

## The Challenging Factors for Women Entrepreneurs in Blending Family and Work

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### Abstract:

*Women have been actively participating in all areas where men has forayed its imprint. Gender equality is a key note for the progress of women in all arenas. In fact in the area of managing business too, women has set up a benchmark but there is a cost for every success that has been achieved. They have been sacrificing their personal life, family life as well in the professional front to achieve at par with the opposite gender. Women entrepreneurs have been progressing rapidly in India but the inside story for this progress is something different.*

*Hence this research aims to study understand the multi-dimensional roles played by women entrepreneurs. An exploratory research has been carried out to identify the various work life balance issues faced by women entrepreneurs. There is an array of factors which affects the women entrepreneurship. These important factors which influence the blend of managing the work and family by such entrepreneurship have been analysed. These factors arise due the multi tasking roles that a women plays in her life. The impact of such factors may vary from age groups, marital status, education level and even the level of income generated. The potential differences in the work-life balance of entrepreneurial women with regard to such components have been also studied.*

**Key words:** Entrepreneur, Work Life Blend, Work Life Balance, Women Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurship, India

## **1. Introduction:**

Entrepreneurship is an art which consists of a set of skill that is required to be mastered. At the same time it is a science that has to be proved based on changing scenarios. From centuries, entrepreneurship has been dominated by the male community but now this art and science of entrepreneurship has been very well inculcated by the female fraternity too. Right from small scale entrepreneurship to the large corporate houses, it has been witnessed that female entrepreneurs have excelled in displaying their entrepreneurial skills across the globe. At the end of the day we see the success, glamour and glory of these successful women entrepreneurs but at the same time we fail to notice the hard work, struggle, conflicts, dilemma that these entrepreneurs have gone through before reaching this position.

Every success has a cost behind it and this cost increases when someone tries to re-write the history of entrepreneurship which had been dominated by the opposite gender. When a woman plays a role of an entrepreneur, at the same time she has to manage her husband, children, parents, in-laws, society and if anything is left she has to manage herself too. Hence the character becomes tougher in such case. The blend between work and family becomes a challenge. There are various challenges which crops up at every step in the path of a women entrepreneur apart from the business related factors dealing with customers, competition and changing trends. At times the family seldom suffers due to the entrepreneurial role or even at times fail to keep the expectation of the friends, relatives and society by not being able to attend their respective family functions, social get together during festivals etc. In case, the support from the spouse becomes a primary importance because there are several occasion when the spouse demands or expects a greater attention from the wife. Not only this, during the early stages of motherhood, the women entrepreneur goes through a rough phase convincing the in-

laws, spouse and at times themselves. They dive into the ethical and moral dilemma in such situation tearing apart the aim and ambition of driving a successful business venture. These work life balance issues vary according to different parameters such as the age factor, education level of the entrepreneurs, the type of business venture, marital status as well the family background. Such critical aspects and underlying factors have been studied in-depth in this research paper.

## **2. Objectives of the Study:**

- To understand the multi-dimensional roles played by women entrepreneurs
- To identify the work life balance issues faced by women entrepreneurs
- To analyse the important factors influencing the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs
- To study the potential differences in the work-life balance of entrepreneurial women with regard to age, marital status, education level and income.

## **3. Review of Literature:**

Gender equality and equal opportunity are constitutional rights in India yet different standards of behaviour for men and women still exist, including in the work environment. However, despite all of this support for women, female entrepreneurs are still far from on par with men in India. In contrast, the situation in developed nations is completely different from that in India (Blim, 2001; Parker, 2008; Zhang, Zyphur, Narayanan, Arvey, Chaturvedi, et al., 2009), with an overall socio-cultural environment favourable for women entrepreneurs. The majority of female entrepreneurs, especially in the middle and lower middle classes as well as in rural areas, still find it difficult to simultaneously meet their entrepreneurial and familial

demands so as to attain a proper work-life balance (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2009a). Meanwhile, Dileepkumar (2006) has elaborated on some of the issues faced by entrepreneurial women, such as a shortage of finances, male dominance, limited mobility, a lack of education, required motherly duties and a lack of achievement motivation. According to Rizvi and Gupta (2009), government-sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women, namely the urban middle class. This may be primarily due to their higher level of education, access to information and family support.

