

Impact of Work Life Balance on Employees - A Study on Constraints & Cope up Strategies

Dr.Suresh Chandra.Ch¹, Ms.Manupati Kalyani²

¹Associate Professor in Business Management, Vaagdevi Degree & PG College, Kishanpura, Hanamkonda, Warangal District.

²Lecturer in Business Management, St.Joseph's P.G. College, Rampur (V), Warangal District.

Abstract:*Sustainability of the organizations largely depends on the employee productivity. Utilization of the employee resources for achievement of better results are based on the commitment of the employees towards organizational goals and personal family life goals. Rational satisfaction over work and family life are the great challenges to the employees. In the era of globalization, the work life balance has direct impact on the quality of life as well as the quality of the organizational work flow. In view of these emerging issues, the present paper contributes valuable field based observations on employees with reference to the preferences, constraints and cope-up strategies for the work life balance.*

Key words: cope-up strategies, leave v/s leaving, preferences, motivation, stress

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of work-life balance has received huge concern in the present stressful competitive market. The emerging problems including pressure for substantial intensification of work, causes due to imbalance in personal economical growth, organizational redesigns, modification in the work pattern and changing work culture and increase in the business competition has led to work-life imbalance. Most of the present day organizations have equipped themselves with three remedial approaches with regard to employees' argument on work-life balance. These include the organizations reacting through emotional situations which include ignoring the employees' problems of their life(ostrich approach), focusing on the problems when the problem get seivour(just in time approach) and getting well ahead by working on the root causes of the problem before it gets worst.The modern day situations are demanding the complex decision making strategies of the organisations and the employees to tackle with the sensitive emerging problem in the form of work life balance.

II. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work is simply an effort which is directed to achieve a specific objective. For organizational context, work is an assignment which requires an effort to get completion.The word 'life' evokes accumulation of experiences, the opportunity to experiment and learn.Balance in the context of work-life balance is a state where an individual manages real or potential conflict between different demands on his or her time and energy in a way that satisfied his or her needs for well-being and self-fulfillment.Clark (2000) assumed work-life balance as "satisfaction of work and

good functioning at home with a minimum role conflict".The work life balance aims to provide equilibrium among the following attributes.These include satisfaction on work and place of work, organizational and family concern about well being ness, satisfaction of work and family management, stress free work load, satisfaction over monetary and non monetary benefits, better organisational relations and more importantly security of job irrespective of the commitment to the organisation. A structured model developed by David E. Guest(2003) depicts the nature of work life balance specified in the following.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study on "work-life balance" recognized huge importance in the recent past. Many studies were made especially in the last decade focusing on the hidden problem exist in the organisations. Some of the important references and the findings are presented to understand broad framework of the study.

Parasuraman et al. (2001), in their study on work life balance for women, has pointed out that the family obligations are making high concern in the performance of women especially in the corporate employment. Lack of family-friendly relations in the work place is creating hurdles to the women to main right balance between work and family life.

David E. Guest (2002) in his study on perspectives on the study of work-life balance has made analysis on the various aspects of contemporary theory and research on work-life balance. The various dimensions of the study include that the nature of work, various sensitive observations in the relations between peers and superiors are mainly causing the problems which lead to the employees' dissatisfaction

over keeping the balance between organisational work and personal life.

The studies made by Drew and Zijlstra et al.(2005 &2006) focused on the conflicts that arise due to imbalance in work life. The authors claimed that work-life conflicts have negative impacts on physical conditions and satisfaction in work and life. Further, the authors have concluded that the imbalance of work-life in long term will definitely create its impact on the organizational productivity and individual health.

Joanna Hughes (2007) in his exploratory study on work-life balance focused on views of the workers on ‘work-life balance were sources of concern and dissatisfaction;, how concern over issues related to work-life balance was compared to other sources of concern and dissatisfaction. The study concluded that the work-life imbalance was the major source of dissatisfaction for the participants of the study. The study revealed that there is a clear connection between problems with work-life balance and withdrawal behaviours, including turnover and non-genuine sick absence.

