

# **WORK LIFE BALANCE: EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE IN INDIAN SCENARIO**

*Ms. Sugandha, Faculty, PG Govt College-46, Chandigarh*

## **ABSTRACT**

*Work life balance is now increasingly becoming the focal point of study by HRM experts and by managing teams of corporate. It is about effectively managing the balance between paid work and other activities like spending time with family, taking part in sport and recreation, undertaking further study. Earlier Companies attract and retain candidates by just providing effective training or Job security. But many employees in 21<sup>st</sup> century see 'Work life balance policies'- as a critical factor for selecting the companies. As employee conclusions are quite logic that it is easier to find a new job than finding a new spouse or a family.*

**Key Words:** *Work life balance, Human Resource Management, Job performance, Professional life, Dual Career Couples*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The subject of Work Life Balance and Work Life Boundaries has received much attention in the last 15 years. Though concept of Work Life Balance is not so much popular in India yet as it is in the West. India remained unaffected earlier due to the social support system available so far in our country. But now in India, there is also change in family structures like the advent of nuclear family system and structure of work force- more women participation in workforce. Further, the today's workforce now includes more dual career couples where both have careers, not just jobs. Along with due to growing use of computers, cell phones, work can be performed almost anywhere at the home, on the highway or in an airplane. Organizations have started to realize that work and personal life are interdependent and employees' personal issues can impact job performance and further job satisfaction and life satisfaction. So organizations need to incorporate policies and strategies to foster a Work Life Balance into their workforce and support their staff undertake Work Life Balance policies or programs.

## **WORK LIFE BALANCE**

Work life balance can be understood as a balancing point on the seesaw, one side of which is work, while the other side is domestic and personal life. A major portion of employee's productive time is spent at the work place. Any problem, either at the work place or in the family, will definitely disturb the balance and thus it is necessary to address the various factors related to work and family that can directly or indirectly affect the overall performance.

## **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

1. To explore the need of work life balance strategies in India.
2. To study different work life balance strategies at both individual and organization levels that can be used by organizations as one of HR strategy for broader global perspective in human resource management.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive survey design. The purpose of descriptive surveys, according to Ezeani (1998), is to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon. A thorough review of literature was conducted before selecting the topic of the study. This study is focused on understanding the need of work life balance in India and also exploring different strategies that organizations and employees can use for balancing their work life and personal life

## NEED FOR WORK LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES IN INDIA

Employers and employees are simultaneously putting efforts to be flexible and are also trying hard to equip themselves to face the forthcoming operational challenges. Employees today want to have freedom and live lives their way. Employers too, have started appreciating the changes and the imperative that the employees of today, value balance between work and life more than ever before. The patterns of change that have triggered the emphasis of work life balance are mainly socio-economical.

1. **Changing Social philosophy:** Employees in 21<sup>st</sup> century place personal life on a higher pedestal than work life. The cause of this can be linked to raising divorce rates, other family and relationship problems. Smart companies have identified this and in regard are designing innovative ideas to lure their employees. In the company like **Hewlett associates**, employees' spouses are invited to attend orientation programs or fruit basket are sent to home on completion of project, as a goodwill gesture towards thanking the employee's family for their support during the times when the employee had to work late.
2. **Raise in the 365/24/7 global operation:** Global organizations and increasing call center operations across the globe have to work day and night coping with the time zones. With more and more business emphasizing on round-the-clock customer service, the concern for work life balance for employees has become more essential.
3. **Rise in Dual Earner families:** Demographic and cultural changes have also added to the problem of work life imbalance. Recent survey conducted by "The work foundation" depicted that by 2014, women workforce is likely to grow. Working mothers are the major chunk of population who adversely get affected in balancing their job performance and family life.

## WORK LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES

1. **Work Life Balance Strategies at Individual Level:** It is not easy task to juggle with the pressing needs of both career and personal life. There is constant need for reducing stress in work life and maintaining harmony in both professional and personal life. Strategies at individual levels are:-
  - A. **Simply Life:** Learn to say "no" if it comes in the way of your schedules. Staying home once in a while helps the frenetic pace of the workplace.
  - B. **Learn to De-stress:** A certain degree of stress often enables people to perform better but the key is to maintain it at manageable so that it can enrich and motivate. Sometimes make sense to "take it easy".
  - C. **Distribute the work load:** An orderly and clean home reduces unnecessary tensions and makes the life simpler. However when time is tight, learn to let go of expectations

of extreme cleanliness. Even at the workplace, learning to trust colleagues and delegating tasks and duties which helps in sharing the burden.

