

Work Life Balance in Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenal growth in the world economy has led to an increase in the disposable income. With a rise in the standard of living of the people all around the world a shift in the spending habits of the people have also undergone a change. The future of the tourism industry across the world seems to be encouraging given the fact that individuals and corporate both lay a great emphasis on holiday making as a source to beat stress. Cheaper air fares and affordable holiday packages are considered to be the main reason behind outbound tourist traffic. All this has resulted into a rise in the volume and dimensions of tourism. The paper is an attempt to understand the role of the hospitality industry in the changing world scenario and the work life balance of the people employed in this industry.

Keywords: *Work life balance; Flexi Timing; Tourism.*

1.0 Introduction

The tourism industry has also seen a fierce competition among the various players. In order to thrive in the ever changing business environment, these firms need to constantly innovate and be 'ahead of the curve'. In the recent past we have seen a great deal of innovative products and combos as service offerings by the travel firms. Thus tourism's important role in economy and socio- cultural aspects is well accepted.

Over the years tourism developed at a fast pace and to gain a competitive advantage the firms rely on their human resources as they are autotelic and can take the organization to the roads of success. It is for this reason it is important for the travel and hospitality industry to keep its employee motivated and to contain attrition. Also the human resource department in the tourism industry is charged with the additional responsibility of maintaining harmonious employee relations and an optimum work life balance in addition to the traditional functions of recruitment, selection, compensation, communication etc.

The function of the Human Resource Department becomes all the more challenging with the complexities arising from the fourth industrial revolution or Industry 4.0. The fourth revolution which is marked by a range of new technologies, impacts all countries, industries and all disciplines. The combination of physical, digital and biological world will challenge the way people are being managed in organizations. As automation increases machines and computers will replace humans across all industries. Organizations which fail to recognize these changes and adapt accordingly will fade away with the passage of time.

The increase in the online travel agencies which have done away with the need of the customer to physically interact with the travel agent before planning a break will leave the traditional sector with mounting costs and lower ROI. As a result the conventional tourism industry which was based on tour operator led business has suffered a setback. The traditional way in which business was done by big players is no longer in practice. There has been a sharp rise in the web based bookings and as a result the quality of recruits has also undergone a change with the expert driven tourism executive replaced with tech savvy talent whose is socially engaged with Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter etc. so that he can mix and match digital platforms to reach its target customers.

2.0 An introduction to tourism, hospitality and leisure

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The significance of tourism in the current global situation cannot be underemphasized. The socio-economic place which tourism occupies within the framework of globalised tourism's leisure and holidaying opportunities on offer today has attracted particular attention. Tourism is a global phenomenon with an almost incomprehensibly massive infrastructure. Tourism is also a very important component of society, politics, culture and economy as it influences all of these to a great extent. It can also be considered as that part of the economy which represents the most vigorous growth.

Over the decades, tourism has displayed continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destinations. In 2016, four countries moved up in the Top 10 ranking by international tourism receipts and three in the ranking by international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors). Most notably, Thailand climbed further, up to 3rd place from 5th in terms of tourism receipts in its second year of double-digit growth, hitting the US\$ 50 billion mark in 2016. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Today, the business volume of tourism equals or even surpasses that of oil exports, food products or automobiles. The Tourism industry has become one of the major players in international commerce. It also represents at the same time one of the main income sources for many developing countries. This growth of tourism along with an increasing diversification and competition among destinations has been remarkable. This global spread of tourism in industrialised and developed states has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors - from construction to agriculture or telecommunications.

Tourism has also been the major contributor to the economic well-being of all its stakeholders and thereby improving their quality of life. According to the UNWTO Tourism Highlights 2017 edition particularly developing countries stand to benefit from sustainable tourism. The importance of tourism, as a vehicle of the economic and social development, has been authorized by the global community also. Tourism also plays an important role in the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity. The efforts of the tourism industry in this respect have also been able to change the mentality of the society towards protecting their natural environment.

Nowadays, the touristic reality is different. The new tourist demands to live unique and customized experiences adapted to their needs. The massive tourism that required simple and non-complex products has in the recent times transformed into informed customers, who require and search unique and complex solutions, with possibility of experiencing the moment before, during and after their vacations. Tourists are actively involved in the usage of technology (e.g. cameras, smart phones, tablets, PC, etc.), and this transforms them into prescribers of other tourists and travelers via the massive and numerous social networks. Thus the traditional tourism which was more focused towards arranging 'beds' for the clients and providing standardized services has in the recent times shifted focus towards more customized options to suit customer requirements. The tourism sectors sector now offers "dreams".

