**Work-Life Balance Practices and its Impact on Employees Working in Hotel Industry in India**

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**Abstract:** This article reviews work life balance and its impact that inspire employees more in control of their personal life, work life and family life. It helps in growth of employees individually and further development of hotel industry, one of the major components of service industry and is closely affiliated with travel and hospitality industry. Due to the different factors affecting hotel industry business such as competition “marketing trends”, 24x7 working hours, seasonality, technological changes etc., the increasing workload of the staff generates heavy demands for night shift and long-working-hours. It develops certain negative impacts on the organization like employee’s turnover, work life imbalances thus producing demand for semi-skilled and unskilled labour and staff forever. Therefore, the hotel industry is required to maintain good and harmonious work life balance of the staff, so that the negative impacts is minimized. This piece of work reviews the effectiveness of different work life practices prevalently followed in hotel industry. This work is based on primary and secondary data.

**Key Words:** Work-family conflicts, Employees performance, Stress, Work-Life Balance, employees Turnover, Hotels Industry.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Work Life Balance experienced by an employee, with age, follows a U shape curve. Factors like gender and family structure also effect levels of WLB**. *Paresh, Manohar, & R K Gupta, (2021).* *O’ Dricoll (1996)*** identifies stimuli such as work and life satisfaction, personal well-being, physical health and mental health on individual performance in organizations. For, the expectations of the individuals vary from time to time depending upon their social, cultural, physical and mental needs. As far as the hotel industry is concerned, the employees are required to pour in more and more efforts and hardwork to gain the satisfaction of the guests, thus, developing stress and workload both in their work and family life.

***Mohanty and Mohanty (2014)*** is of the view that due to the characteristics of the hotel industry many employees fail to manage their work life causing unpredicted results for both organisation and workers. It can consequently result in lower customer satisfaction due to poor employee performance. *Ibid* opines that balanced family and work commitment is necessary for better performance of the employees, but unfriendly shift or late-night shifts with unsocial long working hours, low pay scale, low status and heavy workload produces negative impacts on employee work life balance in their existing jobs. This circumstance stresses the hotel industry to impose additional or extended working hours up 16 to 24 hours at a go. 24x7 check in, checkout, bars, and restaurant facilities have unbelievable negative effects on the Work life balance conditions of the employees since they rarely get sufficient time for their own, social and family responsibilities. However, the factors like technological changes, social freedom and awareness, consumption pattern etc. compels to re-look into the work-life conflicts and balance which are the major problems in employee turnover in hotel industry.

Employee turnover could be the outcome of various factors including compensation and benefits, limited career growth and advancements opportunities, poor management, job-fit, lack of work-life balance, company culture and values, job security, poor work environment, inadequate training and development, overwork, mismatch job expectations, lack of recognition and feedback, inflexible work schedules and lack of autonomy. Every individual’s main objective usually comes around with family safety, security and survival. With this aim, he or she employs more effort and hard work. As expressed in Maslow’s Hierarchical theory, the needs keep on increasing to the extent that he or she forget himself or herself in the struggle of accomplishment of needs, the needs turn to be demands. This makes him overlook his or her family, thus, arising imbalances in work and family life.

In the concept of “*Work-Life Balance, the balance aspect is referred to an equilibrium between the individual's personal and professional activities, whereas, this equilibrium can be physiological, psychological and sociological as well.”*  (***Kidd & Eller, 2012***). As Work-Life balance is a subjective concept, therefore, everyone may have their own definitions. *Work-Life Balance may be defined as “personal and professional time and space dedication in the society”* ***(Felstead & Jewson, 2002).***  Another definition of Work-Life Balance is “*time for home and work commitments*” ***(Sturges & Guest, 2004)***. Along with the concept of work-life balance, there is concept of “work-life conflict”, which guides minds to an imbalance between work and life of individuals. It is defined as *“a conflict which happened through life pressures and work, namely family, child care, work overload, ant etc. that seems discordant in various aspects, means doing more than one task simultaneously is difficult”* ***(******Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).***

According to ***Vernekar & Heidari (2019)***, the psychological constructs that compose work–life balance, noticeably conflict and facilitation. Thus work–life balance has been defined as an absence of conflict and a presence of facilitation: ‘low levels of inter-role conflict and high levels of inter-role facilitation represent work–family balance’ ***(Frone, 2003)****.*

The nature of the hospitality industry, especially the hotel sector, is multifaceted, for example, 24 x 7, service centric, cross-cultural amalgamation, quick adaptability of changing trends, global reach with local touch, seasonal and cyclical nature etc. While the primary aim remains to provide comfort and memorable experiences to guests, various other factors like economic contributions, adaptability to changing trends, and sensitivity to external factors play significant roles in shaping the industry, thus attract more and more human resources to be functional ever. This develops a lot of work life imbalances among the employees.

