STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE AN ORGANIZATION A REVIEW

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to establish whether work-life balance initiatives and practices can be considered as strategic human resource management decisions that can translate into improved individual and organizational performance. The results of a number of studies reviewed in this paper show the outcomes and the benefits of implementing work life balance practices not only for employees themselves, but also for their families, organizations and society. Despite the fact that work-life conflict has significant business costs associated with lack of engagement, absenteeism, turnover rates, low productivity and creativity or poor retention levels, there are some factors of organizational work-life culture that may compromise availability and use of these practices The role of working women has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. This has resulted in a scenario in which working women have tremendous pressure to develop a career as robust as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in personal life. The ever-increasing work pressure is taking a toll on the working women leaving them with less time for themselves. The increasing

responsibilities on the personal front with the technological blessings like advanced mobile phones, notepads, etc.

Keywords: Work-life balance, integration, performance, flexible working time, work-place culture

1.0 Introduction:

Work-life balance practices are deliberate organizational changes in programs or organizational culture that are designed to reduce work-life conflict and enable employees to be more effective at work and in other roles. The transition from viewing work-life balance practices solely as a means of accommodating individual employees with care giving responsibilities to recognizing their contribution to organizational performance and employee engagement is an important paradigm shift that is still very much 'in process.' Competing and multi-faced demands between work and home responsibilities have assumed increased relevance for employees in recent years, due in large part to demographic and workplace changes, such as: a greater numbers of women in the workforce (dual-career couples), transformation in family structures (a rise in the number of single parents), a growing reluctance to accept the longer hours culture,

the rise of the 24 per 7 society, and technological advancements. In response to these changes and the conflict they generate among the multiple roles that individuals occupy, organizations are increasingly pressured to design various kinds of practices, intended to facilitate employees' efforts to fulfill both their employment related and their personal commitments. The way of how work-life balance can be achieved and enhanced is an important issue in the field of human resource management and has received significant attention from employers, workers, government, academic researchers, and the popular media.

Objective of study:

This study is basically for assessing the prevalence of work life among married working women. The purpose is also to present and discuss specifically the problems married women face in the process of balancing their work and family life. The study also aims to through some light on the effect of work-life balance on the quality of life of married working women. Previously, the female workforce in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, subordinate or low-profile positions. Now, they occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. These changes in work culture have added to women's duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society. The conflicts between competing work demands and personal and family needs seem to be the most probable reason for this scenario of work life conflicts.

Barriers to Work-life balance:

- Lack of communication of WLB strategies

- Attitudes and resistance of employers
- Unsupportive work environment
- Rigid organization culture
- Improper implementation of WLB policies
- Inflexible work schedules

2.0 Literature review:

Beauregard, Alexandra and Lesley C. Henry (2008),Practices that are meant help employees better manage their work and non-work times are called in the literature as work-family policies, family-friendly or family-responsive policies In recent years, the term "work-life balance" has replaced what used to be known as "work-family balance" This semantic shift arises from a recognition that childcare is by no means the only important non-work responsibility and the issue can be applies to any non-paid activities or commitments and to a diverse range of employees such women, man, parents and non-parents, singles and couples. Other life activities that need to be balanced with employment may include study, travel, sport, voluntary work, personal development, leisure or eldercare. From the very beginning it is important to understand that work-life balance does not mean to devote an equal amounts of time to paid work and non-paid roles; in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or 'fit' between the multiple roles in a person's life. Organizations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist

Clarke, M., Koch, L., and Hill E. (2004),employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide

organizational benefits. There are a large variety of family friendly policies which include but are not limited to the following: flexible working hours, job sharing, part-time work, compressed work weeks, parental leave, telecommuting, on-site child care facility, In addition, employers may provide a range of benefits related to employees' health and well-being, including extended health insurance for the employee and dependents, personal days, and access to programs or services to encourage fitness and physical and mental health. Still, other practices may support children's education, employees' participation in volunteer work, or facilitate phased retirement.

Eby, L.T., Casper, W. J., (2005),Job sharing may be appropriate where opportunities for part-time jobs or other arrangements are limited. Apart from the obvious advantage of allowing employees more time for other commitments, including family responsibilities, job sharing also facilitates the development of partnerships, where job sharers can learn from each other while providing mutual support. It can benefit employers as well by improving staff retention, increasing productivity and combining a wider range of skills and experience in a single job. In some cases, such an arrangement can also provide additional coverage during busy periods, while ensuring continuity of coverage when one partner is on sick leave or holidays. For business with substantial numbers of administrative, maintenance or customer-facing employees, offering flexible working conditions can be problematic.

