Work-Life Balance; A study on the Quality of Professional and Personal Life aspects of Employees

Josiya Jose
Research Scholar
Marian International Institute of Management
Peermade Road, Kuttukkanam, Idukki, Kerala, India 685531

Abstract: The human beings being a social climber require time for society, family and self to content their varying needs. Work life balance is a theory which states about linking “work” (duties and career) and “style of living” (family, fitness, entertainment). Work life balance explains about the need for ensuring and creating a strong and encouraging work environment, which will succour employees to keep up the equilibrium between work and private life. Work-life conflict is a pressing problem that affects workers, their employers and the society. This research was done to understand the main components of work-life balance and to seek out scope for improvement areas to be attended by an organization. To conduct the study descriptive research design was used and dossier for the paper was piled up using interviews, questionnaire, observation (Primary data), and articles, published data’s, reading similar research papers etc (Secondary Data). The detailed study was conducted in a factory manufacturing and exporting rubber products. Hence the study is authorized as ‘A study on quality of work-life balance among the employees’. The work aimed at knowing the present situation of work-life balance in the company. The discovery of the study is that it is utmost important to safeguard the work-life balance of the workmen’s in an organization to improve the efficiency and devotion towards their job, which eventually leads to the growth and happiness of both the firm and individuals of a society. Thus to conclude my hope is that this study may provide some insight to the increasing significance of preserving work and private life stability. The study shows that if equilibrium is maintained between work and private life the workers are more satisfied which eventually leads to less turnover and increased productivity, which also lead to individual career growth.

Index Terms – Family-work, work-life balance, work-life conflict, stress, job performance, personal life

1. Introduction

A work-life balance is defined as satisfaction with fulfilling the personal goals in both work and life domain, by being able to use appropriate Clark (2000). Work-life balance is all about the need for ensuring and keeping up supportive and encouraging work environment, which will succour employees to maintain equilibrium between work and personal life. In today’s world the employees are having many problems like duties of work, housework, kids, parents etc which causes stress on the employees. Work-life conflict is a pressing problem that affects workers, their employers or managers and the community or society in which they live. Thus work-life balance becomes one of the main factors contributing to an organizations success. The workforce of a firm should be properly cared to ensure an environment which is favorable for them to work. The work-life balance should possess stability in such a level which motivates the employees to do their job with sincerity. By addressing this need the company is paving the way to success in career for each individual and in addition the company can become successful in giving job satisfaction to the employees. Today professional and personal life balance has become one of the pressing issues dealt by the managers in HR field. Subtraction of home hours due to the work load leads to imbalance which further leads to stress, anxiety, fatigue etc which will have a negative effect on both family and work domain of an individual’s life. It is often a usual thing in every organization of putting the organizational needs over the needs of an individual. But in future it leads to a decrease in the productivity and performance exhibited by the employees in their work. None of the previous researcher has examined what are the factors that affect the equilibrium of professional and personal life of an individual and what can be the various measures that can be used to reduce if any imbalance is to occur in the future.

Objectives of the study

1) Study about the present overall quality of work-life of the employees at the organization.
2) To find out the various factors affecting the work-life balance.
3) To identify and suggest the measures for improving the quality of work-life balance.

This particular study aims at knowing the quality of work-life balance among the employees in manufacturing sector. The study has been conducted using descriptive research design since it is termed as fact finding study. The universe of the study is nearly 300 employees of a factory among which 100 was given questionnaires to fill up to collect the data for conducting the research. Since it is a manufacturing cum exporter company the work load was heavy as the operations were on shift basis that is (3 shifts of day and night). In this context the research paper aims to study the quality of work-life balance of employees of the factory and the possible impacts on their work. My research paper aims to demonstrate you that personal life and work-life is interdependent and interconnected and that it is utmost important to ensure that equilibrium is maintained in work and personal life to create happy and satisfied individuals in the society. It is necessary for every organization to have a good work-life policies and practices this would ensure different factors:-

- Enhanced employee satisfaction and morale
- Increased loyalty and commitment towards the organization
- Decreased absenteeism due to increased satisfaction
- Increased return on investment (ROI) in employees
- Reduction in employee turnover rates and increased organizational performance
2. Review of Literature

In a constantly changing social demands and economic conditions the nature of work also has changed throughout the world. In earlier times work was just a matter of necessity and survival. As years passed ‘work’ underwent many evolution and the workforce were also changing which lead to the concept of arriving at work-life balance. It was in the year 1986 that the term “work-life” balance was first stated in U.K as a plank in women’s liberation movement (The movement advocated for flexible schedules and maternity leave for women). Work-life and personal life are two different sides of the same coin. Nowadays the concept of work-life balance is not new because of its importance it has been discussed extensively. Various scholars have given varying views on how they perceive the concept of work-life balance.

