A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND WORK LIFE BALANCE OF WOMEN WORKERS IN TEXTILE SPINNING MILLS

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ABSTRACT

Today, in addition to the traditional unpaid labour required for maintaining a household, which involves growing food and securing water and fuel supplies, women increasingly take on paid work outside the home to augment personal and family income. The world over, these dual responsibilities respectively termed "reproductive" and "productive" by social scientists always play a vital role in human economic activity. Although women as workers have traditionally been regarded as dependent adjuncts of their husbands, partners on closet male kin, the rapid influx of women into labour markets worldwide over the past three decades has become a key factor in the growing independence of women, economically, socially and legally. Increasingly too, their 'household' work, long taken for granted, is being acknowledged as a central contribution to society's wealth.

KEYWORDS: Women Workers, Textile Units, Working Culture, Work Life Balance, Conflict.

PREAMBLE

Traditionally, women's occupational status has always been closely associated with the home and family. In the recent time, educational, political, economic and social changes have necessitated a change in women's status and their role, which was hitherto that of a housewife. Ever since independence women's status has taken rapid strides. There is no job to which they cannot aspire. There is no political office where they cannot achieve. There is an increasing number of married women engaged in white collar jobs. This has made the better educated women conscious of her rights. They are also the one who are more prone to internal conflicts. This is due to incompatibility between the conception of women's role and new occupational role.

Work personal life balance does not mean an equal balance. Trying to schedule an equal number of hours for various jobs and personal activities is usually unrewarding and unrealistic. Life is and should be more fluid than that. According to *Jim Bird, President of Work Balance.com,* individual work life balance will vary over time, often on a daily basis.

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The right balance for one today will probably be different for the person the next day. The right balances when one is single will be different on marrying, or if one has children; when one starts a new career versus when one is nearing retirement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The role of women has been changing substantially over the last decade and a half, both inside and outside home. In addition to their role within households, they are now having a larger role in the outside world also, especially in the labour market. It has often been argued that women face a segmented labour market with sector specific jobs and often gender specific wages assigned to them. However, the world is witnessing a significant change in this traditional thinking regarding ability of women to work only in a few specific sectors. Gone are the days when women were employed mostly as low paid casual workers in agricultural and construction activities. Moreover, it is often argued that globalization is leading to feminization of labour force through putting out system or subcontracting as employing women under informal conditions involve lower labour cost. The decision making of women to participate in labour force depends on personal and various other family related factors, after entry of women at job, the work environment and culture of the organization determine the work life balance of women units.

More specifically, the present study is an empirical investigation into influence of socio economic status on work life balance of the women workers in textile spinning units in Coimbatore district.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the socio-economic condition of the women workers in textile spinning mills,
2. To analyse the significant difference on the selected dimensions of work life balance across the socio-economic status of women workers in sample units, and
3. To offer suggestions to improve the work life balance of women workers in textile spinning mills in Coimbatore district.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is empirical in nature based on survey method. The entire data required for the study was collected in three stages. The primary data relating to the textile spinning mill employees was collected by interviewing the employees with the help of the interview schedule. The secondary data relating to the study like origin and growth of textile spinning mills in India, Tamilnadu and Coimbatore district were obtained from various published and unpublished records, annual reports, bulletins, booklets, journals, magazines, etc. Lastly, the researcher held discussions with the officials of various textile spinning mills and experts. These discussions were helpful to the researcher in identifying the problem of the study.

It was decided that a descriptive study using primary data would be appropriate to investigate the objectives. The instrument used to collect the data was an interview schedule. The researcher has presented and interpreted the collected data supported by quantitative techniques. In the subsequent sections, the researcher elaborates the method adopted to design and administer the interview schedule, the sampling technique used and the justification for choosing the samples.

PRIMARY DATA

The first step in the primary data collection is the identification of textile units. Though there are more than 3000 units operating within the limits of Coimbatore district, almost 50 percent of them are unregistered units. The sample women workers were collected from the registered units. There are around 600 units which got registered

in the Regional Office of The Textile Commissioner. The officials of The Textile Commissioner's office were approached and a list of the address of the textile spinning Mills operating in the area of Coimbatore district was obtained. From this list, 100 textile mills were selected randomly.

