Work life Balance- A Study on Academicians of Select Educational Institutions in Bidar District

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Introduction

Work life balance is all about creating and maintaining supportive & healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have a balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity.

What work life balance is NOT…?

It does not mean an equal balance

Your best individual and work life balance will vary over time

There is no perfect one size fits for all balance you should be striving for.

It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and impact on a person's satisfaction in their work and personal life's roles (Broers, 2005).

If we speak in terms of the organizations as they interpret it, work life balance are working practices that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of the staff in achieving a balance between their home and working lives. (HEBS 2002) It can be judged as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal.

In the current scenario work/life balance is an issue for all employees and all organizations. Meeting the competing demands of the market often accompanies stress and brings lower productivity, sickness, and absenteeism in the organization (Swift L. 2002), this increases the importance of WLB all the more.

Work life balance is a satisfactory level of involvement between the multiple roles in a person's life. How much and to what extent he/she is able to handle the pressure situations of the roles.

It is important to create the right mixture for oneself because without work/life balance, any career goals or aspirations one has set for future will eventually fall flat due to the inability of the mind and body to keep consistent with the growing pressure.

Work/life balance can involve many things, from simply getting enough sleep at night to eliminating negative people and situations from your sphere to the more complex ones involved in building and maintaining beneficial and supportive relationships with family, friends and peers.

Achieving goals or targets is not bad but leaving everything else behind for that one particular goal or target can be harmful for an individual. Hence time management is beneficial in our lives and setting priorities is essential in maintaining the balance.

Rational behind the study

Academicians juggle with multiple responsibilities and challenges that influence their daily activities both professionally and personally. There is need to study work life balance of these professionals in order to suggest them remedial for stress and work pressure which might have a negative impact on their performance.

Research Objectives

1.To understand the importance of Work life balance in current societal scenario.

2.To understand the significant affect of Work life balance on teaching staff at select educational institutions in Bidar district.

3.To gain knowledge about existing work life balance practices adopted by these institutes.

4.To recommend possible strategies for maintaining balance in personal and work live

Research Methodology

The required data for the research was collected from both Primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through field survey. A structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the respondents for the purpose of gathering the needed data. Researcher also had personal interaction with the respondents for effective address of the research problem. A total of 80 academicians from 5 different Higher Education Institutions were selected and were given the

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questionnaires to gather needed inputs for the research study. The questionnaire had two parts; part A was designed to understand the work life balance of the academicians and part B was to know the initiatives that should be taken by the institutes to maintain work life balance in their organization.
It had a 5 point scale:
Strongly agree (SA)
Agree (A)
Neither agrees nor disagree (N.A nor D. A)
Disagree (D. A)
Strongly disagree (S.D. A)

Judgment sampling method was used for selection of higher educational institutions. Academicians of the selected institutes were grouped into two categories; up to 45 years and above 45 years old as on 1st November 2013. From each category 40 academicians were selected using simple random sampling method. Secondary data collected from research journals, newspapers and World Wide Web. Random selection method of sampling was adopted to select the samples. Appropriate statistical tools were used for the purpose of analysis of the data and for drawing final conclusions.

People's Perception-
It is very subjective as reflected by various descriptions of work life balance by employees-
❖ "A good balance is a five day work week. Allows me to get all the 'stuff' done in one day and still have one more, to do what I want."
❖ "If the dream job has stress within tolerable/manageable limit, then I have achieved a work life balance."
❖ For me, "a good work life balance means to work to support my life, and not the other way round."

Thus it can be said that Work life balance for any person is having the 'right' combination of participation in paid work (defined by hours & working conditions) and other aspects of their lives. This combination will change as they move in life; have different responsibilities and commitments in their work and personal lives.

