

A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE OF BPO WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN JAIPUR CITY

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The tremendous growth of Indian BPOs in the last few years has generated considerable social and cultural developments in Indian society. Both positive and negative impacts of outsourcing are discernable across different aspects of Indian social and cultural life, including language, work balance, identity, gender and the emergence of western lifestyle.

Objective: The present study aimed to find out the work-life balance of women employees in business process outsourcing (BPO) sector of Jaipur city.

Methodology: For this purpose a total of 360 women employees were selected from three different BPOs i.e. domestic, international and domestic-international through purposive sampling procedure. The study was analytical and descriptive in nature. Multi-method approach of data collection was used. Obtained scores were analyzed with the help of mean, standard deviation and t-test.

Results: Results revealed that many women employees faced problems in adjusting with their family and personal life with BPO workload.

Conclusion: To sum up, it may be stated that there is no doubt that BPOs have opened up a new avenue of employment for women but there is a need to improve the work environment to make it more friendly for the employees.

Keywords: BPO, Women in BPO, Work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry is growing constantly in India. BPO has created numerous job avenues in the Indian workforce as in many developing countries. In this booming sector, women play a very crucial role. Women are a key and vital part of BPO workforce. Work-life balance is a contemporary issue that is gaining increasing attention from all the researchers and is in the fore front of the discussions. Change in the workforce demographics and western work culture in the field of communication and information technology are some of the factors that influence work-life balance. The present study aimed to find out the work-life balance of women employed in business process outsourcing (BPO) sector of Jaipur city.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Jaipur city of Rajasthan. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. For this purpose a total of 360 women employees were selected from three different BPOs i.e. domestic, international and domestic-international through purposive sampling procedure (Fig. 1). The study was analytical and descriptive in nature. Multi-method approach of data collection was used. The scores were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t test.

Research type	:	Descriptive and analytical
Sampling procedure	:	Purposive sampling
Population	:	BPO sectors in Jaipur
Sampling unit	:	Women employees in Jaipur BPOs
Sample size	:	360
Statistical analysis of data	:	Mean, standard deviation and t-test

