

Are Flexible Workings Highly Gendered with More Women Availing Benefits than Men?

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Abstract

This paper examines the degree of relevance of various flexible options and various benefits of flexible working for men and women. Men and women workers have equal access to flexible working and avail equally various arrangements like job sharing, working from home, part time etc. In this paper, we discuss the impact of flexible working arrangements on both men and women workers' career, social life, attitude and balance. The Flexible workings are not highly gendered with more women availing options and benefits than men. Flexible workings do not treat a man differently than the way these treat a woman. The male employees are confused only because of lack of awareness about flexible working and need to avail the options. Moreover, paper discusses various benefits of availing flexible workings for organization itself, men, and women; and also sheds light on men and women uptakes of flexible workings options. These different options may have different preferences based on gender. This paper suggests that if the gender gap to be closed, organizations must allow greater flexible schedules at workplaces for both men and women. Flexible workings are neither a zero sum game in which men gains and women lose; nor gendered only by availing opportunities for women. Both men and women are attracted to jobs with flexible working options. Flexible workings allow individuals to make balance; both men and women enjoy flexible workings benefits.

Keywords: Flexible working, Gender, availing benefits.

1. Introduction

Increasing the workplace flexibility is an important element organizational strategy. Organizations should more flexible in order to respond the changing demands of the labor market. Organizations should adopt innovative working patterns based on the use of the technology and other office related facilities; if they want to remain competitive. Flexibility is not only important for the employees, but also important for the organizations. Flexibility has many dimensions including working flexibility.

Flexible working is a place of work where the employee and the employer settle an agreed schedule of working. For example, home working or office working, working permanently or working on contract and other variations in time like part time job sharing, day extender etc. (ACAS, 2011). Hell et al (2001) says flexible workings are a range of practices including flextime, part time, job sharing, working compressed hours, home working, teleworking, and having flexible contracts. It is an understanding between employer and employee, among the employees and management. It is a care for each other's needs and trust between the employer and employee. Any agreed schedule and working patterns is flexibility. It is much different than traditional working patterns. Flexible working emphasis on employee mental involvement rather than physical involvement. It is concerned with progress and with physical presences. Employees at home or outside the office can perform work and these practices are possible in advance in the office related and communication technologies.

The evolution of flexible workings has facilitated by many changes in social, technological and organizational workings patterns. In many countries of the world, these working patterns are yet at an introductory level. Some options are more common than others. Different organizational settings prefer different flexible working arrangements. In some countries, these options are management strategies to attract skilled workforces for their organizations, but in many countries availing the flexible working options have become a matter of legal rights. These flexible workings options are considered as basic employees' rights and organizations are bound to provide such facilities for employees in their organizations.

Flexible workings have many benefits for employees, employers and society as a whole. Implantations of flexible workings have changed from strategies to human resource requirements. These working patterns have become a job satisfaction and employee return tools. A tool to increase workforce as women and men participations in working will increase by the facilities of these working patterns. Flexible workings reduce work stress and increases work life balance.

Despite of this favourable picture of flexible workings at workplaces, and in social and personal life of the employees, it is usually argued that flexible workings are highly gendered and having more benefits for women worker than men. It is said that these practices are limited to women and only availed by women workers in organizations. There is increased workforce diversity. Women participation in paid work is increasing every day. So these policies are used only for women to enter the workplaces. However, in a true sense, initially such

policies were introduced to provide women balance in her paid and unpaid work. In the following lines we discuss the benefits of flexible workings for both men and women.

2. Flexible working's Common Benefits for men and women

This century has witnessed fastest growing women's participation in all walks of life, especially in paid work. Traditionally women have given more time and care to unpaid work, especially home and child care related responsibilities. Women participation in paid work has reached to such quantity which never has been experienced in the past (ILO, 2004, ILO, 2007). This shows the old perception that men will perform only paid work and women will only perform unpaid work has changed. The negative perception that women will stay at home will care children and elders, doing only house related activities; is changing and will continue to change. On the global scenario, the perception is changing and level of women participation depends still on country to country. Almost every country has one common trend that has increased women participation in all walks of life including paid and unpaid work. Education, media and different social movements played important role in awareness of women, increased women participation.

