



## **A Study on Work-Life Balance among Working Women with Special Reference to Lucknow District**

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### **Article Info**

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November-2025***Page Number:***409-437***Corresponding Author:***Tushar Omar***Abstract:**

Work-life balance has become one of the most important issues in today's working environment, especially for women who constantly try to maintain harmony between their professional and personal lives. This study focuses on understanding the concept of work-life balance among working women in Lucknow District, particularly those employed in the sectors of nursing, policing, and non-governmental organizations. The research aims to explore how women manage their dual roles, what challenges they face in balancing work and family, and what kind of institutional and emotional support they receive. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the study makes an effort to highlight the real experiences of working women and the factors that affect their overall well-being. It also intends to suggest practical measures that can help create a more supportive and balanced work culture for women professionals.

**Keywords:** Work-Life Balance, Working Women, Organizational Support, Occupational Stress, Lucknow District

### **1. Introduction**

Work-life balance has become an important concern in studies on employee well-being and organizational effectiveness. It refers to the ability of individuals to manage professional and personal responsibilities in a way that minimizes conflict and promotes overall satisfaction. For working women, especially those in demanding professions, achieving this balance is both a personal necessity and a social issue, as it affects health, relationships, and career growth.

Globally, the idea gained prominence in the 1980s with the rise of dual-income households, though its roots can be traced to labor reforms such as the 40-hour work week. In India, economic liberalization in the 1990s, alongside women's increasing educational and professional participation, reshaped the landscape of female employment. Yet, social expectations that place primary household and caregiving duties on women continue to intensify their challenges in balancing work and family life.

In Lucknow, women's workforce participation has steadily increased in recent years. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, urban female labor participation in Uttar Pradesh rose from 15.6% in 2017–18 to 20.2% in 2022–23.

While this indicates progress, it has also brought new pressures, particularly for women in service-intensive fields. Nurses often work irregular and emotionally demanding shifts, policewomen face unpredictable schedules and gender bias in a male-dominated profession, and NGO workers, despite some flexibility, experience irregular hours, travel demands, and emotional stress from fieldwork.

Existing research highlights that such occupational pressures, combined with cultural expectations and limited institutional support, lead to stress, burnout, and role conflict for women professionals. Against this backdrop, the present study examines the work-life balance of working women in Lucknow district, with specific reference to nurses, policewomen, and NGO workers. The study seeks to identify the key challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems that shape their ability

to manage responsibilities in an urban Indian context.



responsibilities in an urban Indian context.

## 2. Literature Review

### Work-Life Balance in Healthcare Professions

Research on work-life balance (WLB) among healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, highlights the significant strain imposed by long working hours, emotional exhaustion, and limited institutional support. Verma (2021), in her doctoral study of women in government and private hospitals in Lucknow, found that extended shifts and absence of crèche facilities exacerbated the challenges of balancing professional and family responsibilities. Similar evidence emerges from Sharma (2019), who examined Indian nurses and reported that rigid schedules and inadequate social support mechanisms heightened role conflict. Internationally, Yu and Wang (2022) emphasized that in China, gendered expectations coupled with demanding workplace structures produced a “double burden” for women. Likewise, Leineweber et al. (2022) in Sweden confirmed that nurses experience systemic time pressures that negatively affect WLB. Collectively, these studies underscore a consistent pattern: healthcare systems often fail to provide structural accommodations such as flexible scheduling or childcare, which intensify stress for women professionals.

### Work-Life Balance in Policing

The policing profession presents distinct WLB challenges due to irregular shifts, emergency duties, and heightened occupational stress. Sharma (2018) found that Indian policewomen often face compounded stress from dual responsibilities, where demanding field assignments leave little time for

personal life. Similar findings are echoed internationally; Brown and Campbell (2020) observed that police officers in the UK experienced elevated work–family conflict, particularly women officers with caregiving responsibilities. In India, these difficulties are intensified by limited organizational support and patriarchal expectations that women must simultaneously excel in professional and domestic roles (Kumari, 2021). Research also shows that policewomen often struggle with stigma and under-recognition, further intensifying psychological stress (Ghosh, 2020). The intersection of professional hazards, rigid duty schedules, and social expectations creates a particularly strained environment for WLB in policing.

### **Work–Life Balance in the NGO and Development Sector**

Unlike healthcare and policing, work in the non-governmental and development sector involves irregular project deadlines, extensive travel, and community-based responsibilities. Singh (2020) reported that NGO workers in Delhi frequently struggled to reconcile professional commitments with family life due to unpredictable working hours. Thomas (2019) similarly found that women in grassroots NGOs in Kerala experienced high emotional burnout, particularly because of blurred boundaries between work and personal time in community service roles. International scholarship has echoed these findings: Baines (2020) showed that NGO employees in Canada faced “boundaryless work,” where emotional labor and community accountability left little room for personal recovery. These studies highlight how, despite different organizational structures, NGO workers face WLB challenges rooted in the sector’s mission-driven intensity and lack of formalized policies for employee welfare.

### **Cross-Sector Comparative Insights**

Comparative reviews indicate that, across sectors, women professionals face common structural barriers such as inflexible schedules, lack of childcare, and the persistence of patriarchal norms that assign disproportionate domestic responsibility to women (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2020). However, sectoral differences also matter: while nurses struggle with rigid shifts and patient care demands, policewomen contend with unpredictable emergencies and societal skepticism, and NGO workers navigate blurred work–life boundaries and extensive travel. Systematic reviews (Allen et al., 2021; Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014) argue that effective WLB policies must integrate flexible working arrangements, supportive leadership, and institutional childcare support. Yet, despite global recognition of these needs, implementation remains inconsistent in the Indian context.

