QUALITY OF WORK LIFE PROGRAMME AN EFFECTIVE STRATEGY FOR ORGANISATION

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ABSTRACT

India is the world's favored market for BPO companies, among other competitors, such as, Australia, China, Philippines and Ireland. India is currently the number one destination for business process outsourcing, as most of the companies in the US and UK outsources IT-related business processes to Indian service providers. BPOs have proved a grand success. However at the same time the industry needs to tackle various issues for which long-term solutions are necessary. Quality of Work Life (QWL) programs would be a beneficial solution for BPO organization in long-term to accomplish the goals. Quality of Work Life refers to the impact of the workplace on satisfaction in work life (job satisfaction), satisfaction in non-work life domains, and satisfaction with overall life (Sirgy et al., 2001). In this paper an attempt is made to identify the issues in BPO industry through review papers. It has been found that salary, long work hours, absence of HR practices and health problems are the issues of high attrition in BPO industry. This paper suggests implementation of QWL programs such as On-Boarding, Employee Participation, Work Life Balance and Value Employee in the Organization which will help the HR professionals of BPO industry to retain employees and promote a heathy well-being. Thus it can be concluded that Quality of Work Life is a comprehensive and expanded program designated to improve employee satisfaction, strengthening workplace learning and helping employees had better manage change and transition.

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Section 1 - Introduction

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is the fastest growing segment of the ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services) industry. The term Business Process Outsourcing or BPO which is popularly known, refers to outsourcing in all the fields. A BPO service provider usually administers and manages a particular business process for another company. BPOs either use new technology or apply an existing technology in a new way to improve a particular business process.

The Business process outsourcing which started in India around the mid-90s has now grown by leaps and bounds. As per the survey conducted by NASSCOM in May 2015, the growth revenue of BPO sector in India have reached to 54 percent and the demand for Indian BPO services has been growing at an annual growth rate of 50%. The industry provides employment for over 74,400 Indians and number continues to grow on a yearly basis. The Indian BPO sector will soon employ over 1.1 million Indians. 70% of India's BPO industry's revenue is from contact centers, 20% from data entry work and the remaining 10% from information technology related work. Indian BPOs handle 56 percent of the world's business process outsourcing.

BPOs have proved a grand success. However at the same time the BPO industry needs to tackle various issues for which long-term solutions are necessary. In this paper an attempt is made to identify the issues in BPO industry through review papers. It has been found that salary, long work hours, absence of HR practices and health problems are the issues of high attrition in BPO industry. This paper suggests implementation of QWL programs such as On-Boarding, Employee Participation, Work Life Balance and Value Employee would be a beneficial solution for BPO organization in long-term to accomplish the goals. Creating high quality of working life for employees enhances their productivity and increases their job satisfaction.Harrison M (2004), defines QWL as the degree to which work in an organization contributes to material and psychological well-being of its members. Moreover GunaSeelan&Maimunah (2008), defines QWL as The effectiveness of work environment that transmit to the meaningful organizational and personal needs in shaping the values of the employees that support and promote better health

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and well-being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life.

Section 2 Objectives

1. To identify the issues of high attrition in BPO industry.
2. **To suggests implementation of Quality of Work Life programmes in BPO industry.**

Section 3 - Methodology

This is a conceptual paper which aims to study the issues in BPO industry and suggest quality of work life programmesto retain employees and promote a healthy well-being. The study reviews literature on the factors affecting high employee attrition in BPO industry.

Section 4 - Review of Literature

James M. J.and Faisal (2013),identified the factors affecting high employee attrition in BPO Industry of Karnataka and Kerala States of India. It has been observed that salary has been emerged as the most critical factor affecting high attrition in the BPOIndustry of Karnataka and Kerala Statesand also lack of HRM practices significantly affect the attrition in the BPO industry.The study further revealed that male employees have more attrition tendency than female employees and Karnataka have more attrition scores than Kerala State.

