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IMPACT OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE (QWL) ON QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) OF WORKING WOMEN

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Abstract:-The term Quality of Work Life (QWL) includes relationship between employees and their working environment while Quality of Life (QOL) is a phrase used to refer an individual's total wellbeing which includes emotional, social, and physical aspects of the individual life. The working environment aspects are the major determinants of overall QOL of employees. Since a higher proportion of women from all social classes are engaged in paid employment than ever before, researcher made an effort to throw lights on impact of QWL of working women on their QOL on the basis of review of literature. Review concludes that, physical environment and psychological conditions of employment plays important role in predicting QOL of working women.

Keywords: Quality of Work Life, QWL, Quality of Life, QOL, Working Women.

INTRODUCTION:

In this networked-age, 24-hour workdays are split into compartments dedicated to life for both men and women who work and tend to the house with highest stress. In Indian scenario despite of legal provisions made by acts like those of the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 which promulgates equal payment for equal work, regardless of gender and prohibits gender discrimination in hiring practices etc. women always carry more responsibilities at home than men and also struggling to achieve Work-Life Balance (WLB). Researcher thinks that one should concentrate on two key concepts i.e. daily Achievement and Enjoyment, for good QOL by acquiring high degree of QWL.

Thus researcher finds it important to find impact of QWL on QOL issues, especially concerning women.

Concept of Quality of Work Life (QWL):

QWL in terms of eight broad conditions of employment which includes Adequate and fair compensation, Safe and healthy working conditions, Opportunity to use and develop human capacities, Opportunity for continued career growth and security, Social integration in work place, Constitutionalism in the work organization, Balanced role of work in total life space and Social relevance of work. The two goals of an effective QWL program should be introduce work changes that would decrease dissatisfaction in the work area and greater organizational effectiveness. Any specific improvement in and around workplace is often included under the term of QWL.

Concept of Quality of Life (QOL):

QOL is a phrase used to refer to an individual's total wellbeing. This includes all emotional, social, and physical aspects of the individual's life. It reflects the difference, the gap, between the hopes and expectations of a person and their present experience. It is the degree to which a person enjoys the important possibilities of his/her life. These possibilities result from the opportunities and limitations each person has in his/her life and reflect the interaction of personal and environmental factors. Primal (survival), Social (environmental), and mainly psychological needs are actually comprise our humanity and contribute to our 'Quality of Life' (QOL).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

QWL has steadily growing importance over a period in which the industrialized nations have increasingly come to question about role and status of human beings in the modern technological environment. In recent years concern with the nature of work, its impact upon people, and their attitudes towards it, seems to have sharpened (Newton, Leckie, & Pettman, 1979). Increased competition from globalization is damaging employee's quality of life (Sarkar & Jeswani, 2008). While in our society, women are concentrated in the low end of spectrum, in low paying and insecure jobs. 96% of the women workers are in the informal sector. Their work is insecure, irregular and often unorganized. They balance children, home and work and more often than not, their income is not commensurate with their work (Nanavaty, 2009). According to (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2009), a positive relation between self and place is essential for well being. Work-life balance which is one of the parameter of QWL, predicts the level of well-being only if the individual's needs are fulfilled within the time available for work and social life.

Work-life balance has recently emerged as part of a wider focus on quality of life issues. The use of flexible working conditions may be beneficial for attaining WLB and so as to QOL (Moore, 2006). Work-life balance is an important consideration for employers as well as employees since this issue is closely related to wellbeing initiatives and the aim of attracting and keeping a healthy, happy and productive workforce. This issue is about more than just balancing time – it is also about satisfaction with work role and personal life (Gallhofer & Paisey, 2011). In every working woman's life, there are four key stakeholders – her own personality, job, family and society. If the balance is not maintained in any of these, then there is conflict in various relationships. When a woman faces such a conflict, she gets no peace of mind, loses her harmony with life and becomes increasingly less efficient in every sphere of life (Sigroha, Gidhar, & Sangwan, 2011). Both genders believe that there is a negative spillover from work on to family life due to which they did not have enough time to spend with their families and moreover work pressures affected quality of the family life. According to them with the increase in number of dual career couples, practices like Flex time, home working, child care facilities at workplace and the option to work part time would go a long way towards improving productivity and enhancing quality of work and family life (Doble & M.V., 2010). Successful work-life balance has far reaching implications for individuals and organizations. It boosts productivity and makes for better quality of life (Sigroha, Gidhar, & Sangwan, 2011). But the success of initiatives like Part-time and flexible working relies upon full and frank conversations between employers and employees to lead to greater satisfaction from both parties to the employment relationship (Gallhofer & Paisey, 2011). Thus building a supportive work environment is yet another important initiative to be addressed (Doble & M.V., 2010).