Factors influencing WLB
Of all the factors affecting the balance, the more time spent at work is the strongest and most consistent predictor. The heavy work load is another factor -to-family conflict reported by professionals and government officials often are a function of their longer work hours. Other factors include, support from one's senior, colleagues, work demands or overloads, work-role conflict, job dissatisfaction and lack of appreciation or reward for good work.
 Today's man has many competing responsibilities such as work, children, housework, spouse and elderly parent care. Work life conflict is a serious problem that impacts workers, their employers and even their communities.

Negative Effect of Work Life Conflict
 With the growing diversity of family structures represented in the workforce in the new millennium, work life balance has become all the more important. Studies focused on employed men & women who are married or living with a partner or those with children shows how stress affect their lives. More so single earner mothers, fathers, single & childless employees with extensive responsibilities, face lot of difficulties in handling stressful work conditions. Blended families children from both partner's prior marriages, families with shared custody of children, and grandparents raising their children all share some amount of problems in balancing their work/personal lives.
Long work hours and highly stressful jobs not only hamper employee's ability to harmonize work and family life but also are associated with health risks, such as increased smoking, and alcohol consumption, weight gain and depression. Specifically if we talk about the academicians it requires them to be very active throughout the day. Hence it does lead them to develop certain physical health problems.


By implementing a work life balance strategy employers can help reduce stress in their employees. This can lead to a more motivated and loyal workforce, increased productivity, reduced absenteeism and better performance delivery.

Factors influencing Work life balance

Over the past years many factors and situations have had a considerable role in the growth of work life balance issues:

• Demographic changes- Increased number of working women, single parent families and elder care etc. are some examples.

• Retention & Recruitment issues- employers understanding importance of human resource and it being the key to business success.

• Work life balance legislation- Employment Act, Working time regulations, Part time workers regulation etc. to name a few.

Research Findings
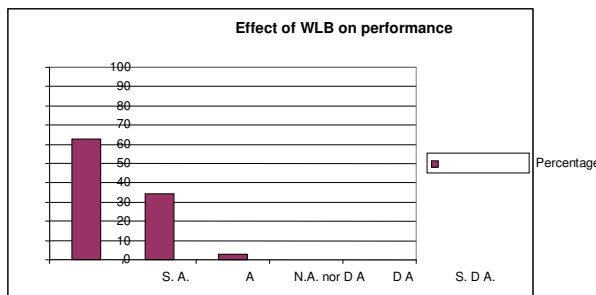
 The above graph displays that 62% of academicians strongly agree to the fact that their performance is best when they are able to manage their work & personal lives equally well. It is an indication that when ever there is a balance between the two the performance quotient improves.
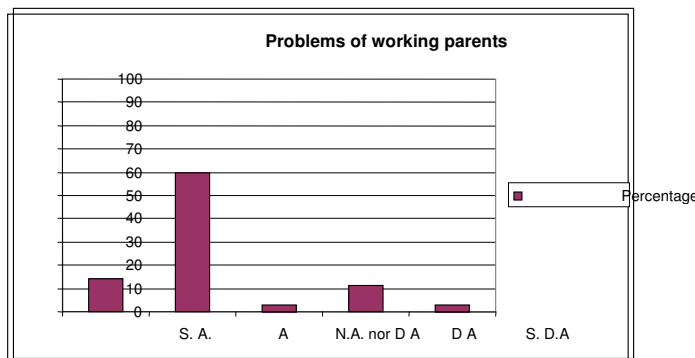

   When the respondents were asked whether their organization should make arrangements in order to accommodate problems of working parents, 60% of them agreed to it. It is observed that many times working parents find difficulties in managing their professional and personal front. Educational institutes can provide assistance to them with regards to handling of difficult situations concerning their children. Whether by giving them leaves in cases of parent teachers meetings or even their children's school functions etc. this would show the organizations' concern for its employees and hence motivate them.