The most important is women own development and interest, which increases women skills, knowledge, awareness and education. There are several factors which played a role for women's participation in paid work, like economic factors. We are living in and economic environment where everything has its price. Money has become a means of comfort and satisfying social needs. We need to pay for good education, for better treatment and health, travelling, food and living accommodations. Our social relations and systems need spending of money. So economic factor is most important which increased women's participation in paid work.

There is a change in social structure as well. Once women were at home and performing all social responsibilities at home; but now women is at workplace. Therefore home and family related responsibilities need men's effective role. Balanced life in paid and unpaid work is not possible without the due participation of men and women. Women are performing the same work which was once performed by men. If women are doing well in both paid and unpaid work; similarly, men have to perform well in both paid and unpaid work.

The changes in family structure and status of women have brought about changes in commitment and responsibilities at home and in career. Women career is considered as important as the career of a man. As women's participation has increased in the working environment outside the home, reciprocally, responsibilities of men have increased at home and in the social sphere. Both man and woman have to show commitment in family related issues, responsibly, and in career related commitments. In many matters women have shown more commitment to family and social responsibilities than men.

Equality concept also emphasis on equality of both men and women. Both have equal rights and equal responsibilities. Sometimes, men have more responsibilities as compare to women in social, family and economic life. Men have to play a major role and has to increase its participation in all spheres of the life. Women were considered weak to face the outside world, she was considered unable to face issues in our society especially in the working environment. Historically, women were considered as born to give birth to children, serving the husband and his family members, cooking and cleaning were her major responsibilities. But now women are considered as partners in all walks of life, especially in economic matters. Negative concepts about women's abilities have been abolished. Women are equally important and respectable as men.

Career development is important for both men and women. If men want to develop his career, then women also want to develop her career. Both men and women want power, recognition, and economic independence. Social changes like marital breakdown, and single parent families emphasis the importance of women economic independence more needed than a men. To resettle in life is very difficult for a women than a men. In older age, it becomes more difficult for a woman to survive than a man. Women has more social limitations as compare to men; these all and other reasons increase women's participation in the labor force, even women personal interest increases in work.

Structural and functional changes in workplaces and organizations also provide more opportunities for women to enter into the work. Organizational and technological changes have made workers' life more comfortable. Working patterns are changing from hard working to smart working. In organizations employees' skills and abilities have more importance than physical strengths. Researches indicate women are more active in smart working than a man. Heavy working loads are performed with the help of the technologies and machinery, therefore smart working patterns are growing in industries. Changes in industrial sector have also taken places from traditional manufacturing towards services sector. Personal and communication factors play important role in managing people and organizations, from rigid organizational systems towards flexible working patterns, boring workplaces towards interesting and motivating workplaces. These all approaches have increased women participation and importance at workplaces.

The most important development is information and communication technologies and related products which have changed working patterns for forever. In the age of information technology; organization need smart working than hardworking; human skills and abilities have more important in a working environment than a

human. Efficient working differentiates the good worker from bad irrespective of gender. Human talent is all that makes difference and creates competitive advantage for a firm. Researches show women has more motivating and managing skills than a man.

Organizations have adopted different family friendly and employee friendly policies all over the world at regional, national and corporate level. These policies initially were introduced for increasing women participation in paid work, so that women can meet its traditional role of caring family and children. Initially family friendly policies like flexible working were given considered important for women workforces. However, with the passage of time, these policies proved as beneficial for men, as beneficial were for female workers.

Flexible working is best family friendly policy which allows both male and female workforce to balance between home life and work life, to meet their social needs, interests and hobbies, career development, improve health, and reduce stress. All employees male and female workers are availing equally flexible working options and entitlements. A quantification of whether the female workers are availing flexible work options more than male may not be possible. There is no any possibility that same facilities availed by one worker has benefits and others do not have. Similarly, flexible working option availed by women or men has similar benefits. These benefits depend on how these options are availed and satisfy the needs for which these options have been availed. Organizations only provide options and employees are free avail these options. The benefits depend on employees' own utilization and will. There is a possibility that different options are liked and availed differently, have different uptake reasons; based on gender like compressed hours are more availed by men than women. There are various availing benefits which are common for men and women; these common benefits based on availing, different options and preferences based on gender, men and women uptakes are discussed below sequentially.