The aim of this study is to highlight the work life balance practices followed in the world particularly in India and to analyse the impact and effectiveness of these practices.

**Literature Review:**

The study made by ***Peacock et.al., (2007),*** entitled Work, Life and Time: The Australian and Life Index ‘are consistently associated with worse work—life outcomes on all our work—life measures'. The findings suggest that there is an unhealthy acceptance of a long working hours in the hospitality and tourism industry which is part of service sector. which impact especially for younger workers, these hours are unsocial and often mean that there is little flexibility get in the way that such workers conduct their social/family lives. Ultimately, this lack of flexibility often leads to employees leaving the industry, not just the organisation, further exacerbating the labour shortages being experienced in a range of industries. ***(Deery and Leo Jago, 2009***) depict that work life balance of tourism industry finds that the long hours, unsocial hours, time pressure, job autonomy and job insecurity work-life pressure are the variables that negatively impact on work life balance of working employees in the industry.

***Lewis & Gruyere (2010)*** discloses in their work that employee retention could be made possible with the help of effective work life balance programmes causing positive impacts on employees’ social and family life. With the help of work life balance programs, employees could be able to manage the long working hours and private life as well.

Hotel industry with unexpected working hours and schedules maintains imbalance between work and life, although it helps in talent acquisition, productivity and better recruitment. As the issues related to work-life balance are getting huger day by day, the key people in different industries pay more attention than before to this issue to find a way ***(Sharma & Shekhawat, 2017).***

The ***International Labour Organization (ILO)*** has published report on work Time and Work-Life Balance Around the World, that looks the two different aspects of working time, working hours and working time arrangements and their effect on business performance and workers' work -life balance. This is further supported by ***ILO*** mentioning that the organizations applied extension of leave programs, flexible working hours, extra working hours remuneration, this report shows that long working hours and work schedules have a negative effect on workers and work life balance while the short working hours schemes help to increased productivity and promote good work life balance. ***Baral & Bhargava (2011)*** specify that work life balance policies and programmes increase more mental and physical health stronger, more productive and motived for work, reducing the mental stress and work-family conflict and help in employee retention. several studies have indicated that work life balance programmes implement have excellent results to lead extraordinary job performance, which contribute in development of business and industry performance.

Various studies of common themes have persistently emerged from the review papers. Consequently, there are some hypotheses proved that job satisfaction and employee’s performance is positively affected by the implementations of work life balance ***(Eldeen & Shawky,2013.*** Number of past studies have shown the evidence of a relation between implementation of work life balance and decrease in employee’s turnover ***(Aggarwal, 2012; Deery & Iverson, 2004).*** According to ***(Rincy & Panchanatham,2011),*** mental and physical health both are increased by the ability to balance family roles and work. For an example an examination of 3,381 American workers disclosed that flexible working time policies and childcare assistance were associated with employee loyalty for those with family responsibilities ***(Roehling, Roehling and Moen 2001)***

Benefits of employees are associated with better work life balance. It has been revealed that high level of work life balance increases greater feelings of job security and job satisfaction among employees and employer ***(Chimote and Srivastava 2013)***. A good work life balance also has a positive effect on physical and mental health of workers revealed by an investigation based on data from ***United States National Study of the Changing Workforce challenging*** that work life balance policies decrease the stress level. According to ***ILO*** reports that India comes under the middle-income group which shows the rate of underemployed -54.3 percent which may imply that people seek the job opportunity according to their needs and which may imply existing job opportunity does not satisfy the people.

The work life balance policies and practices vary from one country to the another. The current study is undertaken with the aim of analysing the employee turnover problems being faced by Indian hospitality industry in the aspect of work-life balance with the following objectives:

* To throw light on work-life balance practices followed in India
* To analyse the impact of these practices on employees working in the hotel industry in India.

**Research Methodology:**

The first objective of this study is covered theoretically by analysing data collected from secondary sources such as articles, journals, books etc. However, the second objective is covered by collecting data from the people working in hotel industry. Telephone numbers and / or email ids of 250 alumni of hotel management graduation and post-graduation programs, passed out in the previous five years, were collected from an academic Institute in India, with the permission of the Director of the Institute concerned. These alumni were contacted telephonically and / or by email for primary data collection. A well-structured questionnaire was employed for this purpose.

