

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Anurag Shanker

PhD Scholar, University of Lucknow, Lucknow

ABSTRACT

“Flexible work arrangements” is a tactical section of the ecosphere of growing establishments. There has exponentially growth in organizations those give ductile work culture for employees. The ductile work culture contains various components that help the employees in improvement of the overall well-being individually and collectively. Discounts given under flexible work culture supports in balancing the work-life of employees remarkably.

KEYWORDS: *Flexible Work arrangements, Work-Life Balance, Well being, Stress*

INTRODUCTION

Many establishments offer “flexible work arrangements” to their employees [1]. “It is claimed that flexible work practices facilitate a balance in the work-life of employees” [2, 3, 4]. The paper, “flexible work arrangements” will be divided into its various components and an attempt has been made to establish their influence on employees’ ‘work-life balance’. A conclusion will be made how “flexible work arrangements” overall effect on “work-life balance” of the employees.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

“Flexible work arrangements” signify and facilitate an employee to change the program, timing and location of his work shifts. It also includes “flex-time working, compressed working hours, job sharing, sabbaticals, telecommuting and childcare provisions” [5, 6]. “Each of the arrangement could be used individually; or they can be combined to complement each other” [7].

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENT AND ITS’ COMPONENT

- 1 **Flex-time working** facilitates employees to choose timings and work shifts as per their convenience.
- 2 **Part-time working** allows employees to work less time with the organization than full time regular employees.
- 3 **Compressed working hours** is system in which an employees work for less day/s in a week instead of five/six.
- 4 **Job-sharing** a mechanism where two employees do the same job by splitting in equal no of hours and each has part-time status. They also divide the wages, leaves and fringe advantages.

- 5 **Sabbaticals** facilitate employees to take a break from the job due to various personal reasons without pay.
- 6 **Telecommuting** is a method where employees can continue the job through ITC without being physical attendance at the workplace.
- 7 **Childcare options** are a type of facility to support employees' with sufficient care for their children and family where employees and their family stay away from their home. Like crèche facility, dispensaries and day nursery for the children.

ORGANIZATIONS BENEFITS

Organizations establish “flexible work arrangements” as part of their “work-life balance” policy. “Flexible working systems help organizations in attracting, recruiting, and retaining highly qualified employees”[8]. “Flexible working leads to increase in productivity, profitability, reduced employee turnover and absenteeism rate”[9].

EMPLOYEES BENEFITS

The different ingredients of “**flexible work arrangements**” give advantages to the employees in various ways. **Felix-time** assist an employees to carry on their personal works without taking off from the work. **Compressed working hours** system gives extra free time to the employees to do their personal activities along with their job. **Job-sharing** gives employees adequate time to carry on their personal and professional tasks. **Sabbaticals** give employees a career break and help them achieve work-life balance. **Telecommuting** facilitates employees to work from home using ITC. It gives enough space to employees to utilize their time, save travelling and other expenses. **Childcare** facility extended by the employers in order to support their employees in achieving work-life balance, especially in the background of dual earning families. Therefore, the benefits by the various sectors of “flexible work arrangements” to the employees, help them in achieving work-life balance [10].

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance means “satisfaction and good functioning both at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict”. Work-life balance is a wide ranging concept about the proper balance between professional and personal life. It is a way to keep balance between professional and personal responsibilities and leisure. “However, it is challenging to achieve work-life balance in this unpredictable and rapidly changing world today” [11, 12, 13].

RELATIONS BETWEEN FWA AND WLB

In the proceedings of this paper, an strive has been made to discuss and define wide constituents of “Flexible work arrangements”. The flexible work systems may have different impact to person to person. Normally it suitability depend upon the various aspects connected to a human being. Employees who need ductile in their work schedules mainly have had other liabilities too and those are equally important. In some case at the age of retirements also, employee looks for the flexible work system to bring an ease in their life. In some cases due certain emergencies in life or due to some major events people intended to give proper time to manage those things, and in these circumstances people always prefer a flexible work systems. The flexible work system is definately a suitable way to manage a balance in the life. The feeling of having capability to manage the situation gives a confidence and happiness to a human. “It may therefore be fair to infer that

implementation of flexible work arrangements have a positive relationship with work-life balance. Opportunity for flexible work arrangement influence productivity, performance, job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment on the part of employees” [14].

“Flexi time give opportunities to the employees to accommodate their personal needs” [15].

“Part-time working empowers employees to work continuously while increasing their leisure time” [16]

“In compressed working, the employee can start work early and finish late so that they can build up additional hours and get a leave for a day from the work. This helps an employee enjoy a longer weekend / more time away from work without a reduction in pay. It promotes their mental and physical well being, which in turn leads to work-life balance”[17].

“In job-sharing, two employees share a job and split the remuneration as well as other fringe benefits proportionately. In case of personal exigencies, either one has the leeway to remain absent from work” [18].

“In telecommuting, all or part of the duties, tasks and responsibilities of the employees are carried out by them from their home using information and communication technology. It helps employees save on travelling cost and time, allow more flexibility in the working hours and consequently leads to increase in the job satisfaction” [19].

