

WORK LIFE IMBALANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR- A STUDY CONDUCTED AT NEST TECHNOLOGIES, TRIVANDRUM

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Abstract— HRM is the most crucial part of any organization. Because of the changing work scenarios, the complexity of HRM is also increasing. From the time where men used to earn and women used to take care of the household, a phase has arrived where both the male and female counter part of the family equally contribute to the family income. Along with this, a new concern has also emerged, that of the “work life imbalance”. It’s a condition where a person finds difficulty in hitting a proper balance between his professional and personal life. And with the increasing number of females working, the problem has become a matter of serious concern. Many find it very difficult to carry along their personal and professional lives together resulting in professional failures and breaking up of family relations. Many recent studies have brought out the alarming rates of divorces among IT couples and this is also one of the aftermaths of work life imbalances. Many also get into serious physical and mental ailments unable to handle their personal life and job together. Hence this topic has become very relevant in today’s work scenarios. In this article, an attempt has been made to throw light on the issues of work life imbalance and some reasonable solutions have been suggested to hit the proper balance between personal and professional life based on a study conducted at the IT major, NeST Technologies, Technopark, Trivandrum. The study was conducted on a sample of 100 employees among the total population of 1000 employees working in the Trivandrum office of NeST using a questionnaire.

Index Terms—Absenteeism, IT industry worldwide, IT industry in India, Productivity, Stress, Flexi-mode work, Work life balance

INTRODUCTION

According to Jody Thompson and Cali Ressler a good work life balance is achieved when there is ROWE or Result Oriented Work Environment. From these definitions we can say that, work-life balance is the equilibrium between the amount of time and effort somebody devotes to work and that given to other aspects of life. The expression was first used in the late 1970s to describe the balance between an individual's work and personal life. Its use became much predominant during late 1970s and 1980s. This is mainly because the number of female employees has increased and which had led many industries to sit up and take various measures to be provided for female employees. Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in a person’s life. Work life balance is measured mainly by using three factors:

- Time balance, which concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles.
- Involvement balance, meaning the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles.
- Satisfaction balance or the level of satisfaction with work and non-work roles.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To study the Work Life imbalance among the IT Professionals in India, identify the problems that it brings into their lives, both personal and professional, and suggest a few ways by means of which the organizations can help bring back the balance in work and in family life. A study has been done within a sample of 100 employees of NeST, Trivandrum for validating the concept and to arrive at conclusions.

REASONS FOR WORK LIFE IMBALANCE

There are various reasons for this imbalance and conflicts in the life of an employee. From individual career ambitions to pressure to cope up with family or work, the reasons can be situation and individual specific. The speed of advancement of information technology, the increasing competition in the talent supply market has led to a "Performance-driven" culture creating pressures and expectations to performance more and better every time.

PROBLEMS DUE TO WORK LIFE IMBALANCE

- Less productivity
- Higher rate of attritions among employees
- Absenteeism
- Failure to meet deadlines
- Will have very low or no social life
- Will not get time to look after family matters
- Will be stressed and always feels being under pressure

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ray & Miller (1994), Thomas & Ganster (1995) and Warren & Johnson (1995), in their work on the work life balance found that there is a very close association between family, friendly work environment and other factors and all these have a strong impact on the phenomenon like absenteeism, turnover, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. They also came out with the conclusion that successful managers are those people who were able to support their employees in their attempts to coordinate their work and family demands simultaneously. Such a work environment produced high levels of job satisfaction and reduced the turnover and absenteeism rates to a much considerable extent.

Perry-Smith et al (2000) found that Software's developers are considered the key occupation to examine in future studies of „knowledge workers. Keeping in mind the long hours working culture and 24/7 support employees in the IT industry are the ones which suffer the most from work-life conflict. It was found that interference of work with personal life has a considerable impact on work-related attitude for this group of workers. They state that work-life boundary variables affect trust in the organization which plays a mediational

role in these variables, relationship to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Even though employees in the IT industry are unique in their direction, market oriented and not likely to show attachment to a single organization. In such a case both employee and employer can gain by helping each other by accommodating approach to non-work commitments which may lead to greater organizational attachment.

J. Redmond et al. (2006) preferred „Work-Life Balance due to the fact that it encompasses the experiences and need of parents and non-parents alike, and are a more progressive theoretical framework in which to think about new ways of living and working that are satisfactory to all. In practice, it involves „adjusting work patterns so that everyone, regardless of age, race or gender can find a rhythm that enables them more easily to combine work and their other responsibilities and aspirations“ (Pillinger 2001: 1).