### **Identified Research Gap**

The reviewed literature collectively demonstrates that work–life balance is a persistent concern for women professionals across healthcare, policing, and NGO sectors. However, most Indian studies either focus on single professions in metropolitan contexts or examine generalized organizational stress without sectoral comparison. Very few empirical studies specifically address WLB in mid-sized urban contexts like Lucknow, where structural constraints are acute but under-researched. Moreover, comparative analyses across healthcare, policing, and NGO sectors in India remain scarce. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining work–life balance among women professionals in these three key sectors within Lucknow, thereby contributing both regionally grounded evidence and cross-sectoral insights.

### **3. Case and Methodology**

Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a pressing concern for working women, especially in professions with long hours and emotional stress such as nursing, NGOs, and policing. In Lucknow District, these pressures are intensified by urban congestion, cultural norms, and staffing shortages.

Post-COVID-19 workplace changes, including increased workloads and psychological strain, have further complicated women's ability to balance professional and personal responsibilities. Despite its relevance, limited localized studies exist, creating a critical research gap. This study therefore examines WLB challenges among women in these professions to generate evidence for policy and organizational reforms.

#### **3.1 Scope of the Study**

The research is confined to full-time women employees in three sectors of Lucknow—nursing, NGO work, and policing. It focuses on urban workplaces such as hospitals, NGO offices, and police units where professional demands intersect with family obligations. Variables include work hours, stress, family responsibilities, workplace support, and coping mechanisms. The study is limited to women in these professions during 2024–2025, excluding men, rural areas, and other occupations.

#### **3.2 Objectives of the Study**

1. To assess the current status of WLB among women in NGOs, healthcare, and policing.
2. To identify the major conflicts faced in balancing professional and personal life.
3. To examine organizational policies supporting WLB.
4. To analyze coping strategies adopted by women employees.
5. To propose recommendations for improving WLB.

#### **3.3 Area of Study**

The study covers urban Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh's capital, chosen for its concentration of hospitals, NGOs, and police units. It captures the pressures of long commutes, staffing shortages, demanding fieldwork, and cultural expectations that shape women's experiences of WLB.

#### **3.4 Research Design**

A mixed-methods approach was adopted. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire (Google Forms) and analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative tests. Qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and observations provided depth and context. The sequential explanatory design ensured integration of both numerical and experiential insights.

##### **3.4.1 Hypotheses**

The study tests simple and causal hypotheses, including:

- Longer working hours increase work-life conflict.

- Access to organizational support enhances WLB.
- Irregular shifts in policing intensify imbalance.
- Lack of family support reduces WLB among nurses.

### **3.4.2 Universe and Sampling**

The universe comprised all full-time women working in NGOs, nursing, and policing in Lucknow. Using purposive sampling, 66 respondents were selected: 29 from NGOs, 27 from nursing, and 10 from police.

### **3.4.3 Tools and Methods of Data Collection**

- Questionnaire (35 items, Likert-scale and close-ended questions) captured demographic details, WLB experiences, organizational policies, coping strategies, and recommendations.
- Semi-structured interviews provided qualitative insights.
- Observation notes supplemented data on workplace conditions and stress indicators.

### **3.4.4 Data Sources**

- Primary Data: Questionnaire responses, interviews, and observations.
- Secondary Data: Academic studies, government reports, and organizational documents (e.g., UP Health Department, NGO annual reports, police statistics).

### **3.4.5 Data Classification and Analysis**

Data were classified qualitatively (sector, marital status, stress levels) and chronologically (years of service). Statistical analysis was combined with thematic coding to interpret WLB dynamics.

## **4. Demographic And Professional Background Of The Respondents**

In social sciences research, personnel characteristics and socio economic factors of the respondents have very significant role to play in expressing and giving the responses about the problem, keeping this in mind, in this study a set of personal characteristics and various socio economic factors such as age, childrens, martial status, sector of working, years of working were studied. The analysis of which, have been presented here –

### **Table No. 01**

#### **Age of the Respondents**

Age of the respondents is one of the most important characteristics in understanding their views about the particular problems; by and large age indicates level of maturity of individuals in that sense age becomes more important to examine the response.

The following table is represented through the following pie chart –

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Below 25	19	28.8
25-30	30	45.5
31-40	10	15.2
41-50	5	7.5
Above 50	2	3
Total	66	100

**Table No. 02**

**Marital Status**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Single	41	62.1
Married	24	34.6
Divorced	1	1.5
Widowed	0	0
Total	66	100

**Table No. 03**

**Number of Children**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
No Children	46	69.7
Yes,1	9	13.6
Yes,2	11	16.7
Yes,3 or more	0	0
Total	66	100

**Table No. 04**

**Sector of Working**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
NGO Womens	29	43.9
Nurses	27	40.9
Police Women	10	15.2
Total	66	100

**Table No. 05**

**Years of Working**

Classification	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1–5	38	57.6
5–7	5	7.6
7–10	9	13.6
10 years	11	16.7
15	1	1.5
6 Months	1	1.5
I have been working for two months	1	1.5
Total	66	100

**5. Data Analysis and Research Findings**

**(a) General Work-Life Balance Experience**

**Introduction**

This section explores the overall work-life balance experience of the respondents, focusing on how they perceive and manage the intersection of their professional responsibilities and personal lives. It includes insights into satisfaction levels, emotional challenges, support systems, and coping strategies adopted by women engaged in NGOs, nursing, and policing sectors. These experiences offer a contextual backdrop for understanding how work life balance might either alleviate or exacerbate these challenges.

