

Indian Working Women: Dual Workload and Ways to Deal with It

Meenakshi Neb

Abstract

Indian working women have struggled hard to get their way at workplace and make their presence felt in the professional world. This struggle was not due to the lack of capability; rather it was due to the lack of opportunity. With the achievement of education, and an urge to give family a secured future, they are now entering into workforce. Taking up job increases responsibilities on them as they have to perform the duties of a homemaker as well as a professional. Thus the problem of dual work (of home and occupation) crops up in front of them. Since these problems tend to pressurize them and it becomes difficult for them to manage their professional and domestic life without any struggle, therefore it is necessary to find out some solutions to remove hurdles faced by them in their day-to-day life. Hence, there is a need of finding out some strategies by which they can maintain balance between their professional and personal life. This article presents the real situation of dual workload on working women and also presents the ways which they can adopt to reduce the burden of dual workload so that they perform the duties of home and office smoothly.

Keywords: Role, Homemaker, Workplace, Work-Life Balance, Employment, Working women, Tools.

INTRODUCTION

If building a good and satisfactory career is an easy task, we all would have got what we dream for and none of us would have ever complained about the position we hold and where we are in our profession. Building a successful career doesn't involve mere good education, rather it demands more than that, especially when we talk about women's career. Forming a successful career is a long journey for them which is full of many hardships. It takes a lot more effort for them even if they have competence and expertise. Women have to play many roles. Fulfilling one of these roles makes it difficult for them to fulfill the other because each of them requires time, energy and attention. As a result it becomes difficult to meet the needs of diverse roles.

JOINING WORKFORCE INCREASES WORKLOAD ON WOMEN

It is commendable that women have proved to the world with hard work, intelligence and sincerity that they are capable of competing with men in professional world.

“The great increase in the number of industries, a result of the creation of public sector undertakings by the Government, gave more women an opportunity to work” (Sharma, 1990) [1].

But taking up a career doesn't mean that they are relieved from their traditional role of homemaker rather one more new role of a career woman is added to the previous one. When they decide to take up job several things start juggling in their mind. Several questions are matter of concern for them such as who will take care of elders and children, how children will get ready for the school if they have to leave early in the morning for office, will the studies of children suffer because of the office and will they be able to give their family that much attention which they used to give them when they were present at home 24x7 and their full time job was to render the responsibilities of family? Domestic duties are attached to only women since ages, thus they are burdened with dual work of office and home. After joining workforce the number of hours in a day remain same but the number of duties are multiplied for them. The family expects them to be a perfect homemaker. It is expected from Indian working women to take care of the family and give them sufficient time. Like a homemaker their day starts early in the morning. They do the household work, prepare children for school, cook lunch, and after coming back from the office prepare last meal of the day and teach children. At workplace, like a good working professional they have to meet the deadlines of the official work. Meanwhile, they hardly get any time to think about their own problems. They have to keep on working for the whole life without any break.

Some women take up career to give their family better future by earning money, some are compelled by rising prices to share the financial burden, some want to use their skills; some of them want to make use of their leisure time. Whatever the reason may be, but the considerable fact is they have the dual burden of family and profession.

Those days are gone when they were supposed to stay at home and let go their talent waste in order to fulfill the family needs. Today women need to balance their home and office. Thus work-life balance is required. Work-life balance is the act of creating a balance between “work” i.e., career and “life” i.e., time for self and family.

“Work - life Balance of women employees has become an important subject since the time has changed from men earning the family living in today's world where both men and women equally share the responsibility of earning for the betterment of their family life”(Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013) [2].

“Work-Life Balance does not mean an equal balance. It means the capacity to schedule the hours of professional and personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life” (Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013) [3].

“To achieve a positive work-Life Balance, w women should be pro-active and plan her professional and personal schedules well in advance so that both are equally balanced and the end result is satisfaction” (Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013) [3].

WAYS TO DEAL WITH DUAL WORKLOAD

Although domestic duties remain priority for most of the women but still they cannot neglect their professional responsibilities and also try to win the admiration in professional field. There are several ways through which working women can strike balance between home and office.

Set Priorities:

Prioritizing duties simply mean to arrange the duties in the order of priority i.e., deciding which work has to be done before the other.

