



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Balancing Acts and Silent Struggle: Investigating the Interrelationship Between Work-Life Balance and Mental Well-Being of Female School Teachers in South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal

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### Abstract

This study investigates the interrelationship between work-life balance and mental well-being among female school teachers in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Traditionally, alongside their professional responsibilities, these women manage intensive domestic chores such as cooking, child-rearing, and house cleaning. Employing a quantitative research design, data was collected from 50 female teachers at government-aided schools within the Baruipur subdivision. Analysis, utilizing descriptive statistics and the Pearson product-moment correlation test, revealed that the majority of the teachers maintain a high level of balance between their professional and family lives. Furthermore, most participants reported moderate to high levels of mental well-being, and no instances of poor mental health were observed among any of the respondents. A significant finding of the study is the existence of a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.829$ ) between work-life balance and mental well-being, indicating that the effective integration of roles significantly enhances mental stability. According to the results of the T-test, there are no significant differences in either work-life balance ( $t = 0.385$ ) or mental well-being ( $t = 0.490$ ) based on whether the teachers reside in urban or rural areas. The study concludes that institutional support, such as flexible scheduling and measures to reduce workload, is essential for maintaining both professional efficiency and mental tranquility.

**Keywords:** *Work-Life Balance, Mental Well-being, Female School Teachers in South 24 Parganas in West Bengal.*

## Introduction

Traditionally, women are considered homemakers, and even modernity has not changed this. Women, wherever they find themselves, are the managers of the home, and they are expected to ensure that the home runs smoothly without any hitch. In most homes, women are the last to go to bed and the first to wake up to carry out household chores or supervise them. Among the responsibilities that women discharge is cooking, bathing of children, keeping the house clean, fetching water if the household does not have pipe-borne water and a host of other minor domestic responsibilities. Anyway, urbanization and modernization have taken some of these responsibilities away, like fetching water from the stream and firewood from the farm. Apart from these traditionally assigned roles, the changing times demand that women work to supplement the family income or even, in some cases, take complete care of the family where there are no men to shoulder such a responsibility (Shashikala, 2023).

The participation of women in the workforce has steadily increased over the decades, yet their journey remains layered with complex challenges, especially when they take on dual responsibilities of work and home. Female school teachers, in particular, embody a unique professional identity, nurturing minds at work while also navigating expectations within their households. In the Indian context, these responsibilities often extend beyond nuclear family structures to include caregiving roles for extended family, compounding the pressure on women's mental health and work-life balance (Bhatnagar & Rajadhyaksha, 2020). This tension between personal and professional roles becomes especially acute in regions like South 24 Parganas, where educational infrastructure and social norms intersect in intricate ways.

In addition to institutional demands, these women face emotional and psychological stress stemming from societal expectations and limited support systems. The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the fragility of their situation, with blurred boundaries between professional duties and personal responsibilities during school closures and online teaching (Choudhury & Dutta, 2021). As educators and caregivers, these women often suppress their mental health needs to prioritize others, a pattern that leads to long-term consequences for their emotional well-being and professional effectiveness. Therefore, exploring their lived experiences is critical to understanding how systems can evolve to better support them (Ghosh, 2019).

## Review of Related Literatures

A summary of previous related studies is presented in Table A.

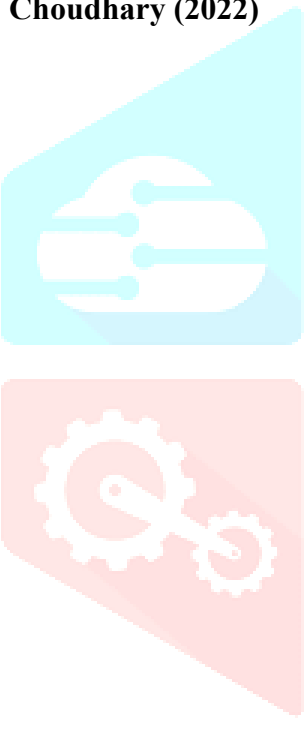
**Table A**

*Previous related studies*

Author(s)	Objectives	Findings
Greenberg (2015)	To investigate mental well-being and depressive symptoms among secondary school teachers, and identify school-related predictors such as	Teachers' level of mental well-being is significantly lower than general norms, with 19.4% exhibiting depressive symptoms. Key

