

WORKAHOLISM: A DISTURBING ELEMENT IN BALANCING WORK-LIFE**Dr. Hema Mirji****Assistant Professor,****Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University,****Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune- 38****Abstract:**

An individual must give importance to both work and life. They both are the two sides of a 'balance'. But, in today's competitive world, this balance is missing. The priorities of the life have changed. A workaholic person is obsessed with the work. Though it may connote the positive attitude towards the work and to the organization but the research has marked the negative side of such an attitude which suggests distortion of the reality entailing personal and professional loss. This paper is based on review of literature describes workaholism, its consequences and provides suggestions to restoring balance for a workaholic.

Keywords: *Workaholic, Workaholism, Work-Life Balance*

The 'Work' and 'Life' Aspects of Balance -

Importance of work can't be neglected because work gives us a status and a stature in the society. Most of the time, people are recognized by the occupation and designation that they enjoy. Work, often termed as a job or a career provides us money, which gives us a power to buy anything, we wish for (Beker, 2013). We can buy things that we need, live in a good place, educate ourselves and our family, and take care of our health. This means, to live our life one must work and earn money. Without a job or a work we cannot lead a life.

Family is a part and parcel of our life. It teaches us the value of love, affection, care, truthfulness, self-confidence and provides us strength, which is necessary to get success in life. This is where you are completely tension free and everyone is there to love and respect you, help you and take care of you (Beker, 2013). Family encourages you to survive through tough times and bring joy and happiness into your life. It gives more meaning to our identity. Family life is important in the sense that it gives basic strength to a person.

So, an individual must give importance to both these aspects. They both are the two sides of a coin called 'life'. But, in today's competitive world, this balance is missing. The priorities of the life have

changed. Most often career is given importance and other part of life - family and health gets a setback. In the words of Gary Keller, the writer of 'The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results'. "Work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls - family, health, friends, and integrity are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, and perhaps even shattered."

The need for Balancing Work-Life:

Being a fastest growing economic power in the world, India has already marked its presence among the emerging superpowers. This fastest growing economy with its 60% young population has many opportunities to capture both nationally and globally. With the onset of liberalization and increasing competition from global corporations, Indian firms have raised the benchmarks on productivity and quality. Many Indian organizations are characterised by long working hours, stressful deadlines to meet and hence leaving their employees struggling to maintain work-life balance (Casio, 2010). Staff within an organization, all individuals working in organization including workers, employers, etc., is considered as the major factor positively influencing productivity within every organization (Moghli & Azizi, 2011). And in the light of increasing competition organizations are experiencing implementation of downsizing policies and restructuring programs to increase expectations of workers and increase their working hours (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Demanding careers in such corporations is exposing the employees with the problem of stress and health related issues leaving the question of Work-Life Balance which has to be addressed and resolved.

Understanding Workaholism :

Workaholic person is obsessed with the work. Though it may connote the positive attitude towards the work and to the organization but the research has marked the negative side of such an attitude which suggests distortion of the reality entailing personal and professional loss. Workaholism is a soul-destroying addiction that changes people's personality and the values they live by. It distorts the reality of each family member, threatens family security and often leads to family break-up. Tragically, workaholics eventually suffer the loss of personal and professional integrity (Barbara, 2011). The term generally implies that the person enjoys their work. It can also imply that they simply feel compelled to

do it. Experts say the never-ending work-related activity masks anxiety, low self-esteem, and intimacy problems (Howze, 2012).

In the given terminology 'workaholic' ; work is associated with a paying job which has the fixed timings and has associated physical and psychological demands to perform it. It may also refer to different career choices such as music, arts and sports. It is found that workaholics gets involved so much in their work or relative activities and tend to lose the track of time neglecting their family and other social relations. Subsequently, the feeling function *no longer informs judgment*. The emphasis too often is placed on the excessive hours, workaholic gradually becomes emotionally crippled and addicted to power and control in a compulsive drive to gain approval and public recognition of success (Barbara, 2011).

