

IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON WORK-RELATED HEALTH ISSUES

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ABSTRACT

The growing awareness of the issue of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has raised the questions about -how responsible behavior of firms would impact employees' well-being. However, very little is known about whether or how corporate social responsibility affects employees. Well-being of employees reflects in their willingness to further contribute in the organization. The concept of well-being at work is better known as job satisfaction. Therefore it is necessary to look for job satisfaction aspects that are relevant in social responsibility context. This paper investigates the link between corporate social responsibility and job satisfaction, which is a more widely recognized measure to assess well-being at work. It emphasizes the importance of working in partnership with employers, employees, insurers and health professionals to develop a comprehensive package of measures that help to create healthy and motivated workplaces and improve access to good-quality occupational health support, thus minimizing the likelihood of people developing health problems in the first place and thus leading to job dissatisfaction. Based on the survey of 140 employees in Agra City (Uttar Pradesh) of different 3 star hotels, measures of physical domain of well being (i.e. physical health, mental health, working environment, physical safety and accommodation) are assessed. Findings of the study indicates that the employees are suffering from various health issues as shift problems, work stress, obesity, diabetes, back pain, depression etc., which leads to major workplace health problems like smoking, inability to balance work and family and feeling of loss of control over work place schedule and environment. Further the study reveals that status of

CSR is not satisfactory for these employees' which lead to job dissatisfaction. In this paper various suggestions have been given to improve the physical domain of well being which will lead to improve the health and well-being of employees at the workplace and therefore the balance between work and off-job time.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, Job satisfaction, Employees' assessment, Healthy workplace, Well-being.

“All too often lives are shattered unnecessarily because of poor working conditions and inadequate safety systems... Let me encourage everyone to join ...in promoting safety and health at work. It is not only sound economic policy, it is a basic human right”

Kofi Annan, Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

INTRODUCTION

Well-being at work is not merely about managing a physical and cultural environment with the limited aim of not causing harm to employees but it requires organisations to actively assist people to maximise their physical and mental health. Some of today's major workplace health issues include stress, smoking, the inability to balance work and family, and feelings of loss of control over workplace schedules and environments. The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) includes the health and well-being of employees at the workplace and therefore the balance between work and off-job time. Employees are primary stakeholders who directly contribute to the success of the company, understanding employee reactions to corporate social responsibility may help answer lingering questions about the potential effects of corporate social responsibility on firms as well as throw light on some of the processes responsible for them. When health is addressed, so is safety, because a healthy workplace is by definition also a safe workplace but the converse, may not be true - a so-called safe workplace is not necessarily also a healthy workplace. The important point is that issues of both health and safety must be addressed in every workplace. Employees'/workers' spend at least eight hours a day in the workplace, whether it is in an office, factory, etc. Therefore, work environments should be safe and healthy. Unfortunately some employers assume little responsibility for the protection of employees'/workers' health and safety. In fact, some employers do not even know that they have the moral and often legal responsibility to protect them. As a result of the hazards and a lack of

attention given to health and safety, work-related accidents and diseases are common. Occupational health and safety addresses the broad range of workplace hazards from accident prevention to the more insidious hazards including toxic fumes, dust, noise, heat, stress, etc. Many people may think that office workers have no health and safety problems; this is far from true. Stress is one of the most common complaints, as well as exposure to chemical hazards from office machines such as computers. Poor lighting, noise and poorly designed chairs and stools can also present problems.