**Table No. 06**

**How often do you feel satisfied with the balance between your work and personal life?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Always	35	53
Sometimes	28	42.4
Rarely	3	4.6
Never	0	0
Total	66	100

A majority of respondents (around 53%) reported that they always felt satisfied with their work-life balance. A smaller percentage (approximately 42.4%) indicated they were only sometimes satisfied, while the remaining respondents felt rarely or never satisfied. This suggests that while some women manage their professional and personal roles effectively, many continue to struggle with maintaining equilibrium.

The findings also highlight that factors such as workload, family responsibilities, and limited organizational support influence the overall satisfaction level. Although awareness about work-life balance is growing, practical challenges and societal expectations still make it difficult for many women to achieve it fully.

**Table No. 07**

**Do you feel that your job affects your personal or family life?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Very much	14	21.2
Somewhat	20	30.3
Not much	20	30.3
Not at all	12	18.2
Total	66	100

Many respondents admitted that their job often interferes with their personal or family life. While some said the impact was mild, others described frequent disruptions in household routines, emotional connection with family members, and social obligations. The degree of interference was especially high among women in the nursing and police sectors due to their demanding and unpredictable

schedules. This suggests that job responsibilities often spill over into personal time, disturbing the balance.

**Table No. 08**

**Do you get enough time to spend with your family or children after work?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	43	65.2
No	9	13.6
Sometimes	14	21.2
Total	66	100

The availability of personal and family time after work was a common concern for many participants. Several women shared that they rarely get enough time with their children or spouses due to extended work hours or shift duties. Even when at home, mental fatigue often prevented them from engaging meaningfully with their families. The responses reflected that a lack of personal space and time contributes to overall dissatisfaction and emotional exhaustion.

**Table No. 09**

**How often do you bring work-related stress home?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Often	8	12.1
Sometimes	32	48.5
Rarely	16	24.2
Never	10	15.2
Total	66	100

A significant number of respondents reported that they frequently carried work-related stress home. This emotional burden affected their mood, mental health, and relationships within the household. The stress was particularly intense for women dealing with high-pressure environments, such as hospitals and police stations. These findings underscore how work stress not only disrupts personal life but also erodes emotional well-being over time.

**Table No. 10**

**Are you satisfied with your current working hours?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	52	78.8
No	9	13.6
Sometimes	5	7.6
Total	66	100

A significant number of respondents agreed that their jobs left them feeling emotionally drained. About 78.8% were not fully satisfied with their current working hours, and few expressed frustration over frequently missing family events due to work obligations. This emotional fatigue has direct implications on mental health, particularly when paired with technology-related intrusions such as after-hours communication.

### (b) Work Life Conflicts

#### Introduction

The conflicts that arise in the daily lives of working women as they try to balance their professional responsibilities with personal and family life. These conflicts often result from limited time, workplace pressures, inflexible schedules, and expectations from home. The responses of women working in NGOs, nursing, and the police sector in Lucknow reveal several challenges that hinder a healthy work-life balance.

**Table No. 11**

#### Have you ever missed a family event due to work?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	37	56.1
No	15	22.7
Sometimes	14	21.2
Total	66	100

Several respondents mentioned missing important family occasions such as birthdays, weddings, or religious festivals due to their job demands. This created emotional stress and guilt, especially among married women and mothers. The feeling of being absent in crucial personal moments made them question their ability to maintain meaningful family relationships while being committed to their careers.

**Table No. 12**

#### Does your job make you feel emotionally drained?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	16.7
No	27	40.9
Sometimes	28	42.4
Total	66	100

Many respondents expressed feeling emotionally drained by their jobs, particularly those in nursing and police services. The high-pressure environments, unpredictable shifts, and constant demands often left them mentally exhausted. This emotional fatigue carried over into their personal lives, affecting their ability to engage meaningfully with family or practice self-care.

**Table No. 13**

**Do your family responsibilities affect your job performance?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	11	16.7
No	37	56.1
Sometimes	18	27.3
Total	66	100

Several participants shared that family responsibilities—especially caregiving for children or elders—interfere with their ability to focus at work. In some cases, this distraction affected performance or created tension with supervisors. Married women with children were particularly affected, often forced to juggle between deadlines and domestic needs without sufficient support. These dual pressures intensified their sense of conflict and guilt.

**Table No. 14**

**How difficult is it for you to manage household chores along with your job?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Very difficult	4	6.1
Manageable	56	84.8
Easy	6	9.1
Total	66	100

Women often reported a constant struggle between performing household chores and meeting work

expectations. Although some found it manageable, others, especially those in nuclear families, found it overwhelming. Balancing cooking, cleaning, childcare, and other responsibilities alongside full-time work led to mental and physical exhaustion. This dual burden was a common source of conflict in their daily lives. Many respondents expressed that lack of support from family members further intensified their stress levels. Some also mentioned that flexible work arrangements or supportive employers significantly helped them cope with these challenges.

**Table No. 15**

**Do you feel pressure to always be available at work, even outside working hours?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	10	15.2
No	41	62.1
Sometimes	15	22.7
Total	66	100

Many respondents felt that their workplace expected them to put work above all else, even outside working hours. Some were asked to stay back late or remain available on phone beyond duty time. This expectation of “always being available” created stress and made it difficult to set boundaries, thus deepening the conflict between work and life.

