

# Work-life Balance - Implication for Millennial Working Women

Roshini Fernando U<sup>1</sup> and Kamna Michael<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Xavier Institute of Management Jabalpur (An Educational unit of XIDAS)  
E-mail: <sup>1</sup>uroshini1@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>kamna.michael@ximj.ac.in

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**Abstract**—*WORK LIFE balance is a term used to describe the balance between an individual's personal life and professional life. Though women have made their entry into the labour market they still face obstacles at their workplace which are related to (a) the hazards or risks which are common to all the workers; and (b) the risks which working women face in their families and in the society. There is increasing evidence that work-Life Balance has a direct impact on societal issues such as delayed parenting, declining fertility rates, ageing populations and decreasing labour supply. Millennial is the generation born between 1982 and sometime in the early 2000's with an approximate age group from 15-33. This study was conducted on women between the age group of 23-34 who also fall under the generation of Millennial. Millennial women are more highly educated and have more labour market equality than previous generations, but then achieving healthy work-life balance assumes great significance for working women particularly in the current context in which both, the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for women. The current dynamics of the work environment have exerted enormous pressure on working women as they need to cope with virtually two full time jobs—one at the office and the other at home. Therefore, this study investigates the factors affecting work life balance among millennial working women and the consequences of poor-work life balance. Data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered by randomly selected millennial generation working women across organizations/institutions. Factor analysis was used to identify the factors which cause dissatisfaction among millennial working women. This study helps in understanding the mindset of the millennial generation working women towards the current work-life balance scenario.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work and life has become talk of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its running parallel to each other in today's fast changing economy, one has to create a balance between work and life. Work life balance is maintaining and creating a healthy and good work environment as well handling the duties and responsibility of the family too. The thin line between the two words, i.e. work and life is balance.

Born between 1980 and 1995, female millennials make up a significant proportion of the current and future talent pool. Attracting the best of these millennial workers is critical to the future of your business. Millennials matter because they are

not only different from those that have gone before, they are also more numerous than any since the soon-to-retire baby boomer generation.

Today's working women has many competing responsibilities such as work, children, acquainting spouse, elderly people or parent care this places stress on individuals families and the communities in which they reside. Work-life conflict is a serious problem that impacts workers, their employers and communities.

## 2. WHAT IS LIFE?

Paul Herbert says "Life is what we do. How much of what we do that is focused on what "we" want and what "others" want is the real issue. And that isn't clock bound. It's not about measuring time—but about passing time. It's not about which numbers on the clock we work or not work—it's about the percentage of our breathing we spend on others' goals and how much we spend on our own.

## 3. WHAT IS WORK?

Peter Moorhouse says this beautifully - "Work is what we do, not where we go. Work is what we produce, not when we produce. It's the problems we solve and the things we create. It's how we use our skills and our smarts."

## 4. WHAT IS WORK LIFE BALANCE

In the words of Jim Bird, CEO of [worklifebalance.com](http://worklifebalance.com), work-life balance does not mean equal balance between professional and personal life. It is careful synchronization of an individual's varied pursuits that may include family, work, leisure, social obligations, health, career and spirituality. While some of the pursuits need greater attention, others may require lesser focus. Striking a fine balance by prioritizing these human quests will result in work-life balance. It is individual specific and keeps changing over time.

Working women in India are not exempt from fulfilling their social obligations. As women are aware that certain social obligations must be met whether they are working or not, they

may be consciously setting aside the time to fulfill such obligations. Discussions with respondents revealed that though the younger generation Indian men today are more tolerant of non-traditional lifestyles of the working women in their homes, they are still fairly conservative and expect women to manage household work and childrearing tasks. Often, working women are expected to make career sacrifice by restricting themselves to limited work at the workplace. This may cause anger and frustration which has the potential to spill over to the various roles women play in their work and family lives.

## 5. WORKING WOMEN, SALARIES AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

A recent survey conducted by iVillage found that many women were not being proactive in the workplace in terms of advancing their careers or asking for appropriate compensation for their job responsibilities.

The 1,500 respondents in the survey touched on everything from mentors to money, work life balance to building skills. One of the major topics covered was money—or lack thereof. While everyone would like to see more money in their paycheck, women are often times reticent to ask for a raise. This is crucial, since 63% of women feel that they are underpaid—and are unhappy about it. Not surprising, not earning what they feel they deserve was the #1 reason reported for workplace dissatisfaction.

And it doesn't stop at asking for a raise or a promotion. There are other areas in which women are not speaking up and asking for what they want (and need) to succeed in the workplace. Only 17% of women have ever asked for a meeting with their boss to discuss career options, and a mere 5% has asked for some form of mentorship.

So why are women so afraid to ask for what they deserve? Job security factors heavily into their decision to ask (or not) for a raise or other workplace benefits. The fear is that if asking for anything be it a raise, promotion, or even career guidance—will somehow count as an X against them and their jobs could subsequently be at risk.

Beyond benefits and raises, though, what today's working women really want is a better work life balance. In fact, a whopping 89% of respondents said that they defined career success as the flexibility to balance life and work. Similarly, 48% of women stated that they would be happier if their jobs offered workplace flexibility and telecommuting options.

