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## Challenges in Work and Life Domains among Women Teachers: A Case Study from District Aligarh, India

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper is a case study on work-life balance among the government school teachers. It studies deeply about the struggles which a woman undergoes in, as a primary school teacher in state government schools in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. There are lots of challenges teachers faces because of scarce and dilapidated infrastructure facilities and hectic work schedule apart from teaching. It has highlighted in the National Education policy 2019 draft that the government will provide thosenecessary institutional facilities like restroom, safe drinking water, clean and hygienic wash rooms by 2022 end. It means that the government schools are lacking the basic institutional facilities for staff teachers as well as school children. This paper explored the challenges women faces inthe workplace, as they give more importance to the job. They are doing the job because the salary is good enough but the job comes with lot of responsibilities which does not correlate with the duties and responsibilities a teachers had ideally performs. They are burdened with clerical duties. They are considered as additional manpower for various running government schemes like collecting the electoral data, census, and duties in various central, state, and local bodies' elections. On the other hand Uttar Pradesh has the highest drop-out rate of children in primary education. They are also responsible for the presence of teachers have a household to run and look after their families. All these factors are discussed in the paper by using a qualitative research tool.*

**Key Words:** Work-Life Balance, Primary Schools, Education, Teachers

### Introduction

This paper had explored the work-life balance of School teachers in state-funded government schools in Uttar Pradesh, District Aligarh. But there were two aspects came out during the qualitative study, first one is the life of primary school teachers, and the second is about the circumstances of schools and pupils wherein the teachers are engaged. The teaching profession considered as the noblest profession since ancient times and thus has been the focus of the attention of researchers and educational psychologists all the time. But

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due to advanced technology and drastic changes during the past few decades has made the teaching profession more challenging. Despite challenges, achieving a 'balance' between home and work life is increasingly a priority argued by many researchers for some time. The teachers are bound to balance the work and family life despite various challenges at work and personal life.

### **Review of literature**

Researchers define the incompatibility between the domain of work and the domain of family as work-family conflict. Conflict between these domains occurs when participation in one role is more difficult due to participation in the other role. Today, work-family conflict (work interfering with family) is more prevalent than family-work conflict (family interfering with work) though both can occur. However, regardless of the direction of causation, when one domain is discordant with another domain, the result is conflict and increased stress on the individual (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Krishna Reddy and Vranda (2010), (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) discuss the issues of Family and Work Conflict and Work Family Conflict are more likely to exert negative influences in the family domain, resulting in lower life satisfaction and greater internal conflict within the family variables impact the experience of WFC and FWC.

Schwartz (1989) wrote that mothers often struggle when they are balancing the employment and nurturing a child. Felice Schwartz sparked a controversy by openly advocating that women who are mothers also should be considered as special employees. Because of the motherhood responsibilities women need a two tired system in the working sector. He suggested that a career track with less intensive, flexible work schedule employment is more suitable for women. In a nutshell Schwartz put the fact that women cannot conform with the highly gendered work atmosphere. Webster (2002) also favoured that women are unable to extend their work hours. They are always available in attending the meeting during the late nights hours. Also women lag behind in the involvement of workplace politics. So the challenges differ for both men and women in the same organization.

A study by (Miriyala & Chiluka, 2012) on work-life balance among teachers and assistant professors revealed that the teachers are not much exposed to the work-life balance practices. They are burdened with managerial activities apart from teaching assignment like clerical activities (Abel & Sewell, 1999).

This paper discusses about the problem of teachers at their work place and also discusses about the glitches the students faces in government schools. Some problems are common which goes hand in hand with both the teachers and students. Another problem here is the teaching which the teachers are responsible; the teachers are also accountable for various activities which they are burdened by the state authorities. According to (Coates & Thoresen, 1976) the teachers are burdened with long working hours, clerical duties, disciplining the students, control and teaching of students, with lot of academic work. The teacher also manages with minimal resources like scarce funds, lack of infrastructure facilities (Abel & Sewell, 1999).

### **Research Methodology**

This study is a qualitative, exploratory Case Study. The respondents are primary school teachers posted in and around Aligarh district, under Uttar Pradesh state government authority. The teachers interviewed during the study are having a minimum of ten years of teaching experience and are married, having at least one child. The teachers are interviewed thoroughly about their work and life activities. The researcher interviewed the teachers to get

a clear picture of the state education system, especially at the primary level. This paper explored the work-life balance of teachers and analyzed primary school education as well.

A long personal interview was taken along with the demographic questionnaire of the school teachers in age group 30 to 45 years. Sample size involved 5 school teachers who are placed in District Aligarh and nearby distances like Atruali, Lodha etc.