Manisha Purohit (2013), „A Comparative Study Of Work Life Balance In Various Industrial Sectors In Pune Region“ says work-life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "workaholics" (career and ambition) on the one hand and "lifestyle" (Health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development) on the other. It is the term used to describe practices in achieving a balance between the demands of employees' family (life) and work lives. Work-life balance initiatives designed to help employees balance their work and personal lives are not only an option, but also a necessity for many employers today. There is a need for organizations to adopt human resource strategies and policies that accommodate the work-life needs of a diverse workforce in the current business environment. This paper presents the results of the study on organizational policies and provisions regarding work-life balance of the employees, which was carried out among a cross-

section of leading corporate entities in Pune representing equally the four industrial sectors, namely, Manufacturing, Information technology, Educational and Banking sector. The results reveal the commonalities and differences in work-life balance provisions across the four sectors. The study ends with giving suggestions on how provision of work-life initiatives in a time of global economic slowdown needs a vibrant HR team that will innovate on existing practices making them cost-effective. Organizations can provide practical interventions rather than merely money-based strategies. Example, organizations could facilitate swapping of shift routines that will help facilitate work life concerns of the employees. Employees need to be more aware of their work-life priorities and strive for its attainment.

Nidhi Tewathia (2014), "Work-Life Balance in the IT Sector: A Case Study of Delhi" says that excessive pressure leads to stress. Many of the stressful life events are related to the workplace. Employees who start to feel the pressure to perform are likely to get caught in a downward spiral of increasing effort in order to meet rising expectations but no increase in job satisfaction. Many organizations in Delhi are trying to promote Work Life Balance (WLB) through initiatives which include flex times, part time work, provision of child care facilities etc. Yet, the respondents of this study have expressed their inability to balance professional and personal life. Gender aspect has also been considered vis-à-vis the variables of the study. Primary survey was conducted with a sample size of 150 IT employees of Delhi. The paper concludes by pointing out that WLB policies need to be implemented as much as possible in all industries, and on a wider basis in organizations that are currently using them in order to sustain the business performance.

Anuradha, Mrinalini Pandey (2015), "A Review of Work-Life Balance Practices Prevalent in Public Sector Undertakings in India" explains work-life balance has become an important issue in the twenty first century. Work and family life are two sides of the same coin as both are interconnected and interfere with each other. Increased work demands interfere with family life, and on the other hand, family demands interfere with the work-life of employees. Therefore, conflicts occur,

which negatively affect an employee's performance at work as well as at home. Looking at the trend, organizations have increasingly started to take an active interest in implementing practices that enable employees to cope with the work-life balance issues. The study attempted to explore the work-life balance practices of selected public sector undertakings and their impact on organizational performance. The finding suggested that public sector organizations in India have realized that work-life balance practices are crucial for organizational performance.

IT WORLDWIDE AND IN INDIA

IT Worldwide	IT in India
The IT sector of any nation is an important contributor to the overall economy and speaks of its growth. Relatively few countries possess all the factors necessary to support a thriving information technology (IT) sector, but the United States, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom provide the strongest environments for IT competitiveness. The industry expanded greatly with the rise of the personal computer in the mid-1970s, which brought computing to the desktop of the office worker. In subsequent years, it also created a growing market for games, applications, and utilities. There are several types of businesses in the software industry- Infrastructure software, enterprise software, security software etc. Other companies do contract programming to develop	India's IT services industry was born in Mumbai in 1967 with the establishment of Tata Group in partnership with Burroughs. The first software export zone SEEPZ was set up here way back in 1973, the old avatar of the modern day IT Park. More than 80% of the country's software exports happened out of SEEPZ, Mumbai in 80s. The Indian information technology (IT) industry has played a major role in placing India on the international map. The industry is mainly governed by IT software and facilities for instance System Integration, Software experiments, CADM, network services and IT Solutions. Over the years India has been the most favorable outsourcing hub for firm on a lookout to offshore their IT operations. The factors behind India being a preferred destination are its reasonably priced labor, favorable business ambiance and

unique software.	availability of expert workforce. India's domestic IT Market over the years has become one of the major driving forces of the industry.
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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The organization Network Systems and Technologies (P) Ltd Technologies which is located in Techno Park, Thiruvananthapuram is one of the highest employers of IT professionals in Thiruvananthapuram city. The study is to know about Work life imbalance among the IT professionals. It is done to know about how the employees manage their work life as well as their family life, whether they are able to cope up with the pressure they have from both family and work. Also to know how much the organization as such is doing its part in helping the employees to have a proper balance in their work and life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To learn about the instances of work life imbalance among the IT employees in India

