



## WORK–LIFE BALANCE AND GENDER-BASED CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN RAJASTHAN

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Women who work in healthcare are very important to the system, but they often have trouble balancing their work and personal lives and face challenges because of their gender that hurt their mental health. The current study investigates the correlation between work–life balance, gender-specific challenges, and mental health among female healthcare professionals employed in government and private hospitals in Rajasthan. The research involved a sample of 120 female healthcare professionals, encompassing doctors, nurses, and paramedical personnel from the districts of Jaipur, Bikaner, and Jodhpur. Data was collected using a descriptive survey method. Standardised surveys were used to find out about work-life balance, gender discrimination, and mental health. We used statistical methods like mean, standard deviation, percentage, and correlation analysis. The results showed that most women who work in healthcare have a moderate to high level of work-life imbalance because they work long hours, night shifts, and have family responsibilities. There were also reports of problems based on gender, such as unequal chances for promotion, bias in the workplace, and a lack of support from institutions. Stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and burnout are all mental health problems that were strongly linked to a bad work-life balance. Correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between work–life balance and mental health, alongside a positive correlation between gender-based challenges and psychological stress. The study concludes that enhancing workplace policies, offering flexible schedules, ensuring gender equity, and providing mental health support programs can mitigate stress among female healthcare professionals. The results are helpful for people who make policies, run hospitals, and do research in occupational health and gender studies.*

**Keywords:** Work–life balance, women healthcare professionals, gender challenges, mental health, Rajasthan.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Healthcare jobs are among the most demanding and stressful because they require long hours, a lot of responsibility, emotional involvement, and constant contact with patients. Healthcare workers, like doctors and nurses, are expected to give good care even when things are hard, which can be bad for their physical and mental health. Women who work in healthcare have more problems than men because they have to balance their work and family lives. Women who work in healthcare in India, especially in Rajasthan, often have trouble balancing their work and personal lives because of irregular duty hours, night shifts, emergency services, and a lack of support at home and at work.

Work–life balance means being able to handle work and family life in a healthy way. A good balance between work and life helps keep your mind at ease, your body healthy, and your job satisfaction high. People may feel stressed, tired, and burnt out when their work load increases, though. Women healthcare professionals are more affected by work–life imbalance because society still expects them to do household chores, care for children, and handle family responsibilities after they finish their professional work. This double burden puts mental stress on them and takes away their time to relax and take care of themselves.

In addition to having trouble balancing work and home life, women who work in healthcare also face problems at work because they are women. These may include things like discrimination, not getting the same chances, not getting promoted, gender bias, and not having enough leadership roles. In a lot of hospitals, men are often given higher positions, and women are expected to help out. Women workers are unhappy and stressed out in these kinds of situations. Their problems get worse because they don't have maternity leave, childcare, or flexible hours.

Healthcare workers, especially women who have to do two jobs at home and at work, often have mental health problems like anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Stress that doesn't stop can make you less productive at work and less happy with your job, and it might also make healthcare services worse.

A significant number of women are employed in hospitals and health centers in Rajasthan; however, there is a paucity of studies investigating their mental health concerning work–life balance and gender-related challenges. Consequently, the current study seeks to elucidate the impact of these factors on the mental health of female healthcare professionals.



## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Women have been getting more and more involved in healthcare in recent years. They work as doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and paramedics in both government and private hospitals. Their job is very important for the healthcare system to work well, but they also have to deal with a lot of personal and social problems in addition to their work. Being a healthcare worker is very hard because you have to work long hours, at night, and in emergencies, and you have to take care of patients all the time. These kinds of working conditions can make you tired and stressed out. Women who work in healthcare have a harder time because they also have to take care of the house, the kids, and other family duties. Women in Indian society often have to do two things at once: work and take care of their families. This puts a lot of stress on them and makes it hard to find a balance between work and family life.

Having a good work-life balance is important for keeping your mental health. Women who can't balance their work and personal lives may feel stressed, anxious, emotionally drained, and burnt out. Many women also have to deal with gender-based problems at work, such as discrimination, unequal chances for promotion, a lack of leadership roles, and gender bias. In some cases, women are not treated as equally important as men. Their problems get worse because there aren't any supportive services like flexible hours, maternity leave, or childcare. Constant stress and imbalance can cause serious mental health problems and make you less happy at work. A lot of women in Rajasthan work in healthcare, but not many studies have looked at how their work-life balance and mental health are affected, which is why this study is needed.

## **1.2 Women Healthcare Professionals in Rajasthan**

### **1.2.1 A lot of people use healthcare services**

Women in Rajasthan work as doctors, nurses, ANMs, lab technicians, and other healthcare professionals in both public and private hospitals. Their work is very important for providing medical care.

