

Striking A Balance: Managing Academic Careers And Family Responsibilities Among Married Women In The Education Sector

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Abstract

The pursuit of a successful academic career often demands extensive time, intellectual commitment, and emotional labor—challenges that become more complex for married women who also carry significant family responsibilities. This study explores how married women in the education sector manage the dual demands of professional and personal life, particularly within the socio-cultural context of India. The research explores the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction and overall well-being of married women educators. It brings to light key factors that impact the capacity of married women educators to maintain equilibrium between work and family effectively. The findings reveal that a significant portion of married women educators face hurdles in attaining satisfactory work-life balance, with a majority reporting negative impacts on their job satisfaction and overall well-being. The study emphasizes the need for institutional support, personal time management and family cooperation that foster a supportive environment for married women academicians.

Keywords: *Work-Life Balance, Married Women Educators, Job Satisfaction and Well-being.*

INTRODUCTION

The term “Work-Life Balance” (WLB) describes the equilibrium between personal and professional obligations. It is the ability to manage professional responsibilities while also having time for personal life, family, and self-care (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Clarke, Koch, & Hill, 2004). Achieving this balance involves managing time and resources effectively to fulfill both work and family obligations without undue stress (Frone, 2003; Voydanoff, 2005). The concept of work-life balance is multifaceted and includes several interconnected elements like time equilibrium, involvement equilibrium and satisfaction equilibrium (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

A key requirement of work-life balance is making sure that enough time is allocated to both work and personal pursuits. This encompasses not only the hours spent at work and home but also the quality of time dedicated to each role (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Voydanoff, 2005). Time management skills are crucial, enabling individuals to prioritize tasks and avoid time conflicts (Claessens et al., 2007). Involvement balance means being mentally and emotionally present at work while effectively engaging in family activities and responsibilities at home. This dimension emphasizes equal psychological involvement or engagement in both work and family roles (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). It is crucial that individuals feel equally engaged and devoted to their personal and professional responsibilities without feeling overburdened by one at the expense of other. Satisfaction balance refers to achieving equal degrees of satisfaction from one’s role in the home and at work. It is not only about carrying out responsibilities but also finding happiness and joy in both areas (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

WORK- LIFE BALANCE AMONG WORKING WOMEN

In today’s fast-paced world, achieving this balance can be difficult, particularly for working women who frequently juggle multiple roles (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004; Lewis et al., 2007). Due to the strenuous nature of teaching, research and administrative responsibilities in the higher education sector, women may find it difficult to find time for their personal lives and families (Mukhopadhyay, 2013). The pressure to perform well at work while managing household responsibilities can lead to stress and burnout (Sandhu & Mehta, 2008). Maintaining work-life balance requires establishing boundaries, prioritizing tasks, and making use of existing support network

(Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Organizations that facilitate flexible work arrangements, provide mental health support, and implement family-friendly policies enable employees to attain a healthier balance (Kossek et al., 2011). Ultimately, work-life balance is crucial for minimizing stress, enhancing productivity, and promoting overall well-being (Frone, 2003).

In India, the education sector employs a large number of women, many of whom are married and have family responsibilities. The traditional expectations of married women to fulfill household duties, combined with their professional obligations, create a unique set of challenges (Rani & Kumar, 2018). This makes the analysis of work-life balance among married women in this sector not only pertinent but also crucial for comprehending how they navigate these dual roles (Baral & Bhargava, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bian et.al. (2024) highlights that work-life equilibrium mediates the association between work-family discord and emotional health among Chinese working women, suggesting that improving work-life balance can alleviate the negative effects of work-family clash on their mental health. Shrestha et.al. (2024) explored that work-life balance (WLB) for women employees in banking and insurance is affected by work overload, family responsibilities, and performance pressure, while promoting factors include supportive management, flexibility, and reasonable workload, crucial for gender equality and employee well-being.

Work-life balance among working women is influenced by factors such as organizational support, work and time requirements, gender insight, role demands, and assistance from spouses and families, which collectively affect their ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities effectively (Akhter, 2024). Work-life balance for working women is challenging due to traditional gender roles and care-giving responsibilities. This imbalance can lead to increased strain, exhaustion, and sluggish professional growth, ultimately affecting their physical and mental well-being, job contentment, and overall quality of life (Stephen, 2024).

