

A Study on the Work-life balance Policies Practiced in Private Schools: With reference to Private Schools in Aizawl City

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Abstract: Education has been a vital part of the economy and it is what drives the nation to the future, and many private schools have been established around Aizawl district Mizoram in the past two decades educating students from all sects of life, these schools employ a number of teachers who work many hours a day and strive to balance work and life. This paper intends to study some of the policies practiced in private schools to enable the teachers to achieve a good work-life balance. It was observed that many of the private schools did not even have policies that encourage their employees to have a good work-life balance. It has been observed that private schools in Aizawl have very different policies that strive to achieve work-life balance among its employees. In this paper the researchers intend to study the policies that strive to attain work-life balance in private schools in Aizawl Mizoram and study the variations of these policies in different private schools and its implications.

Keywords: Work life balance , Private schools, Policies , Education.

INTRODUCTION

Mizoram is a state that is well known for high number of literacy in India , it being a small state in the North east plays a very important role in the literacy status of the country . education is a very important part of any man's life , and as our constitution defines that everyone should have an equal opportunity to receive education , many schools have been established over the years educating students in different region of the state but as the population increases the number of government schools were not sufficient and thus the private schools were established to keep up with the

high demand for education . It has been published in the annual report of the school education Mizoram that out of 4202 schools in Mizoram 1646 are run by the government which is 39.17 % . Which denotes that there are more number of schools run by other proprietors other than the government. The private schools proved to be a very successful tool in providing education to the ever growing need for more educational institutions , today there are 1295 private schools in Mizoram[5] educating and nurturing young minds to grow up and become a respectable citizen of the country .

Table 1: Number of Private schools in Mizoram [5]

Private Schools in Mizoram	Total Number
Primary school	607
Middle school	448
High school	161
Higher Secondary school	79
Total	1295

Source: School Education Annual Publication 2014-15

These private schools that are run by private individual face a number of problems and issues as most of them do not have proper policies to govern them , rather they are run by the proprietor as he/she sees fit in governing the school. These schools employ a number of teachers who work full time and also strives to maintain a balance between work and life , The mizo

society is a society that is very demanding and everyone is expected to take part in the societal and cultural activities which also includes religious activities so the teachers sometimes find themselves in a dilemma and strive to maintain a balance between work and life activities .

The imbalances in work and life hamper the productivity and efficiency of the employees and can lead to high stress and depression and therefore it is absolutely important for teachers to maintain a proper balance between work and life, this paper intends to find out the various policies that are implemented by various private schools around Aizawl city and analyze the impact it has on the lives of its employees in maintaining a good and healthy work life balance.

Objectives

It was observed that many private schools around Aizawl city do not have proper work life balance policies to help their employees maintain a healthy work life balance and so this study intends to find out the issues and challenges that the schools and employees face due to improper policies that governs them and assists them to attain a good work life balance. So based on the above argument the following objectives can be defined:

1. To analyse the work life balance policies in private schools.
2. To find the impact of work life balance policies on the employees in the schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The above mentioned study is explorative in nature and scope. The study was conducted by data collected from various sources including a simple questionnaire which was administered to 40 private schools around Aizawl city and also based on keen observation of the schools by the researcher and since many of the schools did not want to disclose a lot of relevant data interview method was also used to collect significant data for the study. Various government reports, journals, statistical hand book and reports published by the Directorate of school education Mizoram were also used for the study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work-life balance is the term used in literature to refer to policies striving to achieve greater balance between work and 'other than work' responsibilities.

These 'other than work' responsibilities differ from society to society and may be affected by the social and cultural peculiarities of a society. While it is fair to assume that satisfying 'work' responsibilities are crucial to meet most of our primary needs including the entities we need to function day-to-day, especially entities we may gain access to only through money, fulfilling culturally and socially specific 'other than work' responsibilities are arguably equally important. In most management literature, these 'other than work' responsibilities are often clubbed together as 'life' responsibilities giving rise to an interesting juxtaposition of work as an opposite of life while

'work' undoubtedly is a vital part of life. Still, for ease of understanding and running the risk of oversimplification, the term 'life' will be employed to represent all other aspects of 'life' that are not related to 'work'. 'Work' will essentially represent activities that a person undertakes in return for monetary or equivalent remuneration [1].

