Work-life balance works as a medicine for the unhealthy work environment

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Abstract- This article is mainly focuses on the perspectives of Work-Life Balance in the present scenario. *Work life balance* has emerged as a hot topic in recent years. Due to changes in the labour market and the changing nature of work, work-life balance is now at the top of the agenda for government and Private bodies. . This topic also gained importance due to the quality of life which is **the prime need of the employees in today's working** environment. So this article describes the concept, techniques, and factors which are responsible for WLB concept. Work-Life Balance is not a problem to be solved. It is an ongoing issue to be managed.

Keywords: Work life, Job satisfaction, working women, Family, productivity etc.

1. Introduction

Today, Industries have realized the importance of the work life balance of their employees. Organizations are setting up policies for maintaining a work life balance. They are introducing innovative methods to keep their employees happy and satisfied, as it makes office a better place to work and also impact positively on productivity. This article tries to bring out the meaning of work life balance, their causes, their effects on organizations and the methods, systems and processes to reduce the impact of work life imbalance.

Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium between personal and professional life, which varies from individual to individual. As their priorities changes as the individual enters in different phases of life as well as jobs. It not only changes in priorities but also changes in status, like when one is unmarried, after marriage, after childbirth, when a new career begins and this keeps on changing till one's retirement. WLB depends on gender also as for males and females both the challenges of life are different. Work-life balance is used to describe the equilibrium between responsibilities at work and responsibilities outside paid work; having a work-life balance means that this equilibrium is in the right position for the individual concerned. For some people it means spending more time in paid work and less time at home, while for others it means ensuring that paid work does not infringe on time needed for other responsibilities. It is about managing our work commitments with career goals, and our responsibilities at home and the wider community. Work life and personal life are inter-connected and interdependent.

2. Literature Review

Work life Balance brings greater influence to all aspects of life. Employees work better when they do make time for family and personal interests. Thus, the issue has become pertinent not only in India but has become major issue of concern for all kinds of Industry worldwide. Lot of work has been done by researchers in order to explore the ways to maintain proportionate balance between work and life. Some of the research reviews are as follows-

Guek et al (1991), indicated that women reported more work interference in family than men, despite spending about the same number of hours in paid work as men. Although women spent more hours in family, they reported some level of interference in work. Kirchmeyer (2000) **defined WLB as ─achieving** satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time and commitment to be well distributed across domains. Greenhaus et al. (2003) have delved into the multiple roles definition of WLB with a focus on equality of time **or satisfaction across an individual's** multiple life roles. **WLB was therefore defined as ─the extent to which an** individual is engaged in─and equally satisfied with─his or her work role and family role consisting three components of work family-balance, time balance, involvement and satisfaction balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Hymant et al; (2003) indicated that intrusion of work demands into personal life (eg.working during the weekend) was related with reports of heighten stress & emotional exhaustion for employees. Furthermore, employees perceived that intrusion of work obligations into their personal lives negatively affected their health.

Alan Felstead (2007) **in his research on "opportunities to work at home in the context of Work-Life Balance"** finds work-life balance & Family friendly employment is much in vogue among politicians and business leaders. Kalliath and Brough (2008) have put forward their **own definition of WLB and defined it: ―WLB is the** individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with **an individual's current life priorities.**

Skinner and Pockock (2008) investigated the relationship between Workload, work schedule control, work hours and their fit with preferences and work life conflict among full time employee. It was found that the strongest association with work life conflict was demon- strated by work overload followed by work schedule control and work hours fit. Time Based work life policies, procedures and interventions were found necessary but not sufficient, for addressing work life conflicts. Vartha Raj & Vasantha (2012) studied the Work Life balance of working women in service sector. They specified that the ultimate performance of its employees which in turn depends on numerous factors. The relationship between personnel and professional life can be achieved through emotional intelligence.. Better emotion management is necessary in order to accomplish objective of life. Carmeli (2013), examined the extent of which senior managers with high emotional intelligence, employed in public sector organizations develop positive attitudes behaviour & outcomes. Results show senior managers who had high emotional intelligence were more likely to be effectively control work-family conflict than those who have low emotional intelligence.

3. Why organizations need WLB

In any organization a healthy environment leads to productivity. But if the employees will not be satisfied in the organization, this will promote the inefficiency and lack of job satisfaction. Which will again leads to absenteeism, poor productivity, less commitment, unsafe working environment. The effects of poor work life balance on the organization are as follows-

➢ Workers Punctuality, Teamwork, Customer service, work supervision responsibility, group behaviour, peer interaction and leadership initiative by workers are reduced due to lowered self-worth and morale in workers due to conflict in work life balance.

➢ Creativity, new job-expertise learning and innovation of worker are grossly undermined due to lowering of work related enthusiasm among workers.

➢ Workers having problem balancing work roles and family roles set bad standard in the company work setting and often upset the friendly work ambience.

➢ Workers problems get reflected negatively on **company's turnover, operating profit and** balance sheet.

➢ Substantial increase in the cases of workers being absent on the job and in extreme cases leaving the job.

To overcome the above factors, any organization should work in the mechanism of Work-life balance phenomenon. Organizations get competitive advantage out of it. As their employees are more satisfied and happy so they use this positive energy in their job and in the tasks assigned to them.

4. WLB works as a Medicine

In the above mentioned situations, Work-Life balance works as medicine for healing the unhealthy work environment. WLB is the state of mind which an individual have towards his/her life and work simultaneously. Managing both is not difficult but you need is the support from the organisation and one has to manage the family life too. There are some techniques which are useful in managing WLB. But before going to the techniques, we need to analysis the factors responsible for WLB. There are separate factors related to life as well as work, which are described as in the figure1.0.

Figure 1.0- Factors responsible for WLB

WLB is an art of balancing both lives as well as work at a same time. If one is unable to manage both at a same time, he\she feels mismanaged and invites stress. This leads to frustration and the next level is aggression. This affects the personal and professional life of an individual and also the personality of that person.

5. Techniques of Managing WLB

There are 25 techniques-cum-tips for managing and balancing work and life. One needs to follow these tips regularly so that he \she can set equilibrium between his\her personal and professional life.

- **Write a 'To-Do' list** for the next day before you leave the office.
- Keep careful documentation of files that you accomplish.
- Reduce your waste time at work i.e. unnecessary discussions with your colleagues, drinking coffee many times, and reading news paper at office time etc.
- Do not take office work at home.
- Take small breaks during work.
- Be involved in some social and spiritual activities.
- Take vacations with family.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Reward yourself after the accomplishment of any task.
- Stay healthy.
- Do exercise.
- Be positive, passionate and enthusiastic.
- Take e-mail vacations.
- Stay organised at home as well as office too.
- Have tea with your family.
- Be engaged in some of your hobbies.
- Learn time management techniques.
- Have firm faith in God.
- Do not depend totally on technology.
- Make realistic goals.
- Avoid smoking.
- Learn to say NO.
- Set priorities in your life
- Love your job.
- Love your life.

The above tips are the real time techniques adopted by many individuals and they are getting advantage of these. These techniques are collected after an in-depth interview of many bank, IT, educational and managerial level professionals. They suggested that the regular practice of all the above mentioned techniques will help an individual to manage their work-life.

6. Conclusions

It can be concluded that all individuals have different requirements at different stages in their life and therefore the concept of work life assumes different meaning at each of these junctures. Today with increasing demands at work place, the interface between work life and personal life assumed significance which demands more attention. The pressures of the work or personal life can lead to stress. According to studies, it has been found that such situation affects person's health both physiologically and psychologically. Therefore, it is important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives.

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