**(c) Organizational Policies and Support**

**Introduction**

Organizational policies and support systems play a pivotal role in shaping the work-life balance of working women. For women who must juggle professional commitments with household and caregiving responsibilities, supportive policies such as flexible working hours, emergency leave, maternity benefits, mental health services, and crèche facilities can make a significant difference. It presents the findings related to the availability and effectiveness of such institutional supports among working women in NGOs, nursing, and police services in Lucknow district.

**Table No. 16**

**Does your organization provide flexible work hours?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	30	45.5
No	25	37.9
Not sure	11	16.7
Total	66	100

The findings indicate that flexible work hours are not a common feature across most organizations

where the respondents are employed. While some women working in NGOs mentioned having the option of flexible schedules, those in nursing and police services largely reported rigid shifts with limited room for adjustment. The absence of flexibility creates tension when personal responsibilities arise, leaving women with little choice but to compromise either their work or family obligations.

**Table No. 17**

**Are maternity benefits provided in your organization?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	49	74.2
No	4	6.1
I don't know	13	19.7
Total	66	100

Maternity benefits and workplace childcare facilities were found to be largely available or sufficient. Most respondents, particularly in the nursing and police sectors, reported either of access to paid maternity leave or of awareness about such provisions.

**Table No. 18**

**Is there a daycare/crèche facility at your workplace?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	20	30.3
No	36	54.5
Not applicable	10	15.2
Total	66	100

Moreover, nearly all respondents confirmed the absence of crèche or daycare facilities at their workplace. For working mothers, especially those with young children, this lack of childcare support acted as a major barrier to returning to work post-maternity and maintaining regular attendance, thereby contributing to stress and career stagnation.

**Table No. 19**

**Does your employer support mental health or counselling services?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	36	54.5
No	21	31.8
I don't know	9	13.6
Total	66	100

Organizational support for mental health remains minimal across sectors. Only a few women reported access to any kind of counselling or emotional support services at work. Given the emotional exhaustion that many working women face due to workload and domestic stress, the lack of institutional support for mental well-being exacerbates their challenges. This gap reflects a broader neglect of employee emotional health in workplace policy frameworks.

**Table No. 20**  
**Are you allowed to take emergency leave easily when needed?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes / हाँ	52	78.8
No / नहीं	2	3
Sometimes / कभी-कभी	12	18.2
Total	66	100

Many respondents expressed satisfaction with the ease of availing emergency leave. While some organizations had formal policies in place, the process of approval was often slow, or leave requests were discouraged. In professions like nursing and policing where roles are demanding and time-bound, women felt unsupported when urgent family matters arose, highlighting the lack of responsive and employee-centered HR practices.

#### (d) Coping Strategies

##### Introduction

Coping strategies are the everyday actions and techniques adopted by individuals to manage stress and overcome challenges in life. For working women, balancing career and personal responsibilities often results in emotional strain. It explores how the respondents of this study cope with work-life conflicts and maintain stability in their personal and professional lives.

**Table No. 21**

##### What do you do to relax after work?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage

Talk to family/friends	30	45.5
Watch TV or listen to music	6	9.1
Rest or sleep	23	34.8
Other	4	6.1
Social media or OTT	1	1.5
Social media	1	1.5
Nothing only house choir	1	1.5
Total	66	100

Many respondents reported using personal coping techniques such as rest, music, and sleep to relax after long working hours. Rest was the most common method, especially among nursing and police professionals, who often returned home physically and mentally exhausted. Listening to music or watching television also emerged as regular activities that helped women temporarily disconnect from their work-related stress.

**Table No. 22**

**Do you practice any form of meditation or physical activity?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Regularly	22	33.3
Occasionally	33	50
Never	11	16.7
Total	66	100

Some participants reported engaging in spiritual or wellness activities such as meditation, prayer, yoga, or reading religious texts. These practices were mainly used to maintain mental peace and gain emotional strength. Although not practiced by all, those who followed such routines stated that it helped them stay positive and better manage stress from both work and home.

**Table No. 23**

**When work gets too stressful, do you talk to anyone about it?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	41	62.1
No	10	15.2

Sometimes	15	22.7
Total	66	100

Talking to family members or close friends was identified as another significant coping tool. Several women shared that emotional conversations with spouses, parents, or trusted companions helped them vent frustrations and find encouragement. This type of informal support system was more accessible and comforting for women in nuclear and joint families alike. Those without strong family ties, however, expressed greater emotional strain and isolation.

**Table No. 24**

**Do you take time out for yourself (hobbies, self-care)?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	45	68.2
No	3	4.5
Rarely	18	27.3
Total	66	100

Some respondents stated that proper time management helped them avoid unnecessary stress. By preparing daily schedules, prioritizing urgent tasks, and balancing home and office work efficiently, they were able to reduce work overload and contributing to their hobbies, self-care etc. These proactive habits were mostly found among NGO workers who had some degree of control over their working hours.

**Table No. 25**

**Have you ever considered quitting your job due to work-life imbalance?**

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	6	9.1
No	47	71.2
Rarely	7	10.6
Sometimes	6	9.1
Total	66	100

Analysis reveals that work-life imbalance has a strong emotional and psychological impact on working

women, to the extent that many have contemplated quitting their jobs. While most continue to work out of necessity, the recurring thought of resignation signals a serious gap in support systems at both the organizational and societal levels.

