

HARMONIZING WORK AND LIFE OF WOMEN: RESILIENCE THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Achieving work-life harmony is a multidimensional process that requires physical stability, mental calmness, and spiritual grounding. It refers to the equilibrium between an individual's professional commitments and their personal and leisure activities. For modern women, achieving such harmony is particularly challenging due to various reasons.

Objective: It aims at exploring the concept of work life harmony for balancing the life of a modern woman based on scientific literature, highlighting various modalities of Ayurveda that promote a more integrated and holistic approach in balancing the responsibilities.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative conceptual review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts focusing on health, conduct, lifestyle regulation, mental well-being, and longevity. Relevant principles were systematically analysed and interpreted in the context of challenges faced by modern working women. Themes related to work-life harmony and resilience were synthesized to develop an integrative framework.

Results and Discussion: Work-life balance is something that most women strive for, but they face a number of challenges and problems in the process. By implementing effective strategies and cultivating mindful habits, it is possible to achieve harmony and equilibrium between these two vital spheres of life.

Conclusion: Work-life harmony is a holistic necessity rather than a lifestyle choice for modern women. Ayurveda provides a comprehensive, integrative framework addressing the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of women's lives through various principles.

Index terms: Work-life harmony, *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*, *Trivarga*, *Satvavajaya chikitsa*

INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between an individual's professional commitments and their personal and leisure activities. Achieving work-life harmony is a multidimensional process that requires physical stability, mental calmness, and spiritual grounding. It focuses on the integration of work and life in a way that they complement and enhance each other. In the modern era, women juggle multiple roles, from professional commitments to family responsibilities, which often lead to stress and imbalance in their lives. This multifaceted challenge necessitates effective strategies to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

For modern women, achieving such harmony is particularly challenging due to expanding professional aspirations, emotional caregiving roles, sociocultural expectations, and biological transitions such as menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause. Persistent imbalance can manifest as stress, emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbances, hormonal irregularities, anxiety, and reduced productivity. *Ayurveda* recognizes these disturbances as consequences of disequilibrium in *Doshas* and *Manasika Doshas* (*Rajas* and *Tamas*). Hence, an Ayurvedic approach that integrates ethical conduct, disciplined lifestyle, mental regulation, and purposeful living becomes essential for achieving holistic harmony. Ayurveda, with its holistic understanding of health as a dynamic equilibrium of body (*Sharira*), mind (*Manas*), senses (*Indriya*), and soul (*Atma*), offers timeless

principles to cultivate such harmony. Classical concepts such as *Sadvritta*, *Acharya Rasayana*, *Hitayu-Sukhayu Lakshana*, *Trivarga (Dharma-Artha-Kama)*, *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, along with *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*, provide a comprehensive framework for resilience and well-being. This paper explores the Ayurvedic modalities as practical tools for fostering sustainable work-life harmony in modern women, enhancing productivity, emotional resilience, and overall quality of life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To explore the concept of work-life harmony in modern women through an Ayurvedic perspective.

To analyse classical Ayurvedic principles relevant to physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

To highlight practical Ayurvedic strategies that enhance resilience, productivity, and life satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is based on a literature review and conceptual analysis.

Sources of information:

Primary sources include *Charaka samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*.

Conceptual mapping: A qualitative conceptual review was conducted using classical Ayurvedic texts focusing on health, conduct, lifestyle regulation, mental well-being, and longevity.

Conceptual analysis: Relevant principles were systematically analysed and interpreted in the context of challenges faced by modern working women. Themes related to work-life harmony and resilience were synthesized to develop an integrative framework.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Achieving work life harmony is not merely a lifestyle preference. But also, a holistic necessity for physical, mental and emotional health. Ayurveda views health as a state of equilibrium of *Shareera*, *Manas*, *Indriya* and *Atma*. For a modern woman, this balance has been a state of challenge. Ayurvedic principles offers a compass in navigating this complexity.

- Integrating *Sadvritta* for daily discipline and ethical living ¹:

It emphasizes righteous conduct, self-discipline and ethical behaviour encompassing physical (*Kayika*), verbal (*Vachika*), and mental (*Manasika*) dimensions in one's life. For women, *Sadvritta* supports emotional stability, enhances resilience, and enables effective management of multiple roles without compromising health. Following these principles such as waking up early, maintaining cleanliness, following proper rules for intake of food, etc can stabilize the body as well as mind.

Kayika Sadvritta: Personal hygiene (*Snana*), adherence to *Dinacarya*, moderate exercise, proper posture). These promote *Dosha Samyata* and physical vitality.

Vachika Sadvritta: Truthful, gentle, and meaningful speech; avoidance of gossip, harshness, and excessive talking supporting social harmony and mental calmness.

Manasika Sadvritta: Emotional regulation, patience, self-awareness, and *Indriya Nigraha*, preventing mental exhaustion and burnout.

- *Acharya Rasayana* ²

Ayurveda describes *Acharya Rasayana* as rejuvenation through right conduct, mental positivity, and social harmony. Principles include *Satya* (truthfulness), *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Maitri* (friendliness), *Kshama* (forgiveness), *Anasuyata* (absence of jealousy), cleanliness (*Shauca*), respect toward elders and teachers, and

spiritual practices such as *Japa*, *Dhyana*, and *Tapas*. In the modern setting, it can be interpreted as cultivating positive attitudes, gratitude, emotional intelligence, and compassionate relationships. These practices enhance *Satvika Guna*, reduce stress, improve emotional intelligence.

