Work Life Balance Practices in Selected MNCs in Hyderabad

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ABSTRACT

Many employees in current competitive market are not able to balance their professional and personal life. Work and personal life conflict is a universal problem. IT sector is one of the fast growing sectors in India and also globally. Considering their work environment and work requirements, they have recognized the importance of having work-life balance practices in their organizations to improve employee productivity. This paper attempts to study the different work-life balance practices in selected MNCs in Hyderabad. This paper will also try to study the literature on work-life balance policies and practices, work culture existing in different industries.

Key Words: Work-Life Balance, Work-Life Practices, Benefits

INTRODUCTION

Most of the employees working across all industries have a work-life balance conflict. In this competitive world, employees have high goals to achieve and they work for long hours to achieve their goals. This results in a stressful personal life. The work-life balance problem becomes very prominent when personal responsibilities also increase along with professional responsibilities. Personal responsibilities can be child care, parental care and attending to family needs. Professional and personal life, both are equally important and having a proper balance will result in a happy life. Stress, absenteeism, overtime and staff turnover are the outcomes of a poor work-life balance.

Definition of work life balance: The definitions of work-life balance are mostly based on perceptions – how and what do an individual considers to be a happy work-life. Followings are few definitions by some scholars.

⟩ Work life balance practices are the arrangements (both structurally institutionalized and procedural arrangements) and practices (both formal and informal) made for individuals to make it easier to manage their personal and professional life (Osterman, 1995).

⟩ In broadest sense, Work-life balance can be defined as a level of satisfaction or contentment of involvement or 'fit' between different roles an individual plays in his life (Hudson, 2005).

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the existing work-life balance initiatives in selected MNCs in Hyderabad
2. To analyze the need to have work-life balance practices in India
3. To understand the benefits of having work-life balance practices to both employers and employees

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature. Inputs have been collected from –

1. Primary Data – Data collected by interviewing (unstructured) the HR personnel and employees in each organization.
2. Secondary Data – Data from journals, newspapers, research studies, magazines , internet, websites and Government statistics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Earlier work-life balance was considered a problem only to the working women especially the working mothers. With changing demographics and work culture, it is realized that most of the employees do not have control over their personal and professional life and this resulting in a stressful life. Organizations in India and across the globe have recognized the importance of having a healthy work environment.

Bruke (2002) observed that people, both and men and women would like to work in organizations that support a healthy and balanced work-life. Men are more focused towards professional goals and leave the women of the house to take care of family needs. But women on other hand consider both family and professional goals equally important. In such cases, having a healthy work-life balance culture at work will help them achieve both their personal and professional goals.

Many studies have been done in the past to understand the importance of work-life balance practices to women. Burke (1991 &2010) studies about how men perceive work-life balance. Even men benefit out of a good work-life balance. They reported to have less job stress, more leisure time to spend with family and take out time for pursuing activities they like.

Velour and Hunter (2005), agrees that work from home gives employees lot of flexibility but also results in long working hours. Environment at home will also contribute the success/.failure rate of work from home.

Y. P. S. Kanwar, A. K. Singh and A. D. Kodwani (2009) conducted a survey on IT industry and found that there is a positive relationship between work-life balance practices and job satisfaction. Employees working in organizations with good work-life balance practices were more happy and satisfied than the employees working in organizations which don't care for work-life balance.

According to a report released by Indian Labor Organization, Indian companies do not provide more number of paid leaves in comparison to their peer groups globally.

Ms. Chanda Kochhar, MD & CEO, ICICI Bank quoted that though the women population is increasing in the work place but still they form less than 50% of the total working group. Women by choice or by societal pressure and forced to take family responsibilities on priority and take a break from their professional career.

Studies reveal that organizations with international exposure and connectivity are giving more importance to work-life balance practices than the domestic organizations. Most of MNCs and IT sectors are focusing on building a healthy work environment.

Methods of implementing Work Life Balance practices in Organizations:

1. Policies: These are the structured and written rules in an organization framed for employees to provide them a better work environment – work timings (shifts, flexi-time), leave policy etc.

2. Benefits: These are the monetary benefits provided by the organization to ensure a safe work environment - Salary, Medical Insurance to self and family etc.

3. Services: These are the additional benefits provided to employees to reduce stress at work - childcare centers, medical facilities & counseling

Why Organizations are focusing on work-life balance practices?