D. Sugumar, C.K. MuthuKumaran, P. Jeya Raj2 and S. Joseph Xavier (2013), conducted a survey toexamine the effect of work related stress among 310 employees working in top ten BPO companies at Chennai in TamilnaduState.The result showed that the employees belonging in the age group of 26 to 30 years face work related stress, behavioral stress and health related stress and the overall stress level was high among this age group of employees.The result further showed that the employees in the age of 31 to 35 years face high level of psychological stress. The level of increasing and decreasing stress waspositively correlated with the age and gender of the employees. The male employees experience high level of stress than female because of their working timewhereas female employees experienced high level of psychological stress.

Tanya Machado, VidyaSathyanarayanan, PoornimaBhola and KirthiKamath (2013), in the article point to the emerging and growing role of mental health professionals in the corporate sector. Where the researchers explored employee's experience of stress and psychological distress in BPO Company in Bangalore witha survey of 1,500 employees was conducted.The

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results indicated that the employees experienced significant psychological distress and the most affected groups were women, permanent employees, data processors, and those employed for 6 months or longer and therefore there was a need to pay attention to the employee's psychological health as a priority of organizational commitment to its workforce.The researchers finally concluded that the study has implications for individual and systemic efforts at employee stress management and workplace prevention approaches.

ArvinderKaur and Shivani Gupta (2012),studied the problems and challenges faced by the women employees working in the BPOs and Call Centers of Chandigarh namely Airtel, Vodafone, Tata Indicom and Docomo and Spice with a sample size consist of 100 employees.It has been found that the women employees working in Chandigarh are satisfied with the safety and security measures as well as quite satisfied with the infrastructure, supervision, employee-employer relationships, commuting facilities but are not satisfied with the salary, perks, requisites, promotion prospects, grievance redressal system and equality at work.

Rajesh Sain and MadhumalaPathy (2013),identified the causes of stress among the employees working in BPO sector. For the purpose of the study, the researchers conducted a survey of 50 employees of two leading BPO companies namely EXL and HCL from the city of Bhubaneshwar from all cadres of management (top, middle and bottom), because employees of all the levels faced some form of stress or the others due to various reasons. The results showed that majority of the employees experience high level of stress which may be due to professional and personal reasons. The other factors causing stress were heavy target load, lack of effective communication of organizational policies from the top, weak interpersonal relationship, cluster of responsibilities and misperception that can affect the quality of the work and employees health. The researchers suggested that organization should take initiative to provide a common platform to the workforce where they get an opportunity to communicate freely and project them as a potential talent.

Sudhashree V. P, Rohit K. and Shrinivas K. (2005), in their paper titled, 'Issues and concerns of health among the call center employees', discussed the issues and concerns regarding the health ofcall center employees and the risks identified in this industry. The background for the study was a data quest survey 2004. The result of the survey showed that the major cause for high attrition in this industry was due to health reasons such as sleeping disorders, voice loss other problems were ear problems, digestive disorders and eye sight problems. Based on the outcome of the results the researchers discussed with the HR managers and suggested that there

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is a need for medical assistance to identify the problems employees suffer so that they can suggest effective measures to reduce them. The researchers also recommend to the management the importance of employee's pre- employment and periodic medical examination.

Dr. VaibhavkumarRamanuj (2014),examined the various mental, physical and psychosocial health problems amongst the BPO call centre employees located at Ahmedabad. The researcher conducted a survey of 100 employees working in day shift and night shift. The results showed that the level of mental stress was high in both day and night shift employees. The sedentary life style and the work pattern affected both physical as well as mental health. Sleep disturbance, disturbance of biological rhythm and digestive system disorders were seen more in night shift employees as compared to day shift employees. The study also showed that 50% of total employees had addiction of tobacco chewing and / or cigarette smoking. The researcher recommended that the Health education in respect to care of eyes, posture and stress relieving methods should be given to all employees in the organization.

Ms. AravindaTulasi and Mr. Venkata Ravi Kumar Garlapati (2014),identified the various factors that cause high attrition among the employees working in BPO industry.The researchers conducted a survey of 100 employees working in domestic and international BPO located in Hyderabad. The study revealed that working environment, better career opportunities outside, unfriendly working conditions, lack of social interaction at work place, late night shifts, high amount of work stress, role confusion and ineffective organizational policies were the major cause for attrition among the employees working in BPO industry.

