



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

A Study On Worklife Balance Of Employees In Information Technology (it) Sector With Special Reference To Coimbatore

KEY WORDS: Work life Balance, Employee Satisfaction Job share

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ABSTRACT

Work-Life balance is a serious aspect in Indian Economy. Indian economy witnessed a spurt of service sector job opportunity after the opening up of economy in last decade of twentieth century. Over the past two decades the issue work-family and work-life balance have received significant attention from employers and employees mainly in IT industry. With automation and computerization an ample opportunity employment scenario was opened up for opportunities in IT and software sector where the salary is attractive and the job is mostly desk type in nature. But at the same time these jobs are accompanied with extended work schedule and deadline oriented leading to work place stress. A study on work-life balance in the IT sector seems to be needed in this recent time, taking into consideration the high work and time which demands upon employees, thus creating a necessary environment to balance work and personal interests. A study on work-life balance of employees was conducted in IT organizations in Coimbatore and the objective of the study is to find out the causes of disproportionate work-life balance, the benefits for the individual and the organizations in enabling a proper balance between work and life. This study also recommends few suggestions on strategies that can be implemented by the organizations for better work life balance.

INTRODUCTION

Liberalization, Privatization and globalization policy of Government of India has brought a sweeping transformation in Indian economy in last twenty five years.

Labour market has witnessed increasing employment opportunities for young talented manpower.

It has changed the demographic profile of employees accompanied with good pay package and international exposure.

In a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work/life balance has become a predominant issue in the workplace.

Three major factors contribute to the interest in, and the importance of, serious consideration of work/life balance: 1) global competition; 2) renewed interest in personal lives/family values; and 3) an aging workforce. Research suggests that forward-thinking human resource professionals seeking innovative ways to augment their organization's competitive advantage in the marketplace may find that work/life balance challenges offer a win-win solution.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is the term used to describe the balance that an individual needs between time allocated for work and other aspects of life.

Areas of life other than work-life can be, but not limited to personal interests, family and social or leisure activities.

The use of smartphones, email, video-chat, and other technological innovations has made it possible to work without having a typical "9 to 5 work day".

Work-life balance is a combination of interactions among different areas of one's life, the advantages and disadvantages associated with that balance/imbalance can affect multiple levels of society.

The issue of work-life balance has permeated the business community for decades (Carruthers, 2005; Spinks, 2004; Parsons, 2002), and companies have responded with work-life programs to address the issues raised by their employees (Roberts, 2005).

According to a study by the Families and Work Institute (1991), the strongest predictor of corporate family friendliness is change, such as downsizing, because the company sees worklife balance initiatives as a way to retain workers. Another explanation, however, might be that during times of organizational change, corporate culture becomes more malleable.

According to the study of Spherion (2003), there were 96 percent said that an employer is more attractive when it helps employees meet family obligations through options such as flextime, job sharing, or telecommuting. Perhaps more important, the survey found that workers who take advantage of the work-life balance options their employers offer are 20 percent more likely to stay with their employer for the next five years.

Work-life balance is a concern not just for women, but also for men who are tired of missing out on the rest of life.

The challenge of work/life balance in our society is unlikely to disappear. Identified and discussed as follows are four work/life balance trends.

Awareness of these trends will place the human resource professional in a position to better educate management and work closely with employees.

WORK-LIFE RESEARCH IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Information Technology (IT) sector in India is doing very good. There are more job opportunities due to the IT boom.

Just after the completion of professional qualifications like B.Tech and MCA (engineering graduates and computer post graduates), the applicants are getting jobs.

The pay and perks are encouraging. But the work life is highly complicated and highly demanding.

There are many pulls and pressures during the work life.

There are too many commitments and deadlines and there are too much of unpredictable peaks and troughs during the course of the working time.

Managerial personnel have to work for long hours and in

different shifts to meet those deadlines.

All these things make the work as a hectic activity and a strenuous one and creating enormous stress due to work-life conflict there by hampering performance, which is causing decline in productivity levels and also forcing them to leave organizations due to work-life problems.

Many organizations of Information Technology sector adopted work styles and organizational practices from developed countries in the west.

