

Changing Status of Women and Challenges Faced by Women in BPO Units

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Abstract

This conceptual paper tries to analyze status of women in India during Ancient, Medieval and Modern period. Major transformations in the lives of women since yesteryears are reviewed. Report on NASSCOM shows that more than 1/3rd of the women are employed in BPO segments, realizing the fact that BPO in Information Technology Enabled Services as the booming sector, challenges faced by women in BPO is chosen for the study. Accordingly few suggestions were also identified to improve the status of women BPO.

Key Words: BPO, Challenges Sector, Tolerance Women,

1. Introduction

Women constitute almost one half of the world and without her presence the survival of this world is unimaginable and this has been going through all sorts of trauma in this male dominated society. Women undoubtedly are the most magnificent creature of this world. Woman encompasses the word man she shows man what loving and sharing, caring and sacrificing are all about. She is the power of benevolence and tolerance, epitome of integrity and understanding all that is wrapped in one. Status of women has been changing tremendously over the years. During the ancient period women enjoyed most privileged position in the society. Women were highly respected in the society and were encouraged to actively participate in making of decisions and administrative functions during the ancient period. Women during those days were

also given opportunity to attain high intellectual standards and were actively taking part in religious, social, political, economic activities either in family or in society.

But during the medieval period the status of women did not remain the same as it was during the ancient Vedic period .There were tremendous changes leading to sati system where the wife was made to jump into the funeral pyre of her husband during the death of her marriage. There was an existence of purdah system where the female was made to cover her face and body with the veil with intent not to expose or socialize herself to the public and there was a practice of basavasi system where the women were made to serve god in the temple as dancers. Moreover decline of Buddhism and invasions of Muslims in India made the status of women still worst and haphazard. Due to all these prevailing practices the status of women went on declining and deteriorating. Business process outsourcing in India has now grown in leaps and bounds .BPO gained a momentum in India around the mid -90's .Business process outsourcing in India is one of the booming segments of Information technology enabled services. Business Process Outsourcing is a process of hiring another company to handle business activities at much lesser cost and expertise The most fascinating fact is that the BPO industry is tremendously growing in comparison to other industries in India. The culture prevailing in BPO Industry has brought drastic change in the lifestyle of employees.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To know about the status of women during ancient, medieval and Modern period
- To know about the status and culture prevailing in BPO
- To know the challenges faced by women in BPO
- To know how BPO culture influences the performance of women employee
- To suggest few measures to overcome the problems faced by women in BPO Sector

3. Methodology

The Existing sources like UGC Approved Journals, Scopus indexed journal and report on NASSCOM along with few other general articles are reviewed for conducting the study. Hence the study is conducted using secondary data.

4. Literature Review

In a study on “Women and BPOs in India” authored by Dr. Kousar J Ara Begum”,an indepth analysis on how well will an women is able to balance her work life is conducted . Data was collected through questionnaires and through face to face interviews. In this study it was realized that it is highly stressful to balance both personal and professional life due to the organizational culture and stressful working condition. Shivi Mittal, Sapna Sharma and Prabhat Srivastava, in their study opined that women face much gender challenges.The author also stated that there are several laws and legal mechanisms in place inorder to curb out the problems faced by women working in BPO Segments but it is the attitude in people which needs to be changed. Inspite of passing laws and legislation for protecting women there is lack of proper implementation and interpretation of law, hence it is observed that inequality and crimes on women are multiplying.

Kamini B. Dashora in his paper on “Problems Faced by Working Women in India states that a gender bias creates lot of hurdles while remunerating the women at the workplace. There is an old belief that women are less capable and less efficient than men and hence deserve unequal salaries and wages for the same job. T Narayana Rao in his paper on “Literature Review on Health issues encountered by BPO Employees”emphasizes on various health issues encountered by employees working in BPO Sector. Through conducting an in depth study it was realized thatirrespective of the gender various health issues are multiplying among employees day by day due to the mental strain. Hence it was advised that organization needs to take due care of

employees health by conducting regular Health Check-ups every quarter. Banu P and Dr.Gomathi V in review on “Physical Illness faced by women Employees working in BPO Industry” it is observed that women employees face severe physical illness like sleeping disorder, Back pain, Digestive Problem among others.Hence it was necessary to implement strategies required to bring down physical illness and balance life. Anitha S and G.P.Raman in their study on “ **Job Satisfaction of the Women Employees in it and BPO Sector in Chennai City**”explained that theactive participation of women in BPO is seen as a factor for continued growth of BPO Industry. BPO has opened up new vistas for women. The Industry is considered to provide a good avenue for the employment of women who have essential knowledge base to adjust themselves to the outsourcing firms. Hence it is observed that BPO and IT companies are trying to develop and involve women for higher roles and functions.

5. Challenges faced by women in BPO

Aftermath globalization there has been a tremendous growth in BPO segment providing huge employment opportunities and leading major transformation in the lives of people in the country .Above all it is fascinating to know that more than 1/3rd of the women are employed in BPO sector.

BPO jobs being professional in nature it is called as white collared jobs . Even though BPO's are providing employment opportunities to huge population but on the other hand several challenges are also faced by BPO which should be a matter of concern-

- Due to rising financial demands, women are compelled to take up employment to supplement the income in the family and hence women play multiple role both in personal and professional life leading to imbalance in work life.
- Safe transportation is a major setback for women as women work in night shifts. There need to be 24/7 security of women working in night shift

- Frequent changing organizational culture also will also be highly challenging for women as they need to adapt to all changing culture. After Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation we have many international companies who have expanded their business into india and are providing employment opportunities, meanwhile implementing rigid culture making it mandatory to be followed by the indian employees . At times it becomes highly challenging for Indian women to get accustomed to the western culture and go by the same.
- A sexual harassment at workplace is a blatant issue nowadays. Several cases involving sex scandals, rape, physical abuse, defamation are seen in today's corporate sector. In spite of having rigid laws and legislation in place to prevent all these sex scandals it is observed that the laws are not implemented effectively.
- Most of the women employees get into employment which is not worth their talent, expertise and experience and this is because of employers being skeptical about the ideas of women'
- Lack of moral and social support from the loved ones makes them feel more isolated and dejected which hinders their progress

Suggestions for improving the status of women in BPO Sector

- Telecommuting- Where work from home opportunity is provided to the employees in the context of safety and to avoid working for night shifts.
- Separate relaxation zone, wash room or rest room should be provided for women
- Counseling to deal with stress related issues
- Open Discussion Forum should be set up for resolution of dispute
- To implement flexi time schedule to make it more convenient for women to balance her work life

- Introduce additional monetary and Non- monetary benefits for excelled performer as a motivation strategy to enhance the productivity
- Compressed work week will also help an employee to take a long break weekends where employees are made to work for excess hours during the weekdays for lesser days per week .For example: Employees work for 10 hours a day for 4 days in a week instead of 8 hours and take an off on Friday

6. Conclusion

In the past decade India has been showing tremendous growth in terms of employment opportunities for women particularly in Information Technology enabled services along with better career opportunities. But in terms of safety of women our country still needs to evolve greater ideas. The development of the country is incomplete until there is progress in terms of safety. Despite all advancements the attitude towards working women has not changed. Hence special attention need to be paid towards progression of women's career as she plays a major role in contributing to the growth of Indian Economy

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