



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON RETENTION OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN INDIAN ORGANISATIONS

^{*},¹Vinod Kumar, M. and ²Dr. Prakash Babu

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Adaikalamatha College, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

²Associate Professor of Commerce, AVVM Sri Pushpam College, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 13th September, 2017

Received in revised form

20th October, 2017

Accepted 18th November, 2017

Published online 25th December, 2017

Key words:

Retention, Women Employees,
Employee Engagement,
Attrition, HR Practices.

ABSTRACT

Men and women employees have been equally contributing to the organizational success. Recently women employees are in a prime focus for the organisations to get retained. Some organisations take this initiative for managing diversity where as some has witnessed the benefits of retaining women employees leading to optimum performance at work. This research paper attempts to study the practice of retention of women employees in Indian context.

The various areas covered in this research paper are defining retention; various reasons behind retaining women employees, various methods of retention of women employees followed by best practices in retaining women employees by Indian organisations. The primary method of data collection for this research paper is through various secondary sources such as research papers, websites, blogs, e-magazines etc.

Copyright © 2017, Vinod Kumar and Dr. Prakash Babu. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Vinod Kumar, M. and Dr. Prakash Babu. 2017. "A Study on retention of women employees in indian organisations", *International Journal of Current Research*, 9, (12), 62091-62094.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has made the world flat due to which the distance between the organization and prospective employees have reduced. There was a time when people were restricted within a defined boundary to go for searching their jobs but in today's scenario of urbanization, this limitation has become extinct. With the evolution digitalization, employers have an access to their prospective employees to a greater extent due to which people from different states migrate to other states. Globalization has made the global employers to cater different parts of the country. Hence there are three aspects which play an important role which are urbanization, digitalization and globalization. First the number of prospective employees are available at a large number due to urbanization, second the number of employers have increased due to globalization and third the means to reach the prospective employees have increased due to digitalization. Due to all these three factors employees have got an easy access to better prospects, more choices to enhance their career which has lead to increase in competition as well as rise in the number of employees leaving their organisations within a short period of time. This situation has forced the HR professionals to think outside the box and come out with means to stop the employees switching from

one company to other. It has been noticed that the number of girls have started participating in education unlike few decades ago where parents were reluctant to send their daughters to schools. This phenomenon has led to increase in women candidates appearing as prospective employees resulting almost equal number of women employees working in organisations. Majority of the women employees face a major hurdle in their career after maternity due to which they tend to discontinue. Others get stopped due to marriage, harassments at workplace or challenge in managing a balance between work and family life. This has led the HR professionals to un-box such initiatives which can not only attract but also motivate and retain the women employees in their organisations. Employee retention is the ability of an organization to let the employee continue with the organization. This is possible by the overall organization philosophy to support such policies and practices which can motivate an employee to stay within the organisation.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the reasons behind retaining women employees
- To comprehend the various ways to retain women employees
- To identify various best practices followed by leading organisations to retain women employees

***Corresponding author: Vinod Kumar, M.**

Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies,
Adaikalamatha College, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research paper is descriptive in nature which attempts to understand a particular phenomenon with regards to retaining women employees in Indian organisations. Secondary sources have been adopted to gather various data trying to decipher the objectives of the study. Various sources such as research papers, websites, blogs, e- magazines have been fetched to collect relevant data and give a shape to the research paper.

Reasons behind retaining women employees

Diversity Management: Women employees have been increasing in number in organisations due to the increase in awareness among parents to educate their daughters. These educated women population turn out to be quite competitive to men as prove to be resources in organisations. Due to this managing diversity has become important in an organisation. Several organisations have diversity policies in place to balance the gender equation as work place.

Personal Confrontations: From the early childhood, the expectation from girl compared to a boy has been quite different among Indian families. They were made educated to get a better life partner but this trend has changed. In spite of this changed mindset, in every step a girl has to face a hurdle to reach at the desired level. Similarly a women employee also faces several obstacles to sustain in an organization. Right after the time the girl gets her first job, the parents start looking for a groom to get married. A women employee begins to get settled in her career and then comes her phase in life when she gets married which becomes a hurdle at times in case the groom is working in other city. Hereafter managing the expectation of a husband, in-laws becomes another challenge in managing the work-life balance. Next obstacle comes when she becomes a mother. Many women find it extremely difficult to continue with after maternity due several confrontations in her life. Thus it is necessary for organisations to come out with such policies that could support a woman employee after her marriage like transfer policies to other divisions or locations with the same organisation etc. To manage work life balance practices like work from home, flexi time policies are quite helpful. Supportive maternity policies are equally important to help a women employee to cope up in such situations. Facilities such as in-house crèche at organisations could support a women employee to continue her job.