Susi.S et al. (2011), in their research paper titled “Work-life balance: The key driver of employee engagement” made field based analysis on analyzing the employee

commitment and dedication towards the assigned tasks. The study revealed that work-life balance and employee engagement are the deciding indicators of the successful organization which can yield economic growth as well as reputation benefits. Further, the authors suggested that incorporating the work place culture and proper support from all levels of employees for ensuring employees to get connected with work and family responsibilities will make better satisfaction and there by increased organizational productivity

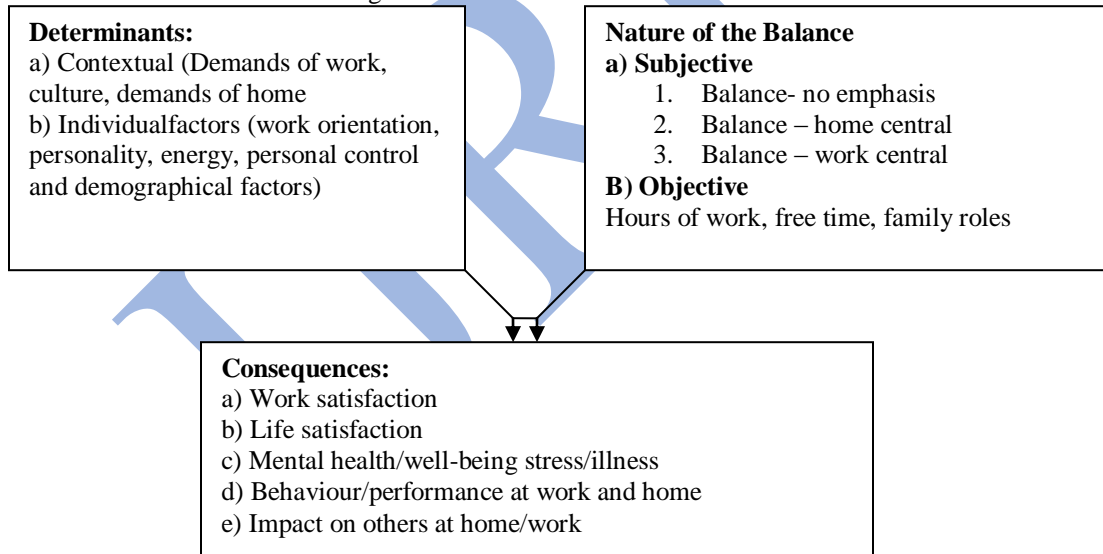
IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study generates the perceptions of the employees with reference to work life. The study more specifically focuses on the following objectives.

1. To study the preferences of employees with reference to balancing work life.
2. To identify the constraints to the employees in balancing the work life.
3. To analyze the cope-up strategies of the employee for maintaining balance between work and life.

Finally, the study will bring the remedies to be adopted for achieving work-life balance of the employees.

Figure1: Nature and determinants of Work life balance



V. METHODOLOGY

The study is mainly focused on the primary data. It includes the responses of the employees working in various areas (viz., teaching, software and banking). The secondary data has been collected from the references from various researches done in the area of work-life. For the collection of primary data, the convenience sampling method is applied to select the sample respondents. The online survey has been used through Google form to record the responses

of the sample respondents. Select models were been used from the sources of reference books by national and international authors on work life balance. Statistical techniques including chi-square test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of One-way and Two-way classification are used at relevant places.

VI. ANALYSIS ON PREFERENCES OF EMPLOYEES ON FAMILY AND WORK LIFE

Matching family life with work life is a predominant task in the modern day. The various problems that may arise at the

organizational work will show its impact on the family life. The lack of satisfaction in the work pattern further witnesses the nature of the individual at home. Similarly, the dissatisfaction in the family life will also result in inefficient productivity at the organizations. Maintaining

balance of work and family is a Herculean task. To understand the importance of family and work life, a portion of survey is dedicated and the field survey results are presented in the following heads.

