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# Exploring the Dynamics of Work Life Harmony Among the Married Women Employees in Aligarh Division in Government Departments

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## Abstract

In the contemporary landscape of rapid economic shifts and evolving gender roles, work-life harmony (WLH) has emerged as a pivotal challenge, particularly for married women employed in government sectors. This study investigates the dynamics of WLH among married female employees in the Aligarh Division, focusing on their ability to manage dual responsibilities across professional and personal domains. Using data collected from 266 respondents through structured questionnaires, the research explores the relationship between workplace factors—such as supervisor support, co-worker support, and job stress—and family-related factors including spousal and domestic support. The findings reveal strong correlations between supportive work environments and improved parental satisfaction and productivity, while also highlighting persistent challenges such as role overload. The study emphasizes the need for targeted policy interventions and organizational reforms to foster equitable and supportive workplaces. By addressing systemic and socio-cultural barriers, government institutions can promote well-being, retention, and long-term effectiveness among female employees. This research contributes to the academic discourse on gender equity, public sector management, and employee well-being in the Indian context.

**Keywords:** Work-Life Harmony, Married Women Employees, Government Sector, Supervisor Support, Role Overload, Parental Satisfaction, Domestic Support, Gender Equality, Employee Well-being, Aligarh Division

## Introduction

The smooth integration of one's job and personal life, often called work-life harmony (WLH), has become a vital factor in how dedicated people are to their jobs, whether they stay with a company, and how productive they are in today's world. In a time of big social and economic changes, like increasing global connections and fast technological progress, achieving WLH has become more difficult, especially for women worldwide. These professionals often have to juggle what their jobs demand, deeply rooted social expectations about gender (sometimes even written into law), their career goals, and the need to keep up with quickly changing technology. International laws, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), indirectly acknowledge that WLH and gender equality are linked by clearly saying that discrimination in hiring is wrong and that everyone should have

the same opportunities at work. Contemporary research (Casper et al., 2004) indicates a clear trend: employees desire roles that offer greater scheduling flexibility, enabling them to better manage the inevitable conflicts between work and personal life[1].

The concept of Work-Life Harmony goes beyond traditional work-life balance by recognizing the fluid and evolving nature of personal and professional roles. It encourages a responsive and customized approach—one that adjusts to an individual's unique circumstances and changing priorities over time. Rather than maintaining rigid separation between work and life, this approach supports integration, aiming to reduce stress and enhance overall quality of life.

At its core, Work-Life Harmony emphasizes the importance of setting intentional, adaptive boundaries. These boundaries are crucial to maintaining focus in both domains and preventing either from becoming disproportionately dominant. The ability to define and



refine these boundaries is central to achieving a harmonious blend of career and personal fulfilment.

In today's evolving business environment, many organizations are actively working to promote Work-Life Harmony as a means of attracting and retaining skilled and driven professionals. Companies like Google have set an example by providing extensive support to their employees, including financial aid for adoption-related costs. This support often covers reimbursement for legal services, adoption agency fees, and access to parental leave benefits, all aimed at enhancing employees' overall quality of life. Insights from organizational behavior play a crucial role in helping companies design jobs and workspaces that reduce conflicts between professional and personal responsibilities. Positions that offer opportunities for skill development, diverse tasks, autonomy, and personal control tend to foster higher employee satisfaction and performance.

Furthermore, the social atmosphere within the workplace significantly influences job satisfaction. Factors such as teamwork, meaningful feedback, mutual support, and social interactions—even those occurring outside of formal work settings—are strongly linked to how content employees feel, independent of the actual nature of their work tasks. At its essence, Work-Life Harmony involves intentionally managing one's time and energy to maintain a clear division between professional duties and personal life. This often includes setting firm boundaries and ensuring that both domains receive attention in a balanced, thoughtful manner.

Achieving Work-Life Harmony involves intentional strategies that allow individuals to balance their professional responsibilities with personal well-being.