Work role & home role conflict
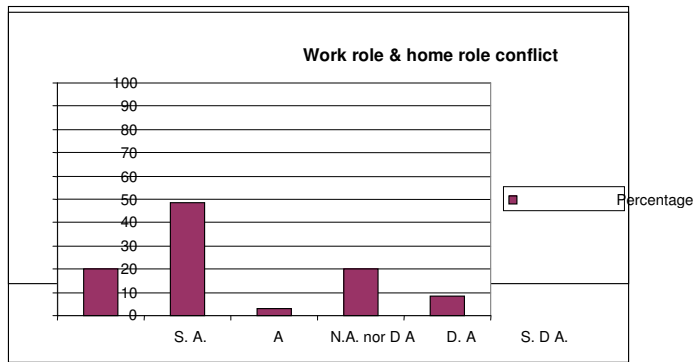
The women lecturers (48%) agree that they have role conflict in their lives. Managing work stress and also the demands at home whether of their children, spouse or even other family members, often leads to stress and health issues for them. On being asked personally they said that they feel guilty of leaving their children for work and they also regret at times when they have to leave their work to manage their children.

Work tension /stress
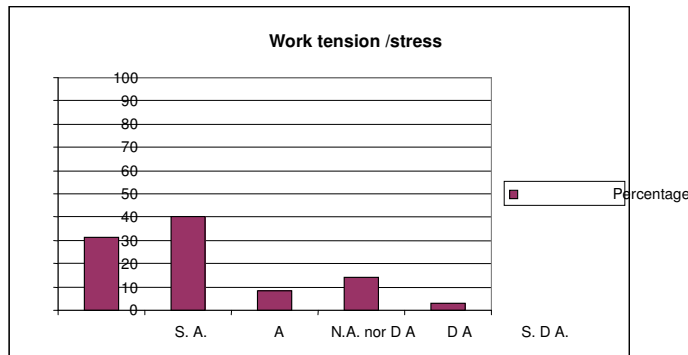
 The above graph displays that 40% of respondents say that they, 'often think or worry about work' even in times when they are not at workplace. These 40% are the ones who are affected by stress at work. This tension or worry about their job or work leads them to think about it even when they are not present at their workplace. Occupational stress is a main cause of work life imbalance in modern society. Organizations should take up initiatives in order to make their workplace stress free and even the working culture should be such that it should not stress out the employees but make the calm and motivated.
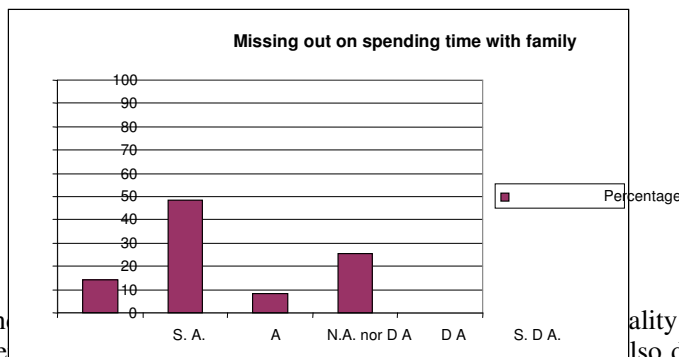
Missing out on spending time with family

49% of respon[dents] .... [qu]ality time with their friends and family membe[rs] .... [a]lso due to the shortage of time because of their work. Professional hazards sometimes makes people get distanced from their family, peers and their loved ones. The challenge thus lies in maintaining a balance between work demands and family needs, and catering to the requirements of the surroundings.
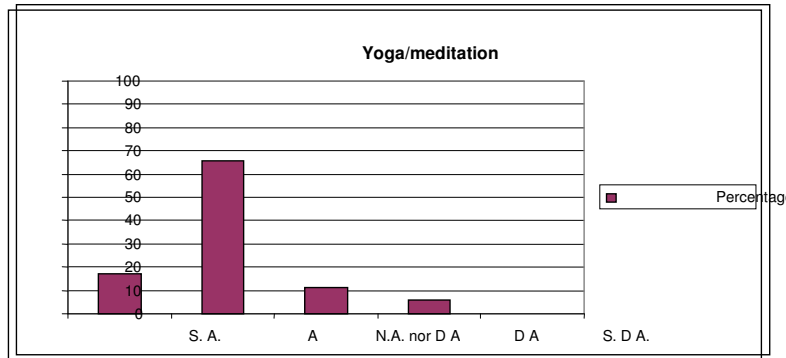


