

Gender Balance and its Impact on WLB of Women Workers in Indian Corporate: a Conceptual Study

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ABSTRACT

Gender balance is a myth particularly in a Country like India. Though it may sound exaggeration of the fact but the reality is gender balance at work place is an idealistic situation which every one aspires to be in. The current study highlights the widespread disparity in gender across sectors in corporate India and the causes for that and the relationship of gender balance and work life balance of women workers. The study uses the information from various websites and Research Papers to validate the fact. The study reveals that still today women are not representing equally in different sectors of economy in comparison to their male counterparts. Irony is that in some sectors there is over representation of female workers than male workers. It was also found that there is discrimination in pay, employment opportunities, and promotional opportunities for female workers and not to mention about the patriarchal mindset of the society and its adverse impact on work life balance of female employees. In this conceptual paper the researcher explored various measures which can be adopted by both state and corporate through sound HR policy to minimize this menace of gender discrimination and how work life balance of women employees can be ensured.

Key Words: Gender Balance, Work Life Balance (WLB), Pay Discrimination, Employment opportunities, HR Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

India will be the most populous Country in the world by 2050 with 1.66 billion people surpassing China. In India at birth for every 100 boys born there are approximately 91 girls born nationally. Female constitutes approximately 48.1% of India's population. More than 25% of India's population is below 28 years old. Only 6% of India's population is more than 65years. That's

why we take the pride that we are a young country .At present women's workforce participation rate in our country is at 20.3% --18.2% in urban India. A very peculiar thing is happening in India which can be summarized as Over the past decade massive changes have happened both in society and workplace. This is now a reality that women participation at work place has increased in different sectors of the economy. Corporate jargons like Teleworking, workplace heterogeneity, work from home are the facts now. So the traditional responsibilities of women like responsibility of family are also undergoing change. The present study of gender balance is closely related with work life balance particularly in a country like India where culture has a huge role to play in female's decision of joining the work force and also the patriarchal mind set of Indian Men. Work life balance actually occurs when the female worker does not compromise her personal time with her professional time. So it is a huge challenge for the female worker to give justice to both her personal life i.e. taking care of family and children and also be effective in her professional endeavors. If we can look at the last three decades trend the female labour force participation rate is actually declining in India which shows the reality of so called gender balance. There are so many causes for this situation which will be highlighted in this paper.

II. OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To have a clear understanding about the twin concept of Gender balance and work life balance.
- ❖ To assess the present situation of gender balance in India across economic sectors.
- ❖ To establish relationship between gender balance and work life balance.

- ❖ To suggest measures to improve gender balance in Indian Work force.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is a conceptual study hence data collected primarily from secondary source like research papers, e-newspaper articles and various credible websites.

IV. GENDER BALANCE AT WORK PLACE

By gender balance generally we mean to the idealistic situation in the society where females have equal opportunities in all matters in all institutions of the society such as economy, education, politics, culture, religion etc. historically gender balance was related to equal opportunities for male and female, boys and girls relating to family matters, human rights and other spheres of life.

Similarly gender balance at work place means employees irrespective of their gender will have access to the same rewards & recognitions, opportunities and resources of the organization which must include equal pay and benefits for similar roles and responsibilities, equal opportunities for career promotion and progression, equal concern for needs.

The organizations which show inclinations towards maintaining gender balance at their work place usually gets benefits like a positive work culture inside the organization where all employees' feels contended and valued, and because of the gender-diverse work environment employees will notice that their co-workers possess such talent which they themselves not possess. Not only that gender balance at work place actually promotes creativity and innovation which is rarely found in male dominated work force. Maintaining gender balance at work place also brings laurels for the organization from the outside world as people having similar values are stimulated to be associated with you which enhance the reputation of the organization immensely in the society. Achieving conflict resolution at an very early stage of conflict is quite normal in gender balanced organization as workers belonging to different genders adopt different roles like not communicating directly, some will adopt the role of trouble makers whereas there are still few who adopt the role of peace makers, this is possible because of only gender diversity.

V. WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance is the level of prioritization between personal and professional activities in an individual's life and the level to

which activities related to their job are present in the home. It actually means how the working people manage time spent at and outside of work. This time out side of work may include managing the various relationships the worker has, family responsibility and of course the interests and hobbies the worker possesses. The approach the worker adopts to manage all his work and personal life demands constitute his work life balance. Today the concept of work life balance has under gone so many changes; the shift is towards incorporating both the issues and strategies aimed at effective time management of employees. The new issues which are included in work life balance are burnout prevention and stress management. Today more emphasis is given that work life balance should be more gender neutral rather than gender bias which was the earlier approach in the 80s.

Work life balance and women have a very interesting relationship. Working women plays very crucial role in human progress and hold a very important place in the society. In earlier times male used to play dominant role in the society and he was the one who provided all the resources necessary for the family while women was deliberately left with the responsibility of household chores like taking care of children, cooking, managing home etc. The situation is quite different now; factors responsible for this are higher education and socio economic developments. Now women have entered into different fields to build their careers at par with their male counterparts. Like every good things, this improvement of status of women in society, brings some kind of challenge in her work life balance. Today in our society working women is facing conflicting demands from both work and life domains. They find it really difficult to manage and balance between high demands of work place and her perennial duty belongs to home and family.

VI. GENDER BALANCE AT WORKPLACE IN INDIA

India is the second populous country in the world but the irony is that India has a very poor female labour force participation rate (LFPR) which is hovering around at meager 20.3% which is not even half of the global average i.e 47% in 2020. Women workers in India are predominately employed in agriculture, traditional rural industries and service sectors. It is a proven fact that women's employment is important not only for their empowerment but also realizing their potential in those fields where their efficiency is

more. Ultimately it will maximize the productivity of nation's economy.

• **Representation of Women workers in different sectors of economy in India**

Education: This is the sector where highest representation of women is found. 42% of teachers in India are women. The gap of 8% is only in higher positions. Approximately equal teachers are working in temporary positions as teachers. Female teachers are exceeding male teachers in tutorial position. There is tremendous scope of career growth and women occupying higher academic positions in this sector.

IT & BPO- Particularly in IT sector women representation currently is 28% and it is increasing gradually which we can say is good news. BPO sector is the leader in women representation where 34% women workers are there though mostly they are in entry level jobs.

Healthcare: It is worthwhile to mention that this industry is one of the best industries for women to work. Currently women representation in this

industry is merely 11% but there is huge potential in this sector. In the pandemic these workers participated as frontline warriors.

Agriculture and allied sector: With rapid advancement of technology and investment in this sector, this sector has tremendous potential for women employment. Women participation besides regular crop production is quite high in Tea plantation. For example Assam tea employs around 7 lakh people in its 800 odd tea plantations and more than 60% of these people are women.

Automobile and Oil & Gas: These two sectors continued to fare low in representation of women. Automobile sector accounts for 10% and the oil and gas sector is only 7% women representation.

Other Sectors: Due to the boom in retail economy, women participation in entrepreneurial roles and customer facing service jobs have increased. Lesser explored areas like Indian Military has increased its women participation 3 times to its earlier position. Meanwhile women continues to choose unique career for herself such as standup comedy, wine tasting, driving city buses or bartenders.

Figure 1: Top 10 Industries with the highest percentage of Jobs for women

SI No.	Industry	Share of Total Jobs for Women (%)
1	ITES/ BPO	30
2	IT/ Computers-Software	24
3	Banking/ Accounting/ Financial Services	13
4	Recruitment/ Staffing/ RPO	5
5	IT/ Computers- Hardware & Networking	5
6	Education	4
7	Animation	4
8	Hospitals/ Healthcares/ Diagnostics	3
9	Internet/ E-Commerce	3
10	Travel & Tourism	3

Source: Monster.com

As per statistics available, women's employability stands at 51.44% in 2022 compared to 41.25% in 2021. This estimates an employable available talent pool of women in urban India 9.2 crores. The female LFPR continued to decline in last three decades. Govt. of India is hopeful that MSME sector will boost the LFPR of women workers as this sector comprises of 45% manufacturing output, 40% of exports and 30% of GDP.