### **1.2.2 Jobs in Rural and Remote Areas**

A lot of women who work in healthcare are sent to rural and semi-urban areas where there aren't many medical facilities and the workload is high. This makes them more stressed physically and mentally.

### **1.2.3 Long Hours of Duty and Emergency Services**



Because hospitals and health centers don't have enough staff, women often have to work long hours, night shifts, and emergency services, which has an impact on their personal lives.

#### **1.2.4 Duties to Family and Friends**

Women are expected to do professional work as well as household chores, childcare, and family duties, which makes it hard to balance work and life.

#### **1.2.5 Not enough places to go and help**

Women healthcare professionals in Rajasthan have a harder time at work because there isn't much transportation, they are worried about their safety while on night duty, and some institutions don't have childcare or maternity support.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- To study the level of work–life balance among women healthcare professionals in Rajasthan.
- To examine gender-based challenges faced by women healthcare workers.
- To assess the mental health status of women healthcare professionals.
- To find the relationship between work–life balance and mental health.
- To analyze the effect of gender-based challenges on mental health.

### **1.4 Hypotheses of the Study**

- There is a significant relationship between work–life balance and mental health.
- Gender-based challenges significantly affect mental health.
- Women with poor work–life balance show higher stress levels.

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **Yadav (2022)**

Juhee Yadav carried out a study on occupational stress and work–life balance among nurses in India. The study found that nursing staff who have a lot of stress at work and a lot of work to do have a much worse work-life balance. The study also found that female nurses are more stressed than male nurses because they have to take care of their families as well as do their jobs. A bad work-life balance was strongly linked to mental fatigue and low job satisfaction.

### **Santhosh and Pillai (2021)**

Lissa Santhosh and Jawahar S. K. Pillai examined work–life balance among nurses at a medical institution in India. The study indicated that work-related stress, familial expectations, and inflexible duty schedules were the primary factors influencing work-life balance. Women



nurses said it was harder for them to balance their work and home lives, which hurt their mental health and job performance.

#### **Adiba & Nair (2020)**

Adiba and Ravichandran Nair investigated occupational stress among nurses in a private hospital in South India. The study found that working long hours, at night, and with not enough staff caused a lot of stress. Women workers said they were more emotionally drained because they had to do both family and work duties. The research determined that inadequate work–life balance results in psychological stress and burnout.

#### **Banga et al. (2017)**

Spoorthy Sagar Banga performed a cross-sectional study on stress levels among healthcare workers in India. The results indicated that healthcare professionals endure significant occupational stress attributed to their workload and responsibilities. Women workers said they were more stressed than men because of family and social pressures. The research underscored the necessity for enhanced support systems for female employees.

#### **Hawa & Hugar (2024)**

Namrata Hawa and B. S. Hugar researched the work-life balance of healthcare professionals in Indian hospitals. The study found that healthcare workers deal with a lot of stress, long hours, and not enough time for themselves. Women workers said it was harder for them to keep their balance because of their family duties. The study indicated that flexible working hours and supportive policies could enhance mental health.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Method – Descriptive Survey Method**

The current study employed the descriptive survey method to investigate work–life balance, gender-specific challenges, and mental health among female healthcare professionals. This approach is appropriate for gathering data regarding participants' current circumstances, perspectives, and experiences. It helps you look at the relationships between different variables in a scientific and organised way.

#### **3.2 Sample: 120 Female Healthcare Professionals**

The study's sample included 120 women who worked in healthcare, such as doctors, nurses, and paramedics. The participants were chosen from both government and private hospitals. The respondents were chosen using a random sampling method to make sure that everyone had the same chance of being in the study.



### 3.3 Area: Jaipur, Bikaner, and Jodhpur in Rajasthan

The research was carried out in three districts of Rajasthan: Jaipur, Bikaner, and Jodhpur. These districts were chosen because they have big government hospitals, private hospitals, and health centers where many women work as healthcare professionals. Choosing different areas helped us get a sample from both urban and semi-urban areas.

### 3.4 Tools Used: Standardised Questionnaires

The Work–Life Balance Scale, the Gender Challenges Questionnaire, and the Mental Health Inventory were all used to gather data. These standardised tools provided a reliable and valid assessment of the work–life balance, gender-specific issues, and mental health status of female healthcare professionals.

