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Navigating work-life balance challenges: A study of women in the BPO sector

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to analyze and understand the effectiveness of the work-life balance of women in the BPO sector. Career and goals are the most essential factors in everyone's life. Most of the women are coming forward to work in order to support their family some women are ambitious towards work. The biggest challenge for women is to make a balance between family life and work life. This paper identifies the various aspects of women's family and work life, career advancement, and Work Stress, in context with Work Life Balance and its impacts. And also helps to overcome the problems faced by working women in the BPO sector.

Keywords: Work-life balance, BPO sector, working women, work stress, family support, work life, personal life

Introduction

The expression "Work-Life Balance" was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1970's to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. In the United states this phrase was first used in 1986. Work-life balance educate us that we all have the right to be ambitious in pursuing our career goals, but not at the cost of losing important emotional and personal ties with people with whom you are going to share relationships with throughout your life. (Tutorial points)

Work life balance is creating and maintaining healthy and positive environment. Work life Balance was effective and interesting that when work becomes a hobby and co-workers become family, there would be sufficient time to give to both career and family. Work and life should not be enemies. Work and family conflict is the push and pull between work and family responsibilities (D. Babin Dhas 2015) ^[1]. Organizations are increasingly adopting work practices that aim to support employees to fulfill both their employment and family related responsibilities.



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The Indian culture with regard to career development of women was undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes are entered into paid occupations (Balaji, 2014) ^[9]. Gender bias against working women started right from the stage of recruitment.

Most of the Indian men are not ready to accept that women are capable enough to work side by side with men in all the sectors, other than in a few limited ones like teaching, nursing, and in clerical sectors. (Dr. Shambunath 2017) ^[7].

The BPO sector in India is doing very well and there are more job opportunities. The pay and perks are encouraging in this sector. But the work life is highly complicated and there are many pulls and pressures during the work life. There are a lot of commitments and deadlines and there are too much of unpredictable peaks and troughs during the course of the working time. Several shifts and long working hours may lead to stress and an imbalance of Work and Life. Employers were expected to work 24/7 × 365 days of the year. To prevent such a work style from affecting worker health and productivity. (DR. S. Suman Babu 2011) ^[6]

Women usually face role conflict more than men and they are struggling to get jobs after marriage and childbirth. Work work-life balance of employees helps reduce the stress level at work and increases job satisfaction.

Indira Nooyi, the CEO of Pepsico has been continuously ranked among the World's 100 Most Powerful Women. In 2014, she was ranked at 13 on the list of Forbes World's 100 most powerful women and she was ranked the 82nd most powerful woman on the Fortune list in 2016.

In her talk on Why Women Can't Have It All, she has distinctly captured the difficulty of being a woman in a world that has built workspaces by and for men with little consideration for the needs of women. "My observation...is that the biological clock and the career clock are in total conflict with each other. Total complete conflict when you have to have kids you have to build your career." "You know stay at home mothering was a full time job. Being a CEO for a company is three full time jobs rolled into one and how can you do justice to all? You can't."

Review of Literature

- Increasing demand for work-life balance have forced BPO companies to take some of the initiatives such as alternative work arrangements, flexible working hours, leave policies and benefits in lieu of family care responsibilities and employee oriented programmes. Such policies are known as 'work-life benefits and practices'. This studies suggest that WLBP's help to improve employee commitment, morale, satisfaction and performance as these reduce the level and vigorous of stress that employees experience (Bruck, et al., 2002) ^[10].
- India is one of the most prefer outsourcing destinations. Indian IT and BPO industry has been increasingly contributing to the domestic economy over the years. It is also provide valuable contribution to the services sector (NASSCOM, 2011) ^[11].
- work life balance is the joint responsibility of the employer and the employees to ensure strong work-life balance that can bring in fruitful results to organisation as well as employees also (K. Thriveni Kumari, 2015) ^[2].
- Most of the working women said that as working women you will definitely suffer from problems. Health related problems like physical and mental stress, general weakness, excessive work load because of work pressure, family pressure etc. are all very real issues. Sometimes the stress is so profound that they feel like

leaving their jobs but then they realize that these are all a part of life that they have to fight and endure, which ultimately makes them stronger (Varsha Kumari, 2014) ^[12].

