Abstract

Dual career couples appear to be an increasing part of the work force. The role of working women has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. This has resulted in a scenario in which working women have tremendous pressure to develop a career as robust as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in personal life. The ever-increasing work pressure is taking a toll on the working couple leaving them with less time for themselves. The increasing responsibilities on the personal front with the technological blessings like advanced mobile phones, notepads, etc. that keeps work life integrated with personal life also creates stress on personal and professional fronts in this knowledge age. This affects the person’s physical, emotional and social well-being. Thus, achieving work life balance is a necessity for dual career couple to have a good quality of life. This paper is an attempt to explore the tough challenges faced by dual career couple in maintaining a balance between their personal and professional life. The various factors affecting the work-life balance of dual career couple have been examined in this study.

Key Words: Dual career, work force, economic conditions and social demands

Introduction:

Dual career couples are families in which both heads of households pursue careers and at the same time maintain a family life together both have high degree of commitment to their career.
Rapoport and Rapoport define dual-career couples as individuals who, rather than being simply employed, have "jobs which require a high degree of commitment and which have a continuous developmental character.” Johnson, Kaplan, and Tusel discuss other characteristics that are implied in this lifestyle, including high levels of career responsibility, economic rewards, social prestige, and personal investment of time and energy on the part of both partners. The number of couples currently pursuing this lifestyle is difficult to determine since career involvement is a more important determinant than income. What's relatively certain, however, is that the number of couples is increasing and will continue to do so in the decade ahead. The fact that married women are going to work and working more consistently than ever before is undeniable. Extension professionals have an opportunity to help individuals meet the challenges and cope with the stress so that they can enjoy the positive aspects of the dual-career lifestyle.

Advantages:

- Happier spouses
- More equality
- Extra income

Disadvantages:

- Household responsibilities or allocation
- Reduction of job mobility for spouse
- Work family conflict
- Increased stress
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

To study the importance or need of dual career couple and try to find the solution of the problems they are facing

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Finding a suitable balance between work and daily living is a challenge that all workers face. Families are particularly affected. The ability to successfully combine work, family commitments and personal life is important for the well-being of all members in a household. Governments can help to address the issue by encouraging supportive and flexible working practices, making it easier for parents to strike a better balance between work and home life. Irrespective of gender or country, people like to have work flexibility. It allows them to be more flexible with their schedules and achieve a positive work-life balance. With technology, it has also become easier to have flexible schedules and still fulfill job commitments.

The question that might come up is how, as an employer, you monitor and have visibility of the work. Well, again, technology can play a vital role here. If every employee’s work is tracked online and transparency is maintained across all team members about the work being planned and done, it can help in working as a team without being constrained to working from the same premises or working at the same time. It is about empowering employees to take charge as well as full responsibility of their work and thereby fostering team spirit. Yes, there is work that needs close collaboration and working from the same office location, but that generally tends to ebb and flow. Best examples of work life balance in Indian context are: Indira Nooyi and Chanda Kochhar who are maintaining a good work life balance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present study includes exploratory research on the concerned areas relating to dual career couple and the work life balance which is constantly being maintained by them. I have tried to use the
latest concepts in management to highlight the situation in context of such problem and tried to suggest some of them for correcting the situation.

DATA COLLECTION
Study was done mainly using secondary sources such as newspapers, magazines and online sources such as websites and blogs.

FACTORS AFFECTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

• **Family Duties:** In today’s modern era, even after working in the corporate world and after taking up challenging roles of executives/directors/marketing professional/IT professionals, etc.; the age old image of a woman of being a home-maker is not much changed. Even if she works, comes home tired/has to leave early for office; she is expected to cook food, take care of kids and all other household duties and the male counterparts may volunteer but they hold no responsibilities.

• **Juggling Between Work, Home, Relationships and Personal Life:** Amid all the dilemma and stretch of balancing the job responsibilities, following her passion, going ahead with her aspirations and looking after her family-kids-husband; a woman handles and balances a big lot of stress, which deprives her of peace, rest, sleep, independent though and luxury to be herself.

• **Ego of Male Counterpart:** One of the most tough to handle challenges is to manage and cope with the ego of your male counterpart as wife/partner. Males do support women to go out and work, but somewhere they find it hard to accept the progress and achievement of women whether she is his colleague or life partner.

