

ISSN: 2249-4650

Review of HRM

Vol. 4, No. 2

April 2016

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Review of HRM (RHRM) is a biannual peer-reviewed journal published in October and April and by Centre for People & Management, New Delhi.

RHRM seeks to create a body of knowledge around the contemporary issues in Human Resource Management and Organizational Behaviour. It is likely to serve as an independent forum for the academia, industry, civil society and the State to carry forward a candid and objective discussion on contemporary HR issues having a bearing on economy, business, community, environment and above all –the quality of life of the people.

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Publisher & Printer

Published and Printed by Centre for People & Management, Management Development Research Foundation, 4th Floor, Statesman House Building, Connaught Place, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi –110001.

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Infant Mortality Trends and Human Resources in India: A Review and Evaluation

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Abstract

This paper tries to analyse the impact of infant mortality trends on human resources of India. In fact, infant mortality is an important issue about which the government of India is quite concerned. While the government is contributing its mite towards reducing infant mortality through an array of public health interventions, it remains a major problem deeply rooted in socio-cultural domain. A number of times, government efforts at ensuring good health of mother and child fail due to orthodox worldview of the community which dissuade them from availing contemporary public health facilities. No wonder, alarming trends with regard to infant mortality is all set to threaten the proverbial demographic dividends and thereby undermine position of the country as hub of human resources especially in the wake of major thrust of the government towards 'Make in India'. It is therefore imperative to reverse the trend of infant mortality and ensure a better future for the country.

Keywords: Public Health, Infant Mortality, Human Resources, India

Introduction

Infant mortality is a proxy indicator of health of the people. There is a potential association between the causes of infant mortality and factors that are likely to influence health status of the whole population (Kansas Department of Health and Environment, 2014). According to Martiner (2013), monitoring and evaluation of health of the population is a core public health function: 'The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is one of those core population health indicators as it reveals the quality of life of mothers and other family members, the access to and quality of health services, access to a good nutrition, education, human rights and security, inequity in deprived population groups and the environment'.

IMR is measured as the number of babies who die before reaching their first year of age divided by number of live births in a specific place and year. It is interpreted as the risk of a baby dying between birth and one year of age. 'In the World, between 1960 and 2011 infant mortality rate has been significantly reduced to 85%, from 113.7 to 17.3 per 1,000 live births, representing a reduction of 2,120 thousands infant deaths. Consistently over time, the European region shows the best situation. In 2011 the European has an IMR of 4.4 per 1,000 live births (126 000 infant deaths) and the African region has the worst situation with 58.5 per 1,000 live births, a risk 13 times higher compared with Europe' (Martiner, 2013). Scenario in India is also quite alarming.

Infant Mortality Trends in India

Assuring public health services is primary duty of every government and as such, the state has taken appropriate steps e.g. opening health centres, hospitals, mobile hospitals;

organizing mass awareness camps on healthy living, mass media campaigns on sanitation, and other health-related issues, etc. In spite of the wide-ranging state-sponsored health programmes and holistic interventions of the non-governmental organizations, incidence of morbidity in the poorer communities is quite high. Women and children are worst affected by illness and untimely deaths. Deaths of mothers during the pregnancy or after delivery are identified as maternal mortality. Similarly, due to different problems, if new born child is dead or dies after delivery, it is called as infant mortality.

India is facing severe problem related to the infant mortality. The statistics reveal that neonatal death rate in India is the highest in the world i.e. 43 per 1000 live births (UNICEF, 2008). A quarter of world's neonatal deaths (one million) each year take place in India, mostly at home (65.4% of all births and 75.3% of births in rural areas occur at home) (NFHS-3, 2007). It may be noted that despite the great importance of the issue, no information is available regarding the details of the causes of deaths (Ghosh, 2012). It is believed that infectious diseases such as sepsis, pneumonia, tetanus, diarrhoea, preterm birth and complications of asphyxia may be responsible for most of these deaths in the neonatal period.

It is well established that better post-partum health care practices reduce neonatal mortality and morbidity to a large extent, and safe delivery practices like clean cord care (cutting the umbilical cord with sterilized instrument and tying it with a thread), thermal care (drying and wrapping the new-born immediately after delivery and delaying the new-born bath for at least 6 hours or for several days to reduce the hypothermia risk) and initiating breastfeeding within the very first hour after birth are the main factors for reduction of neonatal mortality.

Orthodox socio-cultural beliefs and low level of literacy and education among women neutralize the impact of governmental as well as non-governmental interventions aimed at improving the quality of health of both mother and child. No wonder, maternal anaemia is as high as more than 50% in most of the Indian states, affecting growth of the child in the womb and turning the baby vulnerable during birth. Besides, becoming mother at young age, multiple pregnancies, unplanned motherhood, etc. also contribute towards increasing incidence of infant mortality.

Jain and Visaria (1988) have rightly opined that female literacy as a proxy for female autonomy contributes towards reversing the trends of infant mortality by way of better medical care during prenatal, natal and post-natal periods. They observe: 'Literacy improves access to knowledge and information, changes behavioural pattern, increases utilization of health services and thus contributes to lowering of infant mortality. Besides, the states where female literacy is high also have better availability of medical services. However, literacy does contribute to improving women's self-image; empowers and facilitates decision-making triggering off a change in the authority pattern all ultimately contributing to better health care'.