The psychological well-being of office workers is depends on the physical office environment. Worker assessments of the physical environment are distinct from their assessments of general working conditions, such as work load, decision-making latitude and relationships with other people at work. There are many organizational factors like job insecurity, shift work, long work hours, role conflict, physical hazard exposures, interpersonal conflicts with co-workers or supervisors etc. contributing to increased stress levels. These stressors are related to depression, anxiety, general mental distress symptoms, heart disease, ulcer and chronic pain (Sabadra, 2009). In addition to this other adverse environmental conditions, especially poor air quality, noise, ergonomic conditions, and lack of privacy, may affect worker satisfaction and mental health. It supports to the position that, the stress people experience at work may be due to a combination of factors, including the physical conditions under which they labor (Klitzman & Stellman, 1989). Women in particular occupations such as nursing, domestic work and manual labour may have to undergo more difficulties because of the nature of the job, poor socio-economic levels and the exploitative environment in which they work. It does not mean that everybody in these categories of work would be experiencing problems but there is some evidence that women suffer more in such occupations. It is estimated that almost 40 percent of the Indian nurses are not working due to non-conducive environment at home or work front. Women's workplace difficulties may reflect on their status in the workplace, remuneration and family circumstances (Mavalankar, 2009). Poor interpersonal relations, low pay scale, poor quality of infrastructure, workload, number of working hours, irregular shifts are the major stressors for nurses which had significant impact on their QOL. It resulted in large proportion of nurses frequently neglecting their health (Meera Vijay, 2012). While talking about stress at workplace it was seen that psychological work demands affected most significantly well-being of women: the higher the demands, the worse the well-being. The significance of the work-related stressors was evidently greater on women than that of the stressors associated with the family function, although the relationship between family functioning, stress and well-being was also significant (Maskowska, 1995). However, the factors associated with life quality are similar across gender, with conditions at work serving as key predictors of life quality indicators for both men and women. Specifically, having a demanding job and job insecurity are associated with low life quality, while having a supportive supervisor is positively linked to life quality outcomes. Work hours and work-hour preferences matter as well. Men and women in couples where both spouses work regular (39-45) full-time hours, tend to score high on indicators of life quality, while those working long hours and those preferring to work less, are less likely to do so. While strategies use to manage work/life pressures and work conditions are gendered, with workers in dual-earner couples most apt to be in neotraditional arrangements i.e. husbands in professional and/or long-hour jobs and wives working fewer hours, often in non-professional occupations. Life quality is gendered as well, with women in dual-earner arrangements reporting more stress and overload, as well as lower levels of coping/mastery than men (Moen & Yu, 2000). (McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin, 2005) also found gender differences in the relationship between family demands and family interference with work, while the results for family interference with work and job satisfaction, and family satisfaction and life satisfaction were equivocal. It indicates that an asymmetry continues to exist between men and women in their work and family roles.. But

it is also true that, higher occupational complexity, control, and personal income would be associated with higher levels of happiness and self-confidence and lower psychological vulnerability (Adelmann, 1987). So Physical environment and psychological conditions of employment can have deleterious effects on workers' mental and physical well being (Sabadra, 2009).

