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### CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
<a href="#">1</a>	<b>Impact of Radially Non-Symmetric Multiple Stenoses on Blood Flow through an Artery.</b> Sapna Ratan Shah	<a href="#">1-16</a>
<a href="#">2</a>	<b>Health Inequality in India.</b> Mr. Shashidhar Channappa, Dr. Kodandarama and Ms. Amrita Mukerjee	<a href="#">17-32</a>
<a href="#">3</a>	<b>Growing Prospective of Services Industry in and Round India.</b> Ms. G. E. Barkavi and Mr. M. Marudha Durai	<a href="#">33-51</a>
<a href="#">4</a>	<b>Impact of Selling Expenses on Net Sales in Pharmaceutical Companies of India.</b> Dheeraj Nim and Silky Janglani	<a href="#">52-73</a>
<a href="#">5</a>	<b>Work-life Balance in BPO Sector.</b> Mr. Rajnish Ratna, Mrs. Neha Gupta, Ms. Kamna Devnani and Ms. Saniya Chawla	<a href="#">74-107</a>
<a href="#">6</a>	<b>A study on Causes of Failure of Training Programs at Different Industries at Chhattisgarh: Deficiency in Understanding Training Need Analysis by the Training Managers.</b> Dr. Anup Kumar Ghosh and Dr. Monika Sethi	<a href="#">108-125</a>
<a href="#">7</a>	<b>Forecasting Production of Automobiles in India using Trend Models.</b> Dr. A. Vijayakumar	<a href="#">126-148</a>
<a href="#">8</a>	<b>India and Global Climate Change Regime: Issues; Agreements and Differences.</b> Pankaj Dodh	<a href="#">149-169</a>
<a href="#">9</a>	<b>'OPHIOLGY OF INDIA': Snakes, Colonial Medicine and Orientalism.</b> Mr. Rahul Bhaumik	<a href="#">170-193</a>
<a href="#">10</a>	<b>Global Financial Crisis: Media Perspectives.</b> Dr. Chandra Shekhar Ghanta	<a href="#">194-209</a>
<a href="#">11</a>	<b>A Study of Growth of Entrepreneurship.</b> N. Suthendren and DR. B. Revathy	<a href="#">210-228</a>
<a href="#">12</a>	<b>Innovative Management of Microgeneration Technology in UK Residences.</b> S. Binil Sundar	<a href="#">229-256</a>
<a href="#">13</a>	<b>Implementation of Image Steganography Using Least Significant Bit Insertion Technique.</b> Er. Prajaya Talwar	<a href="#">257-273</a>

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**Title**

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN BPO SECTOR**

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**Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The role of work has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. Throughout the years, the role of work has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed. Today, work still is a necessity but it should be a source of personal satisfaction as well. One of the vehicles that assists in providing attainment of personal and professional goals is work- life benefits and programmes. The purpose of the paper is to give an indication of how an organization's work life balance policies assist its employees in balancing their work and life responsibilities and to explore the two-way interaction between personal relationships and paid work in order to provide information to employers.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Exploratory Research is used during the study. The data was collected using two questionnaires by 180 employees from three leading BPO company in NCR (60 each ). The first questionnaire was about various policies available within an organization and to what extent are they assisting employees in maintaining the work-life balance. The second questionnaire was aimed at exploring as to how people feel their work and personal relationships affect each other, and what workplaces could be doing to reap the benefits of good personal relationships.

**Findings:** This report summarizes the findings of surveys for employees conducted in A, B and C. It shows that some of our sample population, both men and women, place a higher priority on their relationships than their paid work with nearly 30% having turned down a job, promotion or transfer because it would impact badly on their relationship.

**Practical Implication:** This project gives a historical perspective, data and possible solutions – for organizations and employees alike –to work-life balance. It offers the perspective that human resource professionals can assist their companies to capitalize on these factors by using work – life initiatives to gain a competitive advantage in the market place.

**Key Words:** Personal and Professional Goals, Personal Satisfaction, Work Life Balance, Work life balance policies and Work and life responsibilities.

**Introduction:**

Work-life balance is defined as being about “effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and other activities that are important to people.” It is not about saying work is wrong or bad, but that, “it shouldn’t crowd out other things that matter to people, like time with family, participation in community activities, voluntary work, personal development, leisure and recreation.” There is no “one size fits all solution.” The “right” balance is a very personal thing that differs for different people at different stages of the life course. While for some, the issue is having too much work, others do not have enough. It is a state of equilibrium in which the demand’s of both a person’s job and personal life are equal. It means different things to different groups, and the meaning often depends on the context of the conversation and speaker’s viewpoint. Work life balance has become increasingly important for a number of social and economic reasons that are making. Organizations think about how they work and to match their business needs with the way their employees work. Government think about how people balance paid and unpaid work and care. Individuals think about the role work has and will have at different stages of their lives and want to achieve a better balance between work and home life. Customers expect to have goods and services available outside traditional working hours. Effective work-life balance policies are valuable to business and organizations for a number of reasons including reduced staff turnover rates, becoming a good employer or an employee of choice, increased return on investment in training as employees stay longer, reduced absenteeism and sick leave, improved morale or satisfaction, greater staff loyalty and commitment and improved productivity. Employees in companies already implementing work-life balance practices enjoy significant benefits such as being able to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at home, work and in the community without guilt or regret, being able to work in flexible ways so that earning an income and managing family/ other commitments becomes easier and being part of a supportive work-place that values and trusts staff. An employer’s commitment to work-life initiatives is influenced by the perception of whether or not such initiatives have a positive return on investment. In recent years, employers have increasingly realized that the quality of employee’s personal and family life impacts work quality and that there are concrete business reasons to promote work and family integration. Both diversity and work-life initiatives promote employee commitment, improve productivity, lower turnover, result in fewer employee relations challenges, and decrease the likelihood of unethical business



practices. The basic outline, as it has emerged during the past few years, calls for workers to commit their best contributions and greatest energies to the job, in return for interesting work, respectful treatment, developmental opportunities, and an environment that responds to individual needs. Before establishing work-life initiatives, it is essential to know if the organization's culture is open and ready to support work-life programs. As is the case with most change initiatives, work/life programs require support from senior management. In addition, for work environment to be ready for work/life benefits, it is helpful to have a corporate culture that encourages employees to have a look at business in an entirely different way and supports and accepts employees as individuals with priorities beyond the workplace. Communication about work-life programs is essential. Although an organization may offer a rich menu of work-life benefits, the desired effect-yielding positive business results, is unlikely to occur if employees do not know about the programs or understand them. If a company already offers work-life benefits, the next step may be to repackage and recommunicate them to the employees to see how these benefits offer ways to manage work-life conflict. In addition, developing a human resource strategy that is clearly integrated with the company's mission, will demonstrate how committed the organization is, to the employees needs.

Indian IT and ITES-BPO industry have created greater variety of jobs and higher pay for people. This industry has provided opportunity to the educated middle-class Indian to prosper and get a respectable livelihood in this country. This increased the IT and ITES-BPO employees' disposable income, owning a flat/house, car etc., at young age, but there is a rising concern on the flip side of this industry - the long-working hours, erratic work schedules and stress-filled lives. This takes a toll on the health and safety of the employees. Companies in this industry are promoting flexible working hours, but most of the employees' clock over 60 hours of work in a week compared to the mandatory 40-48 hours that are a precedent in Europe and US. This leads the employees to be a victim of the problems like physical and mental health issues, absence of personal life, inability to balance their priorities and frequent job change. While erratic eating habits make call centre staff more prone to cardiovascular diseases, prolonged sleeplessness has been found to cause insomnia, fatigue, disorientation and depression of immune function. Besides the health problems, there is an increase in problems in personal relationships as well, due to inability to manage work-life balance. Issues of divorce, work-life balance and parenting top the list. There needs to be a change in the mindset of expecting 12-16 hours a day to

productive 8-hours among the different stakeholders of the industry. There needs to be a cultural change in the mindset of the employees at different levels in the organization – to work towards perfect work-life balance. The companies in this industry need to pursue the attitude of providing/ensuring a good work-life balance to their employees.

