

A STUDY OF EFFECT OF WORK RELATED VARIABLES ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Shweta Varshney¹, Dr. Akansha Jain²

¹Phd. Research Scholar, Mewar University, (India)

²Faculty - Asia Pacific Institute Management

Delhi PhD, MCom (Gold Medalist), PGDBA (fin), (India)

ABSTRACT

Today we see women working in almost all types of professions demonstrating that there is no gender difference in work. In fact many organizations say that women are playing a major role in uplifting the organization. This is a positive development that women are making their presence felt in different walks of life. On the other hand, for every woman there is one more background to manage. That is home and personal life. Today with increasing demands at work place, the interface between work life and personal life assumed significance which demands more attention. In terms of Indian perspective, the anxiety over work-life balance is progressively becoming a common talk especially for women employees.

Work-life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between 'work' (career and ambition) and 'lifestyle' (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation).

The purpose of this paper is to figure out the working atmosphere of different organizations specifically for women employees and what is the opinion of women about the ideas and policies of organization and effects of those ideas on their lives.

Keywords: *Personal life, professional life, quality of life, work-life balance, , working women,.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Work – life Balance of women employees has become an important subject since the time has changed from men earning the family living in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility of earning for the betterment of their family life. Hence it is for the betterment of their family life. Hence it is very necessary to know how the women balance professional and domestic life. In the initial stages, women had to struggle a lot to establish their identity in this competitive world, both in the society as well as in the professional life. But with the advancement in educational and training institutions, things have improved to a great extent.

With this increasing industrialization and education, employment opportunities for women have also increased. And with increasing economic conditions, it has become a necessity that both husband and wife need to work to have a normal life. In this fast growing and competitive world, as every possible opportunity for employment is

increased, the organizations need to create a congenial atmosphere where employees can balance their professional and personal life. Only when an employer has a positive WLB, she can be productive and give her best to her organization. Hence industries are working out schemes which can attract as well as retain their employees.

Work-Life Balance does not mean an equal balance. It means the capacity to schedule the hours of professional and personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It is not a new concept. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life. When a woman achieves a successful work-life balance, she has job satisfaction and becomes highly committed and productive and succeeds in her career. But, in certain cases the women is not able to succeed due to incapability in balancing her work and personal life. She is unable to set her priorities. As a result she withdraws from her work due to simple reasons like taking care of her children, aged in laws/parents, and other family pressures. If the man is able to share some of her responsibilities, she would be successful women. A survey in the UK reveals that the majority of the women had successful WLB, because their husbands shared an equal partnership both in professional and personal life. With the advancement in technology, and education and revolution in the industrial sector, there has been a little change in Indian men too. Both the partners need to schedule their working hours and personal hours so that they lead a professionally and personally healthy life. The women should also educate her children to share responsibilities to make life better and fruitful.

II. FAMILY CONFLICTS AND WORK LIFE

Work-life balance is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work and family have increasingly become antagonist spheres, equally greedy of energy and time and responsible for work-family conflict. These conflicts are intensified by the “cultural contradictions of motherhood”, as women are increasingly encouraged to seek self-fulfillment in demanding careers, they also face intensified pressures to sacrifice themselves for their children by providing “intensive parenting”, highly involved childrearing and development. Additional problems faced by employed women are those associated with finding adequate, affordable access to child and elderly care.

Work Family Conflict has been defined as a type of inter-role conflict wherein some responsibilities from the work and family domains are not compatible and have a negative influence on an employee's work situation. Its theoretical background is a scarcity hypothesis which describes those individuals in certain, limited amount of energy. These roles tend to drain them and cause stress or inter-role conflict. Results of previous research indicate that Work Family Conflict is related to a number of negative job attitudes and consequences including lower overall job satisfaction and greater propensity to leave a position.

Workplace characteristics can also contribute to higher levels of WFC. Researchers have found that the number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of overtime required, an inflexible work schedule, unsupportive supervisor, and an inhospitable organizational culture increase the likelihood that women employees will experience conflict between their work and family role. It has been found that women who had multiple life roles (e.g., mother, wife, and employee) were less depressed and had higher self-esteem than women who were more satisfied in their marriages and jobs compared to women and men who were not married, unemployed, or childless. However, authors argued quality of role rather than the quantity of roles that

matters. That is, there is a positive association between multiple roles and good mental health when a woman likes her job and likes her home life.