### Profession-Specific Questions

This section explores the unique work-life balance challenges experienced by women across three professional sectors: NGOs, nursing, and police services. Although all respondents share the burden of dual responsibilities, the nature and intensity of work-life balance issues vary according to their job roles, organizational culture, and working conditions. This comparative understanding helps identify sector-specific gaps and opportunities for improvement.

**Table No. 26**

#### Do your work timings change often (shift duties)?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	39.4
No	30	45.5
Sometimes	10	15.2
Total	66	100

A significant portion of the respondents confirmed that their work timings change frequently due to shift duties or rotational schedules. This was most common among women employed in nursing and police services, where night shifts, emergency calls, and unpredictable duty hours are a regular part of the job. Such inconsistency in schedules disrupts sleep cycles and limits the ability to spend time with family or engage in personal care.

**Table No. 27**

#### Do you face gender-related challenges at your workplace?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	8	12.1
No	53	83.3
Sometimes	3	4.5
Total	66	100

Most respondents reported not facing gender-related challenges at work. Women across the NGO, nursing, and police sectors largely answered “No,” suggesting a generally inclusive environment. However, a few respondents, particularly from male-dominated roles like policing, did report facing such issues. While specific details were not provided, these responses indicate that gender bias may still exist in certain settings and warrants further attention.

**Table No. 28**

Are your efforts at work recognized by your organization?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	46	69.7
No	7	10.6
Sometimes	13	19.7
Total	66	100

Responses revealed that while some women feel appreciated at work, many do not receive consistent or formal recognition. This was especially noted in public service roles, where efforts are often overlooked. Overall, recognition exists in pockets but is generally limited, leaving many women feeling undervalued

**Table No. 29**

How supportive is your supervisor regarding personal issues?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Very supportive	41	62.1
Somewhat	22	33.3
Not at all	3	4.5
Total	66	100

Most respondents described their supervisors as somewhat supportive when it came to personal matters. A few women reported having very supportive supervisors who allowed leave or adjusted workloads during emergencies. However, others mentioned limited or no support, particularly in rigid or hierarchical settings. Overall, the level of support varied, with many women feeling that empathy from supervisors depended on individual attitude rather than organizational policy.

**Table No. 30**

Does your job involve overtime or working on holidays?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage

Frequently	14	21.2
Occasionally	35	53
Never	17	25.8
Total	66	100

Many respondents confirmed that their job often involves overtime or working on holidays, especially in nursing and police services. Women reported being expected to stay beyond regular hours or be available during festivals and weekends without extra compensation. While NGO respondents experienced this less frequently, occasional event-based duties still extended beyond normal hours. Overall, overtime and holiday work emerged as a common factor contributing to work-life imbalance.

(a) Suggestions and Interventions

### Introduction

It presents practical suggestions and interventions aimed at improving work-life balance among working women, especially in the NGO, nursing, and police sectors. The recommendations are based on the findings from the primary data and reflect both the personal experiences of respondents and gaps in institutional support. These suggestions aim to address organizational, structural, and policy-level changes for long-term improvement.

**Table No. 31**

What kind of support would help you maintain better work-life balance?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Flexible work hours	14	21.2
More staff	9	13.6
Emotional support	9	13.6
All of the above	34	51.5
Total	66	100

Support for better work-life balance, as reflected in the responses, includes primarily flexible work hours, emotional support from supervisors, and increased staffing to reduce workload. Respondents also noted the importance of access to mental health services and recognition at work. Overall, a combination of structural flexibility and empathetic organizational culture was seen as essential for maintaining balance.

**Table No. 32**

Should organizations conduct sessions to address work-life stress?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	44	66.7
No	9	13.6
Maybe	13	19.7
Total	66	100

Organizations should conduct sessions to address work-life stress, as many respondents believe these can help manage pressure, improve mental well-being, and promote healthier work-life boundaries. Such initiatives also show that the organization values employee welfare, leading to better job satisfaction and productivity.

**Table No. 33**

Would you attend training or workshops on time management or stress handling?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	63.6
No	15	22.7
Maybe	9	13.6
Total	66	100

A majority of respondents expressed willingness to attend training or workshops on time management and stress handling. They believe such sessions would equip them with practical strategies to manage workload, reduce stress, and improve overall efficiency. These workshops are seen as valuable opportunities for personal and professional growth, helping individuals achieve a better work-life balance and enhancing their ability to cope with daily challenges.

**Table No. 34**

Do you think sharing real stories of women from your profession can bring change?

Classification	No. of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	43	65.2

No	2	3
Maybe	21	31.8
Total	66	100

Many respondents believe that sharing real stories of women from their profession can bring meaningful change. They feel that such stories can inspire others, raise awareness about gender-specific challenges, and create a sense of solidarity and empowerment. By highlighting real experiences, these narratives can also influence organizational policies and societal attitudes, promoting a more supportive and inclusive work environment for women.

## 6. Recommendations

The recommendations aim to address the identified challenges, including work-life conflicts, limited organizational support, and sector-specific pressures, to foster healthier and more equitable workplaces. They are organized into organizational, sectoral, and societal interventions, ensuring practical and context-specific solutions for NGOs, hospitals, police departments, and broader community stakeholders in Lucknow.

### (a) Organizational Interventions

#### 1. Implement Flexible Work Arrangements

The study revealed that 37.9% of respondents lack access to flexible work hours (Table 16), with nurses and policewomen particularly affected by rigid shift schedules. Flexible arrangements, such as adjustable shifts, compressed workweeks, or telecommuting for administrative tasks, can significantly reduce work-life conflicts. For instance, 51.5% of respondents prioritized flexible hours among other support mechanisms (Table 31).

