

Work-Life Balance: A Study on Female Teachers of Private Education Institutions of Bangladesh.

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Abstract

As society goes ahead in Bangladesh, there is an increasing expectation that women can not only play their roles by nurturing and raising families to ensure confident and competent future generations for the betterment of society but can also generate income by joining as paid workforce in the working place. Growing cost of living and change of mindset are the key reasons for which increasing number of educated women are now working outside their house. Even in recent time, the tendency is enhancing gradually. As a result, the traditional family is being replaced by the dual career family. Thus, socio-demographic changes are occurring similar to those in developing and developed societies. This dual responsibility is putting mounting pressure on women to achieve and maintain work life balance. In this article, a survey is conducted on 62 education institutions of Bangladesh taking sample of 320 teachers to know the real status of work-life balance institutions. The study finds that the work-life balance situation is moderate which can be improved by ensuring flexible working hours (rostered days off and family friendly starting and finishing times), transport facility, residential facility, child care center, flexible work arrangements/ job sharing, reduced working hours & workload and child schooling for the female teachers.

Keywords: Work load, Job sharing, Child care, Flexible working hour, Family support.

1.0 Introduction

In the past two decades, work-life balance as well as the need for “good work-life balance” has featured prominently in countless academic, practitioner and policy maker debates (Fleetwood, 2007; MacInnes, 2008). Work-life balance is the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities (Hill et al., 2001, p. 49). It is a situation in which employees are able to give right amount of time and efforts to their work as well as their personal life outside work (Work-life balance, 2009. Anna, B., 2010). Employers for Work-Life Balance (EfWLB), a lobby group for voluntary changes in working arrangements, says ‘work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where and how they work, leading them to be able to enjoy an optimal quality of life. Work-life balance is achieved when an individual’s right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society’. Work-life balance refers to the flexible working arrangements that allow both parents and non-parents to avail of working arrangements that provide a balance between work responsibilities and personal responsibilities.

The term ‘work-life balance’ is preferred due to the fact that it encompasses the experiences and needs of parents and non-parents alike, and is a more progressive theoretical framework in which to think about new ways of living and working that are satisfactory to all. As work has evolved to be more knowledge-based, fluid, and intellectual, it has become harder to escape (Lockwood, 2003). Employees can no longer easily segregate their work from the rest of their lives because work has the capacity to take over people’s thoughts (Patterson, 2001). In addition to this information communication technologies have removed the temporal and spatial boundaries of work, allowing people to work anytime from anywhere (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). This intensification of work makes finding a desirable balance between work and life outside work much more difficult.

Indeed, from the very dawn to the human civilization, women have been playing very important role mostly in

the family not only by rearing offspring and doing household affairs but also by generating income through handicrafts and many other ways. The role of women is such an important that ignoring their roles no family and society can be progressed and prospered in a balanced and meaningful way. Considering their roles they are called half of body. But, with the passage of time the nature and types of roles of women are changing in different society and culture. Undoubtedly a key economic development in the last 50 years has been the substantial and well-documented increase in women's labor force participation (Blyton and Dastmalchian, 2006; McCall, 2005, Straub, 2007) and mothers are now the primary or co-breadwinners in many families of the world. The Economist commented on this trend claiming, "Women's economic empowerment is arguably the biggest social change of our times" (Anna, B., 2010). Economic pressures over the last decade have significantly increased the need for dual-earner families to the point that the majority of families now require two breadwinners to meet rises in the cost of living (Ford et al., 2007; White and Rogers, 2000). Now, the Women are entering into the labor force in large numbers, where majority of them come from middle-class with children into the paid work force, has either directly or indirectly affected virtually everyone in society as people's mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, and friends stepped out of the home into paid employment (Perry-Jenkins, et al., 2000).

