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A Study on Work-Life Balance of Women Faculty in Higher Education Institutions

Dr. Prabodhini B. Wakhare[1], Bhagyashree S. Borhade[2], Professor (Dr.) Shivaji Borhade[3]

[1]*Assistant Professor, Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana, Arts, Commerce & Science College, Wagholi, Pune, India*
[2]*Research Scholar, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, Centre: Prof. Ramkrishna More College, Akurdi, Pune, India*
[3]*Principal, Mahatma Gandhi Sarvodaya Sangh, Padmashri Manibhai Desai Mahavidyalaya, Uruli Kanchan, Pune, India*

***Abstract*— This research examines the work-life balance (WLB) of women faculty in higher education. It explores the factors that influence their ability to balance their work and personal lives. The data was collected from 130 respondents in aided and unaided colleges through a structured questionnaire. The results show that women faculty, in general, have a moderate level of WLB. However, their work responsibilities and family obligations, such as childcare and household chores, frequently interfere with their role as faculty members. The results indicate that a heavier workload and childcare responsibilities are negative factors in their WLB. Conversely, assistance from their institutions in the form of flexible working hours, mentorship programmes and family-friendly policies can mitigate their stress and improve their WLB. Comparing the two types of institutions, the women faculty in unaided colleges reported lower WLB, higher levels of emotional stress and poorer physical health because of their heavier workload and lower salaries. Poor WLB is very much associated with emotional exhaustion and the desire to leave the profession.**

***Keywords*—Work-life balance, Women faculty, Higher education institutions, Institutional support, Emotional stress and retention.**

I. Introduction

In today's workplace, work-life balance (WLB) is a major topic particularly in the field of education. Higher education in India has undergone significant change giving teachers additional duties. They now have to teach, conduct research, manage administration, guarantee quality, engage with the community and continue their professional education. The demands of their jobs frequently conflict with their responsibilities at home and in providing care which can be extremely taxing on their physical and emotional well-being. Regardless of their employment status women in many societies continue to perform more than their fair share of childcare, housework and elder care. Many female educators experience stress, burnout, decreased job satisfaction and poorer work performance as a result of feeling divided between work and home.

It is more difficult for them to balance work and family because of the drive for career advancement particularly in higher education where research and quantifiable results are important. Teachers in higher education are also under more pressure as a result of the shift to tech-based instruction and new educational models. Although these modifications have the potential to enhance education, they also necessitate greater time and adaptability from instructors. Therefore, it's critical to comprehend how female faculty members manage WLB in order to support their family lives, professional engagement and continued academic success.

This study will examine the factors that affect women faculty members' perceptions of their WLB in higher education. Additionally, it will examine the coping mechanisms used by female educators as well as the systems of support that either support or undermine their equilibrium.

The objective is to compile information that can be used to influence policy and establish more welcoming academic settings for women

II. Significance Of The Study

Academically, institutionally, socially and in terms of policy-making, this study is significant. First of all, it broadens our knowledge of WLB in Indian higher education particularly with regard to female faculty. It improves our understanding of gender roles, labour distribution and work-family issues in academia by offering solid evidence.

Second, colleges and universities can review their support systems and policies with the aid of the findings. This covers things like equitable workload distribution, childcare options, flexible scheduling and mental health assistance. Creating more gender-sensitive and inclusive environments is the aim.

Third, the study can result in programmes that support emotional well-being by identifying stressors and coping mechanisms. This can lessen burnout and increase female faculty members' motivation and job satisfaction.

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Fourth, the knowledge acquired can help organisations create plans to retain more female teachers and promote them to senior academic and administrative positions.

Fifth, WLB has an impact on families, gender equality and community well-being in addition to the workplace. This study can increase awareness of how crucial it is to divide household duties and give women equal opportunities.

Finally, the results can help educational institutions and legislators create policies that support gender parity in higher education.