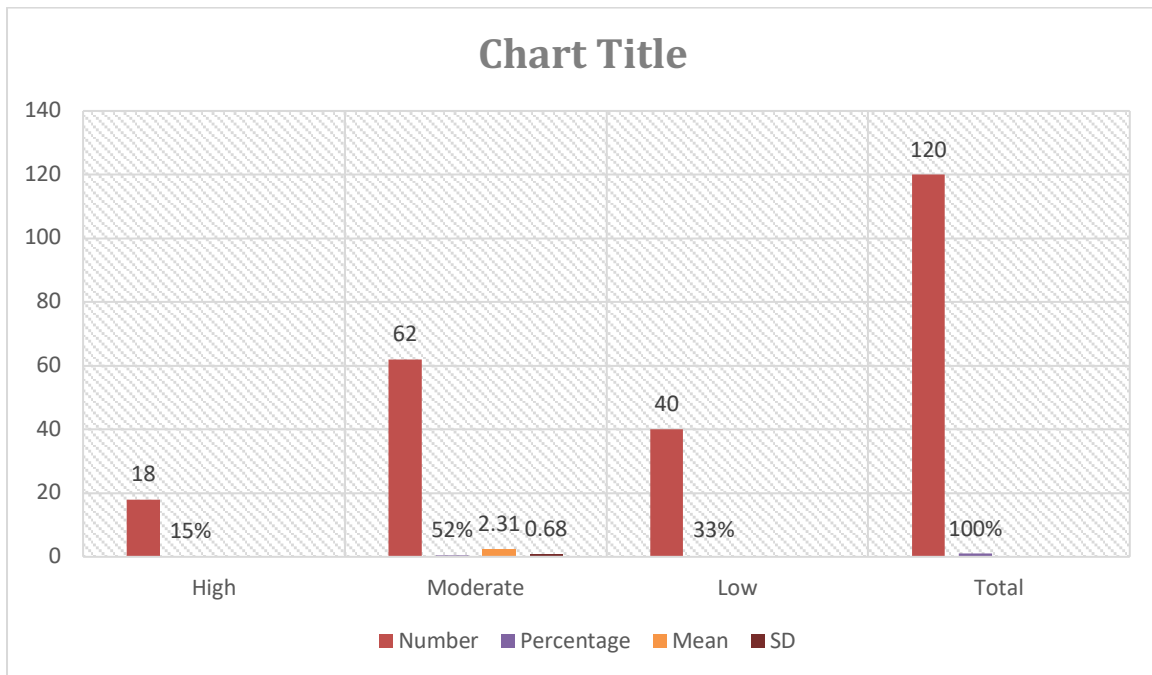
### 3.5 Used statistics: mean, SD, percentage, and correlation

To explain the data, we used statistical methods like percentage, mean, and standard deviation. We used correlation analysis to find out how work-life balance, gender-based challenges, and mental health are related. These statistical techniques facilitated a clear and scientific interpretation of the results.

## 4. Data Analysis

**Table 1: How well women healthcare professionals balance their work and personal lives**

Level	Number	Percentage	Mean	SD
High	18	15%		
Moderate	62	52%	2.31	0.68
Low	40	33%		
Total	120	100%		