Thus, the growing number of women in the labor force intensifies the realization that more individuals have to simultaneously manage two domains of life: family and work (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2001; Karimi, 2006). Indeed, across nations and occupations, it is still mainly women who are responsible for child and elderly care, household chores and other family-related issues and who, typically regardless of hours worked in paid employment, work a "second shift" at home (Asher, 2011; Broadbridge, 2008; Burnett et al., 2011; Hochschild, 2003). As a result, conflict and strain often arise for individuals who participate in both of these areas, because role expectations are frequently incompatible (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2001; Posig and Kickul, 2004, Simon, Kümmerling, & Hasselhorn, 2004). The conflict is usually bidirectional: work can interfere with the family, and the family can interfere with work (Simon et al., 2004). Work interference with family is more of an issue than family interference with work (Grzywacz, Frone, Brewer, & Kovner, 2006; Simon et al., 2004). Although men and women both experience inter-role conflicts, it is often more difficult for women to balance their work and home roles (Walker, Wang and Redmond, 2008). According to Doherty (2004), this difficulty then becomes the primary source of women's disadvantage in the corporate world and explains their "concentration in low paid, part-time employment and their absence at the most senior levels of management [in business]" (p. 433). Thus, the challenge of work-life balance is a reality for every working woman, and it is an issue that is widely discussed in organizations and governments today. Women feel entitled to claim this balance, even if it requires formal intervention from institutions and governments. Yet it was not very long ago that work/life balance was a whispered taboo or seen as an individual's personal problem to be resolved in private (Rice, 2000, Anna, B., 2010). For a long time, most women did not believe that they deserved a healthy balance between their work and their lives outside of work, let alone expect and receive formal policies supporting this balance. Even at present, in many cases the term "work-life balance" is not understood as well as recognized officially and socially. In this regard, Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) say, being balanced means approaching each role both in work and family with an approximately equal level of attention, time, involvement, and commitment.

In the past, the issue of work/life balance was dismissed by organizations as a trivial problem not worthy of concern or action. Organizations throughout history have been built by men and for men (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000), and as men's roles in the workplace have changed little since the Industrial Revolution, the challenges women initially confronted when entering these male-dominated workplaces garnered little attention. Now, there is a critical mass of women in the workforce (Shriver, 2009. Anna, B., 2010), organizations and governments have been forced to recognize women's concerns about work/life balance.

In Bangladeshi society, an individual's identity is largely tied to the identity of the extended family. The majority of Bangladeshi women are still highly responsible for housekeeping, childcare, and all other aspects of running a home. Despite the traditional structure of family roles in Bangladesh, with men as the only breadwinners, a number of women now participate in the workplace. Growing cost of living and change of mindset are the key reasons for which increasing number of educated women are now working outside their house. Even in recent time, the tendency is increasing gradually. As a result, the traditional family is being replaced by the dualcareer family, thus socio-demographic changes are similar to those in developed and developing societies.

Like all other countries of the world (Lingard et al., 2007), work-life balance of the female employees has become an issue in Bangladesh. So, what is the status of work-life balance of female teachers working in the private education institutions from the stand point of different factors in respect of family influence the work life balance as well as organizations influence the work life balance of female teachers in Bangladesh?. What are the ways to ensure WLB of female teachers of educational institutions?

2.0 Methodology

To know the real status of work-life balance, a survey is conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire on 320 female teachers of 62 private education institutions of Bangladesh. The sample as shown below was selected through the stratified disproportionate random sampling method.

| Type of Education | Type of Management | No. of Teachers | No of Female Teachers | Sample Institution | Sample Respondents |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Primary Education | Public | 212653 | 124150 | | |
| | Private | 182628 | 70388 | 20 | 105 |
| School Education | Public | 7562 | 2869 | | |
| | Private | 215993 | 49132 | 15 | 80 |
| College Education | Public | 10433 | 2610 | | |
| | Private | 85187 | 18721 | 12 | 60 |
| University | Public | 9634 | 1784 | | |
| | Private | 6204 | 1889 | 8 | 50 |
| Others | Public | 6358 | 1444 | | |
| | Private | 129953 | 15475 | 7 | 25 |
| Total | | | | 62 | 320 |

Source: <http://www.banbeis.gov.bd/>

The researchers have focused on the teachers because of the fact that teacher is the backbone of education and education is the backbone of a nation. So, for the development of nation the work-life balance should be improved. The opinions of the sample respondents were recorded on 5 points Likert-type summated rating scales. The secondary data and information were obtained through library researches and survey of office documents from text books and related available published articles on work-life balance. The data thus collected were tabulated first manually after when they were analyzed by employing statistical techniques like percentage.

