

Green Work Life Balance initiatives – A case study of healthcare sector in Vijayapura

Abstract:

Sustainable development and preservation of environment are now recognised globally as overriding imperatives to protect our planet from the ravages inflicted on it by mankind. Various global initiatives are underway to counter the ill effects of today development encountered such as global warming and climate change. A common thread running across all these initiatives is the focus on reducing the demand for fossil fuels by implementing the 3R's viz. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Hospitals can play a major and decisive role in these global efforts to make our planet a better place to live in. As providers of hospitals can ensure that healthily adopt environment-friendly and green practices and thereby lead the way in this global initiative. One such initiative in healthcare sector would be adopting Green Human Resource Management practices to promote sustainable practices and increase employee awareness and commitments on the issues of sustainability. This paper deals with one of such green HRM initiatives i.e., Green Work Life balance initiatives followed in selected Hospitals of Vijayapur. 3 Hospitals have been selected for the purpose of study. A sample size of 50 has been selected for the study. The main objectives of the study would be the factors leading to work life imbalance in healthcare sector and the initiatives adopted by hospitals to enable the employees to balance their personal and professional lives and ensure environment sustainability. The paper would also highlight on the general green WLB practices followed in the hospital sectors.

Key words: Sustainable development, green healthcare, green HRM, Green Work Life Balance, Work Life Balance initiatives.

Introduction:

Green Healthcare:

The disastrous impact of recent storms, floods, droughts, and excessive heat that many people have experienced around the world, motivate us to think seriously about global warming and its impact and to do whatever we can to address this problem. Governments, enterprises, and people, all have roles to play in combating global warming and building a sustainable environment. A good thing is that there is now greater awareness and a growing commitment to address environmental problems we face. Inaction to arrest environmental degradation would significantly affect not only current but also future generations and our further progress. So, a proactive multipronged action is necessary by all the industry and business sectors, regulatory agencies, and the individuals. What can, and should, hospitals sector do in creating a greener and sustainable environment? What can each person in the sector do individually and collectively to address global warming and create a sustainable environment? All over the world, healthcare sectors are concerned about the overall impact of depletion of environment. General frameworks describing corporate climate strategies are difficult to transfer to the healthcare sector. Such frameworks usually focus on basic industries, examining the dependency of companies on fossil fuels and exploring the effects of extreme weather events and regulation on corporations. However, hospitals are not generally exposed to weather stresses nor are they heavily dependent on fossil fuels in their operations. Indeed, the main impact of climate change on hospitals is indirect: they are affected to the extent that their clients' activities and economic activities in general are constrained. Like any other enterprises, as consumers of natural resources, hospitals directly interact with the environment. For instance, healthcare contributes towards the carbon emission directly in their day-to-day operations in terms of use of paper, electricity, lighting, air conditioning, electronic equipment and other things, although this is moderate compared to other carbon sensitive industries like steel, oil and gas, etc. healthcare affect the environment indirectly by various intermediaries who are the major source of long-term funding to various industries that pollute the environment heavily. Hence, it is imperative to understand the need for sustainable practices for hospitals. The key issue for hospitals will be assessing the impact of climate change and post covid on the asset quality of lending and servicing. This will influence healthcare policies as well as healthcare unit management. This will help them to develop a business model which is sustainable and adaptable to their environment policies. While many hospitals understand the significance of emission reduction, only very few have comprehensively integrated climate change-related aspects into their business processes. Besides this, internally, in their day-to-day operations also are devising strategies to make their systems and processes environment-friendly.

Currently, in India, the concept of green healthcare is catching up and hospitals are actively looking for ways to portray themselves as a green hospital. Green hospital is an umbrella term referring to practices and guidelines that make hospital sustainable in economic, environment, and social dimensions. It aims to make hospital processes and the use of IT and physical infrastructure as efficient and effective as possible, with zero or minimal impact on the environment.