In order to understand the essence of the Human Resource Management implications in the tourism industry it is necessary to know the components and elements of tourism industry. Tourism can be classified into four types based on Prosser (1998) origin-destination variables of tourism. These are the

1. International tourism: international tourism involves overseas visitors to a destination.
2. Internal tourism: Internal tourism can relate tourism which is restricted to a region within a country.
3. Domestic tourism: domestic tourism relates to nationals of one country visiting that same country.

4. National tourism: national tourism considers all forms of tourism within one particular nation or country.

According to A. J. Burkart and S. Medlik in their famous book 'Tourism: past, present and future', there are four major components of tourism industry

2.1 Accommodation

It includes food & lodging facilities to the guest. With the development in the means of transportation, the variety and quality of lodging facility has undergone a change. The traditional small private hotels or bread and breakfast facilities which existed in the past have given way to big hotels. Accommodation types such as holiday village resorts are on trend. Accommodation is the basic need of the tourism industry and therefore it plays a major role in visitor satisfaction from vacation. As accommodation holds a very important place in any tourist's itinerary and also the highest share of amount spent in any vacation, it should be comfortable and services & facilities should be provided.

2.2 Transportation

Transportation is the blood stream of tourism development. Transportation acts as a connecting factor between the tourist and the tourist destination. Development of tourism is positively related to the development of transportation. Major developments in the tourism sector can be attributed to the development in the means of transport. When we overview the tourism development in the world, it goes along with the pace of development in transportation system.

2.3 Attractions

A tourist attraction is the place of interest where tourists visit. This place is significant due to its cultural, historical, natural sceneries, leisure, adventure or amusement. The primary purpose of attraction is to grab visitor's interest so that they visit a particular destination.

2.4 Support services

The support services can be classified into advisory services to tourism operators, investors, Government and all other stakeholders in all matters pertaining to the tourism industry.

The varied nature of activities concerning the tourism industry demand that the model of human resource management adopted by an organization must be customized to meet individual business and employee needs.

3.0 Changing role of People in tourism

In a world of increasing dynamism in all areas such as social, economic, political and technological thus affecting tourism, some dimensions of people management and the role of human resources appeared to be frozen in time. The reputation of tourism as an employer remained, in this assessment, very mixed with excellent practices in some organisations alongside widespread perceptions of poor pay, challenging working conditions and limited opportunities for growth and development, particularly for women and minorities. However this is only one side of the coin. The corollary of change within tourism that impacts the world of work, in turn, has also evolved in response to economic, political, socio-cultural and technological factors.

An online survey conducted amongst various stakeholders of tourism and travel industry in India with reference to the 'availability, quality & competence' of Human Resources employed therein revealed the following facts:

- The travel industry still lacks competent professionals to serve the industry.

- Moreover, education and training institutions have not yet been able to churn out the professionals who can meet out the industry's burgeoning expectations from them.
- The industry, too, has not been able to attract the talented lot to pursue a career in the same.
- Turnover is a major problem in the hospitality sector. According to a survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, India, leisure and hospitality had some of the highest turnover rates.
- With relatively high turnover rates, it should come as no surprise that recruiting is another problem facing HR in the hospitality industry. Even finding candidates with the skills to succeed in entry-level positions has become an issue. When an organisation fails to fully assess candidates, it increases the chances of placing the right person in the wrong role.

4.0 Changing patterns of work

The tourism industry has come a long way in recent years in the wake of changes taking place in the world economy. To cater to the needs of the modern and highly informed tourists, the work practices in the tourism industry have also undergone a change. The high degree of competition among the organizations in the tourism industry have forced the work force and the management to continuously upgrade themselves so as to survive and grow in the ever changing scenario. The main drivers for change in the tourism industry and their implications on the work can be presented as follows:

	Influencers/ drivers of change in tourism	Implications for work
1	The nature of the tourism industry is such that it is ever changing and has to be specifically designed so as to suit the requirements of the customer on one side and to give him a fulfilling experience on the other. The tourism industry has seen a change in the patterns of travel with respect to both originating and destination markets.	As international tourism has increased over the years, there has been an increase in the majority of travelers of one cultural background into a different culture. This requires new skills and service demands for the human resources. Employees which cater to this section of travelers have to be more skilled in terms language and cultural skills. Moreover they have to be well versed with social media-based marketing tools.
2	A majority of tourists have grown in terms of maturity and their dependence on pre packaged programmes and fixed tours have come down. They now see themselves as independent travelers who are able to manage their visit on their own.	As the tourists have become more mature and independent, the organizations are expected to focus on individualized service delivery. This requires the human resources to be more creative and innovative in designing their tours.
3	The economic conditions in the world economy have been very volatile. Growing competition has resulted in driving down costs from key sectors in tourism, notably air transport. The sector has seen emergence of high degree of retrenchment. The organizations in this sector are vying for their share by focusing on dynamic packaging.	As the tourist has become more informed and the organization is forced to cut down costs, the sector has witnessed elimination of key work areas, especially in tourism intermediaries such as travel agents.

4	In this modern era of widespread technology, social media has gained a place of vital importance. The impact of social media on customers has brought about a change in their decision making styles also.	The technology with which the employees were working and the practices that they adopted are no longer valid. To cope up with the latest technology there is a high pressure on the workforce to adopt new communications strategies.
5	There has been a global concern to save the planet. Growing awareness of environmental concerns and sustainable development has been the effort of every nation. The tourist population has also seen a growing interest in visiting places of natural, historical and cultural importance. Thus there is a growing concern on saving heritage and archaeological sites.	The dynamism brought about by environmental concerns has forced the organizations to alter or eliminate existing skills, create new skills and new jobs. There has been a growing emergence of a demand for new range of green' skills

There are clear indicators that the nature of work continues to evolve in all sub-sectors of tourism – see, for example, Baum's (2012) analysis of the changing work environment of the airline sector. It may also be considered to be a process whereby tourism work may be reconceptualised, in many countries, from the simple to the complex, in part by the incorporation of new or expanded areas, such as technological distribution, wellness (Baum and Lockstone-Binney, 2013) or security (Ball et al, 2014). People are frequently claimed to be a company's most valuable asset and a number of tourism organisations assert this commitment in stating their values and mission (Solnet et al, 2013). However the reality is far from what the organizations claim. It is frequently found that organisations do not live up to such lofty aspirations and little appears to have changed in this regard over the past years. It is often seen that concerns about human resources are recognised as the most important concerns for the management of organizations in the tourism industry. As the industry is highly dynamic the expectations of the management from their employees and vice-versa has significantly impacted the employer – employee relationship.

5.0 Impact of Industry 4.0 on work and people

In the Industry 4.0 boundaries between traditional industries and between industrial and non-industrial institutions have faded. The changes brought about by Industry 4.0 will lead to redefining the value chain in business models as a result of a complex and connected digitalisation. To succeed in this scenario and to gain a competitive edge, the organizations shall rely heavily on their work force. At the same time, the human workforce will require a number of complex skills and interdisciplinary thinking, social skills, and other technical skills. The boundaries of the tourism sector which is historically conceptualized as conservative, closed and inward looking, is increasingly getting blurred whereby the skills are getting obsolete at a fast pace. At the same time, tourism increasingly calls upon skills traditionally associated with other areas of employment.

Like the revolutions that preceded it, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has the potential to raise global income levels and improve the quality of life for populations around the world. To date, those who have gained the most from it have been consumers able to afford and access the digital world. Technology has made possible new products and services that increase the efficiency and pleasure of our personal lives. Ordering a cab, booking a flight, buying a product, making a payment, listening to music, watching a film, or playing a game—any of these can now be done remotely.

While the boundaries between the professional and personal life will vanish, work life balance will emerge as one of the biggest concerns for the Human Resource Department. To cope up with Industry 4.0 the tourism sector has to address the challenges of locating wellness tourism work on the one hand in all the related areas of tourism such as sports tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism and in other wellness businesses which relate beyond tourism such as medical, fitness and religious. This heterogeneity creates human resource challenges in terms of ethical and professional boundaries; training and qualifications; culture and diversity; as well as health and safety.

Technology is the main driver of the work force in modern times. The use of social media as a tool to manage a wide range of activities demands a wide range of skills in the employees. However as compared to the experienced employees, the 21st-century workforce is global, highly connected, technology-savvy, and demanding. Its employees are youthful, ambitious, and filled with passion and purpose. Millennials are a major force but the older workers, who remain engaged and valuable contributors. Critical new skills are scarce and their uneven distribution around the world is forcing companies to develop innovative new ways to find people, develop capabilities, and share expertise. These include the extensive use of social media as a core recruitment tool. Some of these factors, in turn, drive workforce mobility in tourism and account for elements of labour migration.