3. Availing Equal Benefits for Men and Women

The availing benefits of the flexible working are quite clear for men and women. Men and women are able to adjust their paid and unpaid obligations. These benefits are not gendered for a man or a woman and need by both males and females for their wellbeing. The common benefits of availing the flexible workings for both men and women are given below:



Figure 1 various benefits

3.1. Career development benefits

In life of men and women a few things have as importance as career development. Career development is the excellence of life and provides direction for development in life. Career development is the path towards goals of life for men and women. Career development is not only for a man, as it was in the past, but also for a woman. Now a days career has become passion of life for men and women. Career development is important for both employee male and female employees, but also for the organization. For the employee it is financial, personal achievement and for an employer it is organizational development. Traditional organizations have male oriented working patterns where only male workers can develop their career, but the change in organizational structures has made possible for female workers to develop their career as much as a man can do. People enjoy life when they have power and status. Male and female, both like status and career development. Mostly man gives preferences to work over family issues and female workers give important to family than work. This idea is changing for this generation and coming generations. Career and family, both are important for both men and women, but not only for men or only for women. Women are finding similar career paths as men are finding. Career carries significances of promotions, power, prestige, responsibility, authority and means of reorganization

and income (Fynes et al, 1996). Flexible working impacts on the advancement of the career of both men and women, and provide a base to employee both men and women for career advancement. If these patterns are availed then men and women both will have balance in their personal life, and career development.

3.2. Balanced work and life benefits

Family is important for both men and women, similarly is work. The idea that a man gives more importance to work and a woman gives more important to family is not working for this generation. The wheel of life can only run when both wheels of life work properly and in one direction. Flexible working provides opportunity to balance work and family for both man and woman. Continuation participant of man and woman in working life is possible when both have balance in work and life. Balancing the work and life balance is a challenge for both men and women and flexible working provides solution. Balanced work and life decrease the negative about the work and organization. Balance in working and home life is equally important for every worker men and women. Unbalanced life creates conflicts in the life of a man and a woman. Men and women adopt the flexible working options to bring peace in their working and family matters. Balance in work and life is another benefits availing of the flexible workings.

3.3. Health Improvement benefits

The importance of the health of men and women can be viewed from different perspectives. Health is not limited up to a healthy body, but also mental health. Employee health is also in favor of the employer as sound health is the essential for the proper functioning of body and mind of men and women. Health is important for all human beings, not only for male or female. Health related issues can be with anyone irrespective of his or her gender, nationality or age. Flexible working options provide opportunity to care about health or arrange such working schedules which do not effect upon the health of the workers. From health point of view flexible working is important for both, male and female workers. Poor health has many causes, but one of them is working stress, tension, multiple and unbalanced responsibilities, conflict at home and at work, unsatisfied needs and pressure of the commitments. These all are similar phenomena for men and women, and not gender specific. Flexible working and balance in life reduces these concerns in the lives of men and women. Employees can adjust flexible schedules according to their health.

3.4. Stress decreasing benefits

Stress is one of the common problem at workplaces and excess of it has negative impacts on productivity of employees, their health physical and mental state is affected likewise. Negative effects of stress not only harm the employee, but also an employer as employee performance will determine organizational performance. Stress decreases human and organizational efficiency. In workplace everything is not under the control of the employee, but flexible working makes employee empowered to make their own decision about time, place, amount of work, and job sharing. These working issues are important for both men and women, and may be solved through flexible working options. Long working hours create stress and tension for all employees. Stress is not only concerned with male worker or female worker, with age young or older. Flexible workings are toll for employment continuity after a long break. This employment continuity is important for male and female workers. Flexible working reduces the tension level among employees. Continues working makes employees vulnerable and uncaring. Employees availing flexible workings can decrease stress level.