Green hospital can be an avenue to reduce pollution and save the environment aiding sustainable economic growth. Green hospital is a multi-stakeholders' endeavour where hospital must work closely with government, NGOs, regulator, consumers, and business communities to reach the goal.

Work Life Balance:

Work Life balance is a concept that has attracted attention for several years. It is relevant as people attempt to apportion time to different demands they face from both work and life. The multiplicity of demands that individuals have, can increase this challenge as people strive to incorporate many more activities to life. Work-life balance comes from being healthy. When people come to work, it is important that they are healthy. Work/life balance is about people having measure of control over when,

where, and how they work. Work life balance (Work Life Balance) is the current distinct issue of any industry. The employees always want to succeed and progress at workplace, at the same time spare some time for family and recreation. Balancing these two extremes is the cause of burn out of employees and hence the employers recognized this as a need of hour and want to introduce the work life balance strategies, plans, and formulate policies to improve the employee morale, motivation, and productivity. Work life balance does not mean working less to fulfil personal responsibilities at the cost of organizational productivity. In fact, it is to work productively and improve the personal life simultaneously. The work life balance practices achieve retention of the employees. Three major factors contribute to the interest in, and the importance of, serious consideration of work/life balance: 1) Global competition; 2) Renewed interest in personal lives/ family values; and 3) An aging workforce.

Green Work Life Balance:

Work-life balance policies are supposed to facilitate the reconciliation of working life & private life. Green Work-Life balance policy comprises mutual enforcement and harmonization of environmentally friendly behaviour will be downgraded. Moreover, a balance can bring about positive interaction effects, since different environmentally friendly experiences can enrich each other. Green Work-life balance policies focus on employee's twofold role as consumers and producers, because employees learn and practice environmentally relevant behaviour in these two roles. Consequently, green work-life balance policies aim at decreasing imbalances in environmentally friendly behaviour by promoting positive influences both from work –to-life and from life-to-work. Employees will profit from green work-life balance policies, as these additional and voluntary offers will enlarge their possible scope of environmental action. They will find support for environmentally friendly activities in working life and in private life. Moreover, they will get the chance to bring in their personal environmental priorities and values. Moreover, they might feel proud of their employer (Lea & Webley, 1997)

Literature Review:

1. Work –life balance programs, career opportunities and gender equality have been identified as some of the factors that would help to make the industry more attractive to women. (Women in Logistics Access dat:20081205: <http://europa.com/docs/women-in-logistics-en>).
2. Employees also learn environmental attitudes and behaviour in private life. Employee's private environmental performance is closely attached to their individual ways of living and their everyday behaviour. (Reusswig,1994; Soderholm,2010).
3. Work-Life balance policies are meanwhile perceived as gender –neutral assistance for all private demands with regards to leisure, education, and family activities. (Rvan & Kossek,2008).
4. Rashid, Wahid, and Saad (2006) have documented that employees' participation in environmental management systems can spill over and influence environmentally responsible attitudes and behaviour in employees' private life.
5. Green work-life balance policies focus on employees' twofold role as consumers and producers, because employees learn and practice environmentally relevant behaviour in these two roles (Muster, 2011).

Scope of the study:

The study is conducted in three healthcare sectors of Vijayapura – Yashoda hospital, BLDEA's Hospital and Al ameen hospital. The main branches in the city were contacted for the study purpose.

Objectives of the study:

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To understand the concept of green work life balance as applicable to healthcare sector
2. To ascertain the factors at workplace and family which influence the work life balance of employees
3. To know the attitude of employees towards work life balance issues
4. To discuss various green work life initiatives provided by the healthcare sector.
5. To suggest the green work life framework for healthcare sectors

Research Methodology:

Type of Research: Descriptive research.

Sources of data: The data was collected through primary source.

Primary data: Primary data was collected through questionnaire which was administered to the sample in the three healthcares of Vijayapura city. The structured questionnaire is followed. The structured questionnaire consisted of the questions of factors at workplace & family which affects the work-life balance of employees. The response is received through personal interview.