- Whether employees are able to maintain a balance between their work life and family life
- To know how employees manage stress at the work and family life equally and whether they are able to have a good family life despite the pressures at work

METHODOLOGY

Nature of Study: The nature of study used for doing research in the given subject is descriptive.

Population: The employee strength which includes the managers, senior executives, executives, leaders and trainees and the total population is 1000. The sample space used for collecting data is about 10% of total number of employees i.e. is 100.

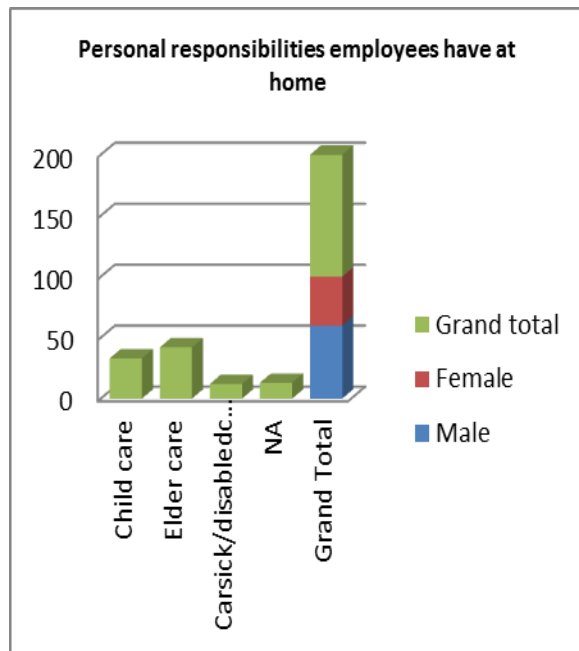
Sampling Method Used: Quota sampling technique is used for collecting data.

DISCUSSION

- Table showing the personal responsibilities employees have at home

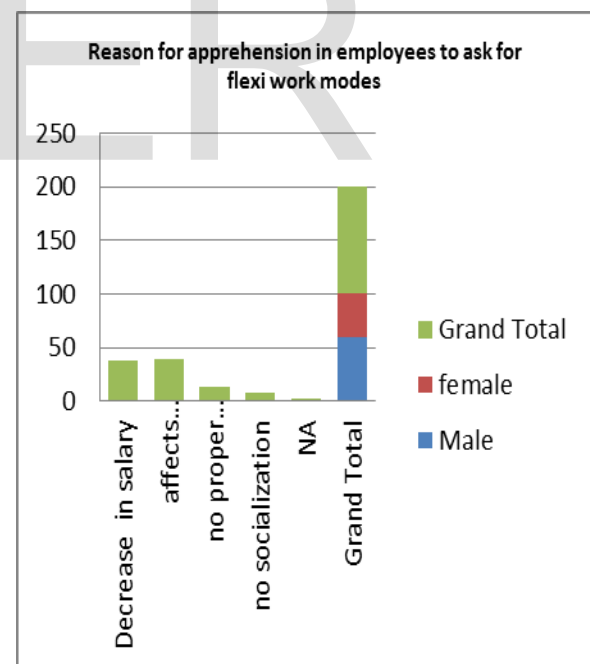
Personal Responsibility	Male	Female	Grand total
Child care	17 (51.5%)	16 (48.45%)	33
Elder care	29 (69%)	13 (30.95%)	42
Car-sick/disabled-child/adult	9 (75%)	3 (25%)	12
NA	5	8 (20%)	13