WFC and FWC are generally considered distinct but related constructs. Research to date has primarily investigated how work interferes or conflicts with family. From work–family and family–work perspectives, this type of conflict reflects the degree to which role responsibilities from the work and family domains are incompatible. That is “participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role.

The work domain variables such as work stress may cause work roles to interfere with family roles; the level of conflict in the family domain impacts work activities, causing more work conflict, thus creating a vicious cycle. Therefore, work domain variables that relate to WFC indirectly affect FWC through the bi-directional relationship between each construct. Family responsibility might be related to WFC when the employee experiences a very high work overload that impacts the employee's ability to perform even minor family-related roles. Such a situation likely affects WFC through the bidirectional nature of the two constructs.

III. WORK PRESSURE AND ITS EFFECTS

Work stress is usually conceptualized as work-role conflict, work-role overload, and work-role ambiguity. Each has the potential to affect Work Family Conflict. With respect to work-role conflict, the more conflict among work roles, the greater the chances that stress will spill over and cause negative behaviors that interfere with fulfilling family roles. Role overload is the result of having too many things to do in a given time period.

As time is constrained by having too many tasks to accomplish at work, the employee may need to use time allocated to the family role which could cause WFC. Work-role ambiguity occurs when workers are unsure of what is expected of them in a work role. As uncertainty concerning work roles increase, employees use more mental energy to decipher it. This requirement may drain mental energy and attention needed for their family roles. It is found that role overload and role conflict were predictors of WFC, yet did not find significant results for role ambiguity.

It is studied the nature of specific strains and stresses among married women in their marital, occupational and house work roles. They found that strains and stresses are lower in family roles than in occupational and household roles among the married women. These have more severe consequences for the psychological well-being of women than occupational strains and stresses. Strains predicted distress through role-specific stress, with strains deriving from contribution of role specific stress. Research studies have identified several variables that influence the level of WFC and FWC. Variables such as the size of family, the age of children, the number of hours worked outside the home, the level of control one has over one's work hours, flexible or inflexible work hours and the level of social support impact the experience of WFC and FWC. However, these variables have been conceptualized as antecedents of WFC and FWC; it is also important to consider the consequences these variables have on psychological distress and well-being of the working women. Most of these studies revivied are in western context; there is a scarcity of research in this area in the Indian context. Hence, the researchers made an attempt to study various factors which could lead to WFC and FWC among married women employees.

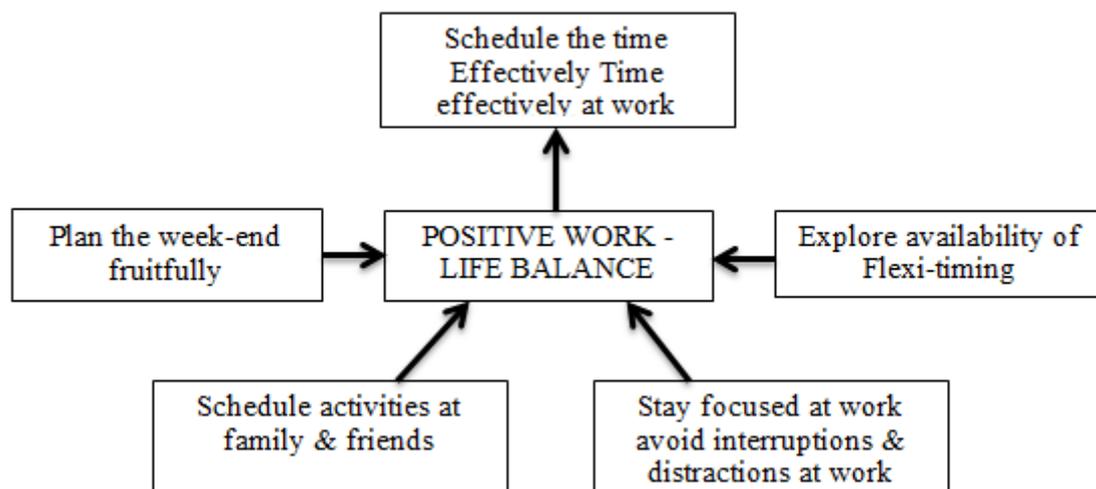
IV. IMPORTANCE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR WOMEN