Hospitality is a fast-paced, stressful industry which often includes working long and irregular hours. Many hotels management always ignore the protection of employees in work places. This is the most significant issue of those employee health and safety issues. There is no reason to ignore employee's health and safety protection in working place. The present paper, therefore, outlines a research that aims to firstly, to investigate the status of internal CSR practices among the three star hotels in Agra and secondly to give suggestions on how to improve the existing situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Linkage between Well Being and Health

The experience of work can have a positive effect on individuals, their families and society, as holding an occupation provides a source of income and material outputs which cater for the necessities of life. However, studies suggest that work can also be seriously detrimental to employees' health and safety (Cox, Griffiths, & Rial-Gonzalez, 2000; da Costa & Vieira, 2010; Leka & Jain, 2010; WHO, 2010a). All businesses seek to be in a healthy state. If their employees are in a good state of health and well-being, this must surely contribute to successful performance, according to the Institute of Directors in its guide to well-being at work (2006). Well-being of employees reflects in their willingness to further contribute in the organization. The concept of well-being at work is better known as job satisfaction (Clark et al, 1997). Well-being is more than an avoidance of becoming physically sick. It represents a broader bio-psycho-social construct that includes physical, mental and social health. Well employees are physically and mentally able, willing to contribute in the workplace and likely to be more engaged at work

(CIPD, 2006). According to Tuzzolino and Armandi (1981), satisfying employees' expectations will lead to improved job attitudes and increased productivity, which is good for the company, but it has to be pointed out that this effect is mediated through employees' well-being.

When individuals have a good psychological wellbeing, they are able to function properly (Ryff 1989). Psychological well-being has been defined as "engagement with existential challenges of life" (Keynes, 2002). Robertson (2011) explained organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and well-being at work as a predictor of the emergence of turnover intentions. Employees who have fulfilled their well-being in the workplace are more productive, contributing to the organization's goals, and low of intentions to leave (Harten, 2002). Bevan (2010) stated that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) estimated there are at least one million workplace injuries caused by accidents every year. There is growing evidence that poor health and wellbeing can be a significant contributing factor to accidents at work. Tiredness is a factor in many accidents, for example, it has been estimated that 20% of accidents on are attributable to fatigue. He also, noted that a growing number of employers, particularly large organisations, were adopting measures to promote and support health and wellbeing amongst their workforces, in order to improve productivity, commitment and attendance.

Noreen Tehrani et. al. (2007) in its Change Agenda Report for Chartered Institute of Personal and Development(CIPD) has given five domains of well-being i.e. Physical, Values, Personal development, Emotional, Work/Organisation. Each Domain has several elements. The authors had considered in their study the physical domain of well being elements given by Noreen Tehrani et. al. (2007) which are Physical health, Mental health, Work environment, Physical safety and Accommodation.(figure-1,near here)

Linkage between Internal CSR and Well Being and Health

Health and Safety at work is seen as a essential component of CSR and companies are increasingly recognizing that they cannot be good externally ,while having poor social performance internally(Zwetsloot & Starren, 2004).Internal CSR practices refer to employee-oriented CSR activities which are directly related to the physical and psychological working environment of employees concerning their health and well-being, their training and

participation in the organization, equal opportunities and work-life balance (Turker, 2009). Internal dimension of CSR that generally covers the employees' well-being at work, particularly including their health and safety and also development and talent identification (Fuentes-Garcia et al. 2008). The internal dimension of CSR includes socially responsible practices concerning employees, relating to their safety and health, investing in human capital, managing change and financial control (Bondy et al., 2004). Unless organizations manage to gain employees' willingness to collaborate towards a social responsible business profile, they will be unable to achieve their goals (Collier & Esteban, 2007). This requires the development and maintenance of stable relationships between the two parties via the routes of communication, identification, dialogue and exchange processes, or even a combination of them (Greenwood, 2007). Corporate social responsibility of organizations could be understood as "doing more than they are required to do under applicable laws and regulations governing the environment, worker safety and health, and investments in the communities they work" (Portney, 2008). The growing awareness of the issue of corporate social responsibility has raised the questions about how responsible behavior of firms would impact employees' well-being (Clark, 1997). Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) promotion strategies by European Commission (EC) and the European Agency of Safety and Health at work (EASHW) have attempted to link OSH and CSR, establishing a business case of strategic importance for organization (EC, 2001, 2002, Zwetsloot & Starren, 2004). The following dimensions of social responsibility have been developed in the HR management (HRM) literature, which is categorized as internal dimensions of CSR (Ali et al., 2010).