A) Analysis on employees experience and their preference on work life and family life

Table No.1: preference of employees

S.No.	Experience category of the employee	Preference of employees			Total
		Family life	Work life	Both work life and family life	
1	0-2 years	4 (13%)	16 (53.3%)	10 (33.3%)	30 (100%)
2	2-5 years	5(17%)	10 (33.3%)	15 (50%)	30 (100%)
3	5- 10 years	5(17%)	8 (26.6%)	17 (56.6%)	30 (100%)
4	More than 10 years	5(17%)	4 (13%)	21 (70%)	30 (100%)
	Total	19 (15.8%)	38 (31.6%)	63 (52.5%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

The above table clearly shows the summarized results of the analysis on employee experience and their preference on work life and family life. From the experience group of 0-2 years, majority of the employees, i.e., 50% of them have preferred work life is very important for achieving the growth. Where as, from the experience group of 2-5 years, 5-10 years, and more than 10 years age group, majority of them have preferred that both work life and family are

important. This study indicates that majority of the employees of less experience have given more preference to work life. But, as the experience increases, majority of the employees have shifted to prefer both work life and family life. ANOVA of two way classification is applied to understand that is there any significant difference between the perceptions of the employees of different experiences and the summarized results are given below

Table No.2: ANOVA test results

ANOVA of Two-way classification test results.							
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F (Calculated value)	P-value	F critical value	Significance level
Rows	2160	4	540	7.489598	0.008202	3.837853	5% level of significance
Columns	779.2	2	389.6	5.403606	0.032739	4.45897	
Error	576.8	8	72.1				
Total	3516	14					
<p>Test result: The calculated values of F for rows (i.e., 7.489) is greater than the tabular value,(i.e., 3.8378), hence, there is a significant difference in the opinion of the employees of different experience group. The calculated value of F for columns (i.e., 5.403) is greater than the tabular value,(i.e., 4.458), hence, there is a significant difference in the preference selected by the employees.</p>							

B) Employees' preference on the most important criterion for balancing work and life

From the survey on criterion selected by the sample respondents, i.e., employees with reference balancing work and life, the following observations are made.

Table No.3: Most important Criterion for balancing work and life

S.No.	Experience category of the employee	Most important Criterion for balancing work and life				Total
		Flexibility of work	Support from the family	Support from the superiors/peers	Independence in work and family	
1	0-2 years	8 (26.6%)	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	13 (43%)	30 (100%)
2	2-5 years	10 (33%)	6 (20%)	11 (37%)	3 (10%)	30 (100%)
3	5- 10 years	12 (40%)	10 (33%)	5 (17%)	3 (10%)	30 (100%)
4	More than 10 years	14 (35%)	9 (30%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	30 (100%)
	Total	44(36%)	24 (33%)	20.8 (17%)	22 (18%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

The above table clearly shows that from the experience group of 0-2 years, majority of the employees, i.e., 43% have opined that independence in work and family will be the important criterion for balancing work and life. From the experience group of 2-5 years, majority of the employees, i.e., 37% have given equal preference for flexibility of work.. From the experience group of 5-10 years and more than 10 years experience group, majority of the employees, i.e., 40% and

35% respectively have given preference to the flexibility of work. Hence, from the survey it is to conclude that majority of the employees have given preference to the flexibility of work and support from family as the important criterions for balancing work and life. ANOVA of One-way classification is applied to analyze the significant difference in the preferences of employees on various criterions for balancing the work and life. The summarized results are given below

Table No. 4: ANOVA test results

ANOVA of One-way classification test results							
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F (calculated value)	P-Value	F crit. (tabular value)	Significance level
Between Groups	71.5	3	23.833	1.9259	0.1792	3.4902	5% significance level
Within Groups	148.5	12	12.375				
Total	220	15					

Test result: The calculated value of F (i.e., 1.925) is less than the tabular value of F (i.e., 3.490), hence there is no significant difference in the preferences given by the employees for important criterion for balancing the work and life.

VII. CONSTRAINTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF IMBALANCE OF WORK AND LIFE

Work-life imbalance shows various consequences to the productivity as well as employee continuity in the organization. The constraints at work place create a mental unsteady ness to the employee as a result; the decision making of employees' may not result benefit to the organisation or individual. Some of the important consequences include leave v/s leaving, forceful spending at work place, and emotional imbalance during the work, aspirational decisions for situations and independent decisions for discontinuity of work and the organisation.

Based on the pilot study conducted to the select employees, some of the important factors were identified and they were grouped in order to analyze the employees' perception on the constraints that results in taking decisions on leave or leaving.

The summarized results are given below.