Workplace Confrontations: There are various sectors where woman employees are discouraged such as main stream work force such as in manufacturing sector. Rarely woman employees are recruited in factories or mines. This gets clearly evident from the number of girl students pursuing mechanical engineering as their career. Automobile sector is another sector where women employees are rare. Not only this glass ceiling for women employees at organisations become another hurdle. Harassment at workplace is a common reason which is known to everyone yet goes unnoticed or rarely taken up formally in organisations. Due to such reasons several organisations have evolved with strict harassment policies and equal employment practices to retain women employees.

Ways to retain women employees

- Provide equal opportunity
- Cultivate women leaders

- Understand drivers for female employee retention
- Workplace flexibility
- Create a sexism-free work culture
- Pay men and women equally
- Have a transparent performance evaluation policy
- Improve maternity and paternity leave
- Empower female employees to shape company culture

HR practices to retain women employees

Some of the unique HR Practices to retain women employees are listed below.

Accenture

- Extended paid maternity leave of 5 months, additional 1 month of paid leave with 3 months of unpaid leave options
- Maximum maternity leave of 9 months allowed including 5 months paid (before the amendment of new maternity benefit act)
- Maternity Returners Programme – Career guidance facility for parents for re-entry into new roles post maternity period depending on the choice of the employees
- Parents at work Programme – Assistance to women employees during the maternity period to continue their job and advance in their roles and responsibilities
- Maternity Counseling Calls – Facility for the women employees during the maternity period to get counseled by a professional counselor for 6 sessions.
- Employee Assistance Programme – This helps the employees to cope up with their personal and professional hurdles which they generally face during the maternity period.
- Vahini: It has formed a community for all the female employees called 'Vahini'. Vahini deals with various sorts of problems that a female employee may come across during the on/off working hours. It helps in discussions and conducts seminars/workshops on financial issues and also educates the women employees to become good parents.

Hindustan Unilever Limited

- Work place Facilities: The head office at Mumbai is furnished with day care facilities, bank, shopping center, café, gymnasium, florist etc. Even provision for drop facility with escort/ guards for lady employees working late in the evening exist.
- MAPS (Maternity and Paternity Support): Maternity leave of 6 Months and Paternity leave of 2 weeks are allowed at HUL. The same roles and responsibilities are given back once the employees are back from their maternity leaves. The integrated online portal called MAPS (Maternity and Paternity Support) enables the line manager and the employees during this transition period via various tools, resources and guidance.
- Career by Choice programme: It is unique program which gives a direction for women to come back to work after a long break. It helps to women employees to gradually transit to the work life. It starts with a structured induction program designed to familiarize with the company followed by an assigned project

guide who co-owns the project. The guide would be working closely with new employee to provide direction and support throughout the project across various functions like Sales & Marketing, Human Resources, Supply Chain and Research and Development. This program is eligible for any women with minimum of two years experience in areas of Marketing, Human Resources, Supply Chain or Research and Development who are looking for an opportunity to work flexibly. A similar kind of program is run by TATA group called the Tata Second Career Internship Programme (SCIP), calling upon women to take on a second career.

Flipkart

- 6 months of Paid Leave (before the amendment of new maternity benefit act), 4 months of optional flexible working with pay.
- 1 year of career break without pay, after which they return to available jobs
- Transport Reimbursement of Rs.600 per day during the last 2 months of pregnancy.
- Stock Parking Facility i.e Reserve Parking slot for 2 months before and after the delivery
- 50% of off in day care charges for children up to 4 years of age.

Godrej

Careers 2.0: This is a unique opportunity for women who are willing to come back to restart their corporate life after a break for whatever reasons may it be. This program gives potential women a second career having a minimum of two years of experience in any function of management. They are assigned for live business projects across functions and sectors initially from 3 to 6 months. It can be a part time or even full time. During this project period, guide or the co-owner will support the project trainee as well as the trainee will be under the mentorship of a senior leader.

KPMG: Mums at Work Program – under this program young mother will undergo regular health checkups, stress management workshops and talks on parenting will be offered.

Ernst and Young Global Shared Services

- 50% of their workforce is females. It has a day care facility known as 'Ashray' where children of the female employees are taken special care
- In fact expectant mothers can choose the option of working from homes.
- Security guards as escorts are provided to every female employee who works late-evening.

Genpact

Returning Moms Programme': Genpact has come out with 'Returning Moms Programme', an initiative to engage the female employees post maternity phase where they can select the shift timings according to their choice and convenience. Not only this, the new mothers can also start working from the nearest branch of the organisation from their residence. This

initiative will definitely encourage and engage more women employees to return back for their second innings.

