

# Work-Life Balance: A Case Study of a Working Woman in Delhi

Rajesh Kumar and Dr. Vinita Agrawal

***Abstract---** Work-life balance is an important issue of consideration in corporate especially for women who finds it difficult to balance between the two equally demanding and pressing work areas. This research paper explores the life of a women working in a reputed textile manufacturing company in Delhi in the form of a case study. The paper explores the transition that takes place in her professional life after marriage. It also shows her approach to the challenging career before marriage. Her professional downfall occurs because of the building social responsibilities that come with marriage.*

***Keywords---** Work-life Balance, Personal Life, Professional Life, Textile Manufacturers, Delhi.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Transition from being home makers to working home makers is a big leap for women of 21<sup>st</sup> century in India. Moving out of a rigid and orthodox system of obeying gendered roles, women in India have amicably adapted to the growing demands of globalization and are striking a balance between their personal and professional lives.

Work-life Balance (WLB) was coined in 1986. Broadly the concept incorporates defining priorities between work and life. Work includes one's professional work like career and ambition whereas life revolves around one's relationship, health, family etc. Definition of work-life balance has different perspectives. There are various explanations of the terms involved in defining WLB. Some of them have evolved whereas some are still evolving.

The English Dictionary defines Work Life Balance as, "the amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing things you enjoy, it can be difficult to get the right work-life balance" [4]. Pitt Catasouphes (2006) as quoted in Kudachimath and Rotti (2016) defines WLB as, "Work Life Balance is defined as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's jobs and personal life are equal. It is nothing but investing equal amounts of time and energy between work and personal life" [4].

Work/life balance from the employee viewpoint: "the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal/family responsibilities" [2].

Work/family culture: "the extent to which an organization's culture acknowledges and respects the family responsibilities and obligations of its employees and encourages management and employees to work together to meet their personal and work needs" [2].

In an attempt to further understand work-life balance Boohene et al (2012) has aptly remarked:

The concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen as less competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. In the light of this, it has become important for

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*Rajesh Kumar, PhD. Scholar, Amity Business School, Amity University, Jaipur, (Rajasthan), India. E-mail: rajeshgangwar1991@gmail.com  
Dr. Vinita Agrawal, Professor, Amity Business School, Amity University, Jaipur, (Rajasthan), India. E-mail: vagrawal@jpr.amity.edu*

employers to support work-life balance to comply with legal requirements that afford working parents the right to request to work flexibly, to promote equality of opportunities by ensuring that staffs with caring responsibilities are not disadvantaged in the workplace, and to widen access to paid work and career opportunities. To realize this, employers are required to demonstrate the benefits that can be derived from employment policies and practices that support work-life balance (Boohene et al, 2012).

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Goyal and Arora (2012) in their study of 120 teachers across different institutes found that factors like negative attitude of family, family commitments, health issues, long working hours, stressful meetings, and excessive work load created an imbalance in their personal and professional lives. Their aim was to measure “the impact of work pressure on family life and the expectations of family on the work commitments” [1].

Meenakshi and Ravichandran (2012) pointed at the difficulties faced by women teachers in attaining Work Life Balance. They recommended ways to help benefit both individual and the organization. Their study also brought to the forefront the awareness and knowledge of WLB by women teachers and steps taken by them to schedule their work by ensuring time management.

Soi and Massey (2011) examined work life balance and its impact on employment relations and productivity of the employees. Study highlighted the incongruence between the work and life of present generation. It was “observed that majority of the respondents weren’t happy with the shape that their lives have taken recently due to imbalance that has crept in their work and life” [1].

Dasgupta (2010) analysed the relationship between socio-psychological factors and emotional intelligence of working women in Information Technology Industry. Study revealed massive input of the socio-psychological elements like Quality of Work Life, Work Family Role Conflict and Perceived Happiness in achieving higher Quality of Work Life.

Doble and Supriya (2010) examined work life balance among male and female and concluded that both the genders faced disproportion in family and work life. Factors that contributed to the imbalance were identified as flex time, work from home, part-time work, availability of child care and flexibility to take care of emergencies at home.

Vittal (2003) studied about dropout rates of women and found a significant rise in leaving workplaces after their marriage and childbirth. Factors at play behind such an increase in dropout rates are the primary responsibilities of childcare and housework as women’s responsibilities, irrespective of her income, educational level or employment. Women are also found to be restricted in their choice of better job opportunities.

