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Editorial

Work life balance among self-dependent pregnant women; challenges and solutions

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1. Introduction

Working mother may be defined as a woman with the ability to combine a career with the added responsibility of raising a child¹. Managing both career and other household chores i.e, work life balance becomes a tedious task especially for pregnant women in view of a sudden surge in pesky pregnancy hormones. Work-life balance is the term used in the literature to refer to policies that strive to achieve a greater complementarity and balance between work and home responsibilities.¹ According to The World Bank estimates, less than a third of women defined as 15 years or older are working or actively looking for a job. Female labour force participation rates in India has reduced to 19% in 2020 from 26% in 2005 which is less than Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.² One of the reason cited for this decline is women are actively involved in taking care of children and elderly at home.³ On the other hand, every family in India is looking for ways and means to increase the household income as the financial demands on the Indian families are increasing day by day.⁴ Hence women strive to be a part of income generation in households despite of physiological changes like pregnancy and tries to cope up with both work at workplace and home. In the history of Indian planning for the first time, The eleventh 5 year plan documents recognises women not only as equal citizens but as 'agents of sustained socio-economic growth and change.'⁵

However there are certain challenges to pregnant women in achieving the goal of work life balance.

Table 1: Challenges and possible solutions

Challenges	Possible solutions
Some stressors related directly to work like excessive travel and too much time away from family may compromise the mental health of pregnant women. ⁵	Support from workplace, providing transport facilities and considering working hours and official family get together now and then
There is always a feeling of guilt among working mothers, if they give more importance to either work or home which puts them sometimes in questionable position. ⁶	Periodic appreciation and rewards from workplace and family which also motivates pregnant women to do much better
Pregnancy discrimination in workplace which includes social isolation, negative stereotyping and negative or rude interpersonal treatment. ⁷	To involve pregnant women in all activities and provide her with moral support
Lack of emotional support from family members may indirectly reduce the productive work output.	Family members to share the household work and allowing pregnant women to have her me time.

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Motherhood is a state where a pregnant women realizes her strengths which she thought never existed before becoming pregnant, hence she tries to put in efforts to balance her day to day life. Work life balance is a dire need to prove her capabilities and it is the responsibility of every one in both her workplace and home to help her achieve it.

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