Sahay and Lal (n.d.) revealed that work-life equilibrium significantly influences job performance and promotional prospects for working women. Addressing work-life balance challenges is crucial for enhancing gender parity and supporting women's career advancement in various professional environments. According to Pareek and Anamika (2024) balanced work-life and stress management positively impact job satisfaction among working women. A balanced equation between work and personal life leads to increased job contentment, while an imbalance results in heightened stress and decreased satisfaction. To address these challenges, organizations can offer flexible work arrangements, supportive policies, and stress management interventions. Sabharwal (2023) focuses on work-life balance among women in educational institutions, highlighting factors like career growth, health, supportive culture, and workplace flexibility. It emphasizes the worth of family values and sensitivity in attaining better work-life equilibrium for women.

Work-life balance continues a major challenge for married women, as they struggle to manage home and work responsibilities, facing stress that impacts their family relationships, health, and career growth due to increasing work pressures (Raju & Kappen, 2021). According to Deshmukh (2020) married working women face significant challenges in achieving work-life equilibrium, particularly in Pune, Maharashtra. The mounting work pressure and personal tasks adversely affect their quality of life, necessitating effective strategies for balance.

Ali et.al. (n.d.) highlights that married working women, especially in developing countries like India, face noteworthy challenges in attaining work-life balance due to dual career demands, lack of organized work culture, and difficulties in setting boundaries between personal and professional responsibilities. Memon and Alcasoas (2018) revealed that married women in the banking sector face increased responsibilities, leading to a struggle for work-life balance. This imbalance results in stress, affecting relationships, health, and overall happiness, emphasizing the need for effective management of both roles.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify specific factors that influences the ability of married women educators to balance work and family effectively.
- To assess the role of organization in promoting work-life balance.
- To examine the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction and overall well-being of married women educators.

- To uncover the coping mechanism employed by married women educators to manage stress related to their work and family responsibilities.
- To suggest measures for achieving effective work-life balance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The present paper is descriptive in nature.

Sampling and Data Collection: For the purpose of the study, requisite data is gathered from both primary as well as secondary sources. The primary data is gathered through survey method using questionnaire from 55 women educators of the Faculty of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Faculty of Social Sciences, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh who can provide rich, relevant and diverse insights.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling has been adopted for the study.

Statistical Tools: Descriptive analysis is made in the form of Percentages.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Profile		Percentage
Age (in years)	20-30	4%
	31-40	32%
	41-50	30%
	50 and above	34%
Educational Qualification	Graduate	0%
	Post graduate	0%
	Doctorate	100%
	others	0%
Experience (in years)	Less than 5	25.5%
	5-10	29.1%
	11-20	29.1%
	More than 20	16.4%
No. of Children	None	10%
	1	60%
	2	30%
	3 or more	0%

The above table depicts the age distribution of 55 married women educators, with the largest proportion (34%) falling in the 50 and above category comprising educators nearing retirement who may prioritize personal time over career advancement, offering distinct perspectives on work-life balance. The 32% fall within the 31-40 years age group, suggesting early to mid-career stages. The 41-50 years category comprises 30%, indicating a substantial number of more experienced educators with potentially more established family routines. Meanwhile, 20-30 years age group (4%) represents young educators, likely facing unique challenges in balancing work and personal life. As far as the educational qualification is concerned, it can be seen that all of the respondents possess doctorate degree with variations in the years of experience. Among 55 respondents, 25.5% are having less than 5 years of experience (likely facing challenges in balancing work and personal life), 29.1% are in the 5-10 years category, and another 29.1% in the 11-20 years category (indicating a substantial number in mid-career stages, potentially juggling growing professional responsibilities and family commitments). The smallest group, at 16.4%, comprises educators with more than 20 years of experience, who may have well-established routines and strategies for managing work-life balance, drawing from their extensive careers.

The table also illustrates the division of respondents on the basis of number of children they have. Out of 55 respondents, 10% have no children, 60% have one child, 30% have two children, and none have three or more children. This distribution indicates that the majority of respondents have children, with the largest group being those with one child, followed by those with two children. A smaller proportion of respondents have no children,

and none of the respondents have 3 or more children. This data provides insight into the varying family responsibilities among the respondents, which can influence their work-life balance.

