

“A Comparative Study on Work-Life Balance of Nursing Staff Working in Private and Government Hospitals”

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Abstract: At present every successful employee has to pass through the dilemma of work life balance in personal and professional life. For the sake of leading a successful life, people do not hesitate to give extra time for achieving the objectives of life. In the process of getting extra mileage in their professional life they have to make a lot of compromise and sometimes mental piece also gets distorted. We have 24 hours at our disposal to deal with and it is up to us how to schedule and plan the same. It is rightly pointed out by experts, if our life span is 60 years (assumed to be) and if we sleep for 8 hours per day, than 20 years of our life span we used for sleeping only. So planning of our own time is important. At the end of the day priority matters a lot. In addition, relationships suffer and the person begins to experience loneliness and depression. The psychotherapist believes that mid-career professionals are most prone to having work-life imbalances. In the present paper it is an attempt by authors to present a comparative study on work-life balance dilemmas faced by nurses working in private and government hospitals. In the present research, initially 14 variables were identified. However after making a pilot study and conducting core group discussions with various HR experts at district level and state level, the variables were reduced to 10 only. The opinion of the Policy makers of various government and private hospital, senior professor from academics and senior professor of various hospitals was also considered for the finalization of variables. This study is based on primary sources of data and to some extent secondary sources. Various authentic journals, books and literature on the subject, newspapers, magazines, reports and studies were referred for the conceptual frame work of the study. The data was collected by distribution of close to 600 questionnaires across the various government hospitals and private hospitals of Odisha, India and of these 337 responses received in all. The percentage of response was in overall was 56.17% and from government hospitals it was 52.92% and from the private managed hospitals the response was 58.33%. To know the perception level percentage method included in the questionnaire with close end options. Questions have covered demographic factors like age group, designation, years of working, family size etc. The analysis is carried out on the basis of socio economic profile and general perception towards the personal and professional life.

Key words- Work-life balance, Nurses, Married, Unmarried & Perception

I. OVERVIEW

The working pattern and work place environment after the industrial revolution have brought about a change to the concept of work life balance. Nuclear families are a common phenomenon now changing the profile of home, where

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previously the earning member's spouse used to take care of. More scope for job has increased the rate of working couple. In the backdrop of working scenario and with a view to retain the workforce, the employer has started to understand the employee needs which will lead to work life balance. This will help to reduce the employee turnover. They organizations started implementing various lucrative schemes to reduce the turnover and increase the efficiency and productivity of the employee. Now female employees are compelled to work in a full time job and at the same time the obligations and expectations of professional life and family life are also taken care. Most of the female employee works more than 50 hours per week and equally face challenges in balancing work and personal life. Female are having multiple obligations at home and work place. The professional work life balance is remaining a challenge for them to prove themselves. A happy employee can help in increasing productivity and efficiency, so employers can have specific schemes that will attract the women to join the workforce. The working women can quit the job simply to take care of growing children, spend some time with the family and taking care of aging parents.

II. NURSING

The word nursing comes from same root word 'nutritious' means to nourish, to cherish, to protect, to support, to sustain, etc. It also means to train, to educate, to supply with the essentials of growth. Our work today as a nurse is a continuation of the work done by our parents, since the beginning of the time. Nursing in its simpler form existed from the beginning of human life and is essential to the maintenance of life. The first mother was the first nurse. From the time of the first mother down to the present day, we have found women protecting their children, and taking care of the elderly and sick members of the family. They also rendered their services to the neighbors during illness, Simple procedures for the sick were adopted, e.g., application of cold water over the forehead to reduce fever, application of pressure over a bleeding injury. Individuals who possessed special gifts and attitudes for caring and healing gradually collected a lot of healing knowledge through trial and error, and passed on from generation to generation. In ancient times, care and healing was considered to be the special responsibility of the priesthood or other religious groups. In the middle age, care of the sick was mainly the responsibility of military and religious orders.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To know the general perception of the nurses towards their personal and professional life.
- ✓ To know the source of support and factors that hinders the work-life balance of the nursing staff.
- ✓ To provide suggestions to overcome work-life balance related to problems of nursing staff working in private and government hospitals.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ✓ The study will be limited to selected government and private hospitals of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, Berhampur and Sambalpur of Odisha, India only
- ✓ The sample size will be limited; it may not give the exact picture.
- ✓ The period of study will be limited to six months i.e June 2013 to November 2013.

V. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study is based on primary sources of data and to some extent secondary sources. Various authentic journals, books and literature on the subject, newspapers, magazines, reports and studies were referred for the conceptual frame work of the study. The data was collected by distribution of close to 600 questionnaires across the various government hospitals and private hospitals of Odisha and of these 337 responses received in all. The percentage of response was in overall was 56.17% and from government hospitals it was 52.92% and from the private managed hospitals the response was 58.33%. To know about the levels of job satisfaction and work stress levels, percentage method used and questions were asked with close end. Questions covered demographic factors like age group, designation, years of working, family size etc. The analysis is carried out on the basis of Socio economic profile and general perception towards the personal and professional life. For the analysis purpose the data is divided in to the following categories:

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- ✓ Unmarried Nurses
- ✓ Married Nurses in the age group of 20-40
- ✓ Married Nurses in the age group of above 40.

Socio-economic variables are- on the basis of the age group, on the basis of compensation, on the basis of experience, on the basis of education, on the basis of family size and on the basis of travelling time.

General perception towards the personal and professional life variables are - Able to balance work and personal obligations of life, time spent at work places, Worry about work when not in work place, feel reluctant or tired mentally due to office work pressure, family support for the work and time spent with the family, able to get time to attend social functions, get maternity leave/paternity leave, Motivation from immediate supervisor, flexibility of time and recognition and reward for better performance

VI. BASIS OF SELECTING VARIABLES

In the present research, initially 14 variables were identified. However after making a pilot study and conducting core group discussions with various HR experts at district level and state level, the variables were reduced to 10 only. The opinion of the policy makers of various government and private hospital, senior professor from academics and senior professor of various hospitals were also considered for the finalization of variables.

VII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- Majority of the respondents irrespective of the category feel that they are never able to balance work and personal obligation. Except in case of unmarried nurses working in Government hospitals and for the rest populations response almost same. To support this perceptions are for other various category employees i.e UNWPH, MNWPH (20-40), MNWGH (20-40), MNWPH>40 and MNWGH>40 are 43.1%, 49.3%, 48.6%, 52% and 59.6%. This shows that the nursing staff are not able to manage their work life balance and personal obligations properly this may be because of the nature of job and other work related issues. From the above trends it seems that married working women in Government hospitals having more problem in handling the work balance and personal obligation and unmarried nurses working in government hospitals have less stress on this regard. Interestingly both are from Government hospitals but the marital status is different. This is quite natural that married nurses working in hospitals having more responsibilities and obligations towards own family than those of unmarried one.
- It seems that majority of the respondents nursing staff time spent at work places are in the timing slot of 6-8 hours except in case of UNWGH and UNWPH. To support this it is found that in case of MNWPH (20-40), MNWGH (20-40), MNWPH >40 and MNWGH>40 the percentage of respondents work 6-8 hours are 53.4%, 41%, 56% and 65%. However, in case of UNWGH and UNWPH 31.3% and 41.2% of the respondents spent their time at work place are 10-12 hours. This may due to the fact the these unmarried nurses in both the categories of hospitals having less family obligation and may be due to their dedication towards the profession for which they have chosen the same for the service of the mankind.
- With reference to answering to the question worry about work when not in the work place, 55.7% of the MNWGH>40 feel that highly worry, followed by 54.8% in case of MNWPH (20-40), 48% by the MNWPH >40, 40% by the UNWGH and 37.3% by the UNWPH. This shows that majority are worried about the work when not in work place. This is a serious issue.
- Answering to question related to feel reluctant or tired mentally due to office work pressure, it is found that majority of various employees category frequently feel reluctant except in case of UNWGH. This seems that

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UNWGH are in a better position in this regard. In this direction MNWGH>40 age group leads the table with 63.5%, 56% in case of MNWPH>40, 53.5% in case of MNWPH (30-40), 41.3% for the UNWPH and followed by 34.9% for the MNWGH (20-40) age group. This mentally tired will definitely reduce the productivity of the working nurses. This is especially in nursing profession may lead to negative effect on the treatment of the patients in general.

