Work life Balance: A source of Job satisfaction - Cases of various Organizations

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Abstract — “A ‘good job’ can be both practically attractive while still not good enough to devote your entire life to.” — Alain de Botton.

Balancing demand of individual with that of the organization is the area of substantial concern for any organization in present scenario. The well being of organization is directly proportional to that of the individual working in the organization. An individual has two roles to play - personal and professional; each role having different set of demands. When such roles are overlapped, multiple problems are faced leading to losses for all concerned: the individual, the family, the organization and the society. Exploring the fullest capacity of human capital is recognized as important strategic matters, as it is well recognized that tensions exist between the parties involved in implementation of work-life policies and practices. Our study is about different organizations in form of cases that how the clashes between the work life and personal life of people hinders success of organization and individual and what strategies can be adopted to resolve issues related to work life imbalances.

Index Terms — Work life balance, Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, flexi assignment, telecommuting

I. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance has been widely discussed since the launch of a major government campaign in 2000 (Changing Patterns in a Changing World, DEE, 2000). This initiative was aimed at encouraging employers to adopt flexible working arrangements such as job sharing, flexi-time, compressed hours and others, to help their employees to achieve a better balance between the demands of paid employment and those arising from their private life. The concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. The way to achieve this is to adopt an approach that is “conceptualised as a two way process involving a consideration of the needs of employees as well as those of employers” (Lewis, 2000: p.105). In order to engage employers in this process it is important to demonstrate the benefits that can be derived from employment policies and practices that support work-life balance, and the scope that exists for mitigating their negative effects on the management of the business.

Globally job satisfied employees show higher commitment and lower intention to quit. But we are still unaware of the commitment and intention to quit of different forms of job dis/satisfaction. Based on data from the Swiss Human Relations Barometer 2009, the study supports the importance of a fit between actual work situation and aspiration level of an employee for commitment and intention to quit. Furthermore the analysis shows that progressive job satisfied employees have higher intention to quit than stabilized job satisfied employees, while resigned job satisfied employees have lower intention to quit than constructive and fixated job dissatisfied employees. Thus job satisfaction and work life balance and interrelated and one is the key for the achievement of other. Worklife balance cannot be quantified but its impact has quantitative influence on organization working. Thus, it is crucial for an organization to work towards worklife balance measures for long term growth of individual and organization.

Objectives of the paper-
1. To study the influence of job satisfaction on worklife balance
2. To discuss various issues related to worklife balance in different organizations
3. To suggest some strategies for managing work life balance in organization.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-life balance refers to people having enough time to have balance in their job and home life. According to the study of Kinman (2001), the strongest factor of psychological distress and job dissatisfaction was related to work life conflict. He found out that over half of the academics surveyed complained that they have to regularly work at home
during the evenings which cause stress. Karakas and Lee, (2004) explained work life balance issues as spending good time with family members, getting free time to be able to relax for emotional wellbeing and health of family members, having good communication and support from the fellow colleagues, obtaining high quality child care and education; and being satisfied with the work load. Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996) asserted that majority of the employees reported that they remained preoccupied with work issues even after leaving the workplace and feel difficulties in sleep at home. The demand from organizations to attend to the family responsibilities of employees has been increasing due to the rise in the number of single parent’s households and dual earners (Goodstein, 1994).

According to Sullivan and Lewis (2006) schedule inflexibility increased depression in both men and women and increased physical distress such as insomnia, appetite problem, tension related aches and pain. Christensen and Staines (1990), found that flexitime programs decreased late comings, absenteeism, and turnover. In their research, Thomas and Ganster (1995) have found a positive association between flexitime policies and job satisfaction. They concluded that flexible time policies enhanced employee productivity by decreasing absenteeism and turnover, and positively served families by decreasing depression in employees as families get more time to spend together which reduces work/family conflict.

Gilbert (2002) stated that longer working hours though reduces general family satisfaction, but workers who are more committed to their work reported significantly higher family satisfaction as compared to the workers who are less committed to their work. So it is not only the work timings that affect family but the behaviour of workers towards their jobs that affect their family life. Greenhouse and Powell (2003) have suggested that certain working conditions, such as time flexibility can mitigate the negative effects of work demands on family life.

Roehling and Moen (2001) predicted that earnings (salary), schedule flexibility, family friendly work policies, and supportiveness of colleagues are related to work and life strain. Non supportiveness of colleagues affects the employee loyalty negatively. They further found that a partner with unstable or low income increases the financial burden on other partner. Smith and Smith (2008) found that future accountants give high importance to work-life balance in making career decisions and they feel that a healthy work-life balance positively affects their job performance. They further explained that Maslow’s hierarchy theory and McClelland’s motivational needs theory provide theoretical support for understanding people’s motivation to achieve a healthy work-life balance. According to Kinman and Jones (2008), reward imbalance is one of the reasons of work stress among the employees. In their study, schedule flexibility and the autonomy of the employee in his work were found to be a key predictor of work-life balance. Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) also found that self-control or having autonomy in the work can help individuals to schedule work in a way that reduces the likelihood of work-family conflict. A study by Warren and Jhsonson (1995) showed that managing dependence on colleagues at the job increases social demands and stress. Personal problems with colleagues affect the employees psychologically and make it difficult for them to manage household work effectively.