- *Hitayu and Sukhayu lakshana* ³

Ayurveda categorizes the *Ayu* into *Hitayu* and *Sukhayu*. True harmony and well-being arise when any person learn to align both. That is a life which is not only joyful but also righteous and purposeful. This ensures that now a days, a woman with her professional ambitions' balances with ethical value and personal fulfilment in order to gain productivity.

- *Trivarga*- A triad for balancing life ⁴

Ayurveda emphasizes the balanced pursuit of *Trivarga (Dharma- Artha- Kama)*. When applied to a modern working woman, it means fulfilling one's duty (*Dharma*) which might be a role of being daughter, wife, mother, sister and what not. She seeks economic independence (*Artha*). Alos she nurtures her life with all her dreams and desires (*Kama*). Excess in any of these leads to disharmony, while balance brings well-being.

- *Satvavajaya chikitsa* ⁵

Satvavajaya focuses on strengthening the mind by cultivating *Dhi* (intellect), *Dhairya* (patience), and *Jnana* (self-awareness). This approach parallels modern cognitive-behavioural and mindfulness strategies. It empowers women to regulate stress responses, manage emotions effectively, and develop inner resilience amidst professional and domestic pressures.

Challenges in Achieving Work-Life Harmony

Modern women face multiple interrelated challenges that disrupt physical and psychological equilibrium:

- Chronic work-related stress and role overload
- Emotional suppression and sustained emotional burden
- Neglect of self-care, including *Vega Dharana* (suppression of natural urges like sleep, micturition, defecation)
- Irregular dietary habits and disturbed daily routines
- Sociocultural restrictions leading to psychological distress
- Hormonal fluctuations affecting menstruation, PMS, and menopause
- Limited awareness and acceptance of mental health needs

These factors collectively disturb *Dosha* balance and weaken *Satva*, leading to fatigue, anxiety, depression, and reduced quality of life.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Work-life balance is something that most women strive for, but they face a number of challenges and problems in the process. By implementing effective strategies and cultivating mindful habits, it is possible to achieve harmony and equilibrium between these two vital spheres of life. It refers to the equilibrium between an individual's professional commitments and their personal and leisure activities.

The principle of *Sadvritta* emphasizes ethical conduct and disciplined living across physical, verbal, and mental dimensions. In the context of modern working women, adherence to *Sadvritta* encourages healthy daily routines, respectful communication, emotional regulation, and social harmony. These practices strengthen psychological resilience and reduce the likelihood of stress-induced burnout. Ethical behaviour and self-discipline also cultivate mental clarity and emotional stability, which are essential for managing competing personal and professional roles.

Another important concept identified in the analysis is *Achara Rasayana*, which emphasizes rejuvenation through righteous behaviour, positive thinking, and harmonious social relationships. Practices such as

truthfulness, compassion, gratitude, and respect towards others enhance *Satvika Guna*, which is associated with mental calmness and clarity. Cultivation of these qualities can significantly reduce negative emotional states such as anger, jealousy, and anxiety.

The Ayurvedic concept of *Hitayu* and *Sukhayu lakshanas* further highlights the importance of aligning a meaningful life with a joyful life. For modern women, this principle implies that professional success should not come at the cost of physical health or emotional well-being. A balanced approach that integrates personal fulfilment, ethical responsibility, and health preservation ultimately leads to long-term productivity and life satisfaction.

The framework of *Trivarga* (*Dharma*, *Artha*, and *Kama*) also provides a philosophical basis for achieving harmony in life. Women often strive to fulfil duties towards family and society (*Dharma*), achieve financial independence and professional growth (*Artha*), and pursue personal aspirations and emotional fulfilment (*Kama*). Imbalance among these pursuits may lead to stress and dissatisfaction. However, when these three dimensions are harmonized, individuals experience a sense of purpose and stability in both personal and professional domains.

The role of *Satvavajaya Chikitsa*, the Ayurvedic approach to mental health management, is particularly significant in the context of work-life harmony. This approach focuses on strengthening the mind through development of *Dhi* (intellect), *Dhairya* (courage and patience), and *Jnana* (self-awareness). Such practices help individuals regulate emotional responses and maintain psychological resilience in stressful situations. This concept parallels modern cognitive behavioural strategies and mindfulness-based stress management techniques.

In addition to these philosophical principles, the present review highlights the importance of Ayurvedic lifestyle practices such as *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Yoga*, *Pranayama*, and *Pathya sevana* (balanced diet).

CONCLUSION

Achieving a harmonious balance between work and life has become an increasingly pertinent challenge for women in the modern work life. Work-life harmony is a holistic necessity rather than a lifestyle choice for modern women. Classical Ayurvedic principles such as *Sadvritta*, *Achara Rasayana*, *Trivarga*, and *Satvavajaya Chikitsa* emphasize ethical conduct, emotional balance, purposeful living, and mental resilience. These principles not only promote disease prevention but also enhance psychological strength, interpersonal harmony, and overall quality of life. When combined with supportive lifestyle practices such as *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, balanced diet, *Yoga*, and *Pranayama*, they offer practical strategies for maintaining physical vitality and mental stability.

The integrative perspective presented in this study highlights that work-life harmony should not be viewed merely as a balance between two competing domains but rather as a dynamic and holistic integration of professional, personal, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life. Adoption of Ayurvedic lifestyle principles can help modern women cultivate resilience, improve productivity, and achieve long-term well-being. Therefore, promoting awareness and application of Ayurvedic concepts in daily life may serve as a valuable approach for empowering women to navigate the complexities of modern living while maintaining health, fulfilment, and inner harmony.

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