**Results and Discussion**

The purpose of this study to throw the light on work life balance practices in India, and its impact of working employee life in hotel industry. The hotel industry is part of service industry involving guest services, for special evening, vacations, special holidays and short time lodgings and accommodation providing services 24x7. Hotel industry is mostly characterised with long working hours, night shifts, heavy workload that generates negative impact on employee work life, personal life and family life. Therefore, employees are facing imbalance between work and family. Even though the industry has faced unavoidable problems of very high employee turnover due to poor work-life balance of employees, It is unable to find a perfect solution causing turnover. Still the hotel industry has, through the time, taken some initiatives and developed programs that would improve work life balance among the employees in India.

**Work life balance practices followed in India**

There are two state of work life balance practices in India. statutory practices and non-statutory practices. Statutory benefits are the set of rights and advantages for employees. These practices are mandatary with minimum benefit (work life balance practices) provide to an employee under Indian labour law and non-statutory benefits are not compulsory but are optional in nature. Therefore, the organization determines independently whether or not these non-statutory benefits should be given to its employees.

**Work life balance practices as Statutory benefits in India**

According to maternity benefit act, 1961, working women is allowed for a paid leave of 12 weeks, six weeks before delivery & six weeks after delivery. This same benefit is provided in the case of miscarriage. these practices make women more financial stability during pregnancy. This act provides two nursing breaks per day.

Under the factory act 1948 served to assist in formulating policies in India with respect of occupational safety and health, efficiency and wellbeing of the employees at work places in India. According to this act workers are not allowed to work more than 48 hours in a week. Every worker who has worked for a period of 240 days or more in the calendar year allow with leave with wages.

Gratuity Act 1972 allowed those employees who worked for their employer over 5 years are entitled to receive a gratuity payment. It is equivalent to 15 days of wages for every year of employment. This act provided for welfare payments for employees who resign, passed away, retire or become disabled.

Under the Employees’ State Insurance Act, 1948 (ESI)These benefits are provided in cases of maternity, sickness and employment injury. ESI are entitled to receive the medical treatment for working employees and their dependents.

Employee Provident Fund, is retirement benefit scheme in where the certain percentage of basic salary contributed to the fund by employer and employee. Which is received by an employee after his/her retirement.

**Work life balance practices as non-Statutory benefits in India**

Mostly hospitality and service industries have initiated the non-statutory benefits for their employees by the employer such as flexible timings, work from home, compressed work week, vacations, child day care facilities etc. These benefits are the perks provided to employer to retain and attract new employees in India. Following are some examples of work life balance practices in India.

* Health Insurance is the assurance of immediate financial assist in the case of emergency medical arises, it is a contract between policyholder and insurance company which is given by employer to employee.
* Travel allowance is type of compensation provide by the employer to the employee for travel expenses for tour and transport for working duties.
* CapacityBuildingPrograms are established for the entry level and junior staff working in hotels to enhance the skills and abilities of the workforce employed.
* Seminars are conducted for benefits for employee, which improves employee performance and increase employee satisfaction level and reduced the stress.
* Workshops enhance employee skill development ability, increase the problem solving and team building ability which reduce the work stress
* Workplace and Location Flexibility allow to the employee can work and collaborate form different range of locations.
* Scheduling Flexibility allows to employee to choose their arrival and departer time its is based on preferences and need of employee and the employer.
* Employee Incentives programmes are benefits that may be provided by the employer to their employee in form of non-monetary and monetary incentives such as reward and privileges.
* Living stipends are fixed amount of that is cover to living expenses such as food, transportation, grants and loans etc.

**Analysis on the impact of Work life balance practices followed in India on the hotel employees:**

To achieve the second objective primary data were collected through questionnaire on telephone and email. The questionnaire with two sections, one on work life balance practices with 15 items and another on support for work life balance with 5 items was prepared. The same was distributed by email as well. Telephonic interviews were also conducted wherever possible. 250 employees of the hotels were requested to choose their response from out of 5 point likert scale such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagre (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). From out of 250 employees contacted, the responses of 161 employees were valid for further study, as per Table One given below.