Sampling Method: Convenience random sampling

Sample Size: The sample size consisted of 50 employees

Analysis and interpretation:

Data collected have been analysed and interpreted based on objectives of the study. The information that was collected has been represented with the help of tables.

Table Showing the demographic profile of the respondents

Age Group	No of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 25	8	16.67
25-35	17	33.37
35-45	20	40
45-55	5	10
Total	50	100

This table show that approx. 17% of the respondents were less than 25 years, 33% were in 25- 35 years 40% were in 35-45, and 10 % in 45-55 years of age segments.

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	30	60
Female	20	40
Total	50	

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents were male and remaining 40% were female respondents

Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage
SSLC	13	26.67
XII	10	20
Graduate	12	23.33
Postgraduate	15	30
Total	50	100

The table depicts the qualification of the respondents where in around 27% and 20% of respondents are in SSLC and XII level respectively 23 % are graduates and 30% of them are postgraduates.

Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	17	34
Married	33	66
Total	50	100

This table shows that around 66% of the respondents are marries and 34% of them are unmarried.

Possession of children	No of Respondents	Percentage

Yes	30	60
No	20	40
Total	50	100

The table highlights that round 60% of the respondents possess children and 40 % of them do not have children

Family Type	No of Respondents	Percentage
Nuclear family	37	73
Joint family	13	27
Total	50	100

As per the table 73% of the respondents have nuclear family status, whereas 27% of them have a joint family status

Personal factors leading to Work Life Imbalance

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	10	20
Disagree	08	16
Neutral	11	22
Agree	16	32
Strongly Agree	05	10
Total	50	

Table highlights the personal factors like dependents' care, family emergencies, social ceremony, personal disability or illness, single person earning etc... Lead to work life imbalance. Though 20% strongly disagreed to this, 22% agreed and 10 % strongly agreed to the above facts.

Organizational factors contributing to leading to Work Life Imbalance

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	4
Disagree	10	20
Neutral	11	22
Agree	14	28
Strongly Agree	13	26
Total	50	

The table indicates that 28% of the respondents agreed and 26 % strongly agreed that organizational factors such as hours of work, out of hours work, technology at workplace, work environment, role confusion, level of responsibility, leave policies and rigid work schedules contribute to individual's work life imbalance

Support of various groups to balance family and work life

Support given by	No of Respondents	Percentage
Spouse	9	18
Parents / in laws	17	34

Sl.No	Work Life Balance initiatives	Yes	No	Total
1	Sick leave for self and family	40	10	50
2	Flexible work schedules	24	26	50
3	Emergency child / dependent care support	15	35	50
4	Paid leave	50	--	50
5	Personal / career counselling	10	40	50
6	Floating holidays / vacations	35	15	50
7	Free health services / Health insurance	28	22	50
8	Wellness programs (meditation yoga, health camps rejuvenation programs)	13	37	50
9	Leave without pay	15	35	50
10	Job sharing	11	39	50
Colleagues/ superiors		19	38	
Other institutions		5	10	
Total		50	100	

This table indicates that 18% of the respondents responded that they receive support from their spouses 34% of them said that they have their parents / in laws to support them, 38% of them said that their colleagues and superiors support them and 10 % of them said that other institutions like baby care centres, domestic help agencies etc. support them in their day to day working to balance their family and professional life.

The above table shows various work life balance initiatives provided by their organizations and the number of employees taking the benefits of these organizations.