Interestingly, the infant and child mortality patterns vary in urban and the rural areas. The relation between the female and male mortality rates hold quite strongly in rural areas whereas in the urban areas it is not visible as such (Agnihotri, 2001). It can be well said that infant mortality is the result of socio-economic characteristics of mothers and households, demographic characteristics of children, and health-care behaviour of mothers, availability of health care facilities, etc.

Review of Literature

As stated by Agnihotri (2001), declining infant and child mortality levels are sure indicators of development. But these may not evenly benefit male and female children especially if the latter are unable to access the improved health infrastructure and nutritional support. The consequent gender gap in mortality is a good index of discrimination against the female children. Analysis of time series data on infant and child mortality of major Indian states indicates a more rapid decline in male mortality rates as mortality levels decline. However, many states known for their gender bias do show evidence of the 'substitution effect', i.e., more rapid decline in female infant and child mortality rates in the wake of increasing incidence of pre-natal selection. It is argued here, however, that a mere improvement in mortality rates among 'surviving' girl children does not mean an improvement in the quality of their survival.

Padhi (2001) stated that infant/child mortality is not a simple function of the level of economic development, pace of economic growth or material prosperity. Proximate conditions having a direct bearing on infant and child mortality are such that they cannot be influenced through increases in income and purchasing power alone and are outside the market domain. The National Family Health Survey provides rich and variegated data which are useful for studying the early mortality in Orissa and provide a solid empirical foundation for further probing of certain questions such as accessibility and quality of a whole range of public goods and services which have a direct bearing on premature mortality.

Bhalotra (2008) investigated the impact of aggregate income shocks on infant mortality in India. A recent OECD-dominated literature reports the provocative finding that mortality at most ages is pro-cyclical. Similar analyses for poorer countries are scarce, and both income risk and mortality risk are greater in poor countries. This paper uses data and methods designed to avoid some of the specification problems in previous studies and it explores mechanisms and extensions that have not been previously considered. It uses individual data on infant mortality for about 150000 children born in 1970-1997, merged by cohort and state of birth with a state panel containing information on aggregate income. Identification rests upon comparing the effects of annual deviations in income from trend on the mortality risks of children born at different times to the same mother, conditional upon a number of state-time varying covariates including rain shocks and state social expenditure. Rural infant mortality is countercyclical, the elasticity being about -0.33. This is despite the finding that relatively high risk women avert birth or suffer foetal loss in recessions. It seems in part related to recessions stimulating distress labour amongst mothers, in contrast to the case in richer countries, where they discourage labour market participation. Health-care seeking declines in recessions and this appear related to the opportunity cost of maternal time. Disaggregation reveals that the average results are driven by rural households in which the mother is uneducated or had her first birth in teenage, and that it is only girls that are at risk; boys are protected from income shocks. Exposure to poor conditions in the fetal and neonatal period appears to have a larger effect on infant mortality than similar exposure in the post-neonatal period.

According to Ghosh (2012), the countdown database to track the maternal and child survival rate, as set by the Millennium Development Goal, reported recently that India's progress is not satisfactory in reducing new-born and child deaths. Articles on neonatal and child mortality in India were accessed from PubMed/MEDLINE for the purpose of her study. Risk factors associated with neonatal and child mortality were reviewed in three crucial phases of pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal period. The review revealed economic disparity acts

through various avenues of cultural belief and restrictions and is indirectly associated with care seeking behaviour and utilization of health care, resulting in slow decline of child mortality rate in India. Secondly, cultural norms, practices, and beliefs are strongly associated with high neonatal mortality, contributing to the sluggish decline of overall child survival rate. Proximate determinants of child mortality, i.e., income, cultural behaviour and beliefs, in multiplicity of Indian cultures, are closely associated with health seeking behaviour, antenatal care, delivery practices and postnatal care of infants. It is observed that apart from raising awareness among community leaders, family members responsible for care giving should be specially targeted for removal of hostile perceptions and barriers for improvement of child survival. Also there is need for developing new strategies for health education based on indigenous concerns, addressing socio-cultural barriers.

Historical and Predicted Trends

There has been a consistent decline in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) in India. The rate of decline in current decade is higher than in the previous. However, based on robust projections, at the current rate of decline, India is unlikely to meet the targets for Millennium Development Goal (MDG)-4, which aims to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two thirds between 1990 and 2015. Six states of India though are likely to achieve the IMR and U5 MR target of MDG-4: Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the South, Maharashtra in the West, West Bengal in the East, and Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in the North. There is a small or no decline in early neonatal mortality rate (ENMR), which hovers at around 30/1000 live births. ENMR is an indicator of quality of perinatal care. In the last decade, IMR decline in urban areas is much less sharper than in rural areas, narrowing the gap between the rural and urban (Census of India, 2013).