	(38.4%)		
Grand Total	60	40	100



2. Table showing the employee's reason of apprehension to ask for flexi work mode

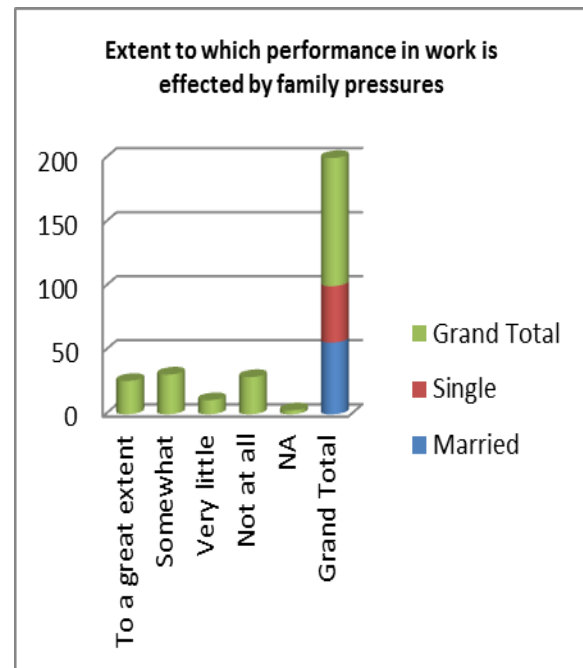
Reason for apprehending Flexi Work modes	Male	female	Grand Total
Decrease in salary	19(31.6%)	19(47.5%)	38
affects pay/promotion	23(38.6%)	16(40%)	39
no proper execution of work	12(2%)	1(2.5%)	13
no socialization	6(1%)	2(5%)	8
NA	-	2(5%)	2
Grand Total	60	40	100



1.

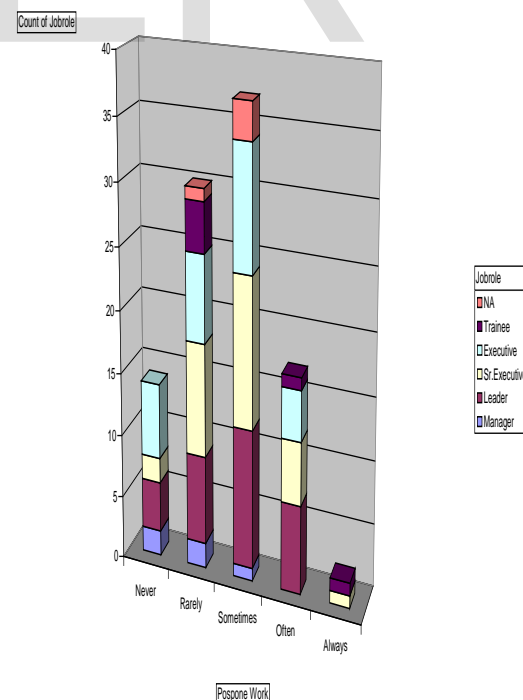
3. Table showing the amount by which the performance in work is being affected by burden from family life.

Performance	Married	Single	Grand Total
To a great extent	12 (46.15%)	14 (53.84%)	26
Somewhat	18 (58.06%)	13 (41.93%)	31
Very little	8 (14.12%)	3 (27.27%)	11
Not at all	16 (55.17%)	13 (41.93%)	29
NA	2 (6.67%)	1 (3.33%)	3
Grand Total	56	44	100



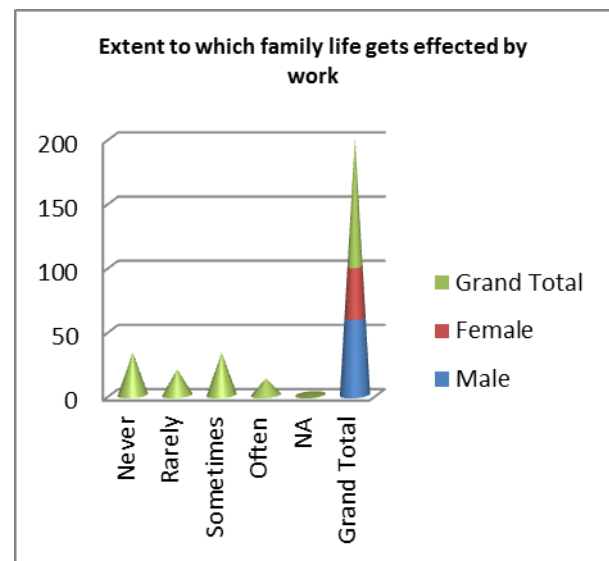
4. Table showing the extent to which employees had to postpone work due to family responsibilities.

