

Corporates Capacitating Work Life Alignment And Wellbeing Among Women Employees

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Abstract: One of the major effects of the pandemic is shutting down of physical offices and encouraging work from home irrespective of age, gender or profession. With the easy facility of internet of good speed and the tricky need to balance the family with the job responsibilities, the employer has opted for the scheme called Work from Home, though has its own pros and cons. Work from Home concept that originated in United States at the time of Great Depression continues till date as a common HR practices in most of the corporates. This strategy helped to keep the employees motivated and ensure the safety of both employer and employees during the pandemic. Work-Life Alignment refers to the coalition between emotional, spiritual, mental and physical capacities along with rest and work cycles at home. Many studies suggest that there is association between well being and work from home. Well being is the state of having good mental health

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life alignment refers to creation and maintenance of strong and encouraging work environments that enables the employees to have a sense of balance between their work and personal responsibilities and in turn strengthen employee's loyalty and productivity. Contemporary life for several people seems to be characterized by stress, role overload, and a lack of time for leisure. This is the truth in case of working women who are in quest to balance the paid with the unpaid work, responsibilities of household and spare time in an increasingly the swift society. Employee's performance can also be defined as the level of success of employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Employee performance is the key in determining the achievement of organizational goals hence the organizations must look out for ways to motivate their employees in order to give their best performance on the job. Work-life balance has implication not only on the attitudes, behaviours, wellbeing of employees but also on the effectiveness of the organization. Bloom et al. (2007) stated that on average larger firms which are typically more globalize have better work life balance practices and such employers are being encouraged to introduce work-life policies and make them more inclusive in order to enhance their business performance. The women were badly affected among the working population since they had to strike a balance at home while struggling between office duties and household chores. This concept of new normal called work from home has disturbed the personal and professional lives of working women.

Au and Ahmed (2014), opine that companies are indulged to incorporate new management procedures that provide collective and managerial support. The superior's perception regarding their employee's work life conflict affects the career progress of employees.

Vloeberghs(2002) was of the opinion that a practical instrument is required to measure the work life balance. Eikhof et al(2007) addressed the current work life balance policies as narrow minded as it does not meet the needs and aspirations of employees.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Bharati (2010) in her research article discussed the travel time; extended working hours; participation in additional jobs and assignments as the main challenges in women's professional life. The guilt feeling of not being able to take care of self and elders at home is the biggest stressor in their personal lives.

Palumbo (2020) critically assessed the assumption that more and more work is being detached from place and that this is a 'win win' for both employers and employees.

This study also showed that while remote working is related with high level of commitment towards work, job satisfaction and workplace wellbeing, these benefits come at the cost of work escalation and the higher helplessness to switch off oneself from the job.

Carrying the workload to home on weekdays is linked with less happiness, and bringing it home on the weekends and holidays is linked with more level of stress. The parental status and gender impacts the effect of working from home on the subjective well being of a person.. (Song, 2019)

Galinsky and Bond (1998)The firms employing larger numbers of professionals are more prone to implement work-life policies due to their scarcity, harder to attract, more valuable and more expensive to recruit and retain than less paid employees whereas there are least availability of work-life balance policies for low skilled workers.

Cox (2021) found in his study that women corrections executives found work life balance as a principal challenge in serving at executive-level roles. This continues to be the main reason why women employees are underrepresented in spite of their professional accomplishments. The studies show that more women were willing to apply for the executive roles only if the departments provide family friendly policies.

The findings of Shaw 2011 indicate that tele-work can contribute in a positive way to life balance for employed women. Due to the tele work profile's flexibility, women employees were available for their children on a daily basis and hence expanded their parenting role. Work from home enhanced the work autonomy and ensured a relaxing work environment. Most of the women employees were able to develop strategies to strike a balance between work and household responsibilities.

Hyman and Summers (2004) identified following problems in the current work life balance-restricted employee voice on implementation of policies, lack of formalization of policies, difference in the adoption process of policies among different sectors and organizations. The familial responsibilities are still carried out primarily by the women of the house irrespective of their employment status.

CURRENT PRACTICES

1. In the "Retuning mothers" programme at Accenture which aids new mothers seamlessly transition back to work after maternity. A coach assigned to each woman attempting to return, ensures personalized and focused strategies and support in finding their rhythm back at work. The 'Intentionality of Careers' program enables women to consciously invest in meaningful career goals while navigating planned and unplanned changes in life with structured action plans. Workshops on building effective networks and managing work/life

balance are conducted. Telecommuting initiative helps in attracting and retaining women employees.

2. IBM India Private Limited offers maternity care program, child care support, travel assistance for primary caregiver, flexible work options, access to online resources parenting, exclusive community for new mothers, coach on call, monthly newsletter, webinars for new mothers. At IBM, the child care centre offers- The Infant program; The Early Toddler/Toddler program; The Pre School program; The Nursery and Kindergarten program; The after School Program.

3. In Credit Suisse Bank, an exclusive program for expectant mothers and those resuming work after maternity leave to help them better balance their new phase in life with work. This includes a buddy system and crèche facilities located near the bank's offices in Mumbai, Pune and Bangalore, as well as comfortable, private nursing rooms on office premises.

