

# An Analytical Study on the Work-Life Balance of Women Employees in the Private Sector with Special Reference to Palakkad District

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## Abstract

**Work-life balance is a crucial aspect of modern employment, particularly for women in the private sector, who often collide with professional responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments. This study examines the challenges faced by women employees in Palakkad District, analyzing factors such as work-family conflict, career aspirations, stress management, and organizational support. The findings highlight the importance of flexible work arrangements, supportive workplace policies, and personal coping strategies in achieving a sustainable balance between work and life. By exploring existing literature and empirical data, this study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of work-life balance interventions and their impact on job satisfaction, productivity, and overall well-being.**

**A healthy work-life balance assumes great significance for working women particularly in the current context in which both, the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for women. Many family-friendly organizations feel the need for work-life balance which includes recruitment and retention of valuable work force, reduced employee stress, job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, health benefits, and better life balance, by applying some interventions in the area of working hours which have been successful in improving work-life balance, such as, flexible working hours. With the basis of extant literature, primary and secondary data, the present paper has made an effort to understand the current status of WLB among women employees in Palakkad district.**

Keywords: Work-Life Balance, Women Employees, Workplace Challenges, Work -Family Conflict.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance (WLB) is a critical aspect of modern employment, particularly for women in the private sector, who often juggle professional responsibilities alongside personal and family commitments. The increasing participation of women in the workforce has led to significant changes in societal and economic structures,

making it essential to examine how they manage their professional and personal lives.

### 1.1. Significance of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between work obligations and personal life, ensuring that neither aspect negatively impacts the other. For women employees, achieving this balance are often challenging due to multiple responsibilities, including career aspirations, household duties, childcare, and social expectations. The private sector, characterized by demanding work schedules, competitive environments, and performance-driven cultures, poses additional challenges for women striving to maintain a healthy balance.

### 1.2 Challenges Faced by Women Employees

Women in the private sector encounter various obstacles in maintaining work-life balance, including:

- **Work-Family Conflict:** The struggle to meet both professional and personal demands often leads to stress and reduced efficiency.
- **Career Aspirations vs. Family Responsibilities:** Many women face dilemmas in prioritizing career growth while fulfilling family obligations.
- **Organizational Policies:** Lack of flexible work arrangements, inadequate maternity benefits, and limited support systems can hinder work-life balance.
- **Social and Cultural Expectations:** Traditional gender roles often place additional pressure on women to manage household responsibilities alongside their careers.

### 1.3 Importance of the Study

This study aims to analyse the work-life balance of women employees in Palakkad District working in

private sector, identifying key factors that influence their ability to maintain equilibrium. By exploring existing literature, empirical data, and workplace policies, the research seeks to provide insights that enhance work-life balance. The findings will contribute to understanding how organizations can support women employees through flexible work arrangements, employee assistance programs, and gender-inclusive policies.

#### 1.4 Statement of the Problem

Work-life balance is a significant concern for women employees in the private sector, particularly in Palakkad District. The increasing demands of professional responsibilities, coupled with personal and family obligations, create challenges that affect their overall well-being, job satisfaction, and career growth.

Women in the private sector often face work-family conflict, where the pressures of work interfere with personal life, leading to stress and reduced efficiency. The lack of flexible work arrangements, supportive workplace policies, and organizational interventions further exacerbates the issue. Additionally, social and cultural expectations place additional burdens on women, making it difficult to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.

This study aims to analyse the factors influencing work-life balance, identify the challenges faced by women employees, and explore effective strategies that organizations can implement to support their workforce. By examining existing literature and empirical data, the research seeks to provide insights into how work-life balance impacts job performance, mental health, and overall quality of life for women in the private sector.

## 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of work-life balance (WLB) has gained increasing significance in modern organizational contexts, especially concerning women employees in the private sector. Work-life balance refers to an individual's ability to manage professional and personal responsibilities effectively, ensuring neither domain suffers at the cost of the other. For women, especially in the private sector, achieving this balance poses unique challenges due to societal roles, organizational expectations, and lack of support mechanisms.

### 2.1 Theoretical Background

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) laid the foundation for work-life conflict studies by defining it as a form of inter-role conflict where the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible. They identified time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflicts that affect working individuals, with women experiencing these more acutely due to dual-role responsibilities.