For women, levels of work-family conflict were similar in the two early life-cycle stages but were significantly lower in the later life-cycle stage (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994). Work-family conflict exerted a significant positive influence on job stress, while family-work conflict did not. The job stress was not significantly associated with life satisfaction. Higher family-work conflict led to lower family satisfaction (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006), (Xinyuan (Roy), Hailin, & Ghiselli, 2011), (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008). While lower levels of WFC translate into greater job and family satisfaction, followed by greater overall life satisfaction (Lapierre, et al., 2008). The work-to-family interference (WFI) partially mediates the job demands-job exhaustion relationship, and fully mediates the job demands-life satisfaction relationship. Emotional exhaustion is related to job demands (i.e., psychological and emotional demands), and job satisfaction is primarily associated with job resources (i.e., job control). Workplace social support is also related to both outcomes (Janssen, Peeters, Jonge, Houkes, & Tummers, 2004). Work pressure was expected to lead to work-home interference (WHI) and exhaustion, and, vice versa, exhaustion was expected to result in more WHI and work pressure over time. In addition, work pressure and exhaustion had causal and reversed causal relationships over time. There is reciprocal relationships between work characteristics, WHI and employee well-being (Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004). Both positive and negative spillover played significant role in mediating the relationship between work and family domains. On positive side a sense of personal accomplishment at work was associated with increased family enhancers, which appeared to lead to greater family support and life satisfaction. While emotional exhaustion at work was associated with more family stressors, which appeared to lead to less family support and life satisfaction (Stevanovic & Rupert, 2009). Researchers found a crossover path from females' exhaustion to males' exhaustion and from males' life satisfaction to their partners' life satisfaction. This implies that not only job-related strain, but also positive, context-free well-being may crossover among partners (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). The importance of the partner's life satisfaction is a significant predictor of life satisfaction for both men and women. Both, wives' and husbands' report greater role balance when their level of parental attachment to children is higher and when their marital satisfaction is greater, but gendered time use gives rise to important differences. Wives report greater balance when they have more paid work hours but have fewer of these hours on weekends. Wives' balance is also greater when they feel less financial strain, have less leisure time alone with their children, more couple leisure alone with their husbands, and more social network involvement. Husbands' contribute to wives' balance when they report more relationship maintenance in the marriage and more leisure with their children at those times when wives are not present (Marks, Huston, Johnson, & MacDermid, 2001). Any effort to reduce or increase the educational, employment, or leisure activities of women will directly affect women's general satisfaction (Kousha & Mohseni, 1997). But more surprisingly some contradictions were found that, other variables such as tiredness and health satisfaction are not associated with life satisfaction for either men or women though differences continue to exist in the household tasks and parental roles of men and women. After all, self-satisfaction is only related to life satisfaction for women (Maintier, Joulain, & Floc'h, 2011).

While throwing light on impact of lower degree of QWL on QOL it is found that, both work rewards and work concerns need to be assessed to understand the relationship between work conditions and physical health. Also, there may be gender differences in the aspects of work that are experienced as rewarding or that moderate the negative effects of work overload. Family roles (quality and occupancy) must be assessed for their main effects and their interactive effects on work-health relationships (Barnett, Davidson, & Marshall, 1991). The paid employment with psychosocial work environment has definitely beneficial consequences for mental health (Adelmann, 1987), (Simmons & Swanberg, 2009). For working poor employees, job insecurity was the single significant correlate of depressive symptoms after controlling for other demographic and work environment variables. For working non-poor employees, high psychological demands and low supervisor and coworker support were associated with depressive symptoms. All jobs do not equally affect employees' depressive symptoms (Simmons & Swanberg, 2009). While talking about women working in hospital setting they reported more WFC, whereas FWC (Family Work Conflict) was found to be more among those women working in industrial setting. WFC and FWC are more likely to exert negative influences in the family domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the family. FWC is related to attitudes about the job or workplace (Reddy N. Krishna, 2010). Both work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) have significant negative association with an individual's affective reaction to his/her job (Xinyuan (Roy), Hailin, & Ghiselli, 2011). The impact of family-work conflict on turnover intentions was greater than that of work-family conflict (Karatepe & Baddar, 2006). While discussing effects of workplace policies and practices on turnover it is found that conflict with supervisor, inadequate advancement opportunities, and incompatible work schedule were the top three reasons for greater turnover of women (Jo, 2008). All these negative affectivity i.e. different negative aspects of the environment had direct effects on women's well-being, and also acted as a partial confound for symptoms of both distress and happiness. NA inflated the relationship between certain role variables and distress symptoms, but was found to underestimate the influence of certain role variables in predicting happiness (Noor, 1997).