• **Inequality as in Provision of Opportunities in Terms of Job Responsibilities, Projects and Organizational Advancement:** One of the most unfortunate challenges for women that they are subject to undergo at work despite all their qualifications, skills, talent, hard work and performance; is to be overlooked and low rated in comparison to their male colleagues. This is one reason, why many women have to settle down at less challenging jobs than their capabilities/talent, or get stuck at an irrelevant job/field or get stuck at one point of career with no opportunities for further growth, etc.
• **Low Dignity and No Ownership of Her Own Earning:** Mostly women are not seen as independent earners, who command respect and dignity. Instead is seen as a small back-wheel of a heavy vehicle and thus, her role and contribution is mostly over looked. In most of the families, especially middle class, upper middle class and lower middle class; it’s seen that the income of the woman either goes in the hands of her father or husband, rather than in her hands.

• **Sexual Harassment:** Every single day a woman when steps out, stays out whole day working while travelling, in office, in field, in canteen, in outdoor meetings…; directly/indirectly she is subjected to a lot of sexual abuses and harassment. It’s not always with hands she is hurt, but she is attacked and hurt with eyes, with tongue, with gestures and of course unfortunately physically. A few women wave off, ignore and move on; some disgust them to the very soul, out there is no way out so with tears or suppressed anger they move on; while some root off their dignity and even existence. To some women have to compromise, to some escape routes, while some compel them to revolt or break down. And it’s no less than a part of the working women, directly or indirectly, to a small and ignorant to large scale.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Something many of us believe would make us happier is achieving a work life balance. The imbalance of the two can cause stress and a lack of satisfaction in both areas. When someone has more “work” than “life” he may be viewed as an exceptional employee, but outside of work he runs the risk of being pegged as a workaholic, and his personal life may suffer. On the other hand, when someone allows his personal life to overflow into his work life, it’s often viewed as laziness or a lack of focus and will likely have negative ramifications on his career. So how can a dual career couple can achieve a better work life balance?

*Quality determines quantity*

People tend to spend time according to what they value.
For example, if one’s personal life provides more fulfillment than one’s work, work may suffer as one pursues those aspects of one’s life that bring happiness. By the same token, if someone is passionate about work and the fruits of his labour (a sense of purpose, monetary gain, the approval of co-workers or superiors, climbing the ladder, etc.), you’ll commonly find him pouring himself into his vocation. When a balance of meaning and fulfilment are found in an individual's work and personal life, therefore, he or she is more likely to experience an overall balance or blending of the two. However, fulfilment within a profession is a relatively new concept, and business owners in particular may find the line between work and leisure becomes harder and harder to decipher.

**Better time management leads to better balance**

In all reality, finding and maintaining the spot where work and leisure blend well isn’t an option for everyone. At the same time, technological developments make it all but certain couples become more attached to their work life while at home, and in some cases, their home life while at work.

For example, it’s very common for people to check their work email when not at work and to check their personal email or texts while at work. If someone wants better work life balance, however, one has to dedicate time to one or the other and stick to it.

**Everyone needs a break every now and again**

More now than ever Indians are pouring themselves into their work and not using vacation time. This phenomenon has been covered in countless articles and even poked at in commercials. But the time is there for a reason. Plan it. Use it.

**It’s important to avoid distractions**

If a dual career couple want more work life balance, it’s best to compartmentalize as much as they can. While at work, focus on work. Don’t be distracted by the outside world.

In the same regard, when at home, sometimes it’s best to put their phone, computer, or whatever connections they have, away. Focus on life for a little while, and they might find that when they go back to their work, they’ll be more refreshed and produce a better work product.

**CONCLUSION**

Work-life balance is harder to find in dual career couples because of long working hours, increased work responsibility, excessive overtime hours, non-encouraging work environment and limited work flexibility are some of the commonly cited reasons. The ability to successfully combine work, family commitments and personal life is important for the well-being of couples.
Numerous studies and research state that employees expect a lot from employers to help them manage the increasing work and life demands. Without getting into a prescriptive mode, here is what I think employers can do to help their employees strike a better work-life harmony.

**References:**