III. Review Of Literature

Shah (2025) examined job satisfaction and WLB among middle-level female employees including teachers. The study confirmed that WLB affects retention by finding a correlation between perceived WLB and both emotional exhaustion and the intention to leave. A bibliographic analysis of WLB studies in higher education was carried out by Siem (2025). New trends like remote work flexibility and post-COVID digitalisation were highlighted in this study. Gaps in the assessment of gender-sensitive institutional policies were also identified. The review emphasised the necessity of measuring digital flexibility and institutional support. Workload, family obligations and organisational support were found to be significant determinants of women teachers' perceptions of WLB in a 2024 study. Additionally, it contrasted public and private universities, highlighting their distinctions. Factors influencing female faculty in private institutions were examined by Mor (2023). The study recommended customised HR practices for women and addressed topics like work overload and family support. Anbalagan (2022) found that the WLB of female teachers was greatly impacted by institutional workload and family-related factors. To improve results the study recommended more adaptable policies and awareness campaigns. In a cross-national study conducted in Oman, Manoharan et al. (2022) discovered a significant correlation between perceived WLB and job satisfaction. They observed that better retention and satisfaction were achieved through flexible scheduling and leave policies. Ensaio (2021) examined 53 articles in order to conduct a systematic review of WLB in higher education. He discovered that teachers' well-being is harmed by demanding workloads, administrative responsibilities and research pressures. Coping strategies and policies of institutions vary dramatically in different contexts.

A (2025) study on digital flexibility in India assessed what happened to the time use of women teachers as a result of remote teaching. While flexibility helped reduce commuting, it had a darker side, making work-home boundary blurring worse in the absence of clear institutional support. A study to investigate work-life balance of women faculty in higher education institutions in Delhi NCR. It was based on Fisher and noted that workload, family commitments and non-flexible policies were the major drivers of their balance.

Several regional cross-sectional studies in India revealed that role conflict was experienced (because of family caregiving and household expectations). Institutional support such as flexible hours can mitigate stress.

Women are frequently confronted with a trade-off between research productivity and family time indicating that this problem is not only common but also context-sensitive.

Overall, the majority of the literature supports a negative influence from excessive demands and role conflict on WLB for women faculty. It was difficult to tell amidst the disturbance that post-COVID digitalisation unleashed but there were both opportunities and challenges that made clear what a careful design of institutions is necessary nowadays. It was suggested that more robust research in colleges of India focusing on mediation should be conducted and comparison made between different types of institutions.

IV. Objectives Of The Study

The general objective of the study is to explore the WLB experience of women faculty from institutions of higher education and identify key factors that contribute to their sense of work/family harmony.

1. To assess the perception of WLB among women faculty in some selected colleges.
2. To explore the association of workload (teaching, research, administration) and perceived WLB.
3. To assess the impact of family caregiving demands on WLB for women faculty.
4. To explore the role of institutional supports (flexible hours, child care, leave policies and workload distribution) in moderating WLB.
5. To conduct a comparison between government and private institutions and urban and rural WLB.
6. To determine the coping strategies used by women faculty and propose ways that these could influence institutional interventions.

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V. Research Questions

1. What is the current perceived WLB for women faculty at the selected institutions of higher education?
2. What is the relationship between workload (teaching load, research pressure, administrative service) and perceived WLB?

The study examines how family caregiving responsibilities, such as childcare, eldercare and household duties, affect the WLB of women faculty members. It also explores the extent to which institutional support mechanisms including flexible work schedules, childcare facilities and leave policies contribute to improving their WLB. In addition, the research analyses whether there are notable differences in WLB among women faculty working in government versus private colleges as well as between urban and rural institutions. Finally, the study investigates the coping strategies adopted by women faculty to manage WLB and identifies which strategies they perceive as most effective.

VI. Hypotheses

1. H1: There is a significant negative relationship between workload and women faculty members' perceived WLB.
2. H2: Women faculty members who serve as primary caregivers tend to report lower levels of WLB compared to those who do not have caregiving responsibilities.
3. H3: Institutional support helps reduce the negative impact of workload on women faculty members' WLB.
4. H4: There is a significant difference in how women faculty members in aided colleges perceive their WLB compared to those working in unaided colleges.
5. H5: Poor WLB is associated with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and an increased intention to leave the profession or pursue alternative careers.

VII. Research Methodology

A. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. A survey method is used to collect data on the WLB of women faculty members.

The study also examines the relationship between workload, family responsibilities, institutional support and WLB.

B. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of women faculty members employed in higher education institutions specifically from aided and unaided colleges.