In workaholics, there is high degree of work involvement people are very desirous and feeling driven to their works (Piotrowski & Vodanovich, 2008). With addictions to alcohol, drugs or gambling, workaholics' denial and destructive behavior will persist despite feedback from loved ones or danger signs such as deteriorating relationships. Poor health is another warning sign. Because there's less of a social stigma attached to workaholism than to other addictions, health symptoms can easily go undiagnosed or unrecognized(Gupta, 2011).

According to A. A. Ahmadi and S.Karimi Asl (2013) workaholism is not the same as hard working because of the following reasons:

1. Hard workers normally consider their work as an obligatory task, which can meet their physiological requirements while a workaholic is a person who believes his workplace as a safe haven wherein he/she can be free from unwanted feelings and obligations.
2. Hard workers know how to split their times between their work and their family and friends as well as leisure activities but a workaholic person dedicates the highest priority to his/her work since the work requirements do not let him/her allocate sufficient time to his/her family and friends.
3. Physiologically, workaholic people are reporting release of adrenaline in their bodies to deal with the work necessities and hard working conditions but hard working people do not have such a feeling.
4. Hard workers are able to control their desires to work but workaholic ones cannot do this. A workaholic person is always thinking of his/her work even when he/she is playing golf or he/she is watching a theatre in the school of his/her child.

To conclude, a hard worker who is emotionally present for all family members, co-workers and friends, and who manages to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal responsibility is not a workaholic (Barabara, 2011).

Causes of Workaholism:

According to Obando(2012) causes of workaholism are being molded into giving more importance to work since childhood, seeking complete perfection in the work, having role models who are completely lost in their work, miserable economic scenario and rising competition which leads to pressure or burden to the individuals to become workaholic.

Consequences of Workaholism on 'Work' and 'Life':

Workaholics also fear of failure and the need to control their lives forces themselves to work harder and harder until they suffer physical and emotional side effects like headaches, heart attacks, anxiety, severe back pains and stress. They isolate themselves from family, friends, spouse and other relatives which is an essential part of anybody's life (Obando , 2012). They avoid going to vacation and tend to feel more comfortable with fellow-workers than with family members. Moreover, they tend to be selfish which causes others humiliated. As workaholics have an obsession to complete the job also exhibit compulsive behavior to control the outcome of the job. The friends and relatives give up the expectations from such workaholics, ultimately spoiling the relationships.

Suggestion for restoring balance for a workaholic:

Unhealthy work addictions are best dealt with by counselors and therapists who specialize in workplace problems. Along with counselors individuals who are on the edge of workaholism can adopt following measures:

Suggestions For Individuals:

- a. **Time management** – To enjoy stress free life and excellent health we must schedule the time. One must spread the time on the basis of priority of work. There should be proper distribution of time for work and family, friends, relatives and for self. This will help to schedule and manage the time adequately. The list of activities to accomplish within a given time or in a day, can be scheduled on ABC criteria. The most urgent and important can be given A tag, then of moderately important and required to completed can be give B tag and finally not so important

type of work can be tagged as C. Thus, one can prepare *to do list* on everyday basis and do them accordingly.

- b. **Engaging in hobbies and sports** – enjoying completely different activities than that of a routine nature, gives the mind a great relief. Thus having hobbies and enjoying favourite time-pass would make individual more relaxed and confident. Engaging in sport activities keeps our heart healthy and gives more oxygen to the body and helps reduce the stress hormones and increase the stamina of the body.

Suggestions for organizations:

- a. **Arranging Stress - Management and Meditation work-shop:** frequently will help the over-stressed employees to cope up with the present health related issues.
- b. **Sponsoring yoga/meditation/gym facilities** - as yoga/meditation/workout in gym have proven remedies in improving mental and physical health of the employee. Sponsoring such facilities will help the employees to cope with work and life stress.
- c. **Providing counseling and consultation facilities** – in case employees need some help related to solve their personal problems, providing counseling and consultation facilities will be good scheme. Unhealthy work addictions are best dealt with by counselors and therapists who specialize in workplace problems.

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