



WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

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“Because man and woman are the complement of one another,
we need woman’s thought in national affairs to make a safe and stable government”.

Elizabeth Cady Stanon

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Abstract

For the past years the conversation about women and leadership has revolved around challenges of Work-Life-Balance which most of the time actually means “Work-Family-Balance”. Woman hardly make it to the top of the companies not because of their personal choice but because of the fact that lots of ambitious women make them off the path of leadership. Women are also gently but firmly avoided while deciding about future leaders, this is mainly because their work and family invariably clash. By this the Government as well as the corporate is not using the talent deck upto it’s full potential. This research paper tries to address the varied dimensions which needs deep insight into the reasons of absenteeism of women leader & suggestions for their work life balance for the purpose of cultural, structural & organisational growth.

Key words: *Women in leadership, Work life balance, ambitious, talent deck*

Any countries customs, traditions, culture & social etiquette creates a great impact on the entrepreneurship of the people of that region. The current scenario however has changed to some extent. Now a days people have started taking interest in their own opinion. If they wish to do some thing then they are moving forward. Their innovativeness, imagination & vision plays a great role in their decision. As we know new ideas & out of box application of this can create wonders these days but very sadly we have to say that women’s talent deck has not been used to it’s full potential in this respect. We can see several kinds of professions being adopted in our surroundings. Some are very big, some big & also small. There is some difference between small scale business & entrepreneurship. Small business owners run their business to earn for their expenses to live but bigger firms & entrepreneurs use more & more innovations to explore more opportunities in the global market. The larger firms give more employment also. Now a days the number of female employees are increasing but they are facing trouble in balancing their family life along with work.

Women Entrepreneurship in India

Times have changed now. From the time the husband was earning, and the wife stayed at home. To the time now when the husband earns and the wife is earning too. But the wife still cooks and washes and runs the house. In this busy schedule how does she balance her work with life at home?

There is no simple answer to this question. Many of the issues are common to women throughout the global corporate 24x7x365 work world of today: long working hours, challenging schedules, need for childcare, household responsibilities, career path demands vs. family demands, stress-related health problems, and societal attitudes towards women and work.

Work-Life Balance

Work-Life Balance does not mean an equal balance. Trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of your various work and personal activities is usually unrewarding and unrealistic. Life is and should be more than that. Your best individual work-life balance will vary over time, often on a daily basis. The right balance for you today will probably be different for you tomorrow. The right balances for you when you are single will be different when you marry, or if

you have children; when you start a new career versus when you are nearing retirement. There is no perfect, one-size fits all, balance you should be striving for. The best work- life balance is different for each of us because we all have different priorities and different lives. However, at the core of an effective work-life balance definition are two key everyday concepts that are relevant to each of us. They are daily achievement and enjoyment, ideas almost deceptive in their simplicity. Engraining a fuller meaning of these two concepts takes us most of the way to defining a positive Work-Life Balance. Change in the pattern of work and the concept of the workplace after the industrial revolution in the second half of the 18th century gave a new dimension to the concept of WLB. As time progressed, nuclear families increased. Working women drop out of the work force when they are doing well, simply because they wanted to stay at home with their children, or care for an ageing parent. There are women who have children later in life because they want to work for reasons of personal satisfaction or for the money. So, can a woman have it all? The working woman should refuse to take on too much. She should adopt a sense of belongingness. If she has children, she should teach them to share responsibilities. What about the husband? Has he changed at all anywhere in the world? Surprisingly, a survey in the UK revealed that a majority of men want a 50/50 partnership with their wives both at work and home. They no longer see themselves as macho men. They want to spend more time with their children. Has the Indian man change with the time? Can women achieve a work-life balance?

Why Work Life Balance is Important to Women?

Today’s career women are continually challenged by the demands of full-time work and when the day is done at the office, they carry more of the responsibilities and commitments to home. The majority of women are working 40-45 hours per week and 53% are struggling to achieve work/life balance. Women reported that their lives were a juggling act that included multiple responsibilities at work, heavy meeting schedules, business trips, on top of managing the daily routine responsibilities of life and home. “Successfully achieving work/life balance will ultimately satisfy more women who will contribute to productivity and



success in the workplace.” Employers can facilitate WLB with many schemes that can attract women employees and satisfy their needs as such Facilities for child care, Flexi-timings, Work sharing, Part time employment, Leave plans-both paid and unpaid-to suit employee’s needs, Subsidized food plans, Insurance plans, Rest rooms, food preparation services, Jobs with autonomy and flexibility, Realistic work loads, Review of work processes to see if the burden on employees can be lightened, and Maintaining dialogue with the employees and considering their suggestions on a continuous basis