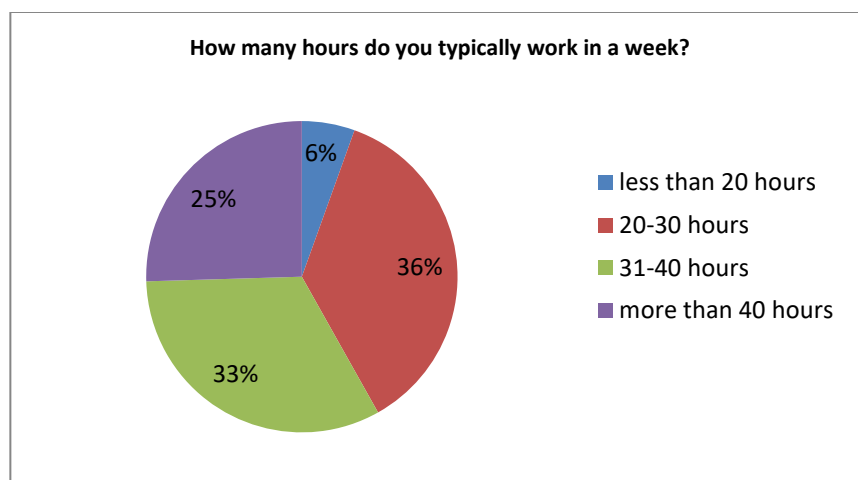


FIGURE 1- WORK LOAD OF EDUCATORS

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart depicts the distribution of weekly working hours among 55 respondents. The largest segment, 36%, works 20-30 hours per week, indicating that a significant portion of respondents have a standard full-time workload. This is followed by 33% who work 31-40 hours per week, suggesting a considerable number of respondents work beyond the typical full-time hours. Additionally, 25% of respondents work more than 40 hours per week, highlighting a substantial group with extensive work commitments. A smaller portion, 6%, works less than 20 hours per week, indicating a minority with reduced hours. This distribution provides insight into the varying work commitments among the respondents.

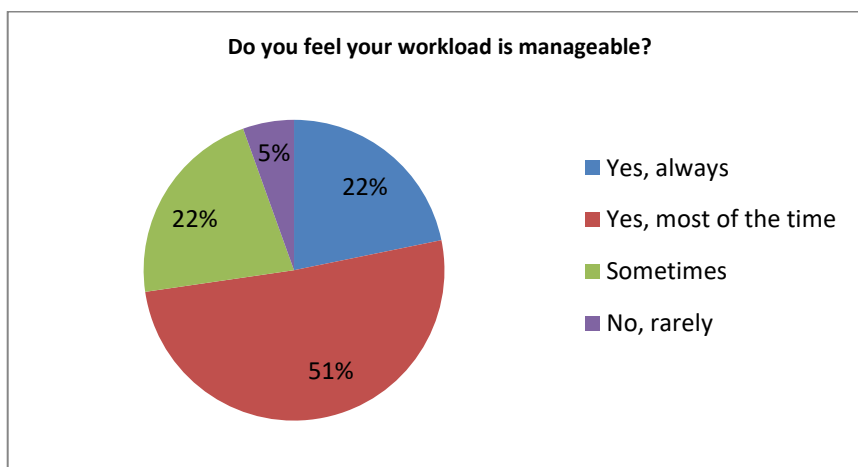


FIGURE 2- PERCEPTION OF WORKLOAD MANAGEABILITY

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart presents responses from 55 participants on the manageability of their workload, with the largest segment (56%) indicating they feel their workload is manageable "Yes, most of the time" suggesting a majority experience a generally manageable workload. The second-largest segment (22%) represents those who find their workload manageable "Yes, always", signifying a consistent level of manageability. Another 22% feel their workload is manageable "Yes, sometimes", indicating fluctuations or periods of challenge. A small portion (5%) represents those who feel their workload is rarely manageable. This distribution provides insights into the varying perceptions of workload manageability, with the majority finding their workload manageable.