As automation substitutes for labor across the entire economy, the net displacement of workers by machines might aggravate the gap between returns to capital and returns to labor. On the other hand, it is also possible that the displacement of workers by technology will, in aggregate, result in a net increase in safe and rewarding jobs.

In addition to being a key economic concern, inequality represents the greatest societal concern associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The largest beneficiaries of innovation tend to be the providers of intellectual and physical capital i.e. the innovators, shareholders, and investors which explain the rising gap in wealth between those dependent on capital versus labor. Technology is therefore one of the main reasons why incomes have stagnated, or even decreased, for a majority of the population in high-income countries: the demand for highly skilled workers has increased while the demand for workers with less education and lower skills has decreased.

6.0 The Work life balance situation

Work life is a subject area which is concerned with an individual's personal and professional life. Work-life balance means different things to different people and different things at different stages of life. However, any definition for anyone must include the problems of lack of time and exhaustion. Research indicates that failure to achieve the correct balance of effort and rest is linked to a feeling of lack of control over your workload, plus lack of energy to fulfill personal goals and commitments. If the balance is wrong, the result may include fatigue, poor performance and a poor quality of life. There is no ideal work life balance. The work life balance situation may undergo a change with a shift in the professional and personal responsibilities.

Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which will enable employees to have balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthen employee loyalty and productivity. Work-life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and "lifestyle" (family, health, pleasure and leisure).

Most recently, there has been a shift in the workplace as a result of advances in technology. Increasingly sophisticated and affordable technologies have made it more feasible for employees to keep contact with work. Employees have many methods, such as emails, computers, and cell phones, which enable them to accomplish their work beyond the physical boundaries of their office. Employees may respond to an email or a voice mail after-hours or during the weekend, typically while not officially "on the job". Researchers have found that employees who consider their work roles to be an important component of their identities will be more likely to apply these communication technologies to work while in their non-work domain.

Some theorists suggest that this blurred boundary of work and life is a result of technological control. Technological control "emerges from the physical technology of an organization". In other words, companies use email and distribute smartphones to enable and encourage their employees to

stay connected to the business even when they are not in the office. This type of control, replaces the more direct, authoritarian control, or simple control, such as managers and bosses. As a result, communication technologies in the temporal and structural aspects of work have changed, defining a "new workplace" in which employees are more connected to the jobs beyond the boundaries of the traditional workday and workplace. The more this boundary is blurred, the higher work-to-life conflict is self-reported by employees.

With the global economy under the impact of Industry 4.0 and a 24 hour work culture the thin line between work and home will blur. People try to find ways to achieve a proper balance in their professional and personal lives to counter to the insecurities in their job which has worsened the work life balance situation. In order to survive and grow in the highly volatile work place where skills are getting obsolete at a fast pace, employees are often willingly or unwillingly sacrificing their personal life for their job. Many companies view work life balance as being particularly relevant to millennials, but employees of all generations is under pressure to meet both work and personal obligations. Organizations therefore should promote work life balance initiatives across all levels and all sections of employees.

The tourism industry is known for its long working hours, shift duties and handling demanding and difficult customers. This stress results in the creation of demand on an individual to make a decision on the balance between work and family. Moreover the pace at which technology is changing and the skills have to be upgraded also creates a pressure in the minds of the employees which causes an imbalance. Many people may find difficulty working in different roles or even multiple roles (as a supervisor in work, a parent at home, a child helping elderly parents). Using a work-life balance approach for employees' well-being will emerge as a strategic human resources management tool. Any approach for achieving a work life balance also assists in retention, productivity and the recruitment of good employees. There are various factors that can be attributed to having an influence on the work life balance of employees in the tourism industry. These factors are of great importance to the management to understand the causes of imbalance and to address issues related to it.

7.0 Factors affecting work life balance of employees

The word productivity has gained popularity in the corporate world in the recent years and it is no longer a secret that productivity is positively linked to the Work-Life Balance (WLB) situation of the concerned employees. The tourism industry is characterized by provision of services round the clock. Moreover, due to the seasonal nature of tourism sector there are some sectors within this industry that have to face a high attrition rate. This situation forces the rest of the employees to take up the extra load by working for long hours and sometimes their duties are stretched for very long hours at a go. This factor has a great negative impact on the WLB situation of the employees since they do not get sufficient time for their personal and social commitments.

