



An Empirical Study of Married Women Entrepreneurs' Work-Life Balance

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Abstract

*Large numbers of women are coming up as entrepreneurs today. Enterprises run by women are giving enough support to the society. Women have lot of roles to play in the family and business, as a result the maintaining a good work life balance has always been a challenge for women entrepreneurs. The present paper is empirical in nature and an effort has been made to discuss the work life balance with the help primary survey of **50 women** entrepreneurs working in **Delhi –NCR**.*

The results show that, the biggest challenge before a woman entrepreneur is the stress and demand of more time from the complex business environment. Time demanded from husband and kids is also a challenge for women entrepreneurs. This has also been found that husbands play the most important role in managing the work-life balance for women entrepreneurs.

Introduction of the Study:

Women Entrepreneurship:

In India, women entrepreneurship is a recent topic which started only after the 1970s with the introduction of the Women's Decade (1975 to 1985) and which mostly picked up in the late 70s. This phenomenon was particularly visible only in the metropolitan and state capitals in India. The reasons for the choice of business are in the order of high demand for product, processing skills, ready market, future prospects and creativity. The reasons for women to become entrepreneurs were to keep busy, to earn money on their own, to pursue hobby as an earning activity, by accident and circumstances beyond control (**Singh, Sehgal, Tinani and Sengupta, 1986**). The most prominent question asked from a women entrepreneur is Why they start their own business? **Lathwal, Shruti (2011)** found that Women entrepreneurs enter business predominantly to keep busy. Although their initial motivation is low, they tend to become high achievers once they get really involved. It was found that while a majority of women came from a family business as a core background and they were mostly married to business families. The business environment seems to have prepared them mentally, thereby facilitating their entry into business. Help and guidance was also available within the family in case of any business problems. Regarding seeking male help, while initially it was taken, at present a majority feels that they can manage entirely on their own. Contrary to general belief, the choice of products by women has not

been necessarily "feminine". At the same time, a majority has entered into the complicated and difficult field of manufacturing and related business. Thus women are not security oriented they are ready to take on challenging tasks. The operational problems faced by the women are in the areas of dealing directly with worker; and also pertain to difficulties in doing field work. The popular belief has it that women entrepreneurs suffer from role conflict and this exerts a lot of mental tension on her. The survey clearly indicates that this is not true. 65% of women reported as having no conflict. Whatever conflict ever rose was resolved positively by working on priorities and accepting the situation. It was disconcerting to note that despite special incentives available to women entrepreneurs, not even one respondent had availed of it. It was found that some women spent from their own sources without taking any financial help from Government agencies. Majority of women entered business without any relevant training. The survey indicates direct correlation of knowledge about special schemes, etc. with training. It is heartening to note that women do not face problems by virtue of they being women. Some of them feel that it is advantageous for them. It is been proved beyond doubt that women entrepreneurs do enjoy respect in the society.