Postpone Work	Manager	Leader	Sr. Executive	Executive	Trainee	NA	Grand Total
Never	2 (40%)	4(23.7%)	2(6.8%)	6(22.2%)	-	-	14
Rarely	2 (40%)	7(24.1%)	9(31.8%)	7(25.9%)	4(6.67%)	1(2.5%)	30
Sometimes	1 (20%)	11(37.9%)	12(41.3%)	10(37.0%)	-	3(7.5%)	37
Often	-	7(27.1%)	5(17.24%)	4(14.8%)	1(6.67%)	-	17
Always	-	-	1(3.4%)	-	1(6.67%)	-	2
Grand Total	5	29	29	27	6	4	100



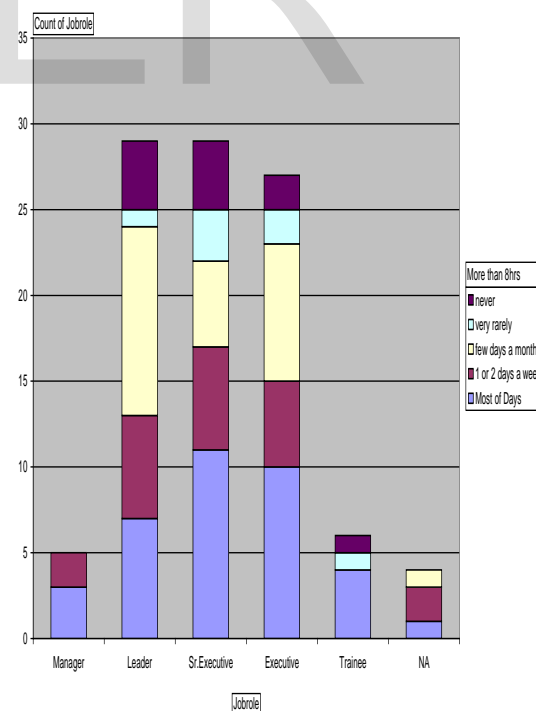
5. Table showing whether family life of employees is getting affected by work

Family Life	Male	Female	Grand Total
Never	23(38.3%)	10(25%)	33
Rarely	12(20%)	8(20%)	20
Sometimes	16(26.6%)	17(42.5%)	33
Often	8(13.3%)	5(12.5%)	13
NA	1(1.6%)	-	1
Grand Total	60	40	100



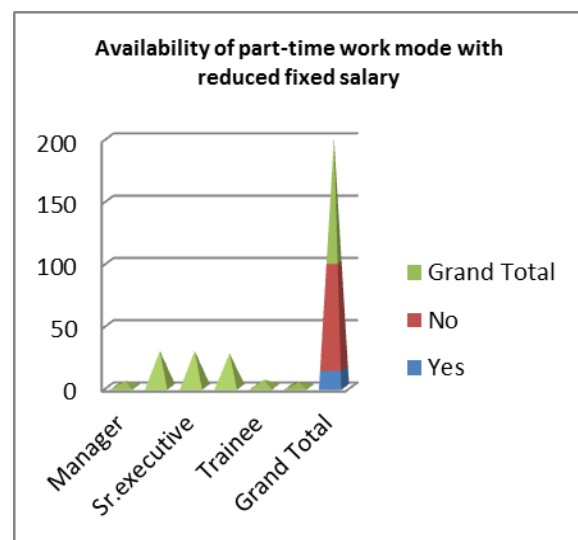
6. Table showing the number of days in a month where employees have to work more than 8 hrs

Job role	Most of the Days	1 or 2 days in a week	few days a month	very rarely	Never	Grand Total
Manager	3 (8.3%)	2 (9.5%)	-	-	-	5
Leader	7 (19.4%)	6 (28.5%)	11 (44%)	1 (4.2%)	4 (36.3%)	29
Sr.Executive	11 (30.5%)	6 (28.5%)	5 (20%)	3 (42.8%)	4 (36.3%)	29
Executive	10 (27.7%)	5 (23.8%)	8 (32%)	2 (28.5%)	2 (18.18%)	27
Trainee	4 (11.1%)	-	-	1 (14.2%)	1 (14.2%)	6
NA	1 (2.7%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (4%)	-	-	4
Grand Total	36	21	25	7	11	100



