

Work-life Balance through Gender Lens

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Abstract—Economies the world over are in a state of flux wherein all aspects of work and life – economic and technological; social and cultural, are experiencing a change though in varying intensity. The era of globalization has escalated competitive pressure across organizations and has led to transformation in the work domain and the social domain, thereby adding complexities and dimensions to the work-life situation. While organizations and individuals were striving to cope with the prevalent state of affairs, the permeable world environment has led to the cascading effect in the form of economic slowdown, which has further intensified the work-life concern. In order to overcome the incompatibility between work and life, Work-life Balance (WLB) is an area in HRM which is receiving increasing attention from governments, researchers, management and employee representatives and popular media.

An analysis of the WLB literature reveals that ample is researched and written about the interface between work and life. The work-life dilemmas are sought to be resolved by adoption of a number of WLB strategies like telecommuting, part-time working, self employment etc. Adoption of these strategies is advocated by researchers and practitioners as they have proved to generate positive outcomes. The concept of WLB though advocated by many has received equal opposition and criticism from few academicians and practitioners who raised concerns about it not being holistic and enveloping within its scope restricted issues. The present paper views the concept of WLB through the 'gender lens'. The detailed review of WLB literature has revealed that a number studies and strategies of WLB are women-centric and there is a great deal of attention on gender focused WLB concerns. The paper highlights the gender presuppositions present in the WLB literature and attempts to seek answers to this pertinent issue