

---

Research Article

## Social Group Work Intervention in Enhancing the Work Life Balance among Married Working Women in It Sector

*Baily Vincent<sup>1</sup> and Dr. Anbuselvi.R<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D scholar at Sree Saraswathy Thyagaraja College of Arts and Science College, Pollachi.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Sree Saraswathy Thyagaraja College of Arts and Science College, Pollachi.

---

**Abstract:** This study focuses on the work-life balance levels of the married working women in the information technology centers. The study had employed social group work as an intervention tool in bringing about the work-life balance among the working women. The research found that the levels of work-life balance were poor and thereby introduced the intervention, and hence has found that through the benefits of social group work, the married working women can aid in balancing both their work and life.

---

### INTRODUCTION

Women of the early centuries were mostly confined to their kitchens and those who were employed worked in factories, farms or shop works. Very few women had the access to higher education and they were forced to be at the mercy of their fathers or husbands attitudes towards women and work. The fast developing knowledge economy has given place for more number of women to be enlightened by higher education. Education has not only empowered them but also has given them robust careers. With brain power being the requisite skill in this knowledge era, rather than endurance or physical strength, the women workers seem to flood into every industry on par with men. But this has indeed become a tough challenge for women as they have to perform a lot of duties in home and office as well.

The attempt of working women to integrate, organize and balance the various problems and activities in their different roles simultaneously puts them under tremendous pressure. The hours and times women work have always been subject to change but the pace of this change is now more rapid than ever because. Organizations are under constant pressure to produce goods and services, of the right quality and the right price, as and when customers want them. This pressure can often mean that new ways of working have to be found to make the best use of staff and other resources. Flexible patterns of work can help address the pressures by maximizing the available labour and improving customer service. Social Work intervention aids to reduce this work and family pressures, and helps the women to have a balanced work/family life.

#### concepts

##### Social Group Work

Social Group Work is defined as a method of social work whose purpose is the enhancement of the psychosocial functioning of individuals and improvement of their

environments. Enhancement of functioning includes both prevention and treatment. The small group is the appropriate modality of practice when a person's needs can be met through interaction with others, as distinguished from help in a one-client-to-one-practitioner situation.

Group work is often spoken as character building" in its effect, and in this sense it is rather closely related to the aims of social case work. To a considerable measure, the character building results of social group work refer to the overall contributions of the process to the strengthening of wholesome living for individuals within the community, and to the nature of the activities in which such groups engage. Group work is based on the fact that all human beings have basic, common needs, including some which can be satisfied through group association.

Social Group work, therefore, is not primary therapeutic, except in a very broad sense. In the application of knowledge to the group work situation, the professional worker uses a whole variety of methods depending on the nature of the group. In 1964, the committee on practice of group work part of the national association of social workers proposed that group work was applicable for the following purposes: corrective treatment; prevention, normal social growth and development, personal enhancement, and citizenship indoctrination. Common needs addressed by social work groups include coping with major life transitions; the need to improve social relationships; and the need to cope with illness; and the need to cope with feelings of loss or loneliness; amongst other reasons.

##### Work-Life Balance

Women have a number of roles that they play throughout life. Work-life conflict occurs when time and energy demands imposed by the diverse roles cannot be efficiently met, as participation in one role is made increasingly difficult by participation in another. Due to the Indian social structure,

prejudices and myths women employees used to face barriers while climbing up the corporate ladder. But time and again women power has been proved and they succeeded in overcoming those barriers and made major contribution towards organizational excellence.

**Hudson, 2005:** "Work-life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or , fit between the multiple roles in a person life".

**Kofodimos, 1993:** According to Kofodimos, work-life balance refers to "a satisfying, healthy, & productive life that includes work, play, & love.

Family-work conflict and work-family conflict are more likely to exert negative influences in the family domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the family. Studies have identified several variables that influence the level of Work Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict. Variables such as the size of family, the age of children, the work hours and the level of social support impact the experience of Work Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict.

Women's employment outside the home generally has a positive rather than negative effect on marriage. The women with children were significantly lower in occupational commitment relative to women without children; contrary to expectation, women with younger children outperformed women with older children. The significance of the work-related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function, although the relationship between family functioning, stress and well-being was also significant.

