

MOVING FROM WORK-LIFE BALANCE TO WORK-LIFE NATURAL FUSION

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ABSTRACT

Analysing the newly proposed concept of Work-Life Natural Fusion (WLNF), that brings in light the explanations from Bharat's Ancient Scripture 'The Bhagwad Gita' and to evaluate the way to analyse the inter-relationship among office role, personal role and social role. Work-Life Natural Fusion can be explained as the simultaneous management of Work and Life demands while one is still at work. While a thorough review of literature to broadly understand the existing concepts and discussions with experts indicates the superiority of Work-Life Natural Fusion over the classical concept of Work-Life Balance; the researchers propose that WLNF could be analysed with the help of suitable quantitative and qualitative tools to standardize its measurement and exploring the need of the implementation of the concept. After taking into consideration the four quadrants in one's life- Work, family, Friends and Self, and a few other factors, a set of questions has been prepared to understand the saatvikta (Dharmic and good thoughts and actions), holistic perspective of employees etc. WLNF seems to be a relevant concept and could be researched further to establish if it is superior to work life balance. Adopting the concept with Bhagwad Gita is the natural guide identifying one's calling, making greatest contribution to society on their part through their work. Can provide better alternative to Work-Life balance and make people more productive and happier. The paper proposes a novel approach to achieve effectiveness in all spheres of life. The paper also adopts a synthesis of ancient and contemporary ideas to enrich the quality of work.

Key words: Work-Life Balance, Work-Life Natural Fusion, Bhagwad Gita, Indian Management, Bharatiya Prabandhan

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INTRODUCTION

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्तेमाफलेषुकदाचन ।
माकर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मातेसङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

*karmany-evādhikārastemāphaleṣhukadāchana
mā karma-phala-heturbhūrmātesaṅgo'stvakarmani*
(Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 2, Shlok 47)

The need of the current generations, who are entering their jobs, are less focused on the salary they earn and more on the balance they look to achieve in their personal and professional lives. But according to the current trend in the work culture, it is difficult to find a balance between the two as the line separating the work and the personal life is blurring; thus, fusing the two into one and it has got really arduous for one to find parity betwixt in the two. Here, the teachings of the Bagvatham – The holy text would come to the rescue by helping us realize the importance and implementation of Work-Life Natural Fusion.

Purohit (2018) discussed that Work-Life Natural Fusion (WLNF) endeavours to explore the newly coined phenomenon by analysing the case of married women who are working with PSU Banks trying to manage their work life. Many interesting observations were registered and were further worked upon to broadly understand their connect with the existing concepts and understandings through various discussions with the experts and referring to the scholarly writings on integrative-intelligence and VUCA that throws innovative insights and provoking thoughts towards the concept, this also validated and acknowledged the need to further develop it.

First, the need is to understand the concept of work-life balance. Work-Life balance is defined as the balance between the number of hours allotted to work versus the number of hours allotted to personal life which might include activities that focus on health improvement, time spent with one's family, or simply the leisure time in order achieve a sense of achievement and enjoyment at the same time. It simply does not mean to create a balance between the time allotted to professional or personal life but to ensure fluidity between work & life as well which mostly is very hard to achieve subconsciously following the work life balance concepts. Work-life balance varies over time of working, as it would be depend upon your marital status, your tenure of work etc.

A research study by Schein (1984) focused on the very crucial fact of the changing work environment. It cannot be denied that the work environment is changing, there are pros and cons associated with these drivers and complexity. Expectedly creative methods and approaches emerge to deal with the issues that were non-existent in the past. A slow shift to Work- Life Integration from the term- Work Life Balance was also developed. Here, for the consideration of work choices, Lifestyle of the employees was created as a separate career anchor.

A research study by Gambles, R., Lewis, S., & Rapoport, R. (2006) looks at the role of technology and the measured shift in its usage which helps to move from the trend of WLB to Work Life Integration.

Kossek and Lambert (2008), in their study focused more on the literature of WLB where the employees who wanted to be successful in their careers considered to follow a pattern in their own way to manage their work and life issues as such looking to understand their requirements by initiating policies and procedures which suits them

While the study by Haeger, D. L., & Lingham, T. (2014) exhibits a strong evidence on the fact that the usage of technologies can consistently affect the employees managing both work and life spheres.

A research study by Sharma (2006) focused on the four pillars – Home, Office, Society and Temple i.e., The HOST Model which emphasis on having a fusion between home, office, social-interactions and spiritual transcendence. HOST model suggests four kinds of values which are based on the 3T Model of Values- Transactional, Transformational, Transcendental. Wherein the office represents transactional values, society represents transformational values, temple represents transcendental values and family represents all the three.