### III. Case Examples

**Why does work life balance matter to employers?**

Work life balances accommodate access to education and training which helps an organization to use the capacity of individuals to the fullest. It also increases the pool of applicants for advertised jobs as the goodwill of the company is enhanced from the work life balance strategies. Work life balance thus in turn enhances the productivity at the strategic, middle and lower level. It is well said if work life balance properly ensured provides greater job satisfaction, growth potential and job security. Work life balance strategies if properly initiated will reduce absenteeism as work family conflict will decrease. The word of Michael Thomas Sunnarborg fits here “A true balance between work and life comes with knowing that your life activities are integrated not separated.

A number of cases that visualize the issues related to work life balance.

**Case study- Infosys**

Tapping its rich mine of educated female talent has been an important factor in allowing India to become one of the world’s fastest-growing economies. But recently this particular dynamo has been showing signs of strain. Not surprisingly, the most stress is felt among women between 25 and 55 years of age, who are trying to balance demanding careers with obligations at home. Surveys showed that many Infosys women dropped out after getting married; the numbers skyrocketed after the birth of their first child and were almost universal after the second.

The gender diversity practices in Infosys seek to address needs specific to the development, engagement, growth and retention of Women by promoting an inclusive workplace where the potential of women is leveraged and every woman feels valued, heard and fully involved with the company. “We were the first company in India to focus on gender diversity and create a gender based affinity network - IWIN - in 2003 to promote inclusion”.

The Network’s support allowed us to develop innovative practices to balance the needs of Indian women and traditions in a multipronged approach to help women achieve career and life goals. - comprising of (1) emotional assistance, (2) inclusive policies and (3) infrastructure support.

**Case study- Samsung and Apple**

At the peak of work on Samsung’s first Galaxy smartphones, the team of about 300 designers spent three months together in Seoul sleeping as little as two hours a
night. A senior user interface designer said she felt so stressed her body would no longer produce the breast milk she was pumping to send to her newborn at home. “Those were difficult times,” said Jeeyeun Wang, who helped design icons and screen displays for the handsets, speaking through a translator with what sounded at one moment like a catch in her throat. “Samsung is a very hard company to work at—it’s a very hard-working company,” said Wang, an attractive middle-aged Korean woman with a stoic demeanor, dressed in a salmon denim blazer and simple black dress. Asked if she copied any icons or layouts of Apple iPhone screens, “Not at all,” she replied through the translator in testimony for the defense in a $2.5 billion patent infringement suit Apple filed against the Korean giant. The moment provided a rare look into the human side of one of the world’s largest electronics companies, and one no doubt carefully calculated to appeal to the sympathies of the nine-person jury here.

Wang’s story echoed tales of Apple’s own industrial designers who talked about long, sometimes contentious debates gathered around a kitchen table where they routinely meet. It also harkened back to even earlier stories—not told at the trial—of an Apple designer so stressed during the design of its failed Newton handheld he committed suicide, a fact only discovered when a New York Times reporter followed the lead of a dedication at the bottom of the code in the device’s software.

For a moment, the high profile trial here, turned its attention to a subject not at issue in the case—the work/life balance of engineers and designers in the pressure cooker of the electronics industry. But the focus quickly snapped back to the details of patent infringement. Samsung attorney John Quinn asked Wang about the distinctive icon of a white telephone receiver against a green background used both in Galaxy phones and the iPhone. “We called it a ‘dumbell’ icon,” she said. “The icon was in use before I joined the company in 2002. The green has a positive connotation, meaning go, do or make the call. A red color would mean don’t or stop,” she added. Wang said as part of her work she studied icons from many sources including the Web, airport signs and elsewhere. Under cross examination, an Apple attorney showed documents with her name on them in their metadata that included comparisons of Samsung and Apple icons as well as an Apple Human Interface Guide provided to third party developers for the iPhone.

Case Study- Govt. Agency (UK)

A State Government Agency recently requested help with a project to reduce traffic congestion and commuter overload on public transport during peak hours. A key component of this project was to educate and support businesses in the implementation of a range of flexible work arrangements. The intention was to stagger start and finish times for staff and, where possible, to assist them in working from home. The concept is one that has been tried and extensively tested in the UK. The research shows that in cities where this has been successful (especially London) there has been a considerable reduction in the congestion on the roads as well as pressure on public transport.

