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A STUDY ON THE EXSISTANCE OF WORKPLACE EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS WITH RESPECT TO THE MARRIED WOMEN SOFTWARE PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY IN BENGALURU

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Abstract

Information Technologies one of the fastest growing economic sector in India. Many view that this sector has empowered the women to the extent of being tagged as “New Indian Woman”. In the year 2012, Booz & Company, which is an international consulting firm released, “The Third Billion”, which highlighted the extent of economic power that women had attained in 128 countries worldwide. Some of the indicators that were included in their survey was related to the matters of equal pay for equal work, equality in terms of female managers and senior business leaders. In the survey carried out India rated at spot 115, which is very sad and there is a need for addressing the issues on a war footing. Though there is a comparative increase in the number of women in the workforce of the IT industry, it is noticed that most of the women workforce are seen at the bottom of the pyramid. Just because of their gender, the women encounter unique set of challenges at their workplace. Most of these problems can be attended to and solved by having employee workplace welfare programs. This paper tries to find out if the IT companies have workplace employee wellness program. In case the company has the employee wellness program, then an attempt is made to find out to what extent it is effective. The paper also makes an effort to check the level of agreement on the fact that “Effective Employee Wellness program can reduce workplace challenges” of the married women employees working as software professionals so that the IT corporate employers will work on it.

Key Words: Information Technology, wellness program, gender diversity, presenteeism

Introduction

There is a saying that “Healthy body leads to healthy mind, healthy mind leads to

healthy actions/behaviours, healthy behaviour in organizations will enhance the productivity of the organizations, and productive organizations are doing their business well”. What organizations need today are the employees who are healthy in all aspects with a healthy body and healthy

mind. Mind and body has a greater impact on behaviours and their activities at work. Here is where the concept of Workplace wellness of an individual wellbeing comes, keeping this interlink factor of the wellbeing of the employee at workplace results in wellbeing of the organisation, the employer or the organizations need to think about the wellness of their employees. Employee wellness is said to have a significant impact on the organization as well as employees performance. It has a greater potential to capture wider influences related to individual characteristics and behaviours, which in turn has an impact on the economic environment too. The workplace wellness program varies from organizations to organizations. It depends on what are the wellness programs that they offer. It could be all or a few of them. Basically the employee workplace wellness programs could be related to smoking cessation activities, psychological counselling, work life management program, prevention and management of certain illness before it starts or worsens and formulate activities within the workplace so that the employees are assisted in the form of Employee Assistant Programs. The workplace employee wellness programs intend to improve employee performance resulting from good health, it also reduces the stress levels and burnouts which are quite high in the software industry, and it intends to enhance morale of the employees. Though on the face it looks like a costly affair for the company, these programs are a win-win solution to both the employees as well as employers." Henry cites a study by the Washington State Health Care Authority documenting a nationwide three-to-one return on each



dollar invested in an employee wellness program.

Indian IT companies are growing exponentially, along with the growth is associated a number of challenges that the industry need to fix it, so that India will continue lead the world in IT manpower and services. Barry L. Brown, President of a Florida-based consulting group. "It's been my experience that a good supervisor will motivate, inspire, encourage and reward good performance. Poor management, of course, is just the opposite, only in multiples. Employees who do not have a direct connection with the company begin to lose all the reasons for wanting to do that little bit extra and take the additional time to make something right."

As per New Delhi (ILO NewsAnalysis), 13 February 2013, it is stated that Women in South Asia are far likely than men to have a job or probably looking for a job. While 80 per cent of men in the region are either employed or searching for a job, the number for women is much lower at 32%. These low rates are largely due to cultural attitudes and social norms about women in the workplace. As per ILO's, 2013 report on GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS, India's women participation rate in 2004-05 fell from 37 percent in the labour force. In the female labour participation, India is in the 11 position from the bottom out of the 131 countries from the available data. There are number of factors that have contributed to the imbalance in the work place diversity. Out of which psychological impact on employees directly impact productivity. In fact, research conducted by "The Centre for the talent and Innovation" has

brought out to the limelight that nearly 55% of the female Indian Employees encounter this problem in a routine manner, while most of them consider dropping out altogether from the workforce due to severe bias and unique workplace challenges to this section of the work force. With respect to married women most of the people at work place feel that they are burdensome to have them in their team, by this it is found very challenging for the married women working as software professionals in the IT firms to remain in the job and also get due recognition. McGuire and McDonnell (2008) in their research work found out that such employee wellness or welfare programs helps in significantly improving the intellectual level and self-confidence of the employees which in turn increase employee productivity.

Employee welfare is crucial for quality service delivery. If the welfare programs and services are inadequate, it would negatively impact the delivery of services and performance of the employees. Finger (2005) argued that improvement of employee morale and spirit can be done by addressing the issues of morale which in turn help in winning the satisfaction index of the married women working as software professionals.

