

**“The Art of Managing SELF to balance Work-Life: Learning from Indian Epics”****Ayushi Vyas**

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**ABSTRACT**

Work-life balance is a term always used to describe work and life phenomenon. It broadly classifies the two-domain work and life; work - where an individual is involved in any physical or mental activity which gives him/her satisfaction or happiness in monetary terms. The other is life – where an individual spends quality time with family, friends, devotes time for self and satisfaction or happiness is measured in the form of smiles and hours spent with the loved ones. In today's fast paced world, bringing out perfect balance in lives has become very difficult because now times have changed dramatically. Due to new challenges, advancements in technology, economic revolution, work overload, stress has become the part and parcel of human life, which is the major cause of imbalance. This article broadly explores the recent trends, challenges, problems faced by an individual and discussing the probable outcomes for the same. The source of paper includes learning's from *Mahabharata, Bhagwat-Geeta, Vedas, Upanishads, Teachings from Spiritual Gurus*, journals, magazines and literature available on internet.

Keywords: Spiritual Awakening, Work-life Balance, Quadrants of human life, Self, Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagwat-Geeta, Mahabharata.

**INTRODUCTION****Work-Life Balance**

*“A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as u walk the tightrope of life” - (William Arthur ward).*

Balance is a must in all aspects of life. It's just like walking on a narrow bridge, as long as we keep ourselves well balanced, we will keep walking towards our destination. It involves time management, concentration and coping up with situations in the right spirit. The best way to maintain work life balance is to have time management. If we try and finish off the work in stipulated time frame, there will be no overburdening of work and thus resulting into better management of work and personal life; so leading to an ideal work life balance. The role of work has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social needs. Fact is, work was a matter of necessity and survival.

There was a time once, the role of “work” has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed. Work still may be a necessity however it ought to be a supply of non-public satisfaction further.

Therefore, tension and work target related pressure; work load at family makes an individual difficult to find balance between work and personal life. Professional working in industry, managers, doctors, directors, Academicians, bankers, and software professionals are the few examples that are facing the brunt of hazard constantly.

A convergence of powerful trends within the early twenty first century is pressuring employers to re-think their folks' practices.

Indeed, the temporal arrangement looks right to create the standard of labour life a strategic focus for business, as well as a public policy priority.

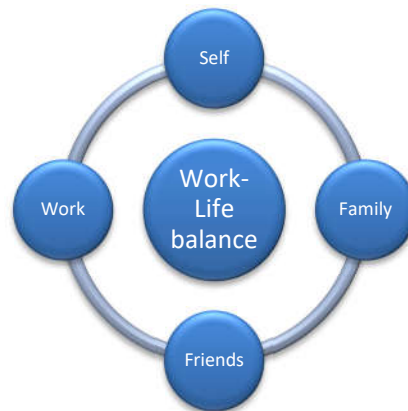
These challenges (workforce aging, increasingly competitive labour market, information technology and rising benefit costs) create new possibilities for employers to achieve organizational performance goals while simultaneously meeting workers' personal goals. At the same time, so many employees are experiencing a reduced quality of work-life.

This is mirrored most conspicuously in work-life imbalance and job stress. With more women employed than ever before and dual-earner families' common, work-life balance is an ongoing quest. A lot of individuals square measure having a harder time finding balance in their lives as a result of there are cutbacks or layoffs wherever they work.

This concept is too old. It has evolved from ages, from ancient Indian culture to the modern upcoming society. If the person is unhappy, he can never bring out the best in his work or in life.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of work-life balance can be described in different contexts. Work-life balance can be better understood by taking an example of a rubber ball. If you drop a rubber ball, it'll restore. But if you drop a Glass ball, it will be broken, shattered and will never get back to its original shape.



Illustrating the diagram, it is very clear that out of the four quadrants; only Work is a kind of rubber ball, i.e. if you try to neglect it by any how means, it can be regained. Rest all three, Friends, Family and Self, if dropped, can never be regained. The consequences are even harsh like unhappiness, dissatisfaction, discomfort etc. Discussing in detail:

### WORK:

Work is defined as activity in which an individual is engaged in any kind of mental or physical accomplishment in order to get the desired result. It can also be defined as a means of earning income or monetary benefit. Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines work as

“Any activity in which an individual is involved physically, and mentally to get desired output.”

