WORK LIFE BALANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Employees are the valuable assets of organization. Work life balance is an issue that is important both to the organization and employees. This issue has come to the fore due to a multitude of changes in the work place, in employee demographics and in the family sphere. Advancement of technology has blurred the line between office and home, and with a laptop, employees is on call at virtual office 24 hours a day. As time spend at work is increasing steeply, quality time available for the family is shrinking. Moreover, the health of employees is also being affected. The study reveals that more than half of the respondents said that they can manage work and life in a better way. Their organization gives good working environment for their job. Work life balance is an important function for smooth functioning of every organization.

Keywords: Work life balance, Stress and Conflict

Introduction

Work was a matter of necessity and survival. Work - life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities. The professional life consists of work fulfillment, target achievement, work shifts and personal life consists of family responsibilities, one's personal likes and a great effort has to be maintained both by organization and employees in bringing equilibrium between the two roles of one's life. Otherwise it may lead to work life conflict accompanied by burnout, absenteeism, poor performance, lack of commitment, stress related problems etc.

An organization can achieve its objectives only by fulfilling the individual needs successfully. When individual needs are achieved it naturally accelerates the employee's loyalty in achieving organizational objectives. In this way the prime concern of organization is given towards work-life balance. It is in this context that the notion of "work life balance" has assumed great significance.

Significance of the Study

Today, employees are not looking at their employer just a job but they want the company to care for their work life balance and their well-being. Companies are adopting new means to ensure that their employees get enough time to enjoy their personal life and spend time with family. Employees tend to feel motivated when they feel that the organization is putting extra effort in providing a healthy balance between work and life. Motivated employees not only enhance the productivity but also help creating a positive work environment at office. This is an attempt to understand the existing system of Work- Life Balance of employees in IT industry.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the Work-Life Balance of IT Employees.
- To examine the programmes used by employers to achieve work – life balancing.
- To study whether there exists any work - life conflict among the employees in the IT companies.
- To study whether there exists any stress related problems among the employees in the IT companies.

Research Methodology

The study is both analytical and descriptive in nature. Information Technology Professionals from Manjeri Municipality, Malappuram district form the population of the study. Convenience sampling method was used for selecting sample from the target population for this survey. A sample size of 50 IT professionals has been taken into consideration for the purpose of the study from Manjeri Municipality and the data required for the study is collected by using structured questionnaire. The statistical tools used for data analysis were percentage analysis and weighted ranking.

Literature Review

Deivasigamani.J and Dr.Shankar.G (2014) state in their research, in a society filled with conflicting responsibilities and commitments, Work Life Balance has become a prominent issue in workplace. As per the research, maximum employees feel that having a Work Life Balance increases commitment level with the organisation. If employees are able to balance work and other activities for self and family, it automatically decreases the work pressure and thereby stress in work.

Sinha (2013) has undertaken a study to find Work/Life Balance related issues and how to maintain a proper Work/Life Balance policy is helpful in increasing the level of production and job satisfaction. The findings of this study indicates that employees who were more favourable towards their organization's efforts to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction.

Vanishree (2012) in her study says that organisations are highly depended on workforce. Hence it is essential for the organisation to adopt a strategy to improve employee's Work Life Balance to satisfy both organisational objectives and employees needs. Indians IT BPO industry has substantially contributed towards the growth of economy. In her opinion, the work schedule of BPO is very unusual and is target based. Employees are expected to interact with different types of clients along with providing qualitative services. This may create huge amount of stress among the employees.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

a) **Work Life Balance**

Table 1: Work Life Balance

Response	No of Respondents	Percentage
Very well balanced	11	22
Somewhat balanced	10	20
Balanced	18	36
Somewhat out of balanced	9	18
Very out of balanced	2	4
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Primary data

The table makes obvious that 36% of the employees able to balance their work and life. 22% of respondents opined that their work and life very well balanced and 20% were opined that their work and life somewhat balanced. Few of them (18%) opined that their work life and personal life somewhat out of balanced. Only 2 employees said that they can't balance their work and personal life.

b) **Stress Related Problems**

Table 2: Stress related Problems

Stress related Problems	No of Respondents
Headache	18
Pain & tightness in chest	4
Strong emotions of fear and anger	10
Tiredness	13
Sleeping disturbance	11
Total	**56**

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that headache is the main stress related problem faced by IT employees. Tiredness is also an important stress related issue. Stress level of employees also results in sleeping disturbance and strong emotions of fear and anger. Very few of them said that they have pain & tightness in chest.

c) **Methods to Manage Stress**

Table 3: Methods to Reduce Stress

Methods	No of Respondents
Yoga	6
Meditation	6
Entertainment	26
Dance	7
Music	20
Other	0