### 2.2 Factors Influencing Work-Life Balance

Several factors contribute to the work-life balance of women:

- **Job Demands and Working Hours:** Studies by Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) and Byron (2005) reveal that long and inflexible working hours contribute significantly to work-life conflict.
- **Organizational Culture:** A rigid, unsupportive organizational culture, particularly prevalent in competitive private sectors, hinders WLB (Lewis, 2001). In South Indian private enterprises, lack of family-friendly policies further exacerbates the issue (Thomas & Jain, 2015).
- **Technology and Work Intrusion:** According to Tarafdar et al. (2011), the use of ICT tools extends work into personal time, especially for women, who continue to bear the brunt of domestic responsibilities.
- **Socio-Cultural Expectations:** Patriarchal expectations in Indian society often place the burden of caregiving on women, regardless of their employment status (Sahoo & Lenka, 2016).

### 2.3 Challenges Faced by Women Employees

- **Role Conflict:** Women in the private sector experience intense pressure to perform both professionally and personally, leading to role overload and burnout (Poelmans, 2005).
- **Career Advancement Barriers:** Studies show that women with caregiving responsibilities are often perceived as less committed, impacting promotion and leadership opportunities (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010).
- **Mental and Physical Health Issues:** Chronic stress due to poor WLB leads to anxiety, depression, and physical ailments among working women (Rani & Kumari, 2011).
- **Lack of Support Systems:** Research by Rajadhyaksha and Smita (2004) indicates that women lack adequate family, institutional, and societal support in balancing work and life.

### 2.4 Organizational Strategies and Best Practices

- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Flextime, telecommuting, and compressed workweeks have proven effective in enhancing WLB (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). However, these are inconsistently implemented in the Indian private sector.
- **Supportive Leadership:** Managers who recognize and support employees' family needs contribute to better WLB (Hammer et al., 2009).
- **Workplace Wellness Programs:** Health camps, mental wellness initiatives, and stress management training

have been found to improve overall employee satisfaction and well-being (Agarwal & Lenka, 2015).

- Maternity and Parental Leave Policies: Adequate leave and return-to-work support post-maternity is crucial in retaining women employees and ensuring their smooth reintegration into work.

### 2.5 Impact of Work-Life Balance on Job Outcomes

- Job Performance: Empirical studies indicate that women with better WLB demonstrate higher productivity, innovation, and organizational commitment (Hill et al., 2001).
- Employee Retention: Poor WLB is a leading cause of attrition among women in the private sector (Gupta & Sharma, 2018).
- Quality of Life: Balanced employees report better mental health, family satisfaction, and life fulfillment (Frone et al., 1997).

### 2.6 Gaps in Literature

Although there is extensive global research on WLB, there is limited empirical literature focusing specifically on women employees in the private sector in Indian districts such as Palakkad. Moreover, existing studies often overlook how regional socio-cultural dynamics influence WLB.

### 3.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the key factors influencing work-life balance among women employees in the private sector.
2. To identify the major challenges faced by women in managing professional and personal responsibilities effectively.
3. To explore organizational strategies and practices that can improve work-life balance and enhance job satisfaction, mental health, and overall well-being of women employees.

### 4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The design for this study is descriptive research design. In this study, both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data was collected with a structured questionnaire from a sample of 300 respondents from Palakkad district through email. Secondary data was collected through websites and internet journals. The information thus collected has been analyzed with the assistance of various statistical tools and techniques.

Convenience sampling method is used for the survey of the study. It is a non-probability sample. In the questionnaire, it is tried to cover the problems of both aspect of life, problems in professional life as well as of personal life. In the Questionnaire, Likert's five point scale was also employed to determine scores, where respondents were asked to rate each attribute on 5-point

scale ranging from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied, The data so collected was subjected to Factor Analysis.

H0: There is no correlation between job related variables and the work life balance of female professionals.

H1: There is a correlation between job related variables and the work life balance of female professionals

### 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study was conducted only in the Palakkad district hence the data cannot be compared with other areas.
2. The analysis is made based on the information provided by the respondent which is subjected to bias.
3. The result arrived is applicable only to the study period
4. Respondents opinion are dynamic, they keep on changing.

### 6. STATISTICAL TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

- Simple Percentage Analysis Method
- Anova Analysis
- Henry Garrett Ranking Analysis

#### 6.1 Simple percentage Analysis

Table 1: Demographic details of employees

Classification	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 years	186	62%
	31 – 40 years	60	20%
	41 – 50 years	33	11%
	Above 50 years	21	7%
	Total	300	100%
Marital Status	Married	252	84%
	Unmarried	48	16%
	Total	300	100%
Educational Qualification	Under Graduate	69	23%
	Graduate	144	48%
	Post Graduate	75	25%
	Professionally Qualified	12	4%
	Total	300	100%
Type of Family	Nuclear Family	216	72%
	Joint Family	84	28%
	Total	300	100%