**Below are several approaches that support this balance**

- **Setting Consistent Work Hours:** Establishing a regular daily schedule helps reinforce boundaries between work and personal time. Clearly outlining when the workday begins and ends—and sharing this schedule with both colleagues and family—can enhance time management and reduce conflicts.
- **Designating a Specific Work Area:** For individuals working remotely, having a dedicated space exclusively for professional tasks can improve focus and minimize distractions. Keeping this area separate from common living spaces also helps maintain a mental divide between work and home life.
- **Clearly Defining Boundaries:** Open communication is key when setting boundaries. Whether with coworkers, family members, or friends, it's important to explain availability and periods reserved for personal or professional matters. This clarity fosters mutual respect and reduces misunderstandings.
- **Unplugging After Work:** Once the workday ends, it's beneficial to disconnect from professional duties by silencing notifications and avoiding the urge to monitor emails or messages. This practice supports mental recovery and reinforces the separation between work and personal time.
- **Learning to Decline When Necessary:** Maintaining balance often requires the ability to say no to additional obligations that might interfere with established boundaries. While flexibility is valuable, it should not come at the expense of personal well-being or time.
- **Regular Review and Adjustment of Boundaries:** As life circumstances evolve, so too should personal and professional boundaries. Periodically reassessing them ensures they remain effective and relevant, allowing individuals to respond proactively to new challenges or changes in workload.

In essence, setting and maintaining boundaries is about building a structure that enables individuals to manage their careers and personal lives in a way that promotes both productivity and overall well-being.

## Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study concentrates on the concept of Work-Life Harmony among married women employed in government sectors, with specific attention to departments within the Aligarh Division. The primary objective is to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and key workplace variables such as job stress and job satisfaction. Additionally, the research includes a comparative analysis to understand how Work-Life Harmony varies in relation to these factors.

**The scope of this research includes**

- A focused examination of how married female government employees in the Aligarh Division manage and maintain balance between their professional duties and personal responsibilities.
- The identification of significant contributors to occupational stress and domestic pressures affecting this group of employees.
- An analytical evaluation of the impact that job-related stress may have on the work performance of married women in public service roles.
- An investigation into the extent to which familial stressors influence the professional effectiveness and overall well-being of married female employees within governmental institutions.
- This research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how dual responsibilities—professional and personal—interact to influence the overall Work-Life Harmony experienced by the participants. The study acknowledges the complex and often overlapping nature of workplace demands and family commitments, and seeks to explore their combined effects on employee performance and satisfaction.

## Literature Review

Organizations choose to implement work-life policies for several key strategic reasons. As per Wise and Bond (2003)[2], these include making the company attractive to and retaining highly skilled employees by positioning it as a desirable place to work. Such policies also aim to tackle harmful work habits like excessively long hours, better respond to the varied and changing needs of the workforce, and cultivate a supportive workplace culture that boosts employee morale and drive. Furthermore, these policies strive to promote fairness through inclusive practices that improve opportunities for all employees.

Konrad and Mangel (2000) compiled a detailed list of potential Work-Life Harmony Practices (WLHPs) that organizations can adopt[3]. This list encompasses longer periods of leave for mothers and fathers, adoption leave, parental leave, gradual return-to-work arrangements, on-site or nearby facilities for childcare, training for supervisors on being sensitive to family matters, flexible work hours, job-sharing options, part-time employment possibilities, emergency support for childcare, and provisions for sick leave to care for children. The authors also emphasized the value of offering voluntary and professional part-time positions as effective WLHPs. These suggestions align with the ideas put forth by Osterman (1995)[4], which included initiatives like compressed work weeks, where employees work their full hours in fewer days; family leave options to accommodate family obligations; work sharing arrangements that can increase employee focus and motivation as per Stennett (1994)[5]; dividing tasks to make the best use of employee talents; and compressed hours that give employees longer periods of time off Westcott (2008).

The idea of WLH is becoming increasingly important in how organizations function, as it's understood to be a critical factor in effectively balancing the energy of both employers and employees across their personal and professional lives. Organizations can strategically put in place various WLHPs to foster improved employee morale, productivity, commitment, and loyalty, thereby creating a more favorable environment for achieving WLH in the long run. Several key organizational aspects of WLH have been

identified.

