

BPO employee: A martyr of work & family

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ABSTRACT

Work-life balance of BPO & hospitality sector are of big question, Work-life balance comes from being healthy, so when people come to work, it is important that they are healthy. Stress, burnout, work- family conflicts are common. One of the consequences of poor work-life balance in the initial stages is low satisfaction and when these parameters are not fulfilled, the employees develop feeling of frustration & this lead to the imbalance in their personnel & professional life., Thus this study focus on the Impact of poor Work Life and the strategies.,that can be adopted for good family life Balance

INTRODUCTION

The Indian economy has been growing rapidly since the 1990s as a result of the processes of globalisation, economic reform and liberalisation. Over the past decade, the services sector in particular has witnessed a high rate of growth, most notably in the information technology enabled services (ITES) and business process outsourcing (BPO) segments.

The tremendous growth of the BPO sector over the past few years has resulted in considerable changes in the lives of its young workforce. While few studies have explored these issues, limited information available from surveys and anecdotal evidence suggests that the BPO sector has had both positive and negative effects on the lives of young adults. Notably, unlike many other industries, the BPO sector provides opportunities for employment at a young age, high disposable incomes and quick promotional avenues. As

a result, young professionals in the sector are reaching their career goals and financial targets much earlier than before. At the same time, evidence suggests that young BPO employees are adopting risky sexual behaviours, and excessive drug and alcohol use has also been reported among this sub-population.

Slamming the BPO culture, A S, from Dubai says, "BPOs are badly affecting their employees. Most of the time, they are high on cigarettes and coffee to stay awake. Lifestyle of the individuals are altered to suit the needs of their time spent at the offices."

Work-life balance of BPO & hospitality sector are of big question ?

When this is understood, it is easier to crack the problem.

Work-life balance is the amount of time one spend at work with the amount of time one spend doing non-work. That is just one dimension of balance. The other dimension is satisfaction balance, which is about the quality of time.

Work-life balance comes from being healthy. So when people come to work, it is important that they are healthy. Occupational health can be divided into physical, physiological and emotional. Stress, burnout, work- family conflicts are common. One of the consequences

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of poor work-life balance in the initial stages is low satisfaction and usually that ends in a stress or a burnouts.

Family Life balance is expectation of family member in shouldering the household responsibility and at the same time they are expected to deliver at work.

PARAMETERS OF FAMILY LIFE BALANCE

1. Being satisfied with work situation
2. Expressing creativity
3. Fulfilling potential
4. Holding esteem separately from your work
5. Being authentic
6. Managing money well
7. Not feeling envious of others
8. Spending time in fun ways from workplace.
9. Spending time with people whom one cherishes and enjoy.
10. Taking good care of oneself.

When these parameters are not fulfilled, the employees develop feeling of frustration & this lead to the imbalance in their personnel & professional life.

In an article published in Economic and Political Weekly, India on 'Increased empowerment, declining health for India's female call centre employees'.....

This study looks at aspect of employment women in call centres in India, based on a survey of 100 women employees.

It deals with the problems occurring due to the unusual hours of work, particularly the biological implication of working night shifts for a long period of time.

In the present transitional developmental state of the economy, such changes are accepted to have a profound influence upon different dimension of the family system. The authors found that 90% of respondents said

that they had no interaction with their families, due to their work schedule.

In a yet another survey conducted by Kathleen Melymuka, Computerworld on "stressed-out IT women tempted to quit".....

STRESS AND LACK of work-life balance in the IT workplace is taking such a toll on women in the industry that 41 percent of respondents to a recent survey reported they were considering leaving their jobs.....

Flexible working is high on the agenda, thanks to the Work and Families Act, but what are employers doing about it in practice? Our exclusive work-life balance research reveals that awareness is high, but staff feels organisations could do better. Research found that 74% of respondents believe the Work and Families Act will have at least some impact on employees' work-life balance, while 92% believe that offering flexible working hours to staff improves their job satisfaction.

The Personnel Today / Red Letter Days research was carried out among 1,015 HR professionals during early March 2007 & it was found that one-third of respondents were from organisation employing more than 5,000 employees.....

MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN IMPROVING WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ORGANISATION

1. Enabling staff more quality time with family/loved ones: 52%
2. Reducing working hours: 21%
3. Stress management schemes: 15%
4. More holiday benefits: 8%
5. Flexible hours: 1%

It was noted in survey that 50% BPO workers were leaving the job as they considered as dead end job. Night shifts, monotony of work and better salary offers elsewhere were given as reasons for moving on.

Dr. Srinivasan (Associate Professor, IIM Bangalore) shared with some findings of a study that common perception is that women drop out of the work force once they get married. But the study showed that marital status does not lead to women dropping out but parental status does. When children come into the picture, your work-life balance is noticeably affected. Dependent care also directly impacts work-life balance.

In an another study on Impact of poor Work Life Balance by the CIPD it was found that

1. 45% of the respondents indicated that working hours had put strain on personal relationships.
2. 11% of the respondents believed that this strain had contributed towards divorce,
3. Over 60% of the respondents stated that working long hours had a negative impact on their work performance, including making mistakes and taking longer to complete tasks.
4. Such findings are also consistent with the increasing prevalence of stress in the workplace and problems of stress-related absenteeism.

Thus "Family and work are so closely interdependent in the experience of the vast majority of people...family life and work mutually affects one another in different ways."

The two realities are so connected with each other that often times married couples have difficulties to manage which results to varied problems from child rearing to broken marriages. This is a conflict between two values that of married life and work. Couples have to face this reality, but not without neglecting one over the other. There is no problem with regards to those who knows how to manage such responsibility but to those who has little ability to manage married life and work it would be a great struggle. In the past man takes up the responsibility of being the breadwinner of the family, but due to economic problem women of today work for economic gain to help the husband and sometimes leaving the childrearing to nannies

and house helpers or to the care of their relatives and in-laws. This kind of family set-up more often than not has varied consequences especially in family relation. "The task of educating the children in faith and the things in life is an irreplaceable responsibility of the parents." What happened now to this role of the parents? Working parents spent eight hours of work every day or more depending on the nature of their job. How much time left for the children? How much of their energy left to do their task at home? These questions and many more awaken the interest of the researcher to pursue this study.

With the kind of work they have especially the scheduling of the shifts married couple face a great task of balancing their work and family life.

In this industry there is no tomorrow because Philippine Call Centres are already operating 24/7 and serving different time zones.

The strategies that can be adopted by organization for good family life Balance

The challenging facing organization is to help their cope with new work pressures by providing them a reward sense of purpose. Let's look at some ways they can do this.

1. Educate staff about new work realities
2. Foster marketability
3. Provide career-nurturing support
4. Develop life-friendly culture and avoid overwork
5. Hire and develop young employees
6. Respond to generational values / think creatively about rewards
7. Rethink retirement and do not throw away wisdom

According to Raja Achanta, life is known to be set of pursuits

The list includes spouses, family, health, wealth, career, social obligations, intellectual and spirituality. A perfectly balanced life for an employee needs a careful adjustment. As these aspects, like glass panes cannot be

mended on development of any crack. But the remaining aspects are flexible and provide scope for fixing them. This continuous juggling pulls the employees into a grind and leaves them stressed.

Thus, managing work life balance is the major challenges of new generation of 21st century, as the work place schedules take its toll on employee health, relationship and well being.

It is being realized both by corporate and employees with changing times, more and more employees are facing the need to adopt the rule , i.e. it is the productivity that matters most, rather than hours spent by operational challenges. It is a strategy to retain employees in the organization. Similarly employees today want to have freedom and live their way. They value balance between work and life than ever before.

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