### **Review of Literature:**

**Bloom, Nick , Kretschmer, Tobias and Van Reenen, John' (2011)**, study the determinants and consequences of family-friendly workplace practices (FFWP) using a sample of over 450 manufacturing firms in Germany, France, U.K., and U.S. We find a positive correlation between firm productivity and FFWP. This association disappears, however, once we control for a measure of the quality of management practices. We further find that firms with a higher proportion of female managers and more skilled workers, as well as well-managed firms, tend to implement more FFWP. Conversely, a firm's environment does not have a significant impact on the FFWP it provides. **Ten Brummelhuis, Lieke L. & van der Lippe, Tanja . (2010)**, encompasses a wide variety of employees with specific needs and resources when it comes to balancing work and life roles. Our study explores whether various types of work-life balance support measures improve employee helping behavior and performance among single employees, employees with a partner, and employees with a partner and children. Using a sample of 482 employees at 24 organizations, the results showed that the organization's work-family culture improved work performance among parents but reduced performance among singles. Singles' work outcomes improved, however, when they had access to flexible work arrangements, whereas couples benefited from their supervisors' social support. The results stress the importance of the employee's household structure when considering appropriate support for balancing work and life roles. **Impact of Family Friendly Policies on Employees' Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention (A study on work-life balance at workplace).** **Bilal, Muhammad , Zia-ur-Rehman, Muhammad and Raza, Irfan . (2010)** , says that Work-life conflict has a damaging effect on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, productivity turnover, and absenteeism. On an individual level, work-life conflict is associated with employee burnout, mental health issues, substance abuse, and diminished family functioning. Thus, work-life balance is an important issue to the Banking industry, in terms of both organizational



effectiveness and occupational health. Long and inflexible work hours are the most consistent predictor of work-life conflict among Banking employees, particularly those working in office. There is considerable resistance to the adoption of new ways of scheduling work within the banking industry. This paper describes the post hoc evaluation of a compressed work week (reducing the length of the working week, but increasing the length of the working day) in a case study. Quantitative and qualitative data are presented to demonstrate the beneficial impact of the initiative on employees' work-life balance. The evaluation provides prima facie evidence that alternative work schedules can improve Banking employees' work-life balance, creating benefits for Banking employees and corporate organizations. The paper concludes that project alliances provide an ideal environment in which work-life balance initiatives can help to create high-performance work systems in the Banking sector. Colley, Linda . (2010) , talks about that Work-life balance is one of the leading contemporary issues in the Australian employment environment, driven by both employee demands and employer desire to attract employees in a tight labour market. This article is about the important issue of employee experiences of work-life balance, and uses a public sector case study to consider progress and identify issues yet to be resolved. The research considers the extent of the work-life balance policy framework in the case study agency, employees' awareness of their work-life balance options, and employee perceptions about access to flexible working arrangements. The research finds that the agency has a solid policy framework and reasonably high levels of awareness. But it identifies a gap between employees' awareness and their perceptions of access, and uncovers many local-level barriers to access to flexible working arrangements. The article concludes that, to ensure employees have access to work-life balance, the agency should shift its focus to implementation of the policy framework through activities such as education and culture change activities.

**Darrat, Mahmoud , Amyx, Douglas and Bennett, Rebecca (2010)**, linkages between and effects of work--family conflict and salesperson deviance behaviors have not received adequate attention in the marketing literature. This is surprising given the profound academic and practical implications that could be derived from further research in the area. Research suggests that an alarming 40 percent of sales reps admit to engaging in workplace deviance and 66 percent did not feel that deviant conduct would result in significant punishment. This study examines work--family conflict as a primary antecedent of salesperson deviance. Salespeople experiencing increased divergence between work and family roles will likely react by violating organizational



norms that will inevitably affect key organizational outcomes. **Kreiner, Glen E., Hollensbe, Elaine C. and Sheep, Mathew L. (2009)**, investigated how people manage boundaries to negotiate the demands between work and home life. We discovered and classified four types of boundary work tactics (behavioral, temporal, physical, and communicative) that individuals utilized to help create their ideal level and style of work-home segmentation or integration. We also found important differences between the generalized state of work-home conflict and "boundary violations," which we define as behaviors, events, or episodes that either breach or neglect the desired work-home boundary. We present a model based on two qualitative studies that demonstrates how boundary work tactics reduce the negative effects of work-home challenges. **Sachitanand, Rahul. (2007)**, presents information on the changing work environment for woman workforce in the Information Technology (IT) industry in India. Work-life balance is the new incentive for women in the IT sector. As more and women are coming into the workforce, child-friendly policies are gaining importance at these organizations. Technology major Infosys has been the pioneer in this changing scenario.

### **Research methodology:**

#### **Research Objectives:**

The objectives of this study are:

- 1) To give an indication of how an organization's work life balance policies assist its employees in balancing their work and life responsibilities and to provide an indication as to how the organization's policies could be improved.
- 2) To explore the two-way interaction between personal relationships and paid work in order to provide information to employers and to know what workplaces could be doing to reap the benefits of good personal relationships.

#### **Data Collection:**

a) **Primary research:** The data was collected using two questionnaires by 180 employees from three leading BPO company of NCR (60 from each company). The first questionnaire was about

various policies available within an organization and to what extent are they assisting employees in maintaining the work-life balance. The second questionnaire was aimed at exploring as to how people feel their work and personal relationships affect each other, and what workplaces could be doing to reap the benefits of good personal relationships.

**b) Secondary Research:** Secondary research was also collected through various sources like newspapers, books, magazines, Internet, etc and used for certain aspects of the research.

### **Statistical Tools:**

**a) Sampling Type: Random Sampling**

**b) Research Design:** Exploratory Research Design is used during the study. Main purpose is that of formulating a problem for more precise investigation. The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights. Flexibility in research design is needed because the research problem is transformed into one with more precise meaning in exploratory studies, which may necessitate changes in the research procedure for gathering relevant data.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation:**

The design of the survey is structured around the three basics of an organization's need to have in place to effectively accommodate the employee's work-life balance:

- It must have institutionalized work-life balance policies;
- Its employees must be aware of the existence of such policies;
- Employees must be able to fairly and appropriately access these policies.

Based on the above-mentioned themes, the survey examines:

- Current organizational policies
- Dissemination and awareness of policy information
- Prevailing work place culture with regards to work-life balance issues.

In addition to this, the survey examines how important are the work life balance policies for the employees. The survey examines four types of policies:

- Leave arrangements (e.g. carers leave, study/training leave)
- Policies relevant to parenting and pregnancy
- Flexible work arrangements (e.g. job sharing, flexi-time)
- Additional work provisions (e.g. counseling services, health programmes)

The survey for employees examines four major concepts:

- The workplace culture;
- Employee's awareness of work-life balance policies;
- The importance of these policies to the employees;
- The formality of these policies

The data interpretation is done on two main factors on the types of policies available in various organizations. The factors that are taken into consideration here are awareness and importance of a particular policy.

#### **a) Awareness of Policies**

The mean awareness score of each organization was taken for each category of policies. The score is then compared with the normative data, or standardized score, in order to know the level of awareness of various types of policies in each organization. The awareness score indicates how aware the employees, of the policies offered, in an organization are. The awareness was calculated on a scale of 0-2, depending upon the replies of the employees. Awareness scores are provided for four categories of policies, including leave arrangements, parenting and pregnancy policies, flexible work arrangements, and additional work provisions.