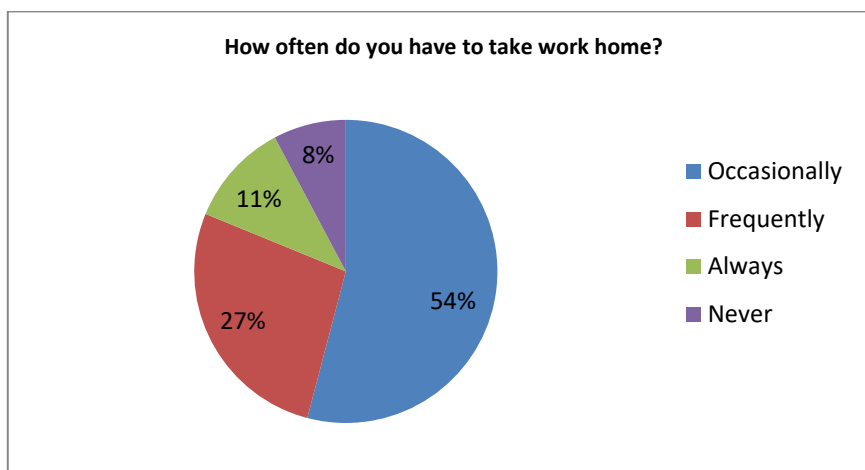


FIGURE 3- FREQUENCY OF TAKING WORK HOME

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart illustrates the frequency with which 55 respondents have to take work home, such as grading or lesson planning. The largest segment (54%) indicates that they occasionally have to take work home, suggesting a significant portion faces a workload that sometimes requires extending work beyond regular hours or location. The second-largest segment (27%) reveals that respondents frequently have to take work home, likely indicating a more consistent need to work beyond the standard workday or workplace, potentially due to heavier workloads or additional responsibilities. Alarming, 11% of respondents always have to take work home, suggesting a consistent blurring of work and personal time. Interestingly, a small portion (8%) never has to take work home, possibly due to manageable workloads or different job responsibilities. Overall, a significant majority (92%) have to take work home at varying frequencies, ranging from occasionally to always, which could indicate widespread issues of heavy workloads or inefficient time management within the workplace, leading to the need for employees to extend their work hours beyond the typical work day or work location.

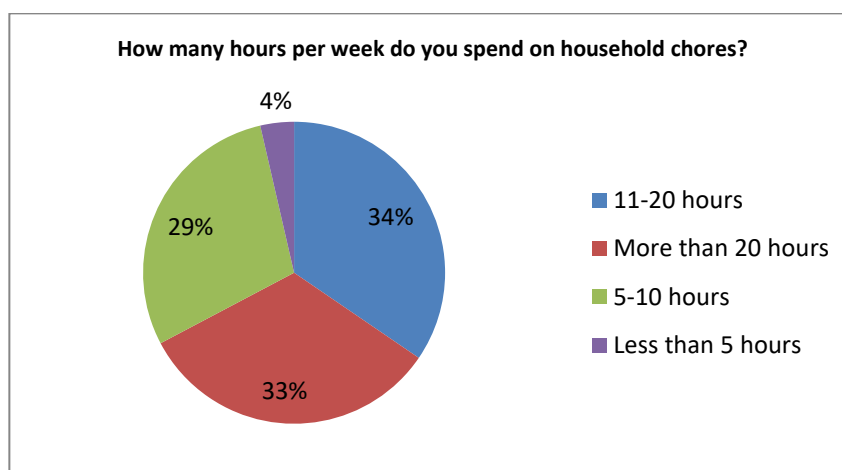


FIGURE 4- TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD CHORES PER WEEK

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The pie chart presents data on the number of hours per week used up on household chores by 55 respondents, with the largest segment (34%) indicating they spend 11-20 hours per week, indicating a substantial commitment to household responsibilities. The second- largest segment (33%) spend more than 20 hours per week, facing a significant burden, possibly due to larger families, a disproportionate share of tasks or personal circumstance. Conversely, 29% spend 5- 10 hours per week, indicating a moderate allocation of time to household tasks and responsibilities while a small portion (4%) spends less than 5 hours per week, likely due to fewer obligations or efficient time management.