The variety of skills, abilities, ideas, and individual traits like age, gender, race, ethnicity, and physical capabilities within a workforce significantly impacts how well employees perform. Organizations must make managing diversity a core part of their policies and procedures to establish an inclusive environment as per Harrison and colleagues (2006)[6].

Positive workplace behaviors, such as helping colleagues, volunteering for additional tasks, and avoiding unnecessary disagreements, contribute positively to achieving WLH. Conversely, behaviors that indicate withdrawal, including being absent, late, and disengaged from organizational activities, have a negative impact as per Amstad and colleagues (2011)[7].

An employee's attitude toward work significantly affects WLH. Research suggests that positive experiences at work often lead to positive moods at home, while stressful workdays can result in negative emotions in personal life as indicated by Ilies & Judge (2002)[8]; Rau (2004); and Song and colleagues (2008). Overall satisfaction with one's job is a strong indicator of general behaviors, including how engaged and motivated employees are. Harrison and colleagues (2006). Conflict between work and family responsibilities is a major source of employee stress, and when an employee's personal values don't align with the organization's values, it can lead to them leaving the company, Schneider and colleagues (1995).

Practices like moving employees between different jobs can reduce boredom, increase motivation, and give employees a broader understanding of the work environment, contributing to better WLH, Westcott (2008)[9]. While flexible work arrangements can be helpful in many administrative roles, they might not be suitable for everyone and are less preferred by individuals who want a clear separation between their work and personal lives, Shockley & Allen (2010)[9].

Employees often face significant difficulties in meeting their job responsibilities, which can negatively affect their family life and lead to psychological stress and health issues, ultimately disrupting their work-life balance. Addressing the fundamental causes of these stressors is essential for achieving WLH. These stressors can be broadly categorized as environmental factors (economic, potential, and technological uncertainties), organizational factors (heavy workloads, tight deadlines, unhealthy work atmosphere, difficult relationships with colleagues, inflexible work schedules), personal factors (family problems, financial worries, personality traits), family issues (marital problems, relationship breakdowns, issues with child discipline), financial/economic problems, and inherent personality characteristics that can amplify the effect of stressors, Adams & Rau(2004)[10]. Stress, a mental state shaped by how an individual perceives things, requires effective management for a fulfilling life, especially when trying to achieve WLH. Various stress management strategies exist at both personal levels (exercise, relaxation, social support) and organizational levels (careful hiring and placement, training programs, goal setting, job redesign, employee involvement, improved communication, sabbaticals). Unmanaged stress can lead to a range of negative physical, mental, and emotional consequences, including memory loss, depression, mood swings, and substance dependency.

## Research Methodology

This study aimed to involve 266 participants, specifically married women working in government offices within the Aligarh Division. Although there were initial difficulties in distributing and collecting the survey forms, the final information used for this research includes responses from all 266 married female employees across different government departments in the Aligarh Division.

To gather the main information for this study, a simple and easy-to-use convenience sampling method was employed with the 266 married women working in Government Departments located in the

Aligarh Division. The information was collected through a carefully designed questionnaire. This sampling method was chosen because it was practical and made it easier to reach the intended group of people within the available time and resources.

This research uses a descriptive study design. This method is used to understand the difficulties and obstacles faced by married working women in balancing their careers and personal lives, as well as how much strong social support systems and infrastructure can help with these issues. The research includes both information collected directly from the participants and information from other sources. The direct information was gathered through the survey questionnaires that were distributed. Information from other sources was obtained by reviewing previous research, reference materials, academic publications, and resources provided by relevant government departments and organizations related to the topic.

The main information gathered from the participants was analyzed using statistical tools, primarily the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, along with calculating percentages. These tools were used to examine the connections between different factors that influence work-life harmony and to create descriptive statistics that provide insights into the experiences of the participants.

