

# **An Impact of Work-Life Balance of Women Employees on Stress Management-A Literature Review**

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## **Abstract**

A woman plays a vital role in the economic and social development of all the nations around the world. Working women has to balance both work and life with lot of problems. Women have to play their role as a wife, a mother and an earner. Women have many sets of overlapping responsibilities. Therefore, in addition to their traditional roles, professional roles are becoming more stressful that the women have to face in her daily life.

Work-life balance (WLB) of women is becoming an important and relevant area in ever dynamic working environment. As Richard Carlson says that, “Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness”. It is the at most pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person. Stress makes human beings to react both physically and mentally to according to the situations in their lives. Stress responds in the areas of feelings, behavior, and physical symptoms. The present research is intended to appreciate literature related to the Impact of Work-Life Balance of Women Employees on Stress Management

**Keywords:** Workplace Stress, Women, Work-Life Balance.

## **I. Introduction**

“Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person’s job and personal life are equal” (Lockwood, 2003). It is the ability to effectively manage the juggling act between paid work and the other activities, that are important to people.

As Kodz et al., (2002) explained, the principle of work-life balance is that “there should be balance between an individual’s work and his life outside work and this balance should be healthy”. Further in 2003, Work Foundation defined the concept of work-life balance and highlighted that it is all about employees achieving a satisfactory equilibrium between work and non-work activities (i.e., parental responsibilities and wider caring duties, as well as other activities & interests).

## II. Review of Literature

- Deepthi and Janghel (2015) discussed coping strategy of stress in employed women and in non-employed women. They observed that employed women use self distraction technique (surprisingly effective technique for changing mood) more as coping strategy compared to non-employed women.
- Essien and Stephen (2014) observed that annual leave and getting assistance from colleagues as the most widely used organizational and personal stress coping strategies by female employees of commercial banks in Nigeria.
- Dhanabakyam and Malarvizhi (2014) stated there is a positive relationship between stress and family difficulties in working women. The increase in work-family conflict leads to increase in work stress and vice versa in married working women. It is observed that women in professional job positions with high job demand were more prone to experience work family conflict and work stress.
- Dr. Hemanalini (2014) investigated the causes of stress that affect women in the working atmosphere in the textile industry. Majority of women stated that they are experiencing stress because of job insecurity and because of high targets.
- Tomba and Rapheileng (2013) concluded that female entrepreneurs feel more stress than male counterparts. Inability to spend enough time with families and friends, daycare and education for children are considered very stressful by both male and female entrepreneurs.
- Bhuvaneshwari (2013) revealed that stress in married working women is caused due to various family and official commitments, harassments at workplace, working for long hours and improper work life balance. These factors lead to stress in working women such as prolonged headaches, hypertension and obesity. She also concluded that stress can be relieved from balancing work and family, from institutional support, by spending time with the family and performing physical exercises.
- Satija S. & Khan W. in their research work titled —Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Occupational Stress among Working Professionals (2013). According to them Occupational Stress is as same as Job Stress that needs to be controlled at the workplace otherwise it will negatively affect on employee's work attitudes & behavior. This study investigates that, the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress. This study revealed findings that, Emotional Intelligence is a most significant predictor of Occupational Stress.

- P.S. Swaminathan & Rajkumar S. in their work on —Stress levels in Organizations and their Impact on Employees’ Behavioral (2013). They have conducted a study that focused on the levels of stress among the age group, profession, different varieties of jobs, hours of work and the influence of work environment on the degree of stress faced by employees. Stress in an employees’ individual in nature. This study indicates that, an optimum level in which every individual can perform with his full capacity and identified three conditions responsible for work stress they are 1) Role overload 2) Role self-distance 3) Role stagnation.
- Kavitha in her research titled —Role of stress among women employees forming majority workforce at IT sector in Chennai and Coimbatore (2012), she has focuses on the organizational role stress for the employees in the IT sector. She found in her research that, women face more stress than men in the organization and she viewed to be more specific married women faces more stress than the unmarried women.
- Sussanna (2012) identified high psychological demands; job strain and low job control are associated with increased stroke risk in working women.
- Urska Treven, Sonja Treven & Simona Sarotar Zizek in their research titled —Effective approaches to managing stress of employees (2011), have found that, where the workers are said to be stressed are more likely to be unsuccessful in their work. Various approaches of managing stress, good work organization and good management are the effective ways of preventing stress. They categorized stress broadly into three types; such as i) Transient Stress ii) Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and iii) Chronic Stress.
- Viljoen and Rothmann, have investigated the relationship between —occupational stress, ill health and organizational commitment (2009). They found that organizational stressors contributed significantly to ill health and low organizational commitment. Stress about job security contributed to both physical and psychological ill health. Low individual commitment to the organization was predicted by five stressors, such as Work-life balance, Overload, Control, Job aspects and Pay.
- Kristina (2008) investigated work-related stress in women and its association with self-perceived health and sick leave among working women. The findings reveal that the major factor causing stress among them is ‘stress owing to hard to set limits’, and followed by ‘increased workload’. On the other hand women associated with ‘high perceived stress owing to indistinct organization and conflicts’ are reported taking more sick leaves.