4. K Raheja Corporations offers Aanchal Maternity Support Program encompasses initiatives and practices to support new mothers achieve work-life balance. During maternity leave, the employee is kept updated on any critical developments at the work place through a friend in the team - My Saheli. Post maternity leave, new mothers are seamlessly blended back in the environment through initiatives like Crèche facility, reduced work hours for initial one month and counselling session with Head HR.

5. The women employees at Deloitte get 26 week paid maternity leaves and reimbursement of expenses in case of expectant mothers. It also provides formal flexible work options. As a result the high performing women professionals are able to build their profiles under senior leadership roles.

6. The software company Mindtree developed an app-Milady that enables women professionals to stay connected with their organization even during their maternity leaves. With the help of this app's updates the other employees are able to find out if the expectant mother is in any emergency.

7. Pepsico provides Adoption and surrogacy leave (commissioning mothers) at par with maternity leave which is ahead of policy (12 weeks) and best-in-class amongst most organizations. Working parents are supported through day-care facilities as well as "Bring your child to work" policy to help when support system fails and summer camp programs to engage employees' children.

8. Ernst and Young conducts mentoring on maternity, inclusive leadership workshops, zero tolerance approach on workplace and sexual harassment, day care facility within the premises and transitional support to expectant as well as returning mothers.

9. Women employees in Citibank receive maternity leave, adoption leave, child care allowance, day care facility, initiatives that promote health and work-life balance, maternity rating protection, pre and post pregnancy support by doctors, counsellors, medical and relocation benefits to domestic partners and sensitization workshops are conducted periodically.

10. Biocon Limited provides its employees with great maternity benefits along with facilities like crèche, pumping rooms, and pre/post-natal counselling services. Several initiatives are focused at women's safety, wellness and providing them with work flexibility. Several workshops like self-defence, women's rights, breast cancer awareness etc. are organized along with interventions like Womentoring and women's forum for developing women leaders.

11. At Aspire the women employees are helped to remain equally focused between work and personal priorities. The women employees can discuss challenges and mutually support each other under the forums called as Mindspa and Tulips. The company provides career

advancement under the initiatives like LEAD workshop, STEP UP, Fast Trackers and other regular assessments.

12. Crèches, Paid holiday, Vacation, Maternity Benefit with extended leave of absence and sabbaticals are offered to every employee. The various Corporate Social Responsibility campaigns under the 'Wipro Cares' initiative gives insights into the right diet, best exercises for the body and soul and a variety of tips to keep one fit.

13. The women employees at HDFC bank experience equal treatment and get well equipped medical facilities as per their needs. The bank offers zero tolerance towards any kind of harassment and ensures a safe environment for them.

14. Flipkart provides flexi work culture. One can opt for Time away from Work or career break

to pursue higher education, take care of elders or children in the family or any other personal/family emergency. Flipkart provides extensive support for new parents through Maternity Benefit Program, Adoption Assistance Program and Day-care Support Program. Flipkart's Wellness program supports employees through Employee Assistance Program, Onsite Medical Centre, Onsite Gym, Emergency Support System.

15. Zensar Technologies offers a facility called "Madat Online" wherein the employees are able to ensure some of their personal daily activities are done (dropping cheques, withdrawing cash, paying bills and school fees of their kids).

16. At Elico Healthcare Services Limited under the retention strategy "Work from Home" is initiated. The employees are offered to continue their service and attend to work from home remotely. Women are entitled for maternity leave as per the Maternity Benefit Act 1961. Elico gives the flexibility for the women employees to work in different shift post maternity.

17. The company called People combine, runs a programme named 'Partial work Partial pay.' It also offers its staff summer, winter, and autumn breaks.

18. Deutsche Bank also ensures adequate infrastructure support through on-site facilities like Mothers Nursing Rooms and wellness rooms across locations other than providing work flexibility. The bank recently enhanced its childcare assistance benefit allowing for 100% reimbursement.

19. The women employees at Kohler receive fertility benefits, maternity leave coaching, flexi- work options, generous leave policies, milk stork services and pumping rooms in the workplace.

20. At Sheroes company, managed remote solutions programme offers remote careers to women in different roles as full time or part time.

3. CONCLUSION:

Work-life conflict is a serious problem that impacts workers, their employers and communities. It seems that this problem is increasing over time due to high female labour force participation rates, increasing numbers of single parent families, the predominance of the dual-earner family and emerging trends such as elder care. The working women's population needs the understanding and support from both their family and the leaders in the organization to enable them to continue in the workforce. Family is the biggest asset for any working women, if she receives supportive and peaceful work environment, then she will be able to develop good bonding with family members at home also.

Employees see flexible work arrangements as a privilege rather than as a way of working. Working from home allows working women the luxury of occasionally dealing with

household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, arranging home repairs, childcare emergencies, etc. Women employees may also feel that they owe something additional to the organization for permitting them to use a flexible work arrangement. The women employees work with more vigor and commitment as a result of facilities offered by their organizations, even if they are not being noticed during work from home. The support extended helps in increasing the sense of belongingness among women employees and ultimately in their retention.

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