

CHAPTER – III

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society. Work-life balance has been described in many different ways, including being judged by one prominent commentator as a complete misnomer on the grounds that work is, for most of us, actually a very important part of life. The term can also be seen as suggesting that work is not good for us, or at best a necessary evil, when in fact we know that people gain in so many ways – not just financially – from being in work. Health, relationships and all round well-being is improved by being in work and in daily contact with others.

Work life balance refers to the effective management of multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in the other aspects of life. It is an issue that is important both to the organizations and to employees. In the current economic scenario, organisations are hard pressed for higher productivity and need employees with improved work-life balance as an employee with better work- life balance will contribute more meaningfully towards the organisational growth and success¹⁶⁶.

This chapter highlights various conceptual and theoretical framework of existing research study. This chapter is divided into various parts as below:

- 3.1. Concepts of Work Life Balance
 - 3.1.1. Conceptual Models of Work Life Balance
- 3.2. Theories of Work Life Balance
- 3.3. Objectives Based Concepts of Work Life Balance

¹⁶⁶ Naithani, P. &Jha, A.N. (2009).An empirical study of work and family life spheres and emergence of work-life balance initiatives under uncertain economic scenario, Growth - MTI, 37 (1), 69-73.

- 3.3.1. Job Satisfaction of employees with Work Life Balance
- 3.3.2. Quality of Work Life Balance
- 3.3.3. Organisational Commitment and Family Commitment
- 3.3.4. Stress and Work Life Balance
- 3.3.5. Perception and Attitude of Employees towards Work Life Balance
- 3.4. Factors Influencing Work Life Balance
- 3.5. Most essential retention and attraction strategies of Work Life Balance
- 3.6. Pre – Requisitions for successful Work Life Balance
- 3.7. Problems in Work Life Balance Practice

3.1 CONCEPT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is a broad concept, defined in different ways by different researchers using diverse dimensions. The origins of research on work-life balance can be essentially traced back to studies on women having multiple roles. Work life balance was initially termed as work family conflict. Family sphere changes that have impacted the work life balance of individuals in today's context include nuclear families, single parent households, and dual earning parents, parents working at different locations and increasing household work. Hence, it has become very difficult to meet the family demands. Another change is the entry of women in workforce in a big way, while still continuing with their earlier role of a homemaker. So, women are playing a dual role, that of a breadwinner as also a homemaker. It is generally women who take the primary responsibility for childcare and who, in situations of conflict, adjust their working lives to accommodate family pressures¹⁶⁷.

Work-life balance as the extent to which a person can concurrently balance the emotional, behavioural and time demands of both paid work, personal and family responsibilities. Work life balance comprised of four parts namely,

- (i) Time, i.e., a comparison between amount of time spend at work and time engaged in other activities,
- (ii) Individual's behaviour at work and in personal life,

¹⁶⁷ Greenhaus, J.H., &Beutell, N.J. (1985).Sources of conflict between work and family roles. Academy of Management Review, 10, 76-88.

- (iii) Strain being a source of inter role conflict and
- (iv) Energy being a limited resource and relevant for employees to accomplish work and/or non-work related goals. In addition, a scale to measure three dimensions of work life balance namely, Work interference with personal life (WIPL), Personal life interference with work (PLIW) and Work/Personal life enhancement (WPLE) was also included.

3.1.1 Conceptual Models of Work Life Balance

A number of conceptual models of work life balance/work family conflict/work family enrichment have been proposed for a model of the sources of work family conflict. There are three major sources of work family conflict (a) time based conflict (b) strain based conflict and (c) behaviour based conflict. The model proposed that any role characteristic that affects person's time involvement, strain or behaviour within a role, can produce conflict between that role and another role¹⁶⁸.

Time based conflict occurs when time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in another role or when time pressures associated with one role make it physically impossible to comply with expectations arising from another role. Strain based conflict is experienced when strain symptoms from one role intrude into and interfere with participation in another role. Behaviour based conflict occurs when specific behaviours required in one role are incompatible with behavioural expectations within another role. According to the model, work domain pressures include the number of hours worked, inflexibility of the work schedule, role conflict, role ambiguity, expectations for secretiveness and objectivity and family domain pressures include the number of children, spouse employment, family conflict, low spouse support and expectations for warmth and openness. The model also proposed that these role pressures (and hence, work family conflict) are intensified when the work and family roles are salient or central to the person's self-concept.

The antecedents and outcomes of WFC (work family conflict) and assessed whether WFC plays an important integrative function in work and family stress

¹⁶⁸ Greenhaus, J.H., Collins, K.M., & Shaw, J.D. (2003). The relation between work family balance and quality of life. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 63, 510-531.

research. A comprehensive model of work-family interface was developed and tested. The direct predictors proposed in the model were job stressors (work pressure, lack of autonomy, role ambiguity), family stressors (parental workload, extent of children misbehaviour, lack of spouse support, degree of tension in relationship), job involvement and family involvement¹⁶⁹.

