



WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN IT COMPANIES IN KERALA

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Abstract

Work life balance has become a sensitive issue which benefits the organizations and its employees. Today, an employee is not looking at his employer just for a job but he wants the company to care for his work life balance and this well-being. Employees tend to feel motivated when they feel that the organization is putting extra effort in providing a healthy balance between work and life. Work life imbalance is the root cause of Work-life conflict and stress among the employees in the organization. In order to overcome these difficulties it is essential to have a work life programmes (WLPs) in the organizations that can promote work life balance among the employees by reducing the impact of stress and work life conflict. Employees are more interested to work in an organization that provide flexibility, friendly and healthy atmosphere that provide them a satisfaction towards job and life at home. Every organization has to consider the work-life balance of its employees in this modern era, IT employees are those who are to work under shift and struggling to accomplish their target achievement within the stipulated time period. This paper focus on the work-life balance of IT employees in Kerala.

Keywords: Work-Life Balance (WLB), Work Life Conflict (WLC), Stress.

Introduction

WLB is an emerging issue in HRM where it aims at creating a better balance between the demands of job and healthy management and enjoyment of one's life outside the work. Several researches have been conducted in this area and to unite all literature under one umbrella is a painstaking task. There is no perfect balance between work and life and it is the way in which one attains successfully in performing work and life responsibilities. By prioritizing the responsibilities, tackling one task at a time, taking breaks, preparing to accept changes and practicing self care methods one can achieve a healthy work-life balance.

Review of Literature

Murphy and Doherty (2011) enlighten that work life balance is difficult to measure exactly since it involves personal aspects and the employees have to differentiate their work life's with personal life's perfectly without any overlapping. The work domain and personal domains should be clearly differentiated in order to overcome work -life conflict, since it is the human aspect under purview which is ever changing not predictable with accuracy. Employees are the valuable assets of the organization; it is the organizations duty to attain its target by fulfilling the employees needs. Retaining the existing employees by satisfying their needs can attract new talented employees to the organization which is beneficial for the future growth of the organization. Nancy R. Lockwood (2003) pointed that the WLB has a significant role and become a win-win situation for employers and employees. It helps the organizations to avoid absenteeism, improve morale, and retain organizational knowledge in difficult economic times. Every organization should bring up with better WLBP's which enable the employees to attain WLB successfully. It has a great impact on employee's performance level in the organization. Hall and Richter (1988) observed that there is lack of separation or difficulty between segregating work and family life. To differentiate between family and work is a painstaking task but to attain WLB the segregation is necessary, otherwise WLC may arise which can cause stress and other issues in one's life.

Md-sidin et al. (2008) reported in their paper titled "Relationship between work-family conflict and quality of life" that individuals who are married are more prone to work family conflict than unmarried individuals. Since they find it difficult to manage the dual role and to segregate work domain and life domain of life. Organization should focus on WLBP's that benefits the married employees effectively.

Tausig and Fenwick (2001) in their article titled "Unbinding time : Alternate work schedules and work-life balance" pointed that for WLB the presence and absence of children is of great significance. The parental role plays a vital role in employees life to attain WLB since responsibility is doubled in such cases in one's life.

Blau,et.al(1998) highlighted that parental status is great significance in their family role. Greater responsibilities arise in this situation. Employees having parental status are of greater responsibilities than with non parental status since they have to fulfil their family role and work role equally to attain WLB.



Jennings and Mc Dougald (2007) opined that the source of work-life stress are related to family responsibilities like household time demands, family responsibility level, household income, spousal support and life course stages. Stress can be reduced if the employees can manage these responsibilities effectively.

Clutterbuck (2003) in his book noted that overwork leads to absenteeism, poor retention levels, low creativity, and unethical employee's behaviour. A better WLB policy of the organization creates shorter absences by people even on maternity leave. Employees' wish to work in an environment that provides friendly atmosphere with attainable workload in stipulated time period. Organization should implement WLB policies that provide employees with better mental satisfaction which boost their performance in organization and family well.

Mohan and Ashok(2010) reported that stress is often developed when an individual is assigned with many responsibility without proper delegation of power and authority and with inter personal factors like group cohesiveness, functional dependence, communication frequency between sender and receiver.

Buddeberg , Stamm, Klaghofer(2008) argue that for new generation a well balanced integration between professional and personal life is an essential goal. The young generation are to be provided with a satisfying job through various other amenities in order to attain WLB.

Surena and Sabitha (2011) highlighted that working hours influence on work-family conflict doesn't influence on work-family enrichment. Work-home segmentation and family support helps women to attain successfully both work life commitments. Prioritize the work and family aspects to attain successful in their work life commitments is a necessary aspect.