65% of lecturers from different educational institutions agree that they practice yoga or meditation in order to cope with their stress levels. Stress in any form has to be relieved from the body in order to maintain a proper working regime. However there are many ways by which the professionals can live a healthy and stress free life: -

• Taking a long walk
• Exercise/workout
• Playing with pet
• Music
• Good relaxing sleep
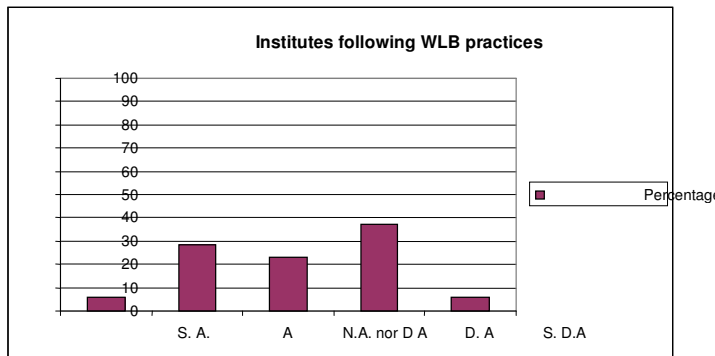
   When the academicians were asked whether their institutions supported any work life balance practice or followed any policies, 37% of them disagreed to the statement. It is a clear indication of the fact that although being aware about work life balance still not many educational institutes are following it. They do not have policies which are supportive for their employees and which would encourage work life balance.
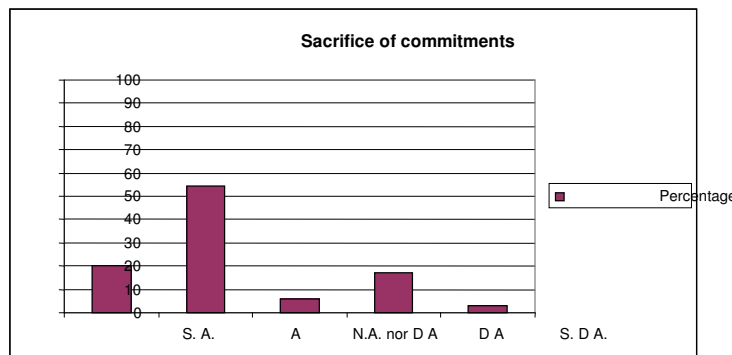
The above graph shows that 54% of respondents agree that they often sacrifice commitments of either personal/professional lives in order to fulfill demands of the other. Failing to balance their work and personal lives, they are forced to sacrifice the needs of either of the two. It is an alarm for the institutes because if these employees are unable to maintain balance then their work will definitely be affected causing a fall in their performance. This henceforth becomes a cause of employee disengagement and de motivation.
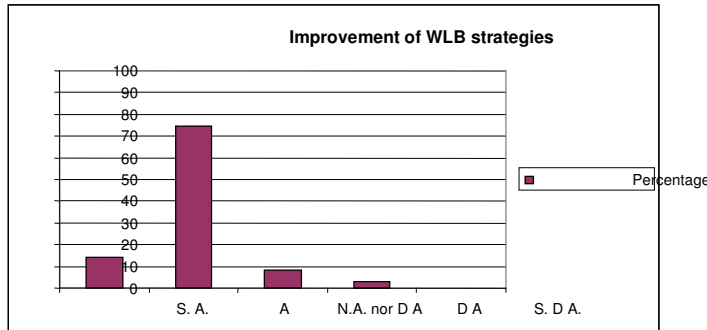

