

**A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE FRIENDLY STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY INDIAN COMPANIES  
ACROSS INDUSTRIES TO SUPPORT WORK LIFE BALANCE**

**Naveena Suresh**, Assistant Professor, BMS Department, Sree Narayana Guru College of Commerce,  
Chembur (W) & Research Scholar, Ramanand D.A.V College, Bhandup, Mumbai  
**Dr. Poonam Naresh Kakkad**, Assistant Professor, Coordinator Department of Commerce, Nirmala  
Memorial Foundation College, Kandivali

**ABSTRACT**

*Work-life balance is the state of equilibrium or condition where a person equally prioritizes the demands of one's career and the demands of one's personal life. It is of utmost importance to ensure that both work and life is balanced so that the employee achieves his/her personal as well as organizational goals. When there is an imbalance or interference occurring between work and family (or non work) roles for an individual, this can result in conflict. To improve work life balance the employers need to implement and focus on various strategies.*

*This research paper attempts to throw light upon various employee friendly strategies adopted by Indian companies across industries which helps them to maintain work life balance. The findings of the study are expected to help HR managers devise strategies and policies to support employees. This research paper is based on secondary data and is a working paper.*

*Keywords: Employee friendly strategies, Work life balance*

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Greenhaus and colleagues (2003) define work family balance as the “extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role. An imbalance here results in conflict which is quite common universally. In today’s, competitive world, the concept of work life balance is very significant. A proper work life balance will help to increase productivity of employees, enhance their motivation, reduce absenteeism, reduce labour turnover etc.

The concept of work life balance has its history crediting to Robert Owen, a wealthy industrialist who was born in Wales, Great Britain on May 14, 1771. Owen is widely credited with being the first person to advocate for a universal “eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest” approach to work-life balance. He experimented with this concept at his own factories and urged employers everywhere to adopt this management ethos.

The concept of work life balance is quite relevant now due to the dominating presence of millennials in the workforce. Employers have been putting in a tremendous effort trying to determine the best way to appeal to millennial workers. With the millennial generation of workers projected to take up 75% of the workforce by 2025, many leaders think it’s time to redefine what work-life balance looks like. Millennials, also known as Generation Y or Gen Y, Researchers and popular media use the early 1980s as starting birth years and the mid-1990s to early 2000s as ending birth years, with the generation typically being defined as people born from 1981 to 1996.

Work life balance is an important aspect of a healthy and content work environment. In today’s world where nuclear families are more, maintaining work life balance becomes a priority to ensure smooth professional and personal life.

**2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To review and learn previous literatures related to work life balance to understand the concept in detail.

2. To understand employee friendly strategies adopted by Indian companies across industries to support work life balance.

### **3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Work-life imbalance is associated with many negative work and personal outcomes, including lower job and life satisfaction, lower career commitment and dedication, stronger turnover intentions, and greater physical symptoms and depression, all of which could affect organizational productivity. This affects an employee both psychologically and physiologically. Many countries around the world like UAE, Spain, Belgium, Ireland etc have either shifted to or are conducting trials for a 4 days' work week schedule understanding the problems and prospects and aiming to improve both organization's as well as employees' productivity. Maintaining Work life balance becomes the responsibility of both the employee as well as the employer. Hence this study is significant.

### **4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The study aims to focus on one of the important domains of HR department. The study can be conducted on other variables too like stress management, employee retention, employee engagement etc. The study may help in devising appropriate strategies to maintain work life balance by looking into the various options provided by different companies.

### **5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study is based on secondary data which has its own inherent limitations. The strategies used by companies selected here might have been developed based on their own HR policies and guidelines and may not be applicable to other companies. These could be used as just reference only.

### **6. LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to (V, T and D, 2021) the working life balance depicts how the job relates to obligations and how they affect one another in life. Workforce engagement needs to be maximized by employers, and governments by incorporating a holistic approach and periodic employee engagement surveys.

The article in (Sirgy and Lee, 2018) explores how technological advances and globalization's beginning have created a "24/7 availability phenomenon." The mobility of devices such as smart phones, BlackBerrys and PDAs has allowed staff to carry out job responsibilities from across the globe. According to (Naim and Lenka, 2018), the need to resolve the tension between work and other personal obligations among employees is increasingly evident.

Managing work/life Balance International (2007) released the Way Ahead Study, which tracks the findings of the annual baseline surveys on the condition for organisations' work/life balance systems around India.