Working mothers have several things to do in a day. They can prioritize their duties to meet everybody's need. For example, if they have to attend child's parent teacher meeting, it is the first important work for them to do before going to the office.

Time Management:

One of the most important issues around which the problems of working women revolves is time. They have many tasks to do within a limited time. In order to use time in a productive and best way working women must learn time management.

Time management means the act of deciding how much time has to be spent on which activity so that all the tasks in a day are performed well within the time-frame.

Without time management they might spend more time on one task and for the other task they might be left with little or no time. Time management helps in utilizing the available time effectively. It is not possible to work 24x7. Working mothers should manage their time in such a way that their children and other family members are not left behind. It is time management which helps them to take some quality time out for themselves and their social life.

Using Modern Kitchen Tools:

Preparing food is a major part of homemaking. Women either working or non working spend most of their time and energy in the kitchen. Cutting, peeling, cooking are time consuming. Kitchen has also not been untouched with advancement of technology. It has proved as a boon for women. Many inventions have been done to make the task of cooking much easier and faster. For example, use of induction cook top, dough kneader, microwave and food processor etc. save energy and time.

"Kanwar et al. (2003) were also of the view that by using improved kitchen tools and equipment, homemakers can efficiently manage their time and labour. They can adopt these technologies to simplify their work and reduce fatigue while attending in the kitchen" (as cited in Kaur & Sidhu, 2011) [4].

Working women can use modern equipments in order to save their time and energy in the kitchen. This saved time and energy can be utilized in other areas. They can spend more time with their near and dear ones.

Work From Home:

Now-a-days women have the opportunity to work from home rather than giving up their career. Working from home is a good option for women who have small baby or elderly people to look after whom they can't afford or want to leave alone. While

working from home they have freedom to work according to their convenience. They are not bound within the working hours of office; in fact, they are in a position to work in those hours which suit them the best. In this way they can satisfy their wish to work and earn money as well as they do not suffer from the guilt of neglecting their familial responsibilities.

Using Modern Technology:

Thanks to the fast grown technology, many of the things are now just a click away. By using computer and internet we can save our time. Just by pressing few buttons we can get the work done which were once big issues for us. With the help of internet we can pay many bills like electricity or telephone bills. With its help it is also possible to book railway or air tickets. Not only many types of forms are available on internet, but also we can fill them and send them through mail.

“Identify the activities that are avoidable by figuring out how to by-pass them (i.e. setting up a direct debit to your account instead of going to the bank to pay your telephone and utility bills every month)” (Garodia, 2009) [5].

By using modern technology women can be freed from the work for which they had to stand in queues. Now this spared time can be used in some other way.

Stay Focused:

It is quite normal that while doing one work we think of some other task which needs our attention. Generally, we do not realize that this habit disturbs our concentration and reduces the pace of doing something.

As working women have a lot of things to do in a day, it may happen that while working on a project at workplace, they might think about their family related matters. Similarly, when they are at home they might think of the pending work in office. It creates stress and frustration, which leads to anger. In turn, this anger can harm the peace and harmony in life. They should not let their office stress affect their children, who wait for the whole day for their mother to come back from office and spend time with them.

Staying focused can help them to improve their efficiency without creating strain. It can help them to do work at faster speed and with more efficiency. When they are in office they should concentrate on office work so that their efficiency doesn't get affected and when they are at home they should pay attention to the family members and enjoy their family life.

CONCLUSION:

Traditionally, Indian women are seen as homemakers and are responsible for fulfilling the needs of family members and men are bread winners. These stereo-type expectations lay hindrances in the path of working women. Negligence in any of the duties whether of home or workplace is accompanied by imbalance. For instance, if a mother neglects her children in their formative years and is not able to give them sufficient time, this can affect the personality development of children and they might get distracted when they need their parents' guidance the most. Emotional closeness

between parents and children helps children to feel free to share their thoughts with them. This makes children a better human being and imbibes positive attitudes like cooperation, respect, love and care.

Since women are taught from childhood that their most important duty is to take care of family needs and house is the place where they are needed the most, thus they cannot afford to pay it less attention. At the same time earning money and joining workforce is a part of modern women's life. They want economic independence and utilize their education. By using some strategies in their day-to-day life they can bring equilibrium between work and family.

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