Protection of human rights: To deal with employees on humanitarian grounds and taking care of their health and safety at the work. In addition, providing them with a smooth working environment.

Nondiscrimination and equal employment opportunity: This dimension is about the organization principles on treating the employees on an equal and equitable basis by showing equal opportunity to the talent and promoting diversity.

Managing environmental impacts: This aspect is about optimization of resource utilization and reducing environmentally damaging effluent can reduce the environmental impact.

Staff development and training: The organization's agenda for employees' training needs for identifying and developing the talent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the status of internal CSR in physical domain well being of employees.
2. To make suggestions for improving the existing situation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Although CSR is a domain widely investigated and many work has been done on internal CSR and well being. But aspect of well being as various elements of health and strategic use of internal CSR activities has been much less studied. The present study will provide a definite structure to understand physical domain well being of employees which will help the hotel industry to understand and work on various elements of health to further increase the work efficiency of employees' and thus leading to increasing productivity of the firm and job satisfaction of the employees. The well-being dialogue can be beneficial to employees' health by giving them an opportunity to use their experiences to improve their working environment

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling

The present study is conducted in three stars hotels of Agra City. There are 32 three star hotels in Agra out of which 10 hotels were selected with the help of simple random sampling. Approximately 500 employees were working in these hotels of which 155 respondents were selected for the study on the basis of simple random sampling. Finally 140 responses were available for the study as few employees were not interested in filling the data while few questionnaires were not correctly filled and some were incomplete. Present study is based on 140 respondents' responses.

Tool of the study

Structured questionnaire was prepared for the study. Some questions in the study were in binary format and some were open ended questions. These questions were prepared on the basis of objectives of the study. Received data was further analyzed for getting the CSR status.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Relating to first element of Physical Domain i.e. Physical Health

When the employees were asked whether the employer is concerned about their Physical Health problems only 24% said yes while 76% said no. Then the employees were asked what kind of physical health related issues they are facing the general answers were obesity, sedentary life style, high blood pressure elevated cholesterol, chronic backache, cervical problems, elevated blood sugar, diabetics, physical fatigue, skin problems, strains and sprains. The reasons which came out for these kind of health problem was as hospitality work involves long hours, frequently with limited breaks or back to back shifts(sometimes they have to wake up for 12 hours or 17 hours) which have impact on their physical health. These changing shifts, irregular or long work hours and stressful conditions not only disrupt normal sleep pattern but also lead to physical and psychological fatigue and increased alcohol and drug use , all of which debilitating effect on employees' health and well being. Again hospitality is an industry in which business tends to be cyclical with peak around the festivals, marriages time and dips in revenue during quieter periods of the year, the employer takes more staff when business is booming and reducing their workforce when there is lull. Due to this job insecurity and financial concerns some employees' are reluctant to take off for important work breaks or if they are ill as they have to save money for when they have no jobs and for the fear they may risk further work opportunities, which lead to rapidly deteriorating health and physical fatigue. Because of this cyclical nature of the industry the employees are juggling more than one job at a time, keen to ensure they have a back-up if one job falls through or shifts are dropped. Juggling multiple employers and a quick turnaround between jobs is a factor which leads to physical and mental fatigue increasing the risk of injury and illness. Unhealthy work pattern , lack of exercise, poor nutrition are common issues which poses high risk on physical health. Sometimes due to overload of work health problem arise and that is why there is high turnover in hotel industry. Most work environment contains sources of hazardous substances (chemicals, dust, fumes, and biological agents) which cause inhalation, dermal absorption, splashing into eyes or ingestion. Hot working conditions found in kitchen lead to heat related illness such as rashes, muscle

cramps, weakness, dizziness, fainting, nausea, headache. Musculoskeletal disorder relating to workplace activities are common and include injuries from manual handling (heavy lifting etc.) and repetitive strain injuries. Manual handling injuries usually result in strains and sprains to employees' back however they may also include the neck and the limb. Display screen equipment (e.g. computer) gives rise to musculoskeletal disorder including eye strain.