#### **b)Importance of Policies**

This score assesses the importance of work-life balance policies to employees in their personal lives, and in general, regardless of whether the person will ever use the policy. This can further



help in knowing how employees view each policy, and whether they expect its high availability or being a necessity at the work place, which can be known by its importance rating. The importance was marked on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being given to very unimportant policy and 5 being given to very important policy.

Scoring range for **importance** of various policies is as follows:

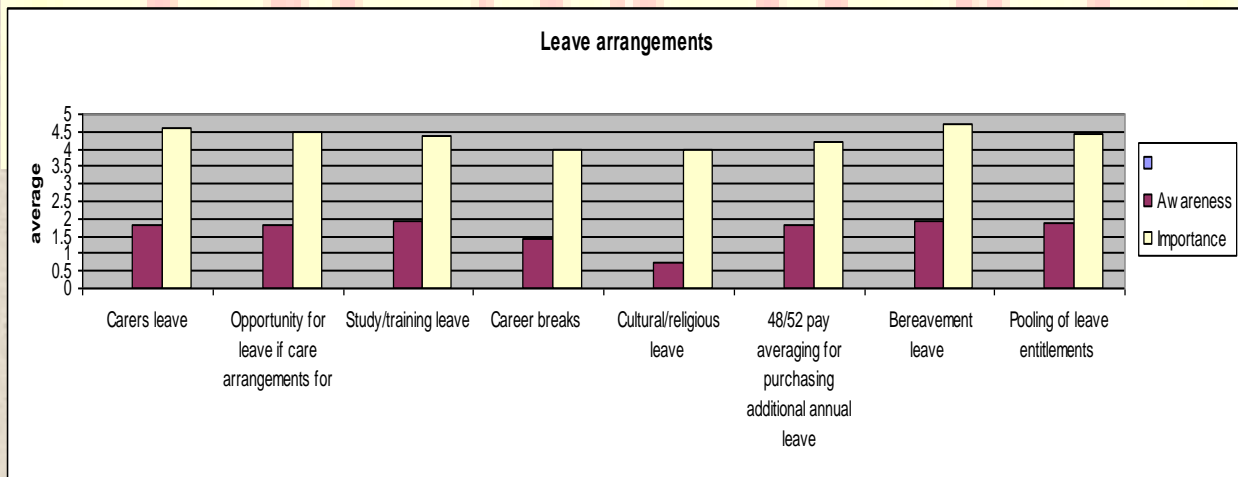
- An average score of closer to 2.5 indicates the policy is of low importance to the majority of the employees.
- An average score of closer to 3.5 indicates that the policy is of medium importance to the majority of the employees.
- An average score of closer to 5 indicates the policy is of high importance to the majority of the employees.

**1. Leave arrangements:**

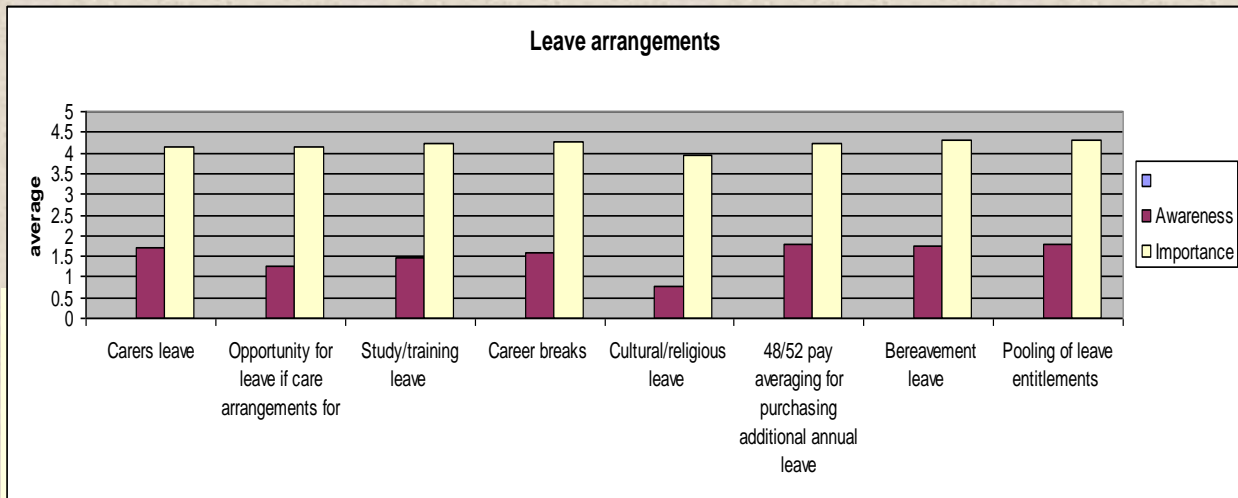
The scoring range for **awareness** of leave arrangements is:

- Below 0.6= low awareness
- 0.6 to 1.5(inclusive)=average awareness
- larger than 1.5=high awareness

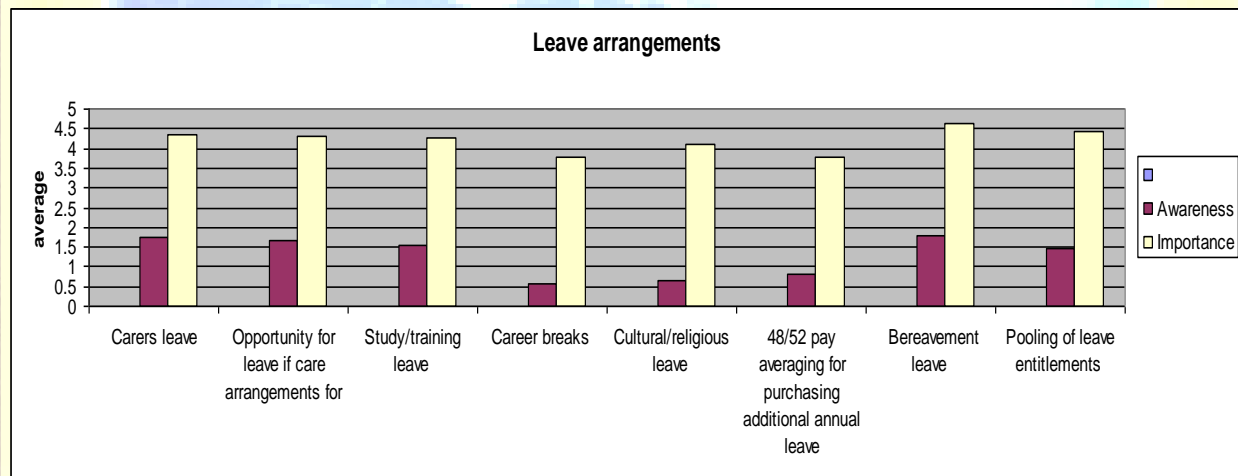
**Company A**



**Company B**



**Company C**



The data collected, in general showed that employees who have been working in organization for less than one year were less aware of the availability of the different work-life balance policies. The employees with caring responsibilities for children, rate leave arrangements as more important than those who don't have such kind of responsibilities. Also, women rate leave arrangements more important than men. It is visible that the employees in all the three organizations were significantly more aware of the carers leave, study/training leave and bereavement leave than that of cultural or religious leave. It was also found out that there was not

