CHAPTER – IV

PROSPECTS OF BPOs, AND ITS POLICIES FOR HEALTH CARE

This chapter explains the Prospects of BPO industry, Holistic approaches proposed by the Organisation to reduce Stress, Responsibilities of BPO Companies in reducing Stress and aspects of Health Care in BPOs, Policies and Act to be established in BPOs.

Prospects of BPO industry

Naukrihub.com\textsuperscript{355} presented in its report that India is the most favoured destination for outsourcing. In 2003-2004, ITES-BPO companies were the largest recruiters in the IT/ITES sector, adding around 70,000 jobs. According to a research conducted by NASSCOM, Indian IT/BPO sector will employ more than 1.1 million Indians by 2008.

Naukrihub.com\textsuperscript{356} advocates that the future of BPOs in India depends upon the quality of education imparted to our young generation. In the recent past, there has been a decline in the quality of education in India, though the number of institutes has gone up. Education is not growing at the same pace as Indian economy.

Bpiai.org\textsuperscript{357} supports that the starting salary in a call centre is much higher than those that doctors or lawyers receive. “An MBBS doctor

\textsuperscript{355}http://www.naukrihub.com/india/bpo/scopre/Future Scenario.htm
\textsuperscript{356}Ibid
\textsuperscript{357}Adultery not BPO-only anomaly, say experts By Bella Jaisinghani / TNN, www.bpiai.org/Adultery.htm
starts off earning around Rs 5,000 per month as an RMO,” says clinical psychologist Narendra Kinger. According to CCAI figures, a young, inexperienced worker at a call centre earns Rs 12,000, and this figure rises by up to 12% per annum.

Chrmglobal.com\textsuperscript{358} promotes that in the global competitive market where every penny counts, BPO plays a major role as it involves subcontracting the core as well as the non-core areas of business to other places of reduced cost. The main objective of Business Process Outsourcing is to help the company earn better revenue through cost reduction. By outsourcing, the company can be more cost effective, efficient and flexible.

Thehindubusinessline.com\textsuperscript{359} believes and Bharti’s Prashar too agrees that the BPOs company will surely gain in the long term. The reason is simple: cost structure is, by and large, the same for an in-house call centre and a third party one. But the savings will become more apparent as the scale of operations grows.

Indiatelecomnews.com\textsuperscript{360} highlights the NASSCOM-Mckinsey report which predicted that IT enabled services would account for a mammoth $17 billion business per year. The report also predicts that in India it might generate 1.1 million jobs and Rs. 810 billion in revenues by the year 2008.

\textsuperscript{358} Coping with BPO Related Stress, http://www.chrmglobal.com/articles.php
\textsuperscript{359} http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/bline/ew/2005/09/05/stories/2005090500080100.htm
\textsuperscript{360} Booming call centre biz in India; http://www.indiatelecomnews.com
THE HINDU, Special Report (Jun 16, 2003)\(^{361}\) quotes that the information technology-enabled services (ITES) sector notched up revenues of Rs. 11,300 crores ($2.3 billion) in 2002-03, after a 59 per cent growth. Expectations are more conservative for the current year’s growth but the pie-in-the-sky, being held out, was in new service areas such as engineering, logistics, sales and legal services, hitherto thinly tapped, which could boost India’s current 2 per cent share of the global ITES pie to 4.8 per cent within five years.

Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\(^{362}\) pointed out that the recent study undertaken by a leading newspaper suggests a great demand for BPO services in functional areas like finance, marketing, sales, human resources and administration in the coming years. By year 2007, Indian BPO companies would have generated about 600,000 jobs and would be a $17 billion industry by 2008. Opportunities in the BPO industry are abundant; however, care needs to be taken while opting for a career in BPO vis-à-vis long-term career plans.

Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\(^{363}\) pointed out the growth of BPO in Indian Economy (By Akinchan Buddhodev Sinha). In spite of tough competition, India has emerged as a global leader in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry. India has the advantage of having large English speaking and computer literate workforce, which are considered as important perquisites for the success of BPO sector. It explores the factors that have contributed to the success of BPO industry in India.

\(^{361}\) Time for a reality check, THE HINDU, India’s National Newspaper, Monday, Jun 16, 2003
\(^{362}\) Taking your business elsewhere, Mallika Jayasheelam, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Wed, Mar 03, 2004
\(^{363}\) Ibid
Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\textsuperscript{364} discusses the initiatives taken by the government including policy concessions, tax exemptions and removal of procedural hurdles to enable the growth of the BPO sector. She also highlighted the future of BPO industry in India, especially its contribution towards GDP, exports and employment generation. The author observes that BPO industry has witnessed transformation from back office service operations to handling core functions and is playing a significant role towards growth of the economy.

Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\textsuperscript{365} gives a bird’s eye view that the BPO industry is here to stay and for those who want to make a career out there, it is best to start early. They need to pick up on their skills and qualifications simultaneously to match their job profile. So they could rise up the BPO ladder.

