Chapter 10

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Work-Life Balance is a subject, which is procuring increasing interest in academic literature. It is a broad concept, including proper prioritizing between ‘Work’ such as career and ambition, and ‘Life’ such as health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development. Embedded in the concept of work-life balance is role conflict or role strain. It is often found that role strain is more common among women employees. Fisher (1994) found that academics experienced more problems in maintaining effective work life balance than other professionals, as their profession incorporates a wide range of responsibilities with potentially challenging demands. Teaching is an extremely important profession in which the need to strike a balance between work and home comes to the pinnacle of concern because of its all-encompassing nature. However, when we reflect on the data available based on research concerning gender, the picture that is revealed is depressing. We see that women with their multiple role-playing suffer most, in whatever field of endeavour they are engaged in. Teaching as a profession is also no exception.
Women teachers embody a woman’s trials and tribulations as an individual, between having a career and being a good wife and mother. The inner conflict generated often does not find any ventilation, which ultimately leads to unprecedented and horrifying consequences. In recent years, considerable changes have occurred in the roles and status of women teachers all over the world. Women have been gaining education and entering into higher-education academia in ever-increasing numbers. However, the social-cultural scenarios surrounding women are still at variance from those of men. Women’s realities and women’s choices, thus, continue to be different even amidst all the mayhem of techno-info advances that our society has witnessed in the past several decades. They continue to juggle between their traditional stereotypic images and icons of knowledge and change in the society, ultimately getting forced to prioritise one of the choices. Most often the choice remains as a tribute to their familial loyalty.

This study was aimed at shedding some light on specific factors affecting women's career paths, especially women teachers, in higher educational institutions. Although these women are a significant part of faculties in these institutions, it is important to study whether or not they face the same difficulties women generally come across in the corporate world in general. The professionalism of the women teachers were analysed and it was correlated with factors like gender division of labour at home, dual career family pattern and changes in the educational system. The findings are portrayed in this chapter in accordance with the specific objectives of study.

10.1 Profile of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents are in the young age category (25-40 years), and Assistant Professors (84.3%) outnumbers Associate Professors
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(14.6%) and Professors (1.1%). As the numbers of professors are extremely less, the respondents having an experience of more than thirty -one years is very low (4.3%), while the category of respondents who have a minimum of five years of experience is high (36%). Mainstream of the respondents belong to the nuclear families (69.4%), which is a predominant family type in the urban areas, and most of the colleges under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, are also located in urban areas. Majority of the respondents (40%) follow the small family norm with two children, which is almost universal in urban areas. Forty Seven per cent of respondents’ spouses have post graduation or higher degrees and thirty per cent of the respondents’ spouses have other professional degrees like MBBS, C.A etc. Twenty Seven per cent of the respondents’ spouses are engaged in professions like chartered accountants, doctors, engineers etc. Only seven per cent are in private institutions working as teachers. The rest of the categories of profession of spouse also reveal that the spouses are equally professionally equipped like their counterparts. Sixty one per cent of the respondents have domestic help which has become inevitability in the urbanized household with the dual career family norm. Forty eight per cent have part-time servants. Majority of the respondents were selected from Private Aided (42.9%) and Unaided Colleges (42.9%), because the number of aided and unaided colleges is greater in number when compared to government colleges. Hence, Fourteen per cent of respondents are from government colleges, which are very less in number. The factors like financial and job security are cited as prime motivators for the respondents to pursue this profession (41%). Other attractions (23%) mainly encompass aspects like status, prestige, dynamism of the profession, etc. The service-mindedness is also a noteworthy factor cited by Twenty per cent of the respondents. At the same time, the element of interest occupies only the last
position (16%) which compels one to assume that the factual motivating factors are economic and job security alone. Majority of the respondents spent 6-8 hours in the college and are moderately satisfied (48.9%) with the profession. Only Forty Seven per cent of the respondents are highly satisfied with their profession. Forty Two per cent of respondents feel that because of the pressure of work, sometimes they are deprived of spending time with family or friends. However, the percentage of respondents who said that they often missed out time with family or friends is very low (10%). While analysing the profile of the respondents, one noteworthy fact was that, none of the respondents mentioned the dimension of “Moral Mission” in their teaching profession.

