

Assessing the Status of Work-life Balance: A Study on Working Mothers

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Abstract: According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (2023), the Female Labour Force Participation in India is 37% and increasing. Among these women who shoulder professional responsibilities with men in the workplace, many have another very important role to play which comes to her by virtue of being a woman, i.e. the role of a mother. A mother plays a vital role in the life of a human being throughout his/her life and holds a significant place in the home and in the society as a whole. In today's dynamic and demanding work environment, maintaining a healthy work-life balance has become challenging, especially for working mothers, juggling with career responsibilities and family obligations. This results in stress on both personal and professional levels which in turn impacts on her social, emotional and physical health. For working women to enjoy a high quality of life, work-life balance is essential. This paper is an attempt to assess the work-life balance among working mothers of different ages and in varied professions.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Women, Care, Working Mothers, Work Pressure.

➤ Introduction:

In the early ages, women were primarily confined to domestic duties, and very few were engaged in shops, factories, or fields. A handful were able to pursue higher education, and they were compelled to live with the sympathy of their fathers or spouses toward women and work. A greater number of women are now able to receive higher education because of the rapidly evolving information economy. Education, not only empowering them but also has provided them with successful professions. However, women now have a difficult task since they must handle several responsibilities at home and at work. Working mothers today balance the demands of their many duties by taking care of their families and attempting to be completely engaged in their work. Balancing their professional obligations with their caregiving responsibilities causes a great deal of stress for working women. Balancing work life stress on different factors such as professional responsibilities, personal commitments and time for herself even manage the conflict as well (Deshmukh's 2018). Working women are under a lot of pressure to integrate, organize, and balance multiple problems and responsibilities in their multiple roles at the same time. Studies have shown that a lack of work-life balance leads to stress, decreased job satisfaction, and burnout. Particularly, working mothers face a distinctive set of challenges in their professional life. Prejudices against their commitment to work, assumptions about their inability to work late nights or on weekends, and frequent absences due to family responsibilities may make them a restrictive factor in the recruitment process, increasing stress and frustration. She is juggling between work and motherhood, when combined with job demands and societal norms, it can lead to challenging choices for women who want to succeed in all areas. Changes in the workforce have also been accompanied by changes in values, resulting in a renewed focus on balancing between work and family life (Hall, 1986).

Childcare responsibilities are a major factor affecting women's participation in the labour force and a significant barrier to occupational mobility. Traditionally, women take the responsibility of family and viewed as nurturers and caregivers and associated with running and caring for a family. (Wattis, 2012)¹⁰. Men consider themselves the primary breadwinners of the family, and society also expects them to work to fulfill their family's needs. However, the composition of the workforce is changing, with a sharp decline in the proportion of women as housewives and men as wage earners (Sundaresan, 2014). Middle-class women facing challenges in balancing work and family life, particularly as women start to consider career progression and motherhood decisions (Buzzanell et al. 2005). Assessed the work-life balance of employees and discovered that, in addition to jobs, age, and caregiving obligations, weekly work hours and work-related stress were significant drivers of work-life balance. Working women who have work-life balance conflicts report higher levels of stress, headaches, muscular strain, weight gain, and depression than their male counterparts. (Lakshmi and Prasanth, 2018).

According to study, working women struggle more than males to strike a balance between job and family. Work-life balance is crucial, especially for working women who usually find it difficult to juggle their personal and professional commitments. In order to identify solutions for preserving a good work-life balance, this study looks at the variables affecting women's work-life balance as well as the effects of inadequate work-life balance. (Sundaresan, 2014). This study measured the work-life balance of employees and

discovered that, in addition to jobs, age, and caregiving duties, weekly work hours and work-related stress were major factors of employees' work-life balance (Kalpana and Deshmukh, 2018). Working mothers face significant obstacles concerning their roles in the home and at work. As a result, they encounter work-family conflict, which can take three different forms such as time, stress, or behavior-based conflict, which impedes their ability to advance in their careers (Dizaho, et al., 2016). The better work life balance creates several positive consequences whereas an imbalance between a person's job and family has a negative impact and can lead to serious problems for both individuals and organizations. (Alqahtani, T. H, 2020).