Relating to second element of Physical Domain i.e. Mental Health

The employees when asked whether the employer is concerned about their Mental Health problems only 16% said yes while 84% said no. Then the employees were asked what kind of mental health related issues they are facing the general answers were stress, anxiety, depression, lack of concentration in work, mental fatigue, relationship strain. The common reasons which came out for this health issue was due to cyclical nature of industry and uncertainty of income leads to financial concerns which is the primary driver of stress. Excessive workload, working overtime negatively impacts the amount of energy the employee is able to invest with family and friends when they are at home and it is a contributing factor in relationship strain and there is no work flexibility to vary the hours to fit in with domestic need. Many employees drink in response to the stress, anxiety and depression they are experiencing which lead to risk taking behavior, such as drink-driving. Sometimes employees have to deal with difficult customer behavior. They have to manage customers who are exceptionally demanding, aggressive or abusive and they generally deal with these situations in a highly public environment, which increase stress and anxiety and damage the confidence and self-esteem of employees'. Lastly they were asked whether any social-protection provided to them by employer like medical claim, accident insurance and none of the employee replied in affirmation.

Relating to third element of Physical Domain i.e. Working Environment

60% employees said that they are not provided with proper working environment rest 40% employees don't had any issues regarding working environment. Unsatisfied employees said there are no special chill out areas to relax, no ergonomically designed working areas that is why they are suffering from strain injuries and musculoskeletal disorder. Again bullying is very

common here old employees often bully their junior counterparts when they don't do good work which lead them to thinking about not to work in this environment. And there is no proper grievances cell to tackle these types of problems.

Relating to fourth element of Physical Domain i.e. Physical Safety

When asked whether employer is concerned with physical safety of employees 30% replied in affirmation while 70% replied in negation. The reason which came out for negative answer was employees' were not provided with proper training about the work they do for example people easily get hurt by the equipments in the kitchen. Some of the common injuries are scald, incised wound, fire burn. The fresher employees complained that they were not provided with proper training and guidance before they start to work. They are transferred from one department to another without any safety training programs which results in negative performance on their parts plus suffered with different work related injuries.

Relating to fifth element of Physical Domain i.e. Accommodation

When the employees were asked whether they are provided with proper non- work areas like clothing-toilet-rest & dining room only 20% said yes while 80% said no.

Relating Human Resource dedication to CSR sustainability in Hotel

Lastly the employees were asked about CSR sustainability in their hotels only 6% said yes while 94% said no as mostly of them were not aware of the term CSR.

From the above analysis we can conclude that the status of CSR is very poor in three stars hotels of Agra. As per the various elements of physical domain well being, industries need to be more sensitive towards physical and mental health of employees. Proper working conditions, proper physical safety training and accommodation for free rest time also play an important role to affect physical domain. Proper internal CSR policy if implemented then the employees will be satisfied with their job therefore these hotels should maintain CSR policy.

SUGGESTIONS

Never before has there been such a clear need to recognize that the health and well-being of employees but employers should address the well-being of employees as they increasingly face the costs and risks of long-term sickness and absence damaging their productivity, growth, retention and brand and the law and government policy driving employers to recognize their impact on employee health. In order to improve physical domain of employees (i.e. physical health, mental health, working environment, physical safety and accommodation) the employer should arrange exercise programmes, health education, awareness (on topics such as safe alcohol use, sleep management) and regular health check up programmes, resilience programmes, stress management programmes, incapacity management programmes, there should be in house gym, sports club facilities, fitness activities like Zumba classes. There should be cashless hospitalization facilities, confidential counseling services, proper conflict handling/grievance handling cell, ergonomically designed working areas. They should also be provided with medical/ accident insurance, personal safety training, safety procedure demos, mock drills, provide training regarding safe working practices, provide proper facilities for rest and to eat meal. Last but not the least they should be provided skill enhancement training and should be given award for good work.

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APPENDIX-1

Figure-1: Five Domains of well-being and their respective elements