3.5. Innovative arrangement benefits

A rigid working culture that firms have adopted for many years are unsuitable for employees, especially young generation including men and women. In Today highly competitive business environment and multiple working responsibilities have become difficult for men and women to own such working environment. Organizations are searching best innovative working practices to benefit both men and women. Search and adoption of such innovative policies is not gendered oriented but human oriented. The flexible working arrangement provides a series of arrangements, which are most innovative arrangements in this century, which have changed the old working patters for forever. It is the right of both male and female workers to get benefit from these working arrangements. These innovative benefits are not limited to gender or particular worker. The aim of these innovative arrangements is to support work and life of both male and female workers. Flexible workings are developed after need assessments of male and female workers. Flexible working is also used to attract the young talent. Many organizations have used these working options as their strategy. Therefore, flexible workings are innovative working procedures. Both men and women should benefits from these innovative working arrangements. Availing flexible workings mean adopting innovative working ways.

3.6. Unpaid work sharing benefits

Traditionally, men spent more time in paid work and women in household work, child care and elder care. These gender patterns have changed now. Women play an important role in paid work and similarly men can play role in unpaid work. Both have equal responsibility for paid and unpaid work. Child care and elder care is not only the woman's responsibility, but also a man's responsibility like other household works. Sharing the proper responsibility in unpaid work both men and women need flexible working patterns to balance work and life. One partner's major role in unpaid work is a gender gap, injustice and effects upon the life of the partner.

Mostly researches show gender discrimination and inequality in paid work like jobs. The gender based salary gap, power and authority gap, promotion an opportunity gaps, and considering as women as unable to manage etc. Discrimination of any type based on gender is considered as gender inequality. In paid work, working hours, services, achievements and contribution are counted and are based on remuneration.

Study of gender responsibilities in paid and unpaid work is very important. How the unpaid and paid work is distributed among male and female. Every society and culture have different ratio of contribution in paid and in unpaid work. Even it is different from human to human in any society. These days, a number of the women are increasing in paid work, therefore the responsibility of unpaid work is equal for both male and female and must be shared. Flexible workings availing can benefit to men share burden of unpaid work.

3.7. Hobbies and Interest benefits

Hobby is a best activity which is done for the pleasure oneself during leisure hours. Participating in hobbies develops one's skills and knowledge, enhances well-being of life. Hobbies make life interesting of a man and a woman. Hobbies and personal interest have good importance in the lives of every human. This interest varies from human to human but not gender to gender. These have equaled importance in the life of a man and a woman. Both have their own liking and disliking. Man and woman have right to pass their life as pleasant as possible. These are basic equal human rights and no any gender have preference on any other gender. They can devote their time in their hobbies and interest once their life is balanced and have equal responsibilities sharing. For their interests and hobbies men and women need time, balanced life and pleasant life. Flexibility at workplaces provides opportunity for men and women to better enjoy their hobbies and interests. Men and women can enjoy the benefits because of leisure time and this time is provided by flexible working options. These interests and hobbies have importance in the life of men and women, but not only men and women. Flexible working availing can provide us time to enjoy our different interests and hobbies.

3.8. Comfort and Reducing long working hours benefits

Men and women want to live carefree, happy, easy, and relaxed life. These aspirations are not gender specific. Every human wants to have the comfort and relaxed life, free from worries, tension and other problems. Human can have little sight when they feel free and have enough time to relax themselves. The need for comfort is not based on gender, important for men as well for a woman. Long working hours make employees tired, irrespective of the gender. Men and women want to reduce long working hours through benefiting the flexible workings options. These all feelings need time and balanced life, less working hours and more flexible options. These all desire can be availed in one option that is a flexible working option in organizations, with equal opportunities for men and women. Long working hours create stress, tension and boring form working and job for men and women, men and women dislike to work long hours the idea that men want to work long hours or women want to work long hours is not realistic. Therefore availing flexible workings means reducing long working hours for men and women.