Infosys

- Infosys has come up with Infosys Women Inclusivity Initiative' (IWIN) which devoted to only women employees
- IWIN provides 24x7 counseling for the female employees. It has day care facility, deals with parenting matters, etc.
- IWIN has a discussion board that helps female employees to seek advice and suggestions regarding childcare and other similar matters. Even Online support during child bearing period is one the best services of IWIN.
- The employees get regular visits by gynecologists, nutrition specialists, physiotherapists and other health related specialists. IWIN has online doctors for all the employees, especially for the female employees. It also offers special yoga classes for the expecting mothers.
- The female employees are allowed to take a year's leave for family reasons.
- It offers its female employees sabbaticals, extended maternity leave, and enhanced training when they come back to the office.

Intel India

- Extended paid maternity leave of 5 months (before the amendment of new maternity benefit act)
- 1 month of flexible working option for new mothers
- 150 days of paid adoption leave for women employees
- Discounts for day care charges (Best day cares have been tied up within city)
- Financial coverage of Rs.100000 for maternity
- Continuous touch with the women employees during the maternity period to reduce the anxiety level which could arise among the employees being away from work for a long period
- Sensitivity training for all senior managers for a smooth transition to work post maternity.

TCS

- In TCS 11% of the senior management comprises women
- The best part of TCS is that does not break the service record of women who discontinue work due to family commitments and return at a later stage
- The company also allows provides role flexibility through job rotations across businesses, practices and functions.
- A framework called DAWN (Diversity and Women's Network) has been set up to nurture the professional growth of women associates, focused on encouraging diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

Conclusion

Women employees are significantly important to achieve organizational success. Not only for the sake of managing diversity, but also to uplift, promote and engage the women workforce retention becomes important. Women workforce

face personal confrontations as well workplace confrontations due to which organisations have evolved with innovative HR practices to retain the women employees. Providing equal opportunity in literal sense must be practiced, women leaders at top most positions are essential. In order to empower women employees at organisations, improved maternity policies and strict sexual harassment policies in place is important. Finally understanding the key drivers for engaging women employees are a must for their retention.

REFERENCES

- Alaina Percival. 2016. Tech companies can make retention of female employees a priority. Retrieved from techcrunch.com: <https://techcrunch.com/2016/04/29/tech-companies-can-make-retention-of-female-employees-a-priority/>
- ALISON COLWELL. 2015. How Can Companies Attract and Retain Female Talent? Retrieved from bsr.org: <https://www.bsr.org/our-insights/blog-view/how-can-companies-attract-and-retain-female-talent>
- Anne Loehr. 2015. Why you need a new strategy for retaining female talent. Retrieved from cornerstoneondemand.com: <https://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/rework/why-you-need-new-strategy-retaining-female-talent>
- Devpriya Dey. 2017. Extended Maternity Leaves – An Employee Retention Trend among Indian Companies. Retrieved from spiritofhr.wordpress.com: <https://spiritofhr.wordpress.com/?s=accenture>
- DirectEmployers Association Guest 2017. 10 Best Practices for Attracting and Retaining Female Talent. Retrieved from directemployers.org: <https://directemployers.org/2017/06/14/10-best-practices-attracting-retaining-female-talent/>
- Georgene Huang. 2016. Flex Work Isn't The Key To Retaining Women In The Workplace. Retrieved from www.forbes.com: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/georgenehuang/2016/10/25/flexible-jobs-and-work-schedules-the-key-to-retaining-women/#20d8cb1458bc>
- Guest Contributor. 2013. The Importance of Retaining Female Employees. Retrieved from <http://womenofhr.com>: <http://womenofhr.com/the-importance-of-retaining-female-employees/>
- Harriet Minter. 2014. Hitting targets: how Linklaters plan to increase their number of female partners. Retrieved from theguardian.com: <https://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/staff-retention>
- Jeffery Tobias Halter. 2016. Women in the Workplace: The One Thing Companies Can Do to Retain Female Employees. Retrieved from huffingtonpost.com: https://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffery-tobias-halter/women-in-the-workplace-th_b_7557312.html
- MONTY MAJEED. 2016. 5 ways companies can attract and retain women employees. Retrieved from yourstory.com: <https://yourstory.com/2016/05/attract-and-retain-women-employees/>
- Rikki Rogers. 2015. 5 Ways Companies Can Attract More Women. Retrieved from themuse.com: <https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiSkYrRm4DXAhXEPo8KHa4-D4AQFggpMAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.themuse.com%2Fadvice%2F5-ways-companies-can-attract-more-women-aside-from-offering-to-freeze-their-eggs&usg>
