

# Gender Stereotyping and Work Life Balance: A Study of Dual Career Couples

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## Abstract

The most common family type in today's era is a family in which both the partners are working professionally. This sort of couple is known as dual career couples. This study focuses on the presence of Gender Stereotyping among DCC which affects their Work Life Balance & Marital relationships, one of the major causes of work life imbalance and marital dissatisfaction is due to the presence of gender stereotyping among DCC. However, when DCC share the roles and responsibilities of home with gender neutral perspective they experience benefits of being a DCC along with the experience of work life balance and marital satisfaction. Purpose of the paper is to study and understand the link between the presence of Gender Stereotyping and work life imbalance. In this paper researchers have tried to study about social role strain, gender role strain and its interdependence on work life balance and marital satisfaction among dual career couples in today's era. The degendered roles and responsibilities among DCC will remove marital dissatisfaction and work life imbalance. This study is an analytical study in which correlation is used for analysing 120 DCC responses from various service sectors from Delhi-NCR. Two different questionnaires were used for this study; one was related to household work division and another was based on gender role beliefs. The entire data were tested and examined with the help of various tools and methods. It was observed in this study that Gender Stereotyping exists among dual career couples specifically in performing household tasks. It was inferred from the study that when the husbands were actively participating in all the household work, their work life balance and better married life goes up and is marked as significant  $r$  is equal to 0.18, and  $P$  is equal to 0.047. It was found that in present times most of the husbands believe in traditional gender stereotyped roles of wives. Husbands among DCC who reported higher work life balance and marital satisfaction had more participation in housework.

**Keywords:** Dual career couples (DCC), Work life balance, Gender Stereotyping, Marital satisfaction, Satisfaction, Gender Ideology

## Introduction

It was Rapport & Rapport in 1969 who coined the term dual career couple. It was a revolution for sure in comparison with the traditional married couples and notion of gender, a family wherein both women and man pursued lifelong professional careers. In our society men are considered to be stronger than women, more rational than women and so on. Men are seen as the protectors, the providers and as the only professionals who can perfectly handle business. Men are valued for their choices and praised for their successes outside the home. On the other hand, women are seen as care givers, more emotional and they are accepted more as a good wife and mothers than any other thing.

### The traditional Indian context

Traditional Indian society has always been hierarchical and stratified. The several hierarchies and stratification within the family was on the basis of age, sex, ordinal position and within the community- it was of caste, lineage, wealth, learning, occupation. All this have been maintained by '*a complex combination of custom, functionality and religious belief*' (Chitnis, 1988). Indian society has been described as a society where each individual lives by the 'ascribed' rather than the '*achieved*' status.

The classic and traditional Hindu family ascribed the status of 'pativarta' to the wife. '*Pativrata*' literally translates as '*one who is vowed to her husband.*' It implies that a wife must accept as her given (beholden) duty the service and devotion to her husband and family (Chitnis, 1988). Generally, in Indian Society it is seen that, society has given women in the family a status lower than that of men, and Indian culture has, through folklore, folk songs and legends, served to maintain such an inequality. It has highlighted the self- sacrificing, self- effacing, pure image of the women, which has reinforced her role as devout and dutiful wife and the doting mother. Her enabler role thus gets precedence over the performance role. Such a veneration of the women's role as a wife and mother has lent sanctity and stability to the institution of marriage in Indian, and has been responsible for the indulgence of children in Indian families, especially of sons. While understanding the core world of the Indian Child, Sudhir Kakar remarks,

“In the case of a Hindu women, at least in the imagery of culture, material feelings of tenderness and nurturance occur in combination with a profound gratitude and the readiness for a poignantly high emotional investment in the child (Kakar, 1981).