Overview of IT Companies

The primary drive towards sustainable economic growth the Government of Kerala acts as a catalyst to facilitate various excellent IT infrastructure ,community synergies in order to enable the environment with building up world-class IT parks, fostering incubators by upcoming innovations and entrepreneurship in both public private sectors in order to transform the digital information. Kerala is a 100% literate society and a perfect destination for IT to explore. Kerala IT policies are of greater importance to create opportunities for citizens and IT ventures. The government are of great support to remove hassles in the regulatory environment and promoting IT ventures in present and future too. The state government has been taking earnest efforts to create a sound and world class infrastructure for the IT sector and to make the state a digital one. The 9th five year plan has given greater importance to the development of Information and Communication Technology Sector .Thus it has uplifted the development of various technology projects, e-governance initiatives, e-literacy programmes and the creation of various IT infrastructures.Thus it is one of the significant IT destinations in India and ranks 8th in the export by STPI (Software Technology Parks of India) registered IT and ITes units (Information Technology enabled services) The Indian IT industry has become a milestone in revenue growth and export contributions and creating employment opportunities over the past decades. Kerala State Information Technology Mission (KSITM), Techno park, Info park, Cyber park, International Centre for Free and Open Source Software (ICFOSS) and Kerala Start-up Mission and Indian Institute for Information Technology are the major agencies involved in the implementation of Information technology programmes in the state under the IT department(IT & ITES 2018).

The expansion of IT industry government of state has been done to benefit all parts of the state. In order to achieve this a hub and spoke under was built in Thiruvantapuram (Info park), Kochi (Info park) and Kozikode (Cyber park) spokes were built in the remaining districts .

Work - life Balance Programmes

In many organizations now a day's HR department is concentrating on various WLBP's in order to help their employees to Attain WLB in organizational work and personal life. Many policies have been introduced by different organization like flexible working hours, Job-sharing, job-rotation, part time, tele work, child care (crèche) facilities, wellness programmes ,eldercare facilities, transportation based on working time, scholarships, work tour, cultural programmes, health fitness programmes like yoga, meditation, free food services, working at home facility, leave allowances, family-friendly policies(FFPs),financial support ,flexibility in choosing working place and information centre for providing information regarding child care centre for new employees.

Theories In support of Adoption of WLB policies by Management

There exist mainly four theories which form the basis of foundation for the adoption of work life policies in the management of organizations. These four theories derive its explanatory power from the various organizational theories like resource dependence theory, strategic choice theory, and institutional theory. The theories are briefly explained below:



Institutional Theory: This theory helps the adoption of various WLB practices in the management's decision to conform the normative pressures in the societies like skill level, ownership, industry, organization size, unionization levels and other factors affecting the society.

Situational Theory: Felstead Et.al. (2002) explains that the adoption of factors influencing the organization with increase profitability and productivity and helps to deal with problems like employee recruitment and retention.

Organizational Adaptation Theory: The organizational adaptation theory explains the organizations adaptation to internal environmental factors like work processes, senior management values, proportion of female staff, skill levels.

High Commitment Theory

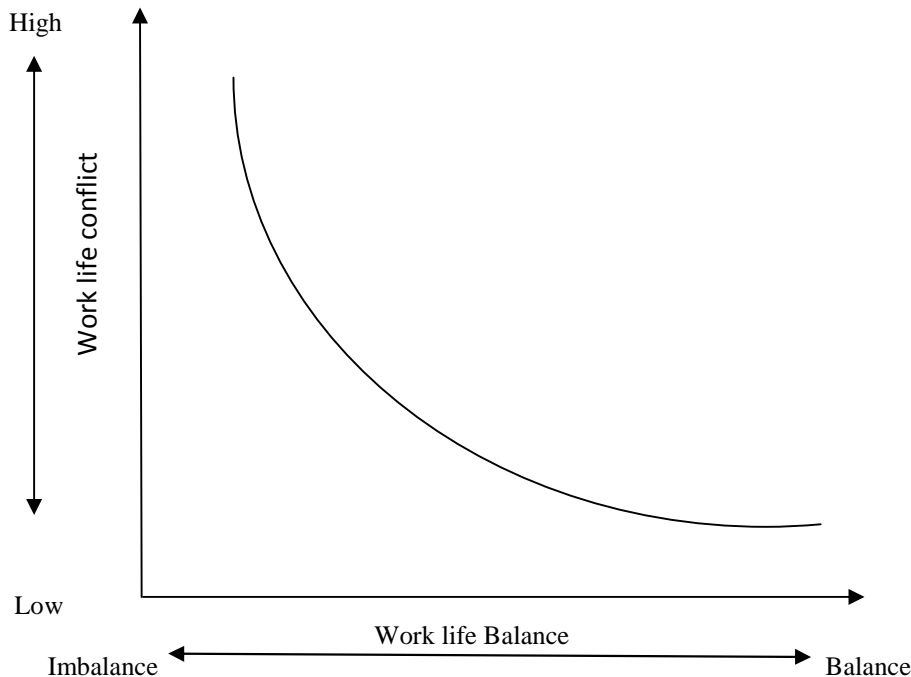
This theory explains the organizations strategic HRM initiatives to WLB practices in order to generate increased employee commitment to the organization.