VII. GENDER BALANCE AND WORK LIFE BALANCE

After going through the state of women representation in different sectors of economy in India it's high time to throw light on the relationship between gender balance at work place and work life balance. Life of women in India has undergone significant changes in the past few decades. Traditionally in a male dominated society like ours responsibilities were fixed for both the genders. Men were considered as the main bread earner for the family. He spends most of his time outside to fulfill this responsibility that is to say he spends most of his time at his work place. And women had the responsibility of taking care of the family and nurturing and caring of the children. So

in the early stages work life balance was male issue. Now the notion has been changed. Due to changes in perception, increasing level of education, and socio cultural impact more number of women are joining in the main stream economy. They are supporting their families financially. But their traditional role of taking care of children and managing home somehow became stagnant. They still are the caring, nurturing mother, wife, sister and daughter- in-law. Maintaining work life balance for female workers is really a challenge. She is constantly in conflict with her personal life and professional life. Women are known for their inherent qualities like patience, caring nature, maturity, kindness skills, good listening skills but this dual role of being good at both the spheres of

life becomes really herculean task. Now women are more prone to stress, muscle tension, depression, headache, weight gain which actually becomes a hindrance to their career progression.

Since women still are expected give prime importance to their traditional responsibility towards family , child care hence they face more chances of work family conflict, less satisfaction in career opportunities, Glass ceiling effect etc.etc. They have to work harder in comparison to their male counter parts to overcome these barriers. To derive career satisfaction as well as family satisfaction simultaneously women actually faces much exhaustion which led to so many health ailments. The Following figure shows the reality

Figure-2: WLB of men in comparison women



Source: Mamathefeminist.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that organizations should adopt such policies which would ensure good work life balance for female employees and also acknowledge their multiple parallel roles and ensure their career progression

VIII. MEASURES TO IMPROVE GENDER BALANCE AT WORK PLACE

Many organizations claim that they promote gender diversity but the reality is that still women are paid less than men and underrepresented in leadership roles. Some of the measures organizations can adopt to ensure gender balance at work place particularly in a country like India are:

- Organisations must ensure flexible working hours for every one especially the women workers recognizing their multiple roles in the society.
- Every employee in the organization should work in a safe environment. Organisation must ensure that women employees must feel safe

while working without the fear of any danger to their modesty, dignity.

- Employee diversity must be appreciated, recognized and preserved in the organization.
- Equal opportunities ,recognition, pay, appreciation for all irrespective of the gender is strongly recommended and implemented throughout the organization
- Total wiping out of pay gap in gender, it should be made public.
- Learning and training opportunities provided by the organization must be similar if not same for all irrespective of gender.
- Organizations must adopt zero tolerance policy for cases of sexual harassment and abuse of dominant position.

IX. CONCLUSION

The conflict between work life and personal life of female workers are increasing. Female representations in differerent sectors of the economy are at a staggering low point. It's high time the different stake holders of the society like govt., politicians, philanthropists, business tycoons,

NGOs, policy makers to come forward and address this dual issue of gender balance at workplace and work life balance issues of women. Implementing gender balance at work place is not a trick but a task to do and it is the right thing to do. Gender balance at work place has its own benefits like it leads to women occupying leadership positions, Creates safe and healthy work environment and it boosts organization culture. Finally to promote work life balance of women employees organizations should offer paid family leaves, encourage flexi work schedules, and offer a robust health care plan, free fitness classes, company cars, public transport allowance etc. to name a few. Because a satisfied employee is an asset for the organization.

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