Krichmeyer has viewed work-life balance as ‘achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requisite personal resources such as energy, time and commitment to be well distributed across all domains. ‘Work-life balance is experienced when demands from the domain of work are compatible with the demands from other domains e.g. family (Pichler, 208, p-3). Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) Work-family balance is defined “as accomplishment of role related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role related partners in the work and family domains’’.

Greenhans and Allen (2006) Work-life balance is “the extent to which an individual’s effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are compatible with the individual’s life priorities”. Although definitions may vary, work life balance is usually related to equilibrium between the quantity of time and energy somebody devotes to figure and private activities so as to take care of an overall sense of harmony in life (Clark et al 2004). Kallith and Brough (2008) proposed that ‘work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’ current life priorities”. Emslie and Hunt (2009) argued that “work—life balance defined as ‘satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict’. Swamy(2007) defined work-life as practice that is concerned with providing scope for employees to balance their work with responsibilities and interest they have outside work.

Deery (2008) defined the concept of work-life balance as a complex task as it can be viewed from the meaning of ‘work’, ‘life’ and ‘balance’. Rapoport and Bailyn (1996) addressed during a report back to the Ford Foundation that “That separation of labor life from family life has existed since the economic Revolution and remains largely intact today albeit it's never reflected the way most of the people live. The business world has skilled work-family issues with an array of programs and policies that address specific family needs but don't change this constitution that employees work and personal life are separate and conflicting”. According to Voydanoff (2004), work demands expected to be highly associated with work-to-family-conflicts that is time based and strain based. There are also some barriers which restrict organizations to implement work life balance policies that are job requirements, commitment and loyalty, cultural values and change.

Sherry Rauh, Guides through five practical steps towards better work-life balance. As per her, first we have to figure out what really matters in life that is getting priorities clear is the first and foremost essential step towards achieving a well-balanced life. Secondly, drop unnecessary activities. Thirdly protect your private time by stopping checking mails and cell phones so often. Fourthly accept help to balance life. Finally plan and relax.

The main factors affecting work-life are:-

- Overtime: Overtime refers to work done in excess of one hour over the prescribed hours of work and includes work done on holidays and Sundays.
- Lone Working Hours: According to the Working Time Regulation of 1998, it is defines that work done should not exceed more than 48 hours a week. In India employees are working around 55-60 hours a week.
- Work Shift: It is a practice designed to make employees to get used of 24 hours of clock, rather than a standard working day. Generally the shifts are day shift, second shift starting from late afternoon to night and third shift is the night shift.
- Stress: Stress refers to body’s natural defense against pressures and other situations arising from work. Conditions in the work place can affect an individual’s performance and overall well-being of his body and mind. According to a survey 81 percent of the respondents admitted that their work is affecting and creating stress in their personnel life thus this pressure of personal life or work can lead to stress. It is found that such situation affects an individual’s health both psychologically and physiologically. Heart ailments, sleep disorders, cardiovascular problems, irritability, insecurity, lack of concentration and even nervous breakdown are becoming common these days. Stress in work-life leads to bad societal life and vice versa.
- Lack of Support from Spouse: One of the main factors causing imbalance is the lack of support from their spouse.
- Family Responsibilities: A good work –life balance is maintained only if one manages the family responsibilities and personal life effectively. It is seen in modern days that personal life is merged with work, this bringing of family into work plays a major role in bringing imbalance to the work-life which further leads to various other problems.
- Relationship with Superiors, Subordinates and Peers: The negative attitude of managers, colleagues and subordinates affects an individual’s work-life balance.
- Some other factors involve health related problems, depression, delivering of the project within the predetermined time, extensive travel relating to work etc.

Ways to Achieve Work-Life Balance

There are many ways to achieve or improve the quality of work-life balance they are:-

- Time Management: Time management is the heart of work-life balance. It is all about putting things first and not last. It is made up of two primary ingredients namely “important” and “urgent”.
- Important: The most important things or activities that contribute to one’s goals or missions.
- Urgent: Things or activities that demands immediate attention.
- To manage time effectively we need to spend more time in prioritizing and planning, saying ‘No’ to unimportant things, utilizing the time to one’s best.
- Yoga and Meditation: Practicing yoga and physical exercise helps to maintain a good health, gaining good mind and body-coordination. It improves concentration along with thinking process.
- Hobbies and Sports: Focusing on your hobbies and sports gives physical fitness and coordination between mind and body.
• Technology: Modern technologies can be used to reduce the work load. A lot of time is saved thus.
• More Flexible Work Schedules: The work schedules can be made flexible to suit parents with young kids, elderly parents etc.
• Job Redesign: Redesigning the job or job enrichment attempts to provide individuals with interesting, exciting and challenging work. This satisfies the higher needs of employees and increases their performance level.
• Job Sharing: It is a kind of part-time arrangement, where individual is assured that the job is being carried out properly by someone else even if they are not working.
• Job Security: Every employee in an organization wants stability of employment, if adequate job security is provided it will improve the quality of work-life balance and leads to happiness which in turn leads to productivity.
• Proper Incentive and welfare scheme: Organization should ensure that there is proper incentive system for monetary and non-monetary benefits of the employees. There should be proper welfare schemes for both employees and their family. It involves school for children housing facility social security etc.