### **Tools and techniques**

A demographic questionnaire is used to collect the basic information of the teachers. Apart from demographics the respondents are asked the open ended questions on the work and life domains by interview. The interview is taken in multiple sittings to record the experiences and responses related to the formal work, organization and personal life.

### **Observation and Findings**

The respondents were found more sensitized about the work environment rather than the personal life. The women felt that it is important to make significant efforts and contribute in the employment sector and it brings for them economic independence, recognition in the society and respect (Gallant, 2006). But except one respondent, all four respondents were found frustrated about the work environment and the infrastructure of the school particularly in rural areas (Abel & Sewell, 1999). It was observed that the problems of teachers at work place are also inter related with the students also. Problems of teachers faced in the municipal schools in UP.

### **Late provision of study material**

The study material is provided late by the authorities. Teachers coerce the students to learn the course to the students in a short time. Teachers are also expected from the *Shiksha Adhikari* (education officer) that all the students should perform well in the exams. The late provision of study material to students also affects the performance and study concentration of students also. They got ample time for making noise and leisure activities which seriously hampers their motivation and increases absenteeism. It is established that there are several factors that contribute the education and learning of children going to school is not enough. Going to school may not be enough for a student to achieve any level of learning like being able to read or do math (Jogani, 2015).

### **New provisions like IT are burdened on teachers without any provision of infrastructure or funds**

A senior teacher complained that any new introduction which is newly introduced in the education draft by the Centre or state education authority it is inarguably imposed on teachers. As per National Education Policy, 'All schools will also be provided with computers and internet connectivity for pedagogical purposes, infrastructure and materials to support differently- able students, safe drinking water on the school premises, functioning toilets with running water, separate for girls and boys, and basic hand washing facilities by 2022 (p 125)' (*National Education Policy*, 2019). The teacher explained that the teachers are instructed by the BSA to inculcate the computer and IT education by playing videos or study material on their android smart phones. It means that the State or Centre is not going to provide the infrastructure like computer, laptop, Power Point as well as internet connection in the school. It is laid down on the teachers to teach students by playing videos on their smart phones. She also further complained "how is it possible that if we play anything on smartphone that all students in class will listen or see the content on small screen of the phone".

### **Lack of infrastructure facility mainly washrooms**

As per the NEP 2009, the school will be provided with safe drinking water on school premises and functioning toilets with running water by the end of 10 years. It means that the schools still don't have safe drinking water facility and toilets. Most teachers during

interview complained that there is no clean washrooms on the school premises for teachers forget about the students. A teacher said “if a girl who is of age 11-12 years ask to go for toilet we grant her leave for the day, because it is not safe to allow girl to go in fields for natural call”. It can be supported that most of the girls drop-out after attaining puberty as the data shows that drop-out rate increases with higher classes. Parents don’t allow their girls to go to school after attaining puberty. It is common among minorities, SC and STs. A report by the International Programs Centre for the U.S. Department of Commerce lists (Velkoff. Victoria, 1998). The chief barriers to women's education in India also include inadequate sanitary facilities, shortage of female teachers. A BBC news report by Kaushik Basu (2004) notes that a study of 188 government-run primary schools found that 59% of the schools had no drinking water and 89% had no toilets.

### **Lack of proper class rooms, furniture and electricity**

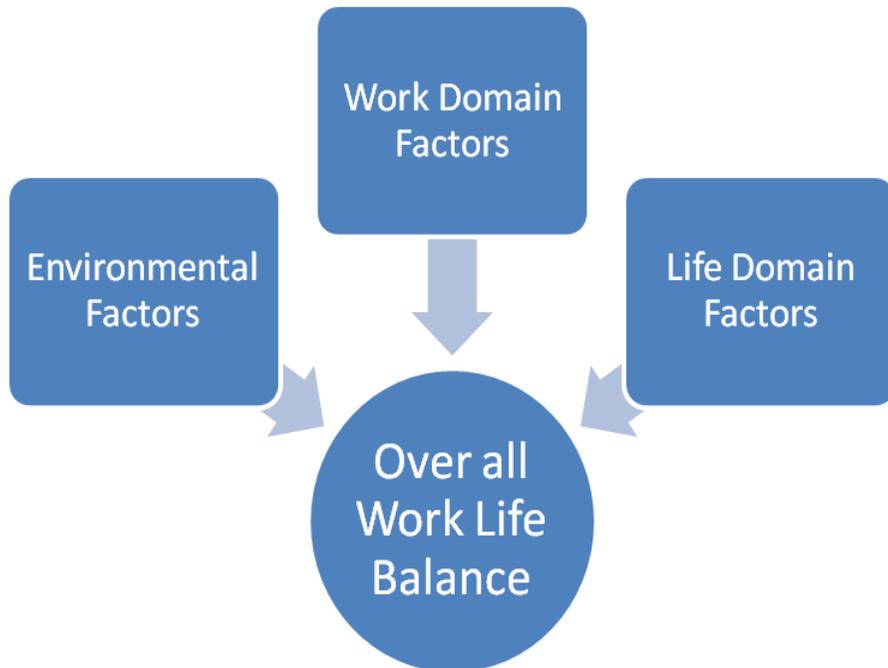
Teachers disclosed that there are no proper class rooms, fans, furniture, play ground or any sports material in the school. There is severe lack of funds. Although the study material and dress are provided by the authorities, but the students are not interested in continuing the education. They are more interested in learning the skill to earn money early. Also it is an established fact that lack of infrastructure or poor facilities in the primary schools leads to increased dropout rate and loss of studies interest among young students (Velkoff. Victoria, 1998).