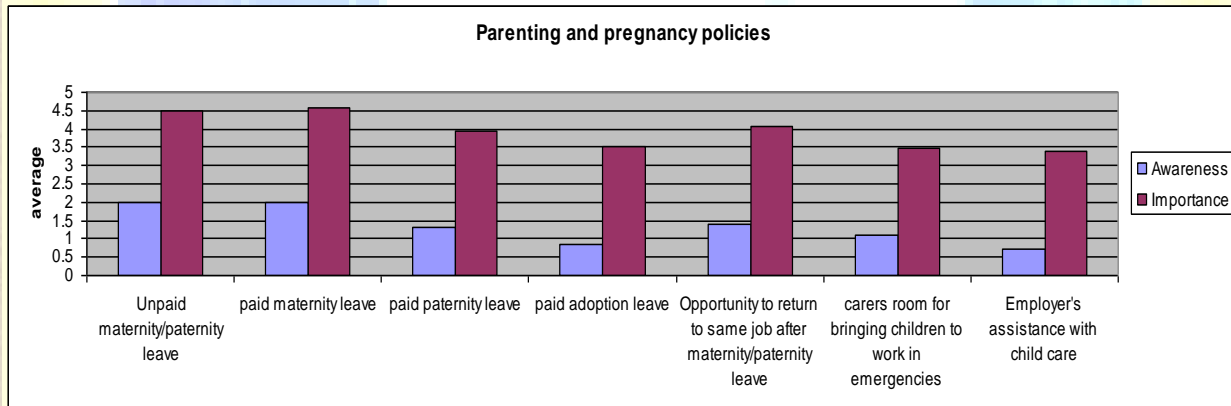
very high awareness about the career breaks (allowing employees to negotiate a fixed period of up to several years away from work, to undertake study, while keeping job at the end of the term), company C scored lowest with 0.566, followed by Company A and Company B at 1.4 and 1.56 respectively. The overall average importance score for leave arrangement policies in Company A, Company B and Company C was 4.35, 4.2 and 4.212 respectively.

**2. Parenting and pregnancy policies:**

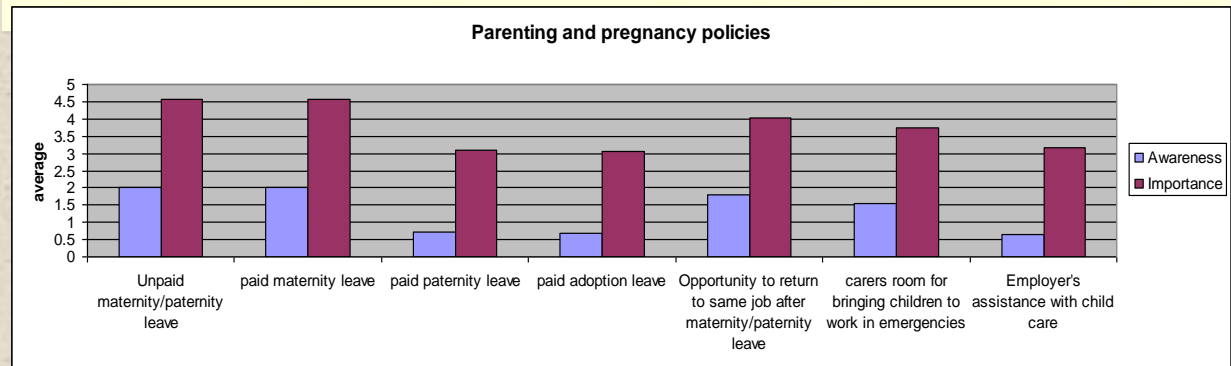
The scoring range of **awareness** for parenting and pregnancy policies is :

- below 0.6=low awareness
- 0.6 to 1.5(inclusive) =average awareness
- more than 1.5=high awareness

**Company A**

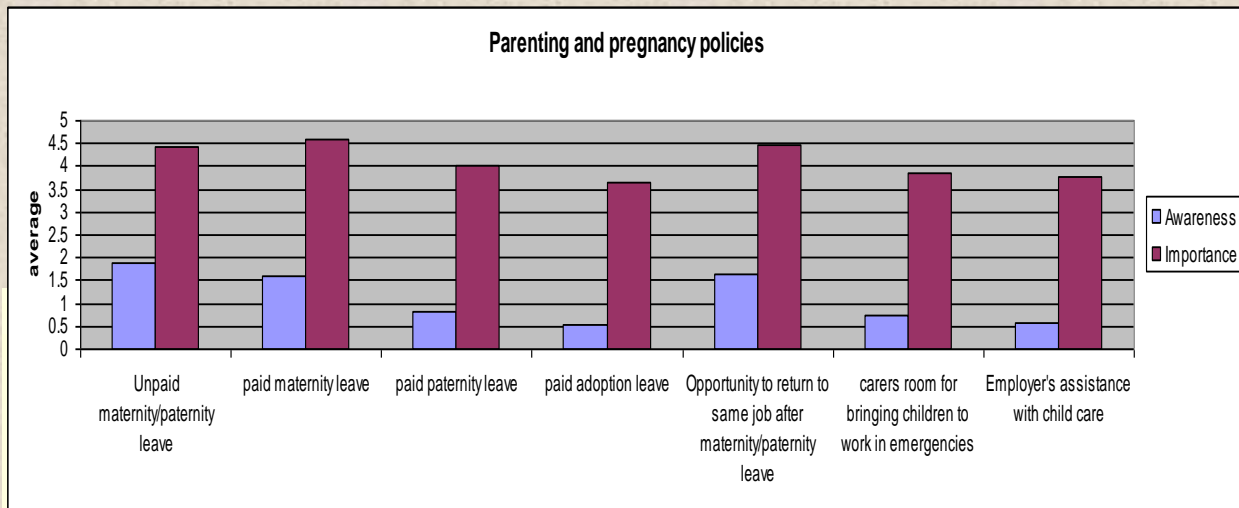


**Company B**





## Company C



It was quite evident that men were not very aware of these kinds of policies. Women rated such policies more important to them, as compared to men. Employees having children, also rated parenting and pregnancy policies significantly very important than others. Although, it was found out that employees in all the three organizations were highly aware of the unpaid maternity/paternity/adoption leave, with Company A and Company B scoring a perfect 2 on average awareness score. The importance was also high of 4.5 in both of these organizations. The paid maternity leave was rated as the most important of all the parenting and pregnancy leaves, with an average score of 4.6 in Company C, and more than 4.5 in Company A and Company B as well, indicating high relevance of this policy, especially for working women. Paid adoption leave had low rate of awareness in all organizations, with Company C scoring the lowest at 0.533, among all three. This was also the reason that these policies were not rated very important by the employees.

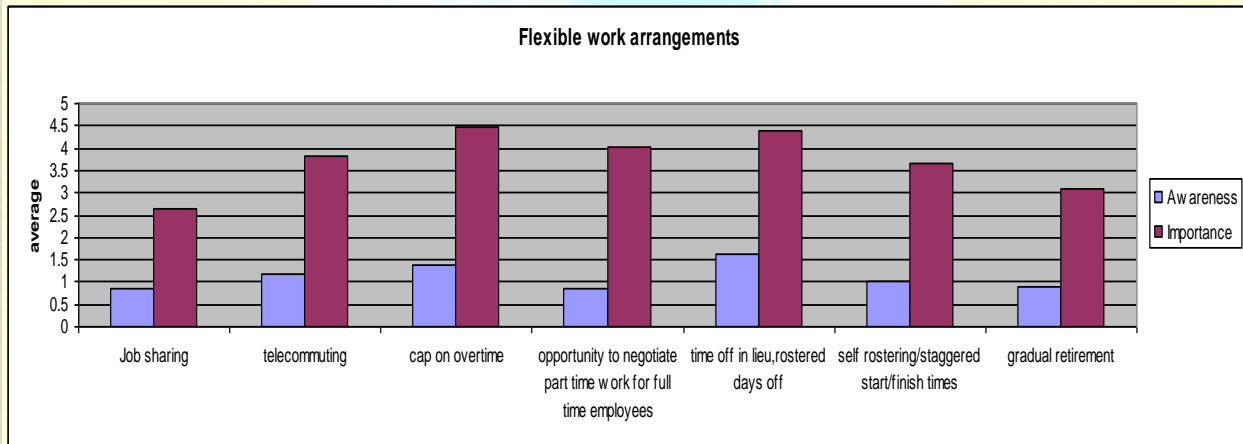
The availability of most of the parenting and pregnancy policies was low in these organizations, and relatively their importance was high, indicating that organizations should think of giving these benefits to maintain better work-life balance among the employees.