The only available reports on the issue, which are mainly from developed nations, indicate that women entrepreneurs of these nations enjoy a comparatively good WLB (Key et al., 2003; CIBC, 2004; Carter & Eleanor, 2006; Godwyn, 2009). The limited studies available from India on women entrepreneurship (Khanka, 2010; Mann & Phukan, 2010; Anitha & Lakxmisha, 1999) either concentrate on the reasons for female emancipation or highlight the contributions of the few successful women entrepreneurs.

#### **4. Methodology of the Study:**

An exploratory research design was followed for this study, with an objective to find out challenging factors for women entrepreneurs in blending family and work. The exploratory research was chosen due to its nature of collecting information in an unstructured and informal manner. This involved interacting women entrepreneurs across India considering general views in regards to the objective of the research.

A Questionnaire was developed with disguised and close ended questions which were presented to the target respondents. The primary data was collected through a survey. Semi-structured interview from the women entrepreneurs were conducted. The sampling type considered for the research was area sampling (cluster-random). The survey was done via

telephone and face to face by interviewing the respondents across the country. The secondary data was gathered from various research papers, company websites, and articles from business newspapers such as Business Line & Economic Times.

**4.1 Profile of the Sample Selected:** A total of 243 women entrepreneurs from various states of India were contacted personally or via an e-mail or letter inviting them to participate in this survey. The respondents were identified through various sources such as social networking sites, articles from various magazines, local government bodies and personal contacts. Out of the 243 questionnaires distributed, 227 duly completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a response rate of 93.42%.

#### **4.2. Plan of Analysis:**

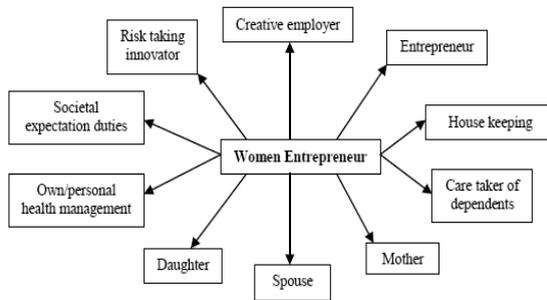
The generated data were subjected to standard statistical procedures, such as factor analysis and standard deviation. For the purpose of the study, the respondents were asked to rate on 5 Point Likert Scale consisting of 44 statements clustered into five factors. Using this scale the important factors influencing the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs were analysed. Based on these five factors, the relationship between the related components such as different age groups, marital status, education level and income of the women entrepreneurs were analysed.

### **5. Research Findings and Interpretations:**

To understand and analyse the challenging factors for women entrepreneurs in blending family and work, the factors influencing the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs needs to be understood and in order to analyse these factors, the various issues leading to such factors is required to be studied. Finally to arrive at the issues that a women

entrepreneur faces it is important to understand the various multi-dimensional roles played by women entrepreneurs.

### **5.1 Multi-dimensional roles played by women entrepreneurs**



**Figure 1: Women Entrepreneurs and their roles/responsibilities**

The above figure highlights the various roles and responsibilities that a women entrepreneur carries out. Starting from being an entrepreneur who drives the business, an innovative calculative risk taker, a creative employer attracting, retaining and managing the employees till fulfilling the responsibilities as a spouse, mother and daughter as well as managing the household with the dependants ensuring social obligations too. Once all these are done then self management also becomes a responsibility too.

These degree of managing these roles and responsibilities varies from one entrepreneur to another depending on the age, type of family, locations, demographic backgrounds but every women entrepreneur has to go through all of them at some stage of their life. Hence this responsibility along with managing the business becomes a challenge in the life of a women entrepreneur.

### **5.2 Work life balance issues faced by women entrepreneurs**

The various issues which confront women entrepreneurs at every step are tabulated below.