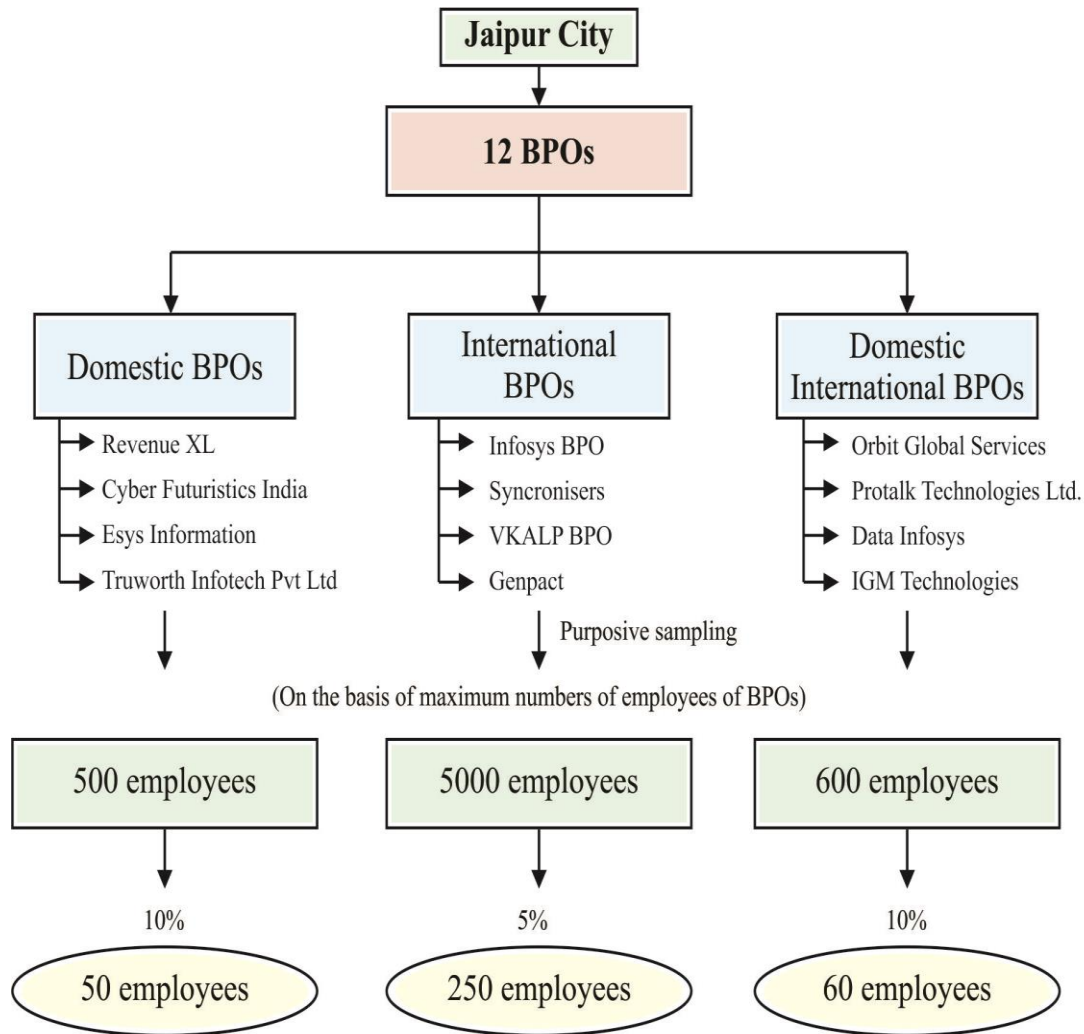


Fig. 1: Graphical presentation of sampling procedure

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Psychological health

Psychological stability is as important as physical and mental health. Long duty hours can disturb and have negative impact on the psychosocial health of BPO employees. In BPOs, multiple job stressors exist at the workplace. These could be irregular work schedules, disturbing their social and family life. Other stressors may be irregular duty hours leading to transportation trouble regarding safety and fast paced workloads. The case study mentioned by BPO Workers of Association of the Philippines (BPOWAP, 2015) states that psychosocial stressors may also be a major cause regarding the health issues.

Many psychosocial problems were manifested in disruptive family relations, poor recreation opportunity, alcohol and tobacco use and faulty eating habits. Work/ occupational related stress has been defined by the Health and Safety Executives (HSE) as “the adverse reactions people have, to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them” (Sharan, 2003).

Edgy or short-tempered

An edgy or short-tempered behaviour refers to a person who is easily moved to anger. It is a feeling of resentful anger and irascible. Short tempered person has a hasty temper. Distribution of respondents according to edgy or short tempered behavior is given in Fig. 2.