The results indicated a positive reciprocal relationship between W-F conflict (work to family conflict) and F-W conflict (family to work conflict). Job stressors and job involvement were found to be positively related to the frequency of W-F conflict. Conversely, family stressors and family involvement were positively related to the frequency of F-W conflict. Both types of WFC were positively related to a specific measure of within-domain distress. F-W conflict was positively related to work distress, whereas W-F conflict was positively related to family distress, at least among blue-collar workers.

A model outlining causes, nature and consequences of a work-life balance citing recent research to illustrate the various dimensions. According to the model, the determinants of work life balance are located in the work and home contexts. Contextual determinants include demands of work, culture of work, demands of home and culture of home. Individual determinants include work orientation (i.e. the extent to which work (or home) is a central life interest), personality, energy, personal control and coping, gender and age, life and career stage. The nature of work life balance was defined both objectively and subjectively. The objective indicators include hours of work and hours of uncommitted or free time outside work. Subjective indicators refer to the states of balance and imbalance. According to Guest, balance may be reported when equal weight is given both to work and home or, when home or work dominates by choice. Spillover occurs when there is interference of one sphere of life with other. The model further indicates numerous outcomes of work life balance which include personal satisfaction and wellbeing at work, home and life as a whole, performance at work and home, impact on others at work, family and friends¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁹ Frone, M.R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M.L. (1992a). Prevalence of work-family conflict: Are work and family boundaries asymmetrically permeable? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 723-729.

¹⁷⁰ Guest, D.E. (2002). Perspectives on the study of work-life balance. *Social Science Information*, 41(2), 255-279.

Theoretical framework is to explain the contextual antecedents of work life balance by identifying the environmental and individual mechanisms and relationships that combine to create work life balance. They explained how life complexity and dynamism affect work life balance and the moderating effect of munificence (abundance or scarcity) and accessibility of resources. The model categorized complexity and dynamism in clusters of home and extended family (number of people in the house, number of children, elder care, care of sick relative), job and employer (scheduling and reaching work, overtime, shift work, travel commitments, job transfers), occupation or profession (continuing education for personal growth, membership and leadership of professional groups) and community and free time activities.

Further, the employer, family, community and profession domains were stated to be the providers of resources like, leave and time off policies, employee wellness programmes, employee assistance programmes, family support emotional empathy, feedback and guidance, profession - training opportunities and conferences. The model argued that higher levels of life complexity and dynamism experienced by individuals results in lower levels of perceived work life balance. However, this relationship varied with munificence and accessibility of resources in one's environment as well as with individual differences of values and personality traits¹⁷¹.

The individual variables included were two personality measures, conscientiousness and positive affect, and the work related variables included were autonomy and supervisory support (tangibles) and work role identification (subjective). They proposed that individual variables and work based variables (both subjective and tangible) will have impact on experienced work family domain conflict, which will in turn lead to work based outcomes, namely, intention to leave and organizational citizenship behaviour.

Another conceptual model that linked work, family, and boundary- spanning demands and resources to work and role performance and quality has been introduced. The model proposed that work, family and boundary spanning demands and resources combine to create two dimensions of work family fit. Work demands-

¹⁷¹ Crooker, K. J., Smith, F. L., & Tabak, F. (2002). Creating work-life balance: A model of pluralism across life domains. *Human Resource Development Review*, 1(4), 387-419.

family resources fit derives from work demands, family resources, and boundary spanning demands and resources, whereas family demands-work resources fit results from family demands, work resources, and boundary spanning demands and resources. The two dimensions of work family fit combine with boundary spanning strategies to influence work family balance. Work family balance then affects work and family role performance and quality¹⁷².

3.2 THEORIES OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

A variety of theories on work life balance have been framed as a single frame work was not being universally accepted¹⁷³. Some of the theoretical frame works on work life balance include spill over, segmentation, compensation, congruence, enrichment, Inter Role Conflict, boarder and boundary theory.

- a) **Spill over:** It is referred to the effect work and family have on each other and was described in terms of affect (mood & satisfaction) values (Important of work and family), and skills. Many of the research work have been based on spill over theory. Researchers have long recognized that work and family are not "separate spheres", but are interdependent domains or roles with "permeable" boundaries.
- b) **Segmentation:** Work and family where considered to separate domain and were independent with each other.
- c) **Compensation:** It considered work and family to belong to two deferent domains and the negative experience of one domain could be compensated with the positive experience of other domain. In other words work and family exhibit invert relationship.
- d) **Congruence:** According to this theory addition variables such as intelligence, personality, genetic force or level of education could positively influence both work and family domains even though they are not directly related to work and family.

¹⁷² Kिरrane, M., & Buckley, F. (2004).Contributing to work family domain conflict: Exploring the avenues.

¹⁷³ Pitt-Catsouphes, M., Kossek, E., & Sweet, S. (Eds.). (2006). the work and family handbook: Multi-disciplinary perspectives and approaches. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

- e) **Inter role conflict:** It referred to conflict arising when meeting on demand a one domain work makes it difficult to meet the demands in other domain family.
- f) **Enrichment:** Enrichment theory refers to the degree to which experiences from instrumental sources (skills, abilities, values) or affective sources (mood, satisfaction) enhance the quality of the other domain¹⁷⁴. Work Family Border-Work-family border theory is devoted only to work and family domains. The outcome of interest in this theory is work-family balance, which refers to "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict".
- g) **Boundary theory:** Boundary theory is a general cognitive theory of social classification which focuses on outcomes such as the meanings people assign to home and work and the ease and frequency of transitioning between roles¹⁷⁵. Boundary and border theory can be applied to a range of work family topics like's flexible schedules working with family etc.