According to Mehta (2013), India's maternal mortality rate declined 16% in 2011-12 from 2007-09. Infant mortality in India declined marginally to 42 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012 from 44 deaths in 2011. Pregnancy-related and infant deaths in the country have declined significantly from a few years earlier, according to the latest data released by the Registrar General of India, but experts say there is not much to cheer in the numbers given that India still lags behind developed nations and even its poorer neighbours. Although the MMR dropped from 212 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007-09 to 178 in 2010-12, India is behind the target of 103 deaths per live births to be achieved by 2015 under the United Nations mandated Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to the Annual Health Survey (2013) which covers nine states, India has made headway in institutionalizing child deliveries, i.e. taking place in hospitals. More than 40% of child deliveries in Chhattisgarh and 79% in Madhya Pradesh were institutional in 2012, compared with 34.9% in Chhattisgarh and 76.1% in Madhya Pradesh in 2011. The states covered by the AHS are Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam. More than 85% of the total births took place in government institutions in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha in 2011, and this was more than 60% in the other states surveyed, except Jharkhand, according to the latest AHS data. But total fertility ratio (TFR), or the average number of children given birth by a woman, reach a preferred level of 2.1 in only 29 out of 284 AHS districts, whereas in 2011 it was 20 districts, according to the AHS data. The Registrar General also released data showing that the sex ratio at birth improved by 2 points to 908 females per 1,000 males in 2010-2012 from 906 in 2009-2011. Chhattisgarh reported the highest sex ratio at birth (979) and Haryana the lowest (857).

Estimates of Mortality Indicators according to Census of India

Mortality is one of the basic components of population change and related data is essential for demographic studies and public health administration. It is the principal ingredient for population projections and life tables. Information on death events recorded in Sample Registration System (SRS) is used to estimate mortality indicators. The various measures of mortality published under SRS are Crude Death Rate (CDR), Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and its components, Age Specific Mortality Rates (ASMR), Still Birth Rate (SBR) and Peri-Natal Mortality Rate (PMR). At the National level, IMR is reported to be 47 and varies from 51 in rural areas to 31 in urban areas. Among the bigger States, it varies from 13 in Kerala to 62 in Madhya Pradesh. Female infants experienced a higher mortality than male infants in all States.

The infant mortality rate, which plays an important role in health planning, has shown a considerable decline from 129 per 1000 live births in 1971 to 110 in 1981 and from 80 in 1991 to 47 in 2010. The child mortality rate has depicted a perceptible decline from 51.9 in 1971 to 41.2 in 1981 and from 26.5 in 1991 to 13.3 in 2010. In 2010, about 34 percent of the deaths were institutional and 66 percent received medical attention other than institution. Sample Registration System (SRS) of Census of India states that early neo-natal mortality rate i.e. number of infant deaths less than seven days of life per thousand live births forms an important component of infant mortality rate and more specifically of the neo-natal mortality rate (SRS Statistical Report-2012; 2013). The early neo-natal mortality rate along with the percentage of early neo-natal deaths to the total infant deaths is at the National level, the early neo-natal mortality rate for the year 2010 has been estimated at 25 and ranges from 28 in rural areas to 15 in urban areas. Among the bigger States, Kerala (5) and Madhya Pradesh (34) are the two extremes. The percentage of early neo-natal deaths to the total infant deaths during the year 2010, at the National level, has been 53.9 and it varies from 54.6 in rural area to 49.6 in urban areas. In most of the States, rural proportion is relatively higher than the urban proportion except Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. Among the bigger States the percentage for total varies from 38.7 in Kerala to 69.4 in Jammu & Kashmir.

Conclusion: Implications for Human Resources of India

Statistical evidences indicate large imbalances in terms of distribution of U5 mortality across states and between social and economic groups, which in turn inhibit the acceleration in progress of the nation. Even though the concerted efforts of the government have paid off well in terms of reducing infant mortality rate and enhancing health and wellbeing of both mothers and children, we are far behind the targets for the purpose set under Millennium Development Goals. This alarming scenario has a long-term impact on the development of human resources in the country. The government has put a lot of thrust on 'Make in India' which requires large pool of skilled and healthy workforce in years to come (Jha, 2015). Thus, the country might be courting a serious crunch of labour when it will be so critical.

Hence, it is imperative that efforts towards reversing the infant mortality trends should be undertaken with renewed enthusiasm. Any lapse on this count will threaten our current position of people-rich country and concomitant demographic dividends into demographic nightmare. Measures other than public health initiatives are needed. For example, higher wages and incomes contribute to infant mortality decline by raising nutritional standards and to lower birth rates by raising the market value of women's time and, hence, the opportunity costs of childbearing (Asian Development Bank, n.d.). Policy makers must pay heed to such

observations and try to enhance overall quality of life by ensuring better livelihood opportunities, health care and education.

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Impact of Business Ethics and CSR on Augmenting Social Responsibilities: A Study of Select Companies

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Abstract

Business Ethics is concerned with determination of right and wrong in a typical commercial or professional context. The need to study ethical practices has become very significant especially in the wake of corporate failures adversely affecting the stakeholders. As a result of globalization and liberalization, corporations have become globally competitive and are expanding their production base and market share. It goes without saying that ethical practices and corporate social responsibility help the companies gain competitiveness over a long time frame. Besides, holistic practice of Business Ethics and CSR also help the companies augment social responsibilities which keep them on their toes when it comes to protecting the interests of all the stakeholders. This paper tries to look at ethical and CSR practices of a few select companies in India.