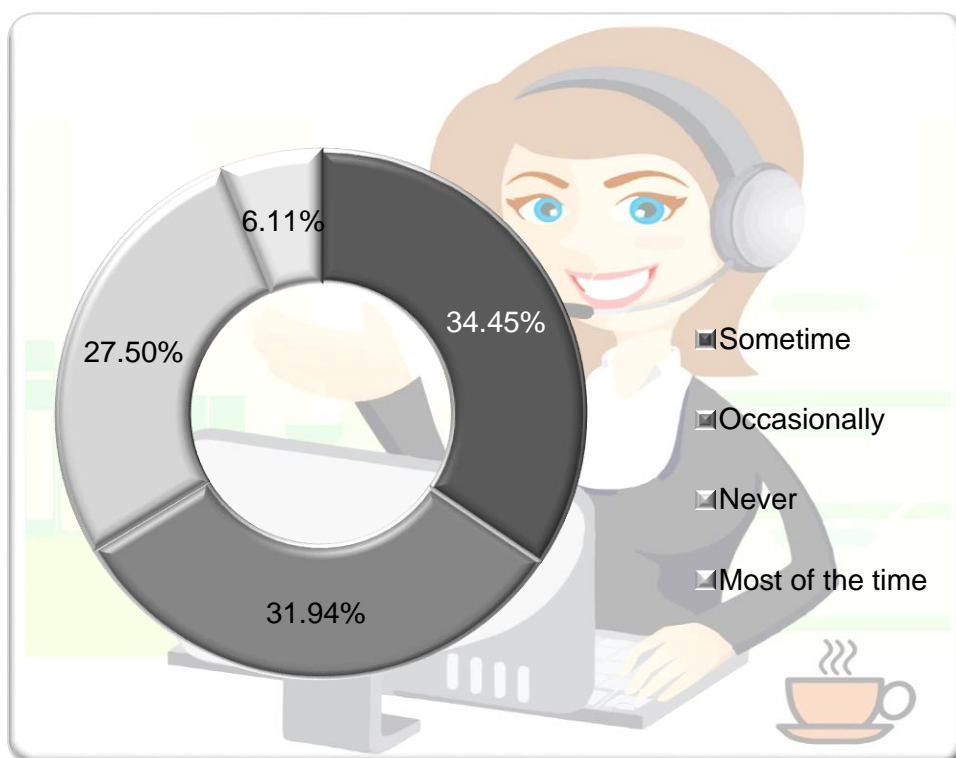


Fig. 2: Distribution of respondents (n=360) suffering from edgy or short-temperateness

More than one-third employees (34.45%) mentioned that they sometimes had edgy behaviour. It was seen that 31.94% of the respondents complained about their edgy or short tempered behaviour occasionally. Only 6.11 % BPO workers faced this problem most of the time. At the same time, there were more than one-fourth women (27.50 %) who felt that they had never faced any kind of such psychological problem.

Loss of interest

A loss of interest refers to a person who loses interest regarding important activities in their life. These may include friendships, hobbies, reading and watching television. This is a common symptom of some mental health issues, including depression.

Fig. 3 shows the distribution of respondents suffering from loss of interest.

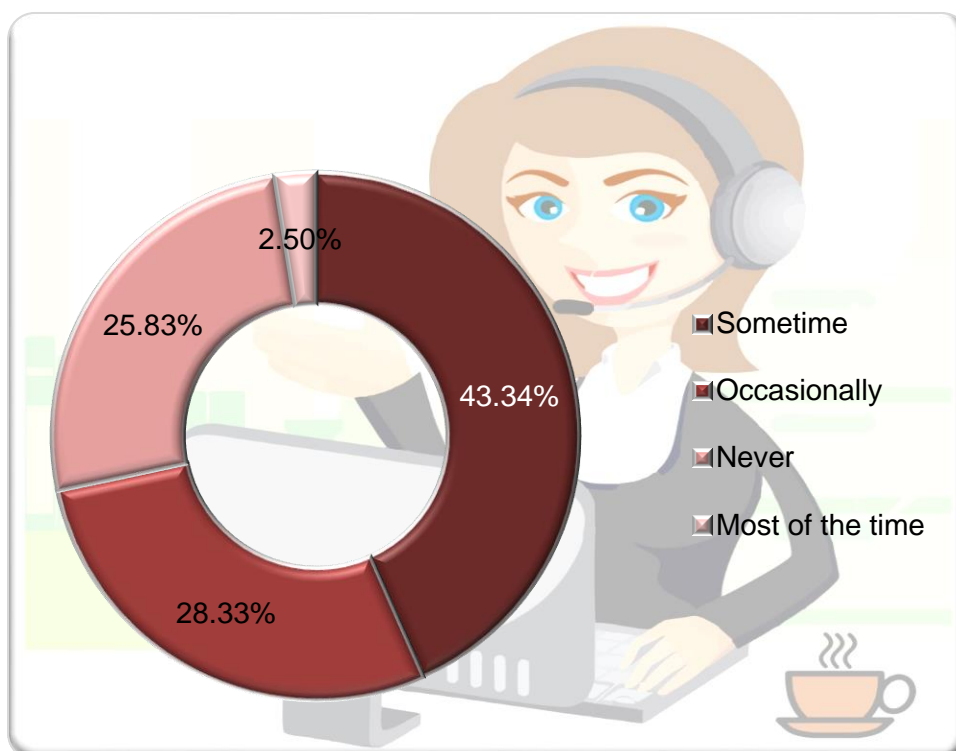


Fig.3: Distribution of respondents (n=360) suffering from loss of interest

Less than half (43.34%) of women employees stated that they sometimes suffered from loss of interest while over one-fourth (28.33%) of women occasionally faced this problem. The reason could be due to repetitive work, more work load, and fatigue. However, it was interesting to note that one-fourth (25.83%) of women employees still had lots of interest in their work. In fact, they loved their job.