In determining the link between work-life balance and commitment, Beauregard and Henry (2009) argue that commitment to work depends largely on the extent to which employees are able to balance work activities and non-work activities and are satisfied with the job they do and the conditions of service within which they work.

Jennings and McDougald (2007) argue that men and women tend to prioritize work and family roles differently and that whereas men typically sacrifice more time at home for work activities, women tend to sacrifice more time at work for home commitments. Martins, Eddleston and Veiga (2002) observe that women's career satisfaction has negatively been affected by work-family conflict throughout their lives whereas men experience adverse effects only at the later stages of their career. The marital status of a worker can also influence work-life balance.

Martins et al. (2002) suggest that workers who are married give more priority to their families' relative to work. The study of work-life balance in relation to commitment is important because an increase in employees' workload adversely affects the time for families and other social activities (Allen & Meyer, 2000).

While WLB policies are common in the west and in most industrialized countries (Munn and Chaudhuri, 2016, Poster and Prasad, 2005) there is a substantial lack of research in less industrialized countries including India (Munn and Lee, 2014).

Thorntwaite (2004) - Found that there's a growing demand and wish is felt by all the working parents for part-time work, short working hours and more importantly flexible working hours. The highest management should check out these issues seriously so there'll be every scope for better work-life balance among working staff. These provisions should be implemented to all or any the staff not for the desired group of staff.

Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran (2006) - it absolutely was found that family support for the work culture helps to manage the work-life balance. Just in case of support from superiors, and associates, the pliability of working hours, adequate maternity leave etc. helps to motivate the worker and allows them to scale back the dark side of work-life balance here is a substantial lack of research in less industrialised countries including India

## 7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary research methodology has been adopted. Secondary Sources means the published sets of literature's or data available for getting important information regarding any kind of research. Contents with respect to Work life balance, HR practices, policies and guidelines etc were available in the form of journals, online literature, company websites, etc. Majority of the data have been collected through websites.

## 8. DISCUSSION

Work-life balance may be understood as the routine efforts to make time for hobbies, family members, near and dears, friends, community, spirituality, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities, in addition to the work and priorities of the workplace. Nowadays employees are experiencing difficulties in balancing domestic demands and work life. The unbalance between these two often leads to an increase in mental stress and reduces work efficiency.

The study aims to understand the employee friendly strategies adopted by Indian companies across industries to support work life balance which are discussed as follows:-

- **Tata Consultancy Services-** TCS is a management consulting firm of the Tata group. When it comes to women's employment, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) ranked among the top ten companies in India in 2018. 360 companies from various industries were surveyed for this purpose. Good work culture was fostered at TCS, and it was promoted within the company. An initiative at Microsoft is called Mpower. In this program, employees' key concerns are addressed by people managers in different centers. As part of another initiative, Maitree, employees' families are invited to cultural events. Additionally, TCS offers its employees a work-life balance that allows them to grow and achieve their goals.
- **Godrej Consumer Products-** Open and flexible working practices, as well as a challenging work environment, keep employees motivated and engaged in their jobs. The employees can take on tough challenges at work because Godrej provides an open and collaborative environment. Through employee mobility across key businesses and geographical locations, it emphasizes career development plans. It is also a strong ally for women. A talent-hunting initiative, LOUD (Live Out Ur

Dream) is used at the Godrej Campus. To recognize some of the most creative and passionate individuals with tremendous potential, this program has been established.