➤ Literature Review:

Working professional deals with different scenarios for daily work life. The idea behind work-life balance has important topic to deal and understand from the perspective of a women. This is concern of discussion due to difference between work life and personal life. Being a female its always be challenging to maintain balance between work life and personal life. For women employees who always ready to take multiple roles because she does not want to lose her identity and also wants to raise their family. During this navigation and hectic schedule needs a balance where she can take a moment for herself. There are many Researchers in the past has consistently highlighted this issue though their commendable work. This growing need to understand how women try her best foot forward to give her best on every role. Work life balance demand of the society which makes women feel happy and productive at the same time. In the competitive era needs their well-being, job satisfaction, and career progression to reach their goal and also living her life fullest.

Author(s) & Year	Paper Title	Journal Name	Focus Area	Key Finding	Relevance to Study
Lakshmi, N., & Prasanth, V. S. (2018)	A study on work-life balance in working women	International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research	Work-life balance in working women	Identified key factors affecting work-life balance among women professionals.	Provides empirical evidence on work-life balance challenges for women.
Bharadwaj, M. V., & Shanker, M. (2019)	Women at workplace and work life balance: a literature review	Semcom Management Technology Review	Literature review on women's work-life balance	Summarized existing research on factors affecting women's work-life balance.	Provides theoretical background for work-life balance issues.
Sundaresan, S. (2014)	Work-life balance—implications for working women	OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development	Work-life balance and implications for women	Highlighted socio-economic and organizational impacts on women's work-life balance.	Explores external factors influencing women's work-life balance.
Vasumathi, A. (2018)	Work-life balance of women employees: a literature review	International Journal of Services and Operations Management	Literature review on work-life balance in women employees	Identified common strategies used by organizations to improve work-life balance.	Offers insights into organizational approaches for better work-life balance.
Deshmukh, K. (2018)	Work-life balance study focused on working women	International Journal of Engineering Technologies and Management Research	Work-life balance of working women	Identifies challenges faced by working women in balancing work and personal life	Provides insights into difficulties and strategies for achieving work-life balance

Sigroha, A. (2014)	Impact of work life balance on working women: a comparative analysis	The Business & Management Review	Comparative study on work-life balance	Highlights differences in work-life balance experiences across different professional sectors	Helps in understanding sector-specific work-life balance issues
Mitnick, D. H. (2006)	The impact of working women on work/life balance perspectives	University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons	Changing perspectives on work-life balance due to women's workforce participation	Discusses societal and workplace shifts due to increased female workforce participation	Supports the study by analyzing historical and cultural shifts in work-life balance
Ali, S., & Ishrat, A. (2022)	Work-life balance: Women employee in organisation	NeuroQuantology	Work-life balance in organizational settings	Examined psychological and organizational factors affecting work-life balance.	Provides a recent perspective on organizational impact on work-life balance.
Wattis, L., Standing, K., & Yerkes, M. A. (2012)	Mothers and work-life balance: exploring the contradictions and complexities involved in work-family negotiation	Community, Work & Family	Work-life balance of mothers	Highlights the contradictions and complexities mothers face in work-life negotiations	Provides insight into the challenges faced by working mothers in balancing roles
Tripathi, V., Randev, K., & Shukla, S. M. (2016)	Determinants of work-life balance for working mothers	Management Insight	Factors influencing work-life balance	Identifies key factors affecting work-life balance, including workplace policies and family support	Helps understand determinants influencing work-life balance
Mitnick, D. H. (2006)	The impact of working women on work/life balance perspectives	University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons	Changing perspectives on work-life balance due to women's workforce participation	Discusses societal and workplace shifts due to increased female workforce participation	Supports the study by analyzing historical and cultural shifts in work-life balance

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This all paper's contributed to understand the need of work life balance for a woman. Working women needs a huge change on profession level where she can balance on both the different world.