Hundred textile spinning mills were approached and from these units, the list of women working in these units was prepared. The selected women respondents were approached in person and the data was collected. Hence, the study has a total of 500 samples selected by adopting the sampling technique of *two stage random sampling technique*.

TECHNIQUES USED FOR ANALYSIS

The techniques used for analysis are, Mean, MANOVA, Inter-correlation, Regression and cluster.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is on the impact of socio-economic conditions on the level of work life balance among the women workers in textile spinning mills in Coimbatore District.

REVIEW OF LITERATRURE

1. An article by Kelly, E.L., Kossek, E.E., Hammer, L.B., Durham, M., Bray, J., Chermack, K., et. al., (2008) reviews more than 150 peer-reviewed studies to determine whether work life balance initiatives reduce work-life conflict or improve work-life enrichment for employees and also whether employees' work outcomes and organizational business outcomes are improved when work-family conflict is reduced. Employees' work outcomes review include work attitudes and behaviour. Work family conflict was found to be related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, tardiness and absenteeism. Organizational business outcomes include firm productivity and firm financial performance. Actual ROI evidence for work-family balance initiatives was rarely found to be clear; however, employees in organizations reporting higher work-life balance quality were more likely to have higher job satisfaction, growth potential and job security, which, in turn, were related to firm productivity. Based on the findings, the authors make four recommendations for a future research agenda: the need for more multi-level research, the necessity of using an interdisciplinary approach, the benefits of longitudinal studies with quasi-experimental or experimental designs and the challenges of effectively translating research into practice.

2. According to Ryan and Kossek (2008), implementation attributes including supervisor support for use and universality of practice availability will affect the degree to which work-life practices are seen by employees as fulfilling their work-life needs and signalling support from the organization. Organizations featuring an entrenched long-hours culture and unaccommodating attitudes among managers and co-workers tend to discourage employees from making use of the work-life practices ostensibly available to them

3. In a study by a Ramanamma and Usha Bambawale (1980) titled "Socio-economic background of nurses, it is stated that women from homes with lower income, education, occupation and status are attracted in greater number to this profession, because of the provisions of stipends in the training periods. This profession has a low status and income with strenuous repetitive work, which is in keeping with women's role in the family. The preference of hospitals in recruiting women to this job is they accept the low income and status awarded to the nurses.

4. Unwalla (1977) studied 50 married women executives, 50 unmarried women executives and 50 housewives (N=150) from the banking, marketing and advertising industry in Mumbai. She made an attempt to assess if work interfered with the family lives of women executives. Sixty-five percent of the women in her sample said that work remained at the back of their minds indicating psychological spillover of work to the family domain. However, her study did not report or explore into spillover effects of family to work. Work did not directly affect marital relationships. Rather once again, it appeared to be individual-specific attitudes that explained marital adjustment. Women who had social adjustment problems before marriage continued to have adjustment problems later and thus, reported marital disharmony. In general for all three categories of women, family roles were more important than their work role. Family factors such as ill health of family members or inability to perform household duties were seen as stressful or problematic by married as well as unmarried working women.

However, non-working wives were stronger in their opinion that children and family get neglected at the expense of work commitment by working women. In general, a large portion of working wives and mothers faced the dilemma of excelling at home without compromising on their working status.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE WOMEN WORKERS IN GROUPS

The researcher has studied the socio-economic conditions of the groups. In order to study this, the researcher has extracted homogenous groups using cluster analysis. The researcher intended to extract two groups, one suggesting the group enjoying higher socio-economic conditions and the other enjoying lower socio –economic conditions. K-means cluster model was used, as the researcher deemed that the sample size is relatively large and the number of clusters (=2) is pre-determined.