3.3 OBJECTIVES BASED CONCEPTS OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

This section shows us objective based concept of Work Life Balance. This brings out connection of work life balance with satisfaction of employees, quality of work life of employees, job satisfaction of employees, organisation commitment, and family commitment, stress of employees and perception and attitude of employees.

3.3.1 Satisfaction of Employees due to Work Life Balance

Job satisfaction is the level of contentment a person feels regarding his or her job. This feeling is mainly based on an individual's perception of satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be influenced by a person's ability to complete required tasks, the level of communication in an organization, and the way management treats employees. Job satisfaction falls into two levels: affective job satisfaction and

¹⁷⁴ Edwards, J. R., & Rothbard, N. P. (2000). Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relationship between work and family constructs, *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 178-199.

¹⁷⁵ Clark, C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53 (6), 747-770.

cognitive job satisfaction. Affective job satisfaction is a person's emotional feeling about the job as a whole. Cognitive job satisfaction is how satisfied employees feel concerning some aspect of their job, such as pay, hours, or benefits. Job satisfaction has identified a number of factors like reward system in work, perceived quality of supervision, working conditions, and individual determinates such as status and seniority, age group, marital status, and years of experience that cause people to become satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. The current study examines the relationship between job satisfaction and work-life balance among women employees in India. Firstly, the relationship is examined between the different constructs Career opportunities, Recognition, Work task, Pay, Work/life balance, Superior subordinate relationship, and employee satisfaction. Second, keeping the work-life balance as a mediating construct, it is analysed whether it leads to employee satisfaction. Job satisfaction has been defined as the degree to which employees have a positive & effective orientation towards employment by the organization. Work determines a person's worth and place in society and it influences one's psychological identity and sense of well-being. The term "work" is being used to paid work or employment. Work establishes one in the community of human kind. It links a person to others, advances the goals of culture, and gives purpose to one's existence. Work is a purposeful human activity which is directed toward the satisfaction of human needs and desires. It is obvious that work needs to be satisfying the job for a mutual beneficial relationship between employee and employer. Job satisfaction creates innovative ideas among the employees. Individuals may become more loyal towards the organization. Employees will be more satisfied if they get what they expected with efficient work life balance.

Effects of Work Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

- ❖ Workers Punctuality, Teamwork, Customer service, work supervision responsibility, group behavior, peer interaction and leadership initiative by workers are reduced.
- ❖ Recognition is the part of job satisfaction. It is an act of notice, praise, or blame supplied by one or more superiors, peer, colleague, management person, client, and/or the general public. Failure in getting recognition leads to poor job satisfaction.

- ❖ Creativity, new job-expertise learning and innovation of worker are grossly damaged due to lowering of work related enthusiasm among workers.
- ❖ Seniority demands the promotion and promotion facilitates mental satisfaction. It refers to designate an actual change in upward direction in job status. The promotion to the next level will result in positive changes such as pay, autonomy and supervision etc.
- ❖ Workers having problem balancing work roles and family roles, set bad standard in the company work setting and often upset the friendly work ambience.
- ❖ Highest monetary satisfaction for specially women employee is monthly salary or pay. These are the sequences of events in which compensation plays a major role. There is no doubt that monetary rewards may play a very influential role in determining job satisfaction. If salaries are not market oriented, this can lead to dissatisfaction.
- ❖ Workers problems get reflected negatively on company's turnover, operating profit and balance sheet.
- ❖ Women employees facilitate stress on interpersonal relationship within the premises majorly with the female colleagues; it involves relationships with superiors, subordinates, and peers or colleague. If the employee experiences the healthy relationship with others within the organization, so it will boost the morale and satisfaction toward the job and lead to the higher productivity.
- ❖ Substantial increase in the cases of workers being absent on the job and in extreme cases leaving the job.
- ❖ Physical working conditions and facilities are equally significant for job satisfaction of women employees. Apart from this company policy and administration plays an important role in satisfaction. These should be framed in keeping the view of employee's needs and desire.

3.3.2 Quality of Work Life and Work Life Balance

Women of the early centuries were mostly confined to their kitchens and those who were employed worked in factories, farms or shop works. Very few women had the access to higher education and they were forced to be at the mercy of their fathers' or husbands' attitudes towards women and work. The fast developing knowledge economy has given place for more number of women to be enlightened by higher education. Education has not only empowered them but also has given them robust careers. With brain power being the requisite skill in this knowledge era, rather than endurance or physical strength, the women workers seem to flood into every industry on par with men. But this has indeed become a tough challenge for women as they have to perform a lot of duties in home and office as well. As working women get married, they have additional responsibilities and when they become mothers, they have to manage the primary care of children and extended family and are thus, under greater pressure to continue on a career path. Working mothers 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 combined with their professional duties. The attempt of working women to integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles simultaneously puts them under tremendous pressure. As a result, the family becomes an organizational stakeholder and this powerful social trend marked the beginning of the work/life balance paradigm shift.