	support systems, stressors, and organizational factors associated with poorer outcomes.	predictors include high workplace stress, presenteeism, and poor colleague support, further exacerbated by shifting school governance.
<b>Lakhanpal (2018)</b>	This study examines the correlation between work-life balance (WLB) and work engagement among male and female teachers, and the impact of organizational stress on it. It examines differences in this balance based on gender and marital status. Finally, it assesses how these effects operate across different dimensions or aspects of work.	Higher work engagement (excluding vigour) improves work-life balance, while organizational stress significantly impairs it. Findings reveal distinct gender differences in family and financial balance, yet marital status and vigor show no significant impact.
<b>Sharma &amp; Gupta (2020)</b>	To examine the work-life balance status among female school teachers in urban Delhi and to identify key factors affecting their professional and personal role alignment.	Female teachers experience significant work-life conflict and stress driven by family responsibilities, yet spousal and institutional support—especially flexible hours—greatly improve their balance and performance.
<b>Dayakar (2021)</b>	This study evaluates secondary school teachers' well-being and its relationship with work-life balance across various demographic factors. By analysing personal, community, and career dimensions, the	With 94.6% of teachers reporting high well-being and 86.9% maintaining a strong work-life balance, the study highlights a positive correlation between the two while emphasizing

	research identifies key drivers of educator satisfaction. The findings highlight the need for institutional policies that support mental health and professional productivity.	the need for institutional support and stress management to address financial and private-sector disparities.
<b>Mishra (2021)</b>	study examines work-life balance among female higher education teachers in Madhya Pradesh by identifying stressors and the impact of institutional and familial support. It proposes policy and behavioural interventions to enhance their professional and personal equilibrium.	Major stressors for female teachers include heavy workloads, long hours (59%), and workplace dissatisfaction (75.6%). While joint family support significantly improves balance, salary issues (44.6%) remain a hurdle. Improvement depends on institutional flexibility, family assistance, and personal time management.
<b>Angayarkanni (2021)</b>	To explore the key factors affecting work-life balance among female teachers and identify coping strategies.	Female teachers perceive moderate work-life balance, with significant impacts from rising job responsibilities and personal sacrifices. Factor analysis highlighted workload, family demands, and lack of flexible hours as primary challenges. Recommended strategies include flexible working hours, institutional childcare, reduced workload, and job-sharing to support Work-life balance.

<p><b>Khan (2021)</b></p>	<p>To compare mental stress levels between female teachers in private vs public schools.</p>	<p>Moderate stress affects 60% of teachers due to heavy workloads and inflexible hours, exacerbated by a lack of autonomy (<math>p &lt; 0.05</math>). However, supervisor support significantly mitigates this stress (<math>p &lt; 0.01</math>), particularly in public schools.</p>
 <p><b>Choudhary (2022)</b></p>	<p>This study examines the interplay between family, workplace, and socio-economic factors to identify the specific challenges affecting the work-life balance of female faculty members in Rajasthan's private universities.</p>	<p>Strong family and workplace support improve work-life balance, yet female faculty often sacrifice self-care for professional demands, increasing risks for hypertension and depression. To mitigate these health issues, schools should implement institutional support like childcare and flexible workloads.</p>
<p><b>Sawant (2023)</b></p>	<p>This study aims to analyze female teachers' work-life balance perceptions, examine influencing factors and personal-professional challenges, and assess their awareness of workplace culture and environmental impacts in Pune Municipal Corporation schools.</p>	<p>Work-life balance is vital for productivity, yet female teachers face unique imbalances that lead to stress and turnover. Because this specific group is often overlooked in research, schools must implement targeted support systems to help them manage their dual</p>

		professional and personal responsibilities.
<b>Rawal (2023)</b>	To investigate the work-life balance challenges and coping strategies of female K-12 school teachers in Noida during COVID-19, while delivering online curriculum from home.	Teachers, particularly women, face severe stress due to the blurring of professional and personal boundaries, worsened by online teaching and domestic duties. Long hours and insufficient recognition require urgent institutional policies to support work-life balance in education.
<b>Dağdeviren (2023)</b>	To evaluate the level of work-life balance among female teachers in Yozgat, Türkiye, and identify which independent variables (e.g., marital status, children, professional experience, housework help, and class size) predict their work-life balance.	Female teachers maintain a moderate work-life balance (mean: 70.08), with professional experience (OR=2.74) and having children (OR=0.48) as significant positive predictors. Conversely, larger class sizes (OR=0.24) negatively impact this balance, while factors like marital status and domestic help show no significant effect.
<b>Sinaau &amp; Shaznie (2023)</b>	This study examines the work-life balance of international school female teachers, identifying key challenges and proposing policy improvements for better institutional support systems.	Work-life balance is vital for well-being, but is often hindered by heavy workloads and poor institutional support. Implementing supportive policies is essential for