What can women do to help earn what they deserve and score some better work life balance? Well, knowing what you're worth is critical. Luckily, it's fairly easy to figure out what you should be getting paid. So instead of bugging colleagues to reveal their salaries, you can easily see what you should be earning at sites such as salary.com, which boasts a salary calculator.

And whether it's to ask for a raise, a career mentor or even a flex schedule, go in to your meeting with your boss prepared. Have a plan and be prepared to explain your case with examples of how you've contributed to the company. But if your boss turns down your request, don't panic. Simply be prepared to build your skills to get you to the next level—whether it's at your current position or a new one—and to the pay grade and job satisfaction that you deserve.

It's important to know your worth, and to let others know it, too. Asking for what you need in the workplace shows that you value yourself, and will help your boss realize that he needs to invest in you—and your other colleagues—in order to have in turn a staff that is happy and invested in the company.

Is Salary, the issue of balance work or creating your demand? Today Females are the essence of the work environment who works dedicatedly for the company or organization. Companies also want a balance of both men and women in their environment.

## 6. THE OBJECTIVE

The main objective was essentially planned as a descriptive/analytical research. The main objectives are:

- To determine the factors affecting work life balance among the millennial working women and
- To find out the consequences of poor work-life balance for working women.

This study is based on the assumption that there are factors in the family as well as work environment that, impact work life balance of working women. It is also based on the premise that poor work-life balance has implications for working women which could be identified.

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Research design proposed for the study is 'Descriptive' type of research service. This type of research deals with quality of responses from the respondents, attitudes, interests, technical skills, experience, behavioural, beliefs and values, emotions, personality, self-concept etc.,
- Primary data was collected by questionnaire survey method based on a pilot study.
- Secondary data was collected from journals and Research articles to support the research.

## 8. SAMPLE

- Primary data was collected from the millennial working women from the age limit 23-34.
- Sample size is 50.
- Questionnaire was distributed to various millennial working women from various industrial sectors from

being an entrepreneur, IT professionals, trainee doctors etc.

## 9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study in terms of determining the factors affecting work life balance among the millennial working women.

### 9.1. Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondent indicates that majority of them 80% are professionals. There are 75% of the women respondent are unmarried. The entire sample of working women selected for the purpose of this study was required to have completed their graduation. Therefore most of them have a minimum of two years of experience.

### 9.2. Factors Affecting Work Life Balance

**Burden of excessive work:** 44% of the respondent agrees that they suffer from the burden of excessive work. With the increasing demands on the job, working women have to spend long hours of work and sometimes even carry their work home. Therefore majority of them are burdened with excessive work in both their personal and work spaces. This is a contributing factor to work life imbalance and may lead to conflict.

**Interference of work with family life:** Majority of the respondents agreed that work interfered with family life. This may be attributed to the fact that mostly work hours are not limited to 7 or 8 hours a day and the private sector employees spend 12-16 hours at work. This leaves them with very little time for family. As more than one half of the respondents are employed in the private sector, there may be interference of work with family life due to long hours spent in completing official work.

**No time for oneself:** Majority of the respondents agreed that they had no time for themselves. Around 76 % of the respondent have replied that they are been robbed of their precious time that could be constructively spent for their personal growth or spiritual pursuits.

### 9.3. Consequences of poor work-life balance

**High levels of stress and anxiety:** Majority (75%) of the respondents agree that they experience high levels of stress and anxiety due to poor work-life balance. Working women not only have to manage the tasks involved in bearing and raising children but also have to deal with high levels of anxiety in having to compete in a man's world. Besides, they have to constantly juggle between the family and work preventing them from aspiring to progress in their career beyond a particular level. Some working women may choose to prioritize career over family. In such cases, they may experience frustration and guilt in compromising on the time to be spent with family. In either situation, working women

are forced to make a difficult choice or compromise resulting in stress and anxiety thereby adversely affecting their health.

**Changes in socio-cultural structure:** The trends in work that have unfolded over recent decades have driven the changing views that younger generations have about marriage, family, and the desired balance between work and family obligations. There are two major issues that concern a lot of importance. They are

1. Declines in marriage/ late marriages
2. Delayed childbearing

**Declines in marriage:** There are fewer people getting married today, and those who are marrying are doing so later than any other generation in history. The downward trend in marriage is driven by a number of factors: higher rates of co-habitation; a declining belief in the social value of marriage; concerns about divorce; and an increasing belief that financial security is a pre-requisite for marriage.<sup>19</sup> This is especially true for women, 78 percent of whom say that it is very important for their future partner to have a steady job.

**Delayed childbearing:** When evaluating trends in childbearing, women's ability to plan the timing and size of their families is an important factor to take into consideration. Due to the hustle of the life and the current work culture, it is becoming difficult in achieving the correct time period with the current economical conditions.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Juggling competing demands is tiring if not stressful and brings lower productivity, sickness, and absenteeism, so work/life balance is an issue for all employees in and all organizations. The analyses of work life balance presented in this study are an attempt to understand factors affecting work life balance of working women and consequences of poor work life balance.

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