To ensure balanced representation and meaningful comparison a total of 130 respondents were selected for the study. The sample included 65 women faculty members from aided colleges and an equal number of 65 from unaided colleges. This distribution was deliberately chosen to allow for a fair comparison between the two groups and to support reliable analysis. The selected sample size is adequate for drawing valid conclusions and enhances the overall credibility of the study findings.

C. Research Design

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather information on demographic characteristics, workload, WLB and institutional support. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

VIII. Variables and Operational Definitions

WLB was treated as the dependent variable in this study. The independent variables included workload, family responsibilities and institutional support. Control variables consisted of age, marital status, number of children, job designation and type of institution. WLB was measured using the overall survey score with higher scores indicating a better level of balance.

IX. Techniques For Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics, while inferential techniques such as correlation analysis, t-tests, ANOVA and regression analysis were applied to examine relationships among the study variables. All statistical tests were conducted at a significance level of 0.05.

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X. Results And Discussion

TABLE I
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sr. No.	Variable	Category	Aided Colleges (n=65)	Unaided Colleges (n=65)	Total
1	Age	<30	12	16	28
		31–45	30	38	68
		>45	23	11	34
2	Marital Status	Single	12	20	32
		Married	47	44	91
		Divorced/Separated/ Widowed	6	1	7
3	Children	None	8	34	42
		1–2	54	30	84
		≥3	3	1	4
4	Qualification	M. Phil.	6	4	10
		Ph. D.	38	20	58
		NET-SET/Other	21	41	62
5	Academic Rank	Asst. Prof.	22	60	82
		Associate Professor	33	2	35
		Professor	10	3	13

(Source: Primary Survey)

The demographic profile of women faculty members from aided and unaided colleges (n=130) reveals several noteworthy differences between the two types of institutions. Faculty members below the age of 30 are more prevalent in unaided colleges whereas respondents in the 31–45 and above 45 age groups are more commonly found in aided colleges indicating a relatively more experienced workforce in aided institutions.

Marital status patterns show that the majority of respondents in both sectors are married; however, a higher proportion of single faculty members is observed in unaided colleges. In terms of parental status women faculty in unaided colleges are more likely to have no children while most faculty members in aided colleges report having one or two children.

Educational qualifications also differ across institution types. Aided colleges employ a greater proportion of faculty members with Ph.D. and M.Phil. qualifications whereas unaided colleges have a larger share of faculty with NET/SET or other qualifications. This difference is further reflected in academic rank distribution.

Senior academic positions such as Associate Professor and Professor are predominantly held by faculty in aided colleges while unaided colleges are largely staffed by Assistant Professors.

Overall, the findings suggest that aided colleges are characterised by a more experienced and academically qualified faculty while unaided colleges tend to employ younger faculty members occupying lower academic ranks. These demographic differences provide important context for understanding variations in WLB perceptions across institution types.

TABLE III
Workload and Salary Comparison

Sr. No.	Variable	Aided Colleges	Unaided Colleges
1	Sanctioned Workload	16–20 hrs/week	9/20 hrs/week (CHB/FT)
2	Actual Workload	16–20 hrs/week	20–24 hrs/week
3	Monthly Salary	₹1,50,000	₹20,000–30,000
4	WLB Score	3.54	3.15
5	Emotional Stress Score	3.42	3.72

(Source: Primary Survey)

The findings clearly highlight substantial differences in working conditions between aided and unaided colleges. Faculty members in aided colleges generally benefit from reasonable working hours and comparatively better salary structures. In contrast, faculty in unaided colleges are often officially appointed on a CHB (Clock Hour Basis) yet in practice they work hours that exceed those of full-time employees. These teachers typically handle a teaching workload of 20 to 24 hours per week while receiving significantly lower pay than their counterparts in aided colleges.

Even in aided colleges when vacant positions are temporarily filled by CHB faculty, these teachers are expected to manage 20 to 24 hours of work despite being formally appointed for only nine hours. However, their monthly earnings remain limited to around ₹30,000 even though they function similarly to full-time staff. The situation is more severe in unaided colleges, where salaries are extremely low- ranging from approximately ₹15,000 to ₹30,000 per month-even for full-time faculty members. Such low compensation creates considerable financial strain and contributes to heightened stress levels.