Studies have shown that the majority of women are working 40-45 hrs/week out of which almost 53% of them struggle to achieve work-life-balance. The reason behind this struggle is that they are being challenged by the demands of their organization versus the commitments of their home. They need to manage the daily requirements of their family as one side and the multiple schedules, meetings, business requirements and other routine responsibilities at work. Women at work need to be taken care by their employers. Employers to work out schemes that would not only attract and retain the employees for a longer period but also make them highly productive. Organizations have many such facilities like, Transport, Canteen, Day care centers, Postal/saving schemes, Flexi-working hours, part-time working, provide the information about work-life balance policies and special leave arrangement such as Annual leave & public holiday leave, Career Break leave, Leave for elective representative, Leave to attend as witness at court in your organization, Health care centers, rewards & recognition, career growth, Insurance plans, Job rotation, Incentives, Performance related pays, Rest rooms and other government schemes like maternity, marriage, sick leave benefit, & medical benefits. And other Work life balance options like Staff counseling, Organizational psychology unit, Workplace Health Promotion, Social clubs, Pre-retirement club, Women's network, Breast feeding support groups etc.

These schemes help the women employees to work peacefully without any family, children tension so that they able to give their best at work. Moreover, organizations have women empowerment schemes like Forums, Committees, Grievance redresses system, suggestion schemes where a women is empowered to share her views, complaints and suggestions with the Top Management and derive solutions for the same.

V. Positive Work-Life Balance

To achieve a positive work-Life Balance, women should be pro-active and plan her professional and personal schedules well in advance so that both are equally balanced and the end result is satisfaction. The bellow figure represents few strategies to strike a positive WLB.



VI. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- To study the prevalence of work-life balance problem among the married working women.
- To study the extent to which various factors like hours worked, work involvement and family responsibilities, affect married working women's work-life balance.
- To study how various factors affecting work-life balance influence the married working women from Academic, IT and Healthcare sectors.
- To study the work-life balance problems of married working women across their demographic characteristics such as age group, number of children and spouse's profession.
- To study the effect of work-life balance on the quality of life of married working women.
- To examine the effect of work life balance on women's performance and work attitude.
- To determine the factors affecting work-life balance.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the study is descriptive. Questionnaire is designed to collect the information from the respondents.

➤ Sampling Plan

- Sample Unit: Target group (Married Working Women from Academic, IT and Healthcare sectors of Delhi-NCR).
- Sample Size: 50

VIII. RESULTS

Q1: Are You Comfortable and Happy With the Timings of the Organization?

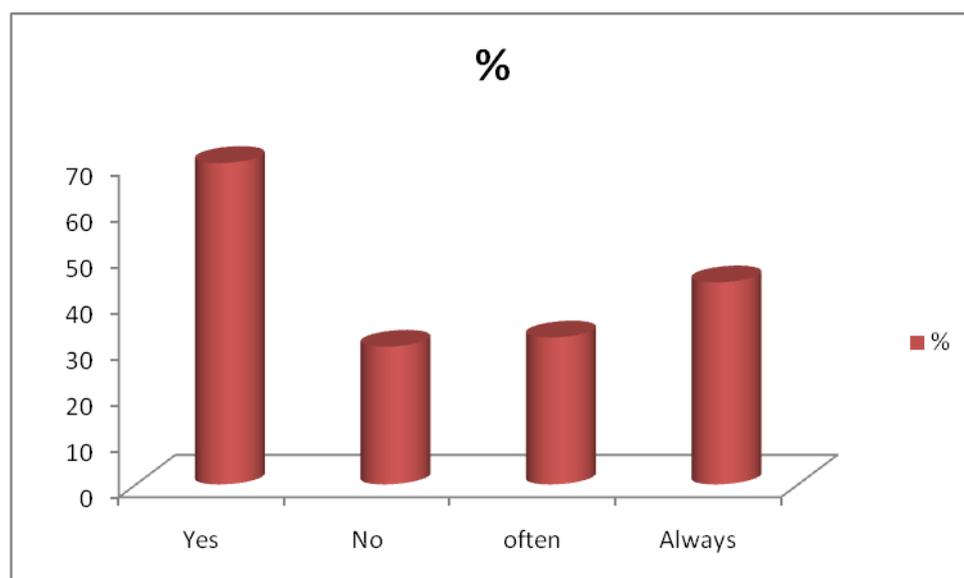


Fig.1. Percentage of employees in relation to their comfort as far as Timings of the organization is concerned.

When it is asked to the women employees, about their opinion on the timings of the organization, 10% and 36% were in highly comfortable and comfortable, while 32% and 22% were dissatisfied and strongly dissatisfied with the timings of the organization.

Q 2: Do You Have Enough Time for Your Family and Friends?