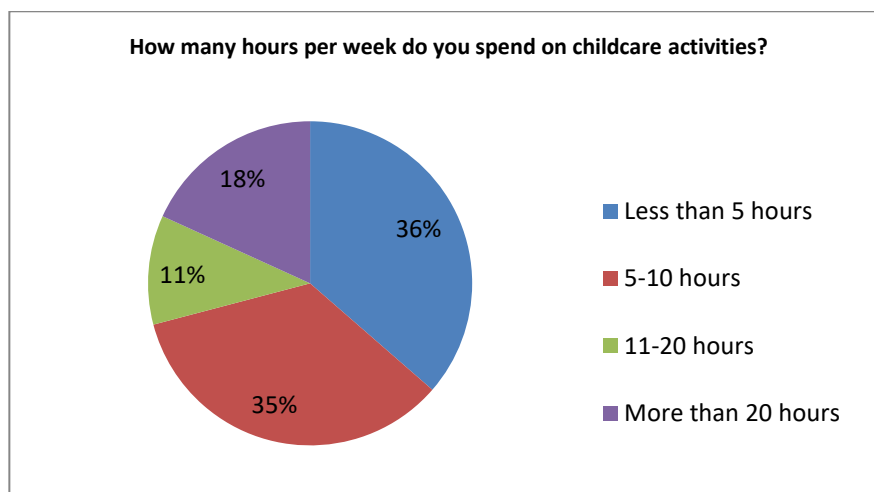


FIGURE 5- TIME SPENT ON CHILDCARE ACTIVITIES PER WEEK

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart displays the distribution of hours per week spent on childcare activities among 55 respondents, with the largest segment (36%) dedicating less than 5 hours, potentially indicating no children or limited childcare responsibilities. The second-largest segment (35%) spends 5-10 hours per week, suggesting a moderate level of childcare tasks. Additionally, 18% dedicate more than 20 hours per week, indicating significant childcare responsibilities, possibly due to multiple children or single parenthood. The 11% spend 11- 20 hours per week, implying a substantial time commitment. The data reveals diverse childcare commitments, reflecting varying family situations and demands among the respondents.

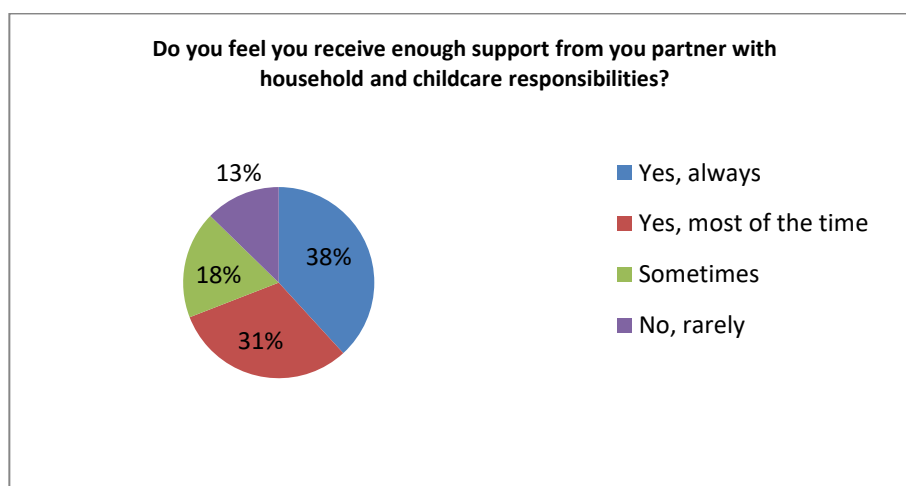


FIGURE 6- SUPPORT FROM SPOUSE/PARTNER

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart presents data on whether respondents feel they receive enough support from their spouse/partner with household and childcare responsibilities. The largest segment (38%) indicates they always receive sufficient support, suggesting a balanced and supportive in sharing domestic responsibilities. Another 31% receive support most of the time, implying a generally positive partnership but with occasional lapses. However, 18% report receiving support sometimes, suggesting an inconsistent or unbalanced dynamic, while 13% rarely receive sufficient support, indicating a notable lack of shared responsibility and potential strain.

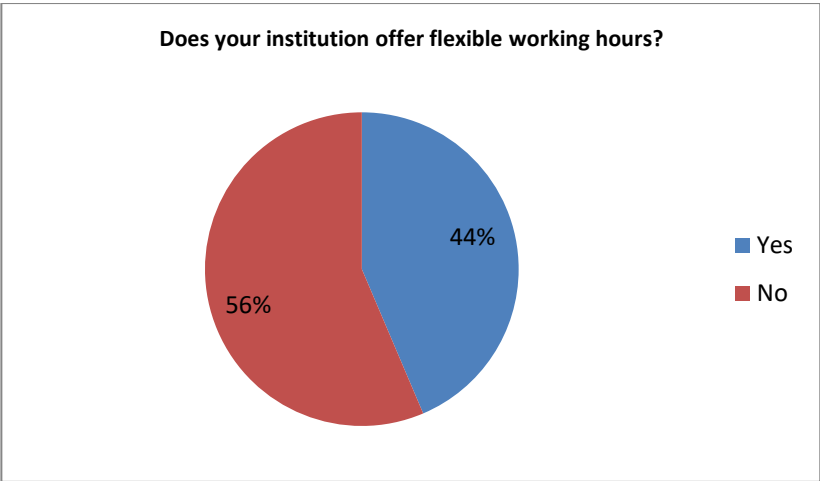


FIGURE 7- AVAILABILITY OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart displays the responses from 55 married women educators regarding the availability of flexible working hours in their institution. A majority of 56% reported that their institution did not offer flexible working hours, while the remaining 44% indicated that their workplace provided this flexibility. The lack of flexible scheduling options for the larger segment of respondents could potentially contribute to challenges in attaining a satisfactory work-life balance, as rigid schedules may conflict with personal or family responsibilities. However, for the substantial minority with access to flexible work arrangements, this could facilitate better alignment between their professional and personal commitments. This data suggests that a considerable portion of married women educators may face constraints in managing their work and life domains due to inflexible institutional policies.