3.9. Others benefits and entitlements

There are many other benefits equally for men and women job sharing. A man can share with any one, similarly a woman can share job with any other employee. Career development opportunities are for both men and women. It is not bound that only men can avail or only women can avail. Making their own schedule, selecting a suitable working place, suitable at which wants to work and amount of the work all these options are open for both men and women. There is no any gender requirement for availing any of the flexible working options. These all options are equally important for men and women, equally motivate them and make their work and life balance. There are many entitled benefits for employees these are also directly or indirectly form of flexible options. Like sick leaves any employee can avail sick leave the one who is sick. There is no any condition that sick men can avail and a sick woman can not avail this option. Maternity leaves a woman can avail similarly parental leaves a man can avail. Casual and medical leaves are open option for both men and women. Extra ordinary leaves and other facilities can be availed by men and women, without any discrimination. Having above all polices and entitlements are not an end itself but employees have further challenges as equitable access and motivation. It has various impacts on organizational commitment and loyalty. These are all indirect forms of flexible workings and entitlements for employees.

3.10. Business benefits

Skilled employees consider employers of the choice to such organizations which offer flexible workings options. Family friendly working environment leads to increased productivity, because these options increase employee morale (Scharlach & Grosswald, 1997; Saltzman & Wiener, 1993). If an employee is valued, employee plans to return to the job. This is believed in the best interests of the firm as it is difficult for firms to get and keep skilled employees. Flexible workings may also be used for retaining the trained and skilled employees. Flexible workings attract a high quality workforce for a firm. Flexible workings have high levels of the commitment to organizations, colleagues and customers. These are some of the business benefits of flexible workings. Organizations offering such options, consider their own and their business need beside employees' demands.

4. Flexible Workings Availed By Employees Based On Gender

Flexible workings have become an important focus of organizations and government policies, since their introduction. The purpose of flexible workings is to reduce the pressure of work and family conflict experienced by employees, but not only experienced by women or men. Fathers and mothers have similar responsibilities in unpaid work (Lewis & Cooper, 2005). Flexible workings are not only to reduce the pressure of paid and unpaid work, but also a management strategy to deal with changing market demands. This management strategy is not based on gender, but focused on human resource. Flexible workings with different forms are actually a set of benefits for employees; avail these options and have benefits for organizations and for employees. A survey conducted 2010 in the UK about the different options of flexible workings availed based on sex shows that different gender has different suitable schedules for their convenience. Result of the survey also shows that flexible workings schedules are availed by both men and women.

Type Of Flexible workings	Men	Women
Full-time employees		
Flexible working hours	10.9%	15.3%
Annualized working hours	4.9%	4.9%
Term-time working	1.2%	6.7%
Four and a half day week	1.2%	0.5%
Nine day fortnight	0.5%	0.4%
Any flexible working pattern	19%	28.1%
Part-time employees		
Flexible working hours	8.6%	10.3%
Term-time working	3.6%	11.6%
Annualized working hours	3.3%	4.6%
Job sharing	1%	2.1%

Source: National Statistics (2010). *Social Trends 40: 2010 edition*. Newport: National Statistics. Available from: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_social/Social-Trends40/ST40_Ch04.pdf

Table 1. Based on Gender

The employment legislations about the flexible workings are equally supporting men and women; are based on the belief of reducing work-family conflict which is faced by men and women (Jones,K & Jones,E, 2011). Employment laws of different countries are based on equality and discourage discrimination based on the gender. Organizations cannot afford to adopt gendered policy; having benefits for one gender and not for another.

5. Uptake of Flexible Working by Men and Women

The most important factor for increased father's interest in child care and other home related responsibilities is changing family structure and gender equality concepts. Flexible working options development increases the trend of gender equality concept in our society. Many organizations use this option as strong instrument for equality (Hass, Hwang & Russell, 2000). Gender equality is a phenomenon to be observed on equal basis for both men and women. The greater contributions by men in child care and other home related responsibilities reduces difficulties for women and develops a sense of equality between men and women. This provides women opportunity to develop her career and lives a pleasant life, which is also a basic right of women. Contribution in unpaid work is not only the woman's responsibility, but also men's responsibility and protection of women's basic rights.