Case Study – Hospital, Victoria

A major teaching hospital in Victoria wanted and needed to implement a work/life strategy that encompassed a range of options, including flexible working, health and wellbeing programs, additional on-site facilities as well as changes to the shift patterns and rosters. They needed to address challenges relating to employee retention and increasing demands for flexible work arrangements.

After an initial planning workshop and consultation process with the Human Resources team as well as departmental stakeholders, it was agreed that an in-depth needs assessment would be the best way to collect the data needed to demonstrate that work/life challenges are a real business issue. This process would also collect the statistical data needed to identify and prioritize the needs of staff.

Barbara Holmes, Director of Managing Worklife Balance International led this project in partnership with the hospital’s Work/Life Manager. A series of focus groups were conducted by both MHLB and members of the hospital’s HR team. These sessions identified the key issues for staff. In addition, each member of the Executive Team was interviewed and contributed information about the priorities for their department. This data was used to build the survey questionnaire and illustrate many of the subsequent findings.

The survey which was delivered to all staff, the findings were analyzed by demographic groups. They highlighted both strengths and opportunities for action. Each Executive received a report for their specific department. Presentations were made to the Executive Team and included both long and short-term options for the future. The Hospital’s Work/Life Manager is now in the process of working with stakeholders to implement the recommendations.

Case study: Job Sharing at Motorola

Motorola was founded in 1928 in the U.S., and currently employs more than 100,000 people worldwide. Today, it is harnessing the power of wireless, broadband and the Internet to deliver embedded chip system—level and end-to-end network communications solutions for the individual, work team, vehicle and home. Motorola employs 1,530 staff in its East Kilbride, Scotland operation, of which about 700 are operators. Motorola operates in a highly competitive global environment; to maintain its competitive advantage, it operates its plants 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A variety of work-life balance arrangements are offered, many of which are long established throughout the company. They include part-time work; dependency leave; an employee assistance program (EAP); job sharing; health care (adding some private health care benefits to the state-funded U.K. system); special shift arrangements (non-standard shifts); study leave (time off work to complete sections for formal qualifications); and emergency holidays (when annual leave needs to be taken for non-holiday time). Moyna Withycombe, the human resource operations manager
at the East Kilbride location, explains that they are offered as part of being a premier employer and to attract high-caliber people, then recognize and reward them. This fits with Motorola’s philosophy of balancing life and work, which has contributed to the company’s high rating in America’s 100 Best Corporate Citizen award lists for environment, community and employment practices.

IV. ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

Some more organizations incorporating worklife balance policies are reaping benefits are as under:

1. In Australia, various organizations are implementing work-life balance policies and reaping the benefits. The National Work and Family Awards showcase organizations with outstanding provisions accommodating work-life balance for employees while meeting business needs. For example,
   a. Greenslopes Private Hospital, an award winner in 2005, found that investing in better work and family initiatives led to a 5.5 per cent reduction in employee turnover and a 23 per cent reduction in workers' compensation costs.
   b. St George Bank, a winner in 2007, reported reduced staff turnover from 18 per cent in 2001 to 15 per cent in 2006 and improved staff satisfaction from 48 per cent of employees in 2002 to 73 per cent in 2006 as some of the positive outcomes of introducing work-life balance initiatives.
   c. Freehills, winner in 2007, provides 12 weeks paid parental leave and adoption leave for primary carers and reported an 85 per cent return rate from parental leave.
   d. While the Cancer Council of Queensland had a 100 per cent record of employees returning to work from parental leave which is offered as 6 to 12 weeks paid leave.
   e. Price water house coopers, another 2007 winner, reported reduced staff turnover by almost 10 per cent from 2002 to 2006 as an outcome of its work-life balance policies.

2. The UK study conducted in February 2005 by The Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD) (5) shows that ‘a desire to improve retention’ is the most popular reason for implementing flexible work practices and HR professionals believe that they are seeing results in this respect. Almost one in three participants (27%) perceive flexible working as having had a major positive effect on retention and almost half (47%) say that it has had a positive effect. 70% of survey respondents believe that implementing work/life strategies and flexible working practices has a positive effect on employee motivation. Over half of organizations feel that recruitment has benefitted from the implementation of flexible working practices. The experience of organizations in Singapore, Australia and New Zealand and many of the multi-nationals operating in this country would suggest that it is time to get started and to develop appropriate plans that will contribute to the overall strategy and success of the business.

3. Organizations such as KPMG, St George Bank, Westpac Bank and the ANZ Bank all publicly promote their work/life strategies and programmes as part of their employer branding, as they consider it an essential component of the overall package that will assist them to attract and retain the best talent.

4. International studies that have shown the benefits of work/life strategies and flexible work arrangements include those from the Families and Work Institute USA. In 2002, they found that employees with more access to flexible work arrangements are more committed to their current employers and more loyal and willing to work harder than required, to help their employers succeed.