Keywords: Business Ethics, Corporate Social Responsibility, India

Introduction

The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word *ethikos* which means custom or character. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines ethics as 'the science of morals, treatise on this, moral principles or rules of conduct'. Business Ethics includes different domains ranging from labour practices, free and fair trade, health issues, euthanasia, animal welfare to environmental concerns etc. Business Ethics is the study of understanding what is right and morally good for business enterprises. To practice Business Ethics in all sincerity, corporations must take a long, hard look at their values, practices and assumptions; question their accepted modes of behaviour, promulgating new values and set up new standards of conduct which are openly held and shared within the corporations, while proclaimed to the outside world (Fernando, 2010).

Ethical behaviour fosters trust among all the stakeholders –a precondition for long-term corporate success. On the contrary, unethical practices lead to end of corporate giants. Many great companies have lost trust of their stakeholders due to their indulgence in unethical and corrupt practices and thus found their way to disgraceful extinction. Examples of such companies include Enron, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch, Global Trust Bank, Satyam, etc. Hence it is imperative that the companies adhere to ethical practices even at the cost of short-term losses so that they come across as trustworthy brand to all their stakeholders. This is the only way through which the companies can remain competitive and successful in the contemporary business environment where a number of watchdogs are keeping their eyes on how the corporate houses conduct themselves.

While the costs of unethical corporate practices are outrageous, companies can reap magnificent dividends from their commitment to ethical behaviour and corporate social responsibility. The companies like Johnson & Johnson, Larsen & Toubro, Wipro, Infosys and Tata Steel, ICICI, TISCO, Dr. Reddy's Lab, NTPC, ONGC, Indian Oil, etc. have succeeded in making profit by following ethical practices. On the other hand, we have several instances of highly successful companies like ITC and Reliance getting into trouble due to indulgences of their top brass (Fernando, 2010). A number of studies show that the companies that follow ethical practices are able to double their profits and have increased their market capitalization as compared to companies which do not follow ethical code for business (Fernando, 2010).

In this paper, we provide a snapshot of how some of the Indian corporate houses are thriving ahead of their competitors while sticking to ethical conduct and being charitable towards the community through their long term commitments to corporate social responsibility.

Tata Sons Ltd.

Tata Sons Ltd. is one of the biggest spenders on corporate social responsibility. According to a report published in The Times of India (2014), the corporate house is consistently spending Rs. 1000 crore per year on an average for last few years. However, it is not simply the money spent by Tata Sons Ltd. that puts the group ahead of others. The group has professionalized its corporate social responsibility efforts so as to optimise impact in all the thrust areas chosen by them. Tata Sons Ltd. has adopted 10 core principles for implementing their corporate social responsibility program as under (official website of Tata Group: tata.com):

1. **Beyond Compliance:** While all the CSR interventions shall fully comply with the relevant laws of the land in which they operate, they will strive to meet core needs, even if it is beyond what is mandated.
2. **Impactful:** Interventions will focus on impact on communities, and to this end all companies (of the Tata Group) will work collaboratively and synergistically on a set of agreed Tata Group Focus Initiatives.
3. **Linked to Business:** All companies may seek business benefits and leverage their core competencies while undertaking CSR activities. However community benefits have to be paramount and clearly defined.
4. **Relevant to National and Local Contexts:** The CSR initiatives must be closely aligned with and relevant to the local and national contexts in which the company is located.
5. **Sustainable Development Principles:** All CSR interventions will follow sustainable development principles; they will factor social, human rights and environmental impacts in their design and execution.
6. **Participative & Bottom-up:** Communities must be central to the interventions and they must be actively involved in identifying the issues to be addressed and in the management and monitoring of the interventions.
7. **Focused on the Disadvantaged:** Special care must be taken to ensure that the needs of the most disadvantaged in the community –in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability and occupation –are addressed.
8. **Strategic and Build to Last:** By design, all CSR initiatives shall ensure that communities can sustain them on their own, beyond the involvement of the Tata Group. Hence the initiative must be part of a long-term CSR strategy.
9. **Partnerships:** All CSR initiatives will be done in partnership with institutions that are close to the ground –community organizations, NGOs, companies (within and outside Tata Group) and government –local, state and central.

10. Opportunities for Volunteering: CSR initiatives will be designed to provide a range of volunteering opportunities for Tata employees.

Besides a well-defined CSR approach, Tata Group is the first Indian company having Ethics Officers as well as Whistle-blower Protection Policy.

Wipro Ltd.