Some other factors are:-
• Mingle with people: Talking with your colleagues during break times helps in relaxing.
• Music Therapy: Listening to music when you get stressed
• Prayer: Regular prayer keeps your mind calm and this is a very good de-stressor
• Yoga and Meditation: Keeps mind and body in coordination
• Reading Books, Movie Therapy: Going for a movie pr just reading a book
• Counseling: Counseling will help the employees in identifying problems that hinder their work-life balance and thus find a solution to it.
• Holiday Trips: Going for outings or long trips once in a year refreshes the mind and body thus helps starting afresh. Even organizations can arrange for such trips as a part of their incentive policy.
• Eating Out: Having food from outside with friends or family once in every weekend helps one to get out from stress.
• Spa and Anti-Stress Medication, Good Sleep, Maintaining balanced diet etc.
• Solving puzzles like crosswords, Sudoku, word finders etc helps in de-stressing and also sharpens one brain.
• Taking a clean bath. Washing face when feeling tired
• Taking bits of chocolate or chewing gum etc helps when you are tired.

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a way to find solution to the research problems systematically. It is important for a researcher to know not only the research method or technique but also the methodology. Research methodology is the description, justification and explanation of various methods of conducting the research successfully.

Research Design

Research design refers to master plan or model to conduct the particular study. It explains the methods and procedures for obtaining data needed for solving the matter."Research design is that the arrangement of condition for the gathering and analysis of knowledge during a manner that aims to mix relevance to the research purpose with the economy in procedure". The steps include the choice of research problem, formulation of hypothesis, methodology, literature survey and documentation, bibliography data collection, testing of hypothesis, interpretation, presentation and report writing.

Descriptive Research Design

The study is conducted using descriptive research design since the study is a fact finding study. Descriptive research, documents' describes the behaviors', conditions, effects etc of an individual or a group. Through the use of this study the researcher must be able to define clearly, what he or she wants to measure and the adequate methods for measurement along with clear cut definition of the population which the researcher plans to study.

Universe of the Study

Universe here refers to the total population available for a particular study. Here all the employees of the factory were taken as the universe of the study and that is nearly 300 workers.

Definition of the Problem

To study the quality of work-life balance among the employees at ‘Glenrock Rubber Products Pvt Ltd’.

Sample Frame

Defined subset of a population, selected from it with the aim of investigating its properties. The frame comprises of the employees of the factory.

Sample Size of the Study

Sample size refers to the number of sample units to be selected from the population for collecting the data and it always is optimum. The study has a sample size of 100 employees of the particular organization.

Sampling Technique

Simple random sampling is used as every member has equal chance to get selected and the selection one individual does not affect the selection of another. Properties of simple random sampling are:-

• The Population consists of N objects.
• The sample consists of n objects.
• All possible samples of n items are equally likely to occur.

Lottery Method

There are many ways to obtain a simple random sample and the study has made use of lottery method. Each of N population members is assigned a number; the numbers are then placed in a bowl and thoroughly mixed. Then blind folder the research selects ‘n’ numbers. Population having the selected numbers is included in the sample.
Sources of Data Collection

The data has been collected from two types of sources they are primary and secondary data.

• Primary Data

Data observed or collected directly from firsthand experience is known as primary data. These are the data’s collected for the first time and thus it is original in character. The data is collected through interview (direct/indirect), schedule, questionnaires, survey, focus group discussion (FGD), observation case studies, community forums and public hearings etc.

• Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to data those have already been passed through statistical processes. It involves published data and data collected in past. These are publications made by central, state and local government, technical and trade journals, management related books, magazines, newspaper, reports by research scholars, universities, economist and public records, journals, articles and websites.

Tools used for Data Collection

• Questionnaire

It is the collection of questions prepared by a researcher for collecting suggestions and opinions from respondents. The questionnaire filled by the respondents is returned after the filling is finished. A questionnaire may include both open-ended and close ended questions. It is formed with the help of various measurement scales like Likerts scale, staple scale etc.