The use of flexible workings is advocated by governments, unions and societies for numerous reasons. These include increased parents interests in children care. Fathers and mothers have much involvement in the lives of their children. Children schooling, health, food and career development is aim of life for many parents (Halpern, 2005; Landauer, 1997; Galinsky et al, 2004). There are many other issues which are equally important in the life of men and women including economic benefits, career development, personal recognition, and equality. Men and women have almost similar reasons for uptake of flexible workings. Men and women uptakes of flexible working, for different reasons are given below:

5.1. Men's Uptake Flexible Working

Men have started taking more interest in child care and elders due to change in family structure and decline of popular traditional men superiority belief based on sexual division. This interest is not only because of change in family structure but also because of awareness and sense of the responsibilities. Men are taking interest in becoming good fathers. Increase in popular concepts of gender equality among male and female, gender discrimination, human beings equal rights and beyond the equal rights that is trust, care, respect and understanding among the male and female. Because of these and more human related approaches have caused the end to traditional sex division concepts. Men perform almost all duties and responsibilities once only were performed by women. These responsibilities include taking care of parents, children, and other household.

In past, for the men none of the arrangements were important and considered as tool for women to balance their paid and unpaid work. But now increased home related responsibilities have increased the importance of these options. In many cases, even informal flexible working options are availed by men to support his family and elders. The use of these options is increasing for men in both short and long term. For their family responsibilities, even men are more interested in social activities as means of availing these options. Male workers availing for various reasons including child care, elders care, natural incidents, hobbies, interests, innovative benefits and comfort health. For a men worker availing flexible workings options can be divided into four categories of preferences. First preference career have, second personal, third family and fourth are social reasons.

5.2. Women's Uptake Flexible Working

Personal and family lives have become critical for both men and women. People are less willing to put off personal and family life for the sake of the work. This importance increases in the case of women, especially when she is mother, the most things in world she likes are her children. She wishes to care and grow her children as best way as possible. The working women have more complexities as compared to housewife in caring her children and family. Working women have to give time to her job and her family. Women job performance is influenced sometimes because of her family responsibilities and similarly sometimes her family life is affected by her job requirements.

This difficulty increases when women do not adopt flexible working options. Women personal life which is already sensitive is affected, her children life is affected and her family suffers because of her more devotions to paid work. In this case flexible working option provides a sign of relief to her life. By availing this option her health improves and stress decreases, wok and family satisfaction increases and tension decreases, simply she can balance both paid and unpaid life. Pay differences based on sex can be erased through flexible workings offering to employees. Women avail the flexible workings to raise her children.

Women like to work with those organizations which have flexible working options. Such organizations become employers of the choice for women. Women avails these options for her child care, elders care, and especially for her health related issues. Women cannot ignore all family related matters for the sake of the work. In many cases women have left their jobs for the sake of caring their family and children. In these conditions when women continue her paid and unpaid work then her performance decreases in both parts. Women evaluate their jobs in relationship of environment and available options for working for her. Working environment without flexible working option becomes less acceptable for women. Women workers availing for various reasons including child care, elder care, natural incidents, hobbies, interests, innovative benefits and comfort health. Women preferences for availing flexible working can be divided into four categories; firstly preference family, secondly personal, thirdly career, and fourthly social reasons.

6. Various Equal Availing Flexible Working Options for men and women

There are many definition and types of flexible workings used in literature. Flexible working is a process or an arrangement which best suits to the needs of both employer and employee. This option can be any type of mutually agreed arrangements beneficial to both employer and employee. Flexible working options are in true sense beneficial when these are in interest of employer and employee but sometimes stakeholders miss this component of flexible working. The option is availed without caring the interests of the other stakeholder. There are various flexible working options. These all options are equally available for men and women. There is no option which is male oriented or female oriented. These options are employee oriented and employer oriented, result oriented, balance oriented but never gender oriented. These options are known with different names like work-life balance options, flexible working options, flexible working arrangements, family friendly arrangements etc. These options include part time working, job sharing, working non-traditional hours, working flexible time, working compressed weeks and hours, phased retirements, home working, working at alternative working stations, working as day extender etc. These, and there are many more working options with different names. Some are more suitable for men and some for women. There is possibility that one option is liked and availed more by men and the other by women.