WLB can be achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of individual, business and society. Thus WLB accumulate decisive importance during assessment of Quality of Work life (QWL) of employees which describe the quality of relationship between employees and working environment. Again working environment aspects are the major determinants of overall Quality of Life (QOL) of employees.

3.3.3 Work Life Balance towards Institutional Commitment and Family Commitment

Institutional Commitment

The term *Institutional commitment* has become so much a part of management jargon today, that many of us use it every day without clearly visualizing the norms and parameters associated with it. Failure to understand the nature of organizational commitment leads to a lack of understanding of employee attachment to the organization and in turn leads to deficient management strategies that fail to reach their *goals*. In this article, we will briefly describe the three types of organizational commitment observed and accepted by research. In simple words, it is the strength of the attachment an employee feels towards an organization. It may be measured by the degree to which an individual is ready to adopt organizational values and goals. It may be measured by the degree to which an employee fulfills his/her job responsibilities. And it may also be measured by behavior observed in the workplace¹⁷⁶.

In the 90s, Allen and Meyer proposed an analytic view of organizational commitment, splitting it into three definable components – affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Affective commitment is the emotional attachment of an employee to organizational values – how much an employee likes the organization. Continuance commitment is a measure of the willingness of an employee to continue working for the same organization. Normative commitment deals with the feelings of obligation, or sense of responsibility an employee feels towards the organization. Though each component of organizational commitment may affect other components, for the purpose of designing management strategies, it is easier to segment and visualize the three types of organizational commitments in order to bolster them according to need.

Affective commitment or how much an employee actually *likes* or feels part of an organization has a tremendous effect on employee and organizational performance. High levels of affective commitment in employees will not only affect continuance

¹⁷⁶ Frederick J. Slack, John N. Orife, and Fred P. Anderson, "Effects of Commitment to Corporate Vision on Employee Satisfaction with Their Organization: An Empirical Study in the United States," *International Journal of Management* 27, no. 3 (2010)

commitment, but also encourages the employee to try to bring others into the talent pool of the organization. An employee with high levels of affective commitment acts as a brand ambassador of the organization. On the other hand, an employee with high continuance commitment (due to lack of alternatives), but poor affective commitment may harm the organization by criticizing it in his/her social circles.

Affective commitment of an employee is directly proportional to positive work experience. So, management policies and strategies that make proper strength and weakness assessments of employees and create situations and workflows where the maximum number of employees individually experience positive work experiences, help to build a successful organization.

The great emphasis placed by recruiting managers upon person-organization-fit is also to ensure a high level of affective commitment in employees. Affective commitment is higher when the gap between individual values and organizational values is minimal. However, the congruence between individual values and organizational values in employees can also be built and enhanced by strategies and programs to enhance employee understanding and recognition of organizational values.

When continuance commitment is not completely driven by affective commitment, it usually boils down to the costs that an employee associates with leaving the organization. Continuance commitment is also driven to a great extent by organizational culture, and when an employee finds an organization to be positive and supportive, he/she will have a higher degree of continuance commitment. Important organizational factors like employee loyalty and employee retention are components of continuance commitment.

Normative commitment builds upon duties and values, and the degree to which an employee stays in an organization out of a sense of obligation. There are times in small companies, when payments are delayed, and the employees have to suffer pay cuts or deferred pay, but they stay on, because they do not want to leave an employer during bad times. Normative commitment comes from a sense of moral duty and the value system of an individual. It can be a result of affective commitment, or an outcome of socialization within the workplace and commitment to co-workers.

Normative commitment is higher in organizations that value loyalty and systematically communicate the fact to employees with rewards, incentives and other strategies. Normative commitment in employees is also high where employees regularly see visible examples of the employer being committed to employee well-being. An employee with greater organizational commitment has a greater chance of contributing to organizational success and will also experience higher levels of job satisfaction. High levels of job satisfaction, in turn, reduces employee turnover and increases the organization's ability to recruit and retain talent.

Family Commitment

Family Commitment means doing something to the family as we do it to work. Work Life Balance refers to an employee's ability to maintain a healthy balance between their work roles, their personal responsibilities, and family life. Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of helping their employees to achieve this balance as more staff are experiencing conflict between their work and personal roles. In today's age, many workers are seeing their personal responsibilities increase, from childcare and elderly care, to volunteer work, and family commitments. This comes at a time when their work responsibilities are also increasing, resulting in a conflict between personal and work commitments and an increase in stress.

Another factor which is contributing greatly to the difficulty in achieving a work life balance is the changing landscape in how and where employees are expected to work. As more and more companies embrace the technological age and move into globalization, work is no longer restricted to the workplace. Employees can work from almost any location with the use of laptops, tablets, and smart phones; and telecommuting is on the increase. Employees can access work emails and assignments 24/7, meaning that they can also be accessible to employers and clients. Although there are multiple benefits to this flexible working pattern, it can run the risk of blurring the lines between work and personal life. Remote working also means that staff may now find that their typical work week is no longer restricted to the traditional 40 hours a week.

