

A STUDY ON THE WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WORKING WOMEN

Sabeeha T. P¹, Dr Annie Ninan²

Abstract

Women's role in India have been changing and are now emerging from the past tradition into the new era of freedom and rights due to globalization. The influx of women into the workforce along with the increasing family responsibilities, thus deviating from the traditional gender based roles makes the work life balance a challenging task for women. The attempt in the present study is to explore the tough challenges faced by working women in maintaining a balance between their personal and professional life. Data was obtained through a structured interview schedule. It was administered to 200 purposively selected adult working women belonging to the age group of 25 years and above from Edakkara Panchayath of Nilambur taluk, Malappuram District, Kerala. The obtained data was statistically analyzed and the results were interpreted. Results indicate that middle aged and married subjects have comparatively more work life issues due to their multiple roles affecting the quality of their life. It also shows that some women tactfully handle the various spheres of life to achieve work life balance. As the demands for women employees are increasing day by day, their contribution to nation's growth and economic progress is also significant. Since domestic responsibilities still remain a primary role of women, the support and involvement of their family members for sure can positively relate to lower levels of role conflict experienced by married working women. Therefore they require further probing so as to help working women balance their work and family life.

Keywords : *Women, Married, Challenges, Work life, Balance*

Introduction

Work plays an important part in all our lives. This is because the earnings ensures light in ones' life, provides food on the table and makes the rainy day pot full. Women's role in India has been changing. It now emerges from the past tradition into the new era of freedom and rights due to globalisation. Maintaining a healthy work life balance is important for health and relationships. Work life balance can be defined as an individuals' ability to manage time properly, assign labour appropriately thus maintaining satisfaction in personal and professional life. A lack of balance between home and

work place can occur in an individuals' life when too many responsibilities are unorganised. Thus work life balance is an issue which affects the wellbeing of an individual. Today working women are constantly challenged by the demands of family and work. A good work life balance is essential as it can improve an employee's productivity and ultimately the performance. It also helps to reduce stress and helps to prevent burnout in both personal and professional life. The influx of women into the work force along with the increasing family responsibilities, thus deviating from the traditional gender based roles make the work life balance a challenging task for women.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the socio-economic status of the subject
- To assess the work life issues
- To analyse the comparison of work life issues

Relevance of the Study

Indian families are undergoing rapid changes due to increased urbanisation and modernization. Educational opportunities for women are substantially higher now. This has increased awareness, opened new vistas and has raised the aspirations of personal growth. Moreover economic pressure has also been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the work force. In the traditional Indian society women were confined to taking care of the family members and doing household chores. Now a working woman has to play a dual role and has to maintain a work-life balance because difficulty in achieving balance can result in consequences like low productivity, health issues and loss of mental peace. The present study aims to explore the importance of work life balance and its effect in women's life.

Methodology

Selection of topic

The career paths of women have more obstacles and hindrances than men. Women often have to face multiple roles by prioritizing family life over work life. So it has laid burden on women by increasing stress levels since both the roles are equally important. The study was taken up to understand the issues related to work life balance of working women.

Selection of area

The area selected for the study was Edakkara Panchayath which belongs to Nilambur taluk in Malappuram district, Kerala. The area was also selected due to easy reachability. Moreover this panchayath gives more importance to women by providing opportunities for them to improve their life style. The selected panchayath contains 16 wards and each ward contains an average of 250 families.

Selection of sample

200 samples of adult women in the age group of ≤ 25 years and above were selected by using purposive random sampling method.

Selection of tool

A pretested structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data.

Conduct of the study

Interview was done with the help of structured and pre tested questionnaires to collect the required information. After the data collection the information was organized in a systematic manner in order to interpret it scientifically. The collected data was compiled, tabulated, analyzed and the results were discussed and interpreted.

Result and Discussion

A. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SUBJECT AND THEIR FAMILIES

a. Background information of the subjects

The background information of the selected samples is presented in table 1.

