# Challenges of striking work life balance: Perspective of women faculties in Aurangabad city

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**Abstract**
Organizations of globalised world in general and India in particular have witnessed a paradigm change in the practices and procedures of work and expectations from employees. Technological advancements and deeper penetration of communication media have played a pivotal role in this. On the other hand the changing family patterns, women entering the working zone have made balancing work and life more and more challenging. Hence, Work – life Balance of women employees demands more attention.

Although it is assumed that women can have good and balancing careers in the field of education, the modern-day education system has led to increase in the faculty workloads. Teachers work load is not only demanding their time in the institution but is also extending to their home so as to get prepared for the following day, apart from maintaining student records and attending to various institution related functional requirements.

The modern era also has witnessed technological advancements to a large extent. The modern-day teachers are needed to develop technology aided teaching sources. However, the biggest worry of modern times is that women have more time saving devices but less time. Additionally, with the revolutions in field of communication technology this time has got more engagements.

In the wake of the above discussion, it was felt necessary to understand the changes hitting the field of higher education. The present study attempts to understand the role and relevance of Work-Life balance for female teachers in the wake of challenging higher education system.

**Keywords:** work-life balance, female teachers, higher education, technology

## 1. Introduction
Organizations of globalised world in general and India in particular have witnessed a paradigm change in the practices and procedures of work and expectations from employees. Cut-throat competition, technological advancements and deeper penetration of communication media have played a pivotal role in this. The higher education sector is also not an exception to this. The traditional teaching-learning practices are becoming redundant at a fast pace. Upcoming batches of students are demanding more and more technology-driven teaching systems. LMS, MOODLE, MOOCs are set to become an inseperable part of higher education. This has made upscalation of teaching skills from traditional to tech-oriented among the teachers. And for this the teachers are required to learn, imbibe and administer these newer pedagogies; thus, increasing the faculty workloads.

On the other hand the transition of joint families to nuclear family patterns, both husband and wife working, elderly care responsibilities have all made balancing work and life more and more challenging for men in general and women in specific. Even today, majority of the Indian household chores are a responsibility of the female in the house. Hence, Work – life Balance of women employees demands more attention.

The working woman of today is found to be blessed with variety of electronic time saving gadgets like mixers, blenders, cookers, dish washers, washing machines etc. However, the biggest worry of modern times is that women have more time saving devices but less time. This leads to increase in stress levels which can affect their efficiency and productivity. In the wake of the above discussion, it was felt necessary to understand the changes hitting the field of higher education. The present study attempts to understand the role and relevance of Work-Life balance for female teachers in the wake of challenging higher education system.

### 1.2 What is Work-Life Balance?
Work/life balance, is referred to as striking a balance between vivid roles that a person plays on various fronts of his/her life. Although definitions and explanations vary, work/life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. Although work/life balance has traditionally been assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, more recently the concept has been recognized as more complex and has been developed to incorporate additional components.

In words of Greenhaus et.al. (2003) Work Life Balance is the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in, is equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role. They further propose three components of work-life balance: 1. Time Balance 2. Involvement Balance 3. Satisfaction Balance

1. Time balance, which concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles.
2. Involvement balance, meaning the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles.

3. Satisfaction balance or the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles.

Clark (2000) defined Work Life Balance as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with minimum role conflict.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study
a. To identify the extent of work life balance among women teachers.
b. To determine the factors affecting work life balance.
c. To suggest strategies to maintain a healthy work life balance.

### 1.4 Research Methodology
The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. From 83 affiliated colleges in the city, a sample of around 120 female teachers from 8 different colleges was selected using purposive, convenient sampling method. Due care was taken to ensure representation of entire population. A structured questionnaire was administered to the sample respondents. However, after scrutiny 10% questionnaires were rejected and the study was carried out over 108 sample respondents. The data collected through questionnaires was classified, tabulated and presented for analysis and interpretation. Spreadsheets were employed for generating statistics and charts.

The data so tabulated was further exposed to tools like Percentage Analysis, Cross-analysis and Chi-square analysis to derive meaningful conclusions. The entire analysis was done using MS-Excel. Secondary data was also used for the study. It was collected from relevant studies published in newspapers, books, magazines, journals and websites.

