MAINTAINING WORK LIFE BALANCE- A SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES OF JAMMU REGION

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ABSTRACT

The paper talks about the present scenario that is being faced by almost all the professional people, working in different organisations, be it govt., semi-govt., or private. Different people work in different organisations that require and demand various kinds of skills and qualifications as per the nature of the work the firm deals in. The competition has crept into the market so well that it has engulfed all the organisations to work at their level best. This in turn creates a strong pressure on the employees to work hard and smartly and beat the competitors in every possible way they can. As a result the working people face a great imbalance between their personal and professional lives. This hinders their self-growth and creates a reflection of it in their work as well. This study tries to unfold this imbalance that persists in the lives of the professional people and thus triggers the turbulences that affects their professional and personal lives. An insight is given into the factors that result into such swirls of the working people. It also depicts the ways how people try to establish a balance between their personal & professional lives so that they live a smooth life and also perform well at their job. A deep exploratory research in terms of questionnaires and personal in-depth interviews of 8 employees of Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir state belonging to different levels and from different organisations (Public and Private) was taken.

KEYWORDS- Imbalance, maintenance, professional, personal, organisations, competition, market, pressure, employees.

INTRODUCTION

Work–life balance is a broad concept including proper prioritizing between "work" on one hand and life"(Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. Related, though broader, terms include "lifestyle balance" and "life balance".

The work-leisure dichotomy was invented in the mid 1800s. In anthropology, a definition of happiness is to have as little separation as possible "between your work and your play.” The expression "Work–life balance" was first used in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s to describe the
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balance between an individual's work and personal life. In the United States, this phrase was first used in 1986.

Over the past twenty-five years, there has been a substantial increase in work which is felt to be due, in part, by information technology and by an intense, competitive work environment. Long-term loyalty and a "sense of corporate community" have been eroded by a performance culture that expects more and more from their employees yet offers little security in return.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature survey was also done beforehand to prepare this paper. The literature thus studied gave a thorough understanding into the concept of maintaining work life balance.

The survey done by Burke (2002) observes that both women and men prefer working in organisations that support work-life balance. Men appeared to benefit more than women. Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more on the job even at the cost of ignoring the family. On the other hand, women stress that work and family are both equally important and both are the sources of their satisfaction. For them the former is more important. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the others. Morgan (2003) in his article outline that consequently, a larger part of them have tended to be present at their work place for longer periods of time, thereby reducing the time for which they are available at home. The internet and mobile phones have made it possible for the organizations to keep in constant touch with the employees both during the day and at night. Yasbek (2004) in his research work highlights that to a large extent in the IT sector, the employee is expected to be engaged on the job almost at all times. So the traditional distinctions between work-life and family-life have disappeared. Even during selection of employees for an organization, emphasis is placed on the attitudes the person exhibits, more particularly, whether the employee is flexible enough to be available for work at any time. Simultaneously, family life is also becoming more complex. The extended family, even in India, is slowly disappearing (Patel 2005). Small nuclear families have come to stay, where both the spouses go to work. In addition, there are an increasing number of single parent households due to increase in divorces (Amato et al. 2003). Although this problem is not as serious in India as in the West, yet, it could become a serious issue some time in the future.

Participation by women in employment continues to grow since the past decade. In spite of more women going out to work, there has been little change in patterns of household responsibilities (Singh 2004) these synchronous changes in working and family life result in a need for employees to continuously attempt a balancing act. Quite often the work intrudes on the family and social life, while at other times family pressures affect the work performance (Fu and Shaffer 2001). Hyman et al. (2003) observed that organizational pressures, combined with lack of work centrality, result in work intruding into non-work areas of employees’ lives. Such intrusions often manifest themselves differently depending on the type of work, extent of autonomy and organizational support (Hyman et al. 2003; Atkinson and Meagre 1986). Fisher and Layte (2003) consider three distinct sets of measures of work-
life balance, viz. proportion of free time, the overlap of work and other dimensions of life, and the time spent with other people. Several reviews have highlighted other issues such as age, gender, life-cycle stage, ethnicity, citizenship, and childcare arrangements which also merit attention (Wallace and Cousins 2004; Jager Jenkins (2000) observes that issues like child rearing, the need to balance multiple roles etc. have consequences on health and family relationships. Securely attached individuals experienced positive spill over in both work and family (summer and Knight 2001). These are pointers that there are gender differences in coping with work family issues. Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status.