The concept of the ideal women on one hand- as being pure, chaste and nurturing; on the other hand, there has been the concept of her as being malevolent, aggressive and destructive Symbolized in Indian mythology by goddesses such as Durga and Kaali(Das,1981). This duality that characterizes the concept of the Indian Women presents her in the final analysis as the simultaneous embodiment of energy/power, and nature-nurture, amity and harmony (Wadley, 1988).

The status of women in Indian society and culture underwent a major change as results of liberalism, social reforms, de-structuralism and nationalism that emerged during the course of the British rule. Access to westernized education under British rule facilitated the entry of women especially for the upper caste/more privileged section of women into the world of paid work in formal organization. While, for the first time, the entry of women was mainly in traditional fields such as- teaching, tailoring, nursing, etc., after independence of the country in 1947 and the subsequent thrust to women's education, there has been a steady trickle of women into professions such as- medicine, engineering and management. In fact, modern India witnessed the growth of a body of middle-class and upper-middle- class educated women, living in large urban agglomerations, who are fairly emancipated in socio-economic terms (Menon, 1997). In the world where Law is a fact and justice is abstract, women's empowerment has been facilitated by the constitutional recognition of equal and unbiased status. The acceptance of the need and spread of women's education, and progressive legal enactments that bestow them with constitutional amity and equality has yet to be achieved.

The changing status of women in modern India and their entry into the workforce, along with the forces of urbanization and industrialization, have been accompanied by changes in the nature and structure of the Indian family. While systematic studies on the typical modern Indian

family are lacking; there is the evidence of a growing trend towards nuclearization of the family with emphasis on the couple (Jain, 1996). A rise in disposable incomes of the family- as a result of both partners being in employment, and following their career and passion an increase in the use of labour-saving devices for household chores, and emerging (Through weak) evidence of pressure on other family members to realign their family roles as women strain under the doubt burden of managing work and family.

### **Understanding the Concept of Dual Career Couples**

Dual career couples in India are indeed leading a sweet & sour life, on one hand, such couples believe that divergent opinion due to two career raises chances of divorce when things become ugly for both the individuals, on the other majority of (over eight in 10) are still satisfied with their work- family balance. According to a survey conducted by Global Research firm Synovate for the country's leading staffing firm Team Lease Services, the overall satisfaction level of working couples is as high as 87% across India. At the same time, the survey found that 34 % of the couples felt that two careers “substantially increase the chances of a difference of opinion leading to divorce and separation.

While those seeing higher odds of separation because of the two accomplices being in employments were still in a minority, a larger part of 63% concurred that battles were regular on issues like quality time and work travel in such families. Delhi developed as the main special case where just about 56% respondents differ about battles being basic in the double vocation families. The overview was led on working corporate administrators wedded with or without kids across five urban communities, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Pune, and Hyderabad.

Notwithstanding the high satisfaction levels about the overall work-life balance, a majority of 52% said that, given a chance, they would go for a less lavish life with one spouse working but satisfactory marital relationship, as against 48% opting for a luxury life where both husband and wife are working. In terms of preference for a luxury life, those living in Pune and Delhi were at the top. People living in Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore are likely

more inclined towards single income but satisfactory marital relations.

66% Delhi people prefer being a dual career couples which entails a double –income luxury life, while it is as high as 88% in Pune. However in Hyderabad, 95% people wished to have a single income, less lavish life. According to the survey, while a growing number of men are becoming actively involved in household chores/sharing family responsibilities, including rearing a child, this sort of life of dual career couple is these days termed as “week-end-parents”. Delhi based Dual –career couples were on the top of the heap in terms of week-end-couple, although some exceptions were there with Bangalore and Mumbai as exceptions including Pune.

The study comes in the midst of a sharp flood in the quantity of working couples with expanded urbanization, lower training dropout by ladies and the requirement for two wages driving higher work power interest by ladies. The stress on marriages and childcare is often perceived to blunt the economic upside; this survey stated the sweet and sour implication of two career driven couples. Stated by-Surabhi Mathur the TeamLease's Permanent Staffing General Manager. After a child break the continued difficulties for women is visible in the workforce. The high unwillingness to move cities to follow their spouse's career highlights the continued and endless struggle for women spouses in the Indian workplace,” Mathur said.

