

## **WOMEN PRINCIPALS AND WORK LIFE BALANCE**

### **Sub Title**

### **EACH CHOICE HAS A COST**

By

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#### **Abstract:**

The percentage of women principals is continuously growing as the number of women entering the administrative arena is increasing. This paper highlights the struggles and challenges faced by the women principals and its reflection in maintaining work life balance. Nature has created woman as a multitasker with a fecund mind, capable of carrying out various tasks simultaneously with precision. Woman as a leader is capable of inspiring, motivating and facilitating her group in achieving the expected goals. The present era has witnessed innumerable women endeavouring to break the glass ceiling which was scanty in progress in the past. Accepting this fact the challenge lies with the women in maintaining a striking balance between their professional and personal life. The term 'work life balance' is used to describe the balance between an individual's personal life and professional life aiming at the achievement of optimum balance. Women principals in the schools are subjected not only to the various cultural and social prejudices but to certain taboos which impede them from blooming to their fullest. Women have the potential to be the captain of the ship, steering it to a safer shore in a stormy weather. As a principal of a school she is the mentor, guide, model for her subordinates and it takes a herculean task to prove herself at the work front and family life in equity. Other than the role of a leader at her institution she has to be the nurturer and caretaker of her family where she has to play a dual role and thereby face challenges in striking a proper balance. Here comes the fact

where she has to pay the cost which emphasises the adage 'Each choice has a cost'. The main objective of this research was to identify the challenges and their coping style. A semi structured interview conducted among the female principals helped the researcher to reach at a conclusion that women principals are successful to a large extent in maintaining a perfect work life balance. It was found that by and large women go for the power seeking positions by choice not only to prove their capability to themselves but also to the society at large. On the basis of this study it can be concluded that women leaders had to pay the cost for each choice.

**Key words:**

women principals, work life balance, facilitator, nurturer

**INTRODUCTION :**

We are in an age where everyone chases to be at his/her best. In this run we are in the continuous uncertainties and excessive pressure which is further fuelled by excessive competitiveness in various fields. In order to fulfil our duties in the best way we are causing an imbalance in our lives. With each passing day we are entwined in a maze where everyone is struggling to come out or escape. In this run either we achieve success and meet our target or we lose hope and get shattered. In order to maintain a balance one has to have strong will power and strength which would enable him/her to lead ahead. In this unending run the most affected one is the female gender of the society. She is expected to be a super human being with extra ordinary power to carryout multitasks.

Traditionally women were the caretakers of our family. They were the nurturers and caretakers of our family therefore assigned with the managing and maintaining the family. As time passed women were shouldered with dual responsibilities both at family front and work front. She is expected to be perfect not only at work front but home front as well. Men were considered to be the breadwinners of the family which has been taken over by women as well. Today's urban society is witnessing increasing number of dual couples for whom family and workforce have become the two important institutions of life. The struggle to maintain an equilibrium in work and family has become a cause for concern. Here comes the role of the much talked and

discussed term -work life balance. Women in urban society is juggling to maintain a balance between her work and family life. In order to excel in work front she has to let go certain duties at home. If a woman is holding a responsible position in an organisation she cannot devote sufficient time to take care of her family. The time meant for the family is to be shelled out for the organisation, and here arises the guilt which results into stress. The time and energy used for the organisation reduces her potential and capabilities which otherwise she can use for fulfilling the demands of her family.

Who is a leader?

A leader is "a person who influences a group of people towards the achievement of a goal". A mnemonic for this definition would be 3P's - Person, People and Purpose as illustrated by the following diagram.

(July 2007 by Alan S.L. Wong)

Leader is a person who influences people to achieve the purpose. He is committed to his group and influences others to be with him in the achievement of goals.

## **WORK LIFE BALANCE**

The term work life balance is a term used to describe the balance between an individual's personal life and professional life. The work life balance refers to the achievement of optimum balance between the personal life and the professional life. There are many factors which are exerting negative relationship with the work life balance of the employees. Some of the common factors are ,demographic profile, workload and responsibilities, work environment, family demands, job demands, role conflict, quality of work, quality of work life etc.