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that engaging in entertainment activities is the main method adopted by IT employees to reduce their stress. Most of them listen to music also when they feel stress. Dancing, yoga and meditation also helps employees to manage their stress level.

d) **Causes of Work Life Conflict**

Table 4: Causes of Work Life Conflict

Areas	Rank								Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Work timings	14	8	4	5	6	3	4	6	**50**
Nature of work	5	8	7	6	6	3	9	6	**50**
Lack of cohesion	7	6	13	3	2	10	5	4	**50**
Deadline pressure	5	5	2	10	7	5	9	7	**50**
Work on days off	6	6	9	5	9	6	3	6	**50**
Meeting/training	5	4	6	7	4	11	8	5	**50**
Shift works	3	10	2	9	8	8	9	1	**50**
Others	5	3	7	5	8	4	3	15	**50**

Source: Primary data

Table 4(a): Weighted Ranking of Causes

Areas	Weighted Rank								Total	Rank
	1*8	2*7	3*6	4*5	5*4	6*3	7*2	8*1		
Work timings	112	56	24	25	24	9	8	6	264	I
Nature of work	40	56	42	30	24	9	18	6	225	V
Lack of cohesion	56	42	78	15	8	30	10	4	243	II
Deadline pressure	40	35	12	50	28	15	18	7	205	VII
Work on days off	48	42	54	25	36	18	6	6	235	III
Meeting/training	40	28	36	35	16	33	16	5	209	VI
Shift works	24	70	12	45	32	24	18	1	226	IV
Others	40	21	42	25	32	12	6	15	193	VIII

As per table it is very clear that work timing is the main cause of work life conflict. Lack of cohesion, work on days off, shift works and nature of work are ranked in second, third, fourth

and fifth position. The least ranked reasons for conflict are deadline pressure and meetings & training programmes after working hours.

e) Work Life Balancing Programmes

Table 5: Work Life Balancing Programmes

Programmes	No of Respondents
Work from home	38
Paid leave for sick family members	10
Paid Maternity/paternity leave	17
Health &wellness programmes	18
Work place tours	13
Scholarship for children of employees	0
Social events to strengthen work friendship	11
Others	0

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is very clear that work from home is the main work life balancing programme adopted by IT companies. The other important programmes are health & wellness programmes and paid maternity/paternity leave. 13 respondents said that their company conducts work place tours yearly. Few of the companies conduct social events to strengthen work friendships. None of the companies offers scholarship for employees' children.

f) Importance of Work Life Balancing

Table 5.26   Importance of Work Life Balancing

Response	No of Respondents
Reduce stress	31
Improves mental health	30
To get better physical health	25
Improves relationship	29
Increase creative thinking	25
Bring happiness& fulfillment	19
To become more productive	5

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that work life balancing is very essential to reduce stress of employees and to improve mental health and there by improves relationships in the company.

Some others opined that existence of work life balancing helps to get better physical health and to increase creative thinking. Only 5 respondents opined that there is a relationship between work life balancing and productivity of employees.

Findings

- Most of the employees have an opinion that they can manage their work life and personal life in an effective manner.
- Work life balancing is very essential to reduce stress of employees and to improve mental health and there by improves relationships in the company.
- Work from home facility, health & wellness programmes and paid maternity/paternity leave are the main work life balancing programmes available in IT companies.
- Work timing and lack of cohesion are the main causes of work life conflict.
- Headache and tiredness are the main stress related problems faced by IT employees.
- Engaging in entertainment activities is the main method adopted by IT employees to reduce their stress.

Suggestions

- Take initiative steps to manage work related stress through conduct the yoga classes, meditation, and entertainment activities.
- The organization should provide a formal friendly atmosphere which brings fruitful employees and even enhance the low performing employees to highest potential of performance which leads to work life balance.
- The organization should take proper feedback of employees of the policies and procedures of the organization.
- Child care facility is of immense help to women employees to relieve their mental tension regarding the care of their dear ones.
- The required work can be allocated properly without extending the working hours of the employees.

Conclusion

The study reveals that work life balancing is very essential to reduce stress of employees and to improve mental health and there by improves relationships in the company. Most of the employees have an opinion that they can manage their work life and personal life. Work from

home facility, health & wellness programmes and paid maternity/paternity leave are the main work life balancing programmes available in most of the IT companies.

Work timing and lack of cohesion sometimes becomes the causes of work life conflict. Headache and tiredness are the main stress related problems faced by IT employees. Employees should do proper yoga, meditation, mind relaxation and other health care methods in order to care themselves from health problems creating out of work pressure. The employees should take time to consider them to remain healthy at each moments of life than to attain a better health tomorrow.

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