**Breakup Details of the 250 respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sl. No. | Break up | No. of Respondents | Remaining Number of Respondents used out of 250 |
| 1. | Phone Number Changed or not reached or not received any reply by email or email not sent. | 43 | 207 |
| 2. | Invalid Responses | 14 | 193 |
| 3. | Total No. of respondents currently not working in hotel industry | 32 | 161 |
| 4. | Total No. of respondents working currently in hotel industry | 161 | 0 |
|  | Total Respondents | 250 | Not Applicable |

***Table One (Source: Authors’ own source)***

It is also found during analysis that 32 respondents are not serving in hotel industry currently. The reasons for leaving the hotel industry is given below in Table Two.

**Table on Reasons for leaving the hotel Industry**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sl. No.** | **Reasons** | **No. of Respondents** |
| 1 | Got Government Job | 4 |
| 2. | Shifted to Other Industries (due to poor remuneration, long working hours, unpredictable shifts etc.) | 13 |
| 3. | Social Reasons (family issues, social issues etc.) | 11 |
| 4. | Medical Reasons | 2 |
| 5. | Not at all working anywhere | 2 |
|  | Total | 32 |

***Table Two (Source: Authors’ Own Source)***

The Table Two clearly shows that 75% of the applicable respondents have left industry hotel industry due to unfriendly work-life balance policies followed in India. It is also clear from the above table that people in India are more attractive towards government job in which work-life balance would be easier.

From out of 161 valid responses, 22 respondents (13.66%) 94 respondents (58.38%) and 45 respondents (27.95%) deliver their duties and responsibilities at higher level, middle level and lower level. This crystal clear from the Table Three given hereunder that hotel industry, being run as private organizations, promote their staff with an aim of motivating them, based on their performance. However, the fact that cannot be neglected that promotion in the career comes along with higher more duties and responsibilities.

**Working Levels of Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sl. No.** | **Working Position** | **No. of Respondents** | **Cumulative Respondents** |
| 1 | Higher Level | 22 | 22 |
| 2 | Middle Level | 94 | 116 |
| 3 | Lower Level | 45 | 161 |

***Table Three (Source: Authors’ Own Source)***

The Table Number Four given below illustrates the policies applied by hotel industry in India along with the number of respondents who had either agreed or disagreed with the policies.

**Responses of 161 Respondents**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sl. No. | Items |  |  |  |  | | No. of Respondents | | | | |  | Total | |
| SA | | A | | N | | | D | | SD | |
|  | Work life balance practices: | In No. | In % | In No. | In % | In No. | | In % | In No. | In % | In No. | In % | In No. | In % |
| 1 | I am enjoying flexible working hours in the hotel | 6 | 3.73 | 7 | 4.35 | 13 | | 8.07 | 46 | 28.57 | 89 | 55.28 | 161 | 100 |
| 2 | Yes. We have health insurance policies provided by the hotel | 5 | 3.11 | 6 | 3.73 | 15 | | 9.32 | 51 | 31.68 | 84 | 52.17 | 161 | 100 |
| 3 | Yes. We are offered life insurance policies by the hotel. | 1 | 0.62 | 5 | 3.11 | 20 | | 12.42 | 43 | 26.71 | 92 | 57.14 | 161 | 100 |
| 4 | We have gratuity facilities in the hotel for the staff. | 0 | 0.00 | 4 | 2.48 | 22 | | 13.66 | 36 | 22.36 | 99 | 61.49 | 161 | 100 |
| 5 | We have the facility of enjoying sickness and/or maternity leave. | 4 | 2.48 | 20 | 12.42 | 30 | | 18.63 | 40 | 24.84 | 67 | 41.61 | 161 | 100 |
| 6 | We enjoy medical allowances or reimbursement facilities. | 2 | 1.24 | 16 | 9.94 | 35 | | 21.74 | 72 | 44.72 | 36 | 22.36 | 161 | 100 |
| 7 | We have travel allowance / reimbursement facilities. | 25 | 15.53 | 46 | 28.57 | 33 | | 20.50 | 20 | 12.42 | 37 | 22.98 | 161 | 100 |
| 8 | The hotel offers time to time capacity building programs, the participation in which makes our CV stronger and better further. | 4 | 2.48 | 12 | 7.45 | 14 | | 8.70 | 46 | 28.57 | 85 | 52.80 | 161 | 100 |
| 9 | The hotel offers seminars and workshop programs to improve the skills of employees. | 7 | 4.35 | 11 | 6.83 | 26 | | 16.15 | 49 | 30.43 | 68 | 42.24 | 161 | 100 |
| 10 | Depending upon our needs, we can get ourselves transferred to any branch of the hotel. | 15 | 9.32 | 20 | 12.42 | 31 | | 19.25 | 47 | 29.19 | 48 | 29.81 | 161 | 100 |
| 11 | Our services in the hotel is recognized and appreciated with rewards, awards and privileges. | 6 | 3.73 | 13 | 8.07 | 28 | | 17.39 | 55 | 34.16 | 59 | 36.65 | 161 | 100 |
| 12 | Our hotel arranges family get-together programs for the employees. | 3 | 1.86 | 11 | 6.83 | 26 | | 16.15 | 28 | 17.39 | 93 | 57.76 | 161 | 100 |
| 13 | We enjoy family or child educational allowances | 2 | 1.24 | 6 | 3.73 | 25 | | 15.53 | 43 | 26.71 | 85 | 52.80 | 161 | 100 |
| 14 | Our hotel conducts wellness programs for the employees. | 4 | 2.48 | 10 | 6.21 | 24 | | 14.91 | 47 | 29.19 | 76 | 47.20 | 161 | 100 |
| 15 | Our hotel conducts employees’ personal or professional counselling programs. | 8 | 4.97 | 18 | 11.18 | 21 | | 13.04 | 36 | 22.36 | 78 | 48.45 | 161 | 100 |
|  | **Work life balance supports** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | I am able to spare time separately for family and work. | 4 | 2.48 | 9 | 5.59 | 37 | | 22.98 | 27 | 16.77 | 84 | 52.17 | 161 | 100 |
| 17 | I am able to spare time for life individual life. | 2 | 1.24 | 10 | 6.21 | 40 | | 24.84 | 24 | 14.91 | 85 | 52.80 | 161 | 100 |
| 18. | My colleague support me to maintain work-life balance | 19 | 11.80 | 38 | 23.60 | 59 | | 36.65 | 24 | 14.91 | 21 | 13.04 | 161 | 100 |
| 19. | My family gives me support in maintaining work-life balance. | 76 | 47.20 | 58 | 36.02 | 20 | | 12.42 | 5 | 3.11 | 2 | 1.24 | 161 | 100 |
| 20. | My hotel values work-life balance. | 5 | 3.11 | 12 | 7.45 | 40 | | 24.84 | 32 | 19.88 | 72 | 44.72 | 161 | 100 |