24 X 7 Service Industry: The hardest hit among the human resources in the tourism industry are the hotel employees. The hotel industry works round the clock. To remain operational at all times the employees have to work in shifts. Sometimes the shifts timings are odd which discourages the employees to work in those shifts. Moreover, if an employee in a particular shift is on leave, his duty has to be conducted by someone in the previous shift. Thus there are employees who have to work for more than one shift one after the other. This has a negative impact on their WLB. Many times they have to sacrifice their personal commitments due to unforeseen job circumstances.

Seasonal Business: Although the tourism industry works round the clock, it faces peak and off peak seasons during the year depending upon the nature of operations its business and customers. For example in the case of hotel industry during the off season, many of its employees are underworked. Although it is practically not possible for hotels to manipulate their number of

employees based on its seasonal requirements, it is thus a common practice that hotels employ just enough employees on the basis of their average requirement. However during peak season they will have to face tremendous shortfall of employees which sometimes are compensated by appointing labour for short periods. As these employees are not really well versed with the operations of the organizations the regular employees have to take the major chunk of the workload during peak seasons. Therefore these employees have to work for long work hours at a stretch. Moreover, during peak season getting their weekly offs also becomes very difficult and in such situations, employees work weeks together without a day off. Long and continuous work durations become very stressful and challenging for them. This obviously have a direct impact on their WLB situation.

Manpower shortage: As it has been mentioned earlier, due to the seasonal business of the tourism industry it carries on its business with less work force as compared to their requirement. In addition to that, the challenge of working with labour unions and other liabilities associated with employment, the industry is discouraged from employing more people during peak seasons. Thus the additional work load has to be absorbed with the existing employees creating a major imbalance in their family and social life.

High attrition rate: There is a high attrition rate in the tourism industry. In many cases, the attrition rate higher than normal. With such high rates of employee turnover, it becomes a major challenge for the management of these organizations to attract and retain talent. Since it is an ongoing and recurring situation, there is a lot of ambiguity in the work timings of the employees. Moreover, the additional load takes away the time allocated to fulfill their family and personal life by way of accumulated stress and limited time for personal life. Due to this reason it becomes difficult to increase the productivity of the organization as there is an imbalance in the WLB of the employees.

Uncertainty of work: The tourism industry in its totality is an uncertain one. Since the industry relies heavily on personal contact with the customers, who may have different aspirations and expectations from their holiday, it becomes unpredictable. For example the hotel industry being a part of the service industry is engaged in providing services to its guests. In doing so, the biggest challenge is to satisfy the varied demands of their guests. The ever changing and unpredictable nature of these demands make the job of hotel employees more uncertain. Unlike other industries where ongoing task can be handed over to the employee in the next shift, in the hotel industry the employee cannot leave the guest service incomplete and cannot leave the work or handover to the next shift until and unless the guest is fully satisfied. In doing so, the employees sometimes have to work for extended hours thus further reducing their WLB.

Hard work: The nature of work in the tourism industry is very strenuous especially due to the continuous contact with the customers. To cater to varied demands of the customers, the employees are expected to be on their toes, active, fresh and jovial as ever when they are dealing with the guests. Irrespective of whether the employee has just reported or he's on the verge of completing his shift duties, he is expected to wear a pleasing smile on his face and is not supposed to look overworked or tired even if he has been standing or running around throughout his shift. This becomes stressful for the employees as they are required to hide their inner feelings and look motivated. The same employee reaches his home tired and spends most of his time in relaxing or sleeping. Thus he barely manages to devote time to fulfill his family commitments which further leads to frustration and disconnect from this family and social life.

Ever-changing and abnormal working shifts: As was pointed out earlier, the tourism industry is a 24*7 service industry the employees may have to work in varied shifts based on the requirements of their job. Also in the peak season since the employees are less in comparison to the required number they are expected to be ready to work in shifts which may again be changing based on the nature and demand of work. Thus in most of the cases, the employee is never sure of his shift for following day and thus cannot plan for any personal commitments. Moreover, sometimes the

shifts are abnormal like the evening, break and night shifts when the employees are expected to travel back home at odd hours. Although, hotels provide home drops for ladies working in late shifts, such service is not available for men. Therefore sometimes employees staying far, prefer to wait back in the hotel till early morning which further reduces their break timings.