Less interaction with family members

Employees of BPOs complained of having less amount of time to spend with their family members due to night shift (Gupta, 2012). Surprisingly, 40% respondents said

that they had less interaction with family members. Due to the job timings, 40% of women mostly had not spent time with their family members. Further, about one third (32.22%) of women employees also reported that sometimes they had less interaction with their family members (Fig. 4).

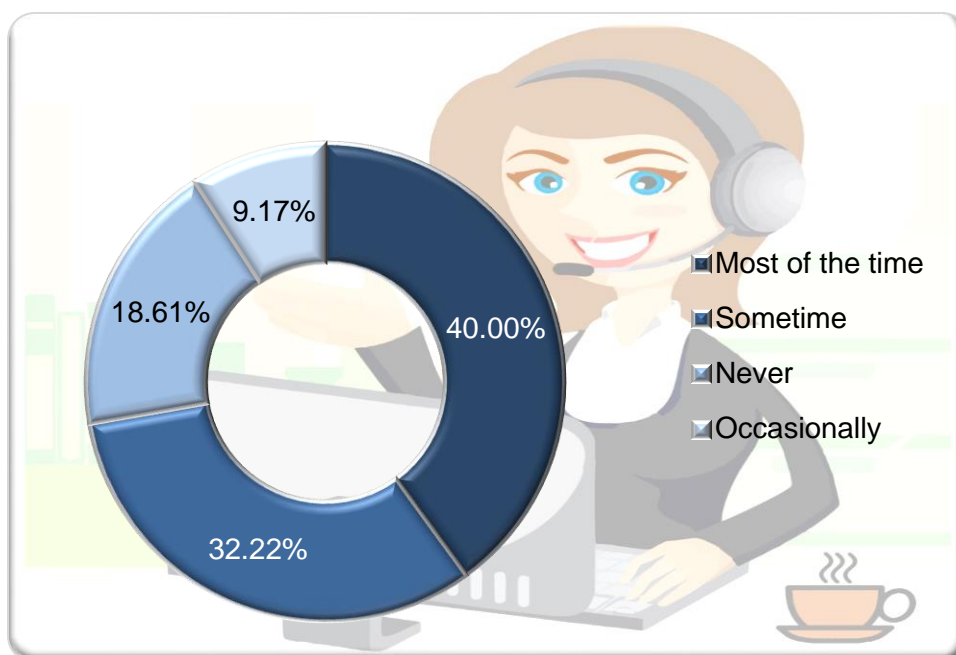


Fig. 4: Distribution of respondents on (n=360) the basis of their less interaction with family members

Similar findings (Cruzat, 2014; Finn, 1981) of younger BPO shift workers had reported a disruption in normal sex life with their partner and relationship with their children, the reason behind this is not being able to spend quality time with their families due to conflicting schedules or fatigue when they are at home.

The most commonly quoted reasons for this change was very little time or their off days/holidays for their spouse/other family members. This adversely affected their quality of family life. A very bad family relation was reported occasionally by nearly one tenth of the women. Less than one fifth (18.61%) of women employees reported that they had very good family support and domestic bliss.

Less social interaction

BPO jobs not only demand cultural transformation, night shift, and long hours of work. It also brings insecurities and vulnerabilities by reducing their interpersonal familial and social interactions. Many employees felt completely cut-off from their family and friends circle because of their night shift.

More than one-fourth (29.7%) of women employees reported that most of the times they spent very less time to socialize. They were also not able to attend social gatherings, and family functions. Twenty nine percent respondents reported the same. Less than one fifth (20.5%) of the BPO women employees also accepted that occasionally they had less social interaction due to their workload and timings (Fig.5).