Table 1 : Background information

N=200

Sl.No	Variables	Category	Number	Percent
1	Age	21-25	19	9.5
		26-30	44	22.0
		31-35	18	9.0
		36-40	36	18.0
		41-45	31	15.5
		46-50	32	16.0
		Above 50	20	10.0
2	Religion	Hindu	63	31.5
		Muslim	104	52.0
		Christian	31	15.5
		Others	2	1.0
3	Marital status	Married	147	73.5
		Unmarried	22	11.0

4	Educational qualifications	Divorced	14	7.0
		Widow	17	8.5
		UP	34	17.0
		HS	44	22.0
		Predegree	19	9.5
		Degree	80	40.0
		Above	23	11.5
5	Occupation	Professional	100	50.0
		Non-professional	100	50.0
	Monthly income	Rs >41430	26	13.0
		Rs 20715-41429	48	24.0
		Rs 15536-20714	17	8.5
		Rs 10357-15535	14	7.0
		Rs 6214-20714	55	27.5
		Rs 2092-6213	40	20.0
		Rs <2091	0	0

The table above reveals the background information of the subjects. The subjects were divided into seven groups and it was found that a maximum of the subjects belong to the age group of 26-30 (22%). It was found that 52 percent of them were Muslims. The marital status of the subject shows that 73.5 percent (147) were married. It was found that 40 percent of them were degree holders. 50 percent of the subjects were professionals and 50 percent of the subjects were non-professionals. 27.5 percent of the subjects had an income level between Rs 6214-10356 and 24 percent of the subjects had a high income between Rs 20715-41429.

b. Family background of the subjects

Table 2 gives the information about the family background of the subjects.

Table 2: Family background

N=200				
Sl. No	Variables	Category	Number	Percent
1	Type of family	Nuclear	163	81.5
		Joint	37	18.5

2	Number of family members	1-2	17	8.5
		3-4	86	43.0
		5-6	82	41.0
		Above 6	15	7.5
3	Number of children	Without children	40	20.0
		1	51	25.5
		2	63	31.5
		3	32	16.0
		4	12	6.0
		5	2	1.0

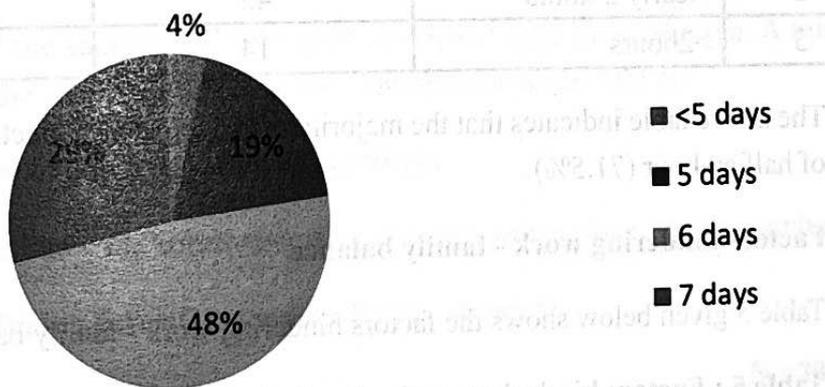
81.5 percent of the subjects belonged to nuclear family. 43 percent of the subjects have 3-4 of the family members and 41 percent have 5-6 family members. A majority (31.5%) of the subjects had two children and 25.5% of the subjects had only one child.

B. FACTORS AFFECTING WORKING WOMEN

a. Work days per week

The working days in a week is presented in figure-1

Figure-1. Days per week



The majority of the selected samples (48.5) work for 6 days in a week and a minimum of 4 percent work for less than 5 days a week.

b. Work hours in a day

The work hours in a day is elicited in table 3

Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	1-2 hours	17	8.5
2	3-4 hours	86	43.0
3	5-6 hours	82	41.0
4	Above 6 hours	15	7.5

Table 3 : Work hours in a day

N =200

Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	7-8hours	81	40.5
2	8-9hours	86	43.0
3	9-10hours	20	10.0
4	10-12hours	9	4.5
5	>12hours	4	2.0

From the above table it is clear that 43 percent of the selected samples work for 8-9 hours a day. A minimum of 2 percent of the samples work for >12 hours a day.

c. Hours of travel in a day

Table 4 points out the hours of travel by the samples in a day.