Jenkins (2000) in his study observes that issues like child rearing, the need to balance multiple roles etc. have consequences on health and family relationships.

Tewathia (2014) pointed to the importance of having WLB by women. She reported, “Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more on the job even at the cost of ignoring the family. On the other hand, women emphasise that work and family are both equally important and both are the sources of their satisfaction. For them the former is

more important. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the other” [3].

According to Barden (2001), as quoted in Tewathia (2014), “negative stress is becoming a major illness in the work environment, and it can debilitate employees and be costly to employers” [3].

Lucy Barnes Foster (2002) investigated mid-level managers and found stress to be a major determinant in worker efficiency. According to the study, the prime areas affected by stress are employee morale, absenteeism, and decision making abilities.

Senthilkumar et al. (2012) found out that older people and females face higher difficulty in balancing their work and life and go through a lot of stress. Their findings show that there is a positive relationship between age of the respondents and their level of stress in balancing work and personal life. There also exists a close relationship between gender of the respondents and their level of stress in balancing work and life.

Kaur (2014) in her study came up with the findings that respondents in metro cities and giant organizations are too pressed with work and hence spend minimal time with their families and friends.

Karakas and Lee (2004) explained work life balance issues as “spending good time with family members, getting free time to be able to relax for emotional wellbeing and health of family members, having good communication and support from the fellow colleagues, obtaining high quality child care and education and being satisfied with the workload” [4].

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

An imbalance in work and life leads to tremendous stress among individuals. Mounting stress leads to poor work performance, health issues, strained relationships and waning motivation. Inability to balance the two spheres of life leads to increased pressure and can cause serious health issues. With the influx in female workforce there is a demand for growing flexibility. In the changing system both men and women share responsibilities but bigger chunk of household chores lies with women including family expectations, managing home, taking care of children and parents. Thus, it is more challenging for a woman to maintain harmony between personal and professional life. Keeping this in mind, the present study explored the life of a female working professional to understand the problems and challenges faced by her in maintaining work-life balance.

### **IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The empirical study has used case study method to analyse the life of a female working in a reputed textile manufacturing organization in Delhi. The research design is descriptive and causal in nature. Time frame of her employment was two and half years. Area of research is Delhi. Delhi and places around Delhi are huge textile hubs constituting of numerous textile manufactures, buying houses and export houses. The person identified for study was chosen because of interesting turn of events in her professional career before and after marriage, which led to ultimate resignation from job. The researcher came to know about her through a common friend. Primary data

involved direct information obtained through interview. Collection of information took six months as the researcher interviewed the candidate and also gathered information about the subject from her organization, friends and colleagues. Questions of the interview were mostly open ended and were designed with the intent to elicit maximum information about the subject of study, Ms. K.

## **V. CASE STUDY OF MS. KANCHAN KAPOOR**

Kanchan Kapoor, an independent working professional in her mid 30's started her professional career as a marketing manager in one of India's largest garment exporter. Hailing from a conservative and orthodox family in Uttar Pradesh, Kapoor was born with revolutionary mindset. She did not confine herself to the traditional and conventional ways of leading an independent girl's life. She was tall, beautiful, intelligent and smart. She outsmarted girls and boys of her age. Always a topper in school, she was burning with passion for success and achievement. Born into a family of four members, she learned the art of hard work, dedication, care and compassion. Filled with a sense of responsibility and duty, she grew into a woman who understood the importance of caring and sharing and imbibed family values. Ms. Kapoor lived with her family till completion of her undergraduate course. She moved to a different city for pursuing higher education.

However, her journey from her town to a new city was filled with hardships and resistance from her relatives. Her decision to pursue higher studies was met with criticism and strict denial. Owing to her constant pleading and persistence, her family and relatives decided in her favor and allowed her to go for higher studies. Completing one degree after another from reputed institutes in the country, she completed two post graduate degrees and landed up with her dream job. Her family started accepting her belligerent ways and developed acquaintance with her passion and zeal for life. Her parents respected her for who she was and appreciated her ways of life, although different but right and positive.