The 11 items used to capture the socio-economic conditions entered the cluster model. The 2 clusters formed are given following table

Table 1.Cluster Analysis

Socio-economic Condition Groups	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Cluster 1	388	77.6	77.6
Cluster 2	112	22.4	100.0
Total	500	100.0	

Source: Computed from primary data.

Table shows that there were 388 members in cluster 1 and 112 in cluster 2. Though the difference in the number of members in each cluster is high, the researcher decided to go ahead with this formation as there are sizeable numbers of members in each group for further analysis. This constitutes 77.6% of the women workers in textiles cluster 1 and 22.4% in cluster 2.

The researcher further compared the means of the socio-economic condition of the women workers in each cluster. The results are given in below:

Table 2.The of Socio-Economic Conditions of Groups

Socio-economic Conditions of Groups Using Cluster Analysis	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Cluster 1	3.45	388	.43
Cluster 2	2.22	112	.35
Total	3.12	500	.66

Source: Computed from primary data.

On examination of Table it is seen that the mean of the socio-economic conditions of members in cluster 1 is 3.45 with a standard deviation of .43 and the mean of the socio-economic conditions of cluster 2 is 2.22 with a standard deviation of .35. This suggests that the members in cluster enjoy a lower socio-economic condition compared to those in cluster 1 who enjoy a higher socio-economic condition. Therefore, it is evident that 388 women workers in textiles enjoy higher socio-economic conditions and 112 members enjoy lower socio-economic conditions.

To study the significant difference existing among the higher socio-economic condition and lower socio-economic conditions across work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, support from supervisor and social support from co-workers.

The researcher intended to study the influence of the socio-economic conditions on all the study variables such as work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, support from supervisor and social support from co-workers.

This hypothesis is examined using the MANOVA. To test the difference between the higher socio-economic conditions and lower socio-economic conditions, this technique is selected over Independent Samples T-Test or ANOVA because the multivariate formula for 'F-static' was based not only on the sum of squares between and within groups as in ANOVA but also on the sum of cross products. That is, it takes covariance into account as well as group means among the dependent measures.

The variables that entered the MANOVA model are socio-economic condition clusters, work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, support from supervisor and social support from co-workers. The socio-economic condition cluster entered the model as a fixed factor and the remaining variables entered as dependent variables.

There are four different test statistics, namely, Pillai's trace, Wilk's Lambda, Hotelling-Lawley's trace and Roy's Greatest Root, each with its own associated F statistics. Pillai's Trace is the most robust of the four tests as it is least sensitive to departures from the assumptions (Olson, 1976; Johnson, & Wichern, 2002) and Hotelling's Trace is the most common and traditional test, where the independent variable is formed of two groups. Wilk's Lambda is the most common and traditional test when there are more than two groups formed by the independent variables and Roy's Largest Root is seldom used. A significance feature of this MANOVA design is that, all the four test statistics give identical F values.

Table shows the results of the MANOVA Statistics. To determine the significance of the omnibus test, taking the composite of all the variables under study, the researcher examined the F - statistics, and the significance value p.

Table 3.Multivariate Analysis of Variance (Manova) Between
Socio Economic Condition Clusters and the Study Variables

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Socio-economic conditions	Pillai's Trace	.519	43.849	12.000	487.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.481	43.849	12.000	487.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	1.080	43.849	12.000	487.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	1.080	43.849	12.000	487.000	.000

Source: Computed from primary data.

- Exact statistics
- Design: Intercept + SOCIOCLU

It is found that *F*-statistics is significant at *p* = 0.01. This means, there is a significant difference between the higher socio-economic and lower socio-economic conditions, Hotelling's Trace = 1.080, *F* (12,487) = 43.849, *p* = 0.000 (< 0.05).

Since the results of the MANOVA are significant, the 'Tests of Between Subjects Effects' (univariate results) are examined to determine whether the independent variables are significant for each of the study variables. Table shows the results of the tests of between subject effects.