3.0 Need for Ensuring Work-life Balance of Female Employee

Organizations today face heightened competition on a worldwide basis, employees are experiencing increasing performance pressures, and hours spent at the workplace may be increasing (Schor, 1991). High performance organizations have raised their expectations regarding time, energy and work commitment. These expectations may be particularly difficult for women to meet, since women still perform the bulk of household tasks (Hochschild, 1989, 1997). The inability to balance work and life has severe implications because it affects every aspect of women's lives. The stress created from being pulled in multiple directions has negative consequences for psychological and physical well-being (Kinman & Jones, 2004). When women are spread too thin attempting to satisfy all of the competing demands on their time, they are not able to complete any task to the best of their ability causing all their roles to suffer. Productivity at work is affected and the quality of women's relationships with friends and family are harmed. This psychological stress stemming from their inability to give 100 percent at work and at home can also produce problems for women's physical health. Poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and high levels of stress that result from poor work/life balance can cause physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, insomnia, and back pains, and sometimes lead to more serious illnesses including heart conditions that result in long-term consequences for women and their families (Kinman & Jones, 2004). Better work life balance creates high levels of employee satisfaction. It provides a solid return for the organization as well as the workforce. Work-life balance programs can also help by reinforcing recruitment, raising employee retention, decreasing absenteeism, limiting late comers, powering up productivity, Promoting participation in training, contending with competition and engaging the emerging labor market (Better Balance, Better Business., 2004)

Work/life balance not only affects working women and their friends and families, but it is also relevant to organizations from a business standpoint. Women now make up half the workforce, and if organizations want to compete in the globalized marketplace, they have to maximize their use of the available talent pool. Work/life imbalance takes a toll on women's job satisfaction and commitment to the organization (Kinman, 2001). If women do not receive adequate support from employers in managing their work and home demands, they are more likely to opt for part-time work or leave paid employment entirely. This has significant business costs associated with absenteeism and turnover, and ultimately limits women's full participation in the labor force preventing organizations from hiring the best person for each job (Todd, 2004). Poor work/life balance has negative implications for organizations in the global economy, as well as for individual women and their families. Furthermore, work life balance has a great influence over the organization. Some time it is costly for the

organization. The costly consequences of work life imbalance of employee towards organization arises by increased absenteeism, increased employee turnover, reduced productivity, increased disability costs, increased health costs, reduced job satisfaction, increased managerial stress, and impaired family/social relationships (Better Balance, Better Business., 2004).

4.0 Analysis and Interpretations of Opinion Survey on Work-Life Balance of Female Teachers of Private Education Institutions of Bangladesh

To know real picture of work-life balance of female teachers in Bangladesh a survey has been conducted. The analysis and interpretations of the opinion survey has been appended below:

Table 1: Work Life Balance

| Statement | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat agree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| I want to leave my job because of work-life balance condition | 45% (144) | 32% (103) | 13% (42) | 6% (19) | 4% (12) |
| My job and family interfere with one another | 31% (99) | 22% (71) | 26% (183) | 10% (32) | 11% (35) |
| I can manage the demands of work and personal life | 9% (28) | 13% (42) | 39% (125) | 25% (80) | 14% (45) |

We see in above table (table 1) that as regards the statement, “I want to leave my job because of work-life balance condition”, 45% and 32% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 77% (45%+32%) respondents do not want to leave their jobs because of work-life balance situation. Whereas, 13%, 6%, and 4% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 23% respondents want to leave their jobs because of work-life balance condition.

As regards the statement, “My job and family interfere with one another”, 31% and 22% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’, that is, 53% respondents replied that their work-life balance situation is good. Whereas, 26%, 10%, and 11% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 47% respondents replied that their work-life balance condition is not good.

As regards the statement, “I can manage the demands of work and personal life”, 9% and 13% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’, that is, 22% respondents replied that they are unable to manage their work-life balance situation. Whereas, 39%, 25%, and 14% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 78% respondents replied that they are able to manage their work-life balance situation.

Table 2: The effect of family on work

| Statement | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Some what agree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| My personal or family life has kept me disturbed from doing a job as good as I could do. | 17% (54) | 39% (125) | 22% (70) | 10% (32) | 12% (39) |
| My spouse / parents / family is/are cooperative to maintain a work life balance. | 8% (26) | 18% (58) | 21% (67) | 46% (147) | 7% (22) |

We see in above table (table 2) that as regards the statement, “My personal or family life has kept me disturbed from doing a job as good as I could do.”, 17% and 39% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 56% (17%+39%) respondents replied that their personal or familial life did not disturb them in doing their jobs perfectly. Whereas, 22%, 10%, and 12% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 44% respondents replied that their personal or familial life disturbed them in doing their jobs perfectly

As regards the statement, “My spouse / parents / family is/are cooperative to maintain a work life balance.”, 8% and 18% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 26% (8%+18%) respondents replied that their spouse / parents / family is not cooperative. Whereas, 21%, 46%, and 7% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 64%

respondents replied their spouse / parents / family is always cooperative in ensuring work-life balance.