Konrad, A.M and Mangel, R., (2000)actually, none of the known work-life

policies has been consistently found as beneficial for job performance. Also found no relationship between a composite measure of 19 work-life initiatives and productivity. While there is not strong evidence for the universalistic approach for work-life policies regarding their effects on job performance, Perry-Smith and Blum (2000) provide evidence for the configurationally approach. Specifically, organizations with a greater range of work-family policies (including leave policies, traditional dependent care and less traditional dependent care) had higher organizational performance, market performance and profit-sales growth. Work-life policies have not been studied yet from a contingency perspective while this can be promising in terms of effectiveness.

Wigfield, A. and Dennett. J. (2002),the effects of introducing work-life balance practices on employee attitudes and perceptions include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job stress and turnover intention. All of these factors, in turn, affect job performance, direct and indirect absenteeism costs, costs associated with the loss and replacement of valued employees, customer satisfaction, and organizational productivity; Although the formal evaluation of work-life practices is often difficult because of the problem of calculating the costs and benefits of different strategies, some companies have attempted to quantify the outcomes of specific policies.

3.0 Methodology:

Variables Influencing Work Life Balance Work- Life Balance means the competence to schedule the hours of an individual Professional and Personal life so as to lead a

healthy and peaceful life. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life The following variables influencing the experience of WLB were identified while reviewing the various literatures.

• Work Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict
• Women in various roles
• Career Advancement
• Work Stress
• Child care Work Life balance is not something that just happens.

It involves the efforts of a number of partners: the employee, the organization for which the employee works, the family with whom the employee lives and the society in which all are embedded. It involves mutual understanding and respect between all of these players

Work Family Conflict and Family Work:
Conflict Researchers define the incompatibility between the domain of work and the domain of family as work-family conflict. Conflict between these domains occurs when participation in one role is more difficult due to participation in the other role. Today, work-family conflict (work interfering with family) is more prevalent than family-work conflict (family interfering with work) though both can occur. However, regardless of the direction of causation, when one domain is discordant with another domain, the result is conflict and increased stress on the individual. As working women get married, they have additional responsibilities and when they become mothers, they have to manage the primary care of children and extended

family and are thus, under greater pressure to continue on a career path. Working mothers of today fulfil family responsibilities and also try to remain fully involved in their careers coping up with the competing demands of their multiple roles. The caring responsibilities that working mothers have lays a heavy stress on them when it is combined with their professional duties. The attempt of working women to integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles simultaneously puts them under tremendous pressure.. Besides the rapid increase of married women entering the work force while continuing to maintain the majority of the family and household responsibilities the interest in the topic has also in large measures been fuelled by the recognition that work-family concerns are highly salient for the well-being of employees. Empirical evidence also confirms that work-family conflict is often a severe stress factor at work leading to various negative outcomes, including impaired well-being The concept of work-family conflict has been explained by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, using the role theory framework.

Role of Women and WLB:
Women are mostly into full time services and are working 8 hours per day and 5 days in a week minimum and are confronted by increasing workload every day. So, most of them carry work and responsibilities to home but balancing between these two complex situations in the present day fast life requires talent, tact, skill and caution. Women have to come up with high work targets, office commitments, tight meeting

schedules and the duties and responsibilities of life and home. Employers should concentrate on framing various policies and schemes to facilitate Work life balance to encourage and attract women employees. in order to gain control over work and their identity in the workplace, women need to clarify with their bosses' the expectations about the workload that they can handle. They also need to manage spouses' and friends' ideas about how hard they need to work. A job includes components and requirements objectively defined by the organization; however, work/life balance must be constructed by an individual There are different kinds of unofficial techniques or behaviors that a woman, as an active manager of her own work/life balance, can use