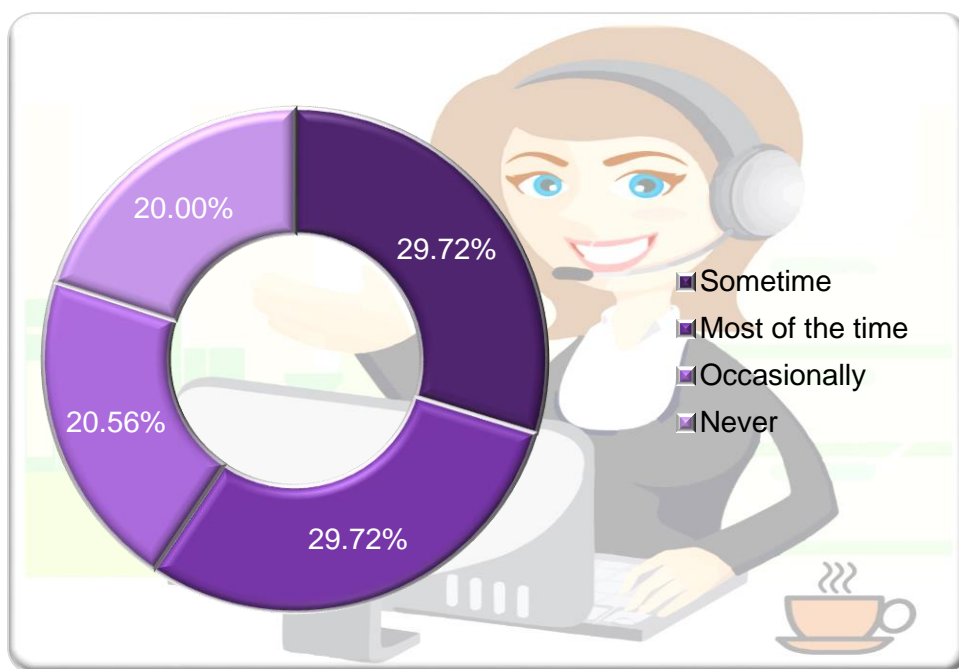


Fig. 5: Distribution of respondents (n=360) suffering from less social interactions

“I don’t have much of a social life anymore. We can’t really plan a social life. It’s really weird the way they schedule shift hours. Everything was easier to juggle [when I didn’t work shifts]. I slept better, I ate better, I felt better and I had a better social life because most of my friends don’t do shift work” experience of one BPO employee.

A study in Delhi-NCR by Gupta (2012) found that 90% employees could balance between their work and family life. Interestingly, the main hobby of most employees was to

sleep for as long as they can because of the late night working hours. Due to odd hours of work their family life and socialization was affected. Further they reported that they had to put more efforts to balance between the dual burden of work and home.

Have no enough time for other activities

BPO employees stated that odd work schedules did not allow them to “have a life” outside of work. They do not have quality time to spend with family and friends. They were not able to fulfill family responsibilities. Further they disclosed that even they did not have time for other activities like movies, outing, gardening, listening to music, reading books and so on.

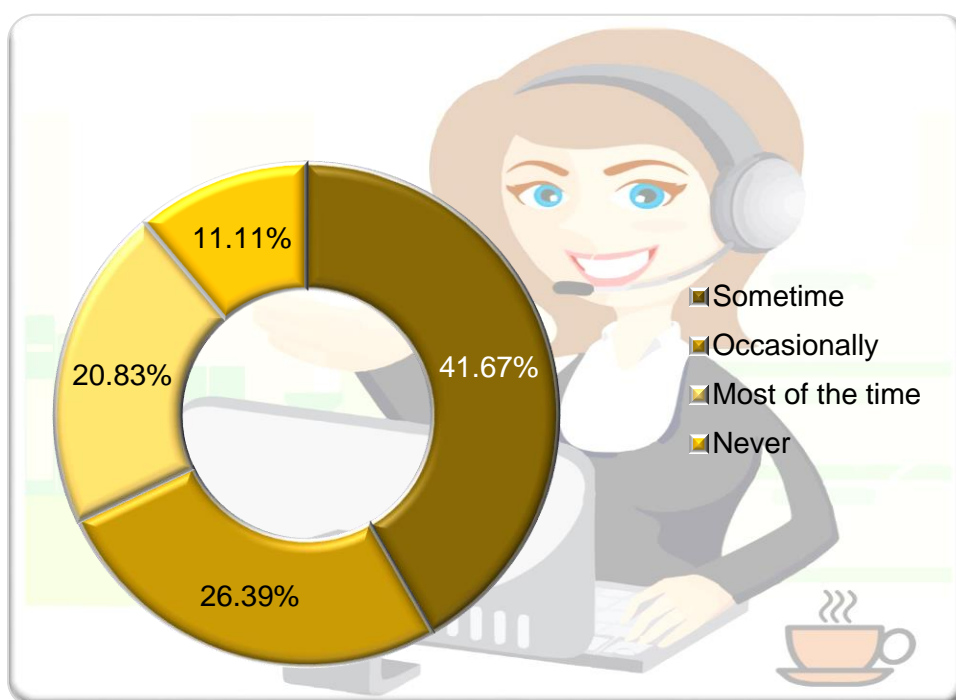


Fig. 6: Distribution of respondents (n=360) reporting not having enough time for other activities