The result of a poor balance between work and personal life not only affects employees, but it also affects the companies that they work for. Employee stress can

increase to the level of burnout, resulting in lower productivity at work, a higher potential for stress related health problems and absenteeism, with the associated costs related to these being passed on to the company. In addition to this, employees may also experience poor personal and co-worker relationships and reduced job satisfaction.

There are several ways in which companies can help to encourage a work life balance for their employees, both in the policies that they implement and in ensuring that managers actively encourage employees to take advantage of these policies. Offering employees flexible working options helps employees design their work pattern to fit their personal commitments, ultimately reducing conflict between work and personal responsibilities. Flexible working options include allowing employees to work from home, adjust their working hours to meet personal commitments, use remote working, compressed work weeks, and job sharing. Managers should encourage staff to use annual leave and help employees to set boundaries by encouraging staff not respond to work related emails and calls during non-working hours. Some organizations are also implementing wellness programs, which include offering stress reduction and time management workshops, while others are creating wellness centers on the work site, helping to connect employees with physicians, mental health counselors, or on-site gyms.

An employee's satisfaction in their personal life and their ability to meet personal commitments greatly affects their success as a worker, which greatly benefits any company. Helping employees to achieve a good work life balance increases work satisfaction, increases their loyalty to their employer, and helps employers to achieve career longevity. A company which recognizes these benefits and implements policies to promote a work life balance is one which will not only see an increase in the productivity of their workforce but which also sees increased retention of staff and reduction in costs associated with high turnover.

3.3.4 Stress and Work Life Balance

A good work-life balance means you have harmony between different aspects of your life, where benefits gained from each area can support and strengthen the others. Work-life integration is a new concept, where many people are learning to

blend their work and personal lives successfully. Everyone experiences stress at some stage in their life. It is a way for us to know that something in our life is causing us concern and is affecting how we are thinking and feeling.

Stress is not always bad. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best, but when you are constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price.

Signs and symptoms of stress

a) Mental

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Memory problems
- Can't concentrate
- Low attention span
- Poor judgement
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

b) Emotional

- Moodiness
- Easily upset or hurt
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, unable to relax or keep still
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

c) Physical

- Tightness in muscles
- Aches and pains
- Headaches, trembling, sweating
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of appetite
- Lack of sleep, dreams, nightmares

d) Behavioural

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing).

Work-life balance is helpful in addressing issues related to stress among employees and it is adjusting your day-to-day activities to achieve a sense of balance between work life and personal life. Some benefits of a healthy work-life balance include:

- Reduced stress levels, at work and at home
- Greater focus and concentration
- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- The opportunity to participate more fully in family and social life
- More time to pursue personal goals and hobbies
- Improved health.

3.3.5 Perception and Attitudes of Employees towards Work Life Balance

The reaction of employees' is determined by attitude and perception development by the employees' with in themselves. The attitude and perception have a significant impact on their performance which in turn decides the performance of the organization. There is a necessity for fulfilling the needs and wants of the employees which would be the outcome of their enthusiasm shown by them towards their work accomplishment.

Work life balance reports found both employers and employees acknowledged management support as a vital aspect of work life balance provisions, and that individual manager's and supervisor's attitudes can have a great deal of influence on outcomes for employees.

3.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING WORK LIFE BALANCE

An individual's ability to maintain a balance between work and life is affected by factors relating to an individual's workplace and working conditions, including the flexibility and quantity of hours worked, sick and holiday leave provisions and availability of support structures within the workplace (e.g. childcare facilities, breastfeeding facilities).

Government policies regarding employer and employee responsibilities also exert an influence. For example, government provision or subsidisation of child care or parental leave may make it easier for parents to participate in the workforce without interrupting their work life balance.

In addition, the characteristics of an individual's life are important determinants of their ability to maintain a balance between work and life. Individuals who have many non-work commitments (either permanently or temporarily) face additional challenges when it comes to balancing these commitments with work. For example, those who are involved in community organisations or do voluntary work, those who are studying or pursuing sports and those who spend large amounts of time travelling may find it more difficult to find a healthy balance between work and life. Various aspects of parenting, including child-bearing, breastfeeding and child-rearing also influence an individual's ability to achieve a healthy work life balance. Employee control over work and work flexibility is of critical importance to employees who are also parents.

In spite of being the above, many other influencers of work life balance have been identified by researchers in both national and international context and can be broadly grouped into individual, personal, organisational, Societal and Some other factors.

Table 3.1 Factors Influencing Work Life Balance

| Individual Factors | Organisational Factors | Societal Factors | Other Factors |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Personality ➤ Well being ➤ Emotional Intelligence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Flexible Work Arrangements ➤ Leadership Support ➤ Role Related Factors ➤ Work Life Policy ➤ Technology ➤ Job Stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Child or Parent Care Responsibility ➤ Family Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gender ➤ Age |

3.4.1 Individual Factors affecting Work Life Balance

As has been shown in the above mentioned table, there are many factors affecting the work life balance. Among them, the first and foremost factor affecting work life balance is individual factor such as personality, Wellbeing and Emotional Intelligence.