Table 3: The effect of work on family

| Statement | Strongly disagree (1) | Disagree (2) | Somewhat Agree (3) | Agree (4) | Strongly agree (5) |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| My job has kept me disturbed from giving attention to my family. | 17% (54) | 24% (77) | 45% (144) | 10% (32) | 4% (13) |
| My organization/ colleagues are cooperative to maintain a work life balance. | 13% (42) | 8% (26) | 26% (83) | 45% (143) | 8% (26) |

We see in above table (table 3) that as regards the statement, “My job has kept me disturbed from giving attention to my family.”, 17% and 24% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 41% (17%+24%) respondents replied that their jobs did not disturb them in providing time to their family. Whereas, 45%, 10%, and 4% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 59% respondents replied that their jobs disturbed them in providing time to their family.

As regards the statement, “My organization/ colleagues are cooperative to maintain a work life balance., 13% and 8% respondents respectively showed ‘strong disagreement’, and ‘disagreement’ that is, 21% (13%+8%) respondents replied that their organization as well as their colleagues are not cooperative enough in ensuring their work-life balance. Whereas, 26%, 45%, and 8% respondents showed respectively ‘some what agreement’, ‘agreement’ and ‘strongly agreement’, it means, 79% respondents replied that their organizations as well as their colleagues are cooperative in ensuring their work-life balance.

5.0 How to Improve the Work-life Balance of the Female Teachers of Bangladesh

We sought suggestions from the respondents to improve their work-life balance situation. The respondents mentioned many factors that can improve their work-life balance situations. The suggestions arise from the respondents are as follows;

Table 4:

| Factors | Weight (%) | Number of Respondents |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| ➤ Flexible working hours (roistered days off and family friendly starting and finishing times) | 27.19 | 87 |
| ➤ Transport facility | 24.06 | 77 |
| ➤ Residential facility | 13.13 | 42 |
| ➤ Child care center | 13.13 | 42 |
| ➤ Flexible work arrangements/ job sharing | 09.06 | 29 |
| ➤ Reduced working hours & workload | 08.13 | 26 |
| ➤ Child schooling | 05.30 | 17 |
| Total | 100% | 320 |

In the above table (Table 4) it is seen 27.19% (87) respondents opined that flexible working hours can help in improving work life balance situation. According to Eikhof (2012), flexibility and choice over working hours and location are commonly regarded as a key facilitator for reconciling work and life/family demands, and therefore as an enabler of women’s careers and a catalyst of equality in the work place. 24.06% (77) respondents opined that transport facility by the employer can help a lot to improve work life balance situation because in Bangladesh transport is a big problem for the employees. 13.13% (42) replied that both residential facilities and child care center arranged by employer can also contribute significantly in improving work-life balance. Whereas, 9.06 % (29) and 8.13% (26) respectively replied that job sharing and reduced workload can improve work-life balance of the female employees of Bangladesh. Booth and van Ours (2005) found that Australian women are happier with shorter working hours. Again, 5.30% (17) opined that child schooling facility by the employer can help in improving work life balance situation. Similar findings also found by many researchers. (Burke (1994a, b, Cassell, 1997 and Deery, 2008)). Studies have shown that these practices increase employee satisfaction; work ethic and motivation (Friedman, 1992); reduce absenteeism and staff turnover rates (Galinsky and Stein, 1990); raise satisfaction with the balance between work and family (Ezra and Deckman, 1996); and

diminish work-family conflict (Goff et al., 1990) and related stress (Johnson, 1995).

6.0 Conclusion and Policy Implementation

Though, much progress on work-life balance has made over last few years in Bangladesh but miles to go. From the survey it is found that 59% female teachers replied that their jobs disturbed them in providing time to their family. Whereas, 44% respondents replied that their personal or familial life disturbed them in doing their jobs perfectly. Therefore, the study reveals that both family and job of female teachers of Bangladesh are being affected due to work-life balance situation. But that should be no more for the betterment of the organization, teachers themselves and for the family of the teachers. Indeed, women in the work place can be blessings only when both family as well as organization will receive proper service from them and they will be able to contribute to both family as well as organization only when the origination will ensure flexible working hours (roistered days off and family friendly starting and finishing times), transport facility, residential facility, child care center, flexible work arrangements/ job sharing , reduced working hours & workload and child schooling for the female teachers.

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