7. Table showing the availability part time work mode with reduced fixed salary in the office.

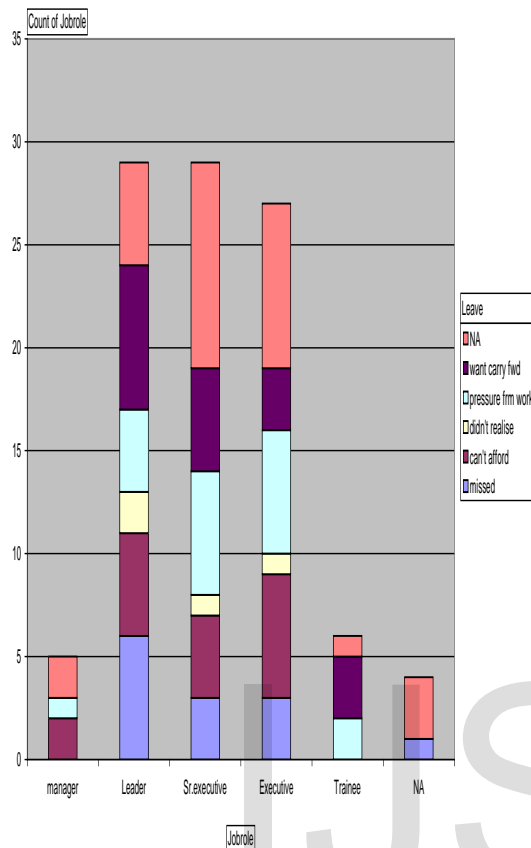
Job role	Yes	No	Grand Total
Manager	-	5(5.8%)	5
Leader	5(33.33%)	24(28.2%)	29
Sr.executive	4(26.67%)	25(9.41%)	29
Executive	5(33.33%)	22(25.88%)	27
Trainee	1(6.67%)	5(5.8%)	6
NA	-	4(4.7%)	4
Grand Total	15	85	100



8. Table showing the reason for not using the leave provision given to employees

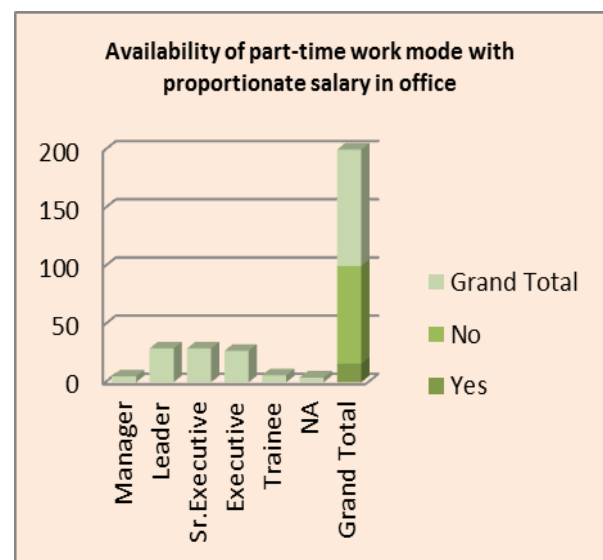
Job role	Misused	Fear of pay loss and job insecurity	Didn't realize	Pressure from work	Want to carry forward	NA	Grand Total
Manager	-	2(11.7%)	-	1(5.26%)	-	2(6.89%)	5
Leader	6(46.15%)	5(29.41%)	2(50%)	4(21.05%)	7(38.8%)	5(17.24%)	29
Sr. executive	3(23.07%)	4(23.52%)	1(25%)	6(31.57%)	5(27.77%)	10(34.48%)	29
Executive	3(23.07%)	6(35.29%)	1(25%)	6(31.57%)	3(16.67%)	8(27.5%)	27
Trainee	-	-	-	2(10.52%)	3(16.67%)	1(3.44%)	6
NA	1(7.6%)	-	-	-	-	3(10.34%)	4
Grand Total	13	17	4	19	18	29	100

d									
Total									



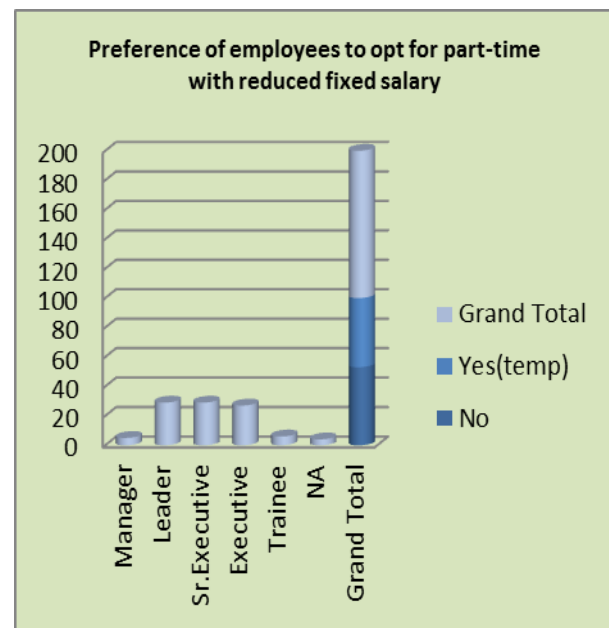
9. Table showing the availability of part time work mode with proportionate salary in office.