Workers were expected to work $24/7 \times 365$ days of the year.

To prevent such a work style from affecting worker health and productivity, workplaces offered services traditionally associated with the family and non-work domain within their premises such as gymnasiums, day-care facilities, laundry facilities, canteen facilities, even futons to sleep on if felt like a nap.

ROLE OF HR DEPARTMENT IN WORK LIFE BALANCE

Human Resource Development (HRD) Department can play a very crucial role in implementing policies that aid in reducing work stress and work-life imbalance.

Few initiatives that HR can bring forth are listed below.

- Reduce unnecessary burden of fixed timings at work. If some of the work can be done even at home during office hours, enables the professionals to do so.
- Job share – where you dovetail your work role with a partner of colleague
- Short-term or interim roles – working full time but a month here and a month there depending on the individual contract
- Reduce bureaucracy – unnecessary time spent on procedural issues like approvals should be reduced.
- Allow women employees to work from home especially during pregnancy and immediately after child birth.
- Providing child care facilities can help retain employees.
- Facilitating fun and relaxation – parties and fun at workplace can provide some relief to the professionals. Also leave options for travelling with family and compulsory offs after fixed time of continuous work should be implemented.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Diversity and work/life initiatives can be found at the core of the new social contract being negotiated between employers and employees.

“The basic outline of the social contract, as it has emerged during the past several years, calls for workers to commit their best contributions and greatest energies to the job in return for interesting work, respectful treatment, developmental opportunities, and an environment that responds to individual needs.

Where those provisions conflict (e.g., the degree of commitment and energy expected by employers versus the flexibility required by employees), the expertise of both diversity management and work/life professionals will be critical to find win-win solutions.

Life and work are essentially two separate spheres of activity, but they overwhelmingly intermingle.

This overlapping has blurred borders between the two spheres.

In this corporate working scenario, work in the office seems unending.

Demand in life home and family reach new heights. An

individual may work too much, sacrificing quality family time, reaches the top of the corporate ladders quickly but the achievement and material gain will not compensate the price he has forced to pay in the long run.

This obviously leads to work stress, less time to spend with their family and shallow relationship with their family.

The current emphasis on fulfillment makes the need for balancing greater and more pressing. In the present day world where technology and speed gives “lead” time in the area of production, speed delivery has become a necessity in the service sector, leading to greater time demands professionals.

While some companies may view diversity and work/life balance as separate functions, the business case for managing diversity is, in large part, the same for work/life balance.

Both diversity and work/life initiatives promote employee commitment, improve productivity, lower turnover, result in fewer employee relations challenges, and decrease the likelihood of unethical business practices.

Thus the researcher decided to focus to study the Work Life Balance of Employees working in Information Technology Sector at Coimbatore.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Work-life balance means different things to different people and different things at different stages of life.

The commitment of employees can make the difference between those companies which compete in the market place and those which cannot.

Employers who can best combine the requirements of their business for flexibility with the needs of employees and potential employees will be well placed to succeed.

Employees may have their own reasons for preferring one pattern of working time to another.

For example people with responsibility for the care of children, the sick or the elderly may not be able to work certain shifts, weekends or during school holidays.

Meeting both the employees and overall business needs requires a significant commitment from senior management.

Each workplace should tailor its work/life policies to suit their own particular needs and corporate culture.

This 'best fit' should be done with frequent consultation with employees.

As with other health and safety programs, for work/life initiatives to be successful and sustainable, both employers and employees must take responsibility for making the program work effectively.

An evaluation or feedback system should also be part of that process.

A program dealing with work/life issues could, for example, be part of a complete health and safety program.

However, it should not take away resources or distract addressing other health and safety concerns or hazards that may be present in the workplace.

It is very important to remember that for many workers balancing work/life demands is just one of the many

challenges they face on a regular basis. While most people would agree that these issues should be addressed, they may not know where they can be resolved.