As it is known, to succeed in one's career, it involves dedication which would involve long hours at work and dealing constantly with difficult and complex situations over a period of time with which often leads to stress and tension. In order to avoid spilling negativity over personal life and still having a sense of satisfaction one tries to find a balance between Work and personal life. It has been found that the failed attempt to maintain a balance between

them often leads to the spill of negativity in one's life along with distractions at work. Given below are a few pointers supporting the criticism of work-life balance:-

- *Lack of effectiveness:* Work-Life Balance suggests giving equal time to work as well as personal life which results in the lack of effectiveness in one's life because it becomes a constant tussle between the various roles a women has to play in her day-to-day life and this tussle results in degradation of mental and physical well-being. Googins (1991) discussed these conflicts as a social earthquake affecting the family, the organizations, corporation and the society at large. Marissa Mayer, who is the CEO of Yahoo, joined work right after the birth of her son, suggests that a person should have a whole perspective of one's as a central part of life than an obligatory entity.
- *Insufficiency to define success in all parts of one's life:* What success may be for one person might not be for another, definition of one's success is entirely personal. Some people relate success to the kind of money they make while others relate success to the leisure they gain. For example, Dyke & Murphy (2006) found that gender significantly determines the definition of success. Researchers suggest that to obtain a holistic approach to work and life, one must ensure the quality of time and effort spend on the major stakeholders in their life, which is a failed insurance with regard to work-life balance.
- *Inability to maintain control:* To maintain a balance between the professional and personal life, it has been suggested to take control of one's life because if one fails to do so, they might be stuck in a place which is an extensive misfit for them, and working in a place that is not whole heartedly accepted by one leads to unhappiness and stress. While one is busy in her life to maintain a balance between work and life exclusively, they fail to give themselves time to explore their own history, preferences, motivation and biases. It is totally unfair for one to immerse themselves so much into maintaining their work and life in a balanced way that end up losing or ignoring their own health needs and other personal needs.
- *Technology making the 'balance' harder to achieve:* In earlier times, the employees were connected to their work places only during the office hours; they would then actually find some leisure time off work which allowed them to maintain an easy balance but in an age

of technological advances employees are always reachable even off duty. A study suggests, in a developed country, a person on an average spends at least 3 hours per day for work matter even during the vacation instead of enjoying the time away from work.

- *Work-Life Natural Fusion:* As per Purohit (2018), Work-Life Natural Fusion can be explained as the simultaneous management of Work and Life demands while one is still at work. Researchers site that employees, majorly the youth, manages to use social media constantly at work in order to maintain their personal life while at work. In addition to which the employers believe that the employees are now far more accessible than ever because of this cohesively connected network. Therefore, this blurring of the boundaries between the work and life introduces us to the concept of Work-Life Natural Fusion. There is a fine differentiation between the two approaches that is the work life balance and the work life fusion. Traditionally its believed that in order to be truly happy one must achieve the 'balance' between Work and Life, else that would lead to focusing so much on ones work that they would not be able to enjoy the fulfilling experiences in life. This is entirely based on treating the two concepts as completely conflicting to each other, which obviously is not the case. This traditional definition has to change with the changing work culture, technological advancements and the changing environment, the concept of work-life natural fusion has to be taken in consideration, understanding that work and life are not conflicting notions but indeed they co-exist.
- *Need of Work-Life Natural Fusion:* In addition to overcoming the limitations of work-life balance, there are more reasons for the need for work-life natural fusion, for a healthier life in the young working cohort.
- *Meaningful daily:* Work-Life Natural Fusion not only allows one to achieve at work but also enjoy the achievements in all the four quadrants of life- Work, Family, Self and Friends etc. The fusion between the work and life helps one to realize the enjoyment in every achievement of live which allows you to be internally happy and push to a healthy self.

कर्मणैवहिंसंसिद्धिमास्थिताजनकादयः ।

लोकसंग्रहमेवापिसंपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥

(Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 3, Shlok 20)

Bhagwan suggested that one should *work for the benefit of people who are in the ambit of his /her region of responsibility* (loksangrah). King Janak has been applauded in this shlok for his mastery in this art.