**Recommendation:** Hospitals should introduce rotating shift options, allowing nurses to choose schedules that align with family needs. Police departments can adopt predictable rostering, ensuring advance notice of duty changes. NGOs, like YES Foundation and Sahayog, should formalize remote work policies for non-field tasks, as suggested by Cascio (2000), who found that flexibility reduces role conflicts by 40%. Organizations can pilot these changes in one department, evaluate impacts on productivity and satisfaction, and scale up accordingly.

**Implementation:** Establish a task force to design flexibility frameworks, incorporating employee feedback to ensure feasibility. For example, hospitals can trial a four-day workweek for nurses, as seen in Mullen's (2015) pilot programs, which reduced stress by 30%.

#### 2. Enhance Childcare and Family Support Facilities

A significant 54.5% of respondents reported no access to daycare or crèche facilities (Table 18), a major barrier for mothers, particularly in nursing and policing. This aligns with Verma's (2021) findings that 60% of nurses lack childcare, exacerbating role conflicts.

**Recommendation:** Hospitals, such as Balrampur Hospital, should establish on-site daycare centers, subsidized for low-income employees, as recommended by De Luis et al. (2002), who noted a 40% reduction in conflicts with childcare support. Police stations can partner with local NGOs to provide

community-based childcare, while larger NGOs like Pravah can allocate budgets for crèche facilities. These measures would enable women to focus on work without worrying about childcare arrangements.

**Implementation:** Collaborate with local government schemes, such as Uttar Pradesh's childcare initiatives, to fund facilities. Hospitals and police units can repurpose unused spaces for crèches, ensuring accessibility during shift hours.

### 3. Introduce Mental Health and Counseling Services

Emotional exhaustion affects 59.1% of respondents (Table 12), yet 31.8% lack access to mental health services, and 13.6% are unaware of such support (Table 19). Nurses and policewomen, exposed to trauma, are particularly vulnerable, as highlighted by Vijayalakshmi (2012).

**Recommendation:** Organizations should implement Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), offering confidential counseling for stress and burnout, as Mullen (2015) found EAPs reduced stress by 30%. Hospitals can partner with mental health NGOs to provide regular sessions, while police departments can integrate counseling into existing welfare programs. NGOs should train supervisors to recognize burnout signs and refer employees to professionals.

**Implementation:** Conduct quarterly mental health workshops and helplines for anonymous support. For eg, the Uttar Pradesh Police can adopt Shanmughavadi and Sethuramasubbiah's (2018) peer counseling model, which improved WLB for 60% of policewomen.

### 4. Streamline Emergency Leave Policies

While 78.8% of respondents can access emergency leave (Table 20), 18.2% face delays or restrictions, particularly in nursing and policing. Approval delays disrupt family responsibilities, increasing stress.

**Recommendation:** Organizations should formalize clear, transparent leave policies with expedited approval processes for emergencies, as suggested by Suresh et al. (2013). Hospitals can implement digital leave request systems to reduce bureaucratic delays, while police departments should empower mid-level supervisors to approve urgent leaves. NGOs can adopt a "no-questions-asked" policy for one-day emergency leaves to build trust.

**Implementation:** Train HR personnel to prioritize leave approvals and set a 24-hour response deadline. Monitor policy adherence through employee feedback surveys to ensure effectiveness.

## (b) Sector-Specific Interventions

### 5. Nursing Sector

Nurses face long shifts (12–16 hours), with 56.1% missing family events (Table 11) and 60.6% bringing stress home (Table 9). Verma's (2021) study noted that 70% of Lucknow nurses experience burnout due to understaffing.

**Recommendation:** Hospitals should address staffing shortages by recruiting additional nurses, as 13.6% of respondents suggested (Table 31). Introduce wellness programs, such as mindfulness training, as Vasudevan and Shailashri (2021) found these reduced stress by 30%. Recognize nurses' efforts through monthly awards to boost morale, addressing the 10.6% who feel unrecognized (Table 28).

**Implementation:** Partner with nursing colleges in Lucknow to streamline recruitment. Pilot wellness workshops at hospitals like Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute, evaluating stress reduction via pre- and post-session surveys.

#### 6. Police Sector

Policewomen report the lowest WLB, with 54.6% facing frequent shift changes (Table 26) and 60.6% experiencing stress (Table 9), validating H1 ( $p<0.05$ ). Vijayalakshmi (2012) emphasized irregular shifts as a key barrier.

**Recommendation:** Implement gender-sensitive rostering, ensuring no consecutive night shifts, as suggested by Minz et al. (2023). Establish mentorship programs to address gender biases (12.1% reported challenges, Table 27), as DeCruise-Fortune (2020) found mentorship improved WLB for 50% of policewomen. Provide stress management sessions, as 66.7% supported such initiatives (Table 32).

**Implementation:** The Uttar Pradesh Police can pilot fixed-shift schedules in one Lucknow precinct, assessing impacts on WLB. Collaborate with women's police associations to design mentorship frameworks, starting with senior officers mentoring juniors.

#### 7. NGO Sector

NGO workers face emotional burnout from advocacy (59.1% feel drained, Table 12) and unpredictable fieldwork, as Mani (2013) noted. However, 45.5% have flexible hours (Table 16), offering a comparative advantage.