Job role	Yes	No	Grand Total
Manager	-	5(5.95%)	5
Leader	5(31.25%)	24(28.57%)	29
Sr.Executive	4(25%)	25(29.76%)	29
Executive	6(37.5%)	21(25%)	27
Trainee	1(6.25%)	5(5.95%)	6
NA	-	4(4.7%)	4
Grand Total	16	84	100



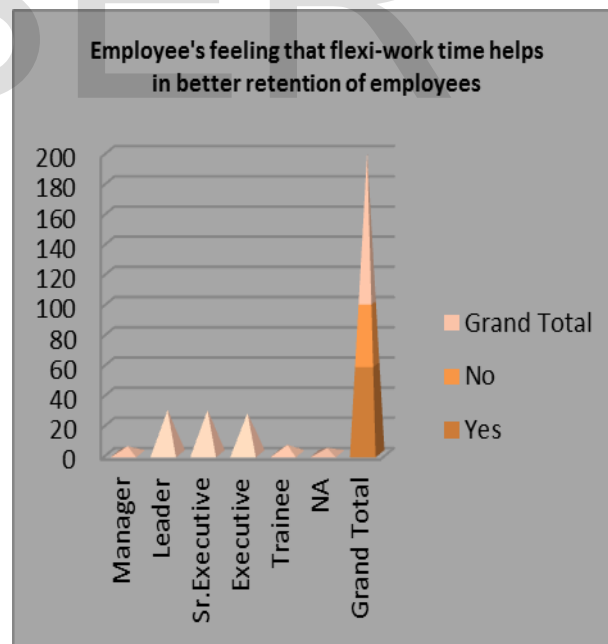
10. Table showing the preference of employees to opt for part time with reduced fixed salary

Job role	No	Yes(temp)	Grand Total
Manager	4(7.54%)	1(2.12%)	5
Leader	16(30.18%)	13(27.5%)	29
Sr.Executive	15(28.30%)	14(29.7%)	29
Executive	12(22.64%)	15(31.91%)	27
Trainee	2(3.77%)	4(8.51%)	6
NA	4(4.54%)	-	4
Grand Total	53	47	100



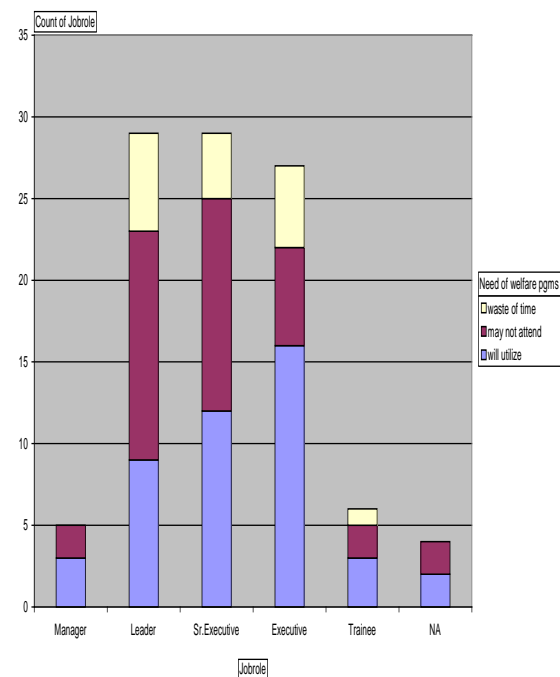
11. Table showing whether employee feels that flexi mode work time helps in better retention of employees.