- ❖ **Personality:** Personality is an important criterion as it influences the extent to which family or work is a central life interest influences the perceptions of balance of every individual¹⁷⁷. It acts as a moderator between Stress State and Job Attitudes. impact of personality on work-life balance and also analyzed the individual differences in maintaining a proper balance between work and non-work domains and suggested that there is no significant relationship between openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion and emotional stability and work-life balance but a positive correlation is found to exist between agreeableness and work-life balance.
- ❖ **Wellbeing:** Many researchers have reported that wellbeing plays an important role in maintaining work life balance. Well-being is introduced as a dynamic state of mind characterized by reasonable harmony between person's abilities, needs and expectations and environmental demands and opportunities. It has been found important for both organizational effectiveness and individual mental and physical health. Wellbeing at work has received renewed attention as a vehicle for organizational effectiveness, social change, and a managerial lever for ensuring performance¹⁷⁸.
- ❖ **Emotional intelligence:** Organizations to be successful need to develop employee's emotional intelligence skills to work effectively in the organization. Managers with high emotional intelligence tend to play an important role in the success of work-life programs by using their position

¹⁷⁷ Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-88.

¹⁷⁸ Keita, G. P., & Sauter, S. L. (Eds.) (1992). *Work and well-being: An agenda for the 1990s*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

to encourage or discourage employee's efforts for balancing their work and family¹⁷⁹. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in the success of completing their goals in the workplace and hence is considered to bring greater job satisfaction. Emotional intelligence apart from affecting job satisfaction was also found to be impacting work-family conflict, which is one of the variables of work life balance. Emotions are critical for stimulating and guiding behavior and to be satisfied and effective in life.

3.4.2 Organisational Factors

Work Life Balance is not only affected by Individual Factors but also influenced by Organisational Factors. Work and Life for an employee is dominated by the place where he/she works. Such factors can be named as flexible work arrangements, leadership support, roles related factors, work life policy, technology, job stress and culture.

❖ **Flexible Work Arrangement:** To help employees attain work-life balance was the driving force for the creation of flexible work arrangements. Flexible and compressed work schedules were related to productivity and performance, job satisfaction, absenteeism, and satisfaction. Individual's control and flexibility is a significant factor in the reduction of work-family conflict and its impact on well-being. It was also found that flexible work timings were more effective than flexible locations of work. Part time is an important flexible working arrangement and helped employees to achieve work life balance and also reduce work-life conflict. Many organizations adopted flexible time schedules in order to help employee balance their work and family. Some researchers have also reported that Schedule flexibility is negatively related to work-family conflict¹⁸⁰.

¹⁷⁹ Zedeck, S., & Mosier, K. (1990). Work in the family and employing organization. *American Psychologist*, 45, 240-251.

¹⁸⁰ Baltes, B. B., T. E. Briggs, J.W. Huff, J.A. Wright and G.A. Neuman, (1999). Flexible and compressed workweek schedules: A meta-analysis of their effects on work-related criteria. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(4), 496-513.

- ❖ **Leadership Support:** One of the most important factors that have impact on retention is the relationship between a worker and a supervisor. Supervisors are the “human face” of an organization. The supervisor support is so essential to retention that it can be said that employees leave bosses, not jobs. Abusive supervisors create conflicts in worker’s attitude for job, life and organization¹⁸¹.

- ❖ **Roles Related:** Individuals with high levels of emotional involvement in their work role may be more preoccupied with their work and, hence, may devote an excessive amount of energy to their role at the expense of their family role, resulting in work-family conflict. There is a recognition that individuals may be actively participating in one role while simultaneously feeling distracted by thoughts, emotions, or demands that are tied to another role. Moods, stress, and thoughts generated in one role domain often influence or spill over into other domains¹⁸². These overlapping thoughts are distractions, which are the product of poor role quality, and may thus result in negative outcomes. Most of the employees were not satisfied with their work life balance due to heavy work load at work place.

- ❖ **Work Life Policy:-**Policies favoring employees were found to be affecting work life balance. Flexible working policies should be promoted in a way that ensures that those who avail these policies will not be adversely affected in their career paths¹⁸³. It was found that the work family policy’s aim of „removing barriers for staff with family responsibilities“ could not be successfully implemented because employees who worked part time or in job share situations in order to better manage their roles, perceived their promotion and opportunities for advancement within that organization as limited. Some policies and initiatives are needed to improve work-life balance through changing workplace culture.

¹⁸¹ Greenbatt, (2002). Work/Life Balance: Wisdom or Whining. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(2), 177-193.

¹⁸² Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 72-79.

¹⁸³ Hammer, L. B., Allen, E., & Grigsby, A. (1997). Work-family conflict in dual-earner couples: Within-individual and crossover effects of work and family. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50, 185-203.

- ❖ **Technology:** Use of technology to some extent has helped employees to balance their work life. “Employees in today’s workplaces have the facility to communicate quickly with colleagues and outsiders, the advent of modern means of communication have brought many benefits but they have also created new problems for employees/employers”. The employees having the ability to access their e-mail from a multitude of devices and mediums at anytime, has definitely positively affected the work force. Availability of technologies that have created a 24*7 communication culture, email, mobile technologies) have, undoubtedly brought about a culture change in organizations with new expectations about working practices and speed of communication. Technologies have created a work culture which are allowing employees to work from home as well, hence allowing them an environment where they can strike a balance between their family and work life. A key advantage that emerges consistently is the flexibility mobile technology can offer, allowing workers to regulate the pace, location and time of day in which they conduct their work. Use of Enterprise solutions provides facility to do things in less time and the potential for greater productivity and efficiency. On the flip side some researchers have also concluded that advent of technology not always have positive impact on the employees, expectation from an employee to be available 24 hours a day, can be challenging as well as result in work life conflict.