Work stress and Work Life Imbalance:
 Stress at work, the stress of raising children, the stresses that come with aging parents -- any of these situations could provide a moderately high amount of stress. When women are faced with multiple roles, all of which carry heavy demands, they face levels of stress that are high enough to contribute to health problems, missed work, and a diminished capacity to take on more. Women are multi-takers by nature and enfold tasks within tasks. The Common causes of work place stress of women are:
• Unreasonable demands for performance
• Lack of interpersonal communication between the employer and the employees
• Lack of interpersonal relationships among the employees
• The fear of losing one's job
• Long working hours
• Less time to spend with the family

• Harder to balance work and home demands
• Treated inferiorly to your male colleagues

4.0 Results and discussions:
Despite its importance, there has been a lack of proper stress management programs. As stress affects the outcome of productivity, monitoring and managing job stress is extremely important. It is primarily the responsibility of an individual to balance work and life and initiate steps to reduce stress and burnout. The organization can indeed facilitate the process. The individual has to explore his values, aspirations, and goals to understand what he expects from work and life and then develop the suitable ways of balancing work and life. Hence, he has to introspect on his job contents, ways of coping and relationship management. On the other hand, organization can initiate cutting edge work-life balance practices to help the employees" mange their affairs more effectively. It can also train employees to understand the issues of worklife and stress management assistance programmers.

Determinants of Work-life Balance:
 The determinants of work-life balance are located in the work and home contexts. At work, the demands of work may be either too low or too high; and may support balance through policies and practices designed to facilitate balance, such as occasional time off and flexible hours, or may strictly limit these. Alternatively, it may demand and expect long and irregular hours and be intolerant of taking time off to deal with family emergencies. The demands of home refer to the commitments and obligations outside work. These may be individual factors or it may exist in the

family, in the community or through choice of leisure activities. Following determinants have been identified which impact the issue of employees" work life balance.

Stress and To Have a Balanced Work life:
A number of recommendations, based on current thinking and empirical literature may assist readers to work towards making work-life balance both a strategic goal and a reality in their organizations.

• Rather than classifying the workweek as five days long, allow employees to work four 10-hour shifts. This schedule enables employees to have three days off each week instead of the typical two-day weekend.

• When possible, incorporate a work-from-home policy. Offering this benefit even a few days per year can make a difference.

• Make day care available to staff on-site or incorporate a benefit which would provide day care at a discounted rate.

• Offer a tax preparation service benefit.

• Offer free gift-wrapping services during the holidays and for special occasions.

• Consider high-performers and present family vacation packages in addition to, or in place of, monetary bonuses.

• Offer concierge services to help employees balance the many errands in life.

Spillover of work into family life:
 Four factors were identified and analyzed to understand the spillover of work into family life. About 73% of men and 52% of women admit that they are not able to spend enough time with their families due to work related activities. About 54% of men and 47% of women believe that they have no clear leisure time since work overlaps into this period. Moreover, 38% of men and 50% of women have recurring thoughts of work,

even after they leave their place of work. Surprisingly, 55% of men and 50% of women feel that work pressures have affected the quality of family life. Work-family conflicts leading to health issues have been discussed by several researchers lists the results pertaining to the analysis across genders. The majority of men and women (without any gender differences) admit that they are not able to spend enough time with their family. Also both the genders observe that the boundary between work and leisure is blurred, which concurs with the findings of others There is an increased pressure due to recurring thoughts of work. Women admit more than men that the quality of their home life is affected. The Chi square results however indicate that there is no significant association between these variables and gender, implying that both genders believe that there is a negative spillover from work on to family life.

Conclusion:
Work life balance has become an integral part and parcel of many employees life. In today s global competition most organizations are trying to help employees achieve it so that their productivity and efficiency can be further increased. If the organization can help employees achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives then employees will willingly contribute more towards the organization and moreover sustainability of such employees in organization is largely based onSome of the strategies and skills at work such as planning, organizing and setting limits can be used at home and work place for accomplishing a satisfying and fulfilling well balanced life both professionally and

personally. Women employee should care the family both physically and financially to satisfy the family needs. Also work for the accomplishment of organizational objectives and individual upliftment to satisfy the career needs. Organizations need to adopt human resource strategies and policies to overcome the issues of the work life balance of women in the current business environment.

Scope for further research:

The work life balance, as a general issue, attracts scholars in various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, social work, policy studies or economics, and has been studied using different approaches. Work-life balance has come to the fore in contemporary debates largely because in affluent societies the excessive demands of work are perceived to present a distinctive issue that needs to be addressed.

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