		teacher satisfaction and organizational success.
<b>Maheshwari &amp; Soral (2024)</b>	To compare work-life balance between female academicians in government and private higher education institutes, and explore the association between work-life balance and well-being.	A strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.673$ , $p < .01$ ) exists between work-life balance and well-being, with government-sector female academicians reporting better balance than those in the private sector. Key enablers like flexible schedules and on-campus childcare underscore the critical role of institutional support in enhancing mental health.
<b>Wohid, Eme, Fahim, Mim &amp; Ferdaus (2024)</b>	This study aimed to investigate the relationship between work-life balance and its impact on physical and mental health among female teachers at BL College, Khulna, Bangladesh.	Research reveals a significant negative correlation between workload and both physical ( $r = -0.32$ ) and mental health ( $r = -0.28$ ), while personal time correlates positively with physical well-being ( $r = 0.35$ ). These findings suggest that policies reducing workloads and prioritizing personal time are essential for enhancing teacher health.

*Note: The researcher made*

From the above table, the literature review has revealed that work-life balance and mental well-being of women teachers are currently considered very important issues in the education sector and in different geographical contexts. Various domestic and international studies have shown that women teachers carry family responsibilities along with professional responsibilities, which results in their mental stress, emotional exhaustion and deterioration of mental well-being. Work pressure, institutional support, family environment and socio-cultural expectations all these factors affect work-life balance.

Although much important information is available from previous studies, most studies are limited to urban education institutions. There is still a lack of adequate research on the experiences of women school teachers in rural or semi-urban areas, specifically in West Bengal, where socio-economic constraints, traditional gender roles, and infrastructural weaknesses are prevalent.

In this context, the present study not only fills a demographic gap but also seeks to present an analysis of the complex interrelationships between the professional and mental worlds of female school teachers, which have been limitedly discussed so far.

### Statement of the problem

*“Balancing Acts and silent struggle: Investigating the interrelationship between work-life balance and mental well-being of female school teachers in South 24 Parganas District, West Bengal.”*

### Objectives of the study

1. To investigate the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers.
2. To explore the level of mental well-being among female school teachers.
3. To assess the relationship between balancing work-life and mental well-being among female school teachers.

### Hypotheses

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of mental well-being among female school teachers concerning the Location of the teacher's residence.

### Methodology

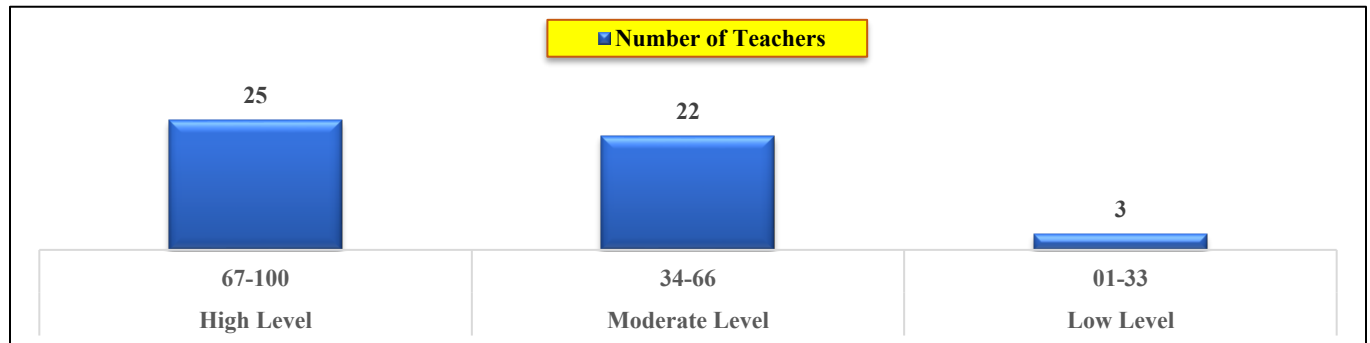
This study has conducted a quantitative research design with a survey method to gather the data. For the research, the population is the female teachers who teach in the schools of South 24 Parganas. The sample for this study has been selected through a two-stage sampling process. In the 1st stage, Baruipur Sub-Division is chosen from South 24 Parganas, and in the 2nd stage, 50 female teachers are selected from Govt. aided schools randomly. Then, data has been gathered through researcher-made scales, which were validated by experts. The analysis has been carried out by using descriptive statistics and the Pearson product-moment correlation test. The data have been presented graphically.

## Result & Discussion

**Objective 1:** Investigate the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers. The level of balancing work-life among female school teachers is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*The level of balancing work-life among female school teachers*



In accordance with Figure 1, it is observed that most of the female teachers have a higher level of balancing ability between work and family life. Conversely, very few teachers have low balancing ability to maintain their work and family life together.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence. Results are shown in Table B.