This report emphasizes on how important it is for teachers to have a good work life balance it is clearly stated that all teachers and along with head teachers are allowed to enjoy a reasonable work/life balance. Work/life balance is about safeguarding that this school's teachers are able to combine work with their personal interests and commitments outside work. Good work/life balance is an essential factor in staff effectiveness and satisfaction, which in turn supports pupil learning. It can help to recruit and retain better motivated staff through giving them greater control of their working lives and a stronger sense of ownership. Therefore we find that a good work life balance in teachers not only benefits the teachers themselves but the students as well[6].

In a study found that different people are productive at different times and due to this certain people have a time in during the day in which they find themselves more productive than any other time during the day which suggests that schools should also include flexible working hours in the policies which can aid the teachers in attaining a proper work life balance and be more productive in work and this will benefit the school as well as themselves[2].

ATL [8] uk. Org. gives us the various benefits of having good work life balance policies in the educational institutions and has made it very definite that all schools and educational institutions must have proper well defined work life balance policies which will benefit the schools as well as the employees so some of the benefits of work life balance policies as given by ATL are:

- Productivity – greater loyalty
- Efficiency – greater energy
- Motivation – empowerment
- Recruitment – a 'first choice' employer
- Retention – keeping good staff
- Training – engaged workforce
- Reduced absence
- Greater flexibility
- Responsibility and ownership
- Feeling valued
- Improved relationships at work and at home.
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved confidence and concentration
- Greater control
- Balance in whole life

It stated that Work-life balance is basically about choice and mobility, balancing life and work, balancing the needs of the school and members (employees) and creating the best environment for performance and job satisfaction. This statement clearly defines the balance that has to be created or maintained not only by the teacher but all aspects should be taken in to consideration to attain a good work life balance[7].

In an article Work life balance for teachers writes of how teachers strive to maintain a good balance between work and life and goes on to say that the duties of a teacher is not only limited to teaching in the classrooms but extends way beyond that, she says that a teacher does not only teach but is bombarded by the daily woes of never ending activities which include clerical work such as entering marks of students after every test of exam, and further more the schedules of teachers are many a times disturbed by the different activities that the schools have like fire drills, emergency unscheduled meetings, interventions, last minute requests can all be a huge day to day distraction for the teachers and therefore due to such hustle experienced by a teacher on a daily basis there has to be a concrete work life balance policy that helps every teacher to attain work life balance to be more productive and efficient in work[7].

It states that while there is no one accepted definition of what constitutes a work-life balance practice, the term usually refers to one of the following: organizational support for dependent care, flexible work options, and family or personal leave. Hence schools should focus their policies towards support and care for the employees and also flexible work options and without these attributes no policy can be accepted to be policies of work life balance[4].

Work life Balance policies practiced in Private schools around Aizawl city

Based on the various literature reviews and surveys it is assumed that schools and educational institutions must have a set of policies and practices that helps the employees to attain a good work life balance and which will not only help the teachers but will also play a huge role in the overall productivity and efficiency of the work force and so some of the so called policies and practices can be explained as follows:

1. Flexible working opportunities
2. Leave provisions
3. Wage/salary/remuneration
4. Holidays/Vacation provisions
5. Health/ Medical provisions
6. Child/family care provisions

1. Flexible working opportunities : They refer to the policies that concerns the time of work, and can include flexi time, working from home, reduced hours, job sharing, and term time working. It has been found in various studies that flexible working hours enables the teachers to be more productive and efficient in their work, it has been found that flexible working arrangements can effectively reduce absence as teacher find different time to work rather than just being absent for the day and as it was discussed in the literature review that different people have different time in which they find themselves to be most productive in a day and thus flexi-time can prove to be a very useful practice in enhancing productivity and efficiency of the teachers.

