Substantiating the Relevance of Worklife Balance in Human Resource Management: A Literary Perspective

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Abstract— Achievement can be viewed as motive of life while enjoyment is the fuel that drives that motive. Work cultures have often demanded a transformation from inflexibility to flexibility. There is a life at work and at home and also a life having space for leisure. With globalization becoming the norm of the day, these issues seem to have taken a back seat for quite a while. Worklife 'imbalance' has over a period of time attracted concern because of increasing problems related to employee health, monotony at work place, declining levels of productivity and efficiency at the employee level. This paper aims to substantiate the appositeness of Worklife balance in human resource management as a crucial management function.

Keywords—Worklife Balance, Human Resource Management

I. INTRODUCTION

Better teamwork and communication offer a conducive working environment. This leads to enjoyment at work and increased passion for it. Work life balance, on an individual level can bring phenomenal changes in one's life and can also heavily impact a society. A balanced work life is of advantage to an employee's health. Stress levels decline drastically to healthy levels. Individuals derive more value from their work and from life that leads to greater satisfaction and is also seen as a mode of self-actualization. The underlying principle perhaps is the increasing realization that certain issues pertaining to the imbalance in working life and personal life of an individual are being overlooked.

II. RELATED WORK

Work-life Balance programmes were reported to be in existence from 1930"s. In 1930"s, the W.K. Kellogg Company has implemented the four shifts of six-hour to take over the traditional daily three hour shifts. This new shift has brought a transformation by increased employee morale and effectiveness. The term Work-life Balance (WLB) was formally coined for the first time in 1970"s, to state the balance between ones work and personal life. In 1980"s many companies have started to offer child care programs and employee assistance programs (EAP). The 1990"s was the major era during which the Work-life Balance programs had a better identification as a vital topic for women. The first gesture of these programs started primarily to support women and children through Work-life solutions. Vast

research in this decade viewed that job preferences are based on their own Work-life issues.

However, it was not until 1986 when this notion began to be relevant in the United States, where in the 80's and 90's companies began to implement work-life balance policies mainly in response to an increasing workers' disregard towards their families due to their focus on accomplishing organizational goals [1]. But work-life balance is not limited to family members assistance, it also includes other fields in individuals' life such as managing studies, travel, sports, volunteering, personal development and leisure. For this reason, the term work -life balance has replaced what was originally known as Work-Family Balance [2].

Thus, the relationship between work, family and personal life can be explained through models proposed by Zedeck and Moiser [3]

Table 1

Segmentation Model	Spillover Model	Conflict Model
Family and work life are different areas, with no relationships or influence between them. Currently this model does not work in the reality.	Family and work life can affect each other both in a positive and negative direction	Family, work and personal life generate demands competing to be satisfied with the resources of individuals, such as time and energy.

In true sense, World War II brought a considerable interest in employee work-family issues worldwide because of the increase of women employees in defense industries which led the federal government to provide facilities such as child care facilities [4].

Post war era saw the increase of government mandated provisions being offered to employees such as health and life insurance, social security like pension plans, and disability protection in forms of worker's compensation for accidents, and diseases institutionalizing the notion that employers had at least some obligations to provide security to employees' families [4].

The way of how work-life balance can be achieved and enhanced is an important issue in the field of human resource management and has received significant attention from employers, workers, government, academic researchers, and the popular media. [5].

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The challenge of balancing work and family (non-work) demands is one of today's central concerns for both individuals and organisations [6]. People who have better balance have a greater job satisfaction and perform better in their position. They have a bigger loyalty and a higher level of trust [7].

According to Lockwood, work-life balance has different meanings regarding the context in which it is used. There are different terms that are used regarding work-life balance, such as work/family, work/family conflict, family-friendly benefits, work/life programs, work/life initiatives and work/family culture. In recent years, the term "work-life balance" has replaced what used to be known as "work-family balance" [2.] This semantic shift arises from a recognition that childcare is by no means the only important non-work responsibility and the issue can be applies to any non-paid activities or commitments and to a diverse range of employees such women, man, parents and non-parents, singles and couples. Other life activities that need to be balanced with employment may include study, travel, sport, voluntary work, personal development, leisure or eldercare.
Work family balance is a form of inter role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect [8].

Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw define work-life balance as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role[9]. Employees who experience high work-life balance tend to invest similar amount of time and commitment, to work and non-work domains.
Work-life balance is about finding the right balance between one's work and one's life (i.e. life outside work) and about

feeling comfortable with both work and non-work commitments. Many people find it difficult to manage their time in a way that is healthy for their work as well as for their personal life [7].

Research by Kenexa Research Institute in 2007 shows that those employees who were more favorable toward their organization's efforts to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction.

Organizations can implement various work-life balance initiatives that may assist employees to better balance their work and family responsibilities, gain improvements in well-being and provide organizational benefits.

IV. LINKING HRM AND WORKLIFE BALANCE

WLB programs can help organizations retain valuable workers they have recruited and trained by reducing the conflicts. The HRM Deptt. needs to formulate WLB policies and strategies so as to assist the employees to balance their professional as well as personal life.

Konrad & Managel studied 19 family-responsible policies, evidencing that companies increase productivity when implementing work-life practices and employing a high percentage of professionals. [10]

Organizations must be aware of employees' needs and provide them with flexibility, permitting them to combine work and personal spheres to meet professional and personal goals [11]. Also, when employees accumulate specific knowledge about the organization they become crucial for its performance, as it is more difficult to find comparable substitutes [10]. Osoian et al. exposed how introducing work-life practices impact the company in different ways, such as in work performance, direct and indirect costs related to absenteeism, costs related with the loss and replacement of valuable employees, customer satisfaction and organizational productivity [12].

HRM, as an important part in strategy implementation, should play a key role in building a supportive work-family/life culture. Top management support can give employees the sense of security. HRM should offer training to accept the change in the workforce and the new job arrangement. Also they may provide supportive means for working mothers and fathers to balance their work-life commitments.

Some suggestive policies and strategies are as under:
a. Flexible working hours

b. Proper and direct communication of employees with HRM deptt.
c. Effective implementation of WLB strategies
d. Better organization culture϶ Commitment of employers
e. Supportive work-life/family environment
f. Job satisfaction to employees
g. Evaluation of work-life balance on a regular basis
h. Training and education to the employees
i. Employee assistance programmes.

V. CONCLUSION

Work–life imbalance in conjuction with human resource management is associated with decreased job satisfaction, productivity, and eventual burn out. An organisation designed to work effectively in the area of human resources has many potential areas and one of them is worklife balance. Work–life balance is often discussed and difficult to achieve. There is significant amount of research that the ability to continue as top organisational players need a well directed human resource having an optimum worklife balance. Although achieving work–life balance is an individual task that cannot be standardized, tools for assessing work–life balance and evaluating priorities may be helpful in increasing awareness of imbalances.

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