Impact of Work Life balance initiatives on Environment sustainability

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	2	4
Agree	24	48
Strongly Agree	24	48
Total	50	

Table clearly states that 48% of the respondents strongly agree and 48% of them agree to the fact their professions and the organizations initiatives have made them more concerned towards the environment sustainability, and they ensure that their activities are in tune with nature and impact on environment due to their profession is as minimum as possible.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

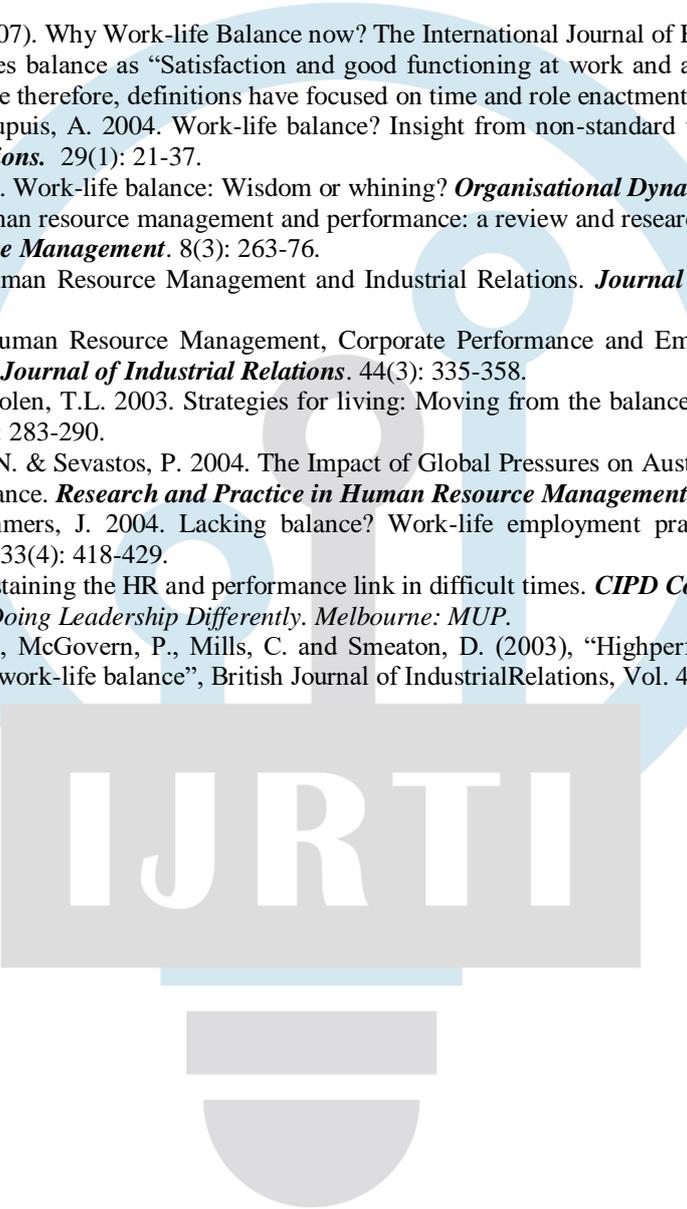
1. Organizations should help their employees to socialize which would enable them to relax and rejuvenate.
2. Provide the employees with flexible work schedules, job sharing options, working from home facilities (wherever possible) etc.
3. Professionals may take up wellness programs like meditation, yoga, professional and career counselling, health camps, stress management camps, etc.
4. Onsite childcare/eldercare initiatives by the organizations would boost up the employee's emotional wellness.
5. Different types of leaves such as educational leave, sabbaticals, paid/ unpaid leave, sick leave, parental leave (Maternity and paternal leave)etc.. can be provided as found suitable.

Conclusion

The green work-life balance concept is supported to bring about positive effects for the environment, employees, and the organization. Green work-life balance works as the reconciliation of working life and private life with regards to environmental values, attitudes, and behaviour. It comprises mutual enforcement and harmonization of environmentally friendly orientations in private life and working life. We assume that balancing environmentally friendly behaviour in both life domains reduces negative interaction effects, since non environmentally friendly behaviour will be downgraded. Moreover, a balance can bring about positive interaction effects, since different environmentally friendly experiences can enrich each other. Green work-life balance policies focus on employees' twofold role as consumers and producers, because employees learn and practice environmentally relevant behaviour in these two roles. The greening and encouragement of employees as human beings can only be successful if environmental aspects are considered in all core business processes.

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