• Interview

It is one direct method of collecting data; it is a verbal method of acquiring data. This method is mainly used to collect the information that was left out in the questionnaire. We can use structured or unstructured interviews. Interviews are key qualitative data collection method for social research. Interviews is useful for discovery and gaining insight into a particular subject. Here the heads of each department were interviewed to collect the data.

Statistical Tools Used

Percentage Analysis

Percentage analysis is used for analyzing the primary data acquired. These are special kind of ratios that express the relationship of one variable in comparison to another.

Percentage Analysis Formula

\[
\text{Percentage} = \left( \frac{\text{Number of respondents}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \right) \times 100
\]

Presentation tools used are tables and diagrams

4. Findings and discussions

Analysis refers to computation of certain indices or measures along with searching for the patterns of relationship that exist among the data. It aims to study the work-life balance among employees by analyzing the data collected through a structured and unbiased questionnaire. Here the methods used for analysis are percentage analysis supported by diagrams, charts and table. Software tools used are MS-excel and MS-word.

Percentage Analysis

\[
\left( \frac{\text{No of respondents}}{\text{Total no of respondents}} \right) \times 100
\]

Interpretation

Table 1 indicates that above 50% of the respondents are satisfied with work-life policies of the organization except the problems related to work shift are more.

Findings

• The time spent at work is satisfactory for 40% of the respondents.
• 50% of the employees responded that they faced problems due to the work shift followed by the organization
• About 40% of the respondents agree that they were sometimes able to achieve personal objectives with respect to organizational goals
• Only 35% agree that they were able to balance work and personal life and others were uncertain about that.
• 40% agree that the present working hours of the organization suited their personal circumstances
• The stress with respect to work is low responded 50% of the respondents
• 60% are satisfied with the welfare facilities offered by the organization
• 40% responds that they get enough support from the superiors and peers to reduce stress
• 50% agree that adequate counseling facilities are provided by the organization to the employees for maintaining stress and thus provide assistance
• About 50% of the respondents agree that the organization has implemented a good grievance machinery to resolve the problems arising
• 50% of the respondents agree that the work-life balance depends on employee responsibilities
• 40% responds that the company not very often accommodates family related needs of the employees
• About 50% responded that they often gets enough time to spent with their family
• 65% of the respondents agreed that if employees have good work-life balance the organization will be more effective and successful
Discussions

- Work-life balance is a topic of contemporary interest; the concern is to open up debate about how work and organizational psychologist can best contribute to this topic.
- Work-life balance has always been a concern of those interested in quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life.
- A study is required on work-life balance to know the impact of others on work and impact on others at home, what the key issues concerning work-life balance are.
- This study provides human resource professionals with a historical perspective, data and possible solutions for organizations and employees alike to work-life balance.
- This study shows that work-life balance is a central issue affecting well-being, as family and work are the most important elements of everyone’s life.
- The study identified the existence of negative factors leading to work-life conflict which affects employee’s work-life balance.

Work-life balance is crucial for the success of an individual employees as well as an entire organization, as it would affect the morale of an employee and his or her attitude towards the organization and work.

Limitations of the Study

- The employees and the mangers were interviewed during the course of their working time, so they were in a hurry to respond to the questions, which may have affected the quality of data.
- Time constraint were another limiting factor, the time available for the study was very much limited.
- The study covers only few aspects of work-life balance, since it is a wide topic to conduct a complete study within the limited parameters.
- Some of the respondents were not cooperative in finishing data, as it requires both time and patience.

5. Conclusion

In a constant changing and demanding situation, it is important to have proper work-life balance initiatives. The study revealed that most of the respondents were able to manage their work-life balance. Also most of them felt the need for further initiatives from the organization in further improving the facilities to effectively to manage their work-life balance particularly in terms of working days and work shift as these were the factors which were majorly contributing to the imbalance in their work life balance. The current study mainly focused on the factors such as long work hours, working in shifts, working in weekends affecting work-life balance. Also about the initiatives such as time-off for emergencies, compensatory leaves, grievance mechanism in addressing the issues of work-life balance.

Further detailed research is required to understand the impact of various factors on work-life balance and its negative influence on the individuals as well as the organization and suggest various strategies to resolve these issues.

REFERENCES

### Table 1 showing opinion about various aspects of Work-life Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with the amount of time spent at work</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with job environment and work conditions</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you face problems related to work shift</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firms current policies facilitates proper work-life balance</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you able to achieve personal objectives with respect to the organizational goal</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does present working hour suits your personal circumstances</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied with the welfare facilities and grievance mechanism of the firm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good work-life balance leads to success of the organization</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>