The need to balance these different roles simultaneously is a reality for most individuals at various stages throughout their lives. Rather than following a transitional sequence from one role to another, women are required to perform an accumulation of disparate roles simultaneously, each one with its unique pressures. Multiple role-playing has been found to have both positive and negative effects on the mental health and well-being of professional women. In certain instances, women with multiple roles reported better physical and psychological health than women with less role involvement. In other words, they cherished motivational stimulation, self-esteem, a sense of control, physical stamina, and bursts of energy. However, multiple roles have also been found to cause a variety of adverse effects on women's mental and physical health, including loss of appetite, insomnia, overindulgence, and back pains.

### **Rationale of Work-Life imbalance**

Work Family Conflict will create a negative influence on an employee's work situation. It will affect the job performance and also creates the job quitting intentions. This stands as an obstacle between a woman in IT sector and her success in work. Family Work Conflict will affect the home domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the family unit. Family Work Conflict will also lead to

loss of respect among the family members. The working women in IT sector having small children are forced to leave their child in day-care or in hands of maid. This creates more tension for them and less concentrate on their work and also not able to give proper care for them at times.

A study conducted by Lowe (2005), found that one in four employees experience high level of conflict between work and family, based on work-to-family interference and caregiver strain. If role overload is included, then close to sixty percent of employees surveyed experience work-family conflict. Of all the job factors that influence work-life conflict, the amount of time spent at work is the strongest and most consistent predictor. The higher levels of work-to-family conflict reported by managers or professionals are often a function of their longer working hours. Other reasons include: job security, support from one's superior, support from co-workers, work demands or overload, work-role conflict, work—role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction, and extensive use of communication technology that blurs the boundaries between home and work. Today's workers have many competing responsibilities such as work, children, housework, volunteering, spouse and elderly parent care and this places stress on individuals, families and the communities in which they reside. Work-life conflict is a serious problem that impact workers, their employees and communities.

Work life balance is more important to women than men, because women has to work with the career outside the home and has to work for their family in her home. Sociologists describe women as struggling to achieve the "male standard" at work, while trying to maintain the perfect wife and mother standards at home. While trying to achieve those standards, women are losing their balance in both work and family. This affects the person's physical, emotional and social well-being. Thus, achieving work life balance is a necessity for working women to have a good quality of life. To achieve this work-life balance Social Work intervention - Social Group Work intervention was given to the respondents. Thus the study aims at enhancing the work-life balance of the married working women in the IT sector, through social group work intervention.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Nandhitha Sharma (2013), from her research on an empirical analysis of work life balance in corporate employees with special respect to marital Status found that, it is clear that, the work life imbalance and job stress are obvious in present life style. Work-life balance is affected by the marital status, if the job stress can be reduced, work life balance will be improved.

According to a survey conducted by the National Life Insurance Company, four out of ten employees state that their jobs are "very" or "extremely" stressful.[ Gerson, Kathleen, 2011] Those in high-stress jobs are three times more likely than others to suffer from stress-related medical conditions and are twice as likely to quit. The study states that women, in particular, report stress related to the conflict between work and family. It is clear that problems caused by stress have

become a major concern to both employers and employees. Symptoms of stress are manifested both physiologically and psychologically. Persistent stress can result in cardiovascular disease, sexual health problems, a weaker immune system and frequent headaches, stiff muscles, or backache. It can also result in poor coping skills, irritability, jumpiness, insecurity, exhaustion, and difficulty concentrating. Stress may also perpetuate or lead to binge eating, smoking, and alcohol consumption.

Pocock and Clarke (2005) explored that spill -over of work into family life showed that both men and women did not have enough time to spend with families and moreover work pressures affected quality of the family life.

A study on “Family and Work Life balance” by Webster in 2002 points out that family structures and female roles vary across countries, but overall, women continue to be the primary provider for domestic and childcare responsibilities. The presence of large numbers of women in the workforce and their drive for careers has resulted in increasing attention to work family balance issues.

**Objectives of the study**

1. To find out the Work life balance among the respondents (levels of work interference with personal life , personal life interference with work and work/personal life enhancement)
2. To study the benefits of Social Group Work Intervention in enhancing the Work Life Balance.

**Research Methodology**

The study was conducted in an IT firm in Chennai. The research design used is descriptive design. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling and the method adopted was the Purposive Sampling. Questionnaire was the tool used for collecting the data. The Work life balance was measured with a 15 item scale adapted from an instrument reported by Fisher-McAuley, et al. (2003). The scale is designed to assess three dimensions of work life balance: work interference with personal life (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW), work/personal life enhancement (WPLE). The final Cronbach alpha values for the three factors include .93 for WIPL, .85 for PLIW, and .69 for WPLE. A structured questionnaire was used to study the benefits of Social Group Work Intervention.