 74 % of respondents agree that their organizations could improve the work life balance strategies and help its employees in doing justice to both their profession and their personal lives. These graphs depict those initiatives which the educational institutes should have in order to ensure that their employees have an effective work life balance. From the questionnaire the researcher has stated below only those WLB strategies which were considered effective by the respondents.
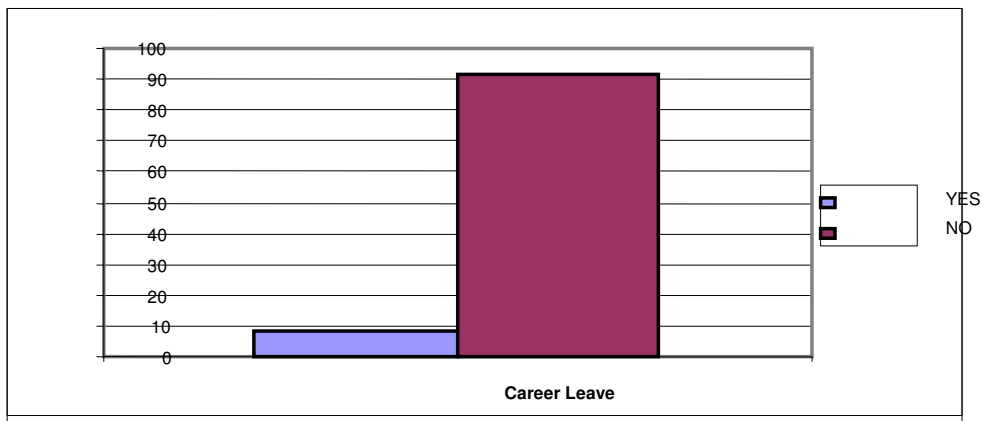

*Part time working* is shown in the graph where almacademician woa

The above graph depicts that 91% of respondents deny of the fact that their institutes give them a career leave. The academicians were asked about those initiatives which their organization is providing them in order to improve their work life balance. It can be seen that most of the educational institutes are not giving any career leave to its employees. By providing them with career leave the institutes give their employees an opportunity to enhance their careers and further improve their knowledge.
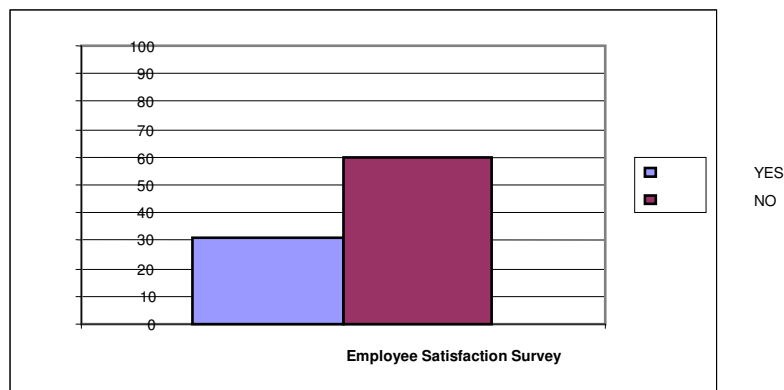
   Another important aspect is the employee satisfaction survey which is conducted by the organizations in order to get a feedback from its employees. However 60% of the respondents say that their institutes do not conduct such survey. In order to be the successful it is essential for the organization to know about the satisfaction level of its employees. With the help of their feedback the institutes can improve and change its work environment to suit the employees and motivate them to perform better.
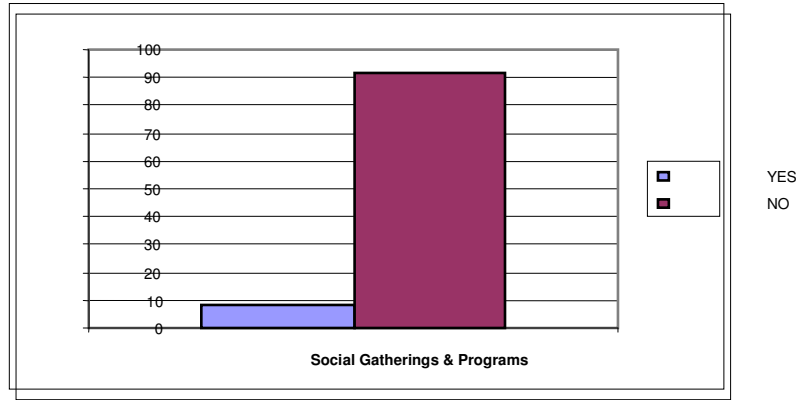
The graph above tells that 91% of respondents deny to the fact that their institutes organize or conduct social events & programs for its employees. If the organizations conduct programs on festivals and other such social events, it would definitely motivate the employees. Such events enable the staff to enjoy and socialize along with their families. It is important for the employees to consider their organization and workplace as part of their family, only the they wil feel motivated and engaged.
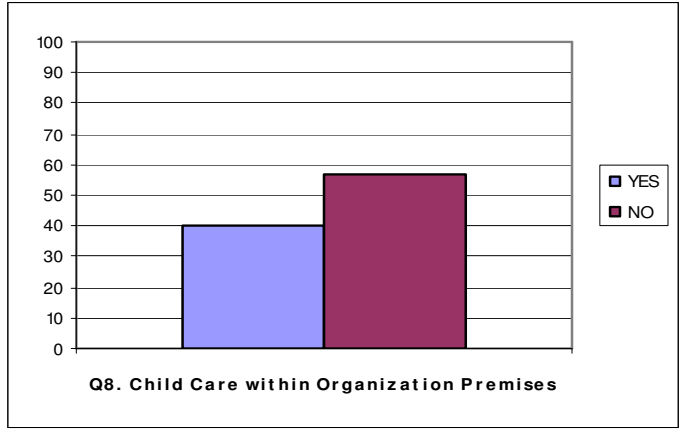
The graph shows that mostly organizations do not have facilities where in they support childcare for working parent (57% deny). By providing a crèche or a small playing room or area for the kids would ease the tension for working parents. Having their children inside the premises will make the employees happy and would be very convenient for women employees of the institutes.