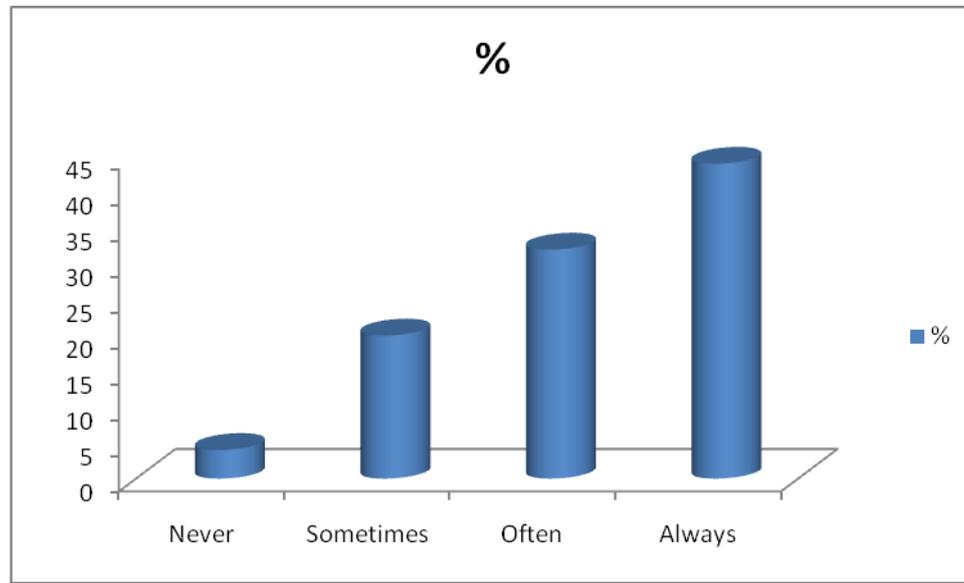


Fig.2. Employees percentage regarding their Time for family and friends

Response of this question was like 4% and 20% said they never and sometimes get enough time for family and friends, while majority i.e. 32% and 44% said , yes they often and always get time.

Q 3: Do you feel that you are able to balance your work life?

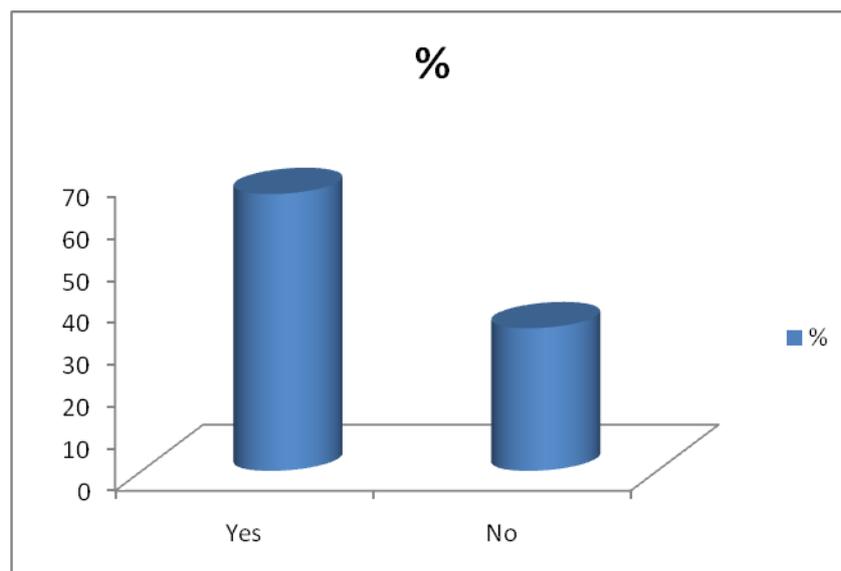


Fig.3. Percentage of employees who can balance their work life and not.

When it is asked to the respondents then 66% of women employees are able to balance their work life and 34% not.

Q 4: Whether Your Organization Makes Some Plans or Programs to Manage Your Work Life?