### 3. Flexible Work Arrangements:

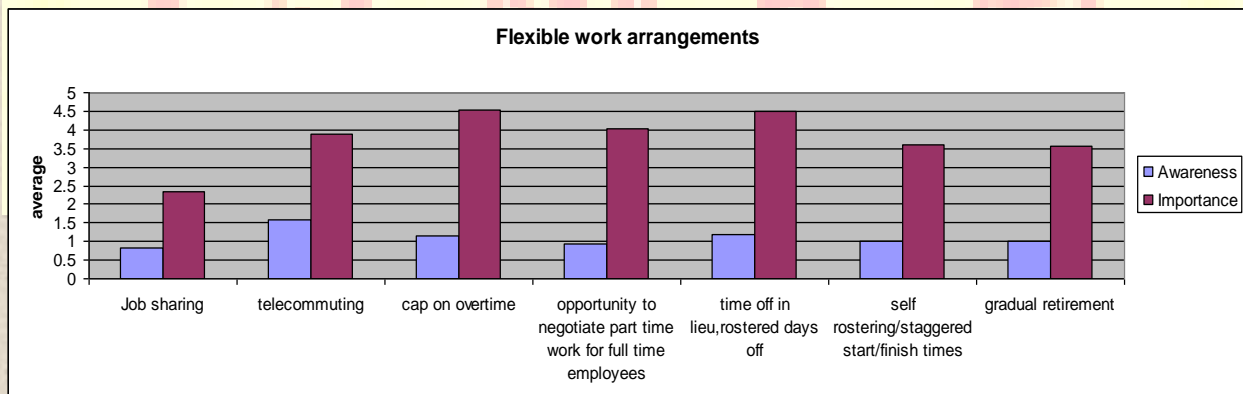
The scoring range for **awareness** is:

- below 0.8=low awareness
- 0.8 to 1(inclusive)=average awareness
- more than 1-high awareness

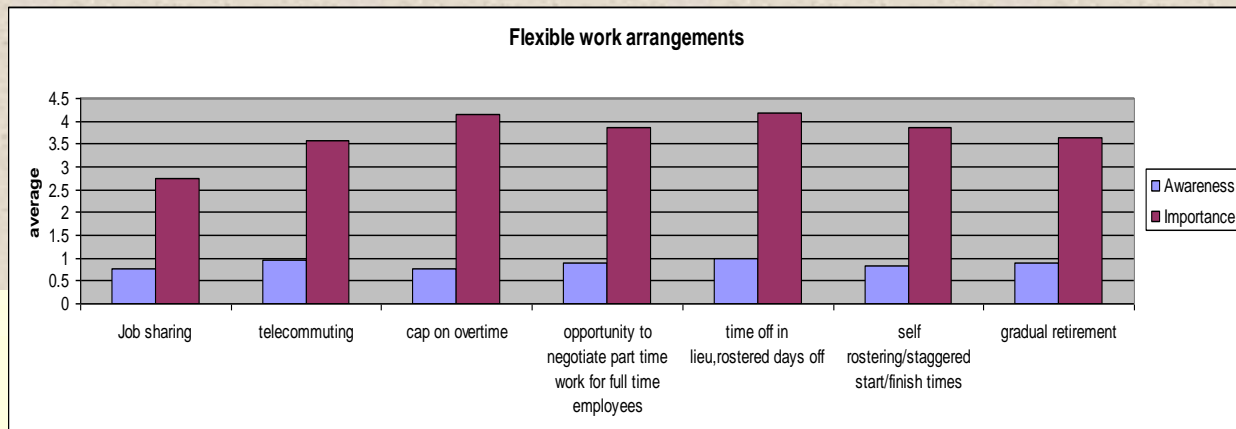
#### Company A



#### Company B



## Company C



Employees with caring responsibilities for children and women rated flexible work arrangements more important than others. In all the three organizations, there was high awareness of policies such as telecommuting, staggered start and finish times, and time off in lieu, rostered days off. Although high awareness does not indicate that these policies are available in the organization or not. Infact, telecommuting and self rostering were not available, as it is visible from the scores of individual employees as well. Company A employees rated cap on overtime (i.e.-a limit of number of hours overtime can be worked) as the most important policy out of all others in flexible working arrangements, with its score being 4.46. The average importance of flexible work arrangements was the highest in B (3.78), followed by A (3.719) and C (3.709).

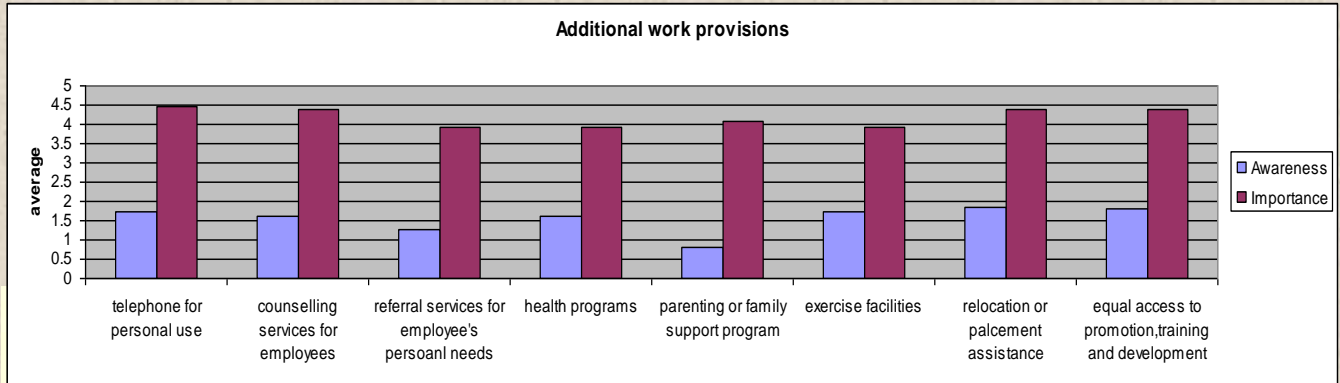
#### **4. Additional Work Provisions:**

The scoring range for awareness of additional work provisions is as follows:

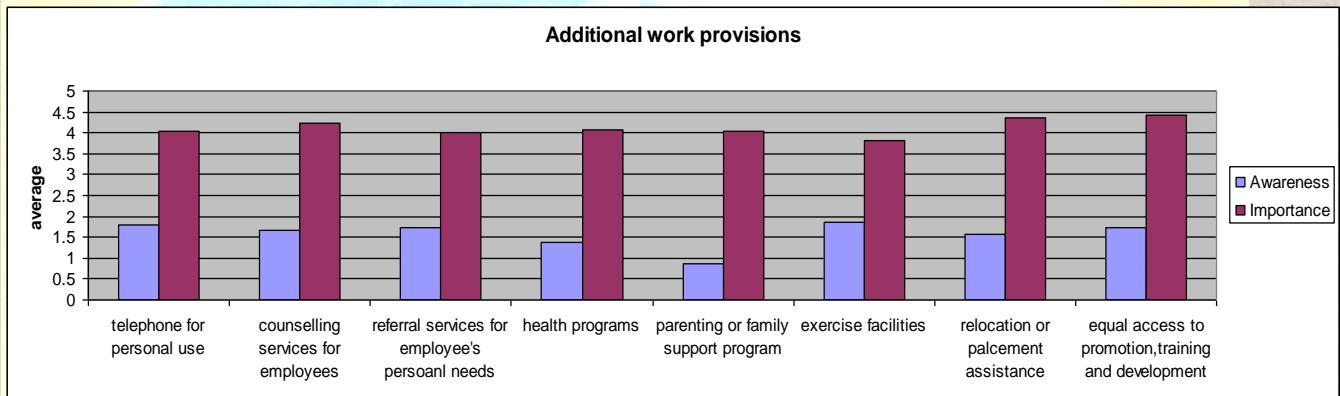
- below 0.9=low awareness
- 0.9 to 1.6=average awareness
- more than 1.6=high awareness