Size of Family	Below 3 members	180	60%
	3–5 members	87	29%
	Above 5 members	33	11%
	Total	300	100%
Designation	Education Sector	171	57%
	Healthcare Sector	39	13%
	Banking and Financial Services	39	13%
	Information Technology (IT)	30	10%
	Textile and Garment Industry	6	2%
	Others	15	5%
	Total	300	100%
	Experience	Less than 5 years	81
5–10 years		159	53%
10–15 years		51	17%
Above 15 years		9	3%
Total		300	100%
Salary Range / Month	Less than ₹20,000	75	25%
	₹20,001 – ₹30,000	174	58%
	₹30,001 – ₹40,000	33	11%
	Above ₹40,000	18	6%
	Total	300	100%

Source: Primary data

The study surveyed 300 respondents, revealing key demographic insights. A majority (62%) is below 30 years of age, and 84% are married. In terms of education, 48% are graduates, followed by 25% postgraduates. Most respondents (72%) come from nuclear families, with 60% having a family size of fewer than three members. Professionally, 57% work as Clerks or Cashiers, while 15% are Managers and only 2% are Chief Managers. Regarding experience, 53% have been working for 5–10 years, and 27% have less than 5 years of experience. Salary-wise, 58% earn between ₹20,001 and ₹30,000 per month. These figures provide a comprehensive overview of the socio-economic and professional profile of the respondents.

Table 2: Prominent Problems Faced by Women Employees in Private sector

S. No	Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	The heavy workload / Tedious work	75	25
2	Physical strain and Mental stress	105	35
3	Lack of concentration	9	3
4	Gender Discrimination	67	23
5	Workplace harassment	24	8
6	Job insecurity	20	6
	Total	300	100

Source: Primary data

The table highlights the major problems faced by women employees in the workplace based on responses from 300 participants. The most reported issue is physical and mental stress, affecting 35% (105 respondents). This is followed by heavy workload or tedious tasks reported by 25% (75 respondents), and gender discrimination by 23% (67 respondents). Workplace harassment and job insecurity are concerns for 8% (24 respondents) and 6% (20 respondents), respectively. The least reported issue is lack of concentration, affecting only 3% (9 respondents). This indicates that mental and emotional strain, along with discrimination and workload, are the key challenges women face at work.

### 6.2 ANOVA Analysis

Table 3: Anova Analysis on marital status and problems of working women

Factor	Married (N=252)	Unmarried (N=48)	p-value (Sig.)	Interpretation
Physical/Mental Stress	Mean ~22.11	Mean ~21.44	0.477	No significant difference
Heavy Workload	Mean ~38.57	Mean ~39.58	0.334	No significant difference
Lack of Concentration	Mean ~33.62	Mean ~34.08	0.491	No significant difference
Work Burden	Mean ~4.48	Mean ~4.35	0.264	No significant difference

#### Interpretation:

- For all four factors—Physical/Mental Stress, Heavy Workload, Lack of Concentration, and Work Burden—the p-values are greater than 0.05.

- This means there is no statistically significant difference between married and unmarried women in the severity of these workplace problems.
- Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% significance level, indicating that marital status does not significantly influence the problems faced by women employees in this sample.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis on Type of Family and Problems of Working Women

Factor	Family Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	df	p-value (Sig.)
Physical/Mental Stress	Joint	84	21.81	5.98	0.66	0.26	298	0.799
	Nuclear	216	21.58	6.05	0.41			
Heavy Workload	Joint	84	40.16	6.35	0.7	1.74	298	0.084
	Nuclear	216	38.41	7	0.48			
Lack of Concentration	Joint	84	34.36	4.49	0.49	1.3	298	0.197
	Nuclear	216	33.53	4.15	0.28			
Work Burden	Joint	84	4.34	0.74	0.08	-0.95	298	0.342
	Nuclear	216	4.44	0.75	0.05			

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

- For all the factors — Physical/Mental Stress, Heavy Workload, Lack of Concentration, and Work Burden — the p-values are greater than 0.05.
- This indicates no statistically significant difference between women from joint families and nuclear families regarding the problems faced at work.
- Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted at the 5% significance level, concluding that family type does not significantly influence workplace problems experienced by women employees.