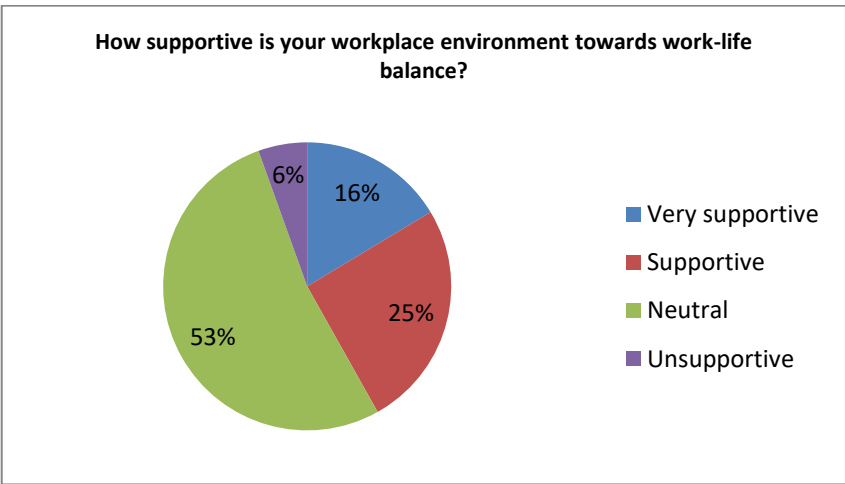


FIGURE 8- WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart presents the perceptions of 55 married women educators regarding the supportiveness of their workplace environment towards work-life balance. Over half (53%) rated their workplace as "Neutral," suggesting they did not perceive it as overly supportive or unsupportive in accommodating work-life balance needs. A notable 25% found their workplace to be "Supportive," indicating a positive perception of organizational efforts to facilitate the integration of work and personal responsibilities. However, 16% considered their workplace as "Very supportive" towards work-life balance. Only a small minority of 6% viewed their work environment as "Unsupportive," potentially facing challenges in managing their work and personal domains. These findings highlight the varying experiences among married women educators, with many encountering neutral or unsupportive workplace cultures, while others perceive more accommodating policies and practices to promote work-life balance.

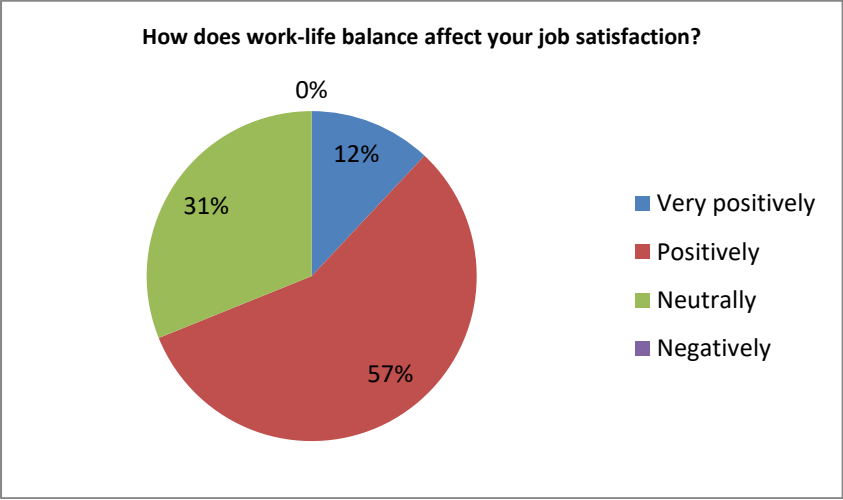


FIGURE 9- IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON JOB SATISFACTION

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart illustrates how work-life balance affects job satisfaction among 55 respondents. The largest portion, 57%, indicates that the majority of respondents feel that work-life balance affects their job satisfaction positively highlighting the imperativeness of healthy work-life balance on maintaining a reasonable level of job satisfaction. Additionally, 31% of respondents reported a neutral impact while a smaller segment of 12% reported a very positive impact. Interestingly, 0% reported a negative impact or work-life balance on their job satisfaction.