10.2 Professionalism of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents (94.6%) belong to the moderate level of professionalism. Nevertheless, the most outstanding feature is that none of the respondents have a low level of professionalism. The hypothesis that was constructed with regard to Nature of College and Levels of Professionalism was that, Professionalism of married women teachers in Private colleges is higher when compared to married women teachers in Government colleges (H1). This hypothesis was rejected, because it was found that teaching faculty in aided and unaided colleges does not have a significantly greater level of professionalism than teachers in government colleges. The moderate level of professionalism is somewhat high in government colleges (98%), high level of professionalism is slightly high in aided colleges (7.3%). The hypothesis that was generated with regard to Years of Experience and Levels of Professionalism was that, Greater the years of experience, higher the levels of professionalism of married women teachers (H2). The statistics reveal that younger faculty members (who
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have five years of experience) show high levels of professionalism (5.6%) when compared to their elder counterparts (21-30 years), who comparatively show lower levels in their professionalism (4.9%). This was also true in categories of moderate level of professionalism also. Hence, H2 was rejected. The respondents with a single child and the respondents who do not have children are showing the highest score for moderate level of professionalism (96.7% and 95.5% respectively). The least score is shown by respondents who have more than three children (50%). However, one remarkable finding is that respondents having more than three children is displaying higher levels of professionalism (50%), than with respondents who do not have any children at all (4.5%). The data conveys that high level of professionalism is topmost among the respondents who had an extended family set up (11.10%), followed by respondents having a nuclear family set up (5.8%). In moderate level of professionalism also, the highest score is shown by respondents who have joint families (95.9%). Spouses with professional degrees contribute more to the high level professionalism of their wives (8%) than those who have lesser degrees. The hypothesis that was generated based on Profession of Spouse and Levels of Professionalism was that, Spouse’s profession has a positive relationship to professionalism of married women teachers (H3). However, the statistics conveyed that the profession of the spouse does not have a direct, influential relationship to the professionalism of the respondents; Hence, H3 was rejected. The findings show that the respondents who even spend more than ten hours in the college are only manifesting a moderate level of professionalism. At the same time, the respondents who are spending 5-8 hours in the campus are high in their professional attributes. The Hypothesis that was constructed regarding Job satisfaction and Levels of Professionalism was that, Greater the job satisfaction, higher the levels
of professionalism of married women teachers (H4). However, the statistics show that job satisfaction does not lead to high level of professionalism. We can see that it is the undecided category which shows high level of professionalism (14.3%) than the category who is most satisfied (8%). In the Moderate level of professionalism also, the highly job satisfied group lags behind (92%) the moderately job satisfied group (97.7%). The rationale behind this maybe the data which we have previously explored in which we found that financial security (21%) and job security (20%) is the prime motivators for the respondents to take up this profession. Interest (16%) remains at a marginal level in the factors for taking up this profession. Hence, H4 was rejected. The respondents who said that they never missed quality time with ‘significant others’ because of the pressure of work (6%) remains parallel with the category who says they sometimes miss the quality time for socializing with family or friends because of the pressure of work (6.1%), in the domain of high level of professionalism.

10.3 Gender Division of Labour at Home and Professionalism

From the perspective of gender division of labour, the figures are quite disheartening, because it shows that the family responsibility is the primary responsibility of women. Regardless of age, majority of household tasks are performed by women themselves. It is surprising that even for respondents who are above fifty-one years of age, the state of affairs is no different, since Fifty one per cent of respondents in this category is showing just a moderate level of gender division of labour.

The statistics show that irrespective of their family type, the housework done by men and women is not in an equitable manner. Even in nuclear families, where there should be equal sharing of domestic responsibilities, the
trend is towards greater household liabilities in the shoulders of women (65%). The case is no different in joint families (67.3%) and extended families (55.6%). Irrespective of the number of children; the majority of the respondents belonged to the moderate level of gender division of labour. The number of children also does not affect the pattern of gender division of labour in the family. We find that the moderate level of gender division of labour is highest among respondents who have spouses with degrees up to graduation (69.4%). Similarly, in households where the spouses hold professional degrees, the husbands role in household scores in minimal (35.6%). The lowest score in gender division of labour is shown by the respondents’ spouses who are engaged in government service as teachers (47.3%), and highest score in moderate gender division of labour is shown by respondents with spouses who are engaged in other government service (75%). This implies that even in the case of respondents with professionally qualified spouses, the gender roles remain customary. The highest score in moderate level of gender division of labour is shown by respondents who spent eight hours in the campus (76%), and the lowest score is shown by respondents who spent ten hours in the campus (100%). From the data, it can be seen that, even those who are highly satisfied in their job show only moderate (63.1%) or low gender division of labour (33.1%), that is, husband’s role in the domestic activities remains nominal. From the analysis, it is also clear that the moderate gender division score is high for those who said that rarely (68.3%) miss quality time at home because of work pressure and low gender division score is highest (34.3%) for respondents who said they never missed quality time at home because of work pressure.