- Stephen Palmer and Kristina Gyllensten (2005) observed, multiple roles, lack of career progress, discrimination and stereotyping are the factors that create stress among the women. They confirmed that women reported higher levels of stress compared to men.
- Iwasaki et al., (2004) has concluded that women experience greater levels of work–family stress as a result of societal expectations and thus bear the burden of greater levels of work–family stress than men.
- Makowska (1995) studied psychosocial determinants of stress and wellbeing among working women. The significance of the work-related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function.
- Beena & Poduval (1992) observed that female executives showed greater stress than male executives. The difference in the stress experienced by female executives is due to a consequence of work-family conflict, social expectations, and behavioral norms that women face as they occupy a combination of roles.

### III. Objectives of the Study

- To understand the meaning of stress.
- To appreciate various causes of stress related with working women.
- To suggest the roles and responsibilities of key parties for maintaining WLB at workplace.
- To recommend various ways to employers for overcoming work stress.

Stress gives reactions of people who have excessive pressures from the dynamic personal and professional environment. Work stress has adverse physical and mental reactions that appear when the job demands. Particularly women feel stressed become a good organizational performer, while at the same time, still fulfilling her responsibilities towards their spouse and family. We live in stressful times, and each of us deals with stress every day. Scientists agree that moderate amount of stress can be benign, even beneficial, and most people are equipped to deal with it. However, increasing levels of stress can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing job satisfaction (Stranks, 2005).

### Sources of Stress

*The Environment:* The environmental stressors such as weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing, and crime.

**Social Stressors:** Social stressors such as deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, divorce, and co-parenting. These stressors arising due to demands of the different social roles such as parent, spouse, caregiver, and employee.

**Physiological:** Physiological stressors include rapid growth of adolescence, menopause, illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.

**Thoughts:** Human brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful or pleasant, in such situation our brain determines whether they are problems to us or not.

**Table :1 Causes of Stress**

<b>Organizational Factors</b>	<b>Personality Factors</b>	<b>Work family interaction Factors</b>
Long working hours	Control & decision making capacity	Support at work
Work overload	Headache	Work flexibility
Poor physical working conditions	Sex	Family demands
Time pressures	personality	Pressures at work
Job Instability	Physical agents	Work & Family life
Job it shelf	Age	Work demands
Job Clarity.	Depression	Imbalance

**Source:** <http://tejas.iimb.ac.in/articles/24.php>

### **Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms Of Stress**

Head ache, Fatigue, Increased absenteeism , Altered performance, Changes in attitude, mood or behavior, Becoming irritable, volatile or aggressive , Conflict with others, Diminished work relationships, Tiredness /lethargy/lack of interest, Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions, Changes to appearance or personal hygiene, Becoming withdrawn or isolated, Demonstrating unrealistic standards or Expectations for self or others and Uncharacteristically labile.

### **Roles and responsibilities of key parties in work-life balance**

#### **Individuals**

- Choose the best fit to organization
- Identifies personal needs

- Be more responsible for the workload as agreed with their manager.
- Participates in organizational growth.

### **HR Manager**

Develops a Work-life balance strategy that meets the needs of both employees and the organization.

- Should ensure work-life balance is embedded in all HR policies (including provision of induction and training).
- Supports individual managers to improve Work-life balance in the organization and find solutions to employees Work-life balance needs.
- Ensures training on Work-life balance principles and practice is provided to managers.

### **Union**

Promotes Work-life balance to members and employers.

- Articulates the collective interests of members in Work-life balance issues.
- Works in partnership with employer to develop a Work-life balance strategy and to improve Work-life balance in the organization.
- When required, assists individuals to negotiate Work-life balance solutions.

### **Suggestions to Overcome Stress and To Have a Balanced Work life**

1. When possible, incorporate a work-from-home policy.
2. Offer grace time at the time of reporting to time. (This helps when the employees hanged in traffic).
3. Make day care available to staff on-site or incorporate a benefit which would provide day care at a discounted rate.
4. Offer scheduling of flextime, where employees can provide their input on their preferred work schedule (7 a.m. to 4 p.m., 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.). If multiple employees request the same shift, offer a rotating schedule to satisfy everyone.
5. Offer seasonal hours, where employees can leave early on Fridays during certain seasons.

6. Allow employees to take a longer lunch, if they come in early or work later, to make up the missed time. This option will make it easier for staff to schedule appointments or run errands on their break.
7. Encourage employees to take frequent breaks to rehydrate and go to the restroom (at least once every two hours). This may seem unnecessary to address, but many busy people forget to take time out of the day for their personal well being.
8. Provide the employees with counseling sessions/stress audit whenever required. (Helps to reduce stress).
9. Provide Medical officers and medicines whenever required.
10. Spread the message about the Importance of work habits, diet and exercises should be emphasized

It is not possible to implement all the suggestions but emphasizing few will help the employees to reduce their stress to balance personal and professional work.

### **Conclusion**

Stress is the common problem which is present in every organization. Stress can make an individual productive and constructive if it is identified and well managed. Women stress is becoming the burning issue in this dynamic environment. Working women report on long run health issues due to imbalance of work and life, juggling between family and work responsibilities. Therefore, positive attitude and meditation will be the solution for coping the stress. Hence every woman will be successful in both the roles with healthy lifestyle.

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