- Answering to the question family support for the work and time spent with family, majority of the various group of nurses feel that they never get family support from the family. This is clear from the fact that 71.2% of MNWGH>40 never get support, 64% in case of MNWPH>40, 49.4% in case of MNWPH (20-40) age group, 47.2% in case of UNWPH, 40% in case of UNWGH and 39.4% in case of MNWGH (20-40) age group. Family support is important factor for the morale of the employee. If the support is not extended by the family members the nursing staff will be always in disturbance and ultimately decrease the efficiency of the staff. The effected nursing cannot justify their job and will ultimately lead to negative effect on the organization and to the profession. Family support is important for all the individuals for the better performance. The happy employee will be more productive and for this purpose family support is must.
- Responding to the question able to get time to attend social functions, majority of the respondents irrespective of employees category, are not able to get time to attend social functions. To support this statement, it is found that in case of MNWGH>40 age group the 71.2% never able to get time to attend social functions, 76% of the respondents in case of MNWPH>40, 47.1% in case of MNWGH (20-40), 67.1% in case of MNWPH (20-40), 47.2% in case of UNWPH and 46.6% in case of UNWGH> . This shows that in the work life balances of nurses irrespective of group of employees' considered for the study, it is found that are not able to manage to social functions. Being a member of a society it is expected from the other members of the society that these nurses should also attend the social functions. However, it should be noted that in the interaction during the study it is found that all the majority of participants want to attend the social functions and they honestly do not want to get cut from the society. It is the time constraints towards the profession and family obligation these people are bound to distance from the social functions. Of course the alternative solutions should be found to sort out these issues.
- Answering to the question, maternity /paternity leave, majority of respondents completely feel that they get the maternity leave. In support to the view, in case of MNWPH (20-40) age group 80.9% completely get the leave, 51.5% of MNWGH completely get the leave, in case of MNWPH>40 the same percentage of perception is 78% and for MNWGH>40 it is 75%. It seems that the maternity leave is completely availed by the married nurses. However, the percentage is lower in case of MNWGH (20-40). This is quite surprising to note that in case of married nurses working in Government hospitals perception is low, in fact in Government hospitals; they have their own leave rules in this direction. At the same time the MNWGH >40 age group perception is quite contrast to the MNWGH (20-40) age group. This seems something wrong at hospital level for granting maternity leave to this MNWGH (20-40). In fact this group is expected to take maternity leave than the MNWGH >40. The inconsistency is needed to be taken care by these Government hospitals.
- Answering to the question related to motivation from immediate supervisor, it is found that except UNWGH the rest groups feel that never motivation extended by the immediate supervisors. This is clear from the perception offered in the research study. Inc case of UNEPH 45.2% feel never got the motivation from immediate supervisor, MNWPH (20-40) 53.6% feel never got satisfaction. Similarly, for MNWGH (20-40) age group 39.5% feel never motivated, for MNWPH >40, 54% feel never motivated and 61.5% of MNWGH>40 feel that never got any motivation from the immediate supervisors. The perception in case of UNWGH is mixed one. Motivation is an important tool for increasing the efficiency of the staff. The motivated staff always is an asset to the organization, so every care should be taken to motivate the employees who are performing for the organization. At all cost the concept of de-motivation should be kept aside from the employees. It is the responsibility of the hospital authorities to motivate the staff and extract the best out of them.