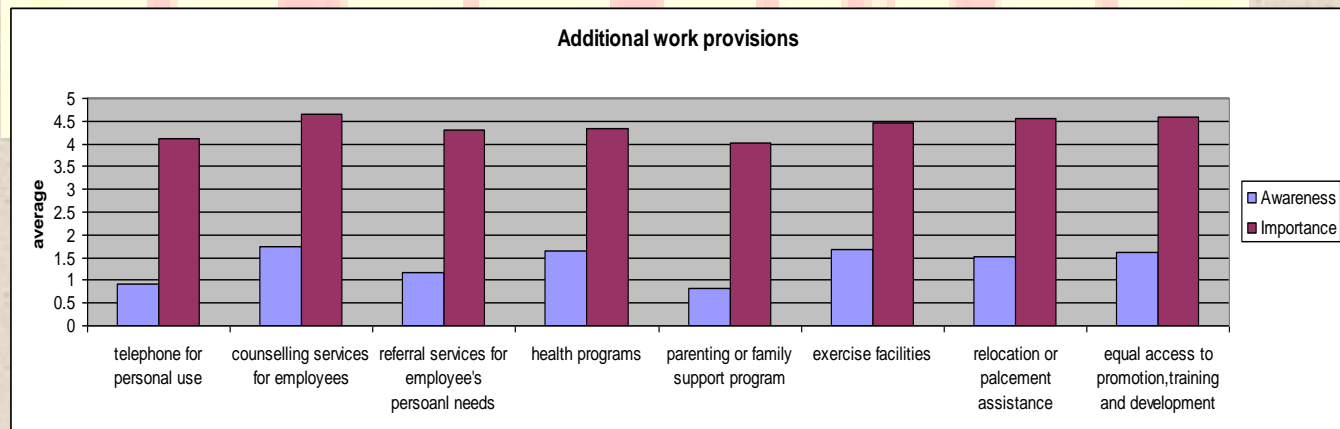
**Company A**



**Company B**



**Company C**



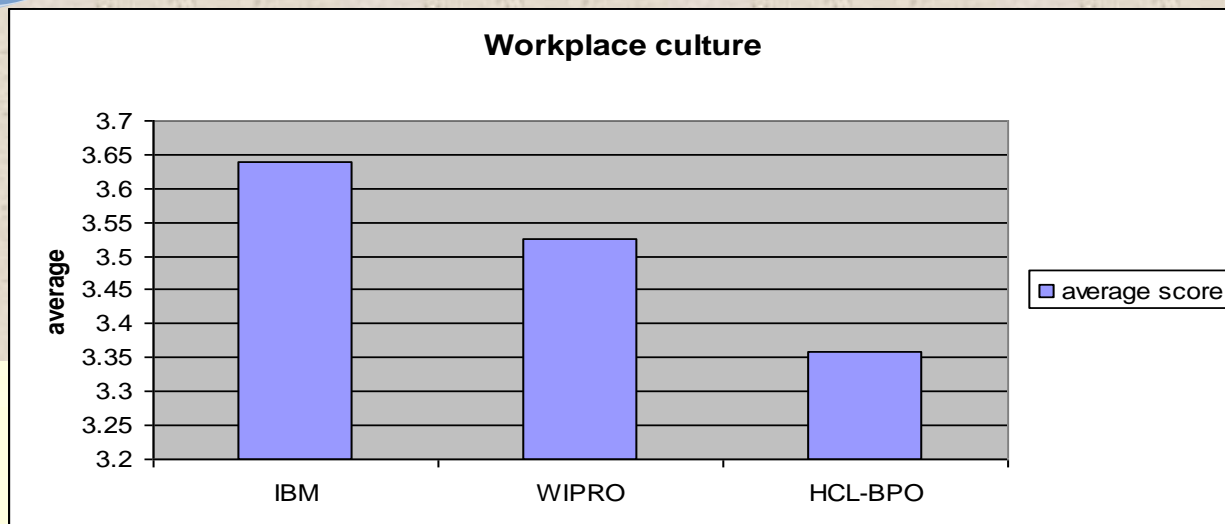
On comparing the average awareness score for all the three organizations, it was seen that employees in A, B and C, said that they were more aware of facilities such as exercise, equal access to promotion training and development and relocation assistance than other policies. Also the average awareness for counselling services provided to employees, was found to be quite similar in all three organizations, A and B(1.66), and C (1.7). Parenting or family support program was not available, in these organizations, although it was rated important by the employees everywhere. The average importance score for this is a clear indication for the same- A (4.066), B and C (4.033). The health program was rated quite critical in C, as evident by its rating of 4.33. The overall average importance of additional work provisions was 4.183 in A, 4.12 in B and 4.38 in C.

### **Workplace Culture**

The culture score indicates the level of organizational support for employees' work-life balance as perceived by employees. Each organization's mean score is taken into consideration, and it is then compared with the score taken as normative score. Thereafter, it can be known whether it's low, average or high.

- Below 2.85=low(not supportive)
- 2.85-3.5(inclusive)= average
- larger than 3.5=high (highly supportive)

Scores more than 3.5 indicate that employees consider the work place culture as highly accommodating and supporting of their work and personal lives. Scores between 2.85 and 3.5 indicate that employees view their workplace cultures moderately accommodating and supportive of their work and personal lives. Scores between 0 and 2.85 indicate that employees consider the workplace culture as not very accommodating or supportive of their work and personal lives.



The average culture score of A is the greatest among all the three organizations (3.638), followed by B (3.526) and C (3.36) respectively.

It can be observed that there is not a huge amount of difference in the average culture score of these three organizations. On the basis of comparison with the predetermined criteria, it is evident that the average score of C lies in medium range, indicating moderately accommodating and supportive work place culture. A and B scores lie in the higher range, signifying highly supportive and accommodating work place culture. On the basis of data collection, it can be said that the employees in A, were encouraged to use work life balance polices (average score 4.1), and for the employees there, when trying to balance work and family responsibilities, it is easier to work things out among colleagues, than to get management involved. (average score-4.23). Also in B, all levels of management apply the work-life balance polices in the same way (average score-3.53). Moreover, C gives male and female employees the same level of access to work-life balance policies (average score-4.03).

On the downside, there were some negative aspects of work place culture as well. Employees sometimes felt that they were expected to put their jobs before their family or personal life.(A-3.13, B-3.33, C- 3.13). It was also found out that employees resent people who take time off for family reasons.(B-3.13 and C-2.3, scoring high on a scale of agreeability). In order to get ahead, employees were often expected to work more than 50 hours a week and put work ahead of their family or personal life, in order to get “noticed.