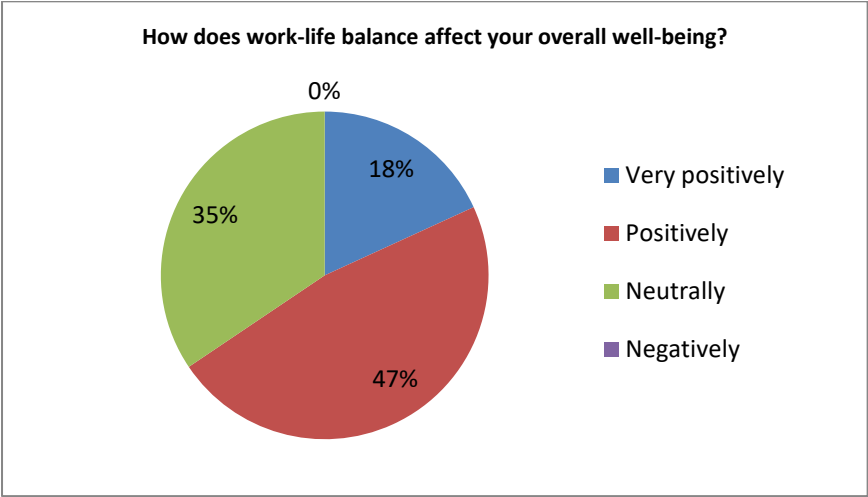


FIGURE 10- IMPACT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ON OVERALL WELL-BEING

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart depicts how work-life balance affects the overall well-being of 55 respondents, likely married women educators. Interestingly, the largest segment (47%) indicates a positive effect of work-life balance on their overall well-being, highlighting the significance of maintaining a healthy equilibrium between professional and personal lives. Additionally, 18% experience a very positive impact and 35% reported a neutral impact, indicating their work-life balance neither positively nor negatively influences their overall well-being significantly. Interestingly, none of the respondents reported a negative impact.

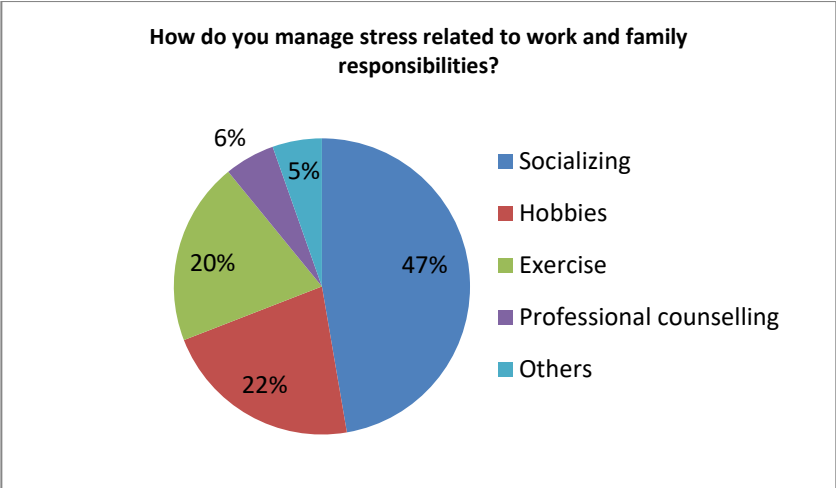


FIGURE 11- STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The pie chart displays the responses to the question "How do you manage stress related to work and family responsibilities?" across five categories. The largest portion, comprising 47% of the responses, is "Socializing", indicating that nearly half of the respondents rely on social connections to manage stress. The second largest category is "Hobbies" at 22%, suggesting that engaging in leisure activities is another popular stress management technique. Additionally, 20% of the respondents rely on physical activity to manage stress. "Professional counseling" and "Other" strategies account for smaller portions of 6% and 5% respectively. Overall, the data reveals that majority of respondents prefer self-directed methods like socializing, hobbies and exercise to manage work and family-related stress over professional counseling and other unspecified approaches.