## Advantages of Achieving Work-Life Harmony

- **Stress:** Integrating work and personal life alleviates the pressure of keeping them separate. This integration allows individuals to manage the demands of both areas more effortlessly, reducing stress and fostering a calm and composed mindset.
- **Improved Productivity:** When work and personal life are kept distinct, individuals can concentrate better and accomplish tasks more effectively. With a more harmonious approach, it's possible to be more productive without sacrificing personal time or well-being.
- **Enhanced Job Satisfaction:** When personal life and work align well, job satisfaction tends to increase. This balance leads to greater commitment, a more positive outlook on work, and higher levels of job satisfaction, which can contribute to better performance and career growth.
- **Stronger Work:** Life Integration – Achieving work-life harmony enables individuals to transfer skills and insights from one area to benefit the other. For example, the problem-solving skills used in the workplace can be applied to personal challenges, and the empathy cultivated in personal relationships can improve communication and collaboration with colleagues.
- **Better Overall Well-Being:** Balancing competing demands allows individuals more time and energy to focus on what truly matters, whether it's nurturing relationships, engaging in hobbies, or simply taking time for themselves, ultimately enhancing their overall well-being.
- **Increased Flexibility:** Reaching work-life harmony often requires adopting a flexible approach to managing both professional and personal obligations. This flexibility is especially valuable when unexpected situations arise, as it enables individuals to adapt more easily to shifting circumstances and maintain a sense of balance.

## Results

We have taken data of 266 married women working in state government departments for finding out work Life Harmony in Aligarh Division.

This Figure 1 indicates that majority of the respondents are covered by Age group between 31 – 40 years old with 80.5

This Figure 2 indicates that majority of the respondents are Post Graduate i.e 56.40%. This Figure 3 indicates that majority of the respondents come under the Family size of 4 – 5 i.e 51.90%. This Figure 4 indicates that majority of the respondents are living in Joint family i.e 51.90% but those living in nuclear family that