Social responsibility and sustainability approach of Wipro Ltd. rests on three important pillars (Wipro, 2015):

- a. The Strategic: domains and issues to engage with are chosen that are force multipliers for social change and sustainable development. Social responsibility is as much about being a sustainable organization as it is about external initiatives. Therefore, some of the areas of engagement at Wipro lie at the convergence of business goals and social purpose.
- b. The Systemic: Within the chosen domains, Wipro chooses to engage on systemic issues that require deep, meaningful and challenging work. Given the nature of social change, this implies commitment over the long term, typically for several decades because real, genuine change does that long to happen
- c. The Deliberative: Wipro's emphasis on depth and on long term commitment implies a deliberative approach that precludes engaging in 'cheque book philanthropy'. By implication, this also means that the company is wary of expanding and growing social programs as ends in themselves.

Major areas of Wipro's CSR initiatives include school education, engineering education, sustainability education, higher education, education for children with disability, ecological sustainability (energy, water, waste, bio-diversity), community healthcare, and long-term rehabilitation after natural disasters (Wipro, 2015). The coming together of business, government and civil society to address society's biggest challenges holds great promise – it is an idea whose time has come and as such over the past several years, Wipro has established a strong foundational framework for social and environmental initiatives both, within the organization as well as outside (Wipro, 2015).

Alongside a robust approach towards corporate social responsibility, Wipro is also known for its upright and ethical conduct in business. No wonder, Wipro has been declared world's most ethical companies in 2016 by Ethisphere Institute –a rare honor bestowed for fifth consecutive year (The Hindu Business Line, 2016).

Aditya Birla Group

For Aditya Birla Group, business is not an end in itself but a means to serve the larger interest of the society (Aditya Birla Group, n.d.). The group has championed theory of trusteeship in practice by dedicating part of their profits for programmes meant for larger social good. According to official website of the Aditya Birla Group, the corporate house 'takes its social responsibility very seriously, far transcending mere chequebook philanthropy. Corporate Social Responsibility is accorded as much importance as a business project. ...social vision is integrated with business vision.'

Aditya Birla Group is involved in education, healthcare and family welfare, sustainable livelihood encompassing agriculture and water-shade development, infrastructure support, women's empowerment and espousal of social cause. Social commitment of Aditya Birla Group is coupled with its assurance of ethical conduct as reflected in the Group's adherence to global compact, code of conduct and above all whistle-blower policy.

Conclusion

Success stories of a good number of companies across the world as well as in India indicate that it is very much possible to run profitable businesses while being socially and ethically committed. Case instances of three large corporate houses of India covered in this article also suggest that they have taken up corporate social responsibility as well as ethical conduct in the same spirit. By implication, all the three corporate houses viz. Tata Sons, Wipro and Aditya Birla Group command infinite goodwill and trust among all their stakeholders all over the world. Hence it goes without saying that it makes perfect business sense to invest in corporate social responsibility and remain committed to ethical conduct.

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Work Life Balance Programmes in IT Companies: A Review

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Abstract

This article is based on a comprehensive review of work-life balance programmes in IT companies. Some of the leading IT companies have indeed pioneered innovative work-life balance programmes which are worthy of being termed as the best practices with universal appeal across industries. In this paper, the authors have reviewed the work-life balance programmes of five companies viz. Google, SAS Institute, NetApp, AutoDesk and National Instruments which are drawn from various authoritative lists of best places to work brought out by Forbes, Fortune or Glassdoor from time to time. HR practitioners and consultants can take cues from this article to develop effective work-life balance programmes for greater impact while academics can take it further in terms of deeper inquiry on this theme.

Keywords: Work-life balance, Best Practices, IT Companies

Introduction

Comprehensive work-life balance programmes are limited to a small number of large companies in the world while a vast majority of employees across the globe have no access to such interventions leading to dysfunctional turnover, exhaustion, depression, and burnout among executives (Jha & Malviya, 2015). This paper is a humble attempt to showcase some of the best practices in implementing work-life balance programmes so as to kick-start a larger thrust in popularising innovative and high-impact interventions in the field based on experiences from top five IT companies viz. Google, SAS Institute, NetApp, AutoDesk and National Instruments. These companies have been selected for the study based on their consistent track record of being the top ones in the best places to work lists published from time to time by Great Places to Work Institute, Glassdoor, Forbes and Fortune.

Google

Google finds a place in the list of Great Places to Work Institute's top MNCs of the world. Work-life balance programs of google have been reported and discussed on various on-line platforms and scholarly studies. Bock (2014) observes that Google uses a scientific approach to work-life balance by conducting an annual g-DNA within survey which is unlike run on the mill researches. The g-DNA survey is used to design and implement work-life balance programs for its employees in different parts of the world. The g-DNA survey revolves around innate characteristics (nature) of the employees and their surroundings (nurture) as both these factors determine their experience at the workplace (Bock, 2014).

The g-DNA survey is unique and worth emulating by other companies interested in leveraging work-life balance programs for long-term competitiveness. Bock (2014) unfolds how the g-DNA survey is conducted: 'a randomly selected and representative group of over 4,000 Googlers completes two in-depth surveys each year. The survey itself is built on scientifically validated questions and measurement scales. (Respondents are asked) about traits that are static, like personality; characteristics that change, like attitudes about culture, work projects, and co-workers; and how Googlers fit into the web of relationships around all (the employees/managers/leaders of Google). (Researchers) then consider how all these factors interact, as well as with biographical characteristics like tenure, role and performance. Critically, participation is optional and confidential'.

