WORK LIFE BALANCE- A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract: People are usually either at work or home. An individual usually spends major part of the day's productive time at work and this is an important facet of his life. His productivity depends, not only on factors related to his work, but also on various other factors related to his personal life. Work life balance provides a complete control on professional work and non professional work area because Achievement and Enjoyment are the two fundamentals in one's life. You cannot have one without the other. This article examines the concepts of work – life balance, Its Issues and impacts and various factors to create a better work –life balance.

Keywords: Work Pressure, Job Stress, Time Management, Management Style, flexible working hours, Quality Work.

INTRODUCTION

The ultimate performance of any organization depends on the performance of its employees because an employee spends major portion of his productive time at work place only. Any problem, either at the work place or in the family or personal will definitely directly or indirectly affect the overall performance. Work life balance helps an individual to manage various aspects of his life to achieve balance at work and in private life. "Work life balance is as a satisfactory level of involvement between the multiple roles in personal's life (Hudson, 2005) or a meaningful achievements and enjoyments in everyday life." Work-life balance for any person is having the 'right' combination of participation in paid work (defined by hours and working conditions) and other aspects of their lives. This combination will change as people move through life and have changing responsibilities and commitments in their work and personal lives.

Importance Of The Balance:

"Balancing work with life will help in enhancing focus on positive side of all things." Work is one dimension of life and should not distort our personal life. The vice-versa is also true as work is a means of livelihood. The concept of balancing work and life is important in more than one way. The concept is gaining prominence since it helps in leading a balanced life; at the work place as well as at home. Maintaining balance encourages optimum working hours that ultimately enhances overall efficiency. It is a common overall fact that an increase in quantity tends to deteriorate quality. If the employee is not over loaded with work, he is motivated to shoulder responsibilities. He does not feel exhausted and is ready to perform every day. When someone works willingly, he attains satisfaction and a contented person is bound to succeed, not only at work, but also in life. Thus, with a perfect balance between work and life, the individual is motivated to perform better and achieve more. An individual has to segregate between his official and personal matters such that these do not affect each other. Both aspects of any individual's life should run parallel like railway tracks and should not mingle in order to avoid failure in performance. So advantages of the balanced life:

• Efficiency

• Quality of Work

• Success

• Contentment

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• Motivation

• Happy life

• Enjoyment

The Effects of Work- Life Imbalance

Effect on Individuals: At an individual level, the absence of a healthy work- life balance results in high levels of stress and persistent diseases, weaker immune system, frequent headaches, stiff muscles or backache. Stress may also perpetuate or lead to binge eating, smoking and alcohol consumption. Symptoms of stress are seen both physiologically and psychologically. It can also result in poor coping skills, irritability, insecurity, exhaustion, and difficulty in concentrating.

• Effect on Children: An increasing number of young children are being raised by a childcare provided or a person other than a parent. Older children are more likely today to come home to an empty house and spend time with video game, television and the internet, with less guidance to offset or control the messages coming from these sources. Parents returning home late and totally stressed out are barely able to help or guide the child. They are more likely to adopt the path of least resistance and allow the child to go by his own choice, which may not be in his best interests. Independence, couple with ignorance, can be lethal combination, to which a society cannot afford to expose its future generation too.

• Effect on Families: Spending more time in the office, dealing with clients and meeting the goals, leaves an individual with no time or energy to participate/ contribute to minimum basic household responsibilities, which can put personal life in disarray with serious consequences.

• Effect on the Organization: At an organizational level, high stress levels in employees and health issues results in reduced productivity and creativity of employees. It can also result in a buildup of resentment, irritability, breeding of inter-personal problems and affecting the health of the organization.

Factors Affecting the Balance:

• **Work Pressure:** work pressure arises from the workplace due to job stress, role ambiguity, and poor relationships with superior/peers, etc.

• **Attitude:** Attitude defines one's likes and dislikes. Attitude is a way of thinking or feeling about something. Balance is substantially affected by various psychological factors. How one reacts to a particular situation, how he manages work and peer pressures are some aspect of psychological behavior.

• **Workplace Atmosphere:** Workplace atmosphere consists of working facilities, relationship with the colleagues, and ventilation of the buildings, which can play a major part in the formulation of stress. The most important element in this is the relationship with superior, peers, subordinates. They play major role in maintain the emotional balance. If an employee is emotionally relaxed, then only she/he could produce quality and quantity performance.

• **Management Style:** The negative attitude of management towards the employees can play a major role in creating stress. This will affect the quantity and quality of the employees.

• **Job:** The type of job can also influence balance. A job, which is monotonous and not challenging, can make a worker lethargic. The job profile should match the employee's profile, I order to enhance his work efficiency and give him job satisfaction.