Table 4 : Hours of travel in a day

N =200

Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	Half an hour	143	71.5
2	Nearly 2 hours	43	21.5
3	>2hours	14	7.0

The above table indicates that the majority of the selected subjects travelled a minimum of half an hour (71.5%).

d. Factors hindering work - family balance

Table 5 given below shows the factors hindering work - family balance.

Table 5 : Factors hindering work - family balance

N =200

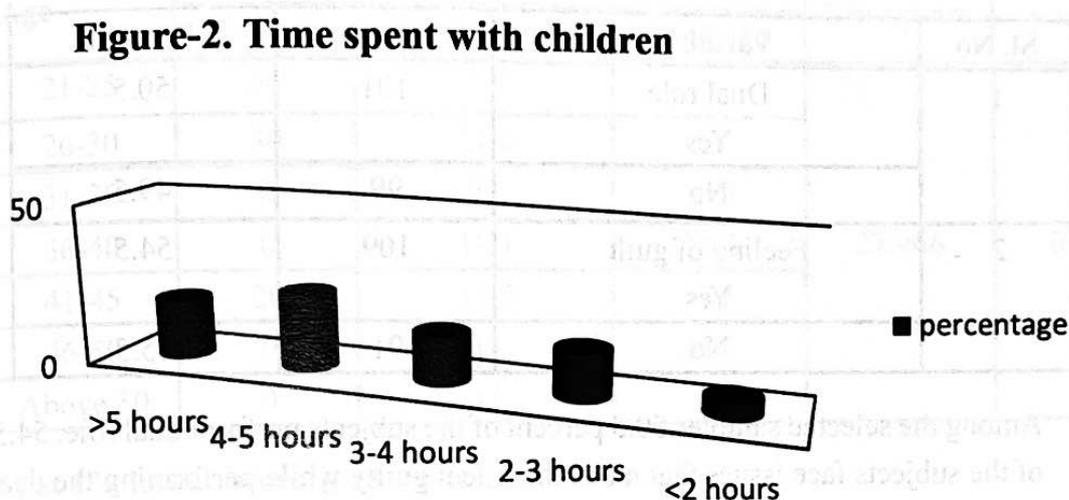
Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	Long work hours	83	41.5
2	Compulsory overtime	22	11.0
3	Shift work	28	14.0
4	Meetings/training after office hours	37	18.5
5	Others	30	15.0

41.5 percent of the selected samples work for long hours which hinder work-family balance. 18.5 percent of the subjects have meetings/training after office hours. A minimum percent of the subjects have compulsory overtime, shift work etc which again hinder their work-family balance.

C. TIME SPENT WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

a. Time spent with children

The times spent with the children by the samples are presented in the figure-2.



Majority of the samples (23.5%) spent 4-5 hours with their children. A minimum of 5 percent of the subjects spent less than 2 hours with their children

b. Taking care of dependent family members

Table 6 highlights the information about caring of dependent family members.

Table 6 : Taking care of dependent family members

N =200

Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	Older people	39	19.5
2	Dependent adults	2	1.0
3	Adults with disabilities	1	0.5
4	Children with disabilities	1	0.5
5	None	157	78.5

It is important to note that among the selected samples, 19.5 percent take care of elder members in the family. Majority of them do not have to take care of any dependent family members.

D. DUAL PERFORMANCE

Table 7 highlights the difficulty faced while performing dual role.

Table 7 Dual performance

N =200

Sl. No	Variables	Number	Percent
1	Dual role Yes	101	50.5
	No	99	49.5
2	Feeling of guilt Yes	109	54.5
	No	91	45.5

Among the selected samples 50.5 percent of the subjects perform dual role. 54.5 percent of the subjects face issues that made them feel guilty while performing the dual role.