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- Answering to the question related to the flexibility of time majority of the respondents feel that they never get the opportunity for flexibility of time. This is clear that 55.8% of MNWGH>40 never got the flexibility of time, 48% of MNWPH>40 never got flexibility, in case of MNWGH (20-40) age group the percentage for the same is 33.4%, for MNWPH (20-40) it is 63.1%, 37.8% in case of UNWGH and for UNWPH the same is 37.4%. Flexibility of time is important for nursing staff working in the hospitals. The hospitals authorities should take note out of this. There are certain other obligations which are to be taken care by these people. For example depositing tuition fees of the children, doing banking transactions and other important obligations toward family and old age parents are to be taken care. Every body works for their family at the end of the day if this aspect is neglected then there will be disturbance in family and ultimately lead to de-motivation and this will reduce the efficiency and commitment of working nurses.
- Answering to the question related to recognition and reward for better performance majority of respondents in all the category of nurses feel that their performance and contribution toward the organization never been recognized and rewarded by the hospital authorities. To support the statement, it is found that in case of UNWGH, 40.1% feel that never recognized, 41.3% of UNWPH feel that never recognized , 53.4% in case of MNWPH (20-40), 36.4% in case of MNWGH (20-40), 64% in case of MNWPH >40 age group and for MNWGH>40 it is 63.5%. Recognition and reward for better performance of the staff should be made. This is motivate the staff for better performance and will help the staff to have sense of belongingness towards the organization. This feeling of belongingness of nursing staff will definitely help to grow the hospitals reputation and in the process the opportunity for financially benefits can also be created.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Most of the respondents feel that they are not able to balance work and personal obligations. In this direction there is a need for creating conducive atmosphere by the hospital authorities in such a way that this problem can be solved. It is also important that these nursing staffs also should try to manage to the extent possible. The constraints will be everywhere; however at individual level also they should try to manage the situation. In short there is a need for effort from both ends, so that an amicable solution can be possible.
- ✓ Working hours should not exceed 8 hours in hospitals for each nursing staff. There should be rotation of staff for every 8 hours. Whenever time spent is more than 8 hours in that case the efficiency of the staff will be affected and especially in nursing profession where this staffs dealing with patients are expected to give best of services to the extent possible. Long working hour is not in the interest of the profession and patients in general.
- ✓ Try to avoid worrying about work when not at work place. This worry will increase the family tension when the nursing staff at their home.
- ✓ The provision should be created in hospitals for the stress relief. This will definitely reduce the feeling of reluctance or fatigue due to office work pressure.
- ✓ Family support is must. The members of the family should also understand/ realize the pressure of the nursing staff. The family members should extend full support. This will lead to contribute the morale of the staff very high and able to deliver the services efficiently and effectively.
- ✓ Hospital working environment should be a happy place to work. This will lead to nursing staff keep being at work places. This is the responsibility of the hospital authorities to look into the important issue. The nursing staff should be counseled wherever needed and issue concerning to them should be sorted out.
- ✓ Majority are enjoying work which are doing at work places except MNWPH>40 and MNWGH >40. These groups concerns should be addressed immediately. These senior nursing staffs are assets for the hospitals. The experience and expertise of these people should not be ignored at any cost.
- ✓ The nature of job in the nursing profession is such that it is very difficult to get time to attend social functions. However this cannot be ground for excuse. For this purpose hospitals authorities should understand the importance of this and accordingly by making some alternative arrangements, the staff should be allowed to attend the social functions, otherwise these section of the society will be sidelined from the society.

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- ✓ Provision should be made in hospitals for physical exercise by the staff. So that this will keep the nursing staff fit for serving the patients.
- ✓ It is reality that now a days because of work pressure and other family responsibilities it is very difficult to give time for self. However, it is not impossible to manage. Now in this regard the nursing staff should plan their daily routine in such a way that, they can manage sometime for themselves. If possible weekend outings should be planned with family or friends whenever possible.
- ✓ Majority of respondents feel that they get maternity and paternity leaves. However the rest who feel they are being denied the proper leaves in this regard, the concerned hospital authorities should look into the issue seriously and follow the policy guidelines in this regard. It is the legitimate right of the married women to avail these leaves and they should not be denied for this.
- ✓ All the team leaders or supervisors should motivate the subordinates working under them. Motivation by seniors will increase the efficiency and dedication of junior staff. The productivity also will increase. The motivated staffs are assets of the hospitals and de-motivated staff are liability for the hospitals. These liabilities can be converted in to assets through little bit motivated initiatives by the immediate supervisors or hospital authorities.
- ✓ As most of the respondents agree that actual working hours exceed the normal working hours, having flexi timing or staggered timing would enable the nursing staff members to invest time for discharging household responsibilities.
- ✓ Recognition and reward for better service is a . Those staff whose performance exceeds standard prescribed, should be recognized and rewarded accordingly. This will motivate others to perform and contribute for the hospitals. The staff whose contribution is recognized and rewarded will definitely excel in the organization with more and more good performances and influence the others to do better performance for the hospitals.