Objectives of the Study:

On the basis of the above theoretical perspective, the following research objectives have been developed in the study to:

1. Find out if the IT companies have workplace employee wellness program.



2. In case workplace employee wellness program exists; to find out to what extent it is effective.
3. Check the level of agreement on the fact that "Effective Employee Wellness program can reduce workplace challenges" of the married women employees working as software professionals.
4. To offer suggestions on the basis of the findings of the study. So that, if any deficiencies or shortcomings identified can be rectified or minimized. By this individuals, industry as well as the nation at large is benefitted psychologically, socially and economically.

Review of Literature:

According to Healthy Workforce 2010 and Beyond, recommends the employers to implement employee wellness programs which says that health and productivity are "inextricably linked", and that workforce that is healthy leads to a healthy bottom line. The study also reveals that the employer can view the health of his employee in terms of productivity rather than as an exercise in health care cost management. With this study, there is a strong evidence that health status be it the physical or mental status or both of a worker can impair day to day work performance (e.g. presenteeism) and effect the job output and quality in a negative manner.

Spector (1997) has clearly brought out through his paper as to how much important it is for the organizations to create workplaces that will enhance the perfor-

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mance that could assist in lessening counterproductive behaviors at work. Therefore with respect to married women most of the people at work place feel that they are burdensome to have them in their team, by this it is found very challenging married women working as software professionals in the IT firms to remain in the job and also get due recognition. According to Gaebler." A more reliable workforce will inevitably translate into a smoother work cycle and a more robust bottom line." With respect to married women most of the people at work place feel that they are burdensome to have them in their team, by this it is found very challenging married women working as software professionals in the IT firms to remain in the job and also get due recognition. According to Gaebler." A more reliable workforce will inevitably translate into a smoother work cycle and a more robust bottom line." he need for wellness program is well appreciated by him. Sagar et al (2014) has highlighted the involvement of women in various activities. Therefore acknowledges the vital role played by women in uplifting family, society and nation at large. This also implies that she is involved in the organizational activities too with the changing times. Therefore it clearly indicates that there is a need to have workplace wellness programs that will be able to support them in all their endeavours and facilitate, help in the elimination or reduction of the unique kind of problems she will have to face in the due course of performance of her duties.

Satyam et al. (2014) in his paper identified that women at some work places suffer from sexual harassment. It could be

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more of the cases where the senior tries to influence the female junior/subordinate. Therefore the workplace wellness program will be able to guide or support the women to tackle this problem, in a more efficient way and also give the psychological and mental support and handling this problem more effectively

Cowling & Mailer (1992) opines through his research that welfare program is a corporate commitment program that implies to what extent they care for their employees at all levels,

Torjman (2004) says that workplace welfare programs will create a positive attitude in work which will lead to higher work performance within the organizations.

Krish (2009) in his research findings suggested that employee welfare facilities should be continuous innovational program and that calls for flexibility, thereby creating a conducive environment to the employee as well as the employer.

Data collection:

Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected from the respondents by adopting a face-to-face distribution of questionnaire to the respondents of this study in order to obtain higher response rate. The data for this study was collected using survey questionnaire.

Sampling Design

Sampling design includes the sampling unit, sampling population, sampling

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 method employee and the determination of the sample size. The sampling unit includes the place where the study was conducted. The study was conducted in Bangalore, the Capitalcity of Karnataka State, India. Two stage cluster sampling was adopted for the study. The sample size taken for the study is 390.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Due to rapidly changing paradigms of technology and the people involved, an IT sector can be considered as an entity subjected to rapidly changing paradigms. Good number of studies and statistics reveal that comparatively there is very less representation of workforce of women working in this sector compared to the huge work opportunities available in this sector, also in the assignments higher up the ladder. If this scenario exists in the industry which various studies have pointed

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out; it implies that there is definitely some challenges that the software married women work force is facing. This research aims at studying and finding out the existence of the workplace wellness program, the employees opinion related to usefulness of employees wellness program in reducing the workplace challenges is found out, also their opinion related to the effectiveness of the workplace wellness program in their organization which will benefit married software professionals directly or indirectly. After getting all the inputs, the obtained data is analyzed and possible suggestions and recommendations in this direction is put forth. With the inputs of this study, there will be scope for inculcation of workplace wellness programs so that the efficient married women software professionals working in IT industry will be able to give in their best to themselves as well as to the organization.

Findings:

The demographic profile of the sample of the respondents are given in table 1.

Table 1.