### FAMILY:

Family is defined as group of people who are related with one another by blood relations or by marriage who always support each other and cooperate in all the activities. McDaniel.et.al (2005) defines Family as “group of people who are connected biologically, emotionally and legally i.e. the cluster of individuals that the patient

defines as important for his or her well-being".Stack (1996) defines Family as "smallest, organized, durable network of kin and non-kin who interact daily, providing domestic needs and assuring their survival."

### **FRIENDS:**

A friend is a person who listens everything, do not try to judge and tries to bring everything on its place. He is a person with whom an individual has affection, likes and trust. A friend is one who would always fight for you, respect you, include you in every action, encourage you to work hard, never disappoints you, deserves you and stands for you.

Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines Friends as:

1. "A favored companion".

### **"The SELF"**

The concept of SELF is a very unique area which helps in unwinding various aspects of human nature. In Hinduism, an individual takes birth after crossing 7.3 million manifestations in the form of animals, plants and insects, the rest 1.1 million are in Human form. Every unique creature sent on this universe has pleasant experience of its own.

The journey of SELF starts right from when a child is born to the old age. The person strives to identify the real Self, or tries to explore the purpose of his/her life. Life of an individual is a journey to self-discovery.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (2013)** reported that IT has positive impact on working domain of the software professionals as it has become the major part of human lives because of its anytime anywhere presence. It has direct impact on working and social lives of people. IT has penetrated in family domains of individuals and families which are socially connected has reduced family related stress. The more people spend time on computer at home, the more they perceive that they are able to manage roles and responsibilities.

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (30-31 January, 2014)** explained the impact of IT on determinants on Work-life Balance of software professionals with special reference to Indore Region. They identified that IT has both positive and negative effect on the determinants available. They found 11 determinants which were affected by IT and their effect was

calculated by correlation and regression. Those determinants were social support, organizational factor, IT and stress factor, IT factors, work issues, supportive factor from organization, family issues, social issue factor, work overload factor, Individual factor, lack of knowledge factor. Out of all these eleven factors, IT has positive impact on the ten factors but is negatively affecting organizational factor.

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (2014, January - June)** reported that when factor analysis was applied to work-life balance as a whole, they explored major 11 determinants namely social support (3.044), organizational factor (3.139), stress factor (3.767), IT factors (3.533), work issues (2.791), supportive factor from organization (1.486), family issues (2.758), social issue factor (2.703), work overload factor (1.241), Individual factor (1.977), lack of knowledge factor (1.56). All the factors have significant factor loading but major was for Stress Factor (3.767). Stress acts one of the major factors which creates imbalance in work and family domains and indicates that the line between work and family is blurring.

**Vyas, A., Gupta, A., Prajapat, A., and Dandwate, M. (29 nov. 2014)** studied how organizational effectiveness can be used in improving the performance of academicians in Indore region. They identified factors of organizational effectiveness through factor analysis.

6 factors were identified namely HR policies and cultural environment (5.755), organization enhancing employee effectiveness (3.218), strategic planning and QWL (2.488), Employee motivation (2.239), Training and development (1.484), Technology enhancing performance (1.459). Since, factor loading for HR policies and cultural environment and organization enhancing employee effectiveness is higher; it clearly indicates that these two factors have major impact on the performance of the academicians.

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (06 December 2014)** studied the scenario of work-life balance in 21<sup>st</sup> century. Due to economic conditions and social needs, the nature of work has changed. Now, work has become a matter of survival. Due to technological advancements, it has become both easy as well as difficult to manage work and life, but organizations have started taking serious efforts in bringing out policies in enhance WLB programs. They have started incorporating the concept of Flexi-time for their employees to bring out better result and at the same time employees can feel free to give time to their families and selves.

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (2016)** explored the work-life balance of women in Indore region. They studied a cursory look at the relationship between different variables and work-

life balance of women. As age progresses, women get married and they have more responsibilities which affect their work-life balance. Women living in joint families have more responsibilities at home but at the same time they do not have to worry about their children at home. Age, income, marital status, gender, type of family has significant effect on WLB of women. Flexi-time, job-sharing, compressed working week, parental leave, telecommuting, on-site childcare facilities are now being provided by organizations to enhance the working of women employees.