The hypothesis that was generated with regard to Gender Division of Labour at home and Levels of Professionalism was that, Gender Division
of Labour at home does not have any relation with levels of professionalism of married women teachers (H5). From the analysis of the section on gender division of labour and professionalism, it was seen that gender division of labour and levels of professionalism remains as two distinct spheres in the lives of the respondents. The respondents who are showing high score in gender division of labour, is showing the lowest score in moderate level of professionalism (92.3%). Whereas respondents who have a low score in gender division of labour, have a high score in moderate level of professionalism (95.6%). Hence, H5 was accepted.

10.4 Dual Career Family Pattern and Professionalism

Analysis on the section on nature of family responsibility points out that even though they are employed full time, the respondents are also absolutely family-oriented and devoted to its needs, that is, the nature of family responsibility is inclined towards women sharing the utmost weight of responsibilities. The figures represent the notion that, society's perception of work is more important for men, and family is the main domain for women. The high score in the nature of family is shown by the 31-40 age groups (41.5%) and for those respondents having two children (44.7%), followed by respondents having one child (35%). These figures become easy to interpret when we compare it to the respondents with no children (15.4%). This means that children play a key role in initiating a scenario where partners cross the traditional role stereotypes, and enter into a more or less egalitarian setup in the household. The lowest score in nature of family responsibility is shown by respondents in the nuclear family (75%) and by those respondents who are highly qualified, i.e., post graduation and above (56.3%). Majority of respondents who show a high score in family responsibility belong to the moderately satisfied group.
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(48.8%). Notwithstanding those respondents among whom the burden of family responsibility is high, they are highly satisfied with the profession (31.3%). The respondents who do not get much assistance from their counterparts is showing a high level of professionalism (8.3%), while those respondents who get modest help from their husbands show the highest score for moderate level of professionalism (95.4%). However, it is also interesting to note that in spite of those respondents who show high score for their nature of family responsibility, is lagging behind in numbers both in a high (7.1%) and moderate level (92.9%) of professionalism. This tempts us also to think that for some respondents, the family realm takes utmost precedence than the work sphere.

Although women have extended their range of activities into the line of work, it has been well documented from the section on domestic responsibility, that men have not made a equivalent shift into women's traditional sphere of domestic and caring work. The highest score in domestic responsibility is shown by respondents in the 31-40 age categories (40.5%), and the lowest score is shown by the age group of less than 30 years (47.8%). It is surprising to note that high score in domestic responsibility is shown by the respondents with two children (45.6%) when compared with respondents with no children (13.3%). Respondents in the nuclear family exhibit simultaneously low score (65.2%) and high score (74.1%) in the sharing of domestic responsibility. The respondents whose husbands have post-graduation and above, show high score in the domestic responsibility (48.1%). The respondents who are also highly satisfied show a low score in domestic responsibility (43.5%). The highest score in domestic responsibility is shown by the respondents who work more than ten hours in college (66.7%). The lowest score is shown in domestic
responsibility by the respondents who said that they sometimes missed quality time with family and friends because of pressure of work (56.5%). The respondents with a low score of domestic responsibility show high level of professionalism (14.7%). This implies that the heavy burden of domestic tasks remains as a self-reliant entity for the women, which they delineate from the realm of professional life.

The statistics reveal that the respondents have a high positive social self-concept. The self-image score is highest for the respondents who are less than thirty years old (40%) and lowest for those respondents who are more than fifty one years old (11.7%). The highest score for self-image is portrayed by the respondents who are moderately satisfied with the profession (80%), than who are highly satisfied (20%). The hypothesis that was constructed regarding Self Image and Levels of Professionalism was that, there is positive relationship between Self Image and Levels of Professionalism of married women teachers (H6). The analysis reveals incongruence in the relationship between self-image and professionalism. Those respondents with low self-image have scored greater in the high level of professionalism (6.40%). At the same time, those who have high self-image also show moderate level of professionalism (100%). Hence, H6 was rejected.