**Table 5.2.1: Challenging issues for women entrepreneurs.**

No.	Issues	X (Mean)	Std Deviation
1	Long hours of work of an entrepreneur and WLB are not related to each other.	1.53	0.97
2	There is no relation between dependent care issues and WLB.	1.51	0.97
3	Entrepreneurship related health care issues have no place in WLB.	1.52	0.93
4	Role overload is not a factor determining the WLB.	1.61	0.91
5	The support network does not play any role in the WLB.	1.52	0.91
6	I feel free and enjoy my profession as I have no dependent care issues.	2.62	0.82
7	I can't concentrate in my business due to dependent care problems.	2.61	0.81
8	My spouse demands greater attention from me.	2.6	0.81
9	My kid(s) are looked after by me.	2.61	0.80
10	I am taking care of my aged parent(s)/in law(s).	2.6	0.80
11	I find it more difficult to manage the elder care issues.	2.59	0.80
12	I find it more difficult to manage the child care needs.	2.59	0.78
13	I find it difficult to manage my business and dependent care issues at home simultaneously.	2.59	0.78
14	Due to the work/family issues and lack of time, I find it difficult to take care of my health.	2.81	0.75
15	My pre-occupation with business does not allow me to provide dependent care needs at home, leading to conflicts.	2.58	0.75
16	The role conflicts in the business and family life given me a lot of stress.	2.8	0.74
17	I feel angry with my employees and family members as I am not able to balance my work and family issues.	2.79	0.72
18	As my business drains away my energy and time, I feel sick at home.	2.79	0.72
19	Being satisfied in the entrepreneurial and family domains, I feel relaxed and sleep very well.	2.78	0.70
20	After becoming an entrepreneur, I frequently visit my physician for health issues.	2.78	0.70
21	My health problems are related to the long and continuous work schedule.	2.78	0.70
22	I often came from the office very late in the evening.	2.39	0.63
23	I have enough time to spend on family duties and societal roles.	2.35	0.61
24	I remain engaged in my business related work for more than 10 hours per day.	2.32	0.61
25	Due to the business needs, I find it difficult to spend	2.31	0.61

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	the evenings and weekends with my family.		
26	I have to leave home early in the morning to engage in my entrepreneurial activity.	2.34	0.60
27	My entrepreneurial activity does not give me time to perform family/social duties.	2.33	0.60
28	The long hours of work make me stressed and short tempered.	2.35	0.59
29	My time resources are equally distributed between the business and home.	2.29	0.59
30	I could have concentrated more in the entrepreneurial activity if the social support network was available to me.	2.23	0.55
31	My social support network is very helpful in dealing with the dependent care issues.	2.22	0.55
32	My family provides me the strength and support to face the challenges of business.	2.19	0.53
33	My family members are not willing to listen to my work related/personal problems.	2.17	0.53
34	My spouse understands and accommodates my pre-occupation as an entrepreneur.	2.16	0.53
35	Being an entrepreneur, I am respected and helped by the society.	2.19	0.52
36	My family members are over stretched to make me a successful entrepreneur.	2.18	0.52
37	I have to perform many roles in a given time.	3.00a	0.42
38	As I am burdened with business and family roles, I find it difficult to attend social/ community activities.	2.99	0.41
39	I am too fatigued to look after my business due to my work load in the family.	2.96	0.40
40	My family life seldom suffers due to my entrepreneurial role.	2.99	0.39
41	I have become a successful entrepreneur by sacrificing many of my family roles.	2.96	0.39
42	Due to the excessive work load and lack of time, I am not able to give proper attention in my personal life as well as in my business.	2.95	0.39
43	As my employees look after all the business roles, I am quiet contented in my life.	2.98	0.38
44	As I have to do multiple roles in the family, I could not succeed in the entrepreneurial domain.	2.96	0.37

Source: Primary Data

Note: Five-point Likert scale was used for rating the WLB issues ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Interpretation: The above table highlights the intensity of major work life balance issues faced by women entrepreneurs.