Except Delhi and Pune, in different urban cities the two life partners who are dual career couples share the duty to deal with the children. As much as 43 % of Delhi guardians don't go to their kids' school or for any school related work due to lack of time and opportunities. Be that as it may, 46% moms in Delhi and 78 % in Pune go to such school related activities. The decision was isolated on in the case of working in same association improves or lessens the nature of work-life balance or the quality of work-life balance. While 48 % said it prompted improvement, 21 % casted a ballot against it and another 26 % didn't perceive any effect whatsoever.

A vast majority of 70% replied positively when asked whether the Indian companies had flexible working policies for employees to maintain a quality work-life balance. The

satisfaction level on this front was highest in Pune (88%), while Mumbai came at the bottom (64%). This chapter tries to put some light on the theoretical foundations and research already done in the field of dual-career couples, work life balance and service sector. It includes definitions and major contributions made in the research area of dual-career couples, work life balance & service sector. Moreover, the conditions of dual-career couples during their work life balance have three different impetuses: Societal, individual and organizational impetus.

### **The Price Of Success: Differ For Men And Women**

Women strive to make choices, In order to get success women are always forced to choose between their professional career and family time, child's education growth and development. In a nut shell, in Indian society till date, the gender roles are so rigid that even at times when women gets an opportunity to make choices are forced to feel guilty. Men can have all that they wish and choose but women had to go through a lot before evening thinking of doing something for themselves. Questions on their values, ethics and principles are raised whereas; it is seen as 'normal' if men make choices.

Contrary to the old traditional structure the woman, now women are viewed as 'super women's who does both; taking care of her professional life and her personal life. But then again, the burden to make quality of Work life balance is on the shoulders of women. It seems that the struggle of women empowerment is not yet over rather it has taken a new shape and it has become an unsaid but clear 'over burdening act' on women of our society. The idea of dual career couple was introduced in society with both excitement and scepticism. The notion was to preserve the best of marriage, to increase intimacy and enduring love between couples leading to marital satisfaction, freed dual career couples from the harness of Gender Stereotyping. Does this actually happen? The biggest question for our Indian society, it was assumed that dual career couples and such families will share true equality between women and men in terms of social, economic, emotional and political space. After almost 30 years of dual career couples'

existence both the excitement and scepticism has taken an empirical turn in which we all can see that gender equality is yet to be achieved.

A sound married life indicates healthy family that directs to the holistic development and growth of both partners' personally and professionally. But the presence of gender stereotyping among dual career couples lead to work life imbalance and marital dissatisfaction. Whereas, work life balance and peaceful married life is one of the essential things that one needs for his/her survival. Marital satisfaction can be simply understood as an objective feeling of satisfaction and pleasure experience by both husband and wife while considering all aspects of life.

### **Review of Literature**

Review of related literature is one of the most important steps in understanding research and its subject-matter. It not only helps in clarifying and defining the problem rather it also helps in stating objectives, formulating hypotheses, selecting appropriate design and methodology of research as well as interpreting the results in the light of the research work already undertaken. The sources referred include various journals, working papers, reports, magazines related to human resource, internet sites and newspapers etc. In order to have a justified and in-depth review of the literature, the studies will include the literature review of Dual-career couples, Work life balance, and Gender stereotyping.

Men feel more fulfilled when they accomplish more at work even at the expense of disregarding the family. Then again, ladies stress that work and family are both similarly significant and both are the wellsprings of their fulfilment. Koneg et al (2018) asserts that generalizations are both enlightening and prescriptive in nature Gender generalizations have engaging parts, which are convictions concerning which people ordinarily do. In any case, they likewise contain solid prescriptive parts, or convictions regarding which people ought to do. The third influx of woman's rights looks to inspect the development of sex and encounters of ladies inside various spaces of gender social request where manliness and femininity are being exchanged (Budgeon, 2012). Gender stereotyping is

viewed as a huge issue deterring the professional movements of women. The continuation of insignificant portrayal and less involvement of ladies in top level positions (Elacqua, Beehr, Hansen, and Webster, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2017) structures the premise of this exploration.