E. GENERAL COMPARISON OF WORK LIFE ISSUES

a. Levels of work life issues

Figure 3 indicates the level of work life issues.

Figure-3. Levels of work life issues

■ low ■ moderate ■ high



From the above figure it is revealed that majority (91) percent of the selected samples have moderate work life issues and a minimum of 4 percent have high work life issues.

b. Comparison of work life issues with age

Table 8 presents the comparison of work life issues with age

Table 8 : Comparison of work life issues with age

N = 200

Sl. No	Age	Work life issues (%)			Chi square	p value
		Low *	Moderate **	High ***		
1	21-25	50	7.7	0	27.466	0.007
2	26-30	30	21.4	25		
3	31-35	0	9.3	12.5		
4	36-40	0	18.1	37.5		
5	41-45	20	15.4	12.5		
6	46-50	0	17	12.5		
7	Above 50	0	11	8		

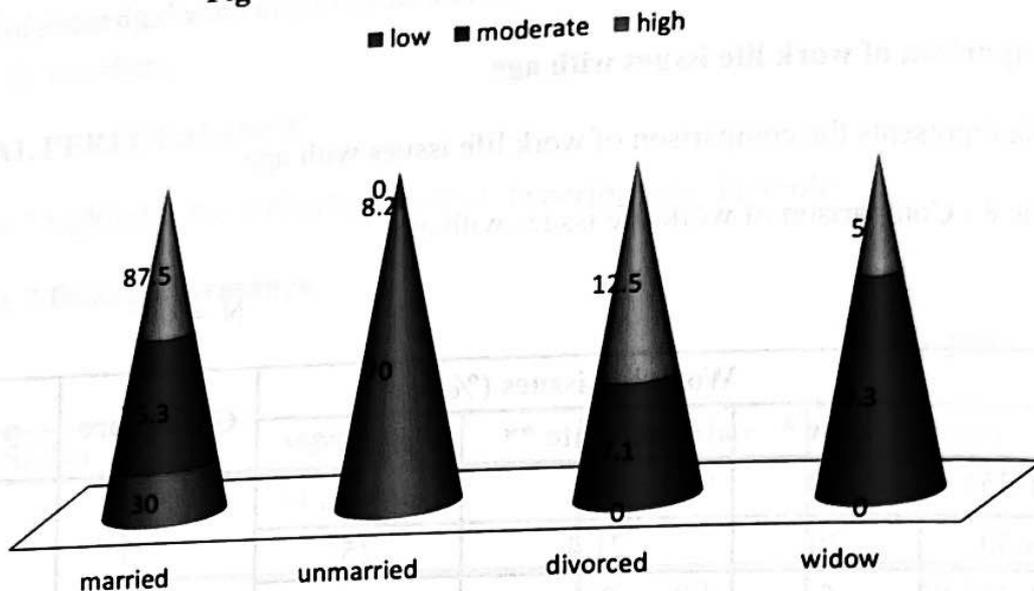
significant at 1% level, score \leq 15, ** 16-31, *** $>$ 31

The above table reveals that the comparison of work life issues with age have a high significant value. Subjects with the age between 21-25 shows low work life issues. The selected samples between the age group 26-30 have moderate work life issues (21.4%). Middle age groups of the selected samples have high work life issue.

c. Comparison of work life issues with marital status

Figure 4 illustrates the comparison of work life issues with marital status.

Figure-4. Work life issues with marital status



Comparison of work life issues with marital status has a high significant value. 87.5 percent of the married women have high work life issues where as 70 % of the unmarried samples have low work life issues.

d. Comparison of work life issues with number of family members

Comparison of work life issues with number of family members are given in table 9.