There has been lot of changes in the demographics of working population. Drastic changes in the life style and family structure (joint families to nuclear families) are impacting the work-life balance of an individual. There is also increasing need for child care.

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Following are few reasons which forced Organizations to focus on work life balance practices

1. We see more number of women working now and handling vital roles in an Organization.
2. Both men and women in a family work to meet their family needs.
3. With increasing personal responsibilities, employees need to balance their personal and professional life.
4. With increase in women population at work place it is more important to provide an amicable work environment for working mothers.
5. Organizations also come across single parent employees
6. With increasing work stress, Organizations are also worried about their employee's health and well-being.
7. Government has recognized the need and importance of having a positive work environment has made few labor laws which organizations are bound to abide by – minimum wages, work hours, safety etc..
8. Reputation of the Organization: Happy and content employees talk good about the organization which builds good reputation for the company.
9. Companies also get cost benefit. Cost of retaining an employee is comparatively lesser than hiring and training a new associate. So organizations target on retaining employees.

Work Life Balance Practices in India

In India, the concept of work life balance has evolved recently with increasing number of private and multinational organizations. So, we have two types of practices. One governed by the legislation called statutory practices and the others are non-statutory practices.

Statutory benefits found under Indian labor legislation are -

1. Working Hours – 9 hours a day and not more than 48 hours in a week.
2. Paid Leave – One day leave for every 20 days for employees who worked for 240 days or more in a calendar year
3. Crèches – If an organization has more than 30 women employees
4. Maternity Benefits – 6 months of paid leave and 2 nursing breaks per day.
5. Protection against sexual harassment – we also have strict laws to protect women associates from sexual harassment at work place.

Non statutory benefits are not mandatory to provide. Organizations provide these additional facilities to their associates based on the work culture and availability of resources. Most of the MNCs and IT companies operating in India have initiated flexi-time, short work weeks, work from home, Child Care. Following are few non statutory benefits provided by few companies in India -

1. Flextime: An option of logging in and logging out at employees' convenience. Employees are expected to maintain 48 work hours in a week.
2. Work from Home: Employees are also encouraged to work from home.
3. Short work weeks – The recent trend in MNCs in India is adopting 4 day week with 48 hours per week.
4. Alternate Career Option: Employees are encouraged to pursue other alternate career options
5. Job Sharing : If work demands 24X7 labor force, organizations are having 2-3 shifts to accommodate employees

WORK LIFE BALANCE PRACTICES IN FEW SELECTED MNCs IN HYDERABAD

A)   *Broadridge Financial Solutions India Pvt. Ltd.*

Employee Strength:

As of December 2017, Broadridge globally has a total strength of more than 10,000 Employees. In India, they are currently operating in Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Delhi (Broadridge Financial Solutions India Pvt. Ltd) and have a total strength of 2500 associates with most them working in Hyderabad office.

List of Work-Life Balance practices followed in Broadridge:

1. Compressed Work Week (5 Working Days a week)
2. Rotational Shifts (for 24*7 Job profiles)
3. Home Pick-up and Drop Cab facility for both Men and Women Associates
4. POSH (Prevention of Sexual and Harassment) Team to protect women from undue influence
5. Advika (Common group for all women associates in the Organization) group to promote welfare of women associates
6. LGBT Community to understand and reduce Gender parity
7. Work from Home
8. Hospitalization Insurance policy for the employee and his dependents
9. Maternity Leave – 6 months; Paternity Leave – 1 Week
10. Annual Leave Policy : Paid Leaves (20), Casual Leaves (12)
11. Recreation Activities
12. Fully equipped Gym – free of cost
13. Subsidized food in the canteen
14. Free Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner for associates working on Indian Holidays
15. Dress down policy – associates are not forced to come in formals
16. Health & Wellness Benefits – Periodic health check-ups
17. Open desk/floor culture – Irrespective of the cadre, all associates are accommodated on open desks at the floor area
18. Cultural and Organizational events – Family Day and Company Day once in a year
19. Distribution Bonus every year when company tops in the 'Great Place to Work' survey
20. Free Goodies – periodically distribute free goodies like bags, water bottles, shirts, sweaters to the associates.