WLB AND WELL BEING

Physical health and wellness is connected with mental peace, satisfaction and well being. It can be noticed that the constituents of ductile work system and their advantages to the employees creates a healthy atmosphere at work place as well in the life of employees. Researchers have suggested that “physiological and mental well being significantly help to promote work-life balance” [20, 21].

DISCUSSION

A ductile work system has been adopted by the various organizations as per situation in order to get better output from the employees and enhance the profit margin of the organizations. It has been found by the research the flexible work systems facilitate employees to manage their responsibilities towards job and personal works. It gives a sense of mental satisfaction and peace and inspire them to give their best performances to the organization. The constituents of flexible work systems are put up to fulfill human needs, and it motivates employees to perform better.

CONCLUSION

The paper scrutinized the links between the arrangements of flexible work system and work-life balance. From this, it turns out that flexible work systems enhance physical and mental well-being of employees. It is indeed an ideal way to get more output from the employees and help them to maintain their work life balance with more commitments and job satisfactions. So it can be inferred that practice of flexible working gives positive influences on the lives of employees, working under regular and non-regular basis. Looking at the advantages of flexible work system, it can be said that this system suits both, employees and organizations if some exceptions are left.

REFERENCES:

- 1 Expert Group Meeting, "Work-Life Policy, Practice and Potential," Presentation to the Management Committee Office of the Focal Women in the United Nations, Office of the Focal Point for Women, United Nations, 2010.
- 2 P. Thomson, "The Business Benefits of Flexible Working," *Strategic HR Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2008, pp. 17-22. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14754390810853129>
- 3 E. Pruyne, M. Powell and J. Parsons, "Developing a Strategy for Employee Well being: A Framework for Planning and Action," Ash ridge Business School, Nuffield Health, 2012.
- 4 D. Hofacker and S. Konig, "Flexibility and Work-Life Conflict in Times of Crisis: A Gender Perspective," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 33, No. 9-10, 2013, pp. 613-635. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-04-2013-0042>
- 5 D. Torrington, S. Taylor, L. Hall and C. Atkinson, "Human Resource Management," Financial Times Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 2011.
- 6 D. Posserried and J. Plantenga, "Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, Working-Time Fit and Job Satisfaction," Tjalling C. Koopmans Research Institute, Utrecht, 2011.
- 7 H. Chung, "Flexibility for Whom? Working Time Flexibility Practices of European Companies," Tilburg University, Tilburg, 2009
- 8 R. Croucher and C. Kelliher, "The Right to Request Flexible Working in Britain: The Law and Organizational Realities," *European Journal of Comparative Law and Industrial Relations*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 2005, pp. 503-529.
- 9 C. Kelliher and D. Anderson, "Doing More with Less? Flexible Working Practices and Intensification of Work," *Human Relations*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 2010, pp. 83-106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0018726709349199>
- 10 Anon, "Flexible Working as Human Resource Strategy: Benefits to the Organization and its Personnel," *Strategic Direction*, Vol. 24, No. 8, 2008, pp. 9-11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02580540810884584>
- 11 S. Lewis and A. L. Humbert, "Work-Life Balance, Flexible Working Policies and the Gendered Organization," *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2010, pp. 239-254. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/02610151011028840>
- 12 M. Shapiro, C. Ingols, R. O'Neill and S. Blake-Beard, "Making Sense of Women as Career Self-Agents: Implications for Human Resource Development," *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 4, 2009, pp. 477-501. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.20030>
- 13 H. Lingard and V. Francis, "Managing Work-Life Balance in Construction," Spon Press, New York, 2009.

- 14 A.-K. Abendroth and L. den Dulk, "Support for the Work-Life Balance in Europe: The Impact of State, Workplace, and Family Support on Work-Life Balance Satisfaction," *Work, Employment, and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2011, pp. 234-256. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0950017011398892>
- 15 S. K. Lyness and K. M. Judiesch, "Can a Manager have a Life and a Career? International and Multisource Perspective on Work-Life Balance and Career Advancement Potential," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93, No. 4, 2008, pp. 789-805. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.789>
- 16 K. Lockett, "Work/Life Balance for Dummies," John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, 2012.
- 17 T. Looker, "Manage Your Stress for a Happier Life," Copyright Licensing Agency Limited, London, 2011.
- 18 G. Lowe, "Under Pressure: Implication of Work-Life Balance and Job Stress," Wilson Banwell PROACT Human Solutions, Kingston, 2006.
- 19 E. Pruyne, M. Powell and J. Parsons, "Developing a Strategy for Employee Wellbeing: A Framework for Planning and Action," Ash ridge Business School, Nuffield Health, 2012.
- 20 E. E. Kossek, T. Kalliath and P. Kalliath, "Achieving Employee Wellbeing in a Changing Work Environment," *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 33, No. 7, 2012, pp. 738-753. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01437721211268294>
- 21 R. N. Baptiste, "Tightening the Link between Employee Wellbeing at Work and Performance," *Management Decision*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2008, pp. 284-308.