

Satisfaction With Work - Life Balance :

A Study Of Women Police Personnel In Hyderabad

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INTRODUCTION

This article is a result of a research study concerning female police personnel, ascertaining whether their gender affects them in their work and in their dealings with the public, and also investigates their work-life balance satisfaction. Specific emphasis was placed on the challenges and difficulties they experienced when combining work with their domestic responsibilities. The fundamental purpose of the research was to give female police personnel a voice by expressing their views regarding their work-life balance and how they combined it with their caring roles and the study also ascertained if this impacted their work-life balance satisfaction.

WHAT IS WORK - LIFE BALANCE?

Work-life balance is the proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "life" (pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance". There is a large individual component in that meaning that includes each individual's needs, experiences, and goals, which define the balance and there is not a one size fits all solution. Furthermore, what work-life balance does not mean is an equal balance in units of time between work and life. Work-life balance has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organizations, as well as for the lives of employees. A balance between work and life is supposed to exist when there is proper functioning at work and also at home.

RISE OF WOMEN IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Before the 1970s, nearly all police officers were men; women comprised of less than 2 percent of the sworn personnel, and "policewomen" served in specialized positions. In the past 30 years, the entry of women into the police work force has increased considerably. In 2005, women comprised of 11.3 percent of the sworn personnel and could be found in all specialized assignments and ranks. Nonetheless, women police in India still are underrepresented, regarded with suspicion by many men officers, and face discriminatory practices within the informal police culture and the formal organization. A lot of work-life imbalance exists in such a bureaucratic hierarchical culture.

REASONS FOR WORK - LIFE IMBALANCE IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Policing work is generally recognized as being one of the most stressful and exceedingly difficult careers. It can be argued that certain types of workplace are male defined and are inhospitable to women, and the police force is credited as being one, which is a 24x7 service. Maintaining a healthy balance between career and personal life is important not only for people with caring responsibilities, but also for the police personnel generally. Women who work in this department have to give up many family responsibilities due to their heavy work load and round the clock duty hours. The salaries of the department are also not high as compared to other departments. Also, the women police personnel have no right to go on strike or make some demands to the Government. It increases the stress, anxiety and results in low WLB satisfaction. If stress and anxiety increases, it also affects the behavioural pattern of the women police personnel.

The policies and procedures of the police organization and autocratic management with rigid hierarchy have been known to cause discontent and dissatisfaction among police personnel along with frequent transfer, suspension / suppression, delayed promotions, non-grant of leave on time and departmental inquires.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rice (1985) emphasized the relationship between work satisfaction and the quality of people's lives. He contended that work experiences and outcomes can affect a person's general quality of life, both directly and indirectly, through their effects on family interactions, leisure activities and levels of health and energy. Being successful in the competitive market depends on the level of the satisfaction of the workers in the establishments. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the workers affects the performance of the organization. Furthermore, job satisfaction provides positive attitudes and results in good behavior of the workers (Organ, 1997). New working practices and rapid technological advances are changing the nature of many jobs (Cooper, 1999).

Premalatha (2003), in her study on work-life balance, established the connectivity between productivity of women employees with the family support system while analyzing the various variables which have a bearing on work-life balance.

Porter & Ayman (2010) said that a big stressor for many employees is a lack of balance between work and family tasks. Some employees may not be able to participate in family life or other personal activities. There is simply no time during the workday to attend to personal or family-related matters. This stress can lead to job dissatisfaction, lower organizational commitment and, in the worst case, an intention to quit.

Bose & Madasamy (2009) opined that job satisfaction is not the same as motivation, although it is clearly linked. Job design aims to enhance job satisfaction and performance; methods include job rotation, job enlargement and job enrichment. Other influences on satisfaction include the management style and culture, employee involvement, incentives, empowerment and autonomous work groups. Job satisfaction is a very important attribute which is frequently measured by organizations.

In the light of the literature survey, it is very clear that quite a lot of research has been conducted on job satisfaction in the Indian and Western context. However, no research survey has been conducted on work- life balance among the women employees in the Police Department. Therefore, the present study was conducted to bridge this gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- 1) To measure the level of satisfaction as perceived by the women police respondents on the varied determinants of work - life balance.
- 2) To identify the major factors that influence the work- life balance among various categories of women police personnel.
- 3) To measure the overall work- life balance of women police personnel, irrespective of cadres.