**Results and Discussions**

Table 1: Demographic Details

<b>Working Hours</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
7 - 8 hours	8	11
8 - 9 hours	56	80
10 -12 hours	6	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Children of the respondents are cared by</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Spouse	20	29
Parents	32	46
Servants	10	14
Crèche / day care centers	8	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Hinder in balancing commitments</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage%</b>
Overtime	18	25.7
Work continues from office to home	36	51.4
Negative attitude of the Spouse	16	22.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

It is derived from the table that eighty percent of the respondents work eight to nine hours in a day. The standard

workweek in India for most office jobs begins on Monday and ends on Saturday. Work schedule is forty eight hours per week, Sunday being rest day. Due to power shortage in some states, industrial areas have power shutdown on staggered days of the week across the state. Hence each area may follow a different rest day for industry. Almost all industries follow standard forty eight hours week. The company strictly follows the various provisions under Factories Act on working hours in a factory that restricts the women to work for more than forty eight hours in a week or nine hours in a day. The role of children in any family is very significant. They add color to the life’s of others in the family. Majority of the respondents have children. For a mother who is also working, rearing children seems to be of higher responsible role, which adds heaviness in the roles she’s performing which makes work life balance impossible. It is inferred from the table that forty-six percent of respondent’s parents helps in taking care of their child or children. Twenty nine percent constitutes spouse and fourteen percent constitutes servants in taking care of the respondents children. Eleven percent of respondents depend on crèches or daycare centre for taking care of their children during office hours. Apart from these the table also portrays the other hindrances in acquiring balance. Fifty one percent of the respondents said that they carry work from office to home, 26% said that it is because of overtime they are not able to acquire work life balance and 23% of them said that it is the negative attitude of their spouses on their official work.

Webster (2002) in a study on “Family and Work Life balance” opined that family structures and female roles vary across countries, but overall, women continue to be the primary

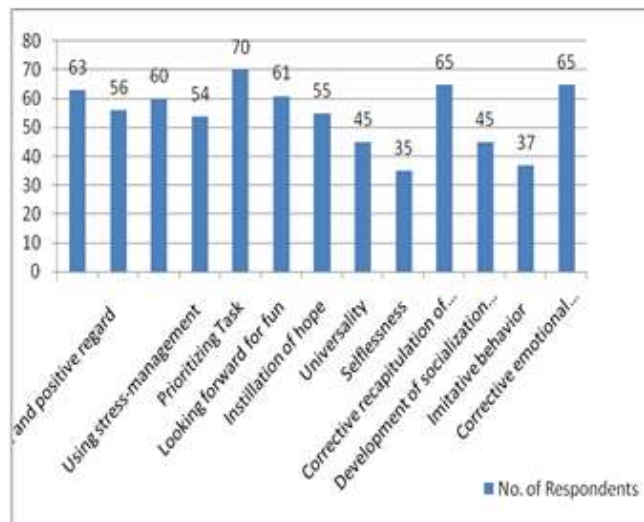
provider for domestic and childcare responsibilities. Aryee and Luk (1996) in a study of two hundred and seven dual earner couples in India found that men significantly identified more with the work role, had more experience in the workforce, and perceived more spouse support. In contrast, women significantly, identified more with the family role, had main responsibility for childcare, spent more time per week with the children and perceived more need for family responsive policies.

**Table 2: Distribution of Work Life Balance**

Work Interference Vs Personal Life	Frequency	Percentage (%)
7-14 (Manageable)	2	3
14-21 (Medium)	49	70
21-28 (Less Balance)	19	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
Personal Life Interference Vs Work	Frequency	Percentage (%)
4-12(Low)	12	18
12-16 (Medium)	46	65
16-20(High)	12	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>
Work/Personal Life Enhancement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
4-12(Low)	6	9
12-16 (Medium)	50	71
16-20(High)	14	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table was studied to assess if the participants currently feels that they had a balance between work and life. The scale contributed by Jeremy Hayman was used to assess the levels of Work Life Balance. The major statements of the scale were personal life suffers because of work, job makes personal life difficult, neglect personal needs because of work, put personal life on hold for work, miss personal activities because of work, struggle to juggle work and non-work. Personal life drains me of energy for work, too tired to be effective at work, and Work suffers because of personal life, hard to work because of personal matters, Personal Life gives me energy for my job, Job gives me energy to pursue personal activities, Better mood at work because of personal life, Better mood because of my job. It is inferred from the above table that the work interference with personal life was scored moderate (WIPL), personal life interference with work (PLIW) was indicated as moderate and work or personal life enhancement (WPLE) was also moderate among the respondents.