### 1.5 Literature Review
1. Work–family balance reflects an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter-role phenomenon (Marks and MacDermid, 1996). Work-life balance is a key issue in all types of employment as dual-career families have become common and high work demands with long working hours have become the norm. The importance of helping employees achieve a balance between the demands of their work and their home lives has been emphasized.

2. Kadam (2012) defines Work-Life Balance is a subject of increasing interest in academic literature and legislation. Work-Life Balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "Work" such as career and ambition, on the other hand and "Life" such as health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development. Work-Life Balance means, meaningful daily achievement and enjoyment in each of four life quadrants work, family, friend and self.

3. Padma *et al*. (2013) defines the term Work-Life Balance (WLB) is attracted by all including the individuals and Corporate all over the world. WLB is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement between the multiple roles of a person's life. It is a person's control over the responsibilities between their workplace, family, friends and self. It is a comfortable state of equilibrium achieved between an employee's primary priorities at their work place and at their private life.

4. Sunita Malhotra & Sapna Sachdeva (2005) in their study point out that the gift of this knowledge era for women is occupational opportunity and mobility. But this gift has become a great challenge for the working women of today as they are not only exposed to the same working environment as men but in turn are also exposed to the pressures created by the multiple role demands and conflicting expectations. "By fulfilling their economic needs, employment has no doubt made women independent with an identifiable social status but it has also made them to juggle into two main domains of lifework and family. They have stepped into work place but the role responsibilities of women still remain the same, i.e., women may be a top executive, still the "nurturing" or "care giving" roles are considered much a part of feminine roles."

5. According to the Nielson Survey conducted in June 2011, Women in India (87%) are most stressed/pressured for time. Research outcomes have suggested that female respondents in all parts of the world are pressured for time, face lack of time to relax and feel stressed and overworked most of the time. Moreover, women in developing countries feel the strain even more so than women in developed countries.

6. In the renowned book, 'Work and Family: Allies or Enemies', Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) argue that conflict between work and family has real consequences. It significantly affects the quality of family life and career attainment of both men and women. The consequences for women may include serious constraints on career choices, limited opportunity for career advancement and success in their work-role, and the need to choose between two apparent opposites—an active and satisfying career, or marriage, children, and a happy family life. Work and family balance, in a way, deals with the role balance of an individual both at home and work.

### 1.6 Significance of Work-Life Balance:
WLB is of utmost importance for the modern day organisations. Today's organizations are constantly facing the challenge of global competition, higher education institution not being an exception to the same. Many private and foreign institutes and universities are making their foothold strong in Indian scenario. Such over-competitive atmosphere creates pressures by demanding more and more from the employees. Organisations are observed to have raised their expectation bar for the employees in terms of their time, contributions and work commitments. This surely makes it difficult to strike a balance between work and personal commitments. The line separating Work and Life is diminishing day by day.

The inability to balance work and life has severe implications because it affects every aspect of women's lives. The stress created from being pulled in multiple directions has negative consequences for psychological and physical well-being (Kinman & Jones, 2004). As Indian women have in recent decades attempted to embrace the workplace responsibilities, it has added to their overall workloads. Performing household responsibilities, being at their best as mothers and maintaining relations with family, relatives and friends has always been their priorities. However, they also strive to be at their best at the workplaces. This makes them susceptible to the high stress

levels, thus affecting all their roles. The feeling of being unable to impart at optimum efficiency culminates into guilt leading to psychological stress. This psychological stress gradually produces health physiological issues among women.

Poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and high levels of stress that result from poor work/life balance can cause physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, insomnia, and back pains, and sometimes lead to more serious illnesses including heart conditions that result in long-term consequences for women and their families (Kinman & Jones, 2004).

With better WLB practices the higher education organizations will be able to retain talent, reduce absenteeism and lethargy among the teachers. Further it shall also help in enhancing their efficiency in teaching, keeping themselves updated. Innovative and enthusiastic teachers can be developed only when they are satisfied, at peace and psychologically committed. Organisations can thus overcome the challenges of employee turnover, absenteeism, lack of productivity with the help of appropriate WLB practices.