**Vyas, A. and Shrivastava , D. (2017, January)** provided an overview on various factors of work-life balance and its practices/policies. They proposed a conceptual model of work-life balance which explained that the individual is mainly affected by two factors namely **Individual factor and psychological and organizational factors.**

While the definition of work-life balance has embraced play besides love and work, much of the previous literature on work-life balance has focused on the work-family interface (Aryee & Luk, 1996; Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Lambert, 1990; Voydanoff, 1988; Warren & Johnson, 1995). Researchers have developed a number of mechanisms linking work and family: spillover, compensation, segmentation, resource drain, congruence, and work-family conflict (Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Evans & Bartolome, 1984; Lambert, 1990; Payton-Miyazaki & Brayfield, 1976; Repetti, 1987; Staines, 1980; Zedeck, 1992). Among them, work-family conflict has been the most widely studied mechanism which has been considered as role conflict (e.g. Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Voydanoff, 1988; Warren & Johnson, 1995; Williams et al., 1991). Kahn et al. have outlined role conflict because the “simultaneous incidence of 2 (or more) sets of pressures specified compliance with one would build harder compliance with the other” (1964, p.19).

The sets of opposing pressures have arisen as a result of participation in multiple life roles in which membership in one organization is in conflict with membership in other groups.

Work-family association is defined as “a style of inter role conflict within which the role pressures from work and family domains is reciprocally incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p.77) has been conceptualized by Frone (2003) as bidirectional. It occurs when role demands in one domain interfere with the demands of a role in another domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964). Demands and responsibilities from work role, such as overtime or take-home work can interfere with

family life or in conflict with the demands of family, making it difficult for individuals to fulfill their familial responsibilities. This is usually known as work to family conflict (Frone et al., 1992a; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Netemeyer et al., 1996). On the other hand, demands from family life can also interfere with work life in the sense that attending to family demands and responsibilities, such as household chores, eldercare and/or childcare responsibilities can make it hard for individuals to fulfill their work demands, that is commonly known as family to work conflict (Frone et al., 1992a; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Zedeck, 1992). Conflict occurs as a result of an individual's participation in one's role as a worker and the concurrent membership in the family as a husband or wife, son or daughter, and father or mother. The bi-directional nature of work-family conflict has rested on the scarcity hypothesis. The scarcity hypothesis argues that people have fixed amounts of physiological and psychological resources and they have to make tradeoffs between competing demands of different roles for their time and energy (Frone et al., 1992a; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986; Pleck; 1977, 1985) which influence the quality of experiences in the roles. For example, excessive work time and schedule has been found to create strain that triggers stress symptoms (Pleck et al., 1980). Likewise, energy and other resources devoted to the participation in one's role may make it difficult to participate in another role by interfering with the level of energy that can be devoted to the other role (Crouter et al., 1993; Piotrkowski, 1979).

Work-family has been showed to relate to greater psychological distress (Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Kelloway et al., 1999; Parasurman & Simmers, 2001) and has also reported to have adverse effects on the psychological well-being of individuals (Allen et al., 2000; Aryee et al., 1999a; Felstead et al., 2002; Frone et al., 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Martens et al., 1999; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Pleck et al. 1980; Pisarski et al., 1998; Sparks et al., 1997; Repetti, 1987; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Kahn et al. (1964) have identified work-family conflict as a significant source of strain for nearly one third of the men in their national sample. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) have reported a significant negative relationship between all forms of work-family conflict and both life and job satisfaction (Bedeian et al., 1988; Burke, 1988; Frone et al., 1992a; Greenhaus, 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1992; Perrewe et al., 1999; Rice et al., 1992). Apart from its impact on work domain,

Work-family has been found to have a negative impact on the quality of employees' family life, such as marital satisfaction (Gutek et al., 1991), relationships

with their children and spouses (Duxbury & Diggins, 2001). In contrast to the scarcity hypothesis which has concentrated on the negative outcomes of role engagement, Sieber (1974) has proposed the enrichment perspective in that engagement in multiple roles, or role accumulation provides access to various resources that can be utilized by individuals across various role performances. Marks (1977) argued that human energy is not finite. Participation in one role may lead to the expansion of energy and thus people can find energy for things they like doing. Frone (2003) has suggested that work-family balance included not only the bidirectional forces of work-family conflict. It also encompasses the positive influence of one role to another (Repetti, 1987). Individuals' engagement in one domain may lead to positive emotional response rather than negative response or strain (Verbrugge, 1986; Gove & Zeiss, 1987; Stephens et al., 1997).