Stress as a Factor of Work-Life Balance

Stress is a factor affecting everyone in some stage of life .The way one's attitude towards stress and always keep an eye on the issues that causing us in concern. To some extent stress has positive impact, but if it continues for long, one's body and mind has to pay the price. The situation for arising stress may be internal (Self-generated) and external (outside forces affecting one's life).Be a watch dog on the external stress, so that immediate practical solutions can be formulated for the pressing issues and develop a self-assessment practice to control internal stress which id controllable by one's own act. A best strategy to overcome stress is to compete against our self, not with those who are around you by aiming for your personal goals and plan to achieve it peacefully.

Work life conflict and work life Balance

The concept of Work- family conflict was first studied in the last 19th century. During this time period, the work and income moved from inside the home (agricultural work) to outside the home (factories). Work- family conflict occurs when experiences and commitments at work interfere with family life, such as extensive, irregular, or inflexible work hours, work overload and other forms of job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, or an unsupportive supervisor or organization all affects employees adversely. Family-to-work conflict occurs when experiences and commitments in the family interfere with work life, such as the presence of young children, primary responsibility for children, elder care responsibilities, interpersonal conflicts within the family unit, or unsupportive family members affects the individual. Family-to-work conflict is perceived to result in lower work productivity of employees in the organization



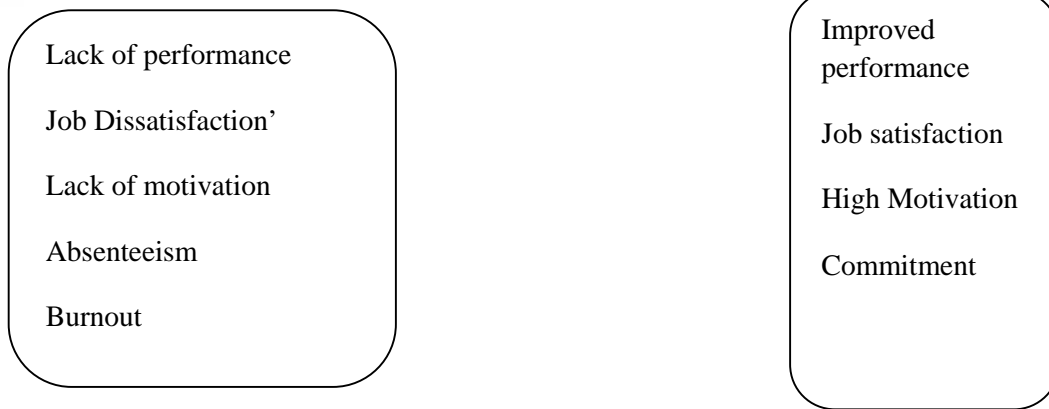


Figure 4.7 Relationships between Work Life Balance, And Work Life Conflict

The diagram explains that an employees' attains work-life balance at the stage of low work-life conflict resulting with improved performance, job satisfaction, high motivation, high commitments towards organisation which in turn benefits both the organization and employees effectively. Work life imbalance of an employee at the stage of high work-life conflict results in lack of performance, job dissatisfaction, absenteeism of the employees which in turn adversely affects the organization. Thus it is always better to be in work-life balance with low work-life conflict.

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Conclusion

It is the responsibility of both employees and employer to manage work-life effectively and efficiently with balance beyond, a 360 –degree outlook, with the right mind-set and willingness. Work is a reflection of the quality of life we used to lead on a daily basis. Mind act as an important factor in balancing work and life. A healthy happy family can lead to attain WLB among the employees'. The significance of WLB understands that it is a key factor to ensure well-being of the employees a core component during performance. It is both the employer and employee to realise the fact of well-being is directly proportional to good performance ,increased engagement level and an important tool in maintaining a higher retention rate. Better stress management techniques are necessary to avoid work-life conflict among the employees' in the IT companies since they are much prone to various health diseases, burnout and fatigue. Introducing new methods with the participation of employees' can bring fruitful work-life balancing programmes in the organization.

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