- *Technology is making the discretion practically impossible:* It has been widely observed that employees have developed the habit of being active on their mobile phones and mails almost all the times, which shows that the fear of missing out on important discussions and details drive them such that even when on vacations they cannot fully separate work from their lives which certainly proves the need of a more sorted approach like work life natural fusion.
- *Flexibility leads to productivity:* This has been observed, majorly with the millennial that the concept of working at an eight-hour stretch has now become uncommon, instead the associated prefer to take small breaks within working hours and extend the period later. This negotiable nature of the flexibility in the work hours and the ability of working from home have indicated a high rise in the efficiency and productivity, if the associates are held accountable for their work. This highly shows the need of work life natural fusion.

Maintaining a Samatva Buddhi

नद्वेष्यकुशलं कर्म कुशलेनानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ १८- १० ॥

Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 18, Shlok 10)

The shlok suggests that one should neither hate less skilled works nor get attached in the skilled works and keep on performing action. Such a person who is able to see both type of works as same is ascetic in real sense.

This approach can help diffuse the dichotomies which have percolated in the society. One can observe a trend of 'hate-love' relationship between dualities like Work-life, my job-not

my job, work done at home is menial-official work is superior, clerical work-creative work etc. This shlok thus provides a guideline to transcend from such dichotomies and approach life in holistic manner.

OBJECTIVES

- i. To analyse the concept of the newly proposed Work-Life Natural Fusion (WLNF).
- ii. To evaluate the way to analyse the newly proposed Work-Life Natural Fusion (WLNF).

METHODOLOGY

Type of Study: Exploratory and Analytical

Approach: To begin with, the researchers have explored relevant literature and attempted to understand the limitations of the popular concept of Work-Life Balance. This was followed by analysis of learning from The Bhagvad Gita; discussions and writing by the experts namely Prof. Subhash Sharma, Dr. Saagarika Ghoshal along with the scholarly writings of Prof. Sharda Nandram, Dr. Puneet. K. Bindlish and Mr. Wim A. J. Keizer and their own experience of interaction with working women to propose a set of questions to analyse the new concept. Prof. Purohit and Dr. Joshi conducted a Shastrarth (2018), brainstorming to arrive at other conceptual dimensions of the WLNF.

Tool of Data Collection: Self designed questionnaire drawing from discussion with above experts, pilot study and cronbach's alpha. Items with cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 have been considered.

Data Collection: It was also decided to survey stakeholders to disseminate knowledge about impact of WLNF and a beginning has been made by surveying the alumnae from Banasthali Vidyapith. A random sample of 406 women respondents located all across the country and few from abroad could be drawn using social media, personal meetings and google docs.

Need for Survey: Work-Life Natural Fusion

After taking into consideration the four quadrants in one's life- Work, family, Friends and self, and a few other factors, a set of questions has been has been evaluated to understand the

saatvikta (Dharmic and good thoughts and actions), holistic perspective of employees etc. A survey has been conducted with focus on the Alumnae of Banasthali Vidyapith classified based on type of industry, the cadre etc. The survey could make use of the Likert's Scale of 1-5 values indicating the extent of agreement for following items:

- i. I am able to understand 'priority' among various kinds of official responsibilities.
- ii. I am able to understand 'priority' among various kinds of family responsibilities.
- iii. I do over react to joy and sorrows.
- iv. I rank myself as a very saatvik (in terms of good by thoughts, working habits, and eating habits) person.
- v. I use mobile phones, internet and other technologies mostly for productive purposes.
- vi. I encourage my family members to attend some of the functions/ programs organized in the University campus.
- vii. My actions are based on some principles and understanding of the situation.
- viii. Life is not just about satisfying material needs of self and family.
- ix. I do not face any criticism at work place when I work from home.
- x. I do not face any criticism at workplace if I carry a personal work at office.
- xi. I can well manage flexible timings when required (to organize conferences/meetings/ graduation ceremony/other college events)
- xii. I pay reasonable attention to my good health
- xiii. I can easily attend a family member while at work.
- xiv. I can easily do some office task while at home.
- xv. In case when any priority issue arises at home and till I have decided to attend the issue in a short while, I am able to focus on my tasks at my work place.
- xvi. I can easily connect with a family member while at work.
- xvii. I can easily connect to office while at home.
- xviii. I believe in giving 100% to both work and family.

- xix. People believe that I am very well able to play my role in office and family.
- xx. I rank myself as a very *saatvik* (in terms of regular yoga & exercise and keeping very low greed or fear) person.

Analysis: Factor analysis on the SPSS platform has been used to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

Interpretation of Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to construct the factors affecting the concept of Work-Life Natural Fusion. Table 1 displays the total variance explained at seven stages for factors that affect the Work-Life Natural Fusion in the lives of working cohorts. Seven factors were extracted because their eigenvalues greater than 1. When seven factors were extracted, then 71.622 percent of the variance would be explained.