### Hypothetical Framework: Individual Impetus

It becomes very important to firstly understand that every couple is an individual first and then some one's husband or wife. If we respect the individuality in a relationship, that relationship will reach till its highest satisfaction level. How we act depends on our will. At individual level we all must use our 'Free will', this term was coined by the most important philosopher a well-known historian and essayist David Hume, his major philosophical work titled as -“*A treatise of Human Nature*” (1739- 1740). In order to understand Hume's “Free Will” one must understand 'will'

in two contexts '**REASON**' & '**PASSION**'. To start with let us be certain that we have “free Will”. According to Hume, the idea of 'Free Will' is- “the most contentious question of metaphysics”. 'Free Will' is the ability unique to the individuals who are able to control their actions.

Let us try and understand Free Will with the help of an example; a boy who is willing to use his free will, such as to choose between whether or not to take his Dog for a walk. The boy shall ask himself that I know I should walk with the Dog. And while I don't really want to walk my Dog because it is raining outside, I think overall the best decision to make is that I should take my Dog for a walk. In the above example we observed that the biggest reason one must care about free will is because it is necessary for free action. The Boy, must firstly choose or make a decision to walk with his Dog before he actually takes him out for a walk. Hence, the possibility of free action totally depends on the possibility of free will.

### Fulfilment - A Reality or Human Illusion

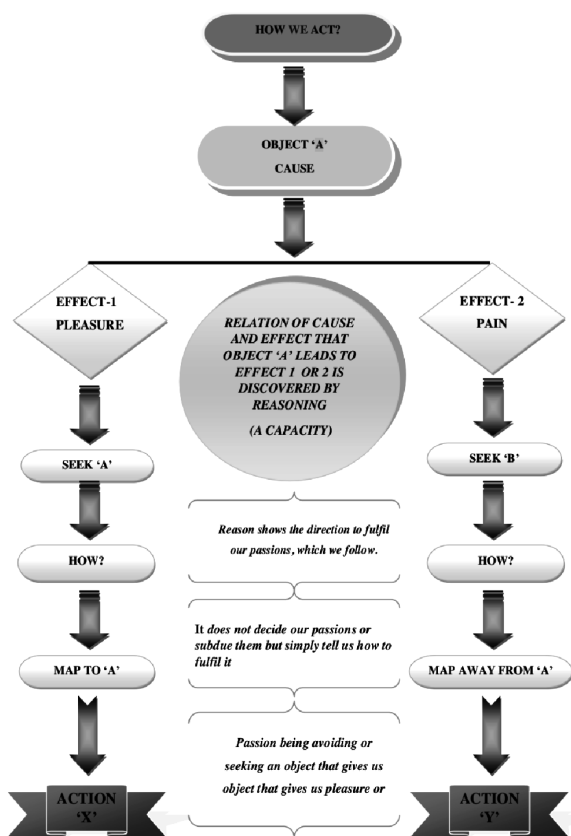
The three principle main thrusts of a satisfied life are first and foremost, the nature of our connections, also, our psychological and actual wellbeing and thirdly, the execution of significant, enthusiastic, strength-and development arranged errands. The last impacting factor is for the vast majority predominantly identified with their positions. In this manner our work ought to be a calling and not a weight, where we feel better. Bliss and happiness is a more transitory state though satisfaction is more profound. Getting advancement or accomplishing an objective can just satisfy individuals right now. Human associations can establish conditions for bliss and furthermore sustain every one of the three affecting elements by supporting human collaborations and reliable connections at work, and through wellbeing focused authority styles and a visionary, objective and qualities situated workplace.