The extent to that individuals' participation in one life domain (e.g. work) may bring resources, pleasurable and enriching experiences to another role (Marks, 1977; Thoits, 1991; Barnett & Hyde 2001), or is made easier by the skills, experiences, and opportunities gained by their participation in another domain (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz, 2002a) was commonly known as work-family facilitation. Similar to the operation of work-family conflict, work-family facilitation is bidirectional in that it involves both work-to-family facilitation and family-to-work facilitation. Work has provided financial and other resources which enabled people to support and be more functional in dealing with problems in family. Family, on the other hand, offers emotional support that buffer stress arising from work. As Rothbard (2001) has confirmed that both negative emotions (work-family conflict) and positive outcomes (work-family facilitation) can result from engagement in both work and family roles, the positive and negative effects of work-family interface were not two opposite ends of a continuum (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999).

Work-family facilitation has been found to be correlated with psychological distress. Individuals who occupied multiple roles (Thoits, 1983; 1986; Wethington & Kessler, 1989) have been found to have lower psychological distress. Ruderman et al. (2002) have showed that commitment to multiple life roles was positively related to feelings of psychological well-being, organizational commitment, job and family satisfaction (Kirchmeyer, 1992a; 1992b, Tompson & Werner, 1997; Wayne et al., 2004).

Though explanations may vary, work/life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life (Clarke et al., 2004).



## CURRENT SCENARIO OF WLB

The role of work has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social needs. Fact is, work was a matter of need and survival. Throughout the years, the role of “work” has evolved and the composition of the work has changed. Now days, work still is a primary need but it should be a source of personal satisfaction as well. In light of the recent economic conditions, there has been a sudden change in how corporations stated thinking about work-life balance programs. Still Corporations are not spending so many funds on these programs, but now they realized their importance for companies. Despite this a lot of crucial read regarding work-life programs, according to Jim Bird, benefits such as “Employee Assistance Programs are considered as a standard offering. Jim Bird argues that he doesn’t see them going.” Now a day, work-life balance programs were an added bonus to attract new blood and retain quality employees. Today, the working benefits also include other perks to employee fitness centers and dry-cleaning services with cars, houses and significant bonuses. Therefore, tension and work life pressure, duties at family creates difficulty to managing balance between work and personal life. Working in service industry, top managers, doctors, directors, bankers, and software professionals are the few examples who are facing these difficulties regularly.

Today, Organizations have realized the importance of the work life balance in originations for their employees and they are trying to setting up policies for balancing a work life balance. Companies are trying for innovative methods to keep their employees happy and satisfied, so it makes office environment better for working and also positively impact productivity of employees.

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Indeed, the temporal arrangement appears right to form the standard of labor life a strategic focus for business, as well as a public policy priority.

These challenges (workforce aging, increasingly competitive labor market, information technology and rising benefit costs) create new possibilities for employers to achieve organizational performance goals while simultaneously meeting workers’ personal goals. At the same time, so many employees are experiencing a reduced quality of work-life.

This is mirrored most conspicuously in work-life imbalance and job stress.

With more women employed than ever before and dual-earner families’ common, work-life balance is an ongoing quest.

Thus, with each employers and workers besieged to seek out ways in which to enhance the standard of labor life — and thru this, facultative workers to contribute their best efforts— surely there is common ground for action.

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND MASLOW’S HIERARCHY

**Yogacharini Meenakshidevi Bhavanani** illustrated the Maslow’s Need Hierarchy and explained the conversation between Maslow and Dr. Ananda Bhavanani (Swamiji), Swamiji asked him the reason for continuous happiness and Positivity. In reply, Maslow answered, that he has created a semi-permeable membrane around himself, which allows only happy, cheerful people, situations, and thoughts in the inner space. And all negativity is stopped at an arm’s length.



Fig. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow always preached constantly on the idea of Self-Actualization, in which he wanted every soul to realize how greater efforts can be made to make live meaningful. Maslow followed all the preaching’s from Indian epics and tried to relate that a person’s ultimate happiness depends upon the way he follows his true divine nature and in the guidance of The Supreme. He gave a proper “Blueprint of Successful Living”, which he named “Maslow’s Need Hierarchy.” This was a powerful thought which had significant resemblance with the concept of *Chatur Purushartha and Prakrithi, Samskrithi and Vikrathi* in Yogic-Hindu World View.

Basically, Maslow illustrated that every individual on this planet has his own needs ranging from lowest to highest level. To attain the highest level of needs, everyone must achieve the lowest and then only, upper needs can be fulfilled.