It is clearly stated that managing multiple roles is a major roadblock in the development of women entrepreneurship, compromise in the personal life and social life become a challenge which leads to improper care of personal health due to excessive work load. Not only this, Long hours of work affects majorly in managing the blend of work and family. Dependent care issues and demand of greater attention from the spouse adds an additional burden to the women entrepreneurs.

### **5.3 Factors influencing the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs**

**Table 5.3.1: FACTOR 1: Role Overload (2.98)**

SI.NO	FACTOR ANALYSIS TEST OF WLB ISSUES ( N = 227)	FACTOR LOADING
1	I have to perform many roles in a given time.	0.82
2	My family life seldom suffers due to my entrepreneurial role.	0.8
3	As I am burdened with business and family roles, I find it difficult to attend social/ community activities.	0.8
4	As my employees look after all the business roles, I am quiet contented in my life.	0.79
5	As I have to do multiple roles in the family, I could not succeed in the entrepreneurial domain.	0.79
6	I am too fatigued to look after my business due to my work load in the family.	0.76
7	I have become a successful entrepreneur by sacrificing many of my family roles.	0.74
8	Due to the excessive work load and lack of time, I am not able to give proper attention in my personal life as well as in my business.	0.73

**Table 5.3.2: FACTOR 2: Quality of Health (2.79)**

SI.NO	FACTOR ANALYSIS TEST OF WLB ISSUES ( N = 227)	FACTOR LOADING
1	Due to the work/family issues and lack of time, I find it difficult to take care of my health.	0.61
2	The role conflicts in the business and family life given me a lot of stress.	0.61
3	I feel angry with my employees and family members as I am not able to balance my work and family issues.	0.6
4	As my business drains away my energy and time, I feel sick at home.	0.6
5	Being satisfied in the entrepreneurial and family domains, I feel relaxed and sleep very well.	0.6

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6	After becoming an entrepreneur, I frequently visit my physician for health issues.	0.59
7	My health problems are related to the long and continuous work schedule.	0.59

**Table 5.3.3: FACTOR 3: Dependent Care Issues (2.60)**

SI .NO	FACTOR ANALYSIS TEST OF WLB ISSUES ( N = 227)	FACTOR LOADING
1	I feel free and enjoy my profession as I have no dependent care issues.	0.77
2	My kid(s) are looked after by me.	0.76
3	I can't concentrate in my business due to dependent care problems.	0.76
4	My spouse demands greater attention from me.	0.76
5	I am taking care of my aged parent(s)/in law(s).	0.75
6	I find it more difficult to manage the elder care issues.	0.75
7	I find it more difficult to manage the child care needs.	0.74
8	I find it difficult to manage my business and dependent care issues at home simultaneously.	0.72
9	My pre-occupation with business does not allow me to provide dependent care needs at home, leading to conflicts.	0.67

**Table 5.3.4: FACTOR 4: Time Management (2.33)**

SI .NO	FACTOR ANALYSIS TEST OF WLB ISSUES ( N = 227)	FACTOR LOADING
1	I often came from the office very late in the evening.	0.87
2	I have enough time to spend on family duties and societal roles.	0.86
3	The long hours of work make me stressed and short tempered.	0.85
4	I have to leave home early in the morning to engage in my entrepreneurial activity.	0.85
5	My entrepreneurial activity does not give me time to perform family/social duties.	0.84
6	I remain engaged in my business related work for more than 10 hours per day.	0.83
7	Due to the business needs, I find it difficult to spend the evenings and weekends with my family.	0.81
8	My time resources are equally distributed between the business and home.	0.8
9	I could have concentrated more in the entrepreneurial activity if the social support network was available to me.	0.82

**Table 5.3.5: FACTOR 5 Support Networks (2.23)**

SI .NO	FACTOR ANALYSIS TEST OF WLB ISSUES ( N = 227)	FACTOR LOADING
1	My social support network is very helpful in dealing with the dependent care issues.	0.83
2	Being an entrepreneur, I am respected and helped by the society.	0.79
3	My family provides me the strength and support to face the challenges of business.	0.78
4	My family members are over stretched to make me a successful entrepreneur.	0.76
5	My family members are not willing to listen to my work related/personal problems.	0.74
6	My spouse understands and accommodates my pre-occupation as an entrepreneur.	0.68