**Figure 1 Benefits of Group Work**



In order to enhance the work-life balance group work intervention was given to the respondents and thereby they had identified the following benefits of Social Group Work, which can be viewed in the above figure. The benefits are using accurate and empathic listening to each member, demonstrating respect and positive regard, encouraging and modeling constructive communication, using stress-management techniques, prioritizing task, looking forward for fun/stimulating activities both at work and family, instillation of hope, universality, selflessness, corrective recapitulation of the primary family, development of socialization techniques, imitative behavior and corrective emotional experience.

**Other Main Findings**

Some of the main findings from the research are as follows:

- Almost 90%, of the respondents said that they work to meet the expenditure of taking care of dependents.
- Seventy five percent of women employees work six days in a week.
- Eighty two percent of the respondents work eight to ten hours in a day.
- Forty percent of respondents spend two to three hours with their children in a day.
- Eighty three per cent of respondents said that the change, which they anticipate on work-life balance should be complete balance or Neutral.
- Eighty Four Percent of the respondents support opinion on having work life balance for the success of the organization.

**Conclusion**

Employees within this recent era are reported to experience increasing issues of stress and stress related work. Because it seems they are faced with the challenge to combine various and numerous tasks and roles both at home and at the work place. At the home; they play the role of a mother and a wife amongst others, and at the work place, they play various roles

based on their job descriptions. A factor that has further escalated this situation of “work and life balance” is the rapid growth of technology across the globe which has affected various organizations; both public and private businesses. Studying and putting various pragmatic measures for WLB is therefore expedient for all Organizations. Social Group work, therefore, was applicable for the following purposes: corrective treatment; prevention, normal social growth and development, personal enhancement, and citizenship indoctrination. Common needs addressed by social work groups include coping with major life transitions; the need to improve social relationships; and the need to cope with illness; and the need to cope with feelings of loss or loneliness; amongst other reasons.

### **Bibliography**

#### **Books**

- [1]. Beverly, “Adventures of Social Work in Business Environment”, Social work and business in a Global society
- [2]. Chandrasekar, J., 2012. “New heights in Contemporary Social Work” Vol.2; Cyber Tech Publishers; New Delhi: pp: 11-17.
- [3]. Fred Luthans.(2005). Organizational Behavior, Eighth Edition, McGraw-Hill International Edition..Page no.112-119.
- [4]. Neal M. Ashkanasy. (2010). Celeste P. M. Wilderson, Mark F. Peterson, Organizational Culture and Climate, Sage Publications, Page no.22-26.

#### **Journals**

- [1]. Anna.(2012) Work life balance – Hero to stay, Vol.44,no.4.
- [2]. Alam, M.S, Biswas, K., & Hassan, K. (2009). A Test of

association between working hour and work family conflict: A glimpse on Dhaka’s female white collar professionals. International Journal of Business and Management, 4(5), 27-35.

- [3]. Betsy Jacobson. 2011. Work-Life Balance. Journal Of Management practices. Vol. 9(4). Pg.42-57.
- [4]. Cherlyn Skramme Granrose.(2012).Work – Family roles choice for women in their 20’s and 30’s from college plans to life experience. Vol. 66,No- 8,
- [5]. Kalliath. (2008) Acheving work life balance, Journal of management and organization, Vol.14, No.3, July 2008.
- [6]. Kamalanabhan & Selvarani, 2011. Work Life Balance Reflections On Female Employee Satisfaction. Serbian Journal of Management. Vol. 6 (1). Pg. 85-96.
- [7]. Kingsly, R. 2013. Achieving work life balance. Attractions Strategies Journals. Vol. 2(9). Pg.2-21.
- [8]. Nandita Sharma, 2013. An Empirical Analysis of Work Life Balance In Corporate Women Employees With Special Respect To Marital Status. Indian Research Journals. Vol.2 (9). Pg.114-119.
- [9]. Nirmala, B and Siddaramu. 2010. Work-life Balance Among Married Women Employees.Indian Journal Of Psychological Medicine. Vol. 2(3). Pg. 112-118.
- [10]. Simmons Susan. 2012. Striving For Work-life Balance. American Journal Of Nursing (AJN). Vol. 112(1). Pg. 25-26.
- [11]. Work life balance.(2013) a review of the meaning of the balance control, Journal Management and organization, Vol.14,No.3.