WORK LIFE BALANCE AND DUAL CAREER COUPLES
–A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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Abstract

The paper review covers two Articles, four Research papers from Indian journals & one from International journal, two Research Thesis, two Books & one E-Book, one Magazine, one website. In one of the articles, the author examines work life challenges for Indian women professionals and studies its impact on career decisions. The author refers to a paper from an Indian journal in which it is mentioned that couples who work in the same place have more balance and also save time to a great extent. The authors of the paper from International journal trace the positive effects of Quality of Work Life (QWL) and work & non work life. The author in her doctoral thesis has listed one of the Research objectives as strategies & policies that can be adopted. The author in her book explores & explains how both parents working affects the children’s well being. The author in the E book puts forward various coping skills strategy for better work /life balance. The author also reviews a Magazine article & a website concerning Work life balance.

Keywords: Work life balance, Dual Career Couples, Employers policies and practices, working environment, health issues, career decisions, stress, challenges, benefits, strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

The authors try to find out how work life balance is being maintained by various couples. The authors' review Employers policies and practices, working environment, health issues, career decisions, stress, challenges, benefits, strategies with respect to work life balance.

2. ARTICLES

A. In the first article, the author examines work life challenges for Indian women professionals and studies its impact on career decisions. The findings of the study focus on how family responsibility effects the career decisions of women professionals. Conflict between career & family roles is potential source of stress and it affects women in India more than men because of many reasons. The author focuses on the desired Organizational support for Managing Work-Family Challenges. One of the objectives of her study is to study the impact of family responsibilities on the Career decisions of women professionals. In her findings, she states that the female spouse has to take care of the family responsibility. It hinders their ability to advance. They have to make career trade-offs because of family responsibility. Putting career ahead of family leads to social disapproval and rejection.1

B. The authors in their article discuss their own personal perspectives of being a dual academic career couple. They quote Granello & Navin 1997, by describing the characteristics of dual career couples as –
Self reliance, self sufficiency, high levels of education, strong temporal, intellectual and emotional commitment to their careers. Family supportive policies followed by institutions-assisting the spouse or partner find work, hiring the trailing spouse in an adjunct position, creating a shared position within the institution. With sensitivity, openness, flexibility, honesty on part of both the partners, there is a good chance of dual career lifestyle working as it is very complex.

The author couple have learned from very difficult circumstances and made their relationship stronger. Goals and plans had to be altered unexpectedly but the alternative path have given their rewards, quote the articles authors.²

3. RESEARCH PAPER FROM INDIAN JOURNALS

A. In the first Research Paper from Indian Journals reviewed, the authors in their paper state that couples who work in the same place have more balance and also save time to a great extent. They list one of the impact of imbalance as ‘Health disorder of self & other members of the family’. They highlight that a helpful working environment & option to work part time are initiatives of the employer which can help in maintaining balance. The organization atmosphere should be family friendly. They highlight that woman having greater job autonomy experience positive work life balance, having more commitment towards organization. The challenges faced by working women in an organization has an impact on their life beyond work too.³

B. In the second Research Paper from Indian Journals reviewed, the research paper shows how Dual career couples is an outcome of the changing face of society. The paper highlights the issues & challenges faced by Dual career couples in their personal & professional lives. Dual career couples face guilt of not being able to devote full time to their growing up kids. The author highlights Employers policies & practices as far as Work life Balance is concerned viz. Tata’s SCIP Program(Tata Second Career Internship Program for Women),Infosys Women Inclusivity Network (IWIN),Infosys Family Matters Network, Infosys Women’s Inclusivity Initiatives Mentoring(IWINTOR);Government of India-Department of Personnel & Training “Posting of Husband & Wife-same station” –Order.⁴

4. RESEARCH PAPER FROM INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

A. The authors of the paper, from International journal highlight & measure strategies used by the sample dual career couples for coping with stress in their marriages. Some of the coping strategies highlighted are cultivation of friendships with other dual career families, Delegating responsibility to others. Men and women dual career cou-
people were studied in six groups on the basis of three major social roles Marital ,Professional & Parental .The samples were asked to identify stressful feelings in the three role areas .The study found that Delegating was employed more often .Child care concerns & career demands are critical factors contributing to group uniqueness .Child rearing concerns was found to be a major source of stress for mothers & fathers across all the groups .Individuals who experienced the highest level of stress have younger children & have been in the position for fewer years which means greater potential for stress during the beginning of career development.7

B. The authors of the paper from International journal have taken a sample of 39 expatriate Finnish dual career couples. They have highlighted 3 career coordination strategies expatriates apply during an international assignment-Hierarchical strategy (the leading career is prioritized over the secondary career and the couple’s relationship),Egalitarian strategy (both careers and the couple’s relationship are of equal importance),Loose coordination strategy (both careers are invested in equally and individual careers are prioritized over family and private life considerations). Stress & strain is created due to the demands of the expatriates lifestyle & work and affects the couples work life balance.