- ❖ **Job Stress:** work place which gives an individual an experience of discomfort. Levels of work related stress could lead to organizational problems like low productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover. Environments with work pressures, coupled with job insecurity stress have been associated with burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment. Female employees with young children experienced negative spill over from family responsibility to work due to tiredness, absenteeism, inefficiency and inability to accept new responsibilities at work and this was one of the major source of stress for professionals and females.

3.4.3 Societal Factors

Social factors dominate the work life balance in some aspects. Work life balance is linked to both family and work. Equal care is need of the hour for both work and family. Therefore, societal factors include child/parent care responsibility and family support¹⁸⁴.

- ❖ **Child/Parent care Responsibility:** there is a statistically significant impact of support in Child Care responsibilities from Spouse and Elder parents“ on Work Life Balance of School Teachers. Marital status, long working hours, child care responsibilities and support from head of the department are the major factors that influence Work Life Balance. long working hours, tenure and gender issues were considered to be main reasons for imbalance.
- ❖ **Family Support:** Family members have a unique opportunity to provide both emotional support and instrumental support to the worker outside of the work environment. Work and family relations are related to job and life satisfaction and that the level of involvement, or degree of importance, the worker assigns to work and family roles is associated with relationships between work and family. Higher levels of family involvement resulted into higher levels of emotional sustenance from family members, which, in turn, had a positive relationship with life satisfaction.

3.4.4 Other factors

Apart from the above factors, others factors come to influence work life balance to some extent as mentioned below. They are gender and age¹⁸⁵.

- ❖ **Gender:** The influence of gender on work-life issues is reported throughout much of the literature in relation to the nature of the workplace, normative and gender-based beliefs and expectations. Gender variable has

¹⁸⁴ Clark, C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53 (6), 747-770.

¹⁸⁵ Edwards, J. R., & Rothbard, N. P. (2000). Mechanisms linking work and family: Clarifying the relationship between work and family constructs, *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 178-199.

significant impact on organization critical factors for maintaining the work-life balance. Employment type and gender had noticeable effects on work-family conflict, job involvement and job satisfaction. Employment type (organisational versus self-employment) was revealed to be linked to employee perception regarding levels of control.

- ❖ **Age:** Women with dependent children are finding it more difficult to balance their life than those who do not have dependent children.

3.5 MOST ESSENTIAL RETENTION AND ATTRACTION STRATEGIES OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Retention and attraction strategies are an important means for attracting and retaining skilled employees - particularly in areas where there is a high staff turnover, difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled staff, a competitive job market, and labour and skill shortages. One of the first strategies to consider is current work arrangements and management practices that may be contributing to the difficulty in attracting and retaining staff. This may require the assistance of an external person to the work area who may be able to see work and management practices more objectively and therefore obtain more detailed comments and views from both management and staff.

Staffs leave an organisation for many reasons, including career advancement, better job opportunities and retirement. These departures may be difficult to prevent. However, another key reason staff – and in particular women - leave their job is to find a better work life balance. Changes to the family situation tends most often to impact upon women and results in increasing difficulty in managing a balance between work and family responsibilities. Factors shown to impact the most upon staff trying to balance work and life include required hours of work, a lack of flexibility in being able to alter their working hours, time off or leave arrangements, a lack of access to suitable childcare arrangements, and undue stresses and tensions in the workplace which make working life more difficult and/or even unpleasant.

Employees who are able to balance their work, family and life commitments have been shown to be happier in their job and are more likely to stay and work

towards a rewarding and productive career. Improving staff retention rates must, therefore, generate cost savings, and these savings could be used to improve flexibilities, facilities and working conditions for all employees.

- Flexible working hours providing more flexible and consultative fostering arrangements and working hour to all employees, including shift workers.
- Part time work - providing more part time jobs with less hours or fewer shifts, or job sharing arrangements to all employees.
- Reasonable working hours reducing excessively long working hours and double shifts.
- Access to childcare - improving access to childcare with onsite childcare facilities and giving shift workers, who need access to childcare facilities, regular fixed shifts.
- Flexible leave arrangements providing greater flexibility in leave arrangements to suit employees' personal circumstances, including leave for school holidays through purchased leave arrangements and extended leave without pay to provide full time care to family members.
- Leave in single days allowing employees to request and take leave in single days and accrued hours as time off in lieu of payment.
- Job mobility providing increased mobility for employees to transfer between wards, hospitals, work areas and health services to find more suitable working arrangements that will assist them to better balance their current work and family/personal responsibilities.
- Safety and wellbeing improving safety, wellbeing and respect for all employees in the workplace.
- Telephone access ensuring all employees are able to receive urgent telephone calls or messages from family members at work and have access to a telephone to remain contactable with their family during working hours.
- Casual work introducing pools of permanent flexible part time or casual employees.