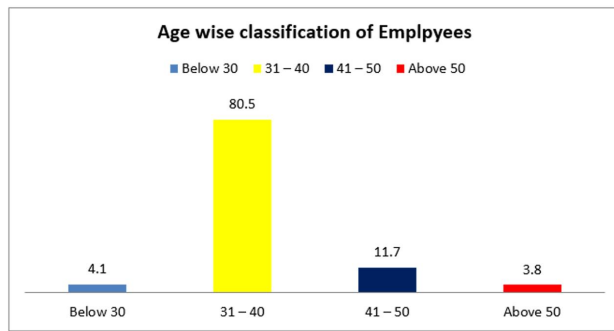


Figure 1

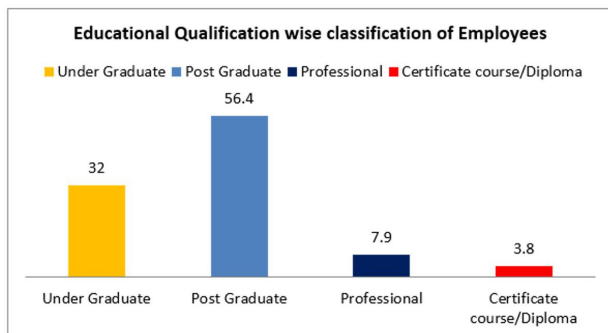


Figure 2

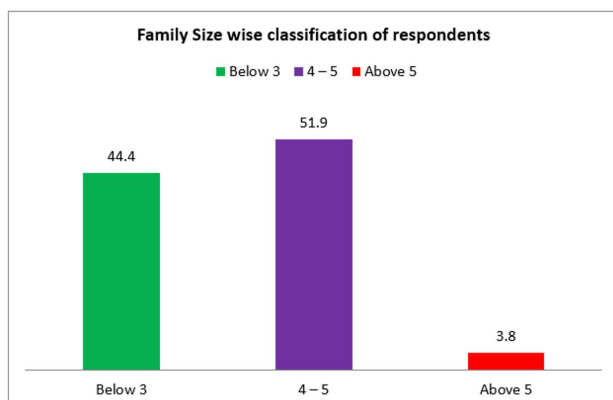


Figure 3

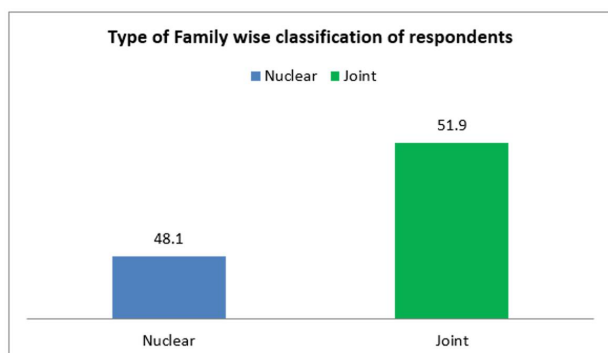


Figure 4

percentage is also very significant i.e. 48.10%. This Figure 5 indicates

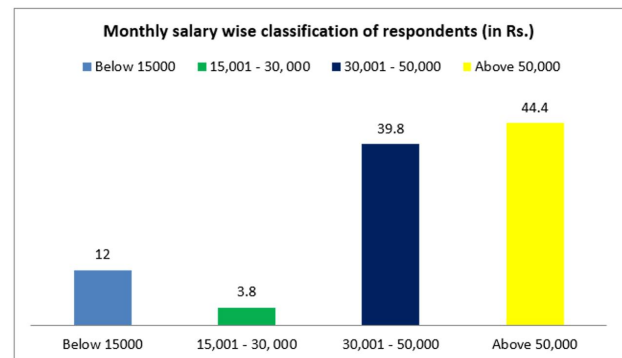


Figure 5

that majority of the respondents have salary income above Rs 50000 i.e. 44.4%.

#### Relationship among various dimensions of Work Life Harmony in Government Department

In this study, Work Life Harmony consists of seven factors that measure Officers Support, Co-workers Support, Positive Parenting, Parental Satisfaction, Spouse Support, Domestic Support and Role Overload.

### Discussion

From the above table it can be inferred that the correlation coefficient for Work Life harmony is strong and positive. It can be concluded that Officers Support has positive and strong relation with Co-workers Support (49.3%), Positive Parenting (47.4%), Parental Satisfaction (1.6%), Spouse Support (15.5%), Domestic Support (31%) and Role Overload (6.5%). Co-workers Support has positive and strong relation with Positive Parenting (46.6%), Parental Satisfaction (12.8%), Spouse Support (16.8%), Domestic Support (15.8%) and Role Overload (16.9%). Positive Parenting has positive and strong relation with Parental Satisfaction (37.7%), Spouse Support (9.3%), Domestic Support (3.1%) and Role Overload (18.1%). Parental Satisfaction has positive and strong relation with Spouse Support (1.6%), Domestic Support (6.6%) and Role Overload (24.9%). Spouse Support has positive and strong relation with Domestic Support (42.3%) and Role Overload (10.1%). Domestic Support has positive and strong relation with Role Overload (22.1%).

### Suggestions

**To improve the work-life harmony of married female employees within the Government Department, the following measures should be implemented:** The demographic characteristics of the survey participants offer valuable insight into the work-life harmony challenges encountered by married female government employees in the Aligarh division. The fact that most respondents are between 31 and 40 years old suggests that they are likely at a life stage where they are actively juggling career advancement with significant family duties, such as raising children and possibly caring for elderly relatives. Their high level of education (mainly postgraduate degrees) indicates a skilled and potentially career-oriented workforce. The prevalence of families with four to five members and the nearly equal distribution between joint and nuclear family structures highlight the diverse home environments in which these women navigate their professional lives. The salary distribution, with a considerable portion earning above Rs 50,000, suggests a certain level of financial stability, which might influence their ability to access support systems or make specific choices related to work-life balance.