- D. **Identify and implement:** Keep a record of all the work related and non-work related activities performed during a given week. After identifying the most important and meaningful activities, those activities which are done out of guilt or are deemed unnecessary can be delegated, if possible.
- E. **Manage Time effectively:** Make proper planning of household chores and duties/tasks well ahead of time that will prevent last minute panic and tension. Efficient scheduling of appointments or tasks which can be clubbed together on the same day minimizes missed work time.
- F. **Nurture Yourself:** Managing both household and work efficiency is quite challenging. Nurturing yourself to replenish the lost energy is a good investment towards WLB. Some of the activities like taking a walk at lunch time, meditation, yoga or engaging in an activity most employed can be a good way to recharge.
- G. **Set up a Work- free and chore-free Day:** Create at least one day in a week that is free of any job-related tasks and chores. This can be utilized to develop a hobby and relax.

## 2. Work Life Balance Strategies at Organization Level

- A. **Flexitime:** Flexitime is a scheduling policy in which full-time employees may opt for starting and ending times within the prescribed guidelines of the organization. The Flex-Time policy may need employees be at work between certain hours, say, 10.00 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. Employees may work additional hours before or after this period in order to work full day. One employee may arrive early in the morning in order to leave at 3.00 p.m. to pick up children after school. Another employee might be a night owl who wishes to arrive at 10.00 a.m. and work until 6.00, 7.00 or even later in the evening. A Flex-Time Policy also permits employees to adjust their work hours in order to utilize time for doctor's appointments, children's activities or voluntary work. **Infosys, Sun Microsystems, KPMGLLP, Best Buy Co., PNC Financial Services Group and Price Waterhouse Coopers** are among the number of companies that have successfully adopted the Flexitime and have survived the crisis.
- B. **Compressed Work Week:** In such type of system, normal working hours are extended to a few more hours to give employee a weekly off. For Example, instead of working eight hours a day for five days, the employees could complete 40 hours of work in four 10-hour days. In this WLB Strategy, on one hand, employees are happy with weekly off, on the other, employers are benefitted with self driven, motivated and satisfactory work force. A Recent survey revealed that 31% responding firms using this plan. Employees in some instances have cited advantages such as increased productivity, extended hours of service to customers, reduced employee turnover and absenteeism. **Bank of America** is also providing to its employees this option.
- C. **Job sharing:** In Job Sharing concept, two part-time employees carry out tasks associated with a single job. That means a job can be shared between two part-time employees instead of one Full time employee. Employers are here satisfied with comparatively less burden of job on their shoulders. **HP India, KPMG LLP** are offering this WLB Strategy to its employees and are benefitting from saving costs.

- D. **Flex Place/ Telecommuting:** This WLB Strategy gives freedom to an employee to work from virtual office, either sitting at home or any other place with the help of computer or telephone and internet facility. Studies found that cost savings from Tele working can be high as in the form of eliminating the need for office space. According to different surveys, **HP India, Ford Motor Company, Delta Air Lines and IBM** are using extensively this WLB policy. The companies find that Tele worker's productivity is higher than that of traditional workers, primarily because of saving of commuting time and avoidance of distractions from Co-workers.
- E. **Part Time Employment:** In this WLB Strategy, working hours are reduced from the standard 8 hours per day or 40 hours per week, the main stress lies upon the completion of projects in hand with some specified time limit. In this arrangement, employees are permitted to meet both job and personal needs where employers can be benefitted by cutting the cost of their pension and other provisions. According to two studies conducted by **Hewitt and Reward Plus**, a majority of employers provide some benefits to their part-time workers also.
- F. **Modified Retirement:** This is an option that permits the aged employees to work a few hours in a day for a certain period preceding retirement. He has the option of reducing working hours before taking permanent retirement. This option allows them to keep away an abrupt change in lifestyle and move gracefully into retirement. It also gives employers the opportunity to take the advantage of experience and skills at a relatively low cost.
- G. **Annualized Hours:** This WLB Strategy works in emergency sectors like Health care where sometime doctors and other paramedical staff are required to work 24 hours a day but sometimes are totally free for a day or so. In this option, employees can make a choice of their working hours and days for a fixed period of time to be availed on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Employees are paid overtime for excess hours or otherwise as per preset terms and conditions of employment. This option can be adopted by many manufacturing companies as well where more seasonal work. MD Foods of UK successfully adopted this system in its dairy and came out of crisis when most of companies' associated with dairy manufacturing were shutting down their operations in UK.