7. Conclusion

A general concept based on gender is that men and women experience the workplace and opportunities in different ways. Flexible working options are more likely to support and benefit women than men. Actually Flexible working provides employees an opportunity to balance between career and life style, paid and unpaid work, personal and professional life, home and family. Flexible working arrangements are formulated and implemented in order to provide opportunity to employees; so that they may be able to balance work and life. Employees can benefit from various types of the flexible arrangements and can make their own working schedules, which may best suit to the needs of organizations and individuals. Flexible working enables both fathers and mothers to balance work and family. These flexible working arrangements are designed to help

employees to balance and benefit from these facilities. These employees may be men or women. The idea that flexible workings are designed to benefit only mother or female workers is not true. Similarly these arrangements are not only designed to provide opportunity to fathers, to make their own working schedules. These flexible working arrangements are designed for both male and female employees.

Flexible working benefits are equal for both men and women. As career development is important for men and women and both are involved in job, the balance between home and work life becomes important for both. Reducing working stress and caring their health is important for men and women. Work stress and health is not a gender issue but a worker issue. Flexible workings are innovative arrangements to benefit the employees. Unpaid work is not only a women responsibility but also a men responsibility. By availing these innovative working patterns both men and women can equally participate in unpaid work and share responsibilities. Flexible working reduces long working hours and provide facility of the comfort and enjoying different hobbies and interests, the decrease in long working hours and enjoying own interests is important for men and women. There is no evidence that men like to work long hours and women enjoy shorter hours. There is no evidence that male have hobbies and need comfort in life, and are not needed by the women. Besides these benefits there many entitlements and legal rights for employees. These are direct and indirect forms of flexible workings. No employer denies these basic and legal rights based on gender. Flexible workings are not only employee's issue but a human rights and an employer strategy as well. Organizations use these strategies to attract skilled employees. Flexible workings have many business benefits. These are strategies to meet the employee's requirements in changing family, social and economic structure.

Flexible working arrangements support in career development process and career development provides base for financial and personal achievements. Financial and personal achievements are not only important for men or women, but in this economic environment are important for both. Flexible workings have changed organizational male oriented working structures. Both men and women can develop their career, as because of the flexibility to meet unpaid responsibilities. Men and women both gave important to career development, but more importance to family and children. Male and female are finding similar career paths and flexible workings help in their career advancement. Family and children are important part of life for a father and a mother. Parents always love their children and like to have as much time as possible for their children. Fathers and mothers are always interested in education, health and other needs of their children. The best thing that parents can give their children is time. This is only possible when they have flexible working options in their organization. Without the option of flexible working there will be conflict between paid and unpaid work of both men and women. Work life balance is important for both. Long working hours create stress and health related issues for everybody. It is not only the women who suffer because of long working hours but the men also. Health issue can be at any time with men or women and flexible working is comfort for an employee, to care and deal with health related issues. Flexible working options are best innovative practices for employees to benefit; irrespective of his or her gender. Both men and women are availing equally options and benefiting their lives.

Flexible workings are highly employee oriented and equal availing options. Flexible workings make easier working and other responsibilities of men and women; but not easier for only male employee or female employee. Policies are family supportive for men and women. There are similar reasons for men and women for flexible uptakes; but different preferences like men mostly avail for career and personal reasons while women mostly avail for family and personal reasons. Some flexible working options are more liked by women while others by men. The discussion concludes in order to fill the gender gap, organizations must allow greater flexible schedules at workplaces for both men and women. Flexible workings are not a zero sum game in which men gain and women lose. Flexible workings have different benefits for employees and employer. These flexible benefits are based on availing the various flexible opportunities.

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