**Table B**

*Interpretation of t Value (For H<sub>01</sub>)*

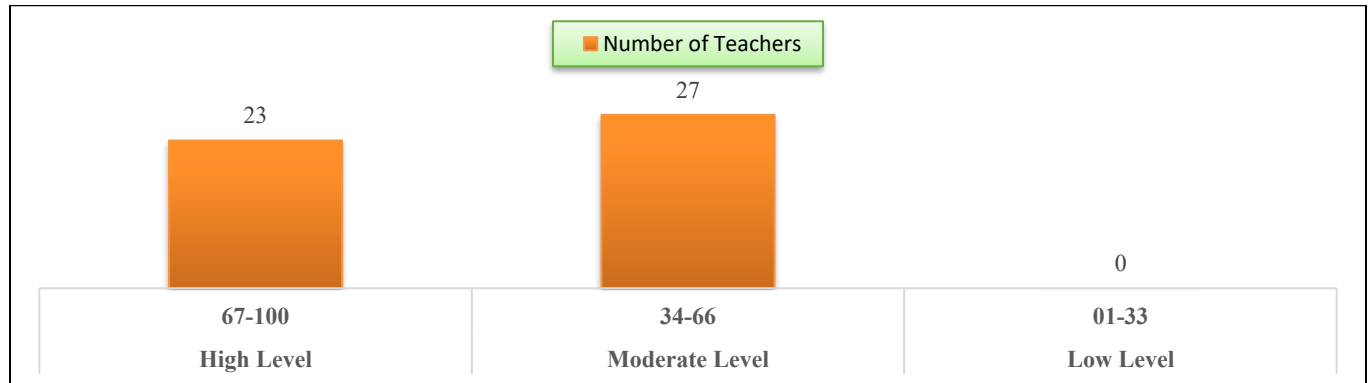
Location	Sample Size	df	Critical values of t		Computed value of t	Interpretation
			5%	1%		
Urban	23	48	2.011	2.682	0.385717	The null hypothesis is accepted
Rural	27					

From the above table, it is reflected that there is no significant difference in the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. To determine whether there is any significant difference in the level of balancing work-life among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence, a t-test is computed & the value is 0.385717, which is much less than the critical values of 5% & 1% level of significance at a degree of freedom of 48 is., 2.011 & 2.682, respectively. Thus, it means the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Objective 2:** Explore the level of mental well-being among female school teachers. The level of mental well-being among female school teachers is illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*The level of mental well-being among female school teachers*



According to Figure 2, it is observed that most female teachers have a moderate to high level of mental well-being. In this case, no one shows a low level of mental well-being.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the level of mental well-being among female school teachers concerning the Location of the teacher's residence. Results are shown in Table C.

**Table C**

*Interpretation of t Value (for H<sub>02</sub>)*

Location	Sample Size	df	Critical values of t		Computed value of t	Interpretation
			5%	1%		
Urban	23	48	2.011	2.682	0.490261	The null hypothesis is accepted
Rural	27					

From the above table, it is reflected that there is no significant difference in the level of mental well-being among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

To determine whether there is any significant difference in the level of mental well-being among female school teachers regarding the Location of the teacher's residence, a t-test is computed & the value is 0.490261, which is much less than the critical values of 5% & 1% level of significance at a degree of freedom of 48 are 2.011 & 2.682, respectively. Thus, it means the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Objective 3:** Assess the relationship between balancing work-life and mental well-being among female school teachers. The relationship between work-life balance and mental well-being is reflected in Table D.

**Table D**

*Relationship between work-life balance and mental well-being*

Variable Name	Variable Name	Value of 'r'	A remark about correlation
Work-Life Balance	Mental Well-Being	0.829	Strongly positive

In the above table, it is noted that the value of  $r$  is 0.829, which indicates that Work-Life Balance and Mental Well-Being are strongly associated with each other & vary with each other. To determine the  $r$  value, the Pearson product-moment method is used in Microsoft Excel 13.

### Conclusion

This study, conducted among female school teachers in the South 24 Parganas district, indicates that the majority of these teachers can maintain a high level of balance between their professional and family lives. The research reveals that their level of mental well-being ranges from moderate to high, and no symptoms of poor mental health were observed in any of the respondents. Statistical analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between work-life balance and mental well-being. This suggests that when a teacher can effectively coordinate her various roles, her mental stability is significantly enhanced. Furthermore, the location of residence, whether urban or rural, does not appear to create any significant difference regarding the teachers' work-life balance or mental well-being. Finally, this study underscores the importance of institutional support, such as flexible scheduling and measures to reduce workload, which is crucial for these female teachers to maintain both their professional efficiency and their mental tranquility.

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