## 1.7  Data Analysis and Interpretation

In order to understand the extent of Work Life Balance among the women teachers of the affiliated colleges an extensive survey was conducted in Aurangabad. The analysis and interpretations of the survey are appended as

follows:
The respondent profile is detailed as below:
Of the total 108 respondents 53.7% are permanently appointed while 46.3% are working on contractual basis or on Clock-Hour basis. 5% respondents are below 30 years of age, 51% are in the age range of 30-40 years and 23% belong to age group of 40-50 while 21% to the age group of 50-60 years. More than three-fourth of the sample is married. Further it is also observed that 81% of the respondents belong to nuclear family systems. Based on annual income the classification indicates that almost 49% of the respondents belong to the above 7 Lakhs category while almost 47% are earning annually less than three lakhs. Further 67.6% respondents are working in this field of education for more than ten years while 23% have been working for 1-5 years and almost 10% respondents are freshly recruited with an experience of less than one year.

### 1.7.1 Opinion on Work-Life Balance Factors

The Work-Life balance dimensions are studied under two categories viz. Home-Life dimensions and Work-Life dimensions. The work-life and personal life are correlated. When a lady is able to carry out her household responsibilities properly, she can perform better at the workplace and vice-versa. The home-life factors provide an insight in the quality of personal life experienced by the repondents.
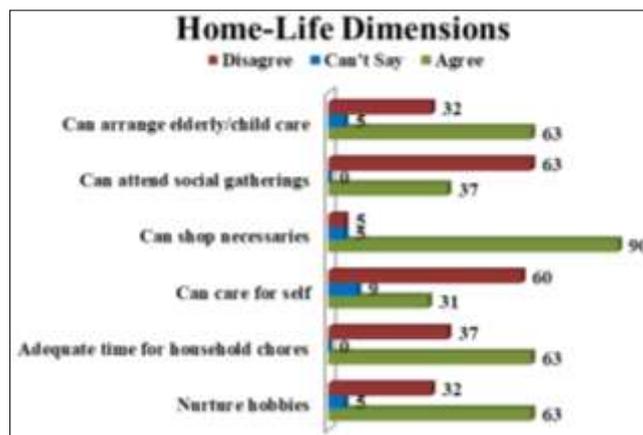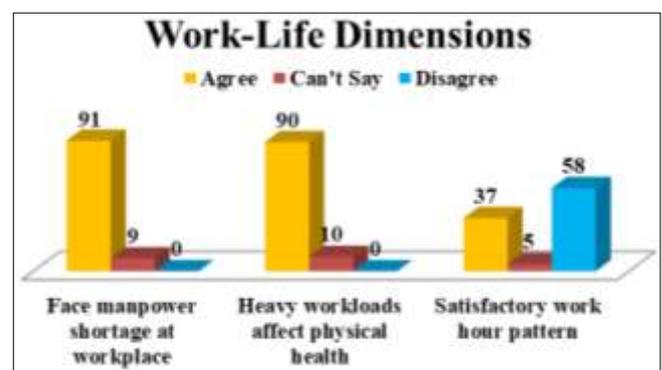


**Source**: Primary Data

**Fig 1**

On various Home-Life dimensions majority (63%) respondents opined that they could very well nurture their hobbies, could spend adequate time for household chores, could shop for necessaries and could arrange for elderly/child care. However, 63% of the respondents felt that they could not attend social gatherings and 60% stated that their work profile did not permit them to take care of self. Obviously, this would leave them under stress and affect their performances at the workplaces.

As there are certain personal life related factors that can interfere work life similarly there are work life factors that can interfere personal-life. The productivity and satisfaction of the employee is based on these factors.



**Source**: Primary data

**Fig 2**

The graph given above analyses the respondent opinion on three work-life dimensions viz; Manpower shortages at work place, heavy workloads and satisfactory work hour pattern. A huge majority (90%) of the respondents stated that they face manpower shortages at their workplaces as well as heavy workloads affect their physical health. When enquired if they had a satisfactory work hour pattern 58% disagreed. This clearly indicates that majority of the respondents had difficulties at their workplaces which led to stressful life for them.