- So this research is the need of the hour and it will be more helpful for the organizational excellence in Information Technology Industries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the demographic details of the respondents.
- To study the existing system of Work-Life Balance of Employees in Information Technology Sector.
- To find out the factors influencing Work life balance of Employees.
- To analyse the benefits of Work life balance.
- To suggest suitable strategies to improve the level of Work life balances

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted 'Descriptive design' for this study. The researcher personally visited and collected the data from the respondents. The researcher conducted Pilot study to find out the feasibility of the research.

The researcher conducted Pre-test with 10 respondents and he made some modifications in the tool.

The study was conducted in four Information Technology Industries at Coimbatore.

The Researcher has used questionnaire method for collecting the data for this research study.

Questionnaire is a list of structured, predetermined questions in written form which is given to the responsible for eliciting the relevant responses.

The sample size of this study was 100 respondents.

The researcher adopted simple random sampling and the questionnaire was given to the employees based on the selection through random number method.

The data are analyzed and interpreted with a view to study the Work Life Balance of Employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study majority of the respondents (78 percent) extend their work timings.

More than half of the respondents (54 percent) have constant pressure at work due to heavy work load.

A large number of respondents (70 percent) never take office work voluntarily to home.

There are 60 percent of the respondents complete the work assigned to them within the working hours.

More than half of the respondents (58 percent) work for long hours to prove themselves in performance appraisals.

A significant number of respondents (88 percent) work more to climb the career ladder quickly.

A large number of respondents (94 percent) take more initiatives to plan activities effectively in order to find time for other engagements.

Majority of respondents (96 percent) feel satisfied at their work as a result of effective work life balance. More than 54 percent of respondents are allocating time and effort to manage their work and spend time on activities of their choice or on personal and family commitments.

In this research 100 percent of the respondents admit that they lead a happy life by ensuring a balance between work and life.

92 percent of the respondents feel that having a work-life balance increases the commitment level with the organization.

More than 64 percent of respondent's opinion that balancing work and the other activities for the self and family decreases work pressure and thereby stress in work.

There are 76 percent of the respondents admit that work-life balance initiatives by the organizations helps in retaining the employees.

A significant number of respondents undergo work-life balance initiatives that pertain to wellness programs (74 percent) and alternate work schedules (54 percent), also 34 percent for employee assistance program and 32 percent for dependent care program.

A quite a few 22 percent take up personal initiatives.

SUGGESTIONS

- Majority of the respondents have stated that extraction of excess work from the employer is one of the causes of work-life imbalance. It is suggested that the organization can grow in size so that the work can be divided and the required work can be allocated properly without extending the working hours of the employees. Thereby reducing pressure and enhancing work-life balance.
- A work-life balance plan can be charted out for every employee by their respective project managers during the time of their appraisal which may reduce working more for the sake of organizational policies like performance appraisals and promotions therefore, convenient them with proper work-life balance. Thus the organization can have friendly and procedures.
- Since a majority of the respondents has proved a greater benefit by attempting to find balance in their lives, the organization can engage a specialist to conduct workshops and seminars on how to prioritize different commitments, how to manage time effectively and ho to plan out activities in order to be making time for hobbies, developments pursuits and quality time for family and friends.
- By designing a work-life balance plan for every individual employee, it would lead to job satisfaction and act as a talent retention tool.
- Work-life balance initiatives can be used as a strategy for talent attraction by highlighting the initiatives of the organization during placement and induction of candidates. This will help in creating a brand for the organization as one of the best places to work for.

CONCLUSION

Work-life balance remains an issue that requires considerable attention from society.

The changing nature of the global economy, where organizations often operate on a 24/7 schedule and technological advances have made it possible for an employee to be connected at all times, has ushered the work-life balance issue into the forefront of the minds of many.

In this study was able to understand the concept of work-life balance that is prevailing in an Information Technology industry.

It also exposed the various work-life balance strategies implemented by various organizations and the employees by their self.

Being the Information Technology era, this study could be of use as it enables to understand the important concept which has a direct impact over the productivity of the employees. Hence, to maintain a healthy workforce, it should be able to cater to their needs and fulfill them.

There is a lot of scope of research in this area.

This concept being a growing phenomenon, it does open its doors for research.

The area that the researcher covered was limited, there are number of areas that could be covered to understand the whole concept of work-life balance.

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