- **Google India**-Officially, there are no work hours for Google. Attend meetings on time and complete your work. As a general rule, employees arrive between 9 am and 10 am, and depart around 7 pm or 8 pm. In addition, Google allows you to work from home in case of an emergency or unforeseen circumstance. You'll also get a 19-inch monitor to work on at home, as well as reimbursement for your internet connection. If you are working for the company, there is no pressure on you. Google has massage chairs, a spa, a gym, micro-kitchens, 4 meals a day (breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner), music rooms, TT tables, cricket nets, and so on. In addition, each team is entitled to one team outing per year to get to know one another more intimately. Google will take care of their travel expenses, so they can go anywhere in the world. Your shopping expenses, however, are not included. Also, Google has no dress code and employees are usually seen wearing casual clothes.
- **Adobe India**-One of the world's most creative companies, Adobe has a reputation for being one of the most innovative. Adobe goes out of its way, like its products, to create an environment where its employees can grow and flourish. Seniors do not micromanage, but rather place complete faith in their employees' abilities to come up with innovative and out-of-the-box solutions. Adobe Life is a social media platform where Adobe employees share pictures of their happy personal and professional lives using the hashtag #AdobeLife. For the 16th consecutive year, it was named one of Fortune Magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For." Allowing employees the freedom and trusting them with their abilities is the key to Adobe's awesome work culture. They believe that being creative at work is enjoyable, and that's what makes for a fun corporate culture.
- **Marriott Hotels India**-'Caring for our friends is at the heart of Marriott's core values. Marriott calls the workers 'participants'. For their birthdays or celebrations, hotel staff is allowed to eat six times at any hotel or lodge to receive the best reception. "Caring for colleagues is at the heart of Marriott's core values, reflecting the company's commitment to professional life. Marriott's history of caring for its employees dates back to the early days, when its founder, JW Marriott, advised individual company employees about their personal problems at his first hotel. He appreciated their presence, kept them up to date with the latest developments at Marriott, and gave them excellent training. JW Marriott always made sure that the employees who joined the company felt part of the Marriott family. It makes management responsible for the satisfaction of their subordinates." said a Marriott spokesman. In addition to providing a competitive pay package, Marriott strives to provide its employees with a healthy working environment. The company values good leadership and provides better opportunities for growth, a friendly work environment, and training resources. Open communication, trust between working groups, and a relentless focus on the right victories are other important factors. Hotel discount policies, talent development programs, international exposure, open department policy, exposure to various departments, performance incentives, and highly qualified employees improve employee ethics. Access to a gym, recreation, discount for food and drink, room accommodation, local and international assignments, international placement and health insurance are other benefits.
- **SAP Labs India**-SAP shows that it cares about its employees. SAP Labs has many programs to keep employees happy because of flexible job options, health care policies, and disaster relief programs. Female employees are entitled to twenty weeks 'paid maternity leave and an additional 16 weeks of maternity leave and loss of salary or part-time. Women are provided with cab transport during and after pregnancy, a maternity return program that focuses on ensuring the return of a female employee after maternity leave as smooth as possible. Part of the work from home after the birth of a child means that male employees, without maternity leave, are able to work four hours in the office and some are at home. The crèche cares for 250 children aged nine to six months. Under this program

children are provided with day care, Montessori education, summer camps and other activities. There is a forum that strives to promote a diverse workplace in SAP by motivating women employees through role modeling and sharing inspiring stories of successful women in leadership positions. Employees can work from home four days a month or one day a week. Temporary Task Team benefit allows employees to work part-time for up to four months. A person may work for 50, 60 or 80 percent of the normal workload based on agreement with the supervisor. One of the most influential programs has been the Employee Benefit Fund called the 'Health Care Fund' which is a voluntary, staff-sponsored and staff-operated fund, which is used to provide financial assistance to employees and their families in the event of unforeseen emergencies. The Care for Life Fund operates through the Trust and conducts continuous monthly contributions for members. SAP has 33 interesting groups, each offering specific activities such as drama, music, art, dance etc. to help employees pursue their favorite interests.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The above literature explores various HR practices across industries to support work life balance. This era of Information Technology has a major significance in the life of employees, because it enables us to understand that important concept which has a direct impact on the productivity, job satisfaction and commitment of the employees. Hence, to maintain a healthy workforce, an organization should be able to cater to the needs of the employees and fulfill them.

## 10. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above study, few suggestions are being recommended which could be employed by organizations in order to support the work life balance of employees:-

1. Providing flexible working hours.
2. Providing opportunities for virtual workplaces.
3. Providing the entire required infrastructure while working virtually.
4. Initiating programs to support the diversity at the workplace.
5. Providing a space for open communication.
6. Arranging stress management programs to support employees.
7. Providing options for sabbaticals.
8. Encouraging the creative abilities of the employees.
9. Providing training programs to cater to developing soft skills.
10. Supporting women workforce who needs to shoulder dual responsibilities.

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# CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

Article Entitled

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Assistant Professor, Coordinator Department of Commerce, Nirmala Memorial  
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Published in

**SOUTH INDIA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES ; ISSN: 0972 – 8945**

**Vol. XXI, No.14, January – June : 2023,**

**UGC CARE Approved, Group I, Bi-Annual Journal,**