Section 5 -Implementation of Quality of Work Life Programmes (QWL)

QWL programme is one of the most interesting approaches to motivation. Providing employees with a good quality of work life (QWL) programs can lead the ability to increase job satisfaction and task performance, lower absenteeism and turnover rate, lower tardiness frequency, and increase organizational effectiveness and organizational commitment.

Quality of work life programmes such as On-Boarding, Employee Participation, Work Life Balance and Value Employeecould produce positive results.

5.1 On-Boarding: Turnover is expensive. At every departure, morale and productivity suffers. It is vital that all the organizations hold on to their people, by providing a well-designed onboarding process. On-boarding is the process of acquiring, accommodating, assimilating and

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accelerating new team members, whether they come from outside or who are inside the organization.

On-boarding becomes successful only when human resource manager and the hiring manager both get actively involved. The goal of this partnership is to establish a long-term relationship with the employee that begins even before the employee is hired. While HR plays an important role in the early recruitment and orientation phase and in guiding the On-boarding process, the hiring manager must be proactive and engaged in facilitating the employee's successful integration into the organization over time.

The On-boarding process clearly states the expectation of a new employee about his job, job profile, career prospects and suggests what is important to learn and from who to learn it and take the new employee's perspective on what processes, procedures and changes the executive intends to implement at the end of three months, six months and one year. The onboarding process also facilitates a new employee into the organization policies and practices. The on-boarding process is also responsible for establishing the mission and goal of the organization into the mind of a new employee. An effective employee on-boarding serves effectively that it builds repute organizations for being a thoughtful employer, with great training, clear leadership, and a strong organization.

The On-boarding helps retain staff members, reduces high turnover costs, gets new employees to efficient productivity levels quickly and builds a cohesive team, therefore raising everyone's productivity. The prerequisite to successful on-boarding is getting the organization aligned around the need and the role. So Onboarding is the perfect opportunity to make a positive, lasting impression on a new hire (Ben Eubanks).

5.2 Employee Participation: Employee participation is considered as a key element in the successful implementation of new management strategies and plays an important role in determining the degree of job satisfaction (Harmon et al., 2003; Zainnudin& Isa, 2011), commitment of the employee as well as their motivation (Batthi&Qureshi, 2007).Employee participation is the process whereby employees are involved in decision making processes rather than simply acting on orders. Employee participation is part of a process of empowerment in the

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workplace. Employee participation is in part a response to the quality movement within organizations.

The successful foundation of any company is its people. Employees represent a source of knowledge and ideas, but sometimes that resource remains untapped. When employees are involved in making decisions, they gain a professional and personal stake in the organization and its overall success. This commitment leads to increased productivity as employees are actively participating in various aspects of the company and wish to see their efforts succeed overall. This is not only beneficial to company growth, but is also on-the-job training for employees. The increase in responsibility expands employee skill sets, preparing them for additional responsibility in the future.

Using employees in the decision-making process, saves money, time, and offers the company long-term reliable assistance from those who know the corporation well. However, employees are already aware of these processes, offer insightful knowledge of the company needs, and understand the policies of the company overall.

Participation in the decision-making process gives each employee the opportunity to voice their opinions, and to share their knowledge with others. While this improves the relationship between manager and employee, it also encourages a strong sense of teamwork among workers. The expression of viewpoints opens dialogue between co-employees, with each worker bringing their individual strengths to a project. It is also a good way to gather information about the employees as to how they work in a team environment, and where training may be necessary, all of which leads to an increase in effectiveness, and ultimately an increase in good teamwork and performance

When employees are treated as an asset and their input is given consideration, confidence increases among every team member, and the company sees significant gains in different facets such as productivity and loyalty. Moreover, improved morale can increase employee longevity with the company. The longer the employee is associated with the company, the more experienced they become, making them mentors to new employees and indispensable to managerial staff.