Table 9 Comparison of work life issues with number of family members

N=200

Sl. No	Number of family members	Work life issues (%)			Chi square	p value
		Low *	Moderate **	High ***		
1	1-2	10	8.8	0	5.083	0.533
2	3-4	40	43.4	37.5		
3	5-6	50	40.7	37.5		
4	Above 6	0	7.1	25		

Score *≤ 15, ** 16-31, ***>31

Table 9 clearly shows that the comparison of work life issues with family members were not significant. Samples with 3-4 and 5-6 numbers of family members have high work life issues. The samples with less family members have 10% of low work life issues.

e. Comparison of work life issues with type of family

Table 10 shows comparison of work life issues with type of family

Table 10 Comparison of work life issues with type of family

N=200

Sl. No	Type of family	Work life issues (%)			Chi square	p value
		Low *	Moderate **	High ***		
1	Nuclear	60	83.5	62.5	5.472	0.065
2	Joint	40	16.5	37.5		

Score ≤ 15 , ** 16-31, *** >31

Table reveals that the members from nuclear family have moderate work life issues (83.5%) when compared to members from joint family (16.5%). It is clear that comparison of work life issues with type of family is not significant.

Summary and Conclusion

Work life balance is the maintenance of responsibilities at home and at work place. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into various paid occupations to augment the family income. Working women are frequently challenged by the demands of family and work. The present study was aimed at exploring the factors leading to work life issues among women employees in different settings. The study could identify several variables like age, size of the family, nuclear family background, marital status and long working hours influencing the likelihood of women employees to experience conflict between their work and family roles.

The obligation to meet the needs of children and elderly family members requiring additional care, also create an impact on their dual roles. Comparison of work life issues with age and marital status scored significantly high values.

The findings of the study thus emphasize the need to understand the conditions under which married women employees experience role conflicts and formulate guidelines for the management of work life issues. Moreover the support and involvement of family members can positively help to lower the levels of role conflict by sharing and redressing the stress and other difficulties experienced by the working women.

Bibliography

1. <http://www.news-medical.net/amp/health/Importance-of-a-Work-Life-Balance.aspx>.
2. <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-achieve-better-work-life-balance>.
3. Gragnano, A., Simbula, S., and Miglioretti, M., (2020). "Work life Balance: Weighing the Importance of Work-Family and Work- Health Balance", *Int. J. Environ Res Public Health*, Feb17 (3):907.

4. Kothari, C.R., (2009) "Research Methodology". New age international publishers. 2nd Edition. Pp.104.
5. Krishnaswami, O.R., and Ranganathan, M., (2009). "Methodology of research in social sciences". Himalaya publishing House: Pp.139.
6. Kumari, T., and Devi, R., (2015). "A study on work-life balance of women employees in selected service sectors". Pacific business review international., vol.7(10):Pp.17-23.
7. Kuppaswamy, B., (2017). " Manual of Socioeconomic Status (urban)", Manasayan, Delhi. International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health. Vol. 4(4): Pp.997-999.
8. Meensah, A., and Nicholas K. A., (2020). "Work life Balance and Self reported Health Among Working Adults in Europe: a Gender and Welfare State Regime Comparative Analysis", BMC Public Health20, Research Article/Open Access Published.
9. Rosner, cara., (2016). "Working long hours are bad for women's health". www.courant.com/health/hc-womens.

Sl. No.	Author	Year	Journal	Volume	Page
1	Kothari, C.R.	2009	Research Methodology		104
2	Krishnaswami, O.R., and Ranganathan, M.	2009	Methodology of research in social sciences		139
3	Kumari, T., and Devi, R.	2015	Pacific business review international.	7(10)	17-23
4	Kuppaswamy, B.	2017	Manual of Socioeconomic Status (urban)		997-999
5	Meensah, A., and Nicholas K. A.	2020	BMC Public Health	20	
6	Rosner, cara.	2016	Working long hours are bad for women's health		

-
1. (MSc.Nutrition & Dietetics) Department of Home Science, Korambayil Ahamed Haji Memorial Unity Women's College, Manjeri. sabeehanisab@gmail.com
 2. Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, Korambayil Ahamed Haji Memorial Unity Women's College, Manjeri. anniesoji@gmail.com