### Hypothesis of the study:

There is no correlation between the husband's active participation in all the household work and work life balance and better married life.

There is correlation between the husband's active participation in all the household work and work life balance and better married life.

Figure.1



Source: Authors own Hypothetical framework

## Methodology

This paper is an analytical study in which correlation is used. Total responses from 120 dual career couples from Delhi NCR were received. Sample was conducted online through Google Forms. The CC (correlation coefficient) of 0.7 between the Gender stereotyping and work life balance were gathered from the first hand source the total sample size of this study for examining work life balance and gender stereotyping was calculated as twenty, and for examining gender stereotyping as nineteen. The significant level was 0.05 and test power was 80% hence the total sample size was 120 for this study.

The following four criteria for respondents were:

- (i) Literate
- (ii) Living with wife/husband
- (iii) Must be a resident of Delhi-NCR
- (iv) Lacking any mental illness.

All the questions in the Google forms were made compulsory and therefore returning incomplete questionnaires were not possible for this study. 5-point likert-type scale was used for this study. The trustworthiness was counted as Cronbach alpha 0.78. After receiving all the data, the analysis part was done in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistics. To check whether the data for this study is normally distributed or not the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used.

## Results

Age of the females (wives) respondents ranged between 24-43 years and the age of the male (husbands) respondents ranged between 28-48 years. 54.2 percent wives had modern thoughts / perspective and beliefs towards life and 55 (45.8%) had traditional thoughts/perspectives and beliefs towards life. On the other hand, 50 (41.7%) husbands had modern thoughts/ perspective and beliefs towards life and 70 (58.3%) had traditional thoughts/perspective and beliefs towards life. It was also inferred that 41 (34.16%) dual career couples were having traditional gender role beliefs while 36 (30%) were of modern beliefs and 35.8% respondents had different beliefs regarding gender; these were the couples who did not agree with the

beliefs of each other. Table -1 & 2 will clearly show the statistics regarding marital satisfaction of respondents. Beliefs of DCC had no noteworthy link with their work life balance. It was seen by the correlation test that if the involvement of male/husbands are more in the home and home related tasks, it correlates with their work life balance, and as their work life balance increases their marital satisfaction also tends to increase. The involvement of wives had no noteworthy link with the way they were treated in their families (with/without gender stereotyping)  $P$  is equal to 0.90,  $r$  is equal to -0.01. The work life balance among DCC has noteworthy link with each other  $P$  is  $<0.55$ ,  $r$  is equal to 0.55. It was noticed that the increase in domestic work by the men had a direct association with the increase in the work life balance of DCCs  $P$  is equal to 0.047, and  $r$  is equal to 0.18. It was also understood from the results that financial status of the family had some significance with work life balance  $P$  is equal to 0.05. The educational qualification also had a major role to play in the approach and attitudes of DCC, but one strange thing was noticed while the results were analysed that the educational qualification of the male did not have any link with the way they divide roles and responsibilities. It was seen that the women who were highly educated had a different vision towards life and were not facing gender stereotyping. They had a better work life balance as well. Hence, it was proved that no matter men are highly educated they do tend to be biased in terms of dividing roles and responsibilities with essence of gender stereotyping  $P$  is  $<0.01$ . Females who were elites, had highly educated families and had a well-off social status they had more gender equitability, gender neutrality and modern outlook towards sharing of roles and responsibilities  $P$  is equal to 0.001.

## Discussion

The major finding of this paper is that there is a noteworthy association between the active participation of men in domestic work to the work life balance of DCC. There has been variety of tools and methodologies used by different researchers to see the association between marital satisfaction and involvement of male in domestic work. Studies based on the total hours spent on domestic work by the male partner among DCC. Few studies show different

pattern and ways the DCC divide domestic work keeping the gender stereotyping aside. Perhaps, the major finding for our study result is that, by removing gender stereotyping and increasing involvement of husbands in domestic work for the helping the partner (wife) or because of the affection

towards their wives, we can see an increased work life balance and marital satisfaction among dual career couples. It is also noticed that the presence of quality higher education and modern thoughts among wives and husbands this leads to a sound life.

