

Work Life Balance and the Role of HR in Enterprises: An empirical Study

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ABSTRACT: *Sound culture of any organization ensures the productive workforce which is the prime responsibility of HR managers in the contemporary age. Any organization could achieve excellence through its productive employees; the condition is that they should be satisfied with every aspect of personal and professional life. Making a balance between personal and professional life is a little challenging but if an organization could develop a culture where they feel comfortable, it is quite possible. The main study records that managers have the power to either support or discourage work-life balance policies in their sections or organizations. Current research lacks a specific focus on the managers' role in facilitating work-life balance. Within the management team, besides being responsible for the overall creation of work-life balance arrangements, lower-level managers are typically the gatekeepers of such arrangements and are responsible for the allocation of work-life balance policies within the organization. Work-life-balance is not only important for employees but it is equally important for overall organizational development also.*

KEYWORDS: *Work Life Balance, Culture, Excellence, productivity, efficiency*

I. INTRODUCTION

Life is most precious gift of nature and we use to live our life happily and comfortably with fullest way. Life becomes a little complex after entering into a profession or occupation. A lot of personal, social and economic responsibilities come on our shoulder. Everybody wishes to earn for living their noble life but by the way during the process of earning by both the couples if this becomes a problem, is a matter of consideration [1]. At personal levels we try to manage it with family and up-to a certain extent we get success in it. But at a professional level it becomes a little difficult because we have to follow the occupation obligations with norms. HR managers have been the central points for managing this situation especially in the conditions when it becomes

dangerous for the organizational effectiveness. Work-Life Balance (WLB) does not mean an equal balance. Trying to schedule an equal number of hours for each of your various work and personal activities is usually unrewarding and unrealistic [2]. Life is and should be more fluid than that. However, at the core of an effective work-life balance definition are two key everyday concepts that are relevant to each of us. They are daily Achievement and Enjoyment, ideas almost deceptive in their simplicity.

Work-life-balance does not mean to make a balance in life all the time but it has a broader meaning in this regard. It is a process to make professional and personal life more fruitful, meaningful and cheerful for high level of productivity as well as satisfaction. Work-life-balance is not the one way process but it is a process of the totality of organizational life and personal life. It is a very comprehensive process to achieve personal and organizational goals effectively and efficiently.

Most of us already have a good grasp on the meaning of Achievement. But let's explore the concept of Enjoyment a little more. As part of a relevant Work-Life Balance definition, enjoyment does not *just* mean "Ha-Ha" happiness. It means Pride, Satisfaction, Happiness, Celebration, Love, and A Sense of Well Being ... all the Joys of Living.

Achievement and Enjoyment are the front and back of the coin of value in life. You can't have one without the other, no more than you can have a coin with only one side [5]. Trying to live a one sided life is why so many "Successful" people are not happy, or not nearly as happy as they should be. You cannot get the full value from life without both Achievements and Enjoyment. Focusing on Achievement and Enjoyment every day in life helps you avoid the "As Soon As Trap", the life dulling habit of planning on

getting around to the joys of life and accomplishment "as soon as...." Work life and personal life are interconnected and interdependent.

Spending more time in the office, dealing with clients and the pressures of the job can interfere and affect the personal life, sometimes making it impossible to even complete the household chores [6]. On the other hand, personal life can also be demanding if you have a kid or aging parents, financial problems or even problems in the life of a dear relative. It can lead to absenteeism from work, creating stress and lack of concentration at work. Work-personal life conflict occurs when the burden, obligations and responsibilities of work and family roles become incompatible [3]. Obligation of one can force an individual to neglect the other.

Which so ever situations employees face, ultimately it has the impact over the organizational performance. If an organization is able to ensure WLB in its organization for their employees, may have a positive impact. The question is how HR managers could ensure the WLB in the organization? If it is a matter of individual and their psychology, up-to- what extent HR managers can help in this regard? HR managers are striving to overcome with these kinds of problems. They are devising various techniques and tools which could be the strategic aspects of their organization to manage WLB effectively [7].

II. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the research paper are:

- To Identify how managers negotiate and understand work-life balance;
- To Examine the role that formal and informal policies play;
- To explore the role of HR managers in facilitating work-life balance within organizations.

The study notes that HR managers have the power to either promote or discourage work-life balance policies in their sections or organizations. Current research lacks a specific focus on the managers' role in facilitating work-life balance. Within the management team, besides being responsible for the overall creation of work-life balance arrangements, lower-level managers are typically the gatekeepers of such arrangements and are responsible for the allocation of work-life balance policies within the organization.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The findings of the research are based on responses from top level HR managers (directors, general managers, and managers) obtained through one-to-one interviews in four organizations. The research was undertaken concerning the following companies:

- One private manufacturing company in Ghaziabad – two interviews;
- One public sector company operating throughout India – two interviews;
- Two regional public sector organizations in NCR – four interviews.