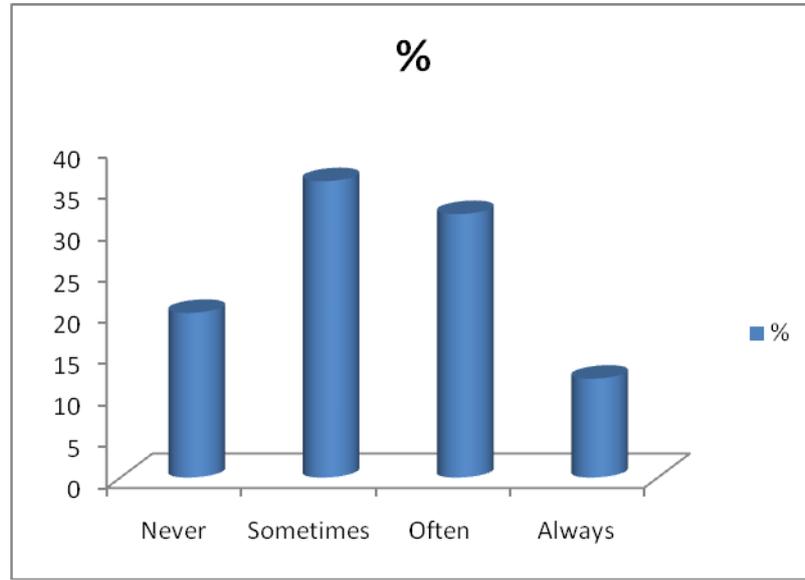


Fig.4. Percentage of employees regarding the plans or programs made by their organization to manage work life

On asking this question, the response was 20% and 36% said never and sometimes, while 32% and 12% said often and always, their organization made programs so to manage employees' work life.

Q 5: If yes, then what are those?

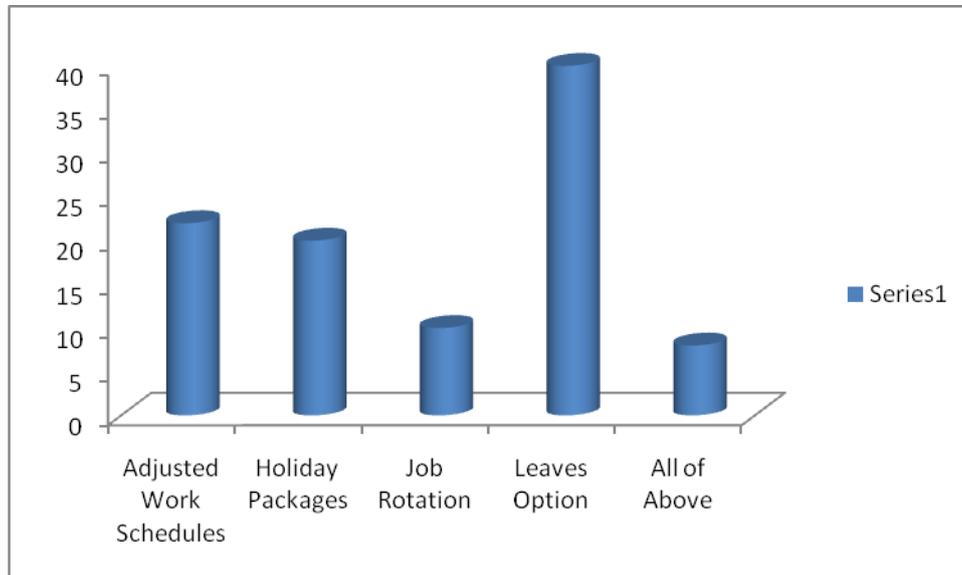


Fig.5. Percentage of different Policies made by organizations to manage work life of employees

The response to this very question was like 22% said adjusted work schedules and 40% said it is the leaves option which helps to manage work life and only 10% said job rotation, while 20% were in favor of holiday packages is the good initiative taken by the organization, and 8% were agree that all mentioned programs has been given to them.

Q 6: Whether Organization Provides Maternity and Paternity Leave to its Employees?

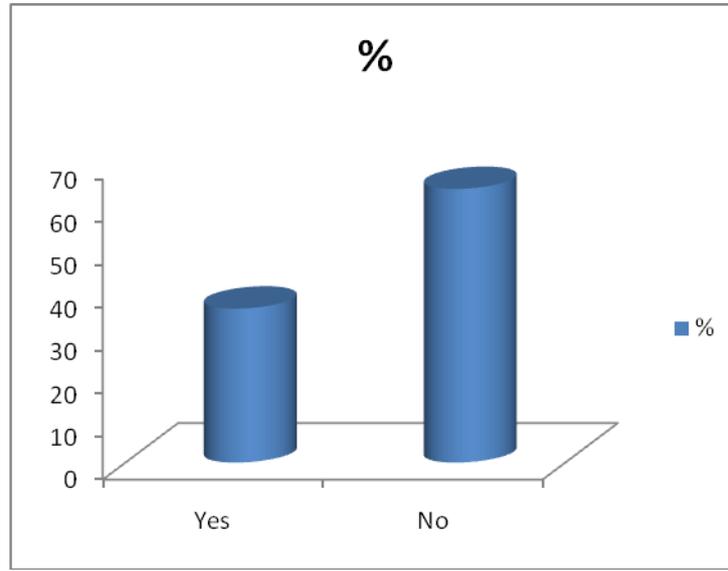


Fig.6. Percentage of organizations providing Maternity and Paternity leaves to employees

In response to this question 36% women employees said that they get maternity leaves and 64% said they don't get such leaves.