• **Multitasking:** The balance is related to both personal and professional life and employees have to wear different Hats at different times. Employees have to concern about their family, career goals, social & financial status, daily routine, friends circle, hobbies. A small mistake in multiple roles will disturb/ruin peace of the employees.

• **Family Background**: An employee, who is struggling financially or who has large family to support or other family problems may spend more time in taking care of those issues.

Glass Ceiling: Glass Ceiling' explains an invisible block that happens in the career development path of women. In the case of women, an 'invisible block, in the career ladders can result in stress, which will affects their morale and disturb their career planning.

Steps To Maintain A Healthy Work Life Balance:

1. From employee Point of View:

An employee can create a healthy work-life balance, only if, he/she recognizes that work is an aspect of life and not whole of life. With that in place, there must be prioritization and

scheduling of activities, such that, all important aspects of life are taken care of. Further, employees must ensure the following:

• **Time Management:** Employee should follow time discipline, by ensuring 100% commitment at work, by this way he can create time for other things in life. He /She should adopt a planned approach to life. Think ahead, prioritize and schedule activities i.e. list out the key areas; maintain a boundary between home and office. Laptops, mobile, blackberry, -a boon to business is a bane to work life balance. One must not carry work home, unless it is absolutely imperative. Another important tool in time management is delegation, both at home and at work.

• **Self awareness:** Who am I? The answer of this question will increase the self esteem and self respect. Try to understand the strength and weakness of your own personality then reduce the weakness and increase the strength of your character. This self perception increases the confidence level and it finally helps to maintain an emotional balance.

• **Meditation/ Yoga:** Meditation and Yoga help to control our emotions and reduce the mental stress to cope up with work life balance. Both help to improve concentration and stay focused on the career goals along with control anger, anxiety, frustrations etc. and maintain a good balance between personal needs and the professional requirements.

• **Recreation:** Recreation is the most important strategy that is used to reduce the stress. Occasional family outings can help in strengthening family relationships.

2. From Employer Point of View:

Management has to concentrate on the welfare of its employees. They should provide fringe benefits according to the needs of the employees. Introduction of flexi time, condensed work hours (The work-week by increasing the number of working hours per day), telecommunicating, and work from home and job sharing will help in greater employee retention. An outing, in a week with the colleagues, spending a few hours with all the team members will help to increase the bonding, remove hesitation and create congenial environment. In organization delegation of Authority, recreation facilities are very important. In the current scenario, we can see that the attrition rate the employees are too high. It is high time employers think about the various incentives to retain talented employees. Following examples are as follows:

• **BANK OF AMERICA** ensures that their employees get a weekly off through appropriate work scheduling. They also organize week-end fun activities on the floor and offsite locations.

• **IBM** sponsors 'fun and learn' activities for its employees' children to encourage a work-life balance, under the aegis of IBM Global, work life fund. The "Young Explorers Summer camp" comprises programs like Explorer's Club, Hobby Club and Yoga Club for employees' children aged 4-12 years to help children discover, develop and realize their potential.

• **WIPRO**, a leading player in both the IT & BPO sectors encouraging employee wellness is an integral part of the corporate culture. Wipro started numerous health and safety initiatives which supplement health- related benefits. Some of these are nutrition consulting, health centers, medical camps, and regular well- being event and the annual Wipro marathon. The most successful Wipro project is one called MITR which means friend in Hindi. In this program, 28 employees all volunteers were trained to counsel fellow employees to manage stress. Mitr signifies to employees that they do have a friend in Wipro and that they should be able to share their problems safely in the company.

• **Johnson and Johnson** India established the women's leadership initiatives (WLI) in 2002 with the support of top management. WLI is aimed at removing barriers to the advancement of women within the company and retaining and developing women leaders in the company.

• **CISCO** set up the women's action Network (WAN) in 2004. WAN India has more than 350 members, who strategize and execute activities with the guidance of executive sponsors and thought leaders. Some of the activities organized by Cisco's WAN chapter include mentoring, the Role Model Leadership Series (RMLS) workshops, and community initiatives such as Girls in Technology, charities for education, networking events, and 'bring your child to working day, flexible timing, vacation and child- care facilities are initiatives taken by many IT and BPO companies which would allow women employees to be gainfully employed and remain productive at the workplace with reduce anxiety, while balancing their dual responsibilities.

Conclusion:

Successful work-life balance is very necessary for individuals and organizations. It boosts productivity and makes a better quality of life. It enables employees to contribute more at the workplace, use each working hour more effectively, and look forward each day positively which bring a complete set of satisfactions and faith towards life, work and family. Therefore

organizations and individual should always do such initiatives which support to maintain a work life balance and ensure a meaningful achievements and enjoyments for all.

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