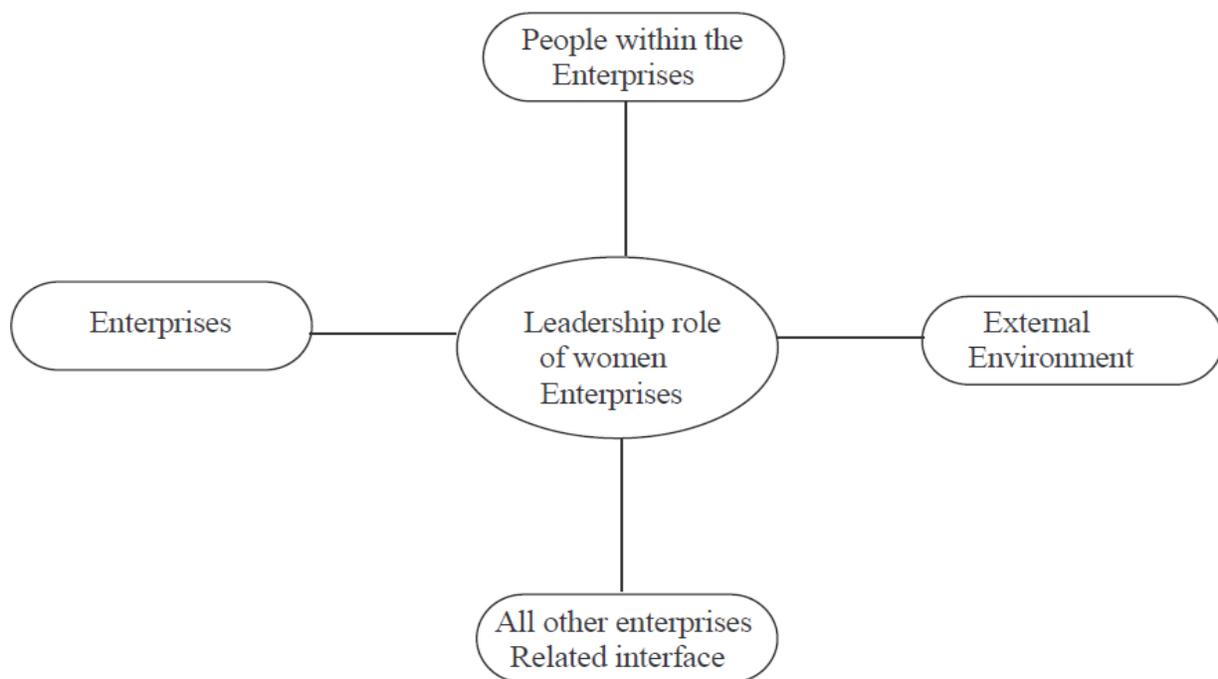
Types of Women Entrepreneurs:

Women entrepreneurs can be categorized in three groups. The first group consists of women who are educated and professionally qualified. They take initiative and manage business as men do. Women entrepreneurs with basic managerial training and educational qualification usually head medium and large units. As per a study 45% women were found to be graduates, 25% postgraduates and 7% professionally qualified. The second group consists of women who may not educational or formal training in management but have developed practical skills required for small scale or tiny enterprises. They choose the products they are familiar with e.g., handicrafts, garments, retail, beauty saloons etc. Some may be in the business of biotechnology, furniture, printing etc. In their initial periods these women entrepreneurs even need certain special privileges to overcome the practical handicaps they face. The third group of women entrepreneurs works in cities and slums to help women with lower means of livelihood. There is a service-motivated organization to assist economically backward section of society. Such entrepreneurs like "Lizzat Papad" and "Sasa Detergents" need government support in marketing and getting finance at concessional terms. **Tambunan (2009)** divided women entrepreneurs into three categories of chance, forced and created and these categories are based upon the fact that how they started their businesses. He argues that women, who do not have any clear objective or goal

in their mind at the time of initiating business, fall in the chance category as with time their businesses evolve from their hobbies. While forced entrepreneurship is the category for such women who start their businesses being constrained by circumstances. Whereas the women who start their businesses by being motivated or encouraged by others, fall in the category of created entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneur are further divided into three categories based on the areas of their engagement , the micro sphere, where female’s economic empowerment is affected by intra -familial associations. The second sphere is institutional also called meso-sphere; it includes organizations other than family ones, for example schools, NGOs and other businesses. The last sphere is macro, this is the environment in which one lives and carry on one’s work, it includes international and national dynamics, regulatory authorities, credit availability, sources of finance and other factors of internal and external environments (Jones, 2004).