B)   *Tech Mahindra*

Employee Strength:

As of March 2017, Tech Mahindra has total employee strength of 117,225 Employees across 90 countries. Close to 100,000 employees work in India out of which close to 10,000 people work in Hyderabad.

List of Work-Life Balance practices followed in Tech Mahindra:

1.   Compressed Work Week (5 Working Days a week)
2.   Rotational Shifts (for 24*7 Job profiles)
3.   Work from Home
4.   Hospitalization Insurance policy for the employee and his dependents

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5.   Maternity Leave – 10 weeks of paid maternity leave and 4 weeks of unpaid leave

6.   Annual Leave Policy : 1.75 day per month and 6 sick leaves

7.   Recreation Activities

8.   Subsidized food in the canteen

9.   Health & Wellness Benefits – Periodic health check-ups

10.   Transport facility (Bus pick-up) for employees

11.   Encourage employees to take certification programs

12.   On-site travel opportunities – short term and long term

C)   Tata Consultancy Services

Employee Strength

At the end of June 2017, total number of employees in TCS is 387,223. They have 17 centers in Mumbai, 11 in Chennai, 9 in Kolkata, 7 in Pune, 5 in Bengaluru and Gurgaon each and 4 in Hyderabad. The total strength of employees in Hyderabad is close to 30,000.

List of Work-Life Balance practices followed in TCS:

1.   Compressed Work Week (5 Working Days a week)

2.   Rotational Shifts (for 24*7 Job profiles)

3.   Flexitime with certain mandatory hours of work

4.   Maître is an initiative for the spouses of employees

5.   Hospitalization Insurance policy for the employee and his dependents

6.   Recreation Activities

7.   Subsidized food in the canteen

8.   Health & Wellness Benefits – Periodic health check-ups

9.   Transport facility (Bus pick-up) for employees

10.   Promotes Group formation with similar interest to come together to conduct various activities

11.   Conducts regular seminar on nutrition, better living & stress management

D)   Wipro

Employee Strength

As of March 2017, total employee strength of Wipro is 181,482. Out of the total employees' strength, 125,000 (approximately) work in India. Close to 10,000 people work in different locations in Hyderabad.

List of Work-Life Balance practices followed in Wipro:

1.   Work from Home

2.   Compressed Work Week (5 Working Days a week)

3.   Rotational Shifts (for 24*7 Job profiles)

4.   Hospitalization Insurance policy for the employee and his dependents

5.   Recreation Activities

6.   Subsidized food in the canteen

7.   Health & Wellness Benefits – Periodic health check-ups

8.   Transport facility (Bus pick-up) for employees

9. Conducts regular seminar on nutrition, better living & stress management
10. Encourage employees to undergo training programs

BENEFITS OF WORK LIFE BALNACE PRACTICES

Benefits to Employer:

1. Reduces Cost: Organizations try to retain employees by providing them a healthy work-life balance. Cost of retaining employees is less than cost of hiring and training new associates.
2. Helps in Employee Retention: After a certain level, employees look for work security than monetary benefits. Employees remain loyal to organization if they are happy.
3. Increases Organization Reputation: Satisfied and happy employee talk good about the organization and that builds organization reputation.
4. Increased Productivity: Reduction in absenteeism, increase in employee satisfaction, all these positively contribute in increasing the productivity of employees.
5. Increased employee engagement and employee commitment.

Benefits to Employee:

1. Reduce Stress and will be able to manage both his professional and personal life.
2. Increased Job Satisfaction
3. Sense of Job security
4. Better control on his/her work-life
5. They can pursue their interest, hobbies etc.

CONCLUSION

From literature review it is clear that in India work-life balance practices are more encouraged by organizations with global connectivity – like MNCs and IT sector. There is a need for the government to revise its laws to implement a proper work-life balance in public sector and Domestic organizations.

From the study conducted in selected MNCs in Hyderabad, it is clear that these organizations are focusing on building a healthy work-life environment for their employees. Employees of these organizations are also happy with companies' policies and practices.

However, companies have to focus on creating awareness about the existing work-life practices in the Organization. It was surprising to know that few employees were not aware and familiar with some of the employee benefits programs implemented in the organization .

Organizations should also focus on not differentiating the employees who take the benefits of work life practices like working from home, flexi time, maternity leave etc. It is very important that the Manager s at the ground level that are responsible for implementing these policies should not discriminate employees using such benefits of WLB policies.

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