	Characteristics	No.of Respondents	Percentage
Age	Less than 25 years	250	64
	25-35 years	118	30
	35-45 years	20	05
	45-55 years	02	01
	55 and above	00	00
No .of years of experience in the current company	Less than three years	227	58
	3-5 years	115	30
	5-7 years	32	8
	7-10 years	16	4
	10 years and above	00	00
Educational qualifica-	Diploma	3	1.0

tion	Graduate	310	80
	Post Graduate	77	19
	M.Phil	0	00
	Doctorate	0	00
Annual Income	Less than 3 lakhs	154	39
	3-6 lakhs	183	47
	6-9 lakhs	34	09
	9-12 lakhs	17	04
	Above 12 lakhs	02	01

The researcher has made an attempt through the questionnaire to find out if the workplace employee wellness program exists in the companies, in case if it is there, then to find out to what extent it is effective. The researcher also has made an attempt to find out the opinion of the said category, if they agreed on the fact that workplace wellness program would help in reduction of workplace challenges for married women software professionals. Three questions were formulated for the purpose. For the first question stating “Does your company have workplace employee well-

ness program’, the respondents were asked to rate the factors in a three point scale for the question (1= yes, 2=don’t know, 3=No), and for questions on “the effectiveness of the employee welfare program and to elicit opinion related to the agreement of workplace wellness program in reduction of the workplace challenges “ five point scale was formulated from 1 to 5,(1 = Highly agree, 2= agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = Highly disagree). The results of the data collected are represented in the corresponding tables.

Q1. Does your company have workplace employee wellness program.

(1= yes, 2=don’t know, 3=No),

Table 2.

Sl.no.	Parameters	No.of respon- dents	Percentage%
1	Yes	245	62%
2	Don’t know	10	3%
3	No	135	35%
	Total	390	100

The table 2 denotes the presence of employee wellness program in the companies of the respondents working. 62 percent out of the total 390 respondents said that their company has employee wellness program

and 3 percent on the total respondents were unaware if such program exists in their company and 35 percent of the respondents said that their company does not workplace employee wellness programs.

Q 2. Do you agree that workplace employee wellness program is effective in your organization?

Table 3.

(1 = highly agree, 2= agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = Disagree and 5 = highly disagree).

Sl. No.	Parameters	No.of respondents	Percentage %
1.	Highly agree	0	0
2	Agree	109	44
3	Neutral	0	0
4	Disagree	136	56
5	Highly disagree	0	0
	Total	245	100

Table 3 denotes the agreement of the effectiveness of the workplace employee program in their organization. From table 2 it is observed that 245 respondents said that their company has employee wellness program, only such respondents were eligible to answer this question and the respondents who did not have employee wellness program in their organizations or did not know if the employee wellness

program exists in their organization were not eligible to answer this question. Therefore the number of respondents who were eligible to answer this question were only 245 out of 390 respondents. 44 percent out of the total 245 respondents agree that their company's wellness program is effective. Whereas 56 percent of the total respondents disagreed that the workplace wellness program in their organization is effective

Q3. Do you agree that effective employee workplace wellness program can reduce the workplace challenges for married women working as software professionals in the IT companies?

Table 4.

Sl. No.	Parameters	No.of respondents	Percentage %
1.	Highly agree	105	27
2	Agree	250	64
3	Neutral	10	0
4	Disagree	35	9
5	Highly disagree	0	0
	Total	390	100

Table 4 denotes the level of agreement on the fact that presence of effective workplace wellness programme can reduce the workplace challenges for married women working as software professionals in the IT companies. Out of 390 respondents 27 percent of them highly agreed, 64 percent

of the respondents agreed and 35 percent of the respondents disagree to the point.

Findings and Suggestions

The study reveals that;

1. More than 50 percent of the IT companies have workplace em-

ployee wellness program but it is not enough, the reason being that all organizations should have this kind of a program which benefits the married women at large and also the organization as well. Therefore the organizations all by themselves should start such workplace wellness programs or the government should formulate a compulsory policy wherein there is a common minimum program to address the issues and implemented effectively.

well as attract good and efficient workers of this category.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

2. Though 62% of the companies had work place wellness programs the more than 50% of the employees stated that their workplace wellness program is not effective. Therefore the organizations should take necessary steps find out why it is not effective and formulate strategy to make it work effectively.
3. More than 90% of the employees out of 390 respondents agree that the workplace wellness program can help in reducing the workplace challenges for married woman, there is a need to take up this factor with full seriousness in order to tap the potential of the married women working as software professionals for the benefit of the organization as well as the individual. Therefore, it is necessary for all the IT companies to have effective workplace wellness programs as a strategy to retain efficient married women software professionals as

The universe for the study is Bengaluru only, hence, findings cannot be generalised beyond the universe. However the methodology, is replicable. The sample used in the study is only 390 and it may not be representative of more general population. This is a factor that limits the total generalization of the results. Large samples of populations can be taken in replicating and extending the research study. Though the instrument for the data collection was carefully evaluated for its construct validity and reliability, it is only possible to minimize the effect of the limitations on the quality of the data and analysis.

Conclusion:

This study on married women working as software professionals in the IT industry, have opined that workplace wellness programs is going to be very helpful to them. it is also found out that more 50 percent of the respondents surveyed from different organizations said that they do not have such programs . Therefore in the interest of the organizations as well as the workforce there is a need for the IT firms to step up in this direction and have a more competitive work environment which leads to competitive economic environment too.

“A company which has healthy atmosphere, will create healthy workforce who will in turn contribute to the good health of the company.”

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