### Formality of Policies:

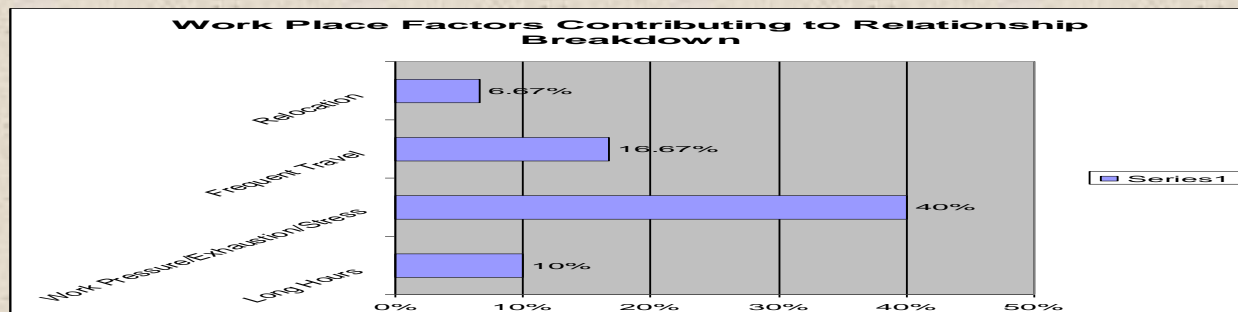
Formality of the policies refers to the way an organization makes its policies available. That is, does an organization provide the policy on formal or informal basis? Informal policies are often problematic as employees are often not aware of their existence, because informality means that those policies are not publicised. More over, it also means that the employees are unaware whether they could negotiate such arrangements. Due to this, the staff can not plan ahead for balancing their work and personal lives. The employees of A and B were aware of the documentation of the work-life balance policies. They have either seen or been given a copy of these policies. Although, many of them said that all the policies were not formally available, and there was a need to make them formally available, in order to become more aware of the same and utilize them to their advantage, as and when the need arises. Almost 40% of the employees surveyed said that it was not very easy to understand that when and how these “work-life balance” policies can be used by them.

### Work and Personal Relationships Survey:

#### Company A

#### Specific outcomes of conflict between work and relationships

30% of the people said that they or their partner had turned down a job, promotion, or transfer because it would impact badly on their relationship. Work pressure/exhaustion/stress was the main reason for a work-related relationship break-up (40%). Other contributing factors were frequent travel (17%), long hours (12%), and relocation (7%). Almost 57% of the respondents said that they have never experienced conflict due to paid work and that it has not contributed to broken relationships.

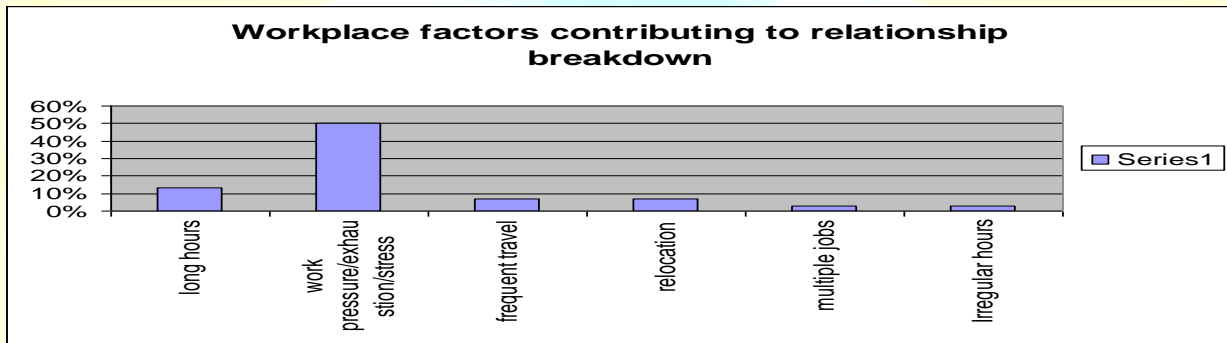


**Impacts of relationships on work**

**Company B**

**Specific outcomes of conflict between work and relationships**

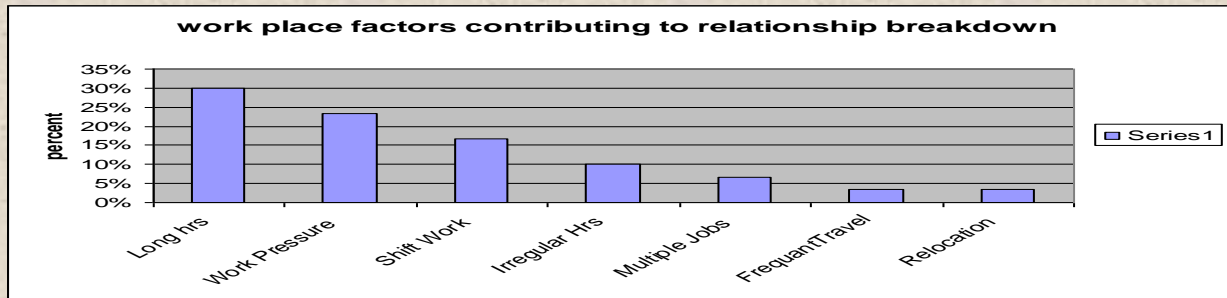
Work pressure/exhaustion/stress was the main reason given for a work-related relationship break-up (50%), followed by long hours (13%). Other contributing factors were frequent travel (7%), relocation (7%) and multiple jobs (3%), irregular or unpredictable hours (3%). About 10% of the employees said that they have not experienced relationship problems or break up due to the excess time spent at work.



**Company C**

**Specific outcomes of conflict between work and relationships**

Work pressure/exhaustion/stress was the main reason given for a work-related relationship break-up (23%), followed by long hours (30%). Other contributing factors were frequent travel (4%), relocation (4%) and multiple jobs (7%), irregular or unpredictable hours (10%). About 22% of the employees said that they have not experienced relationship problems or break up due to the excess time spent at work.



## **Findings:**

### **a) Gender**

Both men and women report negative impact of paid work on their relationships with friends and spouse/partners, both have put relationships ahead of job, promotion or transfer, and both have experienced similar levels of relationship break-up where paid work was a contributing factor. Both men and women would equally like more flexible work hours, shorter work hours, and less work intrusion into personal time through cell phones, meetings and travel.

### **b) Age**

Differences by age group were not great, but did confirm some expected patterns. It is the below 30 years age group that is generally most affected by the impact of paid work on their personal relationships. 30-40 is the group whose time is most likely to have to be divided into a parenting role, as well as a paid work and relationship role. As a result this is the age group most likely to want workplace initiatives to help them manage their work and relationship roles better.

### **c) Long hours**

There is some suggestion from the analysis of findings by hours worked by respondents and, where applicable, those of their partners, that it is not just one's, own hours, but a partner's hours that impact on the relationship. Long hours are sometimes worked by choice, but often it is the culture of long hours that leaves a worker with little choice. Also consistent with the literature reviewed for this project is the finding that it is not just long hours, but general work-related pressure, stress and exhaustion that impact on personal relationships.

## **Conclusion:**

This study offers evidence of the two-way relationship between paid work and relationships, with relationships having both positive and negative impacts on paid work, and paid work having positive as well as negative impacts on personal relationships. It shows that while long hours are an important factor, general work related stress and exhaustion is the greater issue. This study also tells us what IT and ITES sectors(A,B,C) are doing to encourage good relationships among employees, and what they could be doing to support good personal relationships for themselves



and their staff. The findings also show that some of our sample population, both men and women, place a higher priority on their relationships than their paid work with nearly 30% having turned down a job, promotion or transfer because it would impact badly on their relationship.

### **Recommendations:**

a) The **Better Work Life Balance Survey** tested the work life balance of the employees on four parameters namely:

- Workplace culture
- Awareness of the policies
- Importance of the policies
- Formality of the policies

Based on the data collected and interpreted, and on the subsequent findings of A,B,C, following can be recommended in relation to the above mentioned four points of contention here.

#### **1. Improving work place culture**

Making “work-life balance” policies available is an important step in helping employees balance their work and personal lives.

It is very important to build a consensus for a culture-change from the top down as well as bottom up. Education about the importance of work life balance, the benefits provided by work-life balance policies and the role of work place culture plays a vital role in convincing the managers and the front-line employees of the importance of a “supportive work-life balance culture”. It is imperative that both the senior and the middle management put efforts for a change of culture in an organization. Managers should act as role models for their employees while using work-life balance policies themselves. A culture change requires a tailored approach using processes that are right for the organization. Moreover, it is vital to keep customer needs into account while planning changes.