METHODOLOGY

❖ **Sample :** The study was confined to Hyderabad city and Multi-stage random sampling was adopted for the present study. In the first phase, 20 police stations were identified from the west zone of Hyderabad. In the second stage, 10 police stations were identified, which had been existing for the last 10 years .In the final stage, women police personnel alone were chosen from each police station. The sample size of the present study was fixed at 350 women police personnel from each of the following lower ranks (e.g. Home Guards, Constables, Head Constables).

❖ **Period of The Study :** The period of the study, i.e. the period of data collection was December 2011–February 2012.

❖ **Data Collection :** This study being based on survey method, primary data on the varied dimensions of work - life balance were collected through a suitably framed questionnaire. Besides the responses received on the questionnaire, informal discussions were held with the women police personnel to get insight into various matters connected with the work - life balance of women police personnel.

❖ **Framework of The Analysis :** Data collected have been presented in tabular form and the analysis was made using Simple Percentage and Mean Score. Likert's five-point scale was used to measure the attitude and opinions of respondents to ascertain the level of work- life balance satisfaction.

❖ **Limitations Of The Study**

- 1)The study examines the level of work- life balance on the basis of opinions collected from 3 ranks of women police

personnel in Hyderabad. There is a possibility of prejudice having entered into their perceptions.

2) The findings may not be the same all over India, since the perception of police women are likely to vary depending upon local environment and other dimensions influencing the work- life balance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

❖ **Satisfaction With The Family Support System:** Support system in the family is an important factor which contributes to the work-life balance. Presence of elders to take care of the family makes the women employees' comfortable at the workplace, and enables them to contribute to their maximum efficiency as they are relieved of their family's responsibilities and can fully concentrate on the job at hand. The perception of the women police employees related to satisfaction with the level of family support has been tabulated in the Table 1.

Table 1 : Satisfaction With The Family Support System						
Designation	Family Support					Mean
	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Moderately Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Home Guards (195)	86 (44)	59(30)	32(16)	11(7)	7(3)	4.03
Constables (110)	23 (21)	25(23)	20(18)	18(16)	24(22)	3.01
Head Constables (45)	18 (40)	10(22)	8(18)	9(20)	-	3.81
Total (350)	127 (36)	94(27)	60(17)	38(11)	31(9)	3.68

Source: Primary Data, Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages

Analysis of mean scores of the respondents reveals the fact that the Home Guards at the entry level enjoyed a measure of support ranging from total to adequate support in terms of percentage. Since most of the women police personnel under this category are yet to start a family, they may not require any special support from family members. Their stay with the family or stay in a private accommodation relieves them of the drudgery of discharging familial responsibilities. Therefore, the mean score may point to a total and adequate support. Similarly, women police of other cadres at higher level (Head Constables) too can have access to near adequate support (3.81). Since most of the respondents under this category are almost settled in their family, with their children having been placed elsewhere and with the elders being with them at an advanced age, this category got a near moderate level of support.

However, respondents at the Constables level could get only moderate support (mean score : 3.01). It can also be noted that 38 per cent of the middle cadre (Constables) respondents suffered from inadequate and lack of support from their family. It was only 34 per cent of the respondents who had the luxury of familial support, varying from total to adequate. During the course of the interview with this category of respondents, it was ascertained that they need more support from various quarters for taking care of their children, elders, housekeeping, cooking, helping the children with their studies, taking care of the husband, being taken care of during illness, child birth, child rearing, attending to the needs of the family during their absence on deputation, transfer, assignment, etc.

Table 2: Satisfaction With The Benefits Provided By The Police Department						
Designation	Satisfaction With Benefits					Mean
	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Moderately Satisfied	Dissatisfied	
Home Guards (195)	78(40)	56(29)	33(17)	17(9)	11(5)	3.89
Constables (110)	17(15)	21(19)	22(20)	33(30)	18(16)	2.90
Head Constables (45)	15(33)	13(29)	7(16)	8(18)	2(4)	3.69
Total (350)	110(31)	90(26)	62(18)	58(16)	31(9)	3.55

Source: Primary data, figures in brackets indicates percentages

❖ **Satisfaction With The Benefits Provided By The Police Department** : Benefits are those paid to employees in addition to their salary. It includes paid holidays, subsidized food, maternity and paternity leave, health insurance, educational facilities for children, etc. Existence of these benefits in an organization boosts up the morale of the employees, and creates a sense of belongingness towards the organization, which enhances the productivity of the employees (Sakthivel Rani et al., 2011). The perceptions of the employees regarding the benefits received by them have been shown in the Table 2 . It is evident from the Table 2 that the Home Guards at the entry level and Head Constables at the higher level had a positive outlook towards the benefits awarded by the organization, since the mean scores of the above categories - 3.89 and 3.69 - are slanting towards “satisfied” in the scale, while the absence of contentment is apparent in the case of Constables at the middle level, as the mean score of 2.90 is barely touching the “undecided” in the scale. The interview with the Constables revealed the fact that rewards are not commensurate with the magnitude of efforts expended to attain the expected performance. Therefore, the grievances over inadequate benefits surfaced among the lady Constables.