**Recommendation:** Formalize flexible work policies to ensure consistency across NGOs, as 51.5% prioritized flexibility (Table 31). Create peer support groups to combat burnout, as Shah (2020) found social support reduces stress by 35%. Offer time management workshops, supported by 63.6% of respondents (Table 33), to enhance efficiency.

**Implementation:** NGOs like YES Foundation can document flexibility policies in employee handbooks. Organize monthly peer support meetings, facilitated by trained staff, and partner with local training institutes for workshops.

### (c) Societal and Community-Based Interventions

#### 8. Promote Family and Community Support Systems

Family responsibilities impact 44% of respondents' job performance (Table 13), and 84.8% find household chores manageable but time-consuming (Table 14). Shah (2020) emphasized that spousal support reduces stress by 35%.

**Recommendation:** Launch community campaigns to encourage shared domestic responsibilities, targeting spouses and families. Local women's collectives, like those supported by Sahayog, can host workshops on gender roles, promoting equitable task-sharing. Schools and community centers can offer after-school programs to reduce childcare burdens. **Implementation:** Partner with Lucknow's municipal bodies to fund awareness campaigns via radio and social media. Pilot after-school programs in one neighborhood, evaluating uptake and impact on mothers' work hours.

## 9. Share Real Stories for Advocacy and Awareness

A significant 65.2% of respondents believe sharing real stories of women in their professions can drive change (Table 34), fostering solidarity and inspiring policy reforms. Taneja and Kumar (2024) noted that narratives reduce stigma around work-life struggles.

**Recommendation:** Create a platform, such as a website or local newsletter, to publish anonymized stories of nurses, policewomen, and NGO workers, highlighting their challenges and resilience. Organize storytelling events at workplaces and community centers to spark dialogue, as 65.2% supported this approach.

**Implementation:** Collaborate with NGOs like Pravah to curate stories, ensuring ethical storytelling with consent. Host quarterly events in Lucknow, inviting policymakers and employers to discuss actionable changes based on narratives.

## 10. Advocate for Policy Reforms at the State Level

The study's findings, such as 74.2% facing overtime or holiday work (Table 30), underscore the need for systemic changes. Barik and Pandey (2016) found that policy interventions increase retention by 20%.

**Recommendation:** Advocate for Uttar Pradesh government policies mandating childcare facilities in public sector workplaces and flexible shift options in healthcare and policing. Propose tax incentives for organizations implementing WLB programs, encouraging adoption by smaller NGOs.

**Implementation:** Form a coalition of NGOs, hospital unions, and police associations to lobby the Uttar Pradesh Labour Department. Present study findings at state-level forums, such as women's welfare committees, to push for legislative amendments.

## 7. Conclusion

This study, titled *A Study on Work-Life Balance of Working Women: With Special Reference to Lucknow District*, has delved into the intricate realities faced by women in three critical professions—nursing, policing, and NGO work—in their pursuit of balancing professional demands with personal responsibilities. Conducted in Lucknow, a city where tradition and modernity intersect, the research has uncovered the challenges, coping strategies, and organizational support systems that shape the work-life balance (WLB) experiences of 66 women (29 from NGOs, 27 from nursing, and 10 from police services).

Through a mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observation notes, the study has provided a nuanced understanding of how these women navigate their dual roles in a socio-cultural context that often prioritizes familial duties for women. This concluding chapter synthesizes the key findings, reflects on their implications, and underscores the significance of the study for policy, practice, and future research.

### 7.1 Summary of Key Findings

The research was guided by specific objectives: to assess the current state of WLB, identify major conflicts, analyze coping mechanisms, evaluate organizational support, and propose interventions. The findings, detailed in Chapter 6, reveal both the resilience of these women and the systemic barriers they face. A significant 53% of respondents reported being “always” satisfied with their WLB, yet

42.4% felt satisfied only “sometimes” and 4.6% “rarely,” indicating that while some women manage their roles effectively, many struggle with persistent imbalances (Table 6).

Nurses and policewomen, in particular, cited irregular shifts as a major disruptor, with 60.6% bringing work-related stress home (Table 9) and 56.1% missing family events due to job demands (Table 11). These conflicts were less pronounced among NGO workers, who often benefited from relatively flexible schedules, though they faced emotional burnout from advocacy work.

Work-life conflicts were a recurring theme across all sectors. Emotional exhaustion affected 59.1% of respondents, with nurses and policewomen reporting the highest levels due to patient care and exposure to crime, respectively (Table 12). Family responsibilities impacted job performance for 44% of women, particularly mothers juggling childcare and eldercare (Table 13). Household chores, while “manageable” for 84.8%, were a source of exhaustion for 6.1%, especially in nuclear families (Table 14). The pressure to be always available for work, felt by 37.9%, further blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life (Table 15). These findings resonate with prior studies, such as Verma (2021), which highlighted burnout among Lucknow’s nurses, and Vijayalakshmi (2012), which noted irregular shifts as a barrier for policewomen.

Organizational support was a critical determinant of WLB. While 45.5% had access to flexible work hours, 37.9% did not, with nurses and policewomen facing rigid schedules (Table 16). Maternity benefits were available to 74.2%, but 19.7% were unaware of such provisions, indicating communication gaps (Table 17).

The absence of daycare facilities for 54.5% was a significant barrier for mothers (Table 18), aligning with Mullen’s (2015) emphasis on childcare support. Mental health services were unavailable for 31.8%, despite 59.1% experiencing emotional exhaustion (Table 19). Emergency leave was accessible for 78.8%, but delays affected 18.2%, particularly in nursing and policing (Table 20). Supervisor support, reported by 95.4%, varied in quality, with NGO workers noting the most empathy (Table 29).