**Table 1: Work Life Balance of Dual Career Couples**

<i>Work Life Balance</i>	<i>N. (%)</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Males</i>
Slightly	7 (5.8)	7 (5.8)
Moderately	47 (39.2)	36 (30)
Extremely	50 (41.7)	63 (52.5)
Very Extreme	16 (12.2)	14 (11.7)
TOTAL	120	120

**Table 2: Correlation**

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Husband's active participation	Work life balance among dual career couples and batter married life.
Husband's active participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.047
	N	120	120
Work life balance among dual career couples and batter married life.	Pearson Correlation	.065	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.047	
	N	120	120

From the above table, it is observed that the value of **p is less than 0.05, i.e. p=0.047**. Hence, null hypothesis is rejected and it can be concluded that there is **a significant correlation between the husband's active participation in all the household work and work life balance and batter married life.**

According to our study it's clear that there is no noteworthy link between women's active involvement in household work on their work life balance and marital satisfaction maybe because this is unsaid and a given fact that women have to actively participate in household work immaterial of their career and profession. On the other hand, when we see an active participation of men

(husbands) in household it carries a difference and different meaning. It also increases the work life balance among DCC, this somewhere also reflects that there are gender neutral ideology (in very few) couples. In the present study, work life balance of women was observed to be better if their husbands were happily involved in all the house hold work. Here, the presence of gender stereotyping among DCC was observed to be noteworthy linked with the way roles and responsibilities were divided. That is, couples with traditional attitudes completed housework tasks traditionally; those with a modern beliefs, thoughts, perspective and attitudes completed housework traditionally; and on the other hand, all those with

anegalitarian outlook shared task equally. In a nutshell, it is because of the cultural conditioning since childhood till adulthood that governs the distribution of domestic work. In this study we studied the dual career couples from Delhi NCR we can infer out that egalitarian gender ideology (absence of gender stereotyping and presence of gender neutrality) is the need of the hour for Indian society.

The uniqueness of this paper is that it examines both spouses because it studies both dual career couples; in most of the studies the researcher studies mostly women and at times men in general not as spouse (dual career couples).

### Conclusion

Things that we the humans do immaterial of gender, class and creed makes an impact on other individuals. One must be careful and thoughtful while we 'Act'. After all we are known for our Actions. The hypothetical framework given in this paper systematically explains the way an individual should 'Act'. This hypothetical framework is inspired from David Hume's idea of 'Free Will'. It becomes essential to see whether our actions are based on our free will or not, one must be rational and conscious before even thinking to act in some way. If humans will understand the importance of acting in a right way it will solve half a problem. The way we use our 'free will', will determine how we treat others. In order to remove gender stereotyping and increase work life balance and marital satisfaction among dual career couples one must make utmost use of individual's free will and be thoughtful before any action. It was observed in this study that Gender Stereotyping exists among dual career couples specifically in performing household tasks. It was inferred from the study that when the husbands were actively participating in all the household work, this active participation of husbands in their house was significantly correlated to their work life balance. It was found that in present scenario most of the husbands believe in traditional Gender Stereotyped roles of wives. The Husbands among DCC who reported higher work life balance and marital satisfaction had more participation in housework.

### Recommendation

Recommendations for further studies can be with larger sample size on dual career couples outside Delhi NCR.

Dual career couples with children and with childless couples. Dual career couples who are from rural communities and are less educated can also be a point of research.

### Limitation of the Study

Low sample size and survey through Google Forms were the two main limitations of this study. Another limitation of this study was that it did not examined couples from outside Delhi NCR.

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