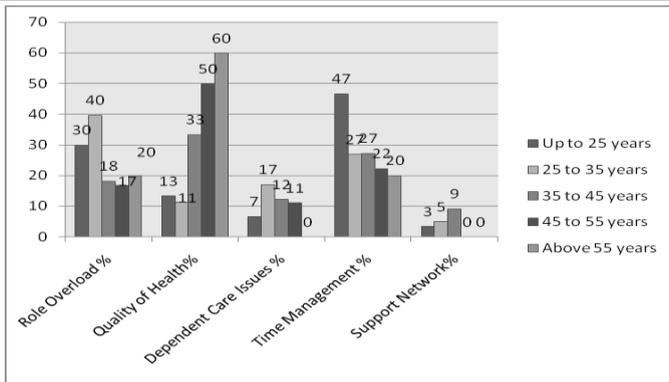
Interpretation: From the 44 work life balance issues highlighted in table number 5.2.1, factor analysis has been carried out which resulted in 5 major factors influencing the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs. The 5 factors that resulted from the 44 issues are a) Role Overload, b) Quality of Health, c) Dependent Care Issues, d) Time Management e) Support Networks. The minor factors that are clubbed under the major factors are listed above. This gives a clarity and in-depth understanding of each major factor.

#### **5.4 Differences in the work-life balance of entrepreneurial women with regard to age, marital status, education level and income**

**Table no. 5.4.1- Relationship between age groups and work life balance factors**

N = 227	Role Overload %	Quality of Health%	Dependent Care Issues %	Time Management %	Support Network%
Up to 25 years	30	13	7	47	3
25 to 35 years	40	11	17	27	5
35 to 45 years	18	33	12	27	9
45 to 55 years	17	50	11	22	0
Above 55 years	20	60	0	20	0

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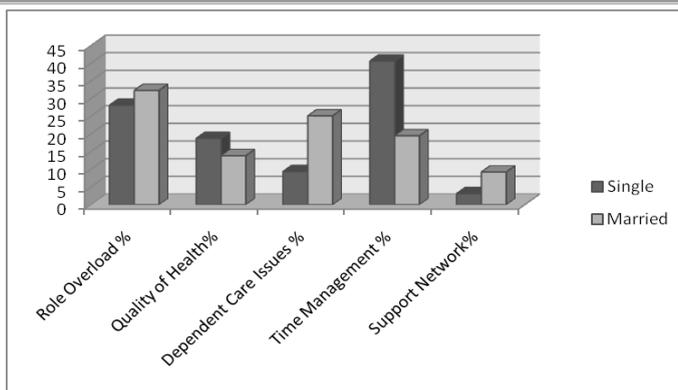


Interpretation: The above graph highlights the relationship between age group and major factors influencing the work life balance among women entrepreneurs. Time management is a major challenge for entrepreneurs aged upto 25 years, whereas for entrepreneurs aged between 25 to 35 years, role overload becomes a crucial factor. Similarly middle aged( 35 to 55 years) and aged( above 55 years) women entrepreneurs face health managemet issues as a major hindrance in the path of entrepreneurship

**Table No: 5.4.2 - Relationship between marital status and work life balance factors**

N = 227	Role Overload %	Quality of Health%	Dependent Care Issues %	Time Management %	Support Network%
<b>Single</b>	28	19	9	41	3
<b>Married</b>	32	14	25	19	9