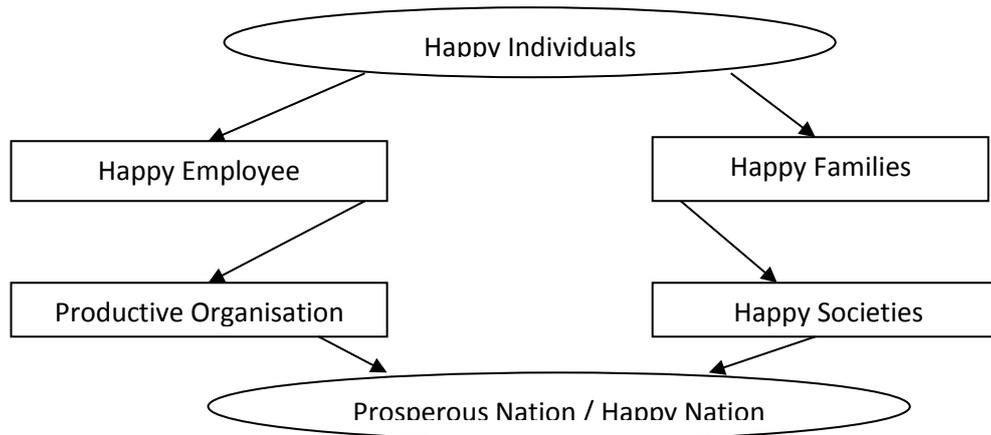
## IMPORTANCE OF WORK LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES

Helping individuals and families achieve a balance between their work, family and lifestyle commitments by introducing WLB strategies can provide benefits for both employees and employers. Some benefits of Work life balance strategies to employees include:

- Improved work life balance- a reduction in the impact of work on home and family life.
- Reduced stress level
- Control over time management in meeting work life commitments
- Autonomy to make decisions regarding work life balance
- Increased focus, motivation and job satisfaction knowing that family and work commitments are being met.
- Increased job security from the knowledge that organization understands and supports employees with family responsibilities.

The benefits of Work life Balance strategies can be defined by following figure:

**Figure-1: Importance of Maintaining Work life Balance**



Source: [www.ssc.govt.nz/worklifebalance](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/worklifebalance)

## CONCLUSION

In India, Scenario of Job market is changing. India is facing several HR related problems like retrenchment/ layoffs, salary cuts, promotions etc. that leads to decrease in employees motivation, morale, job satisfaction and increase in absenteeism, turnover, job stress. Their productivity gets affected. In today's turbulent conditions, no company can survive with traditional job retention strategies like job security and training. They have to take new initiatives in human resource management then only Indian companies can compete and success in this global economy. Work life balance is being considered to be a broader HR strategy by HRM experts for improving job satisfaction, performance of employees. Indian companies should also take initiatives for maintaining work life balance of employees.

## REFERENCES

K. Sandhya, N Viyaya Bhaskar Chaudhary (2011); "Individual change management initiative for better work life balance ; Indian journal science and technology; 14(7); 848-850

Melanie palmer; Dennis rose (2012); Conflict between work and family among New Zealand teacher with dependent children"; Teaching and teacher education; 28;1049-1058

Rajesh K. Yadav; Nishant Dabhade (2013); Work life balance amongst the working women in public sector banks- A case study of State Bank of India; International letters of social and humanistic sciences; 7; 1-22

Ruth Harris, Janette Benett (2010); Flexible Working and contribution of nurse in mid life to the workforce: A qualitative study; International journal of nursing studies; 47; 418-428

S. Ashwini; Dr. M. Kumaraswamy (2015); "Work life balance with special reference to Public sector bank employees in Karnatka"; Global journal of Research analysis; 3(2); 37-41

Sakthivel Rani; Kamalanabhan and Selvarani (2011); Work life balance reflection on employee satisfaction; Serbian journal of management; 16(1);85-96

Smita R.chavan, Balkrushna Potdar(2011), A critical study on work life balance of BPO employees in India, International conference on technology and business management;50; 966-977

Suzanne de janasz, monica forest(2011); Family status and Work attitude, an investigation in a professional services firm, British journal of Management, 97-100

T.S. Sathi and Dr K. Sunder (2012); A study on the work life balance of women employees in information technology industry”; Zenith international journal of business economics and management research; 82-96

Tom Redman , Colin Ashurst (2009); Location,: does place of work really matter?; British journal of Management; 20;171-181