A) Employees' perception on decisions taken against organisation's over stress on additional work and the consequences

Employees' response on decision with reference to organizations' stress on completion of additional work is recorded and summarized in Table no.5

Table No.5: Employees' decision on the organisation's stress on completion of work

S.No.	Experience category of the employee	Decision on the organisations' stress on completion of additional work				Total
		Apply for a leave	Leave the organization	Disputation with superiors/ colleagues	Stay idle and complete the work assignment	
1	0-2 years	8 (26.6%)	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	13 (43%)	30 (100%)
2	2-5 years	7(23.3%)	9 (30%)	4 (13%)	10 (33%)	30 (100%)
3	5- 10 years	12 (40%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3%)	10 (33%)	30 (100%)
4	More than 10 years	11(36.6%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13%)	8 (26.6%)	30 (100%)
	Total	41 (34%)	27 (22.5%)	14 (11.5%)	38 (32%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

Table No.5 clearly shows that majority of the employees, i.e., 43% of below 2 years and 33% from 2-5 experience groups have opined that they stay idle and complete the work assignment. Where as, majority of the age group of 5-10 years and more than 10 years have opined that they will apply for leave. Overall, from the survey, it is to conclude that majority of the employees to tackle with organizations' over stress on completion of work are

preferring to apply for leave or stay idle and complete the work assignment.

B) Factors motivating the employees to take decisions on leaving the job

Table No.6 shows the summarized results on factors motivating the employees to take decisions on leaving the job in order to give justice to the family life.

Table No.6: Factors motivating the employees to take decisions on leaving the job

S. No	Category of employees	Factors motivating the employees to take decisions on leaving the job						Total
		Job-stress	Unattractive pay	Uncongenial atmosphere	Lack of career advancement	Family demands for sparing more time with them	Better pay and prospects	
	0-2 years	2 (6%)	5 (17%)	2 (6%)	12 (40%)	2 (6%)	7 (23.3%)	30 (100%)
	2-5 years	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	13 (43%)	2 (6%)	4 (13%)	30 (100%)
	5-10 years	1 (3%)	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	13 (43%)	2 (6%)	7 (23.3%)	30 (100%)
	More than 10 years	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	5 (17%)	10 (33%)	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	30 (100%)
	Total	10 (8.3%)	15(12.5%)	14 (11.6%)	48 (40%)	10 (8.3%)	23 (19.1%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

The survey results are clearly indicating that majority of the employees, i.e., 40% of them have preferred that 'lack of career advancement' as the major factor which is motivating them to take decisions on leaving the job. Further, 'better pay and prospects' is also causing as the influencing factor to leave the job.

C) Employees' perception on spending additional hours at work place

The following table shows the field survey results on employees' perception on spending the additional hours at work place based on the assignment of work.

Table No.7: Employees' perception on spending additional hours at work place

S.No.	Income level of employee(Rs. Per month)	Perception on spending additional hours at work place if the situation demands		Total
		Willing to spend	Not willing to spend	
1	Below 10000	5 (38%)	8 (62%)	13 (100%)
2	1000-20000	25 (59.6%)	17 (40.4%)	42 (100%)
3	20000-30000	26 (60.4%)	17 (39.6%)	43 (100%)
4	More than 30000	10 (45%)	12 (55%)	22 (100%)
	Total	58 (48.3%)	61 (51.7%)	120 (100%)
	Total			120

Source: field survey

From the survey, it is clear that, majority of the income group of below Rs.10000 and between Rs.10000 to Rs. 20000 have opined that are not wiling to spend additional hours at work place if the situation demands. Where as, the income group from over Rs.20000 has opined that they are willing to spend additional hours at work place. From the

survey it is evident that the income group has positive effect on the decision about willing to work for extra hours at work place. Chi-square test is applied in order to analyze the significant association between the income level of the employees and their perception on spending additional hours at work place if the situation demands