The authors suggests in their paper that the following Benefits as organization support practices can be provided by the employers-dual career support practices, providing assistance to the partners of expatriates in finding work, hiring both partners, identifying further education opportunities with the potential to enhance the career prospects of the partner, providing facilities for self employment, covering travel expenses for partners & expatriates visiting each other would help couples living apart sustain relationships ,career ,couple & life counseling when abroad, training in coping skills to support their relationship when it is under pressure, career coordination during & after the assignment.8

5. RESEARCH THESIS

A. The authors reviewed one doctoral thesis in which the Researcher have listed one of the Research objectives as strategies & policies that can be adopted. In her suggestions, she has classified them as personal, organizational & governmental level giving result to an improvement in the Work life balance of IT sector employees.

Her suggestions to Organizations are taking into consideration the project- centric, 24x7, demanding nature of IT Employees jobs. She suggests that the Employer promote family-friendly policies (Job sharing arrangements, working compressed week, voluntary shorter working time/part time arrangement, working from home, On-site child care offers, Flexi arrangements); Socialization process (properly introducing new employees to the organization, clarifying how employees knowledge & skills fits into the existing work system), Employee commitment to work life balance (Employee family achievements can be highlighted in the company newsletter, celebrating events), Merge family Leisure and work time (Strong social support system, Bringing services into the workplace), High Involvement Work Practices(HIWP)- (Reward & incentive plans, employment security, training plans, merit based promotion, employee participation in decision making, pay-for-performance).9

B. The authors reviewed a second doctoral thesis. The researcher in her thesis assesses the work life balance of employees in two public & private sector undertakings. She identifies three interventions for enhancing work life balance. They are Organizational level, Process level and Individual level interventions. Among the Organizational level, she has suggested practices as : flexi time ,partial work at home, no meeting after working hours, telecommuting ,childcare, eldercare ,maternity & paternity leave, job sharing, employee assistance programs, in house store, family vacation etc, as interventions for enhancing work life balance.

For developing a good organizational environment & culture, the author identifies benefits to the employees by the employers as-

- Regular & direct communication with workers
- Help employees in balancing their personal & organizational commitments by providing necessary support & resources
- Flexible time options, child care centers near the workplace, elder care assistance, training for health & fitness, work from home option
- Counseling guidance on relationship problems, workplace conflict
- Training/education on health, hygiene, stress management, parenting, personal finance, use of technology/ gadgets, children's education, retirement planning.

The researcher describes work life balance as a stress remover. She states how the employee driven solutions
help to reduce overtime, stress and workloads, and increase flexibility family and leisure time.\textsuperscript{10}

\section*{6. BOOK}
A. The authors reviewed a book in which the author of the book explores & explains how both parents working affects the children's well being. Of course the factor of money increases and both parents can give the child an enhanced environment. The author also provides research evidence on how both parents work can affect children's well being. The author highlights how the following Employee benefits are mandatory in most advanced countries-paid sick leave, flexible work hours, time off for children's health and educational needs, breastfeeding breaks, premium pay for night shift work, paid vacation, paid parental leave and child care support.\textsuperscript{11}

B. The authors reviewed a book, the author in her book, survey upon a sample of 21 dual career couples (42 individuals) working in senior management positions in Chicago Metropolitan Area. Interestingly, she identifies a third career “marriage” and studies how both their careers interact with their marriage. Her study explores and examines the impact of organizational & career demands on child care arrangements, opportunities to pursue careers, work & family linkages, gender roles, family structure. It is an exploratory study.\textsuperscript{12}

\section*{7. E- BOOK}
A. The authors reviewed the E-book. The author of the E-book discusses how stress is increasing in modern day life and analyzes the common signs of stress with reference to work / life balance. He also puts forward various coping skills strategy for better work /life balance. He suggests -

Never take work home, take benefit of weekends, if only necessary be contactable at home, time management, exercise, relaxation, diet, physical condition, pride in your appearance, holidays, leave a Friday evening list to be taken care of on Monday mornings, Time for yourself, develop some interests outside work, keep a good mood at home, wake up early morning – are some of the salient aspects for better work /life balance.\textsuperscript{13}

\section*{8. MAGAZINE}
A. The Chief Performance Officer, as an author of the article in the Magazine, writes how Ramco Systems encourages work life balance in their activities. Employees are encouraged to bring their family to office on select weekends. This brings a sense of belongingness to the employees. Employees are also encouraged to be fit and healthy by participating in daily yoga and zumba. This is how employees become productive & successful.\textsuperscript{14}

\section*{9. WEBSITE}
A. The author reviewed the website where it is shown how the Apple I Pad can help work life balance. Kerry Butters, on behalf of Broadband Genie, the consumer information website for finding I Pad mini deals, the author shows how the Apple I Pad can help work life balance-you can meditate with soulful music on; Evernote app can help organize appointments, weekly bills, take notes at work, write shopping list, fix your next holiday; Netflix app helps search, download & watch favorite movies or TV show to relax.\textsuperscript{15}

\section*{10. CONCLUSION}
Thus, from the above review we can find that balancing work & life is indeed a gigantic challenge for dual career couples. Of course, some of the researchers & authors have highlighted various ways of coping and strategies.

\section*{11. REFERENCES}