***Table Four (Source: Authors’ Own Source)***

In order to know whether the responses are related to the practices followed in the hotel industry, chi square test was applied.

***Chi Square Test One for Work life balance practices***

Ho: There is no significant relationship between work life balance practices and the responses of employees of hotels.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between work life balance practices and the responses of employees of hotels.

*X2 (56,161) = 351.63, p=0.0002; p<0.05 Significant*

*The result is significant and it implies that the responses and practices are independent and related.*

***Chi Square Test Two for work life Balance support***

Ho: There is no significant relationship between supports of work life balance and the responses of employees of hotels.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between supports of work life balance and the responses of employees of hotels.

*X2 (16,161) = 418.73, p=0.0001; p<0.05 Significant*

*The result is significant and it implies that the responses and supports for work life balance are independent and related.*

***Pearson Correlation Coefficient***

*The correlation coefficient was found between the practices and supports for work life balance. Since r=0.74 (closed attached to 1), this can be interpreted that the strong support of colleague and/or family members is a must for better work-life balance.*

**Recommendations & Conclusion**

In the hotel industry employees are facing various problems related work life such as (long working hours, unfixed schedules, heavy work load) from that employee could not spare time for their family life (family, child care,). this shows poor work life balance in the hotel industry and it also impact on employee turnover. Based on the finding there is some recommendation to improve the work life balance of working employees in hotel industry.

Through work life balance awareness programmes hotel management can aware their employees. Encourage to participate in these programmes and implement it in their life to maintain their work and family life. These programmes can be conducted by government or private organisation. That will increase work life balance practices in employee’s life.

Second recommendation suggested that organisation conduct the training and counselling programmes as support system for employee and their family members to encourage to implement work life balance.

Third recommendation is suggested to provide seminar and training programmes for strong support of colleague and family for employees which direct impact on more productivity, good employee performance, decrease turnover, and also effect on good mental and phycological health.

From the review of literature, we conclude that private organisation has taken very low work life balance programmes for employees working in various sector specially in hotel industry. which impact negative on employee retention policies Therefore, hotel industry needs to improve and strictly regulate the work life balance programmes for growth of employee individually and further development of organisation.

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