Table 2 shows the rotated factor matrix for the questionnaire. After performing

Varimax Rotation Method with Kaiser Normalization, Factor 1 comprised six items with factor loadings ranging from 0.46 to 0.73. The items in Factor 1 are Q6, Q7, Q8, Q15, Q18 and Q19. Factor 2 comprised of three items with factor loadings ranging from 0.48 to 0.81. The items in Factor 2 are Q4, Q5 and Q20. Factor 3 comprised two items with factor loadings ranging from 0.64 to 0.86. The items in Factor 3 are Q13 and Q16. Factor 4 comprised of four items with factor loadings ranging from 0.49 to 0.77. The items in Factor 4 are Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q12. Factor 5 comprised 2 items with factor loadings ranging from 0.76 to 0.81. The items in Factor 5 are Q1 and Q2. Each of Factor 6 comprised of two items with factor loadings ranging from 0.78 to 0.82. The items in Factor 6 are Q14 and Q17. Factor 7 comprised one item. The factor loading is 0.926. The item in Factor 7 is Q3.

Seven new factors were successfully constructed using factor analysis and assigned as the factors affecting the Work-Life Natural Fusion. Table 3 shows the name of the new factors and percentage of variance explained for each of the factors. The first factor shows the highest percentage of variance explained when it was extracted.

Table 1: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sum of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Percentage Of Variance	Cumulative Percentage	Total	Percentage Of Variance	Cumulative Percentage	Total	Percentage Of Variance	Cumulative Percentage
1	5.739	28.694	28.694	5.739	28.694	28.694	2.676	13.382	13.382
2	2.451	12.255	40.949	2.451	12.255	40.949	2.184	10.919	24.300
3	1.552	7.760	48.709	1.552	7.760	48.709	2.129	10.644	34.944
4	1.292	6.458	55.167	1.292	6.458	55.167	1.127	10.636	45.580
5	1.161	5.804	60.971	1.161	5.804	60.971	1.071	10.354	55.934
6	1.126	5.631	66.602	1.126	5.631	66.602	1.863	9.314	65.934
7	1.004	5.020	71.622	1.004	5.020	71.622	1.275	6.374	71.622
8	.863	4.313	75.935						
9	.745	3.726	79.660						
10	.740	3.700	83.360						
11	.618	3.092	86.482						
12	.532	2.659	89.111						
13	.462	2.308	91.419						
14	.396	1.981	93.400						
15	.348	1.740	95.139						
16	.318	1.592	96.731						
17	.231	1.156	97.887						
18	.178	.889	98.776						
19	.146	.731	99.507						
20	.099	.493	100.000						

Source: Authors' own Calculation

Table 2: Rotated Component Matrix

COMPONENT							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q1					.761		
Q2					.819		
Q3							.926
Q4		.715					
Q5		.643					
Q6	.464		.329		.427	-.416	
Q7	.639				.482		
Q8	.730						
Q9				.686			
Q10				.773			
Q11			.455	.533			
Q12		.489		.498			-.393
Q13			.823	.315			
Q14						.822	
Q15	.682						
Q16			.861				
Q17						.789	
Q18	.605				.303		
Q19	.664			.347			
Q20		.814					
Extraction Method : Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization Rotation converged in 8 iterations.							

Source: Authors' own Calculation

Table 3: Factors Extracted with percentage of Variance

COMPONENT	FACTOR	%CUMULATIVE VARIANCE
1	Understanding of priority	13.282
2	Emotional Response	24.300
3	Ability to work from home	34.944
4	Criticism at work-place and self-criticism	45.580
5	Ability to stay connected with friends and family while at work	55.934
6	Saatvika and use of technology	65.248
7	Understanding of family and self needs and giving 100%	71.622