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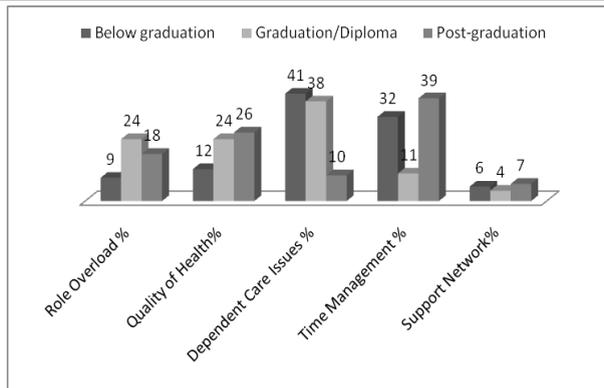


Interpretation: From the above graph, it clearly portrays that women entrepreneurs who are single find time management as a major factor in balancing their work and family. When asked about the reason behind mentioning “Time management” as a road block to the single women, the answer was “due to lack of experience”. Generally our perception is that since they are single they must be easily managing time, but in reality it was different. Since they were new to business, managing time was a major challenge to them. Understanding and prioritising between important and urgent required sometime in the area of entrepreneurship. On the other hand the married entrepreneurs faced the heat of balancing the multiple roles that they play along with the entrepreneurship.

**Table 5.4.3 - Relationship between education level and work life balance factors**

N = 227	Role Overload %	Quality of Health %	Dependent Care Issues %	Time Management %	Support Network %
<b>Below graduation</b>	9	12	41	32	6
<b>Graduation/Diploma</b>	24	24	38	11	4
<b>Post-graduation</b>	18	26	10	39	7

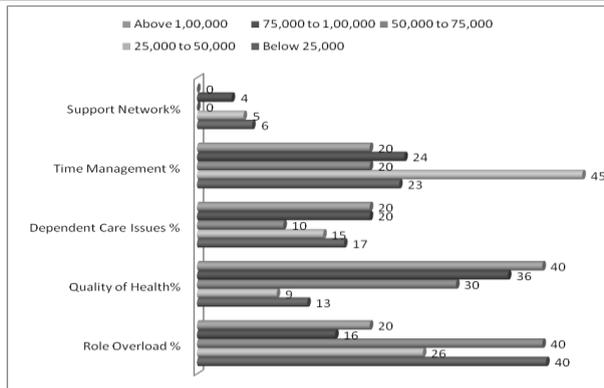
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Interpretation: The above graph highlights a mixed result, rather leaves us a reason behind to think because the time management factor has been highlighted for post graduate women entrepreneurs as well as below graduates. This raises a question for all of us with regards to the efficiency the time management between literates and highly qualified women entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the graduates face dependent care issues as a major challenge in the path of blending the work and family life.

**Table No: 5.4.4 - Relationship between income level and work life balance factors**

N = 227	Role Overload %	Quality of Health %	Dependent Care Issues %	Time Management %	Support Network %
<b>Below 25,000</b>	40	13	17	23	6
<b>25,000 to 50,000</b>	26	9	15	45	5
<b>50,000 to 75,000</b>	40	30	10	20	0
<b>75,000 to 1,00,000</b>	16	36	20	24	4
<b>Above 1,00,000</b>	20	40	20	20	0



Interpretation: The above graph shows the influence of income level on the work life balance factors. One fact which has been clearly highlighted is that income level and health management is inversely proportional i.e higher the income, managing the health becomes a higher challenge. Whereas the lower income women entrepreneurs face time management and role overload as a major issue in balancing the family and work.

## 6. Conclusion:

Women have been progressing at an aggressive pace in the area of entrepreneurship. They also have mastered the art and science of entrepreneurship. The research clearly identifies that there are significant sacrifices that the women entrepreneurs have made in order to reach the heights of mastery. There are more than forty thought pints which pulls back a woman from running a successful enterprise. Major five factors stand as a road block in the path of entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs need to play multiple roles and are expected to maintain a balance in all the multitasking which is a herculean task. Not only this, there are subsidiary factors which affects the entrepreneurship spirit of a woman such as their age factor, education level, the cultural background, marital status, the income level as well as the family support but the best part is that in spite of all such roadblocks, women entrepreneurs have been able to set a benchmark in the business world. Such

examples have been laid for the coming generation of women fraternity that would boost the culture of women entrepreneurship across the globe.

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