disorders, burnout, low productivity, high employee turnover and the worst is increasing divorce tendency due to family conflicts. Recently, Kanwar, Singh and Kodwani, (in press) found that work-life balance is directly proportional to job satisfaction. Karatepe and Tekinkus, 2006 found that work family imbalances / conflicts increased emotional elimination and decreased job satisfaction.

According to Lewis et al., 2007, in the Indian context, financial up gradation is considered to be of more importance in comparison to "social well-being and human issues". As such , much factual researches tracing back to the economic metamorphosis of the nation has been carried whilst very few studies emphasised on the work life balance issue which came to the fore on account of this economic metamorphosis. The study on work life balance is divided into two parts : Life contexts and Work Contexts.

Life Context in India

In the Indian context , family is the basic unit of the society which is uni-cultural in most of the cases and multicultural in few cases where joint family and extended family systems are in existence. Formerly only joint family and extended family systems were in existence in which males acted as chief earners and females the chief caretakers, while women of upper castes and upper and middle economic classes were commonly encouraged to bear children and devoid of working outside their homes.

 But after liberalisation policy of 1990 , Indian society has seen several changes due to movement of people from rural to urban areas , equal status provided to females socially as well as legally , greater acquiring of higher education by females , increased employment opportunities for females , new state laws introduced by state for equal remuneration for all in employment with no disparity on the basis of gender , increasing consumerism , increased urban cost of living , availability of too much luxury items in the market , easy availability of loan advance (even zero interest facility and that also the principal repayment option in instalments), increase in salaries of employees and self employed , increased number of urban women seeking employment outside home as concluded by Ghosh and Roy , 1997 ; Bharat, 1994. With all these metamorphisms the joint family system has also undergone a change and has resulted into nuclear families. With most of the people now living in nuclear families , they have to arrange more gadgets for children for playing as both the parents are now working , so the buying tendency has increased compulsorily aided by easy finance options and with all these facilities in hand , more and more females are opting for employment.

D'Cruz and Bharat (2001) in a methodical and comprehensive examination of Indian family literature , established that the process of growth industrialisation and urbanisation has transformed the traditional family system and resulted into creation of nuclear families and that also with dual earning partners. Because of the increased presence of females in paid regular employments, the necessity was felt for the reworking of domestic responsibilities / job distribution in the family. Ramu, 1987 in his study, while comparing role of males in single and dual earning families said "certainly remarkable change in the approach of the husbands in India was noticed as far as domestic responsibilities were concerned ".Nonetheless , as far as the actual time spent on housework assignment is concerned , there is remarkable imbalance between males and females of the dual-earning families. Bharat , 1995 in his study based on 326 dual working partners belonging to different social and cultural groups said , " irrespective of the employment status , females allocated more time on child care activities , household engagements and other family concerns ". While males on the other hand dedicated their available time to less time exhausting activities such as household repair and managing accounting/ insurance / major purchase decision activities of the family .This perpetuation / preservation of customary gender exercises is because of two reasons . First, Indian males are not ready to change their household roles and secondly the Indian women also are not interested to go offensive for this role change. Shukla and Kapoor in their study on 101 families done in 1990 concluded that females in dual earning families enjoyed more share of authority in family in comparison to single earning families and still continue to prove themselves as "homemakers" by dedicating maximum available time beyond office hours on household works in the former case. Hence, as such the work role of females has not changed their approach and they continue with double responsibility performance i.e. of work as well as of home. Tarabadkar and Ghadially , 1985 in their research study using Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) proved that females in India beyond doubt, on account of multiple roles (i.e. as wife , as daughter , as daughter in law , as wife etc.) and double burden of work and family, are facing more work life conflict in comparison to males.

In order to resolve work life conflict/ imbalance originated because of the double burden of work and home, Indian women seek support from outside. Rao and Rao in their study of 1985, while studying the impact of improved socio-economic position of Indian families , established that urban females who are in employment also have great inclination of engaging domestic helpers on full time or part time basis for performing household activities. Although the services provided by these domestic helpers are quite costly and irregularity is also observed but this

practice still persists. On parallel lines, for getting these care responsibilities accomplished from outside, help is also taken from the extended members of the family in the Indian culture. This type of help is taken either by stay along relatives or at intermittent intervals on as and when required basis especially when the children are of schooling ages. According to D'Cruz and Bharat ,2001, with the emergence and continued increase in the nuclear family culture , the couples have gained as far as freedom and decision making authority vesting is concerned , but on the other side it has started losing continuously the help rendered by sustained family members for household and care sharing liability. If said that this phenomenon of creation of nuclear families has resulted into a permanent blow not only when the children are of young age but is observed throughout the life span.

Work Context in India

Since the ancient times, males used to go for work outside homes, so the arrangement and the pattern of work at the workplace has got designed and developed for working by males. Males sustain principal status at the workplace whereas the females relish with secondary status. In a study based on the survey examining gender pattern held by men and women at the workplace in India , Basu , 2008 , confirmed the discrimination and disparity faced and suffered by women as far as appointment , salary / pay package , job evaluation , career progression and provisions of welfare .

However in view of the changing education pattern of females and their increased employment tendency , the Government of India has come out with new legislations in which women has been kept at par with men as far as all these disparities are concerned . Budhwar et al., 2005 conducted in-depth interviews of females of varied organisations, with the aim of studying the status that the Indian female managers are enjoying. On the basis of results of these interviews, they have reached the conclusion that females have ventured in to the field of careers and designations which were exclusively for males. They further said that however, females still refrain in their choice of careers which require extensive travelling, relocation and staying away from their families are a regular feature. These developments although discernible but are not common. Khandelwal , 2004 in his study based on the Government of India , Labour Ministry's , Public and Private sector data established that a large chunk of Indian females are primarily interested for jobs for, Teaching, HR , PR , Administration and Accounts while jobs in production , marketing and engineering sections are widely largely left for males (The main reason for this is hindrance by rules and regulations of the state which prohibits working of women in night shifts and to some extent avoidance of much fatigue creating jobs by females).

The infighting and maintaining a balance between responsibilities of care taking of family and children and career , having an impact on the career progression of females is not only restricted to India but is a worldwide phenomenon. Kulkarni, 2000 in a study on "Canada – India Institutional Co-operation project on limitations encountered by females" observed that females , in most of the cases of transfer because of promotion , decline the offer as the promotion to next higher level will increase their responsibilities at work and as such they will have to shed off some responsibilities towards their family . Sandhu and Mehta, 2006 in a study conducted on 271 female executives in the service sector organisations, established that females in this sector anticipated imbalance in work life on the grounds of priority they require extensive travelling accompanied by working for meeting the targets are left with little time to devote to their families.

Buddhapriya , 2009 in a survey of 121 women professionals from diversified organisations (government, public, private and non-government) , concluded that females wanted organisations to be more abetting by giving them flexibilities in the form of flexitime working , easy availability of leaves and flexible work place.

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