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As a result, faculty members in unaided colleges report lower WLB scores and higher emotional stress scores. This indicates greater difficulty in balancing professional responsibilities with personal life along with increased emotional exhaustion. Overall, unaided college faculty experience heavier workloads, lower pay and higher stress compared to those working in aided colleges.

Quantitatively, the WLB score of unaided college teachers is 0.39 points lower than that of aided college teachers clearly reflecting poorer WLB. At the same time, their emotional stress score is 0.30 points higher indicating greater psychological strain. These differences strongly suggest that excessive workload combined with inadequate compensation places unaided college faculty at a distinct disadvantage in managing personal life and emotional well-being.

TABLE IIIII
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Sr. No.	Variable	Aided Colleges	Unaided Colleges
1	Household Chores	3.80	4.10
2	Childcare Interference	3.85	4.12
3	Flexible Hours	3.40	2.85
4	Mentoring programmes	3.36	2.88
5	Childcare Facilities	1.20	0.70

(Source: Primary Survey)

Teachers working in unaided colleges spend more time on household responsibilities and childcare compared to their counterparts in aided colleges and these responsibilities more frequently interfere with their professional work. Aided colleges generally offer greater flexibility in working hours whereas unaided colleges provide very limited flexibility. Although mentoring programmes are available in both types of institutions the level of support is noticeably weaker in unaided colleges. Childcare facilities are extremely limited in both aided and unaided colleges creating significant challenges for teachers with young children. Overall, faculty members in unaided colleges face greater pressures at home while receiving comparatively less institutional support at work

TABLE IV
WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS

Sr. No.	Variable	Aided Colleges	Unaided Colleges
1	Self-reported WLB	3.54	3.15
2	Emotional Stress	3.42	3.72
3	Physical Health Impact	3.30	3.60

(Source: Primary Survey)

Teachers working in aided colleges are generally better able to maintain a healthy balance between their professional responsibilities and personal lives compared to those in unaided colleges. In unaided colleges,WLB is noticeably poorer and faculty members face greater difficulty in managing both work and family commitments. Emotional stress levels are also higher among unaided college teachers due to heavy work pressure and inadequate income. In addition, the negative impact on physical health is more pronounced among unaided faculty indicating that sustained workload and stress are affecting their overall well-being. Overall, faculty members in unaided colleges experience higher levels of stress and more health-related issues than their counterparts in aided institutions.

TABLE V
COPING STRATEGIES AND CAREER INTENTIONS

Sr. No.	Variable	Aided Colleges	Unaided Colleges
1	Task Planning & Prioritisation	3.72	3.60
2	Use of Technology	3.70	3.55
3	Work-Home Boundaries	3.60	3.40
4	WLB Influences Stay Decision	3.50	3.20
5	Consider Leaving Academia	2.90	3.40

(Source: Primary Survey)

Teachers in aided colleges demonstrate slightly better ability to plan and prioritise their tasks through the use of technology and are more effective at maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life compared to teachers in unaided colleges. For aided faculty members, WLB plays a stronger role in influencing their decision to continue working within the same institution. In contrast, teachers in unaided colleges feel less supported by their institutions and are more negatively affected by work-life imbalance. As a result, a higher proportion of unaided college teachers consider leaving academic positions due to these ongoing challenges. Overall, faculty in unaided colleges experience greater pressure, insecurity and uncertainty regarding their long-term continuation in the academic profession.

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XI. Testing Of Hypotheses

TABLE VI
Statistical Results of Hypotheses on Work-life Balance

Sr. No.	Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Interpretation
1	**H1:** Higher workload reduces WLB	Pearson Correlation	r=-.52, p<0.01	Supported - Workload has a significant negative effect on work–life balance.
2	**H2:** Caregiving duties lower WLB	Independent sample t-test	t=3.41, p<0.01	Supported - Women who are primary caregivers report significantly lower WLB.
3	**H3:** Institutional support moderates workload–WLB relationship	Regression Analysis	β=0.31, p<0.05	Supported - Institutional support weakens the negative effect of high workload.
4	**H4:** Aided vs Unaided college faculty differ in WLB	Independent sample t-test	t=2.84, p<0.01	Supported - Aided college faculty show significantly higher WLB.
5	**H5:** Poor WLB increases emotional exhaustion and intention to leave	Pearson Correlation	r=-0.48, p<0.01	Supported - Lower WLB is linked to greater burnout and career withdrawal intentions.