❖ **Satisfaction With The Working Conditions:** The Police department is known for its irregular working hours. This results in health hazards, stress, which has a negative impact on family life. To overcome this, police personnel are given off days to put them at ease. Thus, the availability of the various options frees the women police personnel from the grind of the daily work and enables them to spend quality time with their family members. It is one of the vital factors rooting out absenteeism, disloyalty, physical and mental stress, etc.

Table 3: Satisfaction With The Working Conditions						
	Satisfaction With Working Conditions					
Designation	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Moderately Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean
Home Guards (195)	87(45)	38(19)	30(15)	25(13)	5(18)	3.81
Constables (110)	43(39)	27(24)	22(20)	14(13)	4(4)	3.83
Head Constables (45)	10(22)	13(29)	10(22)	5(11)	4(8)	3.24
Total (350)	140(40)	78(22)	62(18)	44(13)	23(7)	3.74
Source: Primary Data , Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages						

The Table 3 highlights the fact that the female respondents at the Home Guard level were highly satisfied with respect to the working conditions, as the mean score of 3.81 reflects high satisfaction, while the dissatisfaction is manifested with the mean score of 3.24 among the Head Constable level. A discussion with this category of employees revealed the fact that they cannot avail themselves of the various forms of work options as their physical presence in police stations is warranted to supervise the work of other police personnel and they are under constant pressure to report to their higher ups on the day to day happenings and any sudden urgency of the situations on a continuous basis. Therefore, their working conditions depressed their level of satisfaction on this dimension. Hence, the mean score is at 3.24.

❖ **Satisfaction With The Facilities Available At The Police Stations** : Women represent nearly 10% of the police force. Because of the lack of proper facilities at the police stations, women police personnel experience insecurity to work at night, faced increased harassment at the workplace, and found it difficult to report and go out during the night,

Table 4: Satisfaction With The Facilities Available At The Police Stations						
	Satisfaction With Facilities At Police Stations					
Designation	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Most Dissatisfied	Mean
Home Guards (195)	69 (35)	51 (26)	29 (15)	26 (13)	20 (10)	3.53
Constables (110)	13 (12)	24 (22)	19 (17)	37 (33)	17 (15)	2.81
Head Constables (45)	8 (18)	14 (31)	16 (36)	6 (13)	1 (2)	3.39
Total (350)	90 (26)	89 (25)	64 (18)	69 (20)	38 (11)	3.24
Source: Primary Data, Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages						

all of which affect the work- life balance satisfaction. Unless the privacy issues of women police are given due attention, the work environment would not be suitable for the women police personnel. It is evident from the Table 4 that the women police personnel at the middle-level i.e. the Constables were highly dissatisfied with respect to the facilities at the police stations as the mean scores is 2.81, as compared to the Home Guards and Head Constables. A casual discussion with these respondents revealed the fact that they were under constant pressure to report to their higher ups on a minute to minute basis, and the lack of proper resting facilities at the police stations led to loss of privacy and hence, they were not satisfied with the facilities available at the police stations.

❖ **Satisfaction With Maternity Leave And Child Care Benefits:** Women need more leaves than their male counterparts. This fact ought to be taken into account in the wake of the natural role of women as caretakers of their families in India. The need to take care of the children while working is an important factor which disturbs the mind and diverts the attention from official work. This may lead to work - life imbalance. Maternity leave may be increased to four and a half months as in the Central services. Fixed hour duties may be given during pregnancy and for two or three years after child birth. This should involve regularity of working hours so that women police personnel can look after their children.

Table 5: Satisfaction With Maternity Leave And Child Care Benefits						
	Satisfaction With Maternity Leave And Child Care Benefits					
Designation	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Most Dissatisfied	Mean
Home Guards (195)	45 (23)	43(22)	38 (19)	34 (18)	35 (19)	3.16
Constables (110)	18 (16)	20(18)	18(16)	44(41)	10(9)	2.94
Head Constables (45)	12(27)	16(36)	12(28)	3(6)	2(4)	3.74
Total (350)	75(21)	79(23)	68(19)	81(28)	47(19)	3.20
Source: Primary Data, Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages						

The Table 5 indicates that the police personnel at the level of Home Guards as well as at the higher level could give moderate amount of care to their children. The personnel at the Head Constable level might have crossed their mid career. Their grown up children, support from elders, only desk jobs and no field duties might provide them time to spend quality time with their family. Constables at the middle level suffered from want of time to attend to the needs of their children as their mean score stands at 2.94, pointing to a little care.