- Working women of today fulfill 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 combines with their professional duties (G. Delina, 2013) ^[13].
- BPO companies are trying to bring in work life balance of the employees by taking care of the factors like working from home, flexi time and swap in order to retain talents, enhance quality of work and to keep the employees happy. The flexibility of work reduce stress and helps in better time management. Employees living with joint families are more comfortable when compare to those from nuclear families. Work life balance requires cooperation and coordination at national, governmental, organizational, as well as individual level (Vanishree, 2012) ^[14].
- The findings of the study emphasized that the need to formulate guidelines for the management of work life balance at an organizational level as it is related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees (Balaji, 2014) ^[9].
- Rashida Banu (2011) ^[3] explicitly that three major factors contribute to the interest and the importance of, serious consideration of WLB:
 - 1) Global competition
 - 2) Renewed interests in personal lives/family values, and
 - 3) An aging workforce
- Research suggests that forward-thinking human resource professionals seeking innovative ways to augment their organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace may find that WLB challenges offer a win-win situation.

Issues in Work-Life Balance

- Decrease the productivity.
- Employees are doing a lot of overtime.
- Employees taking a lot of time off to deal with emergencies involving children or other dependents.
- High levels of stress.
- Increase rates of absenteeism or staff sickness.
- Large level of staff turnover.

Benefits of work-life balance

There are several benefits of work-life balance. Some of the benefits are listed below:

1. Work-life balance increases the motivation of employees and helps to perform better at their jobs.
2. It helps people to relieve their stress as they can spend leisure time with their friends and family.
3. Companies can maximize productivity from an employee who is rejuvenated and refreshed as compared to an overworked employee.
4. A healthy lifestyle can be maintained by having a work-life balance. This includes a good diet, regular exercise, Time management, etc.
5. Employees who are highly motivated can help the business grow as they are more attached to their jobs and careers.

Objectives

- To study the level of Work-life balance among Women employees in the BPO sector.
- To find out the factors influencing Work work-life balance of Women Employees.
- To examine the relationship between demographic factors and work-life balance.
- To recommend areas for improving work-life balance among employees.

Sample design

The present study was carried out in Trichy City by selecting BPO professionals. A sample of 183 employees was selected for gathering primary data. To carry out the study more accurately and easily convenience sampling method was adopted.

Data collection

Both primary and secondary data have been used to draw appropriate conclusions. The primary data was collected by using interview and questionnaire methods. The secondary data was drawn from available literature in the field of knowledge.

Analysis and interpretation of the study

H₀: there are no significant differences between marital status with work work-life balance

H₁: There is a significant difference between marital status with work-life balance.

Result

P-value is less than the significance value then we accept the null hypothesis hence we conclude that there is no significant difference between marital status with work work-life balance.

Table 1: Level of Work-Life Balance

S. No.	Level of work-life balance	No of respondent	Percentage
1.	Low	50	12%
2.	Medium	91	73.5%
3.	High	42	14.5%
	Total	183	100

From the table, it is clear that out of 183 respondents, 50 of them fall under the category of low-level work-life balance, 91 of them come under the category of medium-level work-life balance and the remaining 42 of them fall under the category of high perception.

Table 2: Frequency of depression due to work

S. No.	Depressed	No of respondents	Percentage
1.	Never	51	13.3%
2.	Rarely	53	39.7%
3.	Sometimes	48	33.7%
4.	Often	19	10.9%
5.	Always	12	2.4%
	Total	183	100

Table 2 expresses that 13.3 percent of the respondents do not get any depression, 39.7 percent of the respondents are depressed rarely 33.7 percent of the respondents are depressed sometimes, 10.9 percent of the respondents are depressed often and 2.4 percent of the respondents are always depressed because of work.

Findings

- Employees need to interact with different types of customers some of whom may be overbearing and irate, at the same time the quality of the service needs to be maintained. All this may lead to burnout and stress in the employees.
- Employees living with joint families are more comfortable when compared to those from nuclear families.
- Family support and organizational support lead to maintaining a good work-life balance.

Suggestions

- Try to bring in work-life balance for the employees by taking care of the factors like working from home, flexi-time, and swapping to retain talent, enhance the quality of work, and keep the employees happy.
- Non-work domain within their premises such as gymnasiums, day-care facilities, canteen facilities, Small breaks, and even futons to sleep on if felt like a nap.
- To eradicate gender bias, a male-dominated society and financial independence is also necessary for the betterment of women employees.

Conclusion

Throughout history, women have played crucial roles in households. Nowadays, their importance in the workplace is also recognized, and they are involved in a diverse range of work activities, in addition to their routine domestic work. By allowing for flexible working hours and giving them consideration in decision-making, a positive impact can be created. Work-life balance is not a problem, but rather an ongoing issue that needs to be managed.

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