Job role	Yes	No	Grand Total
Manager	3(5%)	2(4.8%)	5
Leader	18(30.5%)	11(26.8%)	29
Sr.Executive	15(25.4%)	14(34.14%)	29
Executive	15(25.4%)	12(29.2%)	27
Trainee	4(6.7%)	2(8%)	6
NA	4(6.7%)	-	4
Grand Total	59	41	100



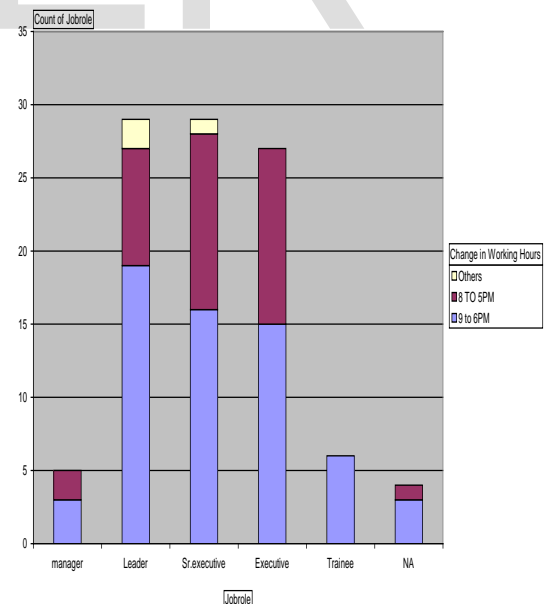
12. Table showing employees' attitude towards having a welfare program

Job role	will utilize	may not attend	waste of time	Grand Total
Manager	3(6.66%)	2(5.3%)	-	5
Leader	9(20%)	14(35%)	6(57.5%)	29
Sr.Executive	12(26.66%)	13(33.33%)	4(25%)	29
Executive	16(35.55%)	6(15.38%)	5(31.25%)	27
Trainee	3(6.66%)	2(5.13%)	1(6.25%)	6
NA	2(4.4%)	2(5.13%)	-	4
Grand Total	45	39	16	100



13. Table showing preference of working hours by employees

Job role	9 to 6PM	8 TO 5PM	Others	Grand Total
Manager	3(4.8%)	2(5.71%)	-	5
Leader	19(30.64%)	8(22.85%)	2(66.67%)	29
Sr.executive	16(25.80%)	12(34.29%)	1(33.33%)	29
Executive	15(24.19%)	12(34.29%)	-	27
Trainee	6(9.68%)	-	-	6
NA	3(4.83%)	1(2.8%)	-	4
Grand Total	62	35	3	100



SUGGESTIONS

- The organization should implement good work life balance policies and should also

see that all employees have sufficient awareness about the policies

- The leave system can be made more liberal so that the employees may get time to spend more time with their family
- The company can consider introducing flexi mode work systems such as part time work with reduced or proportionate salary, flexi attendance and flexi leave system and also provision for employees to work from home under certain circumstances
- A small amount of concern from the employer can create a huge sense of belongingness among the employees towards their organizations. Certain measures like good insurance plans, subsidized food plans, child care facilities (for working women with small babies) etc can make a real difference in the employees' attitude. The study revealed that even the freedom to dress up as per one's convenience can also bring in employee satisfaction and reduce stress.
- In companies like NeST, where thousands of employees are working, providing financial planning services to employees is also a good option to think of. Many a times, the employees quit organizations in search of better packages to meet their financial liabilities even though the organizations provide a good balance in terms of career and family life. If organizations think of entering into a tie up with some banks or financial institutions to provide financial services to their employees at reduced rates, the employees not only feel satisfied, but tend to remain in the organization for longer duration. This also reduces their work life imbalance by bringing in more peace in their family atmosphere due to reduced financial stress.
- Welfare programs such as counseling, on the job training etc may be considered to know about the problems of employees and formulate solutions
- Employee cultural and welfare activities may be conducted regularly to break from work pressures

CONCLUSION

The study throws light into the work life balance issues of the organization and reflects the general industry scenario. The organization needs to bring in more policies to enable better work life balance and thereby facilitate better productivity. There also seems to be a lack of awareness and usage of the existing policies aimed at better work life balance. The problem of work life imbalance appears to be a matter of huge concern when looked from an outsider's point of view and so are their aftermaths. But the solutions are very simple and easy to implement. Just a little cooperation from both employer and employees and proper communication and integration and the workplace becomes the best place to burst out your pressures. Beyond all the efforts from the part of organizations, it is the support of the family which matters the most and it is one of the most lacking things in India, especially for the Indian working women. If the family support and employer support is there, the problem of work life imbalance will no longer be a problem.

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