❖ **Satisfaction With Field Duty :** The police personnel has the difficult and unenviable task of maintaining public safety and security. It is a job that not only demands mental alertness and physical fitness, but puts all of one's abilities to the harshest of tests while dealing with the ever increasing crime graph. The women police personnel now work for 12 hours a day and have difficulty in getting leaves. Furthermore, the uniform of women police officials during pre-natal and post-natal periods also creates a certain amount of discomfort .Wearing the tight uniform and belts, which are prescribed for all police officials, is the biggest problem that woman police officials face on duty. This problem is being realized by the police authorities and they are taking necessary directions of taking appropriate measures in this regard.

Table 6 : Satisfaction With Field Duty						
	Satisfaction With Field Duty					
Designation	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Most Dissatisfied	Mean
Home Guards (195)	72 (37)	53 (27)	34 (18)	33 (17)	3 (1)	3.81
Constables (110)	48 (44)	24 (22)	22 (20)	16 (14)	-	3.95
Head Constables (45)	2 (4)	4 (9)	10 (22)	6 (13)	25 (56)	2.00
Total (350)	127 (36)	86 (24)	70 (21)	55 (16)	12 (3)	3.75
Source: Primary Data, Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages						

Also, many of the women police personnel who were interviewed expressed the fear that because of lack of toilet facilities for hours together on field duty, they tend to abstain from drinking water and as a result, suffer from dehydration or even develop urinary infections or kidney problems, thereby indicating work - life imbalance.

Table 7: Women Police Personnel's Overall Satisfaction With Work - Life Balance						
	Overall WLB Satisfaction					
Designation	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Undecided	Dissatisfied	Most Dissatisfied	Mean
Home Guards (195)	23(12)	76(39)	41(21)	37(19)	18(9)	3.25
Constables (110)	12(11)	32(29)	27(25)	16(14)	23(21)	2.95
Head Constables (45)	6(13)	12(27)	12(27)	8(17)	7(16)	2.05
Total (350)	41(12)	120(34)	80(23)	61(17)	48(14)	3.10
Source: Primary Data, Figures In Brackets Indicates Percentages						

It is evident from the Table 6 that field duty problems badly affected both entry level Home Guards and middle-level Constables as the mean scores of 3.81 and 3.95 respectively indicate more field duty assigned to them, because of the *bandhs* and *melas* happening in the city . Due to field duty, the women police personnel faced many problems like lack of proper privacy to take care of their basic needs. The overall mean score of 3.75 reveals the existence of challenges in carrying out the field duties.

❖ **Overall Satisfaction With Work - Life Balance :** It is clear from the Table 7 that 51 percent of the surveyed Home Guards were satisfied with their overall work - life balance. However, 28 per cent of the Home Guards were dissatisfied with their WLB. As for the women Constables, 40 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the various work life harmony measures. However, 35 per cent of them were dissatisfied with the various parameters that aimed at work life harmony.

As for Head Constables, 46 per cent were satisfied with the implementation of work life harmony strategies. 31 per cent of the Head Constables were not satisfied with the work life balance mechanism, with a mean score of 2.05, indicating on the whole, less satisfaction with work life balance.

CONCLUSION

Though women have made their way in the police department, they still face some obstacles at their workplace and at home. The findings of the study reveal that most of the women police personnel were dissatisfied with WLB. Suspicion by society, family-related issues and personal problems caused problems for women police personnel. Challenges persist at workplaces, and it is how employees take up these problems that are likely to vary. Few issues are unique to women, and women need to prepare themselves to cope with these challenges and also, the Police Department can implement family-friendly approaches to encourage women employees to balance their work-family challenges. Dissatisfaction among the women police personnel can be reduced by improving the quality of work life by providing an attractive system of rewards and recognition of good work and by improving the working environment.

The superiors have to imbibe the required amount of professionalism (in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes) for dealing with work life issues more effectively, and it is imperative that all state police organizations undertake suitable initiatives, including organizing training programmes to sensitize the police personnel at all levels.

Therefore, the police department surveyed has to find out the reasons for moderate satisfaction and dissatisfaction prevailing among the women police personnel across different cadres and seek to address the issues of dissatisfaction among the women police personnel.

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