So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and summers 2004). Work based support to women is positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment and career accomplishment (Marcinkus et al. 2007). The home working can lead to greater flexibility and independence, but it can make people work for longer periods of time, including weekends and evenings. Home environment also plays a very important role in the quality of life. Home working could be stressful, if young children have to be managed (Valcour and Hunter 2005). Gender has an important effect on home working (Gunkel 2007) Bharat (2009) reviewed that many employees need to work on Saturdays and Sundays too. Moreover, there is a changing pattern in the working hours which is quite different from the standard one, which normally operates from 9 am to 5 pm (Bharat 2009). The primary objective of the study conducted by Sanghamitra Buddhapiyra (2009), is to understand the impact of family responsibilities on the career decisions of women professionals and also to find out the type of work-life support they would require from their employers to balance their work and life in a better manner. The study is conducted with 121 women professionals working in government services, public sector, private sector, and in NGOs across different levels. Another study by Reimara Valk and Vasanthi Srinivasan (2011) attempts to understand how work and family related factors influence the work-family balance of Indian women IT professionals. The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 13 women IT professionals in the software sector in Bangalore, India. The narratives reveal six major themes: familial influences on life choices; multi-role responsibilities; self and professional identity; work-life challenges and coping strategies; organisational policies and practices; and social support.

**HYPOTHESIS**

Job Satisfaction is positively related to work-life balance.

**OBJECTIVES**

Some of the objectives identified as a result of the literature review, are enumerated as under.

1. To find out the challenges being faced by working people.
2. To study the effective Time Management of the working people.
3. To find out whether work life is affecting personal life or not. And if yes, to what extent.
4. To study whether organisation is contributing towards maintaining work life balance.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper studies about the work life and personal life balance of the employees. The method used describes the steps of implementation of the survey so conducted and finally concludes or outlines the various problems that are being faced and the challenges that are taken over in order to sustain in this competitive environment where more time is being devoted to the work life rather than to individual’s personal life.

➢ Tool formation: - Firstly the purpose of the survey and the objectives were thought upon by continuous brain storming and the following objectives came forth which are as written above. Then various employees were interviewed in an informal manner to come to know about the problems faced, time management and the personal life which was put at the back foot by most of them. Secondly, after collecting all the knowledge and the relevant data about different aspects attached to work-personal life balance a questionnaire was chalked out which was targeted to mass segment of different demographics (gender, status, age etc), occupation, working hours, marital status, social considerations etc... After the questionnaire was finalised it was given to various employees in Jammu city (J&K) only for filling to get their responses and the valuable insights to their dual lives.

The survey was restricted only to the professionals who are working in different organisations in the Jammu city (J&K) only because of time and financial constraints.

The sample size so taken was eight i.e. N=8. Each respondent was asked a total of 21 questions amounting to the total sample of about 168. The questions were like:-

Q1 at what level are you currently being posted in your organisation?

Q2 for how many hours do you often work?

Q3 what kind of communication do you use for arriving at the office?

Next the relevant data so collected is analysed on Ms excel by using data analysis tool such as Pie charts. Only those questions were analysed which were close ended i.e. having options and the open ended questions were left for general analysis.

➢ Scales Used:

Dichotomous scale. – it is being used in those cases where the answers to some questions are pretty sure are going to be either yes or no and in order to reduce the ambiguity we have gone for dichotomous scaling.