Based on g-DNA surveys, Google employees have been classified as Segmentors (they draw a psychological line between work stress and the rest of their lives, and without a care for looming deadlines and floods of emails can fall gently asleep each night) and Integrators (they not only find themselves checking email all evening, but pressing refresh on gmail again and again to see if new work has come in) (Bock, 2014). Incidentally, 69% of the google employees fall under Integrators' category which is worrisome for the company. Inhouse research on work-life balance provides hope as Google is trying to design work-life balance programs based on the findings of the survey. For example, Google office in Dublin has launched an innovative plan better known as 'Dublin Goes Dark' where the employees are told to drop off all their devices at the front desk before going home for the night. The Google employees of Dublin office reported blissful and stress-free evenings as a result of this initiative (Bock, 2014).

There are other encouraging storied from Google. Toronto office of Google has started a program of not sending e-mails in evenings or weekends unless emergencies arise. Employees are not penalized for sending e-mails during weekends, however, such temptations are discouraged. (The Globe and Mail, n.d.). In the Waterloo office of Google, No Meeting Weeks are held, allowing staff to focus on other work without time siphoned off to gatherings and the many tasks they spawn. That decreases the chances employees have to take work home that week to keep up with everything, allowing for a more segmented lifestyle (The Globe and Mail, n.d.).

Google offers a great opportunity to enjoy work and augment familial happiness to all its employees. As per the career page of Google, its employees are entitled to the following benefits (Google, n.d.):

- Stay healthy, save time: On-site physicians and nurses, convenient medical services, and comprehensive health care coverage help keep you healthy and happy. (Varies by location)
- Travel without worries: Googlers and their families are covered with travel insurance and emergency assistance - even on personal vacations.
- More time with your baby: New parents get time off and some extra spending money to help them welcome their new bundle of joy.
- Never stop learning: We'll reimburse you for classes or degree programs that help you with what you do.
- Legal aid for less: Googlers get legal advice at no cost and, in the US, also get common legal services at a generous group discount.

SAS Institute

SAS Institute tops the best companies list of Glassdoor in terms of work-life balance and ranks second in the Great Places to Work Institute's list of World's Best MNCs. The company's website vociferously reflects its philosophy and ethos: 'The culture of SAS honors the importance of family, work/life balance and enjoyment of the workplace. SAS is committed to helping employees, their families and retirees achieve balance in their lives by providing problem-solving, coaching, resources and referrals, and educational programs'.

SAS Institute provides following benefits to its employees to ensure a greater work-life balance (SAS Institute, n.d.):

- Career: Meaningful work, stimulating work environment, training and career development opportunities.
- Time for Self/Family: Paid holidays, paid vacations, flexible work schedules, bereavement leave, paid sick days.
- Health: Beautifully landscaped campus with walking/biking trails, comprehensive medical services, employee assistance program, healthcare flexible spending account, on-site healthcare centre, on-site recreation and fitness centre, short and long-term disability plans.
- Family: adoption assistance and paid adoption leave, college scholarship for dependents, dependent care flexible spending account, paid family sick days, subsidized on-site child-care centres.
- Work/Life Department: A full-fledged office of Work/Life with eight full-time social workers involved in providing professional assistance in matters of child development, aging, elder care, education counselling, etc. □ Miscellaneous: On-site services such as massage, salon, repair and maintenance.

SAS Institute's unique work environment and family-friendly programs contribute to the company's astonishingly low 4 percent turnover rate (as against industry norms of 20%) which translates to an annual savings to the tune of \$60-62 million (Bankert, Lee and Lange, n.d.).

NetApp

NetApp has been ranked 3rd in the Great Places to Work Institute's World's Best MNCs List 2014 and also figures in Fortune magazine's list of 100 best companies to work for in 2014. As mentioned on the company website: 'These rankings reflect NetApp's unique offering of employee benefits and its culture of credibility, fairness, respect, pride, and camaraderie. Creating a healthy work environment plays an important role in building employee enthusiasm and fostering the collaboration and creativity for which NetApp is known. Its daily activities and events help build its community and maintain a healthy balance between work and play. In addition to a great work environment, the employees get to work on one of the leading innovative storage and data management solutions in the industry'.

Benefits page of NetApp website categorically outlines the spirit of work-life balance approach towards employees: 'At NetApp, we are passionate about creating a stimulating, supportive work environment for you. We strive to keep you healthy, happy, and moving ahead through our benefits programs'. A summary of NetApp's rainbow of employees' benefits are mentioned as under:

- Healthcare Program: NetApp provides comprehensive medical, dental, and vision insurance plans beginning the first day of regular employment.