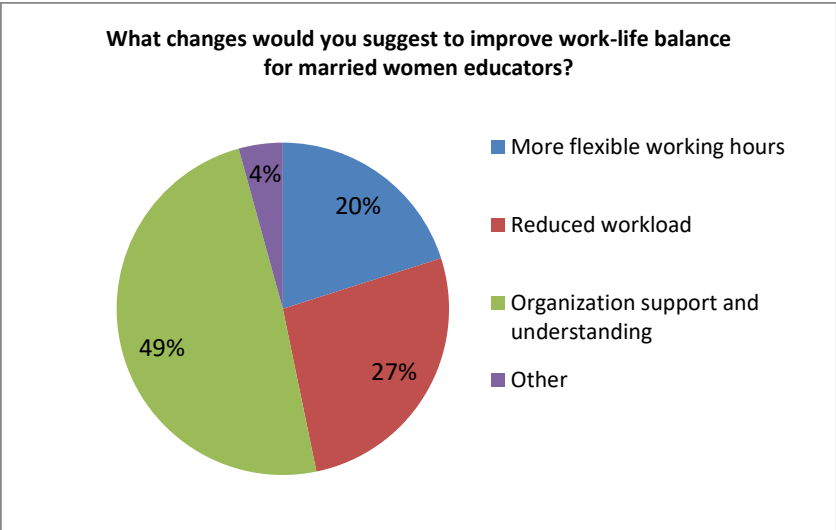


FIGURE 12- SUGGESTED CHANGES TO IMPROVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

The pie chart presents the responses of 55 married women educators regarding suggestions to improve their work-life balance. The largest segment, accounting for 49% of the responses, indicates a need for more organizational support and understanding. This suggests that some respondents perceive a lack of empathy or accommodating policies within their organizations, which can hinder their capability to balance work and personal commitments effectively. The second-largest segment, at 27% of the responses, suggests a need for reduced workload. These respondents likely feel overburdened with their current workload, which may be contributing to an imbalance between their work and personal lives.

Another 20% of the respondents desire for more flexible working hours. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents perceive rigid or inflexible work schedules as a major barrier to achieving a better balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. The smallest segment, representing 4% of the responses, falls under the "Other" category, which may include suggestions not covered by the provided options or additional context-specific recommendations.

Overall, the responses underscore the diverse challenges faced by married women educators in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance and highlight the potential areas for improvement, such as organizational support, workload management, flexible working hours, etc.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- A significant portion of married women educators confront challenges in attaining a satisfactory work-life balance, with a majority reporting negative impacts on their job satisfaction and overall well-being.
- Extended work hours, heavy workloads and the need to take work home are common challenges that contribute to work-life imbalance among married women educators.
- Household responsibilities, including childcare and chores, add to the burden of balancing work and personal life for many respondents.
- Majority of the respondents receive adequate support from their spouses or partners, however, some of them experience a lack of consistent or sufficient support in managing household and childcare responsibilities.
- Self-directed strategies, such as socializing, engaging in their hobbies and exercise are the most prevalent methods employed by respondents to manage stress related to work and family responsibilities.
- A majority of respondents perceive their organizations as neutral towards work-life balance with a lack of flexible working hours and support programs being common concerns.
- Majority of the respondents indicate a need for more organizational support and understanding for achieving healthy work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the pressing need to address work-life balance challenges faced by married women educators in India. The findings reveal that an imbalance between professional and personal responsibilities can have detrimental effects on job satisfaction and overall well-being. While some individuals employ coping strategies to manage stress, the lack of organizational support and inflexible workplace policies exacerbate the challenges.

To foster a healthier work-life balance, educational institutions must prioritize implementing supportive policies and practices that cater to the unique needs of married women educators. By offering flexible working arrangements, childcare facilities, and supportive leave policies, organizations can alleviate the burden on these employees and support long lasting and fulfilling work-life integration.

Furthermore, developing a supportive workplace culture that values work-life balance and promotes open communication and understanding is crucial. Empowering married women educators to effectively manage their multiple roles can lead to increased job contentment, improved performance and enhanced overall well-being, ultimately benefiting not only the employees but also the educational institutions they serve.

SUGGESTIONS

Achieving work-life balance for married women in the education sector requires a combination of institutional support, personal time management, and family cooperation. Institutions can help by offering flexible work schedules and supportive maternity or childcare policies. Reducing administrative burdens through digital tools and streamlined processes can also free up time for core teaching and research responsibilities. At a personal level, effective time management, setting clear boundaries between work and home, and prioritizing self-care are essential. Delegating household responsibilities and seeking family support can ease stress, while open communication with spouses about workload expectations fosters a more balanced home environment. Additionally, engaging in hobbies, exercise, or mindfulness activities can help diminish stress and get better overall well-being. Encouraging peer support networks and mentorship programs within educational institutions can further empower women to navigate their professional and personal roles more effectively.

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