Q7: Do You Think Good Work Life Balance Matters a Lot for the Organization's Success?

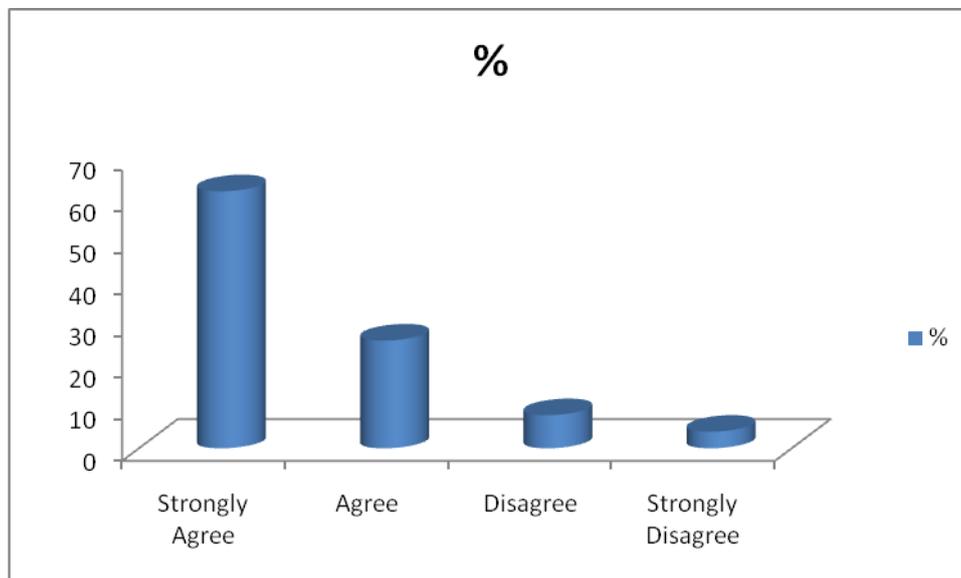


Fig.7. Percentage of employees showing their views regarding importance of work life balance for organization's success

When it is asked to the employees that good work life balance matters a lot for the organization success, then majority 62% and 26% were strongly agree and agree, while only 8% were disagree and 4% were strongly disagree on this.

Q 8: Tick the factor that motivates you to work.

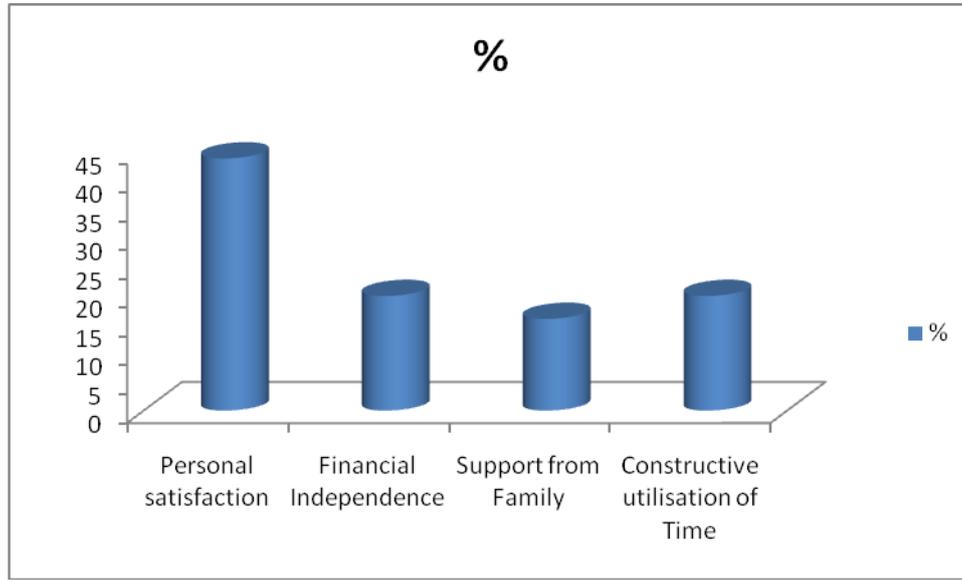


Fig.8. Percentage of factors that motivate employees to work

In response to the factor motivating women to work, 44% said that it is for personal satisfaction, 20% work for financial independence, 16% are able to work because of family support and 20% work for constructive utilization of time.