Why does the need arise?. This clearly states the fact that it is the gender that makes it responsible for striking a balance. It has never been seen or heard a male member struggling to have a balance between his personal and professional life; whereas we have end number of cases where a woman is struggling to balance her personal and professional life. Niklas Goke (2019) in his article has coined the concept of 'Four Burners Theory of Work life Balance'. The four burners are Family, Friends, Health, Work. He says "In order

to be successful you have to cut off one of your burners. And in order to be really successful you have to cut off two."As per this theory a woman has to sacrifice and let go her one component of life in order to achieve the other one, why is it so? The answer could be she tries to be perfect in each of her components. She has been created in such a way that there is no word like compromise in her dictionary. Which ever aspect she is dealing with or undertaking she forces it to be excellent. In this run of being excellent she has to undergo lot of stress and tension which forces her to choose one among them.

The term work-life conjures up as an image of a scale with work life on one side and family and other relationship on the other side. In the middle is the woman with both hands extended trying to balance both. The woman in the middle is struggling trying to balance everything where she feels where she should be and society feels what and where she should be. She is caught in the middle in a muddle trying to balance everything. Work life balance is sold to women as a key to happiness.

Work life imbalance can lead to absenteeism from work creating stress and lack of concentration at work The issue of work life balance is increasingly becoming important as families are becoming nuclear and dual earners.

Why work-life balance is important?

When employees have a sense of control and ownership over their own lives, they tend to strike a balance by leaving the work issues at work and home issues at home thereby maintaining a perfect control over their minds and behaviour. Such balanced employees feel more motivated and less stressed out at work which increases their productivity at work and balanced output at home front. There are ways and means to promote healthy work life balance which will enable the employees to increase their efficiency at both the areas, like exercise access, quiet space ,outings ,senior spotlights etc.

Challenges faced by women principals in maintaining work life balance

Women are always at the receiving end when responsibilities are concerned. Woman as a mother, sister, daughter and wife is expected to carry out her

responsibilities and at the same time she as a leader is expected to shoulder the responsibility with the same precision. She has to prove herself at every step as if she the perfect creation of God without any flaws. Here comes the situation where she encounters number of challenges which results into stress and tension if unable to maintain a work life balance. As a woman principal she has to let go certain choices of her own for which she has to pay the cost.

### **Literature Review**

Abirami N (2003) conducted a study on worklife balance of women teachers in Arts and Science colleges in Tamilnadu. The objectives were to study the socio-economic status of women college teachers and to analyse predominant factors influencing the worklife balance of women college teachers in Tamilnadu

Sumathi S.(2017) conducted a study on work-life balance of women teachers working in private schools with reference to Coimbatore city. The objectives were to understand the factors those influence the work life balance among women teachers and To identify the work family conflict among the women teachers.

R. Vajiravel (2018) conducted a study on the work life balance of women teaching staff and its impact on their job performance. The objectives were to understand the theoretical concepts of worklife balance ,its causes and effects.and to analyse the work, family and personal life environment of women teaching staff.

### **Objectives of the present study**

- (1) To identify the challenges faced by the women principals in maintaining work life balance
- (2) To understand the coping style of the women principals in maintaining their work life balance

### **Delimitation of the study**

The study is delimited to the female principals of private schools of Vadodara city.

### **Methodology**

This is a descriptive survey method study which comprises of the population of all the female principals of the private schools of Vadodara city. The tools used for data collection was semi structured interview schedule. In the interview schedule the questions were related to the challenges faced by the women principals in maintaining the work life and balance and their coping style.

### **Findings:**

After the study the researcher was able to reach at the following conclusions on the basis of the feedback given by the samples

- (1) The women principals were accepting the position as leaders by choice to not only prove to themselves but also to the society at large about their capability to lead the school. This was the result of the perception of the society on apprehensions on the strength and capability of women.
- (2) Age is an important factor while maintaining work life balance. At an age when family commitments are accomplished the challenge of maintaining work balance becomes much easier. If leadership position accepted at an early age, family and societal commitments may hamper the duties.
- (3) Women principals faced certain challenges like lack of spending quality time with their family due to the leadership positions.
- (4) Decision exhaustion was a major challenge. Certain decisions may affect the stakeholders and associated links which put the women leaders in a dilemma.

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of this study it can be concluded that women leaders had to pay the cost for each choice. The journey as a leader leading the school carrying out the responsibility of a motivator, facilitator ,inspirer was not a bed of roses, for each choice she has to pay the cost.

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