IX. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The current study puts forward a number of implications that have practical relevance for the management of these hospitals. They need to take care about the burnout issues and motivate to reduce them. The management should try to address the weak links like work timing, monetary benefits, support team, creating tension free working culture, provision gyms for physical fitness, provision for leaves for attending family functions and social functions, proper maternity/paternity benefit to all deserving staff, motivational work workshops, stress relieving workshops, family get-together, flexibility of time and recognition & reward for better performance. These efforts will definitely help to balance the imbalance part of work-life of the working nurses in hospitals.

X. CONCLUDING NOTE

Hospitals though preach different concepts on work life balance; it should at the same time practice it. Failing which they would lose the quality of the staff and their emotional attachment towards the hospitals and commitment towards the work. Hence, the top management of hospitals should aim at restructuring its policies whereby they can create a favorable working environment. Though women have made their way in to nursing profession, they still face some obstacles at their work places and at home. The findings of the study reveal that most of the nursing staff were dissatisfied with WLB. Family related issues and personal problems caused concern for nursing staff. Challenges persist at work places, and it is how nursing staff take these problems that are likely vary. Few issues are unique to female nursing staff and this need to prepare them to cope with these challenges and also hospital authorities can implement family-friendly approaches to encourage nursing staff to balance their work-family challenges. Dissatisfaction among nursing staff can be reduced by improving the quality of work life by providing an attractive system of rewards and recognition of good work and improving the working environment. Work-life balance issues have assumed a lot of importance in recent times due to increasing in single parent families, dual career couples and issues of elder care which create complex situations for the nursing staff. The factors that sustain or impede a healthy work life relationship are multifaceted and likely to differ depending on an individual's life circumstances, values and priorities. Managing both professional and personal life effectively and efficiently has become a major challenge for

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nursing staff employees. Innovative, robust and cost-effective options will prove to be sustainable options in the long run and finally an instrument for competitive advantage. It is also true that these staffs are equally important for the growth of the organization. Their feelings, emotions and expectations cannot be taken for granted. Considering all the compulsions we can learn a lovely lesson from these lines, *“Adjust ourselves in every situation and in any shape but the most important is to always find out our own way to flow.”*

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Code used in data analysis

Serial No.	Category	Code used
1	Unmarried Nurses Working in Government Hospitals	UNWGH
2	Unmarried Nurses Working in Private Hospitals	UNWPH
3	Married Nurses Working in Government Hospitals in the age group of (20-40)	MNWGH – (20-40)
4	Married Nurses Working in Private Hospitals in the age group of (20-40)	MNWPH- (20-40)
5	Married Nurses Working in Private Hospitals in the age group above 40 years	MNWPH > 40
6	Married Nurses Working in Government Hospitals in the age group above 40 years	MNWHG>40

BIOGRAPHY

Ipseeta Satpathy is working as a Professor in OB area in School of Management, KIIT University, India. She has authored three books such as Empowering Award Staff by Revamping Training System in Banks, published by Lap Lambert, Germany, Environment Management and Business Communication & Personality Development published by Excel books, New Delhi. She has also published more than 75 research papers in various referred national and international journals and conference proceedings. She is a Visiting Professor to Lynchburg College, Virginia, USA. She has conducted a number of management development programmes, and is guiding several research scholars for the PhD degree. Two of her scholars have been awarded PhD degree by KIIT University.



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