Source: Authors' own Calculation

FACTORS AFFECTING WORK-LIFE NATURAL FUSION

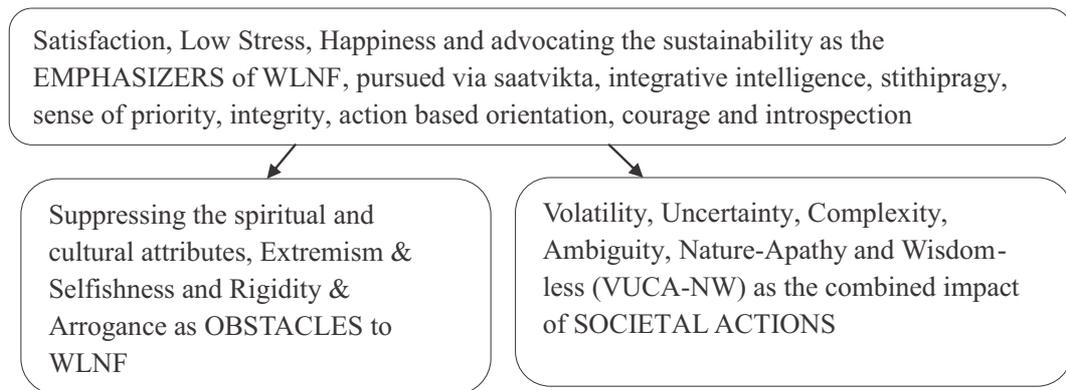
1. *Understanding of priority*: Work-Life Natural Fusion depends on the ability of the individual to be able to understand the priorities among various official and family responsibilities.
2. *Emotional Response*: It is also dependent on how an individual reacts to the emotions of joy as well as sorrow.
3. *Ability to work from home*: It is dependent on an individual's ability to do the office task from home and vice versa without compromising with the efficiency and quality of work done.
4. *Criticism at work-place and self-criticism*: Work-Life Natural Fusion is also influenced by the criticism received by an individual when working from home, carrying personal work to office, managing flexible timings and giving reasonable consideration to personal health.
5. *Ability to stay connected with friends and family while at work*: It is also affected by one's ability to stay connected with one's family or friends while the individual is still at work.

6. *Saatvika and use of technology:* Work-Life Natural Fusion is also dependent on an individual's use technology for productive purposes and maintaining sacredness in terms of good thoughts, working habits, eating habits, regular yog & exercise, and assuring very low greed or fear etc.
7. *Understanding of family and self needs and giving 100% to both:* It is also dependent on a person's ability of understanding the situations and taking decisions without deviating from one's principles, keeping in mind that life is not only about satisfying self and family's material needs. Being able to maintain a stable mind while at work if some priority issue arises at home, still giving the 100% in both spheres leading to appreciation of the ability to handle both entirely well.

QUALITATIVE ASPECTS

On analysing Shastrarth by Purohit and Joshi (2018), and Purohit and Atre (2017), interactions with Prof. Subhash Sharma, Prof. Sharda Nandram and Dr. Saagarika Ghoshal and brainstorming by the 4 researchers it is observed that WLNF emphasizes on *santosh* (satisfaction), low stress, happiness and advocates merits of sustainability.

Figure 1: WLNF dimensions



By referring to above figure, it is important to point that *santosh* pertains to satisfaction about what one gets and passion for what one delivers, in contrast to the western philosophy for instance a famous quote that “I hate satisfied people”. While the emphasis generates from

saatvikta, sense of priority etc. but there are several obstacles rooted in inner-self.

Finally, considering the views of Mind, *Atma*, Heart and Stakeholders - which is a felt voice and which is an undesired noise? The answer differs from person to person but the moment it is a felt voice for all the four, it synchronizes with the four pillars of *Purusharth* as per *Sanatan Dharm* and leads to path of WLNF.

CONCLUSION

Today be the home, self or the work, one needs to put the best and this could be done if one is full of joy at all of these. The HOST model proposed by Sharma (2006) also points at creatively looking at the duties which one can enjoy. Following the wonderful piece of advice from Indian Culture and texts, one can slowly move towards *saatvikta*, integrative intelligence and *stithipragya*. Instead of striving for a Work-Life Balance, one must focus on living the best life they can, without treating the two notions of work and life as separate, but prioritizing life and the same time acknowledge the work they do for the best life as simply a part of it.

Looking at the implementation of Work-Life Natural Fusion there are two critical issues. *Identify one's Calling*: It is only when one finds one's calling, that fusing your life with work could be implemented. Look out to find where one can make the greatest contribution to most people if one has a hard time finding one's calling. *Bhagvad Gita Supports Work-Life Natural Fusion*; Bhagvad Gita is not only seen through the holy lens but it can also be seen as a guide to a healthy fusion of work and life.

Having a positive attitude towards work and life not only creates a balance but involves fluidity in life as well, ensuring that the two notions are fused as one. One has to give their best in work, life, and self with enthusiasm, sense of priority, *saatvika*, holistic perspective and relaxed manner. On the whole it seems both rationally and intuitively appealing to move towards WLNF.

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