8.0 Impact of work-life imbalance on productivity of employees

Less work can be accomplished when brains are fatigued and stressed. As the employees are in a state of conflict between their professional and personal commitments they begin to disengage from their place of work. Studies show fatigued brains look exactly like ones that are sound asleep. Minds that are focused, organized, and energized get more work done in less time. A report by the Corporate Executive Board, which represents 80% of the Fortune 500 companies, found that employees who feel they have good WLB work 21% harder than those who don't. Not only does work life imbalance has a negative impact on the efforts made by the employees, but also it increase conflicts at the work place. The employees experiencing an imbalance are constantly into conflict between their work and family responsibilities. This conflict spills over to many relationships in the workplace thereby resulting into cases of grievances, burnout, attrition etc.

Work-life policies increase effort by giving people the support to work in the most effective way—reducing stress, improving energy, increasing time management skills, improving morale and commitment, and making it easier to handle professional and personal responsibilities. More job satisfaction leads to more engagement and better results. This it may be summarized that good WLB of employees have a great positive impact on their productivity

9.0 Measure to enhance work life balance

A work life imbalance situation is very common in the tourism industry. Although a majority of employees may be experiencing imbalance at some point of time, any incident of prolonged imbalance is considered harmful. An employee experiencing work life imbalance not only faces problems on the personal front but also is the reason behind many organizational problems. As humans are the most important resource in any organization, the productivity of the organization suffers a setback if humans are not utilized optimally. Moreover if the problems of imbalances are not addressed they may continue for longer durations thus putting the survival of the organization at stake. In this regard for the long term growth and survival of the organizations the management of these organizations should come forward and take responsibility to correct work life issues.

The role of the employer in enhancing the work life balance situation of the employees cannot be understated. A considerate management supports the efforts of employees to split their time and energy between work and the other important aspects of their lives so that they feel satisfied and contented and do not experience any conflict. Work-life balance is a daily effort to make time for family, friends, community participation, spirituality, personal growth, self-care, and other personal activities, in addition to the demands of the workplace. If the workers understand how their work can be organized, managing work and life demands may be possible and employees can better fit in their personal commitments. This can lead to improving the organization culture, higher employee morale and commitment.

Work-life balance enables employees to feel as if they are paying attention to all the important aspects of their lives. Because many employees experience a personal, professional, and monetary need to achieve, work-life balance is challenging. Employees willing to balance work with the rest of the activities that they wish to pursue in their life have to be assisted by their

employers who steps to institute policies, procedures, actions, and expectations that enable employees to easily pursue more balanced lives.

10.0 Measures followed by the tourism industry to enhance the WLB situation of its employees

The tourism industry employs a variety of skill sets. The employees in the tourism industry are placed in different work profiles. Thus there cannot be one fixed method of addressing the issue of work life imbalance for all the employees. The tourism industry has realized the importance of enhancing the WLB situation of its employees. Although Employers are not responsible for providing work balance for their employees, but they can assist the employees to seek and maintain their own work balance. Optimistically, the decisions, policies, values, and expectations of the employers help the employees in scheduling their work-life balance choices. Hotels, travel and tour agencies, tourist guide associations etc are thus developing policies and taking measures in the following ways to address this issue.

Provision of additional weekly offs: The various organizations in the tourism industry have introduced a system of giving fixed number of weekly offs in a month which means that the employees get a fixed number of offs every month irrespective of the traffic of customers. Since the employees are aware of the offs they are entitled to, they can plan their family and social commitments. This practice is highly welcomed by the employees since they can devote more time for their family and friends.

Optimum work timings: The management nowadays is aware of the fact that long working hours is the biggest factor for poor WLB of its employees. To address this issue management are taking conscious measures to discourage prolonged working hours and working for back to back shifts. Supervisors are also instructed to manage their task force effectively and assign optimum work timings to their employees to ensure highest productivity. Most of the hotels especially the international chains have instructed their staff not to work beyond their stipulated duty timings and in unavoidable circumstances, the supervisor has to seek prior permission of the senior management to make his staff work beyond their work timing. This has put restrictions on unnecessary over time remuneration that had to be borne by the organisations and the supervisors have also become more cautious towards the timings of their subordinates.