Recommendations

   Employees of any organization face a tough challenge of managing everything in the right manner, be it their work or even personal demands and needs. Managing is the key to every challenge: -
1) Self-Management- Sufficiently managing one's self can be challenging, particularly in getting proper sleep, exercise, and nutrition. Self-management is the recognition that effectively using the spaces in our lives is vital, and that available resources, time, and life are finite.

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2) Time Management- Effective time management involves making optimal use of your day and the supporting resources that can be summoned. Time management is enhanced through setting appropriate goals and discerning what is both important and urgent.

3) Stress Management- In the face of increasing complexity, stress on the individual is inevitable. More people, distractions, and noise require each of us to become adept at maintaining tranquillity and working ourselves out of pressure-filled situations.

4) Change Management- In our fast-paced world, change is virtually the only constant. Continually adopting new methods and re-adapting others is vital to a successful career and a happy home life. Effective change management involves making periodic and concerted efforts to ensure that the volume and rate of change at work and at home does not overwhelm or defeat you.

5) Technology Management- Effectively managing technology means ensuring that technology serves you, rather than abuses you.

6) Leisure Management- The most overlooked of the work-life balance supporting disciplines, leisure management acknowledges the importance of rest and relaxation in one's life. Giving sufficient time to one's hobby and any favourite past time will surely have positive effects on ones work.

Conclusion

There is increased evidence to suggest that work life imbalance has a direct impact on *societal issues, as delayed parenting, increase in infertility and ageing population.* Hence it can be said that work life balance strategies or policies are beneficial for individuals, families, organizations and society. Work life balance programs tend to effect employees in terms on their recruitment, retention, engagement, satisfaction, absenteeism, and productivity.

Policies like working hour regulations, maternity benefits, leave policies, encashment of leaves and voluntary retirement etc. have received continuous attention from various organizations. However there is need now for interventions with regard to protect employees from exploitative workplace and also show some concern with respect to their family problems.

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