5. A study conducted by the Boston College Center for Work and Family (found that 70% of managers and 87% of employees reported that working a flexible work arrangement had a positive or very positive impact on productivity.

6. A Family Tradition—Spending Time at the Beach. Kenji Shinmori, General Manager, Lifestyle & Retail Business Division .It's our family policy to go to the beach every summer, so last year I took nine days off and we visited Kota Kinabalu in Malaysia. The great thing about visiting a beach resort with your family is that you can have both the time to spend with your family and the time to relax on your own, listening to the sound of waves. I managed to relax at the beach, but the highlight of the trip was seeing proboscis monkeys, which live only in Kota Kinabalu. Seeing them up close was really exciting.

All the above study give the glimpse that worklife balance is an active source of generating job satisfaction or dissatisfaction among employees in an organization. Thus must be taken as an issue which acts as a catalyst to organizational growth and success.

Thus, some strategies which actually showed positive results resulting to work life balances are: Telecommuting, Working Part-Time, Changing Roles, Flexitime etc. are strategies organizations use to achieve that elusive work-life balance.

1. Flexi time:
   Flexi time is arrangement made by the organization by varying the working hours of employees as per their convenience. The objective of this type of policy is to enhance the efficiency of department/organization. A flexi time scheme provides for authorized time worked beyond scheduled working hours as per contract. This extra time is taken as time off at a later date, to suit both the employee and employer.

   A flexi time system allows employees, subject to certain conditions, to vary individual working hours. Flexi time should normally be taken to cover routine appointment. The time an employee contributes as flexi time must be intimated to line manager in advance and must be recorded in flexi time sheet. The aim is to improve the efficiency of a department/organization whilst giving flexibility to employees to enable them to work hours suited to their individual requirements.
2. Changing roles:

Saturation from same routine work is also a prominent issue that must be considered which as a result creates frustration among individual and become a challenge to work life balance. “Right job to the right person” is an Human resource strategy which says employees must be given task of their interest and capability, thus regular job rotation or changes in job as per the type of organization may sometimes proves to be effective solution of work life balance problem.

3. Working Part-Time:

- These days a new phenomenon came into existence where working from home culture is very prevalent. For staff who would like to work part-time, priorities other than work can assume more importance. Part-time workers reduce their working week for various reasons including attending to family (children and the elderly); pursuing personal hobbies; voluntary work; studying; and many others. Staff wishing to work part-time may benefit from this policy if their directorates gives its approval, or they may apply for a part-time vacant post.

4. Schedule time to relax

We schedule meetings, we schedule interviews, we schedule doctor’s appointments; but somewhere in that mass of work, personal time gets lost. Relaxation seems like a luxury rather than a necessity, when it’s actually one of the keys to sanity. A person must give time for himself. Any activities which acts as stress busters to the individual may act as a tool to refresh him boost him to work more effectively.

5. Take your mind off work

This strategy is different from relaxing because it means actively focusing on something other than work. Thinking 24/7 about work adds the stress in individual. After office hours an individual must take his mind away from work and give time for family, children and area of his personal interest.

6. Make friends with your coworkers

This one is simple: if your coworkers are your friends, work isn’t just worked anymore. The lines between work and life start to blur. Coworkers are the family away from family. They are the people with whom we spend maximum time. Therefore, a person must be friendly with coworkers for happy working hours.

7. Choose the right spouse

In a world where most people rush out of their offices at 5:01 pm, not everyone understands the allure of 12-hour days and work-filled weekends. So finding a partner who accepts your crazy lifestyle is key. As mentioned below, that person can also keep you accountable and make sure you don’t overwork yourself into exhaustion.

8. Be accountable to someone

Vows to take a break, relax, or go to the gym can end up as empty promises unless you have an external source of accountability. That might be a spouse who makes sure you get home at a certain time, or a friend who refuses to let you cancel your weekly hangout.

9. Say no

Another common piece of advice is to say no: say no to extra projects, commitments, and anything else that will eat up your time. Overburdened employee is in chaos as far as his priority is considered and thus as a result no effective result can be generated in any of the project he deals with. Thus, work should be as per caliber which enhance employee motivation.

10. Ask for help

Recognize that you can’t do everything — and if all else fails — ask for help. An individual cannot survive alone. Learning never ends. Thus he may take help wherever required to make work easy and interesting. Learning in turn adds value and positively influence employee working.

V. CONCLUSION

Whether or not you believe in work-life balance, these strategies should at least make work and life a little more enjoyable. Providing work-life friendly workplaces will result in a win-win situation for both employers and employees. Work-life friendly workplaces enable employees to balance their personal and work commitments. Employers who proactively support a work-life friendly environment will stand to benefit from having a more engaged and productive workforce. This will also help in attracting and retaining talent, especially in light of the tight labour market.

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