- Likert scale. – It is being used in those cases where there are favourably more chances of different views and opinions of different intensity. So on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 represents the highly dissatisfied and 5 represents the highly satisfied and all other cases lie in between.
Sampling used:

Convenient sampling: - A convenience sample is a sample where the patients are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher. The researcher makes no attempt, or only a limited attempt, to insure that this sample is an accurate representation of some larger group or population. The classic example of a convenience sample is standing at a shopping mall and selecting shoppers as they walk by to fill out a survey.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data was analysed by feeding the calculated values from the responses got with respect to the total sample and was then converted into percents. After this the data was converted into 2-D pie – charts for the pictorial representation which is easy to understand in MS excel.

Each question was analysed separately that could give clear picture about the survey and thus helped in the easy evaluation and correct interpretations of the results.

Example of the values that is being represented is as follows:-

Let’s say for the level of job, we may take total calculated respondents as: 21*8= 168.

Now No. Of respondents who answered middle = 4

Hence % is as = 4/168 * 100= 2.38 %, and so on.

2-D pie charts:

1. Level of Job: 
   - Middle –2.38%
   - Lower – 2.38%
   - Top–0%

Interpret: it is evaluated that most of the respondents are occupied to either lower or middle type of jobs in their respective organisation, both being 50% each.
2. Method of Conveyance: Matador – 1.78%

Pvt Vehicle – 2.38%

Others - 0.59%

**Interpret:** the survey reveals that most of the working people commute via matador or either pvt. Vehicle to reach their place of work, maximum being those who use their own vehicles that accounts for 51%.

3. Type of Job: Sitting – 2.38%

Field – 1.19%

Clerical – 1.19%

**Interpret:** Maximum respondents are doing sitting type of jobs that included about 50% of the total sample size.
4. Late night shifts: Yes – 1.19%  
    No – 3.57%  
    **Interpret:** About 75% of the respondents did not have to work in the late night shifts.

5. Satisfaction with the job: Yes – 4.16%  
    No – 0.59%  
    **Interpret:** About 88% of the people are satisfied with their jobs.

6. Time spent with the family: 6-8 hrs (daily) – 2.38%  
    3-6 hrs – 0.59%  
    More than 8 – 1.19%  
    **Interpret:** About 57% of the people spend about 6-8 hrs daily with their families.
7. Level of stress:

- Very often – 1.19%
- Always – 0.59%
- Sometimes – 2.97%
- Never – 0.59%

**Interpret:** Respondents feel stressful living only sometimes.

8. Frequency for outing:

- Sometimes – 1.19%
- Very rarely – 2.38%
- Once in a year – 1.19%
- Weekend – 0.89%

**Interpret:** People take their families for outing very rarely.
FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Employees are generally using their own private vehicle for their commutation and hardly any help is provided by the organisations in this regard that creates problems for the working professionals.

2. Most of the employees are having cordial relations at the work place that reduces the imbalance between personal & professional lives.

3. Mostly the employees do not account for late night shifts and thus this relieves them of the major stress they can have on/off the job.

4. The employees are also having minute health problems due to their work.

5. They also spend enough time with their families and thus feel stressful only sometimes that is natural.

All the above findings reveal that people of Jammu have such a professional life that helps them to maintain a balance between their personal & professional lives and thus perform well at their workplaces. Also t–test was applied to hypothesis which accepted the hypothesis that if work and life of employees is balanced, they feel satisfied with their jobs as is relevant from the survey of employees of Jammu region.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study is useful for hr persons of public and private enterprises of smaller cities in framing policies for work-life balance by knowing the demands of employees working in these cities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample size was very small.

The employees are not fully aware of the concept of work-life balance.
CONCLUSIONS

From the survey being conducted on “work life balance” , in which people under concern were asked to as how they were managing their balance, it was found that people of Jammu city are facing a problem in their work and personal life management and balance but to a little extent only. Though, their work life has a great impact on their family life and vice-versa and but they are well able to maintain a life creating a mismatch resulting in physical and mental strain quite translucent. Of course, at times they feel stress and pressure to maintain the same, but they are able to cope up with these kinds of situations well enough and thus lead a somewhat better life.

REFERENCES

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