The interviews explored the following questions.

- How is work-life balance defined?
- What is the personal take-up of work-life balance arrangements like?
- Are there managers who avail of work-life balance arrangements?
- Who should get priority with regard to gender or family status?
- How are the workplace procedures implemented – formally or informally?
- How are policies or procedures communicated?
- What is the prevailing workplace culture?
- What is management's role in promoting work-life balance?

IV. ANALYSIS

Analysis of data is one of the important aspects of any research. This requires the valid tools and techniques. After analyzing the data collected through the schedule and subsequent explores various aspects of work life balance were found which are not of researcher's expectations but this is the beauty of research which reflects the true picture of the scenario. Great care has been taken in data analysis with a careful observation and documentation. Following findings have been sought out:

A. ATTITUDE TO TAKE-UP OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE ARRANGEMENTS

In terms of the most important findings, interviewees were asked to describe the workplace response to work-life balance take-up – for example, regarding the take-up of parental leave or job-sharing

arrangements. More specifically, the respondents were asked whether there was any kind of penalty for those who avail of such arrangements. The opinions of HR managers varied in this respect. Some opinions were very positive. However, other HR managers stated that work-life balance was a personal affair, and that it had no real relevance to their HR role, since what staff did outside of the workplace was their own personal business.

B. FORMAL VERSUS INFORMAL ARRANGEMENTS

Another important issue was that organizations have traditionally relied on informal flexibility, such as 'time off in lieu'. The HR managers were asked about their preference for formal as opposed to informal work-life balance arrangements. Recognizing the importance and spontaneous nature of informal arrangements, one HR director believed that they could only work in limited circumstances, after which formal procedures would have to apply.

C. PHENOMENON OF 'PRESENTEEISM'

The HR managers were asked to describe the level of work-life balance associated with themselves and managers above and/or below them in the organization. One HR director felt that senior management has been constrained to conform to 'presenteeism' – a phenomenon whereby employees work long hours but with lower productivity or poor functioning capacity due to medical or other personal problems. Working outside the traditional 'presenteeism' system remains the exception among senior managers and was more common among women located in female-dominated areas. The exception to this was teleworking, which enabled a few senior male managers to work from home on a limited basis.

D. PROBLEMS RELATED TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Managers' views were sought on whether they believed that having staff availing of work-life balance arrangements made it unfair to others who did not. The interviewees referred to problems of availability and the negative impact that take-up or lack of availability could have on other staff.

Overall, the most important finding to arise from the research was the existence of a culture that runs counter to attempts to achieve work-life balance.

This culture is characterized by long working hours and a focus on being seen to be present [4]. The study shows that these work patterns are not conducive to work-life balance – not just for parents of young children but for all employees. In such a climate, seeking work-life balance arrangements – such as working from home or working reduced hours or flexitime – are not seen as compatible with holding management posts.

V. FUTURE WORK

In view of the research findings, the concluding study sets out some recommendations for work-life balance strategies that might be used by organizations, including the following:

- Establishing and disseminating good practice – a clear message that emerged from the interviews with managers is the need for leadership from the top HR directors and managers demonstrating their acceptance of work-life balance arrangements, without penalty, for all employees including senior managers. Campaigns promoting work-life balance are needed to remove the prevailing negative perceptions of such arrangements;
- Reviewing work-life balance policies and practice – in particular, work-life balance needs to be marketed in a gender-neutral way that will appeal to men as well as women;
- Challenging the prevalence of long hours – mechanisms to address this would include reducing the number of, and time allotted to, meetings;
- Create an organizational and national culture of work-life balance – most of the managers who participated in the study supported the need for a culture change that departs from the prevailing reliance on 'presenteeism' to one which places an emphasis on performance results or outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSION

There are various reasons for this imbalance and conflicts in the life of an employee. From individual career ambitions to pressure to cope up with family or work, the reasons can be situation and individual specific. The speed of advancement of information technology, the increasing competition in the talent supply market has led to a "performance-driven"

culture creating pressures and expectations of performance more and better every time. Also, many a times, many people find it difficult to say "NO" to others especially their superiors. They usually end up over burdening themselves with work. The increasing responsibilities on the personal front with age can also create stress on personal and professional fronts.

After all it is a matter of perception and tolerant capability of a person along with above mentioned reasons. How we take our life and the motive with certain direction that matters a lot in making work life balance. Some life value matters and philosophy could make a difference in our life. We could make an ideal ideology and faith our cultural and Indian Vedic perspective to make balance between professional and personal life. Time management, saying "no" if possible, accepting the change willingly, searching the way of enjoying job etc. are some of the ways how one could ensure work life balance.

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