More than one third (41.67%) of the respondents accepted that sometimes they did not have time for other activities, whereas 26.39% and 20.83% of women felt this problem occasionally and most of the time, respectively (Fig. 6). An irregular hour which is combined with lunch breaks leads to unhealthy and restless habits.

Having family maladjustment

Family is a primary unit of the society. If one's adjustment is poor in the family it is possible that her/his social and professional life is not good.

With respect to family maladjustment, Fig. 7 portrays that nearly half (48.88%) of women employees accepted that sometimes they had a bad relationship with family while 28.06% of BPO employees stated good relations with their family. Only 8.06% respondents had a maladjusted relationship with their family most of the time. It can be said that due to maladjustment with family, employees faced mental stress. Because of that, employee's work efficiency and performance was also affected.

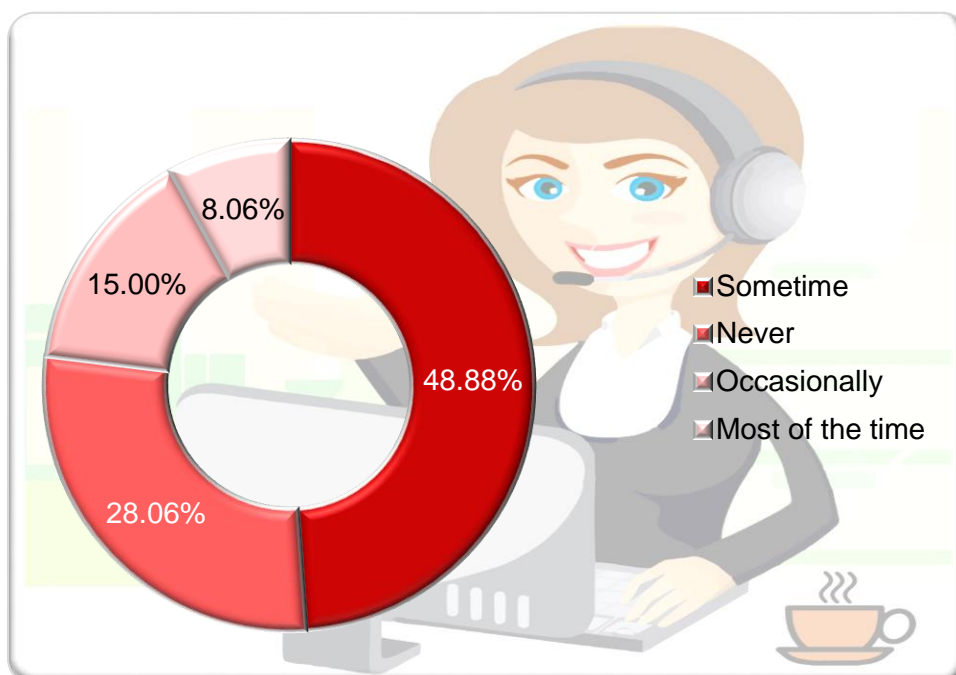


Fig. 7: Distribution of respondents (n=360) suffering from family maladjustment

CONCLUSIONS

The BPO employment leads to social and mental isolation of women employees from their family and social networks. Women are alienated from their family and friends and lead a dual life as westerners by night and Indians by day. On a front side, BPOs act as an agent of empowering the young women by making them financially independent

and improving their spatial and temporal mobility. But on the other side of the coin it also gives them health hazards, psychological stress and social problems too.

BPOs need to put more emphasis on gym facilities and yogic management programmes. Healthy work environment with co workers (males) should be created through orientation programmes, welcome parties, get together, outings and group activities. Motivation and stress buster programs (gaming zone and fun activities) on work life balance and stress management should be provided. Full-time counsellors should be engaged for counselling.

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