From the analysis of the section on career salience, it was found that majority (54%) see their career in a significant manner. The highest percentage of moderate career salience is shown by the respondents belonging to the category of 16-20 years of experience (100%). The highest score for career salience is shown by the respondents of aided colleges (53.6%), while the lowest score is shown by the respondents of unaided colleges (75%). Further, the highest score in moderate level of career
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Salience is shown by respondents who work as teachers in private institutions (100%). The statistics show that the highest percentage of career salience is shown by the respondents who are highly satisfied with their profession (53.6%). This section also divulges that a high score in career salience is reflected also in the high level of professionalism (5.6%). Section on Career Line depicts a strong career line for the respondents in this study (57%). The highest score for career line in is shown by the respondents in unaided colleges (58.3%). Simultaneously, we can also see that the respondents in the government colleges indicate the minimum score for career line (21.3%). The score for career line is high for the moderately satisfied category of respondents (66.7%). The highly satisfied respondents are also showing greater score in the moderate career line (54.6%). We also find that respondents who have high score in Career line have high level of professionalism (15%).

Forty Eight per cent of the respondents have family life satisfaction. The figures show a negative relationship between job satisfaction and family life satisfaction. The highest score in moderate family life satisfaction (100%) is shown by those respondents who are unsatisfied with their jobs. The hypothesis that was constructed regarding family life satisfaction and levels of professionalism was that, there is no relationship between Family Life Satisfaction and Levels of Professionalism of married women teachers (H7). Statistics tell us that respondents with a high score in family life satisfaction is showing a high level of professionalism (50%). Hence, H7 was rejected.

The analysis of dual career pattern and professionalism shows that women continue to juggle between home and work, and this is definitely imprinting indelible negative aura in their professional investments.
10.5 CBCSS and Professionalism

The data points out the teachers have not yet completely accepted the CBCSS in their mind set. All the figures point out the different changes have come up in the form of Internal Assessment system, semester system, grading system, digital campus and syllabi oriented teaching has affected the professionalism of the respondents to a considerable extent. It is found that majority of younger respondents belonging to categories less than thirty years (62.7%) and between 31-40 years (67.4%) have said that CBCSS system has affected their professionalism. We can see that respondents with more than thirty one years of experience (60%) represent the least percentage in all the categories who have said CBCSS has affected their professionalism. Majority of respondents from the government colleges (78%) has said that CBCSS has affected their professionalism when compared to respondents from aided and unaided colleges.Those respondents who work more than nine hours in college (80%) say that CBCSS has affected their professionalism. At the same time, those who work more than ten hours in college, (who constitute a minority) is least affected by the CBCSS (33.3%).Majority of the respondents belonging to the unsatisfied category (100%) have said that CBCSS has affected their professionalism. Figures also denote that the respondents miss quality time with family/ friends often because of work pressure, and CBCSS system has contributed to the same (82.9%). High level of professionalism is demonstrated by the respondents who said that CBCSS had not affected their professionalism. The figures portray that concrete professional investments are immune to all kinds of adverse effects. It gives testimony to the reality that the changes in the educational system can be seen as opportunities for improvement rather than barriers in the paths of
development. The hypothesis that was generated with regard to CBCSS and Levels of professionalism was that, there is no relationship between CBCSS and levels of Professionalism of married women teachers (H8). The data showed that the high level of professionalism is demonstrated by the respondents who said that CBCSS has not affected their professionalism (9.6%). Hence, H8 was accepted. However, the highest percentage of respondents who belong to the moderate level of professionalism (96.9%) say that CBCSS has affected their professionalism.

From the analysis of the objectives, it is crystal clear that women teachers are not able to devote their potentialities and skills into the professional arena to the full extent. They are enmeshed in the intricate network of patriarchal ideology, which dictates them to be primarily homemakers, and not as competent professionals. They manage to bring out the ‘superwoman’ in them, but not all of them are successful. In the meantime, the scenario of higher-education today is demanding only the highest quality for its learner-centered paradigm. Hence, the moderate level of professionalism cannot be underlined by any kind of justification whatsoever from the major stakeholders in the higher-education scenario; that is, the teachers. The only approach that can help the women teacher is the ‘Integrated Paradigmatic’ approach, which envisions prioritization and time management as the key for establishing a work-life balance.

10.6 Policy Implications and Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations that can be made to improve the professional competencies of women teachers, based on the study-

1) Teacher’s professional development must be thought of as a long-term process, which begins with initial preparation and only ends
when the teacher retires from the profession. This new approach to the education and development of teachers requires a transformation of processes and policies that support teachers, their education, their work and their growth in the profession, taking into consideration the socio-cultural set up of Kerala Society.

2) Teacher’s professional development has a significant impact on the success of educational reforms and on students learning. The more opportunities the teachers have to be both subjects and objects of educational reform, the more effective the reform and the work of the teachers.