The perspective of Yoga Darshan states that development of every human nature has 3 possibilities;

1. **Prakrithi** – those which are basic to human existence (food, sex, emotional fulfillment, sleep, safety, security, enjoyment). These needs cannot be suppressed, has to be fulfilled and should be fulfilled in the limits of Dharma (Yama-Niyama, code of conduct).

Once the needs of Prakrithi are satisfied, then it is possible to refine, and add beautify to one's life style. After fulfilling biological needs of Prakrithi, one proceeds up to fulfill emotional, intellectual and aesthetic needs called Samskrithi. Prakrithi are satisfied by Samskrithi.

2. **Samskrithi**- those which are refinements of fulfilment of needs and desire or sometimes referred to as "Culture".
3. **Vrikrithi** – the stage when basic needs are not fulfilled within the limits of Dharma, it gets twisted leading to destruction of an individual.

Fulfilment of Needs can also be understood in the framework of **Chatur Purushartha or four noble Aims of Life**, mainly known as Dharma (one's duty of life), Artha (need for material possessions, security), Kama (sexual and emotional fulfilment) and Moksha (Santosham).

Prakrithi mainly involves fulfilment of Kama and Artha, within the structure of Dharma or righteous living. Dharma brings harmony, stability and integrity in all aspects.

And last is Moksha, which means santosham, one is satisfied and all needs are fulfilled i.e. the person has enough and knows that he has enough. Moksha is the stage of Self-Actualization, in which person knows the real Self (Swaprabhandan or Atma-Purusha). It helps the person to know his true self and divine nature, and how can it bring Bliss (Anandam) in his life. When a person realises all these above scenarios, he becomes happy, he can keep everyone surrounding him happy, increases his work potential, thereby bringing out perfect balance.

## CONCLUSION

To bring out perfect balance in one's life, a person must know himself, which is the solution to work-life balance problems.

OSHO quotes:

*"An individual may know thousands of things,  
May be aware of the whole world,*

*But if he is unaware about himself,  
He is the biggest Ignorant.”*

Every individual seeks enjoyment, pleasure, enlightenment and happiness in their lives. People are busy looking their surroundings, which is the point where they start neglecting “Self”. It is because they are involved in the worldly activity, tend to loose self-awareness. This is the tendency of our minds and bodies’ nature has created, to be occupied every time. When we focus to the external world, we cannot see the self within us.

Human behaviour seeks partner in all the activities he is involved, but he ignores the “Silent Partner” who is present with him in all deeds, experiences, which guides us the path of right and wrong, the basic observer in an individual, i.e. the Self.

The Self is Supreme which is above all senses, above all intellect, above all egos, which is Omnipresent. It is a reflection, an experience and the owner of mind and body.

From the Medieval Period, researches have been going on to find out the real self and the happiness associated with it. Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita, The Mahabharata, The Holy Bible, all these explain the ultimate goal of human life which exist in finding the true Self.

In Katha Upanishad, Yama, the Lord of Death, explains Nachiketa, “The Self cannot be understood by any Scriptures, nor can it be understood by any intellect or hearing learned converses. It can only be accomplished by those whom the self chooses.” The mystery of human life is finding the Self. Being a human has spiritual experiences. Going back to Bhagavat-Gita, in chapter two, Verse 12<sup>th</sup>, Lord Krishna, explains the nature of the self as endless, percipient, completely different from the material body. He has also explained the science of eternal self in the further chapters, but certain instructions are summarised in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> chapter, verse 66, the essential position and duty of every individual is to serve “The Supreme God”, as an eternal, spiritual being. When an individual gets himself connected to the almighty, the journey of self-starts.

Sri Swami Krishnananda, founder of the Divine Life Society, in his book, “Self-Realization-its meaning and method”, explains the concept as a highly balanced vision, a peaceful approach in every sphere and factor of life, and every activity which they encounter in life.

He tries to explain that since the ultimate goal of every human is finding self, they strive very hard to achieve it. But if they are unable to figure out due to certain circumstances, this is the

place, disappointment with life comes into existence. Disappointment brings imbalance in lives. A person can neither focus on self, nor on the activities associated, nor on the people.

Talking about solution to work-life balance problems, there cannot be a perfect solution to all the problems of imbalance, i.e. there is no such one size solution which can fit for all situations. Scenario of work-life balance is different for different individuals. Therefore, he alone has to decide what can better suit his requirement.

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