Kollan and Parikh (2005) presented the following universe of women enterprises:



Where,

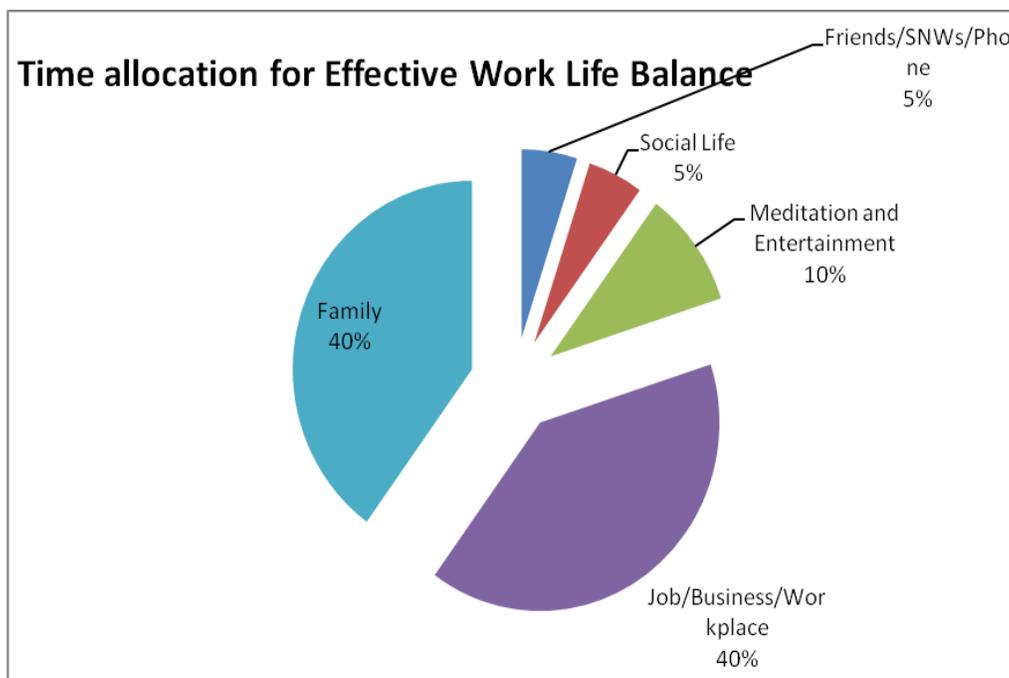
- An enterprise may be of small, medium, large, mammoth or giant.
- Largely, the employees are men.
- The external environment also consists of interfaces with global and macro changes.
- The enterprise related interfaces with individual and business systems are also with men

Work Life Balance:

Work–life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between work (career and ambition) and lifestyle (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation). Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle calm balance" and "lifestyle choices."

Literature Review:

A question usually arises that how much time we should spend on different activities. **Mittal, Arun (2013)** has given the following time allocation for effective time management.



Pozin (2013) has given 8 ways to maintain a good work life balance namely Critique yourself, Knockout big tasks first, create a schedule, Avoid interruptions, Turn off autopilot, Learn the power of saying “no”, Perspective, Know when you’re done

Surti and Sarupriya (1983) investigated 40 women entrepreneurs with minimum two years experience and found that unmarried women entrepreneurs experienced **less stress and self-role distance** than married women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs from joint families experienced less stress, probably because they share their problems with other family members. External focus of control was

significantly related to the stress role and fear of success was related to result- inadequacy and role-inadequacy dimensions of stress. While many entrepreneurs used intrapersistent coping styles, such as taking action to solve problems, avoidance was more common than approach – oriented styles of coping.

In contrast, a study by **CIBC (2004)** revealed that women entrepreneurs in such developed countries as Canada are able to better balance their family life with work than those employed by someone else.

Mjadu, Gugu (2013) has given some of the tips to women entrepreneurs to maintain a better work life balance. She has recommended a proper time for start-up of the business, Appoint the right people and plan at work and home properly. In her opinion It is important to not only plan for meetings at the office, but to also plan activities at home thereby ensuring a balance between the two environments.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the various motives of starting business by women entrepreneurs
2. To find out the different challenges in maintaining a good work life balance
3. To find out who helps a woman entrepreneur the maximum in handling the work life balance

Research Methodology

The present research is descriptive in nature where a survey method has been used to collect the primary data. A structure questionnaire has been used for the purpose with a 5 point likert scale. The sampling method was judgment, where only those women entrepreneurs were selected with minimum five years of experience and are married.