Lack of infrastructure like clean toilets, clean drinking water are some basic facilities which bothers the school teachers. One teacher claimed said “there is no way we can go to washroom, even we have to give half-day leaves to the adolescent girls if they ask to go to the toilets. We can not take risk to send them to field when they are studying in the school”.

The other teacher also claimed the same “once you reach the school, then we can go to washroom when we reach home”. The authorities don’t pay any heed for the absence of toilets or toilets in dilapidated condition.

### **Multitasking by the teachers**

The teachers are not meant for teaching in the school, but they have the arrangement in the State and Centre election, to fulfill these duties the teacher skips their routine classes. This also badly affects the concentration and diligence of students who wants to learn in these schools. They are also assigned an area to update the electorate data and update information. They also take part in the census survey for every ten years. A teacher seemed very frustrated with these duties, she said “although we get good money for our job, but now I want to quit this job”. This also resulted in increased in adoption of Voluntary Retirement scheme. Most teachers complained that they are placed in village corners for teaching positions, and getting transport for these schools is a tough task, and thus travelling is very painful as well as time consuming. A teacher of 57 year of age said “it is now becoming difficult day by day to survive in this environment, where we are treated as multi-taskers, I am planning to take the Voluntary retirement”. Other women claimed that “I am planning to start an alternative business in my home so that I can plan my early retirement”. The work environment is harsh with difficulty in taking the leaves even during the medical emergencies.



**Fig 1: Factors Affecting Work Life Balance among School Teachers**

#### **Effect of Employment on personal life**

The teachers were observed more annoyed with the work environment that involve poor infrastructure, high drop-out rate of students, unconcerned students about their studies, pressure from higher authorities to work in poor condition, and juggling between work and life.

#### **Juggling between work and Home**

They were happy with their salaries but there are lack of transport connectivity of schools with the city bothers the teachers a lot. They complained that travel is a major hurdle which causes stress when they are still at home. There is not any provision for flexible work-hours for women employees.

#### **Child Care**

The teachers said that their families are a big support and they are satisfied with their personal life. But the travelling devours to 3 hours in travelling. Husbands are supportive though teacher 1 age 40 years has children 13 to 15 years of age complained of not getting some personal time. She said that she wakes up at 4 in morning to make lunch and breakfast for their girls before leaving to schools. A women teacher 2 of 45 years said that "I got married at the early age of 18 years, and become a young mother of 8 children. All the children are grown up now and they have a daughter-in law and daughters at their home. So she has no worries about the cleaning and cooking chores. Teacher 2 found to be healthier than the younger teacher 1. The difference is because of the presence of the caretaker at home. Crowley and Kolinikov(2014) in their studies suggested that it decreases stress among working women by an effective 50.9 percent if someone is there to take care of the household chores and childcare responsibility.

Apart from the work place responsibilities, teachers mostly complained about the random duties, the travelling time. They conclude that they have supporting members in

their family. They have maids for several works and child care is not a tough task. Teachers also complained that getting leaves from job is another task. Sometimes it is impossible to get leaves in medical emergency especially during elections.

### CONCLUSION

From this case study, it is concluded that teachers are in stress because of the extra duties assigned by the state authority. They give more importance to their work in comparison to their lives but they cannot even work for that whole heartedly because of the burden by the school authorities. This is also result in lack of motivation in both the students and teachers. By these things the education in the state is in shambles. The funds allotted are not getting the results which they are provided for. This matter should deeply look upon by the central government as well as state authorities. The state government should take measures in provide minimum facilities like clean environment and clean toilets in all the state schools.

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