The analysis of how different aspects of Work-Life Harmony relate



**Table 1.** Relationship among dimensions of Work Life Harmony

Work Life Harmony	Officers Support	Co- workers Support	Positive Parenting	Parental Satisfaction	Spouse Support	Domestic Support	Role Overload
Officers Support	1.000	.493**	.474**	.016	.155**	.310**	.065
Co-workers Support		1.000	.466**	.128**	.168	.158**	.169**
Positive Parenting			1.000	.377**	.093**	.031	.181**
Parental Satisfaction				1.000	.016**	.066**	.249
Spouse Support					1.000	.423*	.101**
Domestic Support						1.000	.221**
Role Overload							1.000

to each other reveals several important connections. The strong positive links between Supervisor Support, Colleague Support, and Positive Parenting indicate that a supportive work atmosphere, both from superiors and peers, is significantly associated with a more positive experience of raising children among these employees. This emphasizes the critical role of workplace culture and interpersonal relationships in facilitating work-life harmony. The positive connection between Colleague Support and Positive Parenting further highlights the importance of a cooperative and understanding work environment in enabling women to effectively manage their dual roles. Similarly, the link between Supervisor Support and Domestic Support emphasizes that when employees feel supported by their superiors, they are more likely to have better support systems at home, or perhaps feel more empowered to seek or utilize such support.

The connection between Positive Parenting and Parental Satisfaction is logical, suggesting that when women feel they are successfully fulfilling their roles as parents, they experience greater contentment in this area. The relationship between Spouse Support and Domestic Support emphasizes the crucial role of the partner in contributing to a balanced harmony between work and home life. Interestingly, Parental Satisfaction also shows a positive connection with Role Overload. This might suggest that for some women, the fulfillment they derive from their parental role might, to some extent, lessen the perceived burden of having multiple responsibilities. Finally, the positive connection between Domestic Support and Role Overload could indicate that while support at home is helpful, it might not completely eliminate the feeling of being overwhelmed, especially when professional demands are high.

The findings of this study highlight the potential benefits for organizations that implement strong Work-Life Harmony strategies within government entities. As emphasized in the broader context of this research:

#### Corporate Advantages from Implementing Work-Life Harmony Strategies

- **Greater Inclusion of Skilled Female Professionals:** By addressing the specific needs of married women, government departments can attract and retain a wider range of talented individuals.
- **Improved Employee Retention and Organizational Stability:** Supportive measures can reduce exhaustion and employee turnover, preserving valuable institutional knowledge and lowering recruitment costs.
- **Increased Focus and Efficiency:** When employees experience better work-life harmony, they can concentrate more effectively on their job responsibilities.
- **Development of a Supportive and Emotionally Intelligent Culture:** Cultivating emotional awareness and support contributes to a more positive and collaborative workplace.
- **Enhanced Balance Between Work and Personal Life:** Promoting flexibility and shared responsibilities leads to greater job satisfaction and engagement.
- **Fair Career Growth and Talent Development:** Recognizing ex-

perience and time with the organization ensures the retention of experienced employees, including women returning to the workforce.

- **Improved Reputation as a Preferred Employer:** Organizations that support work-life integration are seen as progressive and attract top talent.
- **Fewer Absences and Health-Related Disruptions:** Reduced stress levels and better mental health lead to lower absenteeism and higher productivity.
- **Alignment with Responsible Business Standards:** Supporting employee well-being aligns with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals.
- **Preparedness for Evolving Workforce Dynamics:** Adapting to the increasing prevalence of dual-income households ensures the long-term resilience of the organization.

#### Academic Significance and Scholarly Value of the Study

Organizations under financial strain might unintentionally create obstacles to WLH through efficiency measures. However, evolving legal and policy landscapes are increasingly emphasizing the need for supportive work environments that address gender disparities. Key areas of concern include unequal pay between genders, discrimination in the workplace (related to maternity and other factors), and the availability of care support and flexible work arrangements, all of which are crucial for women's WLH. The findings have the potential to contribute new evidence to the academic understanding of WLH, gender dynamics in the workplace, and the interplay of socio-economic factors.

Moreover, the research's aim to suggest practical strategies and consider international benchmarks positions it as relevant for informing organizational practices and potentially influencing policy development towards greater gender equality and work-life support.

#### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the broader understanding of work-life harmony challenges faced by married female government employees in the Aligarh division, the following recommendations are proposed to improve their work-life harmony and foster a more supportive work environment:

- **Encourage Delegation of Caregiving Duties:** Government departments should promote a culture where female employees are encouraged and supported in delegating caregiving responsibilities for children and elderly family members to other capable members of the household. This can be facilitated through awareness programs and workshops that emphasize shared family responsibilities.
- **Promote Responsible Use of Technology for Caregiving:** While technology can be a tool for managing care, employees should be educated about the potential drawbacks of over-relying on social media platforms for the direct care of children and elderly relatives, as this can detract from their focus on both professional responsibilities and personal well-being. Departments could offer guidance on more effective and balanced approaches to

utilizing technology in care management.

- **Ensure Equitable Distribution of Family Responsibilities:** Organizational policies and workplace culture should actively discourage the notion that female employees should bear the sole or primary responsibility for all family and household tasks. Initiatives promoting gender-neutral parenting and shared domestic labor should be encouraged.
- **Establish Counseling and Support Services:** Government departments should consider establishing confidential counseling services within the organization. These services can provide a safe space for married female employees to discuss the challenges they face in balancing their professional and personal lives and receive support in developing coping strategies and solutions.
- **Implement Emotional Intelligence Workshops:** To foster a more empathetic and supportive workplace, departments should host workshops aimed at enhancing employees' emotional intelligence. This can lead to greater awareness of the challenges faced by colleagues and promote a more understanding and collaborative environment.
- **Ensure Fair Workload Distribution:** Implementing a system for the fair distribution of tasks is crucial to prevent employees from being overburdened with excessive workloads. Regular reviews of workload distribution and mechanisms for addressing imbalances should be established.
- **Recognize Experience and Length of Service in Career Advancement:** Experience and length of service should be given due consideration in decisions related to career advancement. This acknowledges the valuable expertise and commitment of long-serving employees, including women who may have navigated career breaks due to family responsibilities.

## Conclusion

This geographically focused investigation within the Aligarh division's government departments illuminates the multifaceted challenges encountered by married female employees in their pursuit of Work-Life Harmony (WLH). While global discourse increasingly recognizes and addresses the imperative of supportive workplace policies, particularly in developed nations, this research underscores the nuanced realities within the Indian context. Despite a significant female presence in government employment, the study reveals persistent career interruptions and ongoing struggles for highly skilled women, often stemming from the intricate interplay of familial responsibilities, societal gender norms, and the enduring demands of motherhood and household management. These factors demonstrably impede career progression and impact overall well-being.

Our findings underscore that WLH is not merely an individual concern but a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness. The data from married female government employees in Aligarh reveal a strong dedication to their professional roles, coupled with a continuous negotiation of career aspirations and family obligations. Crucially, the study identifies supportive organizational cultures (characterized by empathetic leadership and collegial support), positive experiences in their parental roles, and robust spousal and domestic support systems as pivotal enablers of WLH. Furthermore, this research posits significant benefits for government organizations that proactively embrace WLH strategies, including enhanced employee retention, amplified productivity, and the cultivation of a more positive and equitable work environment.

Drawing from these insights, we propose actionable, evidence-based recommendations for government departments. These include fostering a culture of shared caregiving responsibilities, ensuring equitable workload distribution, establishing accessible support services (such as childcare and eldercare resources), and cultivating emotional intelligence and understanding within the workplace. By acknowledging the distinct challenges faced by married female employees in this specific context and implementing targeted in-

terventions, organizations can cultivate greater WLH, leading to tangible improvements in job satisfaction, enhanced productivity, and ultimately, a more resilient, engaged, and effective public sector workforce. This research contributes valuable, context-specific empirical evidence to the broader academic understanding of gender dynamics in the Indian public sector and provides a robust foundation for future research and the development of culturally relevant policies aimed at advancing gender equality and holistic employee well-being in similar socio-cultural contexts globally.

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