- Dental, Vision, Wellness and Family Programs: Employees have a choice to visit any dentist anywhere. They are also entitled to get frames and lenses in case of any vision-related issues. A wide range of wellness benefits are available to all the employees. Besides, the employees have choice of having second-opinion service with access to medical advice from top physicians of the world.
- Insurance and Income Protection Programs: NetApp provides short and long term disability benefits, basic life and AD and D insurance and supplemental life insurance to its employees. Financial and Savings Program: NetApp provides for flexible spending account, limited purpose flexible spending account (for healthcare), and employee stock purchase option.
- Work-life Balance Program: NetApp provides the following benefits under worklife balance programs:
 - Time off: Paid vacation time increases based on years of service. Time off also include 10 paid holidays and sick time.
 - Volunteer Time Off: Employees can avail five days of voluntary work in a year with full pay.
 - Employee Assistance Program: Employees can get free confidential assistance with issues such as individual or family counselling, work-life conflicts, legal and financial services.
 - Educational Assistance: Tuition reimbursement plan covers expenses for accredited coursework. NetApp University also offers a wide range of free professional development resources.
 - Pre-paid Legal Plan: This voluntary plan provides covered legal services, consultations on the phone, in-person consultations, document preparations, and representations in many frequently needed legal matters.

Thanks to comprehensive employee benefits and focus on work-life balance, NetApp has been able to attract and retain highly talented people and surge ahead of its competitors in exceeding stakeholders' expectations.

AutoDesk

AutoDesk figures in the list of Glassdoor (for best work-life balance) and best MNCs list of the Great Places to Work Institute. The company believes that a rewarding career and personal life depend in part on employees' continuing good health, future financial security and peace of mind. That is why Autodesk offers a wide variety of high-quality health insurance plans, flexible spending accounts, and survivor and income protection plans as part of our benefits program. The program allows employees to choose the benefits and coverage levels that best meet their needs and those of their family.

Summary of the benefits provided by AutoDesk is presented as under (AutoDesk, n.d.):

- Shared Contributions: AutoDesk contributes enough so that its employees can afford comprehensive benefits package. The company also subsidizes health insurance premium for the family.
- Flexible Spending Accounts: The company provides flexible spending account to meet healthcare expenditure of self and dependents.
- Income Protection Plans: The employees of AutoDesk are entitled to sick leave, short-term/long-term disability benefit,

- Work/Life Quality: Characteristic features of work/life quality at AutoDesk are as under: Workplace Flexibility: variable core hours, home working, shared office space and casual dress.
- Time Off: Sabbatical, holidays, vacations.
- Health and Wellbeing: Wellness reimbursement (\$300 per annum), employee assistance program, health advocacy program.
- Employee Impact: Paid volunteer time (4 hours per month), matching gift program (the company donates amount contributed by the employees to an approved NGO). Miscellaneous: Group legal plan, auto and home insurance, pet insurance, long-term care insurance.

National Instruments

National Instruments figures in the common list of Glassdoor and Great Places to Work Institute. The company has developed an employee-centric work environment designed to empower individuals and provide enough space for their work-life balance. The company firmly believes that the employees will get their jobs done when given the freedom to accommodate their personal lives –accordingly, employees can take advantage of part time and flexible scheduling or avail unique opportunity of bringing their kids to office on such occasions as ‘Bring Your Kid to Work Day’ (Great Places to Work, n.d.).

Summary of employee benefits provided by National Instruments is given as under (National Instruments, n. d.):

- Very comprehensive –yet extremely affordable –medical plans that include prescription and vision coverage
- On-site health centre professionally managed by Take Care Health Systems Employer Solutions and staffed with a physician, a nurse practitioner, a registered nurse, and support personnel
- Flexible, cost-effective dental plan
- Employee stock plans, including a discounted employee stock purchase plan
- 10 annual paid holidays (one is a personal holiday you can take at your discretion)
- 2 weeks of paid vacation
- 10 annual paid sick days
- Paid bereavement days
- Tuition assistance for approved degree plans
- Company performance bonus
- Flexible spending account
- Group legal plan for discounted legal services
- On-site, 24/7 fitness centre
- Employee wellness programs
- Adoption assistance
- Life insurance, short-term disability, and long-term disability plan.
- NI match for employee’s charitable contributions (annual match limit applies)
- 24-hour toll-free employee assistance program -a confidential, professional counselling resource

Conclusion

The authors have discussed work-life balance programs of five companies viz. Google, SAS Institute, NetApp, AutoDesk and National Instruments in this paper. Except Google, none of the companies have a scientific approach to implement work-life balance program despite the

fact that these companies figure in the lists of best places to work or best companies for work-life balance. All the four companies (barring Google) in the study have tried to present their comprehensive employee benefits as part of work-life balance intervention.

In reality, work-life balance program is a minor part of the overall employee benefits package. This betrays the stated philosophy of companies to ensure work-life balance of their employees. None the less, these companies certainly have offered more than lip service to the cause of work-life balance of their employees. A large number of companies have only cosmetic programmes in the name of work-life balance interventions. Hence it goes without saying that a scientific approach to work-life balance programmes is imperative so as to help the employees strike a holistic balance between their familial and professional responsibilities.