**1.7.2 Level of Work-Life Balance of Respondents**
In order to measure the extent of WLB achieved by the respondents, they were exposed to a 12-dimension question set in the questionnaire. These questions were given scores for proper classification of respondents in three levels viz. Low, Medium and High.
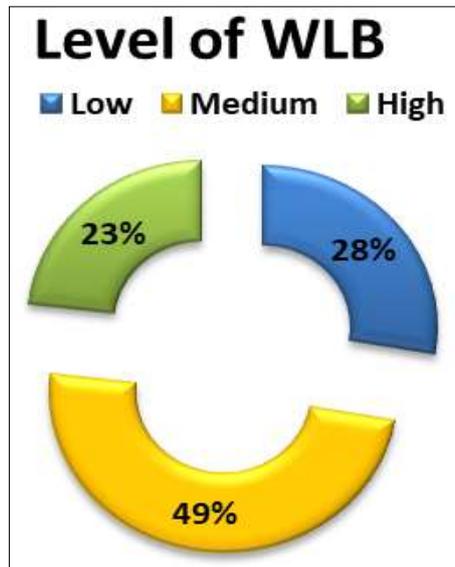


*Source*: Researcher's analysis

**Fig 3**

It can be clearly observed from the graph above that of the total 108 respondents only 23% could effectively achieve Work-Life Balance. Almost half of the respondents are observed to be positioned in the medium level of WLB while more than a quarter of the respondents are experiencing tremendous difficulties in maintain WLB.

**1.7.3 Impact of demographic profile**
The impact of demographic factors on WLB of the respondents was analysed by testing the hypotheses. The results of hypothesis testing are summarized as below:

**Table 1:** $X^2$ analysis

| Sr. No. | Particulars | $X^2$ Calculated Value | $X^2$ Table Value | dF | Relation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | H$_0$: There is no significant relationship between nature of appointment of respondent and WLB of respondent. | 42.09 | 9.49 | 4 | Significant |
| 2 | H$_0$: There is no significant relationship between years of service of respondent and WLB of respondents. | 19.615 | 9.49 | 4 | Significant |

Source: Computed by researcher

The calculations of $X^2$ from the above given table clearly indicate that both the null hypothesis tested are rejected. It means there is significant relation between the nature of appointment and WLB of the respondents. It is also clear that years of service of the respondents have a significant impact on WLB of the respondent.

**1.8 Recommendations for Improving Work Life Balance**
Based on the findings and conclusions of the study the researcher presents following recommendations:

a. The study reveals that there is no special provision of any family support programs across the institutes. Hence, it is advised to the management that a coordinating committee with the representatives of management and employees should be constituted which itself is a great initiative from employee 's point of view.

b. The institutions need to create counseling services in their respective organizations by appointing full time counselors who can help employees sync their mental and physical bent-up.

c. Sabbaticals & Part-time work arrangements need to be promoted in institutes which will help reduce familial pressures.

d. Free health checkups, health insurance & exercise facilities should be introduced to retain talent as well as leverage effective recruitment.

e. Flexible work arrangements and sharing of workloads may be permitted.

f. Appropriate training and motivational programmes may be arranged for the female employees of the institutions.

g. Technology and utilization of innovative teaching aids do wonders for time management. Rich databases of

video lectures should be created for each subject which will be very effective in maintaining WLB.

h. Teachers should be motivated to make optimum use of technology-oriented teaching aids.

## 1.9 Conclusion
The present study throws light on a comparatively ignored area of study i.e Work Life Balance of female teachers. Teachers are assumed to be moulding and nurturing future India. It is therefore evident that they must be stress free to offer their best services The analysis however putsforth a startling outcome with less than one fourth of the female teachers being able to balance their Work-Life. The respondents have stated that their familial life as well as jobs are affected due to contra interferences. Hence it is the call of time that the government, policy makers and educational institutions together work for easing the working conditions, workloads and providing amicable work environment for the female teachers thus bringing the best out of them.

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