2. Leave provisions : Human beings are not like machines that can work 24*7, we need some time off, and there will be a day when one must take a leave of absence due to health issues or any other reason that one may encounter and so leave provisions are very important as it creates a balance between work and other activities at home and in life. Some of the different types of leave provisions are:

- a. Maternity leave
- b. Paternity leave
- c. Parental leave
- d. Casual leave and
- e. Earned leave
- f. Study leave

3 . Wage/salary /remuneration : There must be a proper wage /salary /remuneration system in the institutions as financial matters are very sensitive and salary is one of the main reason people work in the first place, therefore a proper wage /salary system should be followed in the schools and institutions to prevent and dis satisfaction which can result in imbalances between work and life.

4 . Holiday / Vacation provisions : Different policies are practiced in different organizations towards holidays and vacations, as discussed earlier human beings are not like machines that can work nonstop they need some time off work and go on a vacation or a holiday to get their minds refreshed, it is said that spending some time on a holiday or a vacation is like a refresh button on a computer that clears the mind and make them more productive and efficient in their work. Sometimes the holiday / vacation is paid for by the organization and sometimes a certain percent of the expenditure is paid which may vary from organization to organization.

5 . Health/Medical provisions : It is natural for an employee to fall sick and grow old as the time passes by

and therefore certain provisions must be followed and practiced to allow the employees to avail certain health /medical treatments . such provisions made by the organizations have been said to have a positive link towards overall performance of the employees which may help the employee attain a balance between work and life .

6 . Child/family care provisions: Many organizations have policies that are practiced towards child/family care , such policies allow certain family members or child to be included in the health / medical provisions , certain organizations provide allowances for their children's education , and such provisions also prove to be a very effective policy that promotes work life balance.

Table 2: WLB policies and the number of schools using them

WLB Policies	No of Schools
1. Flexible working Opportunities	15
2. Leave provisions	35
3. Wage/salary/remuneration	13
4. Holidays/Vacation provisions	3
5. Health/ Medical provisions	4
6. Child/family care provisions	4

Source: Compiled by researcher

It can be observed from the table that many of the schools do not have proper practice of the Work life balance policies shown in the table and as the table shows only 15 schools have flexible working opportunities , where as for leave provisions we find that 35 schools have leave provisions and this policy is the only one that is practiced by majority of the schools , we can also observe that only 13 schools have a proper wage/salary system and in most schools that salary or wages is given purely as per the mercy of the proprietor of the school , and it is quiet surprising to also see that in terms of policies towards holiday/vacation provisions only 3 schools have such policy and likewise we can observe from the table that only 4 schools have policies towards health/medical care and child /family care . Therefore we can analyze that many of the private schools do not have proper WLB policies to support work life balance among its employees.

It was also observed from the study that schools that do not have proper Work life balance policies do tend to suffer from different problems associated with imbalances in work and life activities of the employees such as high rate of absenteeism, low productivity of the teachers , high level of stress due to excess work load , and many of the respondents did not express a sense of belongingness in the school and that caused the rate a employee turnover to increase over the time . Therefore it is quite evidently clear from the study that there is a link between Work life balance

Besides these policies that are mentioned above there are many more policies that are practiced in different organizations around the world but the policies that are discussed in this paper are the policies that are expected to be practiced in the private schools and institutions around Aizawl city .

It has been observed from the study that many of the schools do not practice any of the work life balance policies and even though these policies were not practiced the teachers do not have a choice but to work in the private schools as the unemployment rate is very high. And it is a very huge factor that causes massive imbalances between their work and life activities.

policies and the performance of the employees in the schools.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The following findings can be described in the study which reveals that the number of private schools in Mizoram is increasing drastically and that more schools are now run by private individuals which defines the immediate need for formulation of proper well defined Work life balance policies to help the teachers attain a good work life balance to face the high demands of the schools.

It was also found that many studies have been done to assess the need for work life balance policies and to establish a link between work life balance and its impact on the employees and from this study it was evidently clear that there exist a link between the two .The study also reveals that many of the schools in Aizawl city do not have proper work life balance policies to support its employees attain a good balance between work and life activities.

Therefore, we can conclude by saying that private schools in Aizawl should formulate work life balance policies and start practicing them in the schools to tackle various problems that arises out of the imbalances between work and life activities such as high rate of absenteeism, low productivity of the teachers , high level of stress due to excess work load

and support the employees in maintaining a good balance between work responsibilities and life activities which in Mizoram includes all society ,cultural and religious activities which are a very important part of our lives.

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