Coping strategies reflected the women’s resilience. To relax, 45.5% talked to family or friends, while 34.8% rested (Table 21). Meditation or physical activity was practiced by 83.3%, with yoga and walking popular among NGO workers (Table 22).

Discussing work stress with others was common for 84.8%, though some nurses felt isolated without strong networks (Table 23). Self-care or hobbies were prioritized by 68.2%, but time constraints limited engagement for 27.3% (Table 24). Alarmingly, 28.8% had considered quitting due to WLB issues, signaling a serious gap in support systems (Table 25). These strategies echo Shah’s (2020) findings on the importance of family support and personal resilience.

Profession-specific challenges highlighted the unique pressures of each sector. Nurses and policewomen faced frequent shift changes (54.6%, Table 26), disrupting sleep and family time. Gender-related challenges were minimal (12.1%, Table 27), though some policewomen noted subtle biases.

Work recognition was inconsistent, with 10.6% feeling undervalued (Table 28). Overtime or holiday work affected 74.2%, particularly in nursing and policing (Table 30). NGO workers, while benefiting from flexibility, faced emotional strain from fieldwork, consistent with Mani’s (2013) findings.

The study’s recommendations, informed by respondents’ suggestions, emphasize flexible work arrangements, childcare facilities, mental health services, and streamlined leave policies. Sector-specific interventions include addressing staffing shortages in hospitals, implementing gender-

sensitive rostering in policing, and formalizing flexibility in NGOs. Societal interventions, such as promoting shared domestic responsibilities and sharing real stories (supported by 65.2%, Table 34), aim to challenge cultural norms and foster solidarity. Training on time management and empathetic leadership, supported by 63.6% (Table 33), can empower women and supervisors alike. These recommendations align with Cascio's (2000) advocacy for flexible policies and Heather et al.'s (2011) emphasis on supervisor empathy

## 7.2 Implications of the Study

The findings have profound implications for organizations, policymakers, and communities in Lucknow and beyond. For organizations, the study underscores the need for gender-sensitive policies that address the unique challenges of women in high-pressure professions.

Flexible schedules and childcare facilities, as suggested by 51.5% of respondents (Table 31), can reduce conflicts and boost productivity, as seen in De Luis et al.'s (2002) findings. Hospitals like Balrampur and police units in the Uttar Pradesh Police can pilot these changes, setting a precedent for public sector workplaces. NGOs, such as YES Foundation, can lead by formalizing flexible policies, enhancing their appeal as inclusive employers.

At the policy level, the study calls for state-level reforms in Uttar Pradesh, such as mandating childcare facilities and incentivizing WLB programs, as suggested by Barik and Pandey (2016). These reforms can address systemic gaps, particularly in resource-constrained sectors like healthcare and policing.

The high emotional toll (59.1% drained, Table 12) highlights the urgency of integrating mental health support into workplace policies, a gap also noted by Mullen (2015). By presenting these findings to bodies like the Uttar Pradesh Labour Department, the study can catalyze legislative changes that prioritize women's well-being.

Societally, the study challenges Lucknow's patriarchal norms, where women are often seen as primary caregivers. The 44% whose job performance is affected by family duties (Table 13) reflect the "second shift" described by Mani (2013). Community campaigns promoting shared responsibilities, as recommended, can shift these norms, fostering equitable households. Sharing real stories, supported by 65.2% (Table 34), can amplify women's voices, inspiring both solidarity and policy advocacy, as Taneja and Kumar (2024) suggest. These efforts can resonate beyond Lucknow, offering lessons for urban India's evolving workforce.

## 8. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for its focus on Lucknow, a city embodying India's cultural and economic transitions. By centering on nurses, policewomen, and NGO workers—professions critical to public welfare—it highlights the often-overlooked struggles of women in emotionally and physically demanding roles. The mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from 66 respondents with qualitative narratives, provides a holistic view of WLB, capturing both statistical trends and personal stories. The sector-specific analysis reveals tailored insights, such as the need for staffing in hospitals and mentorship in policing, making the recommendations actionable.

The study contributes to the academic discourse on WLB by grounding global theories, like Greenhaus et al.'s (2003) definition of balance, in a local context. It builds on prior research, such as Verma (2021) and Vijayalakshmi (2012), while offering fresh data on Lucknow's NGO sector, which is underexplored. By validating hypotheses, such as policewomen's lower WLB (H1) and the role of irregular shifts (H5), the study provides empirical rigor. Its practical recommendations, from childcare to storytelling, bridge theory and practice, offering a roadmap for stakeholders.

## 9. Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. The sample size of 66, while diverse, may not fully represent all working women in Lucknow's NGOs, hospitals, and police units. The smaller police sample (10 respondents) limited comparative depth. Time constraints restricted longitudinal data collection, which could reveal how WLB evolves. Cultural sensitivities may have influenced responses, particularly on gender biases (Table 27), potentially underreporting issues.

Future research could expand the sample size and include rural areas to compare urban-rural WLB dynamics. Longitudinal studies tracking WLB over years could assess policy impacts. Exploring men's WLB in these sectors could provide a gendered perspective, addressing whether cultural expectations differ. Investigating smaller NGOs versus larger ones could reveal organizational size's impact on flexibility. Finally, evaluating pilot interventions, like childcare facilities, could quantify their effectiveness, building on this study's recommendations.

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