XII. Findings

The study reveals that women faculty members generally experience a moderate level of WLB with an average score of 3.41. This indicates that their balance is neither particularly strong nor extremely poor; however, many women continue to struggle with effectively managing both professional and personal responsibilities. Workload emerges as a major source of stress as women faculty juggle multiple roles including teaching, research, administrative duties, NAAC-related work and digital teaching responsibilities which often feel overwhelming. These challenges are more intense for faculty working in unaided colleges, where heavier workloads combined with lower salaries further increase stress levels.

Family responsibilities such as childcare and household duties frequently interfere with academic work. Married women faculty members with children-especially those with children under the age of 12-report the lowest WLB scores.

Institutional support plays a positive role in easing these pressures. Colleges that offer flexible schedules, mentoring programmes, leave options and emotional support help reduce stress to some extent. However, childcare facilities remain largely absent in both aided and unaided colleges continuing to pose a major challenge for women faculty.

Poor WLB has serious consequences for health and job retention. Women faculty in unaided colleges report higher emotional stress and more physical health problems. A strong relationship is observed between low WLB and the intention to leave academia. Although women faculty often rely on planning, time management and technology to cope with these demands many still feel overwhelmed due to insufficient institutional support.

XIII. Recommendations

A. Recommendations for Higher Education Institutions

a. Institutions should implement family-friendly policies such as flexible working hours, hybrid teaching options and leave provisions for personal or family emergencies.

b. Ensuring a fair and manageable workload is essential which can be achieved by setting limits on teaching hours and rotating responsibilities related to NAAC, examinations and administrative work.

c. Improving salary structures and job security is crucial particularly in unaided colleges where transitioning from CHB and part-time appointments to permanent positions is strongly recommended.

d. Establishing on-campus support systems such as childcare centres, lactation rooms, wellness facilities and mentoring programmes for women faculty would be highly beneficial.

e. Institutions should integrate mental health initiatives including counselling services, stress-management workshops and burnout prevention programmes

B. Recommendations for Government and Regulatory Bodies

a. Government and regulatory authorities should develop and enforce gender-sensitive human resource guidelines across all higher education institutions.

b. WLB indicators should be incorporated into NAAC and AQAR evaluation frameworks to ensure faculty well-being is valued alongside academic performance.

c. Maternity, parental and family care leave policies should be expanded and standardised.

C. Recommendations for Women Faculty

a. Women faculty members should continue using effective planning strategies, boundary-setting techniques and technological tools to manage their responsibilities.

b. Building strong peer-support networks can help in sharing workloads, mentoring one another and providing emotional encouragement.

Additionally, pursuing professional development opportunities can strengthen career confidence and improve long-term mobility within academia.

XIV. Conclusion

The study indicates that women faculty members in higher education face persistent challenges in achieving WLB due to heavy workloads and significant family responsibilities. While institutional support has the potential to reduce stress such support is often uneven and inadequate particularly in unaided colleges. Poor WLB contributes to emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction and a stronger intention to leave the academic profession. These findings emphasise the urgent need for gender and family-sensitive reforms along with fair and supportive working conditions. Implementing such changes can enhance the well-being of women educators and improve their long-term retention in academic careers.

XV. Scope for Further Research

Future research may expand on the current findings by exploring several important areas. Longitudinal studies could examine how WLB evolves across different career stages such as early career, mid-career and senior faculty positions. Qualitative approaches including in-depth interviews and focus group discussions may provide deeper insights into the emotional and socio-cultural dimensions of WLB.

Comparative studies could investigate differences between STEM and non-STEM disciplines as well as between public and private universities and urban versus rural institutions. Further research may also assess the impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence on academic workload, particularly in the post-COVID era. Additionally, examining the role of spousal support and prevailing gender norms could offer valuable perspectives on WLB outcomes. Exploring mediation models-such as the relationship between workload and stress, job satisfaction and employee retention-would further strengthen understanding in this area.

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