To avoid all these negative implications, employee and employer should give prime concern to the relationship between work and family. Since it can have an important effect on job and life satisfaction and that the level of involvement the worker assigns to work and family roles is associated with this relationship. This relationship between work and family can be simultaneously characterized by conflict and support. Higher levels of work interfering with family predicted lower levels of

family emotional and instrumental support. Higher levels of family emotional and instrumental support were associated with lower levels of family interfering with work (Adams, King, & King, 1996). Family social support alleviated conflicts in the work–family interface and increased family–work facilitation. It was observed that work–family facilitation was significantly and positively related to life satisfaction. Employees who were confronted with both directions of facilitation displayed higher performance in the workplace (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008). Support from one's family and one's supervisor and the use of problem-focused coping seem most promising in terms of avoiding work-family conflict and/or decreased well-being. Benefits associated with the use of flextime, telework may potentially increase the extent to which family time demands interfere with work responsibilities (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Reporting to a family-supportive supervisor was related to the use of the four family-friendly employment practices (i.e., telecommuting, ability to take work home, flexible work hours, and family leave) and to work–family conflict (Breugh & Frye, 2008).

Perceived job flexibility is related to improved work-family balance after controlling for paid work hours, unpaid domestic labor hours, gender, marital status, and occupational level. Perceived job flexibility appears to be beneficial both to individuals and to businesses. Given the same workload, individuals with perceived job flexibility have more favorable work-family balance. Likewise, employees with perceived job flexibility are able to work longer hours before workload negatively impacts their work-family balance (Hill E. J., Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Like this part-time employment influences the ability of mothers of preschool children working in professional occupations to successfully integrate work and family responsibilities. Part-time professionals allocated additional time primarily to caring for and nurturing their dependent children. They also reported less job-related travel, unnecessary work, and work-to-family conflict, as well as greater work-family success, childcare satisfaction, and family success. However, part-time professional mothers reported a more traditional division of labor in household responsibilities and less career opportunity and work success (Hill, Mårtinson, Ferris, 2004). The flexible working interventions helps to increase worker control and choices such as self-scheduling or gradual/partial retirement are likely to have a positive effect on health outcomes. In contrast, interventions that were motivated or dictated by organizational interests, such as fixed-term contract and involuntary part-time employment, found equivocal or negative health effects (Joyce, Pabayo, Critchley, & Bamba, 2010).

Employees' perceptions of workload predicted work-to-family conflict over time, even when controlling for the number of hours spent at work. Workload also influenced affect at work, which in turn influenced affect at home. It is also found that employees' behaviors in the family domain (reported by spouses) were predicted by the employees' perceptions of work-to-family conflict and their positive affect at home (Ilies, Schwind, Wagner, Johnson, DeRue, & Ilgen, 2007). So use of perceived control of work schedules may useful to increases work-life balance net of family and work characteristics. The most consistent family characteristic predicting imbalance is being a parent. The most consistent work characteristic predicting imbalance is hours worked. Once we control for hours worked, women and part-timers are shown to perceive more imbalance. Younger and better educated persons also perceive more work-life imbalance. However, they also report higher levels of schedule control and since schedule control improves work-life balance, it may be more important for unbinding time than schedule alternatives (Tausig & Fenwick, 2001). While some researchers suggest different way i.e. Psychological detachment from work moderated the relationship between WFC and psychological strain, and between FWC and life satisfaction (Moreno-Jiménez, Mayo, Sanz-Vergel, Geurts, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Garrosa, 2009).

According to some researchers proper utilization of workplace may supports on work-family conflict and job satisfaction. Individuals' use of workplace supports was related to work-family conflict in the direction opposite to expectations and was related to job satisfaction in the direction consistent with expectations. Differential effects for wives versus husbands were found. In addition, couples' use of workplace supports was only minimally related to wives' outcomes (Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005).

Finally, organizations can improve and enhance employee well-being is by embracing them as whole individuals (Bourne, Wilson, Lester, & Kickul, 2009). The organizations should acknowledge the changing gender profile of the employees, and modify their basic assumptions about work and non-work aspirations and commitments, and their needs, not only to balance, but also to enjoy multiple life roles (Saxena & Bhatnagar, 2009).

CONCLUSION:

It is concluded from the review that, there is reciprocal relationship between work-home interference and QOL. Low supervisor and co-worker support, inadequate advancement opportunities and incompatible work schedule, poor work culture etc. lowers the degree of QWL which causes stress and affect health of working women which significantly lowers their QOL. Thus it can be said that physical environment and psychological conditions of employment plays important role in predicting QOL of individual but still researcher feels that more work needs to be done in order to humanize the workplace for working women who wish to lead rounded lives.

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