Table 4.The Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for the Study Variables

Source	Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Socio-Economic Conditions	Work life balance	99.245	1	99.245	511.296	.000
	Work personal life balance	29.605	1	29.605	58.581	.000
	Personal life to work conflict	22.521	1	22.521	36.561	.000
	Work to personal life facilitation	24.550	1	24.550	30.142	.000
	Personal life to work facilitation	17.890	1	17.890	24.259	.000
	Culture of the organization	50.391	1	50.391	110.440	.000
	Job satisfaction	27.895	1	27.895	67.313	.000
	Life Satisfaction	49.589	1	49.589	56.734	.000
	Family satisfaction	55.174	1	55.174	100.361	.000
	Career satisfaction	52.311	1	52.311	86.140	.000
	Supervisor support	68.532	1	68.532	130.338	.000
	Social support from co-workers	89.670	1	89.670	165.611	.000

Source: Computed from primary data.

On examination of Table 5.6, it is found that there is significant difference for work life balance (*F* = 511.29, *p* =0.000), work personal life balance, (*F* = 58.581, *p* = 0.000), and personal life to work conflict (*F* = 36.561, *p* = 0.000). work to personal life facilitation (*F* = 30.142, *p* = 0.000), personal life to work facilitation (*F* = 24.259, *p* = 0.000), culture of the organization (F = 67.313; p = 0.000), life satisfaction (F = 56.734; p = 0.00), family satisfaction (F = 100.361; p = 0.000), career satisfaction (F = 86.14; p = 0.00), supervisor support (F = 130.338; p = 0.00) and social support from co-workers (F = 165.611; p = 0.00) are significant. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for all the study variables and alternative hypothesis is accepted for the study variables such as socio-economic conditions, work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, support

from supervisor and social support from co-workers.

As the independent variable has only two groups, multiple comparisons using Post-Hoc are not conducted. Further, on examination of the univariate descriptive results, shown in Table it has been found that the lower socio-economic condition cluster reported less work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, support from supervisor and social support from co-workers than the higher socio-economic condition clusters.

FINDINGS

On application of K-means cluster analysis with a predetermined 2 cluster model on the socio-economic condition, the researcher found that 388 textile workers fell in cluster 1 and 112 in cluster 2. It was found that the women workers in textiles in cluster 1 have a homogenous socio-economic condition and those in cluster 2 have homogenous socio-economic condition within the clusters.

The women workers in cluster 1 make up 77.6% of the total and cluster 2 make up 22.4% of the total women workers in textiles. The textile women in cluster 1 enjoy a higher socio-economic condition and those in cluster 2 a lower socio-economic condition. It implies that the women workers textile in cluster 1 have better opportunities to avail loans, fulfill basic needs, buy goods on credit, improve standard of living, spend independently, earn respect from family members and relatives, get chance to mingle with other, have chance to spend time useful ways, have opportunities to take part in the affairs of the organization, gain opportunities for improving personal skills and have opportunities for attaining their ambition.

On examination of the descriptive statistics, the researcher found that there is a moderate level of work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, supervisor support, social support from co-workers and socio-economic conditions. This is indicated by the mean values centred between 3 and 4.

The socio-economic condition has significant main effect across work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, supervisor support and social support from co-workers. The subsequent examination of the results in that work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, supervisor support and social support from co-workers are statistically significant with women workers textile in cluster 1 reporting more work life balance, work personal life balance, personal life to work conflict, work to personal life facilitation, personal life to work facilitation, culture of the organization, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, family satisfaction, career satisfaction, supervisor support and social support from co-workers than the workers in cluster 2.

SUGGESTIONS

The findings clearly reveal the socio economic status of women workers influencing work life balance, so lower socio economic cluster women workers improve their work life balance from the followings:

- Work life balance planning
- Co-Worker support
- Managerial Support
- Developing WLB Information system

CONCLUSION

In the present study, it was attempted to understand the opinion of the women workers on the work life balance measured in terms of various factors and the opinion on the work culture, and the factor that determines their work life balance and its impact on socio-economic conditions considerably.

The major purpose of this investigation is to capture the prevalence of work life balance among women working in textile spinning mills in Coimbatore district. The analysis of the study shows that socio-economic condition has significant effect across work life balance.

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