➤ **Objective:**

Objectives of the study are:

- To assess the status of work-life balance among working mothers by examining the challenges they face in managing professional and personal responsibilities.
- To identify key factors like working hours, work involvement, and family responsibilities, affect working mothers work-life balance.

➤ **Research Methodology:**

1. Research Design

This study applies a quantitative research design to Assess the status of work-life balance among working mothers. A google form survey-based approach is used to collect and analyse data from a sample population of working mothers.

2. Sample Size and Population

The study was conducted among the working mothers, aged 20-45 years by using Convenience and Snowball sampling techniques. where 83 are responded. Participants, who are freelancers, full-time, part-time or self-employed were selected from various sectors like education, healthcare, IT Sector, corporate industries. All participants are mothers with at least one child.

3. Data Collection Methods

Survey: Google Form is use to survey, primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire designed using the Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar Scale, which is tailored to measure WLB. The questionnaire is divided into two sections:

- **Demographic Information:** Age, marital status, education level, occupation, and number of children information are asked of working mothers.
- **Work-Life Balance Assessment:** Questions to evaluate the ability of participants to balance their professional and personal lives.

4. Research Tools

Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar questionnaire which is tailored to use, as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire comprises Likert-scale-based questions (ranging from 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree) to quantitatively assess the status of WLB among working mothers. SPSS tool is used to analyse the data.

5. Ethical Consideration

Participants were informed about the study's objectives. Participants' names and identities were anonymized and data privacy was maintained.

➤ Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Percentage analysis was done to understand the proportion of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with different aspects of work-life balance.

Demographic Details:

Table 5.1: Age Status

Age group of mothers		
	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
20-25 yr	3	3.60%
26-30 yr	2	2.40%
31-35 yr	15	18.10%
36-40 yr	26	31.30%
41-45 yr	37	44.60%
Total	83	100.00%

Interpretation: The majority (44.60%) of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 41-45 years. 31.30% belong to the 36-40 years groups and only 3.60% of respondents are in the 20-25 years category. This study focuses on working mothers, the data set suggested that significant portion of respondents belong to mid-career (41-45 years) age group.

Table 5.2: Marital Status

What is your marital status		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Married	74	89.2%
Single	6	7.2%
Widowed	3	3.6%
Total	83	100.00%

Interpretation: 89.2% of the respondents are married, 7.2% are single and widowed are 3.6%. Most of the working mothers are married. Widowed and Single moms face more challenges making WLB in the society due to being a single parent.

Table 5.3: Employment Status

What is your current employment status?		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Freelance	8	9.6%
Full-time	55	66.3%
Industry of Work	1	1.2%
Part-time	5	6.0%
Self-employed	14	16.9%
Total	83	100.00%

Interpretation: The majority of the respondents are full time working (66.35%), self- employed are 16.9%, Freelance respondents are 9.6%. Full time job requires greater time commitments and make WLB more challenging.

Table 5.4: Income Level

Income Level (Annual)		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1,00,000 Rs, - 3,00,000 Rs.	19	22.9%
3,00,001 Rs. - 6,00,000 Rs.	18	21.7%
6,00,001 Rs - 12,00,000 Rs.	16	19.3%
Above 12,00,000 Rs.	15	18.1%
Below 1,00,000 Rs.	15	18.1%
Total	83	100.00%

Interpretation: Maximum mothers who were surveyed were having a Monthly Income between 1,00,000 to 3,00,000 Rs. Higher income groups might experience higher work pressure.

Table 5.5: Working Hours

How many hours do you work per week?		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
21-30 hours	12	14.5%
31-40 hours	25	30.1%
Less than 20 hours	17	20.5%
More than 40 hours	29	34.9%
Total	83	100.00%

Interpretation: Maximum mothers Work more than 40 hours, spend maximum time on their work place. It creates difficulties to balance WLB.