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Corporate Interface

Leveraging Gen Y Aspirations to Foster Employee Engagement

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Abstract

This article is based on an interview with Dr Deepak Malhotra, founder, People Pal –an online leadership newspaper (www.peoplepal.in). He is author of ‘Match the Age to Keep Them Engaged: Decoding the Secrets of Creating a Happy Workplace’ published by Bloomsbury, New Delhi. Dr Malhotra is a seasoned HR professional who advocates an array of original interventions plans for keeping the Gen Y employees engaged in his ground-breaking book on the theme. His cutting-edge research is likely to impact HR practices vis-a-vis employee engagement in contemporary organizations. This interview brings in a corporate perspective on the need to understand age-specific aspirations of Gen Y employees while planning any employee engagement programme in the organizations so as to have better outcomes in term of commitment, organizational effectiveness and sustainable competitiveness.

Keywords: Employee Engagement, Gen Y, India

How the concept of employee engagement has evolved over the years?

In my opinion, concept of employee engagement revolves around continuously creating a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by drive, guarantee, and passion for success. It triggers a will to act –leading to commendable levels of performance. It goes without saying that performance either makes or breaks an organization in the testing waters. You as a people leader should know, who would fit in your organization, what will it take for a good team member to stick with the organization, and how would they like to be treated. Engagement also directly depends on the value system of the organization. It is important to align opportunities to learn and grow, aiding environment which continually supports performance, work and life balance, and attainable booty month on month. It is interesting to note that more than 60 per cent of engaged employees report positive fitness and are happy to be there.

Factors that we need to work on as people leaders to ensure higher degree of employee engagement include resolution to the key issues, ethics, core values, conduct of the leaders, and work and life balance, especially in a 24X7 environment. Hence the way we look at employee engagement today has changed from organizing birthday parties and giving movie tickets or dinner coupons on anniversaries to contributing meaningfully in helping them strike a balance in their work and life, professional self-development and attainment of their life goals which may or may not be aligned with that of the vision and mission of the organization they are working for.

Why is it important for leaders to understand, appreciate and do something about employee engagement?

Would you believe when I say that most workers hate their jobs? The reason is very simple, they are either not recognized by their superiors or they do not feel aligned to the overall scheme of leadership, organization, and its vision. Bang-on! They are here to receive their remuneration month on month.

Why should we be concerned about employee happiness? Aren't there more important issues such as sales, marketing, finance, and operations? The truth is all of these issues are better met by employees who are happy and enjoy their work. The first logical step would be to define what 'engagement means to your organization'? It is important, as it may mean different to you. Your definition of the 'ideal employee' may be different, from others. Next step would be to distinguish between, engagement and its consequences.

What kind of challenges the business leaders face in fostering employee engagement in their organizations?

I strongly believe that apart from measurement, action planning and its correction with the right intent, is the key to engaging teams. Good and engaged people are our key assets. Fully engaged scores of 9 per cent in Indian context are quite alarming. Leaders in the long run should move from 'team focused' approach to a more 'individual focused' approach. We all are looking for engagement, as a state where a team member desires to go beyond the call of the duty. Entrepreneurial leaders must note that performance management system and career prospects of the team members are viewed as the most important engagement drivers.

Taking cue from your research, how age play an important role in successful implementation of employee engagement programmes in organizations?

Engagement needs differ in generation, mostly due to different outlook created because of our overall upbringing and culture, core beliefs, values installed in us, and technological and political views in the country and the overall world at large. Teams remain engaged, when given an opportunity to learn and grow, and are empowered to take critical decision. Social security is equally important. One size does not fit all, and that is the reason why, 'matching the age' was born. In Asian cultures we falter mostly in distinguishing between performer and non-performer. Team members notice this quicker than you can fix it.

How the business leaders can best leverage employee engagement programmes using insights from your book 'Match the Age to Keep Them Engaged'?

We can compete with the world, as we are going to have one of the youngest workforces. The responsibility is on us to provide them with the correct learning opportunities, pass on the baton, and groom them for future. Interestingly younger lot wants to contribute to make the world a better place. They all wish to be their own bosses, work in teams, have flexible work-life options and dedicatedly invest in their careers. Their mentors need to have all the characteristics of an exceptional school teacher, as for them timely feedback is very important. I have seen them very well connected socially too. I can say without doubt that the younger lot are splendid, and 'keeping them engaged' is so beneficial for the organization, as they put in the extra efforts in their jobs.

Taking a cue from the above, just as a casting director engages a particular actor for a role, keeping in mind the story of the movie, the age bracket, and his potential to do justice to the role, a leader plays a pivotal role in identifying the right actors, by 'matching their age', their

potential, efficiency, and the dedication to do justice to the assigned roles. In other words, 'keeping them engaged' and extracting the best out of them!

What changes do you envisage in the way employee engagement programmes are conceptualized, implemented, monitored and measured in future?

A happy workplace can have significant impact on the business results and the overall success. It is no rocket science to conclude that there is a huge impact of employee engagement on productivity. The co-relation between engagement and efficiency is proved time and again. The entrepreneurial style of leadership should focus on this relation. As a people's manager, you would agree that in every organization there is diversity, generation gap, which generates different outlooks. Diversity impacts directly on individual's skills or knowledge fissures, technology management, self-confidence, multi-tasking drive, ability to persevere challenges, and work in teams. This is different for different age groups. There is no one size-fit-for-all approach at an organization level.