Table No.8: chi-square test results

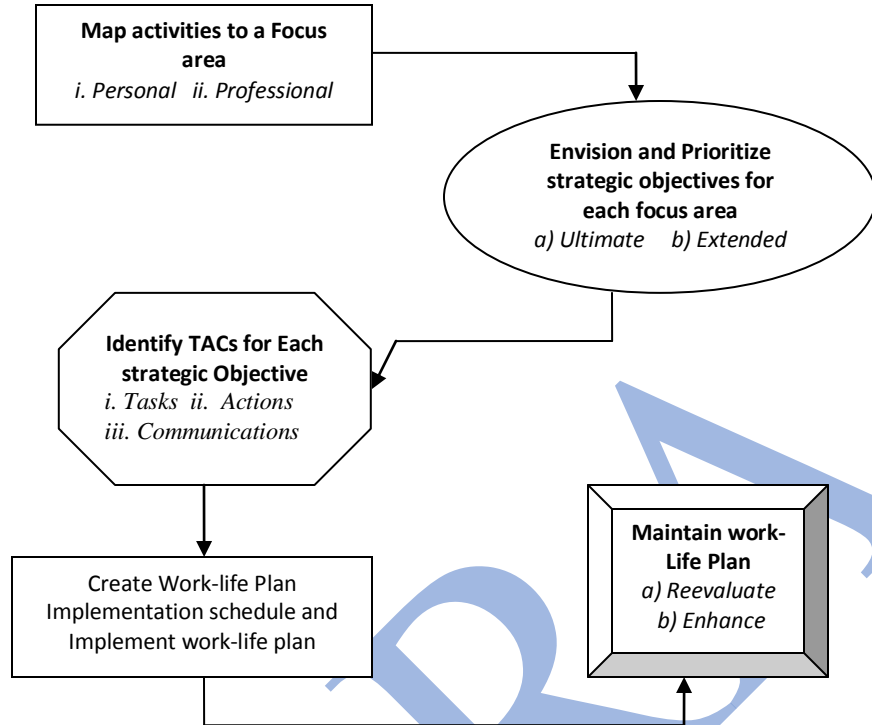
Name of test	Degrees of freedom	Tabular value	Calculated Value	Significance Level	Decision
Chi-square test	$(r-1)(c-1) = 3$	7.81	5.31	5%	Accept Null Hypothesis
Result: The calculated value of chi-square (i.e., 5.31) is less than the tabular value of chi-square (7.81) at 3 degrees of freedom, hence at 5% level, it is to conclude that there is no significant association between income group of employees and the Perception on spending additional hours at work place if the situation demands.					

VIII. COPE UP STRATEGIES FOR BALACING WORK LIFE

Model on Work-life plan suggested by Erica D. Chick(2004) for balancing work life is considered to understand the cope up strategies that employees can develop to maintain right balance between work and life. This model includes maintenance of 5 strategies or activities to retain proper balancing of work and life. In the first stage, the employee will identify the activities that are crucial for personal as well as all work related issues.

Based on the study on these activities, the employees must prioritize the strategic objectives for the focus areas which may be ultimate or extended. Every problem can be solved through effective identification of Tasks, Actions and Communication (TAC) and the employee prepare strategies through preparation of schedule for work life plan. Implementing the work life plan again and again through reevaluating and enhancing will ultimately results in proper balancing of work and life.

Figure2: Strategic remedies for balance in work and life



In order to investigate the application of this model for the employees, the field survey has been applied to understand the employees' cope up strategies. The summarized results are given below.

A) Employees' perception on mapping activities to focus on balancing work and life
The survey results with reference to employees' perception on mapping activities to focus on balancing work and life is given in the following table.

Table No.9: Employees' Perception on mapping activities

S.No.	Income level of employee(Rs. Per month)	Perception on mapping activities for balancing work and life		Total
		Maps activities for balancing work and life	Does not map activities for balancing work and life	
1	Below 10000	6 (46%)	7 (54%)	13 (100%)
2	1000-20000	28 (66.6%)	14 (33.3%)	42 (100%)
3	20000-30000	26 (60.4%)	17 (39.6%)	43 (100%)
4	More than 30000	14 (63.6%)	8 (36.4%)	22 (100%)
		61 (61.6%)	39 (38.4%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

From the table values, it is evident that except in the income group of below Rs.10000, remaining all income groups has clearly shown their intent as they preferred to map activities for balancing work life. Overall, 61% of the

employees have opined favour to the mapping of activities for balancing work life.