Q 9: Is Organization Capable to Hold its Employees Due to Effective Strategy of Work Life?

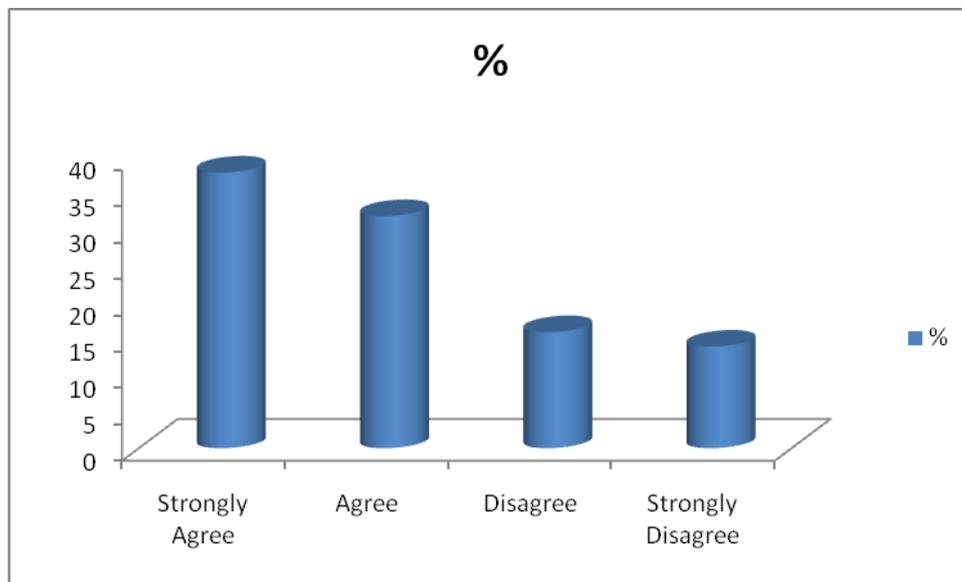


Fig.9. Percentage of employees to views related to effectiveness of strategy of work Life by organization to hold its employees

On asking to the respondents, that organization's strategy helps to hold its employees, then 38% and 32% were strongly agree and agree, on the other hand 16% and 14% were disagree and strongly disagree on this.

Q 10: Is Management Loyal and Dedicated towards Their Employees in helping them to Attain Good Work Life Balance?

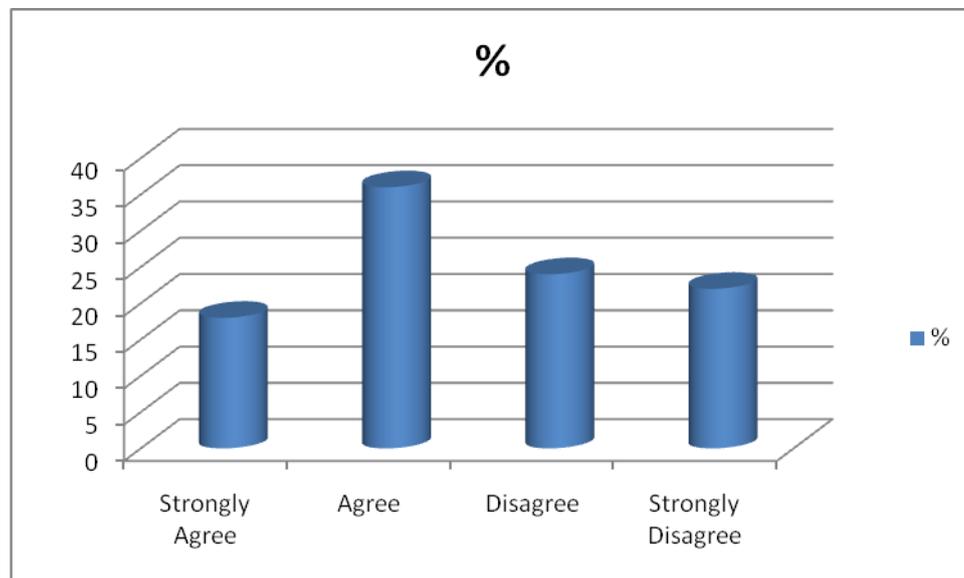


Fig. 10. Employees percentage to different views as far as loyalty of management is concerned to help employees to attain good work life

When it is asked to the women employees, about management loyalty and dedication towards their employees in helping them to attain good work life balance, then 18% and 36% were strongly agree and agree, while 24% and 22% were disagree and strongly disagree.