Effective Education, Training & Counseling: The industry focuses on effective training as a tool to help their employees manage work stress and handle multiple roles effectively. Employees are encouraged to work smartly and to spend quality time rather than quantity time at work. Training also helps the employees in scheduling their time effectively. The different types of training apart from job related skills that are imparted on a continuous basis are time management, stress management, communication and soft skills, decision making etc. these training programs help the employees to prioritise and complete their work in an effective way. In many organizations employees are counseled on a routine basis to create awareness about mental health and its importance in the long run.

Provision of flexible work timings: This practice is usually followed for employees working in departments whose workloads changes on a daily basis. A flexible work schedule does not mean that the employees can come and go at their will. A flexible work timing policy has to be specifically spelled out by the employer. Employees working in the banqueting departments have been given the liberty of working in flexible shifts depending on the schedule of the department. The role of this department is to cater to functions, corporate meetings / events. Since the timings for these events are not fixed and may vary on a daily basis it is thus permitted that the employees working in this department have the option of working in flexible hours so that they are benefitted and can make themselves available at varied timings when such events fall due. Thus they have the liberty of working in flexible timings thereby avoiding unnecessary staff during less busy hours of the day.

However, this facility cannot be extended to all the employees for obvious reasons. The provision of flexible work timings goes a long way in improving the WLB of the female staff members who are responsible for the good care of their family. The provision of flexible work arrangements for the valued staff members also provides an antidote to loss of skills and experience and high cost of recruitment and retention in a highly competitive industry.

Modeling WLB: Managers and senior managers need to model the work balance they'd like to encourage for their employees. When a manager who is on a vacation responds to email as if she is in the office, this sends a powerful message to employees about whether they need to do email while on vacation. The actions of senior leaders are heard and observed by employees. When a senior manager calls in for unimportant meetings while out-of-the-office, employees get the message. It affects their personal choices for work and life balance. It is often seen that the junior level employees tend to imitate their bosses.

Organizing family get-togethers: This is an important tool to address the issue of work family conflict. When the family members are invited to the hotels on the occasion of get-togethers they get an opportunity to interact with families of other employees and get a feel of the work culture of their spouse. This practice goes a long way in bringing the employees closer to their families. Bowling, picnics, outdoor movies and bonfires, game centers, ice skating, sports events like a baseball or football game etc is appropriate for families. Such relationships which are build on these events encourage the employees to stay with the organization for longer periods. Also a caring attitude of the management towards the employees family helps to instill motivation and feelings of commitment.

Realistic expectations: It is normal to expect that the employees will work hard for long hours, and weekends, but not all of the time. It's okay to expect employees to work long, hard hours during the peak season when there is highest client traffic for a timely product release, for example, on festivals, special occasions or at a trade show. But, employees can't sustain an extraordinary level of energy and long overtime hours as a constant work expectation. Employees will check out, burn out, and / or leave if long hours and extraordinary effort are the norm.

Up gradation of technology: As technology has taken over in all aspects of personal and work life, it is impossible to imagine life without technology. But technology has its harmful effects too. With employees electronically connected to the workplace 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in the office or out, work and life balance is a challenge. The responsibility of the management in setting expectation is very important. When an employee leaves for a vacation, it is okay to send an email that says he is on vacation with limited access to email. The management should honor the employee's personal space by not contacting him unless it is truly an emergency.

11.0 Conclusion

Work life balance has now been increasingly recognized as the responsibility of the management. It is suggested that consideration be given to the development of guidelines in order to ensure that working hours should not affect the WLB of employees. Flexible work policies need to be integrated into the overall strategic plan of the organisation. As the management support is necessary for effective work-life balance programmes, this need to be reflected in a positive organisational culture. The workplace must be responsive to employee needs. Effective training can be used as a tool to help the employees manage stress and handle multiple roles effectively. The labour force is becoming more diverse. Flexible working arrangements are becoming important aspect of quality of working life for many employees. In order to obtain optimal return on staff it is important to understand the interplay between work and family. Managers need to acknowledge that there are work-life balance issues that affect the quality of work. Adopting an employee-centric and integrative

approach are the critical success factors for implementation of a work–life balance program. The overall cost of replacing an employee involves recruitment, selection, training and some aspects. It may make more business sense to accommodate the employee’s work demands, rather than lose all that talent and skills. Tourism industry is an employment multiplier and the hotel sector being an important component of tourism, needs better HR practice in order to retain and utilize the talent by balancing work and life situation.

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