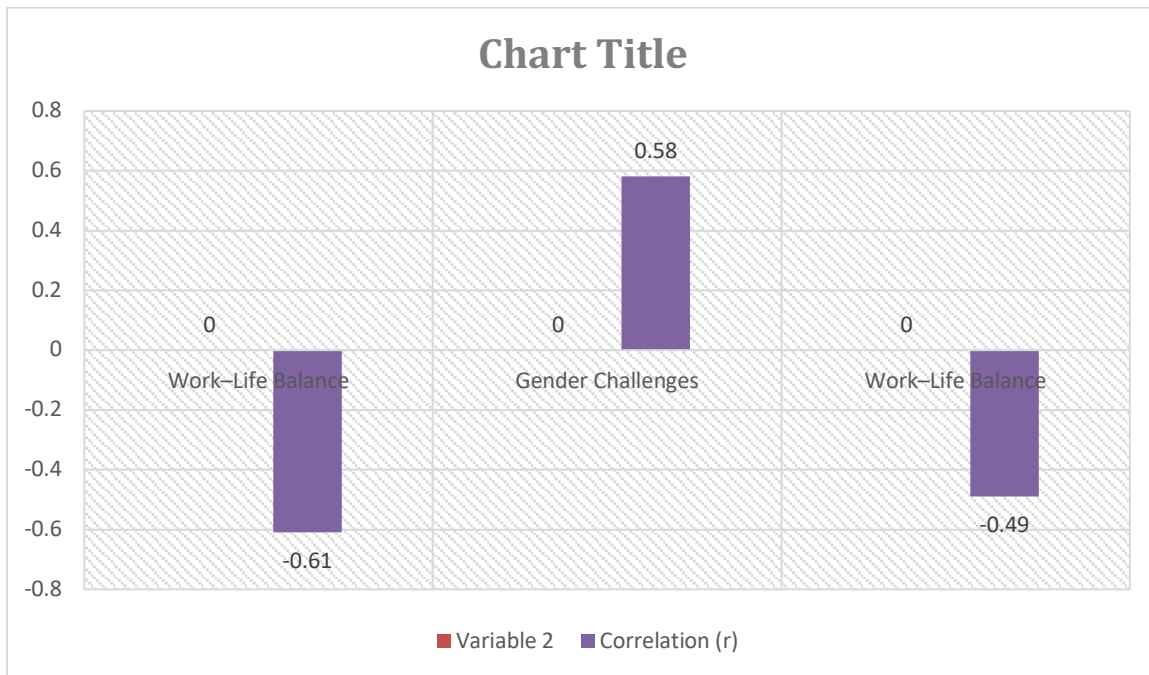


### Interpretation

Most women who work in healthcare have a moderate or low work-life balance, which means they have a lot of work to do and a lot of family pressure.

**Table 2: The link between work-life balance, gender issues, and mental health**

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation (r)
Work–Life Balance	Mental Health	-0.61
Gender Challenges	Mental Health	0.58
Work–Life Balance	Gender Challenges	-0.49



### Interpretation

Having a bad work-life balance makes mental stress worse, and problems that are based on gender also make mental health worse.

### 5. Discussion

The results of the present study indicate that women healthcare professionals in Rajasthan face significant stress due to imbalance between their professional and personal life. The healthcare profession requires long working hours, night duties, emergency services, and continuous responsibility toward patients. These demanding conditions make it difficult for women to manage their family and social responsibilities effectively. In Indian society, women are generally expected to take care of household work, children, and family members in addition to their job. Because of this dual responsibility, many women experience fatigue, tension, and lack of personal time, which affects their overall mental health.

The study also found that gender-based challenges play an important role in increasing psychological stress among women healthcare workers. Many participants reported that they do not receive equal opportunities for promotion and leadership positions compared to male colleagues. Some respondents also mentioned that they feel less valued at the workplace despite performing the same duties. Lack of supportive facilities such as maternity leave support, childcare services, and flexible duty schedules further increases their difficulties. These problems create dissatisfaction and emotional pressure among women employees.



Mental health problems such as anxiety, irritability, emotional exhaustion, and burnout were commonly found among participants who had poor work–life balance. Statistical analysis showed that women who reported higher gender-based challenges also showed higher levels of stress and poor mental health. This means that both work–life imbalance and gender discrimination directly affect the psychological well-being of women healthcare professionals. The findings suggest that hospitals and health institutions should develop supportive policies for women employees. Flexible working hours, counseling services, equal opportunities, and gender-friendly work environments can help in reducing stress and improving mental health. Improving the well-being of women healthcare professionals is necessary for better healthcare services and a healthy work environment.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This study demonstrates that work–life balance and gender-related issues substantially affect the mental health of female healthcare professionals in Rajasthan. The findings reveal that most female healthcare professionals experience a moderate to low work–life balance due to prolonged duty hours, night shifts, emergency responsibilities, and familial obligations. Women who work often have to do two jobs at once: one at work and one at home. This constant pressure causes stress, fatigue, and emotional exhaustion, which hurts their mental health and job satisfaction.

The study shows that there are a lot of gender-based problems in the healthcare field. A large number of female professionals reported differences in their chances of getting promoted, the lack of leadership roles, gender discrimination, and less power to make decisions compared to their male coworkers. The absence of supportive amenities, such as flexible working hours, maternity benefits, childcare services, and secure working conditions for night shifts, intensifies the difficulties faced by female healthcare professionals. These problems cause unhappiness, fear, and mental pain.

Statistical analysis indicated a substantial correlation between poor work–life balance and declining mental health, while increased gender-related challenges exacerbate stress and emotional difficulties. Women facing heightened workloads and discrimination displayed intensified levels of anxiety, burnout, and mental fatigue. This clearly shows that both personal and work-related traits have a big effect on the mental health of female healthcare workers.

The study shows that hospital management and health departments should make policies that include both men and women to help female employees. Flexible work hours, fair chances for



promotion, counselling services, childcare facilities, and safe workplaces can all help people balance their work and personal lives and improve their mental health. Improving the health and happiness of female healthcare workers will help both the workers and the quality and speed of healthcare services in Rajasthan.

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