Her professional journey began in January, 2012 in a new city. This time far from home. She joined one of the most reputed organizations in India as Marketing Manager. Ms. K, started working as Marketing Manager with a reputed textile manufacturer in Delhi. A through professional and dedicated employee, her work demanded to negotiate and mediate between buyers and manufactures. She met and dealt with Brand Heads, Sourcing Heads, Head Designers, Brand Planners, Retail Planners and Chief Marketing Managers of finest national and international brands. It was a high maintenance and demanding job profile. She ensured constant in-flow of orders to smooth and timely execution of orders to meet deliveries. Scientific and strategic communication was at the core of her job profile. Her work demanded extensive travelling and employment of people skills along with technical skills to accomplish task at hand. She enjoyed a successful and fulfilling career. She achieved her targets and would set up new goals on completion of the last one. She was able to meet the desired targets and gained appraisals. She soon won fame and respect of her colleagues and was acclaimed to be one of the best among the team of marketers.

Ms. Kapoor's span of work with the organization lasted for two and half years. For a year and half she worked as a spinster and continued for another year after marriage. As a maiden she enjoyed her professional and personal life. Working on Sundays and for late hours was met with excitement as she would go out for lunch or dinner and for shopping there on rather than cooking. She was prepared to hold the bull by its horn. She gave importance to her

work and tended to the household chores when required. Taking care of the house, cleaning, weeping and tending to the house was never a necessity. She did it at her will rather than any compulsion. She enjoyed her independence and following her heart. Frequent travelling, as part of her job profile, did not bother her. On the contrary, it fulfilled her desire of exploring a new city and its eateries. Travelling and cracking a business deal revitalised her.

Her reverie for being successful and independent was soon about to end. Her performance started deteriorating after a few months of marriage. Pressure of work, which she earlier considered being fun; soon became difficult to be dealt with. Coupled with familial demands, her challenging job responsibilities made her fret. Her demanding work profile was seen as a threat to a peaceful family life by her in-laws and husband. Late working hours and frequent travel plans were met with resistance by her newly acquired family. She started being questioned for staying back late at work and questions were raised on her morality. Working on weekends and especially on Sundays was frowned upon by the family.

They wanted her to be adept with household chores and be at home like a housewife as and when required. Constant ridicule, annoyance and persistent demands of her new family, made it difficult for her to concentrate on her work. They started building psychological pressure on her to quit her job and be like the other female members of the family: docile and submissive and family oriented. Mounting pressure was pushing her backwards. She was torn between duty and responsibility. Her learning as a growing up girl struggled to keep balance between both the roles, but her family pulled her towards household disallowing her from paying any attention to her wishes, dreams and passion. They only saw a housewife in her and wanted her to be an obedient, order following daughter-in-law. As a result, her lifestyle drastically changed. Her carefree spirit was overburdened with responsibilities of her life as well as of her extended family. She would rise early to meet the demands of her personal life. Mistakes were considered to be blaring signs of negligence, where cooking and tending to household was considered prestigious than going out for work. Being able to cook two square meals was an achievement. Result was job burnout and deteriorating health. Finally in September 2014, she took the decision to resign from her work and look for something that was less demanding and consuming than her previous job. She was contemplating another option of quitting full time career and be more family oriented in order to save her fragile marriage. She resigned on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

## **VI. CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS**

Organizations are escalating workload and desired outcomes from individuals thus over burdening them. This is one of the downsides of globalization that forces an individual to be at their performance best to be retained by organizations. Ill effects of work-life balance are vividly articulated by Tewathia (2014) in her study about work-life balance in IT sector in Delhi:

There are growing reports of stress and work imbalance. The constant requirement to work at optimum performance takes its toll in job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, reduced efficiency, illness and even death in some cases. Absenteeism, alcoholism, bad or snap decisions, indifference and apathy, lack of motivation or creativity are all by-products of an over stressed workplace (Tewathia, 2014).

In India, the changed working pattern of women has not reduced the amount of responsibilities that these working women shoulder. Women undertake majority of household chores and child rearing. Work pressure and social responsibilities both affect each other by hampering time for the other. It was found that post marriage the number of hours worked per week, the amount and frequency of overtime, and inflexible work schedule increased the likelihood of conflict between her work and family roles. She devoted more time to fulfil her work related activities than perform family duties. By the time she reached home after long working hours, she was overworked to perform yet she did the cooking and other necessary work. However, this practice did not last long as her health started deteriorating. Besides, when a woman finds herself unable to perform her duties towards family she feels unhappy, frustrated and dissatisfied.

The case portrays drastic changes in the work performance of the subject after marriage. This clearly indicates the mounting responsibilities of the household make it difficult for woman to perform their professional task to the fullest and build frustration within them. Continuous stress from being unsuccessful in both the fronts leads to severe physical and mental problems.

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