IX. Findings

1. Women employees, report average level of work life balance and are generally cool with their working provisions.
2. There is a feeling that employers are investing in work-life balance, but the solutions offered are not always well-matched with employee's needs.
3. Some employees, feel that employers are not always making well-informed decisions about their own work-life balance.
4. On the other hand, while some feel that their employer does not provide proper information about work-life balance strategies.
5. Somewhere somehow it is also found that balancing care and work affects career succession.
6. WLB is an important determinant of fundamental aspects of job satisfaction.
7. Quality and Productivity will definitely improve, if the employees are given proper space and rights to choose their own work schedules. Because if this opportunity given to the employee so it will also bring to the responsibility for finishing work within specified deadline.
8. As work life balance is the two sides of coin, so both employer and employee are responsible for having balance between work and life.
9. It is found that some of the employees agree that they are physically stressed in their job. And some of the employees strongly agree that they are mentally pressurized in their job.

10. Employees agree that their superiors are more helpful and cooperative which may be one of the reason for women employees to balance between their private life and professional life

X. SUGGESTIONS

1. WLB improve the productivity and eliminate job stress, employers can also make efforts to know the workload and job demands.
2. The female employees should be given the facilities like flexi time; job sharing; crèche facilities, and necessary breaks so that they feel that the organization is helping them in coordinating the family and professional life.
3. Employer need to examine employee training, communication, reward system, coworker relationship and work environment.
4. A sympathetic management is required to reduce the conflict between work and family. Top management should understand the importance of work life balance.
5. Make arrangement for infant / child care inside the office for working women.
6. Create a work environment free of harassment & discrimination.
7. Generous leave facility, both with or without pay in case of family urgency should be considered as much as possible.
8. Ensure fairness and consistency in the way policies that support work-life balance are implemented.

XI. CONCLUSION

Today with increasing demands at job, 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.

Conflicts in work-life balance of working women affects their health who report more stress, headaches, muscle tension, weight gain and depress than their male counterparts.

Juggling between the obligations towards the families and expectations of the organization and constant struggle to maintain a balance between work and family can have serious implications on the life of an individual by affecting their well-being and overall quality of life. Therefore, it is very important for employees to maintain a healthy balance between work and their private lives. For the employers, Work-life balance of employees will be an important input in designing appropriate policies for employees to address work –life balance issues. Work-life balance initiatives should be designed to help employees to balance their work and personal life.

REFERENCES

- [1] Baick, I., and E. Drew. 2006. Struggling with juggling: Gender and work life balance in the legal professions. *Women's studies International Focus* 29 (2): 9–22.
- [2] Blair-Loy, M., and A. S. Wharton. 2002. Employees' use of work-family policies and the workplace social context. *Social Forces* 80 (3): 813–845

- [3] Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work-life balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 7470–7770.
- [4] Denise Horner Mitnick, “The Impact of Working Women on Work/Life Balance Perspectives”, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons, 2006
- [5] Desai, N. (1996). “Women’s Employment and their Familial Role in India”, In Shah, Baviskar and Ramaswamy (Eds), *Social Structure and Change: Women in Indian Society*, (pp. 98-113). Delhi: Sage Publications.
- [6] Grossman, Allyson Sherman. “Working Mothers and Their Children”. *Monthly Labor Review: Special Labor Force Reports – Summaries*. May, 1981: pp 49 -54. Pleck, J H (1977). “The Work-Family Role System,” *Social Problems*, 24(4), 417-427.
- [7] Jane, Parthasarathy (2010). The family and work connect: A case for relationship focused family life education. *International journal of occupational and environmental medicine* 13 -15
- [8] Lalita Kumari, “Employees’ Perception on Work Life Balance And It’s Relation With Job Satisfaction”, In *Indian Public Sector Banks*”, *IJEMR*, Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp. 1-13, 2012.
- [9] Pranav (2010). Overview of Work life balance discourse and its relevance in current economic scenario. *Asian social science* 6,148 – 155.