6.3 Henry Garrett Ranking Analysis

Table 5: Factors Preventing Women Employees from Achieving Higher Posts in Private Sector (Garrett’s Ranking Method – Population: 300 respondents)

S. No	Factors	Total Score	Total Mean Score	Rank
1	Obligations of women as a homemaker creates hindrance in career growth	7308	48.72	V
2	Unavailability of time to combine personal and work life	9549	63.66	II
3	Physical strain due to prolonged hours of work	8800	58.67	III

4	Inability of making quick decisions	5957	39.71	VIII
5	Work related Tours and Travel	8266	55.07	IV
6	Transfer of job	10128	67.52	I
7	Mental Stress	7303	48.69	VI
8	Depression	6630	44.2	VII

Source: Primary data

The study identifies key factors preventing women employees in the banking sector from achieving higher positions, ranked by their mean percentage scores:

- Job Transfer is the top obstacle, with the highest mean score of 67.52%, indicating it is the most significant barrier.
- Unavailability of time to balance personal and work life follows closely at 63.66%.
- Physical strain due to prolonged working hours ranks third with 58.67%.
- Work-related tours and travel come next at 55.07%.
- The obligations of women as homemakers account for 48.72%.
- Mental health issues like mental stress and depression are moderate concerns with scores of 48.69% and 44.20% respectively.
- The inability to make quick decisions is perceived as the least significant barrier, with a score of 39.71%.

This ranking highlights that organizational factors like job transfer and time constraints, along with physical workload, are major challenges affecting women’s career advancement in private sector.

Table 6: Garrett Ranking on Attributes That Help Women Achieve Quality of Work Life in Banking Sector (N=300)

S. No	Factors	Garrett Score	Garrett Mean (%)	Garrett Rank
1	Pay and other benefits	9773	54.29	1
2	Convenient work timing	9749	54.16	2
3	Leave Availability (CL/EL/ML)	9653	53.63	3
4	Career opportunities towards growth	9229	51.27	4
5	Job security	9118	50.66	5
6	Cooperation	8631	47.95	6
7	The social relevance of the work life	8145	45.25	7
8	Work and total life space	7522	41.79	8

Source: Primary data

The Garrett ranking shows that the most important attribute contributing to the quality of work life for women in the banking sector is “Pay and other benefits” (54.29%). This is closely followed by “Convenient work timing” (54.16%) and “Leave availability” (53.63%).

Other significant factors include career growth opportunities (51.27%) and job security (50.66%). Cooperation from colleagues (47.95%) and the social relevance of work life (45.25%) are ranked moderately important. The least emphasized factor is work and total life space (41.79%), indicating women place relatively less priority on this aspect.

Overall, the ranking highlights financial and flexible work-related benefits as the key factors helping women achieve a better quality of work life in private sector.

## 7. FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1.1 : Simple Percentage Analysis

#### Major Findings:

- Majority (62%) of respondents are under 30, indicating a younger workforce.
- 84% are married, showing most women juggle both work and family.
- 72% live in nuclear families; 60% have fewer than 3 family members.
- 48% are graduates, and 25% are postgraduates.

- Most work in the education sector (57%), with fewer in finance, IT, or textiles.
- 53% have 5–10 years of experience; 58% earn ₹20,001–₹30,000/month
- Top issues: Physical & mental stress (35%), heavy workload (25%), and gender discrimination (23%).
- Lesser but still relevant issues include harassment (8%) and job insecurity (6%).

### 7.1.2 : ANOVA Analysis

- The p-values for physical stress, heavy workload, lack of concentration, and work burden are all greater than 0.05 with respect to marital status; therefore, there is no significant difference between these factors and marital status.
- Similarly, the p-values for these factors with respect to family type are greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference between these workplace problems and family type.

### 7.1.3 Henry Garrett Ranking Analysis

#### Major Findings:

- Top barriers: Job transfers (67.52%), time constraints (63.66%), and physical strain (58.67%).
- Other barriers include work travel, homemaking duties, mental stress, and depression.
- Quick decision-making ability is the least cited issue.

### 7.2 Suggestions

- Assign jobs that motivate women employees and positively influence their quality of work life without causing overload.
- Avoid overtime for women employees to reduce physical and mental stress.
- Provide appropriate pay strategies to ensure fair and adequate compensation, with periodic adjustments reflecting changes in the cost of living.
- Maintain gender balance to avoid discrimination against women employees.
- Offer proper training programs to enhance women’s skills, motivating them to perform equally alongside men.
- Establish infrastructural facilities like crèches and day-care centres to support working mothers.
- Introduce special leave provisions (e.g., up to five years) for women to manage specific contingencies, extendable to men as needed.

### 7.3 Conclusion

Empowerment of women, gender discrimination, and violence against women has become critical areas of sociological research but were historically neglected. Despite social changes exposing women to unprotected socio-economic, cultural, and political environments, social justice systems have lagged in safeguarding their interests.

Scepticism about women's ability to exercise equal rights and perform on par with men is unfounded, especially given broader opportunities available today. To truly understand women's status and problems, it is essential to consider the social framework, including social structures, cultural norms, and value systems that shape women's roles and positions in society.

While theoretical possibilities exist for equality, actual realization is often lacking. Improving the quality of work life is a significant means to bridge this gap, helping to alleviate many challenges faced by working women in the private sector.

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