Table 5.6:

I have enough quality time for my family and personal well-being.		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	36	43.4%
Disagree	8	9.6%
Neutral	15	18.1%
Strongly agree	24	28.9%

Interpretation: Maximum mothers 43.4% are Agree to have enough quality time for family and personal well-being.

Table 5.7:

I set boundaries between my work and personal life effectively.		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	43	51.8%
Disagree	7	8.4%
Neutral	16	19.3%
Strongly agree	17	20.5%

Interpretation: 51.8% of working mothers are Agree to maintain a clear separation between professional and personal life. 20.5% are Strongly agree and 19.5% are Neutral. They establish boundaries to ensure that work responsibilities do not interfere on your personal time allowing for a balanced and fulfilling life.

Table 5.8:

I am able to manage my professional responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed.		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	45	54.2%
Disagree	7	8.4%
Neutral	14	16.9%
Strongly agree	17	20.5%

Interpretation: 54.2% working mothers are able to manage professional responsibilities without feeling overwhelmed are show Agree, 20.5% show Strongly agree, 16.9% are Neutral and 8.5% are Disagree. They have a good balance between their workload and their ability to handle it. They are confident in managing their tasks efficiently without experiencing stress or burnout.

Table 5.9:

Parenting responsibility is a source of stress as a working mother.		
	<i>No. of respondent</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Agree	27	32.5%
Disagree	32	38.6%
Neutral	13	15.7%
Strongly agree	7	8.4%
Strongly Disagree	4	4.8%

Interpretation: Above shows that Parenting responsibility is a not source of stress as a working mother because result show Strongly disagree percentage is 4.8%.

➤ **Finding of Study:**

Based on the analysis of data and interpretation, the major findings of the study may be summarized as follows:

1. While job, childcare, family, and social obligations take importance in the lives of working moms, their personal well-being including holidays, vacation time, spiritual needs, and leisure activities takes a backseat.
2. It is still exceedingly difficult for working moms, whether they are single, have dual parenting help, or are part of a joint family support system, to balance job, family, social obligations, and personal welfare.
3. Childcare remains the working mother's top priority, and single working moms are in most miserable state when it comes to their workload, childcare help, financial obligations, and the safety of their kids while they are at work.
4. Due to the absence of childcare facilities at work, job overload, lengthy working hours, and excessive compensation and lack of flexible policies, employment actually hinders working moms rather than providing them with the support and stable foundation they need.

➤ **Future Research Scope:**

- This study primarily included responses from working mothers in the 20-45 age group. Future research could be focus on young mother's professionals (aged 20-30 years who may face unique challenges related to early career stress, childcare responsibilities, and career progression.
- This study needs to explore different work profession women from various sector. Even in various sector different time shift working Pattern is there, so there is scope where more finding can be find.
- Working women who left job post pregnancy and come back to work after a gap that also need to think.

➤ **Conclusion:**

In short, from this research clearly emphasize that working mothers find it extremely difficult to establish a balance between their personal and professional lives. Widowed and Single moms face more challenges making WLB in the society due to being a single parent. Full time job requires greater time commitments and makes WLB more challenging, often leaving less room for house hold work and self-care. Freelance professionals face uncertainties in income and workload fluctuation but they may have more flexibility in work. Spiritual intelligence can serve as a coping mechanism, helping individuals in demanding jobs manage stress effectively. Health and wellness initiatives may assist working women in striking a balance between their personal and professional lives. Financial stability, on the other hand, makes it easier to obtain services that promote wellbeing, such wellness initiatives, home help, and childcare support. However, because of their financial constraints, professionals with lesser incomes could be under more stress. Along with motherhood, a successful career adds to the completeness of being a working mother. In order to do this, significant changes must be made both personally and professionally, allowing the mother to fulfil the twin roles of parenting and employment.

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