B) Analysis on employees' negotiations for support to achieve work life balance

Table No.10: Employees' response on negotiations for support in balancing work and life

S.No.	Experience category of the employee	Employees negotiations for support in balancing work and life				Total
		Superiors at work place	Peers	Family members	Friends	
1	0-2 years	4 (13%)	6 (20%)	17 (57%)	3 (10%)	30
2	2-5 years	8 (26.6%)	4 (13.3%)	15 (30%)	3 (10%)	30
3	5- 10 years	10 (33%)	3 (10%)	12	5 (16%)	30
4	More than 10 years	13 (43.3%)	4 (13.3%)	9 (30%)	4 (13%)	30
	Total	35 (29%)	17 (14%)	52 (43%)	15 (12%)	120 (100%)

Source: field survey

The above survey results clearly showing that majority of the employees, i.e., 43% of the employees from different experience group have opined that family members play vital role in sharing and negotiating employees perception and to get support in balancing work and life. Further, 29% of them have opined that 'superiors at work place' are the

source for negotiating for the support in balancing work and life.

C) Employees' perception on motivating factors for maintaining work life balance at work place

The survey results with reference to employees' perception on motivating factors that assist them to maintain work life balance at work place is given below

Table No.11: Motivating factors maintaining work life balance

S.No.	Experience category of the employee	Motivating factors for maintaining work-life balance					Total
		Satisfaction at work place	Support from family and peers	Well-being ness of the family	Monetary benefits at the work place	Lesser work load and flexibility	
1	0-2 years	12	8	6	3	1	30
2	2-5 years	13	7	5	3	2	30
3	5- 10 years	10	3	5	6	6	30
4	More than 10 years	12	7	5	3	3	30
	Total	39%	22%	22%	11%	6%	100%

Source: field survey

The above results are clearly showing that majority of the employees from all experience groups have opined that 'satisfaction at work place' is the important motivating factor for work life balance. Where as 22% each have opined that support from family and wellbeing ness of the family as the motivating factors for maintaining right

balance between work and life. ANOVA of one-way classification is applied in order to analyze is there any significant difference between the opinion of the employees on the motivating factors for maintaining the balance between work and life. The test results are given below

Table No.12: ANOVA test results

ANOVA of One-way classification test results							
Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F (calculated value)	P-Value	F crit. (tabular value)	Significance level
Between Groups	191	4	47.75	17.46951	1.62E-05	3.055568	5% significance level
Within Groups	41	15	2.733333				
Total	232	19					

Test result: The calculated value of F (i.e., 17.46) is greater than the tabular value of F (i.e., 3.055), hence there is a significant difference in the opinion of the employees with regard to motivating factors for maintaining the balance between work and life.

IX. FINDINGS

The work life balance will affect productivity, competitiveness and more importantly it act as intervening variable that may affect the performance of the organisation and individual life periodically. The survey results on the preferences of employees on work life clearly indicating that majority of the employees of less experience have given more preference to work life. But, as the experience increases, majority of the employees have shifted to prefer both work life and family life as important. The flexibility of work, support from the family and independence in work and family are the important criterions observed from the field study. As far as the decisions of the employees with regard to constraints is concerned, majority of the employees opined that they take decisions to apply for a leave or in case stay idle and complete the work assignment in case when the organisation stresses for completion of additional work. According to the survey results, the most influencing factors that motivate the employees to leave from the job are the lack of career advancement and the better pay and prospects. Hence, these factors also have a direct impact on the employees' decisions. The survey on association between income level and the perception on spending additional hours at work place, it was observed that there is association between income group of employees and the Perception on spending additional hours at work place if the situation demands. The cope up strategies observed from the study include mapping activities for balancing work and life, negotiating the support from family members and superiors at work place. It is also observed that that satisfaction at work place has been the most vital motivating factor for work life balance.. Further, the support from family and peers, wellbeing new of the family are observed as the motivating sources for work life balance.

X. CONCLUSION

Work-life balance aims to satisfy the organizational and individual assignments. It includes the combination of

secured and risk free working conditions, friendly relations at work place, maintenance of legal rights and support for individual and organizational work. Hence, the field survey clearly suggests that inability in providing balance between work and non-work activities are causing the problem for imbalance in work and life. And effective mapping activities right from identifying the constraints to resolving the issues through better negotiations will resolve the severity of this emerging sensitive problem.

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