3) Teacher’s professional development must be systematically planned, supported, funded and researched to guarantee the effectiveness of this process.

4) Teachers must be encouraged to participate in programmes designed for their development. In addition, teachers must be given the time and the financial support to be active designers, implementers and participants of professional-development opportunities.

5) Teachers must be encouraged to design and implement experiences and opportunities that help in their growth as teachers and professionals.

6) Activities designed by and for teachers must respond to: their professional needs, their personal and professional interests, the stage of professional development attained at that particular time, and the stage of the education system in force in their place of work.

7) There should be an effective system of accreditation and licensing of teachers for their performance.
8) External agencies can and must support teacher professional by offering particular activities and programmes that address the needs of teachers.

9) A variety of models and techniques of professional development must be regularly available to teachers.

10) Technology and distance education should be used as means of supporting teacher’s professional development. However, those responsible for planning and organizing these experiences must be aware of the limitations teachers may have. For example, not all teachers have access to computers or telephone lines, not all teachers know how to use particular forms of technology, not all teachers can attend courses given in very distant locations, etc.

11) Programmes of professional development must be co-ordinated so unnecessary repetition is avoided, and a logical sequence of experiences can be followed.

12) Pre-service programmes should be compulsory, and pedagogically and practically oriented. It should enable teachers to teach in multiple contexts and to diverse groups of children.

13) The goals of development of teacher professionalism should be in alignment with those of the curriculum.

14) In Service programme for teachers must inculcate the spirit of updating knowledge and use of state of art ICT strategies.

15) Meritocracy should be the rule, for more competent and qualified people to join the profession.
10.7 Future Research Questions

The current research thesis studied the relationship between family responsibilities and professionalism of married women teachers in Kerala. In future this study can be directed to unmarried women teachers and also to male teachers. The major finding of this thesis was that there is no drastic change in gender roles, but the professional investments of women teachers are commendably high, but needs to be improved. The future, studies can also be based on gender role problems of male spouses in dual career families.

It is critical for work and family research to understand the conditions under which the married women employees experience conflict between their roles. There is a need to consider working environment, job satisfaction, family support and number of working hours in the future research. Future studies should also continue to refine the methodology used in the area of work–family research. In order to attain in-depth understanding of one's work and family life, researchers, that study work–family roles should include multiple perspectives such as job stress, quality of life, mental health, and work demands. In addition, it is necessary to explore multiple waves of data collection over a longer period of time to understand the changing nature of work family roles over time. Longitudinal studies need to be conducted to examine how the stages of life (e.g., marriage, child birth, and child rearing) affect work and family concerns. It is clear from the current study that married women teachers indeed experience Work-family conflict while attempting to balance their work and family lives. Thus, educational institutions need to formulate guidelines for the management of Work-family conflict since they are related to job satisfaction and performance of the employees.
10.8 Conclusion

The results of this research indicate that, in a time-honoured, gendered society like Kerala, being a woman teacher has wider implications. Along with the highly imperative responsibility of adhering to the professional parameters of this noble field of endeavour, they also have to be the backbone of their family setup. The implicit logical assumption is that women teachers with their well equipped professional weaponry are playing the roles of ‘Superwomen’, by managing the multiple roles with a high self-esteem and positive vigour. The large majority of teachers report that they are satisfied with their Jobs and consider that they make a real difference in education. They make significant investments in their professional development, both in terms of their time and often in terms of money, an investment that goes together with teachers’ reporting that they use a wider repertoire of pedagogic strategies in the classroom. However, what we find is that, still teacher professionalism is at crossroads. “Lack of quality teachers has been hampering the overall quality of higher education in the country,” said Sukhdeo Thorat, chairman of University Grant Commission (UGC), while delivering Kale Memorial Lecture on “Higher Education in India: New Initiatives and New Challenges” on the occasion of Foundation Day and 17th convocation of Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (GIPE) (2011). This statement has been corroborated by various other educationists in our country as well as abroad.

Hence, for teachers, the challenge is to come to terms with the modern character of professionalism impregnated with trials and tribulations of the 21st century postmodern, globalised world. Today, it is more informal and personal than ever before, and this brings with it unknown set of opportunities and threats. The threats are of stress and
exhaustion for individual teachers and of a hidden, creeping fragmentation of the profession as a whole. Even so with these threats come a host of opportunities rooted in the creativity and entrepreneurialism of the profession both at the level of the educational institution and at system-level. The challenge is to exploit these opportunities for providing a kaleidoscope of learning experiences to the students and a saga of self-fulfillment.