Framework for successful Work-Life Balance in organizations

Identify the key need or reason for introducing Work-Life Balance policies; Build the commitment to Work-Life Balance Policies into the organization’s vision or value statement; Set up a Work-Life Balance Task Force to examine current practices in the organization; Hold joint discussions with employees to evolve policies, while also identifying possible barriers; Communicate policies through handbooks, newsletters, Intranet and other forms of communication; Hold workshops to help Managers implement and manage policies; and Monitor implementation and put feedback systems into place In India, there is a starting point in that organizations have recognized the need for and value of Work-Life Balance policies. An integral part of our lives is our profession. Just as there is responsibility and opportunity in life, our careers are also guided by opportunities and responsibilities. We must ensure that these two factors don’t work at cross purposes. Quality of life is something we all covet, every profession affects life in general and every profession has a duty towards life.

Top 5 Strategies to Strike a Balance

Budget your time both in and out of the office - Schedule your time efficiently at work. Put yourself on your calendar and take some time for you and your family / friends. Leave work on time at least three days per week - There are times when working late just can’t be helped, but schedule your time to leave on time three days per week.

Control interruptions and distractions - Stay focused while in the office, and budget your time effectively. Try to schedule a block of time during the day without meetings when you can focus on your tasks with minimal interruptions.

Explore the availability of flex-time - Research or flex-time options within your organization. If available, it may be a helpful solution. Take break at the weekend - Plan your time off as you plan your work week.

Schedule activities with family and friends, a weekend trip, or just something fun.

Examples of some Women Leaders in India & their work life balance

Chanda Kochhar

How difficult can it be for the managing director and CEO of India’s largest private sector bank to manage a work life balance? While other female employees at her office leave at 5:30 pm sharp, Chanda is workaholic but is constantly in touch with family. She rarely manages time to sleep & that’s how she maintains her job & family life together. She has learnt to be a mother on the job. She returned to work just after delivering her second child. She manages to meet the official annual target in less than half of the year. She usually has 7-8000 likes in all happenings in social networking sites, so she is

active in that also. She meets the women who keep the scrap book of all the articles written on her. It is some times difficult for her children to believe that she runs a company with 60,000 employees, for them she is only “The Mother”.

Indra Nooyi

This year NDTV India selected 25 people from all over India for award & Indra Nooyi was one among them. Worked as a receptionist from midnight to sunrise and struggled to put together to earn money worth US\$50 to buy herself a western suit for her first job interview out of Yale, where she had just completed her masters. Incidentally, she wasn’t comfortable trying out a formal western outfit and ended up buying trousers that reached down only till her ankles. Rejected at the interview, she turned to her professor at the school who asked her what she would wear if she were to be in India. To her reply that it would be a sari, the professor advised her to stick what she was comfortable with.

She says sleep is a gift that God has given to you & it’s a gift God has never given me.

she still considers herself her household’s primary caregiver. Nooyi has two daughters, 14 and 23 and in her words, “a supportive husband.”

she’s smart enough to know she has to work harder than a man and earn her stripes everyday. When asked what lessons she wants to teach her daughters, her answer was “be humble.” “This position can be gone tomorrow, but if the person in you is always the same, you can survive good and bad,” she said.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Always make separation between family life & office life; Set goal according to your objectives; Show resilience to work where ever possible; Eat well & sleep well, find time for exercise also; Never say no to help others & enjoy work; Find out difference between urgency & important; Always make list of works; Give yourself a deadline to each work; Keep yourself free from work at weekends; Flexibility in work is a very good advantage at work place; and Work to live don’t live to work

Conclusion

Conclusion for working women is that getting caught in the work/life balance trap will continue to be an ongoing challenge. Careful & practically effective planning and personal effort is the advice from those who have found balance in both career and home life. As one respondent summarized, “Plan, prioritize and schedule as efficiently as possible... and don’t be afraid of hard work!” Work-life balance is a person’s control over the conditions in their workplace. It is accomplished when an individual feels dually satisfied about their personal life and their paid occupation. It mutually benefits the individual, business and society when a person’s personal life is balanced with his or her own job. The work-life balance strategy offers a variety of means to reduce stress levels and increase job satisfaction in the employee while enhancing business benefits for the employer. In our increasingly hectic world, the work-life strategy seeks to find a balance between work and play. A sentence that brings the idea of work life balance to the point is: “Work to live. Don’t live to work.”

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