## 2. Create awareness of policies

When an organization implements new policies, it is important that the employees are made aware of the existence of these policies. Policies need to be effectively and appropriately communicated to the employees and should be well articulated.

A formal communication strategy is vital when introducing work-life balance policies. Communication can be achieved through various channels such as staff meetings, e-mails, newsletters, fact sheets, brochures, articles, posters, in-house magazines and information packages. A formal communication of policies should be implemented in the human resources, or other relevant handbook, held by an organization, outlining the details of the policies, and the responsibilities of staff as well as managers. New employees can be communicated about this at the time of induction.

## 3. Importance of policies

Employees' views on which policies are more or less important to them provide important information that can assist in development and implementation of new work place policies and practices. If certain individual policies are rated as important or very important by the majority of the people, organizations could further investigate the possibility of developing and implementing such a policy. Recognising the needs of all groups of employees, instead of only taking into account those of the majority, is essential to these policies being beneficial for both employees and employers. For example, if percentage of women employees is less in an organization and men feel that parenting and pregnancy policies are not very important, here the views of women should be taken into consideration and not ignored..

## 4. Formality of the policies

When introducing new, or changing old policies, it is vital to formalise the policies, and document them in organization's human resource handbook. Formalising a policy removes doubt about which provisions are available to the employees, while documentation in a central place (website/handbook) allows employees to have ready access to the policy information. The

guidelines should be concise and clear, so that all employees can understand their rights and responsibilities in relation to available policies.

It was seen that these organizations had a handbook or site dedicated to work-life balance policies, but its awareness and understanding level was low among employees. The organization, in this case, should ensure that the employees are:

- Aware that such a handbook or website is available
- They have access to handbook/website
- They find the content of handbook/website easy to understand.

**b)** On the basis of data collected and analysed, following workplace initiatives are recommended as being supportive of employee's personal relationships:

- Flexible work hours
- Training managers in awareness of work practices that impact on relationships (both positive and negative)
- Providing a secure permanent job
- Consulting staff about work practices that would minimize work-related problems affecting personal relationships
- Hold meetings in core work hours only
- Make promotion available without relocation

### **Limit long hours/overtime:**

- Have policies to limit long working hours and enforcing those policies.

### **Flexible hours/location**

- Allow staff to work flexible hours



- Allow staff to work from home where applicable.

#### **Out of town/overseas assignments**

- Minimize to essential
- Have policies limiting travel and enforce them
- Have a policy against travel in personal time for work purposes, e.g. leaving on Sunday to start work in new location on Monday morning, or early morning, or late night travel to maximize the working day out of town at the expense of personal/family time.
- Provide for time with family on return from out of town assignments to compensate for family time lost due to work out of town.

#### **Dual career couples**

- Have couple career paths if both work within the same organization.
- Assist with employment opportunities and other support for partners to adjust to new location, such as information sessions, counselling, and cultural training.
- Offer relocation benefits that recognize dual career couples such as job related or educational expenses for the partner.

#### **Shift work**

- Allow staff in rostering decisions.
- Shift-work training session for partners.

#### **EAP/Counselling**

- Make employee assistance programmes available for relationship counselling, especially for those going through relationship transitions like separation, divorce, birth of first child, serious illness or disability of partner.

- Allow time to attend counselling without needing to “make up time” which further eats into relationship building time.

### **Contact during work time**

- Ensure all staff to have access to make and receive personal calls during work time. This needs to be managed, so as to not impact on the employee’s productivity or on people working around them, e.g. limit time per call, number of calls ( average over period – for instance during time of crisis such as illness, there may be a high need for contact for some period of time).

### **Workplace relationships**

- Employees need time, activities, place to interact in a non-work way, e.g. social club, organized activities and events.
- Be aware of age/generational differences in preferred activities while developing and implementing work place activities.

### **Domestic violence**

- Provide understanding and supportive environment.
- Provide time off for counselling to resolve the problem.

### **Limitations:**

- The research could have been further justified with additional work, which was missing. So there is a great scope of further study in that research area.
- As a result of being hard pressed for time, the scope of the project got a bit limited.
- It was difficult to get a uniform sample size with people of same age group and background. Hence, homogeneous sample size cannot be assured. This being the case, it

was not possible to meet up with the number of respondents, which was originally intended to meet.

- The survey when planned initially was aimed at taking the responses of the top management of various organizations as well, but due to lack of contacts at the higher level and inability to approach them for the same, due to their time constraints, this was not possible.

### **End-Notes:**

1. ten Brummelhuis, Lieke L. & van der Lippe, Tanja , Effective work-life balance support for various household structures. *Human Resource Management*; Mar/Apr2010, Vol. 49 Issue 2, p173-193, 21p, 3 Charts, 6 Graphs.
2. Bloom, Nick , Kretschmer, Tobias and Van Reenen, John , Are family-friendly workplace practices a valuable firm resource? *Strategic Management Journal*; Apr2011, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p343-367, 25p.
3. Kreiner , Glen E. , Hollensbe, Elaine C. and Sheep, Mathew L., Balancing Borders and Bridges: negotiating the work-home interface via boundary work tactics, *Academy of Management Journal*; Aug2009, Vol. 52 Issue 4, p704-730, 27p, 1 Diagram, 1 Chart.
4. Bilal, Muhammad , Zia-ur-Rehman, Muhammad and Raza, Irfan , Impact of Family Friendly Policies on Employees' Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intention (A study on work-life balance at workplace). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*; Nov2010, Vol. 2 Issue 7, p378-395, 18p, 1 Diagram, 3 Graphs.
5. Colley, Linda , Central Policies, Local Discretion: A Review of Employee Access to Work- Life Balance Arrangements in a Public Sector Agency, *Australian Bulletin of Labour*; 2010, Vol. 36 Issue 2, p214-237, 24p.
6. Darrat, Mahmoud , Amyx, Douglas and Bennett, Rebecca , An investigation into the effects of work family conflict and job satisfaction on salesperson deviance, *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*; Summer2010, Vol. 30 Issue 3, p239-251, 13p, 1 Diagram, 5 Charts



7. Sachitanand, Rahul. IT's An Equal World, Business Today; 6/17/2007, Vol. 16 Issue 12, p148-150, 3p, 4 Color Photographs, 1 Illustration.

## **Research Papers:**

### **1) Articles**

1. ten Brummelhuis, Lieke L. & van der Lippe, Tanja , Effective work-life balance support for various household structures. Human Resource Management; Mar/Apr2010, Vol. 49 Issue 2, p173-193, 21p, 3 Charts, 6 Graphs.
2. Bloom, Nick , Kretschmer, Tobias and Van Reenen, John , Are family-friendly workplace practices a valuable firm resource? Strategic Management Journal; Apr2011, Vol. 32 Issue 4, p343-367, 25p.
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7. Sachitanand, Rahul. IT's An Equal World, Business Today; 6/17/2007, Vol. 16 Issue 12, p148-150, 3p, 4 Color Photographs, 1 Illustration.

## 2) Websites

- 9 Strategies For Regaining Your Work Life Balance, <https://www.authenticpromotion.com/work-life-balance/redress-work-life-balance.html>
- Refine Your Work Life Balance by Setting Healthy Boundaries <https://www.authenticpromotion.com/work-life-balance/setting-healthy-boundaries-for-work-life-balance.htm>
- 5 Tips for Better Work-Life Balance <http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/5-strategies-for-life-balance>
- Work Life Balance: The Gift Of Too Much To Do <https://www.authenticpromotion.com/work-life-balance/work-life-balance-too-much-to-do.html>
- How to Maintain Work-life Balance? <http://www.articlesbase.com/self-help-articles/how-to-maintain-worklife-balance-391804.html>
- WORK-LIFE BALANCE <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/management/Tr-Z/Work-Life-Balance.html>
- Work life balance-Is it possible? <http://www.xtremehr.com/work-life-balance-is-it-possible>