



# Work–Life Balance And Mental Well-Being Of Working Mothers In Urban India: A Sociological Study

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## Abstract

The participation of women in paid employment has increased substantially in urban India; however, working mothers continue to experience significant challenges in balancing professional and family responsibilities. The present study examines the relationship between work–life balance and mental well-being among working mothers in urban India from a sociological perspective. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from **100 working mothers** employed in government and private sectors using a structured questionnaire. The findings reveal that long working hours, domestic workload, limited workplace support, and persistent gender norms contribute to work–life imbalance and adversely affect mental well-being. The study highlights the need for supportive workplace policies, equitable distribution of household responsibilities, and social awareness to promote the mental well-being of working mothers.

**Keywords:** Work–Life Balance, Mental Well-Being, Working Mothers, Gender Roles, Urban India

## 1. Introduction

The growing participation of women in paid employment has become a defining characteristic of urban Indian society. Rapid economic development, urbanization, expansion of educational opportunities, and increasing living costs have encouraged a large number of women, including mothers, to enter the workforce. Paid employment offers women economic independence, social recognition, and opportunities for personal and professional growth. However, for working mothers, employment also brings complex challenges associated with managing professional responsibilities alongside family and childcare obligations.

Within the Indian socio-cultural framework, women continue to be perceived as primary caregivers and custodians of household responsibilities, regardless of their employment status. Consequently, working mothers are often required to perform dual roles, leading to role conflict, time constraints, and emotional strain. The pressure to meet both work-related expectations and family demands frequently results in difficulties in maintaining an effective work–life balance. Prolonged imbalance between these roles can adversely affect mental well-being, manifesting in stress, anxiety, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion.

From a sociological perspective, work–life balance extends beyond an individual issue and reflects broader structural and cultural factors, including gender norms, family systems, and organizational policies. Understanding the relationship between work–life balance and the mental well-being of working mothers is therefore essential for designing supportive family structures, gender-sensitive workplace practices, and effective social policies.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing participation of working mothers in urban India, many continue to face difficulties in balancing professional and family responsibilities. Extended working hours, rigid organizational structures, inadequate childcare facilities, and lack of workplace support intensify stress and psychological distress. Persistent gender norms further burden women with primary domestic responsibilities. Poor work–life balance negatively affects mental well-being, family relationships, and job performance, indicating the need for systematic sociological investigation.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of work–life balance among working mothers.
2. To evaluate the mental well-being of working mothers.
3. To examine the relationship between work–life balance and mental well-being.
4. To identify social and workplace factors influencing work–life balance.
5. To suggest measures for improving work–life balance and mental well-being.

## 4. Hypotheses

### Null Hypotheses ( $H_0$ )

- $H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between work–life balance and mental well-being of working mothers.  
 $H_{02}$ : There is no significant association between workplace support and work–life balance.  
 $H_{03}$ : There is no significant relationship between domestic responsibilities and mental well-being.

### Research Hypotheses ( $H_1$ )

- $H_{11}$ : There is a significant relationship between work–life balance and mental well-being.  
 $H_{12}$ : Workplace support significantly influences work–life balance.  
 $H_{13}$ : Domestic responsibilities significantly affect mental well-being.

## 5. Research Methodology

### Research Design

The present study adopted a **descriptive sociological research design** to examine the level of work–life balance and mental well-being among working mothers. This design was considered appropriate as it enables systematic description and analysis of existing social conditions without manipulation of variables.

### Area of the Study

The study was conducted in **selected urban areas of India**, where women's participation in paid employment is relatively high and work–family role demands are more pronounced.

### Population of the Study

The population comprised **working mothers employed in government and private sectors**. Only those mothers who were currently employed and residing with their children were included in the study.

### Sample Size

A sample of **100 working mothers** was selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate to obtain reliable insights into the work–life balance and mental well-being of the respondents.

### Sampling Technique

A **simple random sampling technique** was employed to select respondents from the study population, ensuring equal representation and minimizing selection bias.

### Tool for Data Collection

Data were collected using a **structured questionnaire** developed by the researcher. The tool consisted of the following components:

- **Socio-demographic variables** such as age, education, occupation, and number of children
- **Work–life balance scale** assessing time management, work demands, and family responsibilities
- **Mental well-being indicators** measuring stress levels, emotional exhaustion, and psychological health

### Method of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using **both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques**, including frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis, to examine the relationship between work–life balance and mental well-being.

## 6. Results and Discussion (Sample = 100)

### 6.1 Work–Life Balance

Out of 100 respondents, a majority reported difficulty in maintaining work–life balance. Long working hours and lack of flexible schedules were the most commonly reported causes. Mothers employed in private organizations reported comparatively higher imbalance than those in government sectors.

## 6.2 Domestic Responsibilities

A large proportion of respondents stated that they remained primarily responsible for household work and childcare despite full-time employment. Limited spousal and family support significantly increased time pressure and fatigue, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

## 6.3 Workplace Support

More than half of the respondents reported inadequate workplace support, including limited flexibility, insufficient maternity benefits, and lack of childcare facilities. Respondents with better organizational support demonstrated improved work–life balance and lower stress levels.

## 6.4 Mental Well-Being

High levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and feelings of guilt were reported by many respondents. Mothers experiencing poor work–life balance also reported lower levels of mental well-being, indicating a strong association between the two variables.

## 6.5 Relationship Between Variables

Statistical analysis revealed a **significant positive relationship** between work–life balance and mental well-being. Improved balance was associated with reduced stress and better psychological health, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis.

## 7. Major Findings

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- The majority of working mothers reported experiencing **moderate to high levels of work–life imbalance**, primarily due to competing professional and family responsibilities.
- **Domestic responsibilities were found to be unequally distributed**, with working mothers continuing to bear the primary burden of household work and childcare.
- **Workplace support**, including flexible working arrangements and supportive organizational policies, was found to have a **significant influence on work–life balance**.
- Poor work–life balance was observed to have a **negative impact on the mental well-being** of working mothers, leading to increased stress, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion.
- **Family support and organizational assistance** played a crucial role in reducing stress levels and improving the overall mental well-being of working mothers.

## 8. Suggestions

1. Introduction of flexible working hours and remote work options.
2. Provision of workplace childcare facilities.
3. Promotion of shared domestic responsibilities within families.
4. Implementation of gender-sensitive workplace policies.
5. Awareness programs addressing mental health of working mothers.

## 9. Conclusion

The study concludes that working mothers in urban India face significant challenges in balancing professional and family roles. These challenges are deeply rooted in social norms, workplace practices, and unequal domestic responsibilities. Poor work–life balance adversely affects mental well-being, emphasizing the need for coordinated efforts from families, employers, and policymakers. Creating supportive and inclusive environments is essential for enhancing the quality of life and mental well-being of working mothers.

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