3.6 PRE-REQUISITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance in fact brings cheers to employees in particular and employer in general. Failure to balance work and life will lead to stressful life, prolonged illness, Attention disorders at the work place¹⁸⁶.

- **Positive “Work life Balance” thinking:** Treating staff as adults who are balancing their work commitments with their family/personal responsibilities, and being positive about making changes to create a more flexible workplace in all aspects of employee relations. The importance of modelling best practice work life balance “from the top” cannot be underestimated.
- **“Work Life Balance” policy:** It needs to have a clear policy statement which announces that the “WA Health is committed to providing a flexible responsive workplace, which enables all employees to balance work and family/personal responsibilities,” which is incorporated into core values statements and corporate plans, and supported by policy guidelines outlining what that means for everyone in the workplace.
- **“Work Life Balance” employer:** WA Health be promoted as an employer who respects and cares about its employees, who recognises that they will have family and personal responsibilities, and who provides flexibleibilities. Factors shown to impact the most upon staff trying to balance work and life include required hours of work, a lack of flexibility in being able to alter their working hours, time off or leave arrangements, a lack of access to suitable childcare arrangements, and undue stresses and tensions in the workplace which make working life more difficult and/or even unpleasant.
- **Awareness of entitlements:** Increase awareness of employees’ entitlements to access flexible working arrangements, and what assistance and services are available to them directly or by referral.

¹⁸⁶ Swami (2007). Work-life Balance: Organizational strategies for sustainable growth. HRM Review, October, 33-37.

- **“Work Life Balance” survey: conduct** a survey to identify staff needs in balancing work and family/ personal life responsibilities, current awareness of flexible work options, and suitability of current working arrangements. Incorporate results into the human resource management plan and staff work planning arrangements.
- **Implement flexible work practices:** This will provide greater flexibility to all employees, including supervisors, managers and other senior staff, and will ensure flexible working hours schedules, rosters and leave arrangements to accommodate their family and personal responsibilities, without detriment or penalty.
- **Willingness to pilot or trial initiatives:** All managers and supervisors to demonstrate commitment to creating a flexible workplace that supports work life balance by considering employees’ needs and requests, and be willing to pilot or trial new initiatives and implement more flexible working arrangements.
- **Management accountability:** managers to be responsible and accountable for implementing work life balance arrangements, reducing staff turnover rates and increasing retention rates in their work area. Managers to be made accountable for decisions will refuse employees’ requests for more flexible working arrangements.
- **Management Training:** Training and development programs for managers should include human resource management skills, the benefits of creating work life balance, and how to manage a more flexible workforce.
- **Pre-exit interviews:** Pre-exit interviews that include questions such as whether difficulties in balancing work and family/personal responsibilities were a contributing factor to the employee leaving, to be conducted prior to the employee leaving. This data to be collated analysed and reported to senior management. Where possible, alternative working arrangements should be offered to assist employees remain with a better work life balance.

3.7 PROBLEMS IN WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICE

Employees are unaware of WLB practices in their organization. While in some organizations work-life flexibility options may exist on paper, very few senior managers, male or female, they can avail themselves of them, as it would convey that they are not committed to their career¹⁸⁷. This undoubtedly has more impact on women than men, given the greater likelihood of women's take up of these options to enable them to combine family and work responsibilities.

Even managers are unaware of the WLB practices in the organization. Even the organizations having WLB practices their managers are reluctant in offering these benefits to the employees.

At present, establishment of work life balance in the workplace is generally left to individual employers, amongst whom there is large variance in awareness, interest, commitment and resources to deal with it (Hyman and Summers, 2004). Business results may be affected either positively or negatively depending on the company's attitude towards family issues¹⁸⁸. An example of negatively affected results is the cost of turnover. Replacing a valued female employee can cost up to 150% of her annual salary.

Even if the employees are aware of the companies WLB they feel uncomfortable for availing the benefits as they perceive that utilizing the existing WLB practices will undermine their career prospects. Senior female managers were reluctant to take up work-life balance options because of concerns that they may be viewed as less suitable for managerial positions. Change in organizational culture and perception of the management towards WLB practices need to be changed.

This can only be achieved by convincing those in senior management positions, in particular men, to actively promote and adopt such practices. So establishing the WLB policies is not enough, as policies don't change anything if the culture is resistant. Employees who fear that working flexibly or part time will have a negative effect on their career or their bonuses will inevitably feel wary of taking

¹⁸⁷ Piotrkowski, C. (1979). *Work and The Family System*. New York: The Free Press.

¹⁸⁸ Lockwood, N.R. (2003). *Work/Life Balance: Challenges and Solutions*, Society for Human Resource Management: Research Quarterly, 2, 1-10.

advantage of WLB practices. To stimulate culture change, policies need to be backed up with change in systems and in the attitudes and capability of people. The organization needs to examine its:

- **Processes for work organization:** how it divides up work and responsibilities. Technology- for example, whether people at all levels can work effectively from home or how delivery routes are planned.
- **Human Resource System:** The present human resource system is not able to provide flexible atmosphere among employees in their organisations. Even they face many hurdles due to existing HR system in their company.