Data Analysis and Interpretations:

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Age	No. of Respondents
Below 30	15
30-45	22
Above 45	13
Total	50
Income	
Below 1,00,000 pm	22
1,00,000 – 5,00,000	18
Above 5,00,000	10
Total	50
Nature of Business	
Manufacturing	4

Retail	33
Service	7
Others	6
Total	
Education	
10+2 or Below	00
12 th – Graduation	5
Graduation	31
Post Graduation	14
Total	50

As stated in table one most of the women entrepreneurs are between the age of 35-45. Maximum number of women entrepreneurs belong to the income group of below 1,00,000 and 1,00,000 to 5,00,000. Retail business (33) is the most preferred business for women entrepreneurs, as very few are found in manufacturing. Manufacturing also is most of the times concerned with garments, home décor and gift items. Services and others count for 13 entrepreneurs out of 50.

Table 2 Motives of Starting Business

Personal	Mean value (out of 5)
Making oneself busy/Using extra time	3.08
Earning money for self	3.19
Earning Money for Family	4.22
Enhancement in Social Status/ Achievement Motivation	3.68
Pressure from Family members viz. Husband etc.	2.55
Peer Pressure (friends, kitty, social etc.)	2.13

Women entrepreneurs start business to earn money for their family (mean value 4.22) followed Social status and Achievement (3.68). However using extra time or making oneself busy gets a good score but not too convincing (3.08).

Table 2 Challenges in maintaining a good work life balance

Personal	Mean value (out of 5)
Complex business environment needs more time	4.13
Complex business environment gives more stress	4.12
Household duties	4.10
Demand of time from Husband	3.71
Demand of time from Kids (study etc)	3.97
Demand of time from other family members	3.41
Time required for Social life	3.12
Relatives and friends expectations	2.92
Occasions festivals etc.	4.02

Table 2 presents Challenges in maintaining a good work life balance. The biggest challenges are Complex business environment which needs more time (mean value 4.13), Complex business environment gives more stress (4.12) and Household duties (4.10) followed by Occasions and festivals (4.02), as a woman becomes busier during the occasions and festivals. Demand of time from kids and husband has also got a significant means 3.97 and 3.71 respectively. However it seems that a women entrepreneur gives less time to the social life (3.12) and relatives (2.92).

Table 3 Helper of a woman entrepreneur the maximum in handling the work life balance

Personal	Mean value (out of 5)
Husband	4.59
Kids / Grown up Kids	3.56
Other family Members	4.07
Office Staff	4.11
Other Stakeholders	3.20
Specific Mentor	2.22

Table 3 shows the helpers of a woman entrepreneur the maximum in handling the work life balance. Husbands (4.59) are the first to help women in managing their work-life balance, followed by office staff (4.11) and Other family member (4.07). Kids help to some extent (3.56).

Recommendations and Conclusion:

The present study shows that the biggest challenge before a woman entrepreneur is the stress and demand of more time from the complex business environment. Time demanded from husband and kids is also a challenge for women entrepreneurs. This has also been found that husbands play the most important role in managing the work-life balance for women entrepreneurs. The following recommendations can be made:

- Women entrepreneurs must give Work Life Balance (WLB) the utmost priority whenever they think of starting their business.
- Women must think proactively on the matters of WLB rather than reactively.
- Women should use all the stakeholders and helpers in an efficient manner to help her without cutting the share of their happiness/ work/ time by using an effective time management.
- Jeff Davidson's six components of WLB must be followed for a great WLB viz. Self Management, Time management, Stress Management, Change Management, Technology Management and Leisure Management.

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