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5.3 Work life balance: Work-family balance is defined as "satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2000, p. 751). Moreover, Parkes and Langford (2008) defined this as "an individual's ability to meet work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities" (p. 267).Work-life balance is about creating and maintaining supportive and healthy work environments, which enables employees to have a balance between work and personal responsibilities and thus strengthening employee loyalty and productivity.

While determining and maintaining a satisfactory work-life balance it is primarily the responsibility of individual employees, so that employers can help their employees obtain a positive balance. Employers, who keep an open mind about how their business should run, are flexible in how they approach their employees' working arrangements, and are aware of their employees' needs to make work-life balance possible. Employers can also benefit greatly from addressing work-life balance issues with their employees.

When an organization promotes work-life balance for its employees, it benefits the employees, their families, and that all important bottom line. A corporation that focuses on work-life balance provides a "benefits package" that does not add to the cost of payroll, so everyone wins.

Work Life Balance initiatives can benefit the employee by assisting them to start, stay in, or re-enter employment while dealing with other responsibilities or availing of other opportunities in their lives. Work Life Balance initiatives also benefit workplace equality in that they support the presence and participation in the work-place of a diverse range of employees from across the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability etc.

When employees in the organization feel a greater sense of control and ownership over their own lives, they tend to have better relationships with management and are able to leave work issues at work and home issues at home. Balanced employees tend to feel more motivated and less stressed out at work, which thereby increases company productivity and reduces the number of conflicts among coworkers and management.

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Organizations who gain a reputation for encouraging work-life balance have become very attractive to employees and will draw a valuable pool of candidates for new job openings. These Organizations also tend to enjoy higher employee retention rates, which results in less time-consuming training, more loyalty, and a higher degree of in-house expertise.

Employees who have a positive work-life balance do a better job at work, so promoting this balance is beneficial to individuals and the company.

5.4 Value Employee: *"Employees who believe that management is concerned about them as a whole person – not just an employee – are more productive, more satisfied, more fulfilled. Satisfied employees mean satisfied customers, which leads to profitability." —Anne M. Mulcahy*Employees are the building blocks of an organization. Every individual working in the organization at every level plays an important role in the success of the organization. Employees are the strong pillars on which the foundation of the organization is built because every employee utilizes his potentials, skills, learning attitude and abilities that will bring success to the organization

All employees associated in the organization wants to feel valued and believe that they are of value to others. All of them can contribute to creating a culture where all participants who work for and with the organization know that who they are and what they do matters and makes a difference. Appreciation in the workplace can help employees understand how much they are valued by their peers, their manager, and the organization as a whole.When employees are valued, they gain confidence, feel good, and eagerly contribute. Their reaction to the work environment impacts the attitude and how they feel about the organization. The good feeling they get from knowing that they are valued gets passed on to other people in our lives.

Employees who feel valued contribute more, do better work, are more engaged, are loyal and passionate about their work and have positive interactions with the people they work with. By creating a culture where employees feel valued, the pay-off for the organization and for the employees is huge.Valuing employees helps to create a sense of belongingness, ownership, mutual trust among the employees by which organizations goals are achieved. Valuing employees develops a better understanding among the employees and they come up with

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constructive solutions when organization is going through crises. The employees retain with the organization and strive hard to overcome the phase of crises that reflects e-spirit de corps.

When employees do things that add value to the organization which could be their positive attitude or their hard work, their effort and thought they put into a project, their creative thinking or ideas let them know that the organization value for what they do. It may be in the form of words of appreciation, written note, offered help and support, gifts and a pat on the back.Every individual needs to be valued in the organization for their valuable contribution through which goodwill about the organization has been created in the society. An organization with positive image and goodwill as an employer finds it easier to attract and retain employees. Valuing employees helps in satisfying internal customers which in turn help in satisfying external customers.

Section 6 – Conclusion

Quality of Work Life is a comprehensive and expanded programme designated to improve employee satisfaction, strengthening workplace learning and helping employees had better manage change and transition.

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