Priyanka Jayashankar (Nov 27, 2004)\textsuperscript{366} characterised that despite the competition from South-East Asian and Latin American countries, India can notch up a higher growth in outsourcing with its English-speaking population and skilled manpower. In the meantime, outsourcing firms have to get cracking on smart HR strategies and creative back-office work.

Priyanka Jayashankar (Nov 27, 2004)\textsuperscript{367} foresees the technical report shared by SlashSupport's Raghuram, Senior BPOs executive that the...
BPO segment itself is still nascent but it has a lot more to offer to freshers and seasoned professionals now. "We expect this (BPO) to become the career pattern for a vast majority of the labour pool in India in the next 5-10 years,"

Nagarajan.S (Aug 15, 2005)\(^{368}\) distinguishes that today the world recognises India - as the ideal destination in terms of people infrastructure, quality of service and costs. According to a NASSCOM report, the BPO industry is set to grow to $7.3 billion in FY 2005-06 with new business segments getting added to the kitty, almost every quarter.

Nagarajan.S (Aug 15, 2005)\(^{369}\) promotes the concept of BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) that is India's latest mantra. India's inherent strengths have made it a major success as an outsourcing destination. A vast workforce of educated, English- speaking, tech-savvy personnel are a boon in a high-growth industry faced with a shortage of skilled workers.

Mahadevan.G (Sep 26, 2005)\(^{370}\) points out the revenue worth $18 billion and an employment generation of one million. This, according to many research agencies, is what the ITES/BPO sector will give India by 2009. Already, the performance of this industry export revenue of $5.2 billion in the financial year 2004-05 and additional employment generation of 1,00,000 has caused the financial pulse of the nation to quicken.

\(^{368}\) BPO: The myth and the reality, S. NAGARAJAN , COO and Co-founder, 24/7 Customer, THE HINDU, India's National Newspaper, Monday, Aug 15, 2005

\(^{369}\) Ibid

\(^{370}\) Scouting for the right talent, G. MAHADEVAN, THE HINDU, India's National Newspaper. Mon, Sep 26, 2005
Anasuya Menon (Sep 04, 2006)\textsuperscript{371} gives opinion that currently in India, the industry employs nearly three lakh people and almost 10 lakh people are being trained only in voice and accent skills. These are the people who have just basic education (Plus Two or Class X). Students no longer feel the need to continue their education after Plus Two; for they can land up in jobs that earn them a fat pay packet at a call centre.

Samir Kapoor (May 31, 2006)\textsuperscript{372} quotes that according to the NASSCOM-McKinsey Report 2005, the industry is expected to provide direct employment to approximately 2.3 million people and indirect employment to another 6.5 million people over the next five years. This gives 8.8 million people opportunity to earn their livelihood. It has already led to an increase in the income levels and an appreciable drop in unemployment rate.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{373} points out that the number of people employed in the BPO sector is currently upwards 2 50,000 in the country and expected to reach 1.1 million by 2008. (According to a NASSCOM Report) The business has grown by 46 per cent, with the revenue touching $ 3.6 billion and has added 70,000 new jobs in the year 2004.

\textsuperscript{371} BPO jobs-big bucks and no skills?, Anasuya Menon, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Mon, Sep 04, 2006

\textsuperscript{372} The industry beckons, Samir Kapoor is the Regional Recruitment Head of a leading BPO, THE HINDU, India’s National Newspaper, Wednesday, May 31, 2006.

\textsuperscript{373} A Study on the Work life of BPO Employees and the various Human Resource Practices in a BPO - A Case Study of Convergys, By Dr. Kumuda Tripathy, Faculty Member, ICFAI Business School, Pune, Aundh–411 007, June 21, 2006)
BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)\textsuperscript{374} presents the reports that the Indian BPO industry had been growing at a steady rate, even though under a lot of pressure. According to NASSCOM estimates the Indian ITES-BPO exports grew from $6.3 billion in FY 2005-06 to $8.4 billion in FY 2006-07 and are expected to touch $10.5-11bn in FY08. Employing over 553,000 people, the industry is facing a lot of pressure in terms of competition from other low-cost destinations and Indian economic factors.

BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)\textsuperscript{375} found that India, which has already established itself as a global BPO hub, is fast becoming a popular outsourcing destination for major manufacturers across the globe. Riding on the outsourcing wave, the Indian auto component sector is on a roll and, for the first time, its exports have reached the $1-billion mark.

BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)\textsuperscript{376} points out that the companies in Europe and the US are aware that the Indian IT industry provides quality services at highly competitive prices. With the West coming out of the post-9/11 slowdown, the Indian BPO industry is regaining jobs. The good part about the outsourcing segment in India is that it's not only the cost, which attracts the global audience, but the high quality services that are rendered.


\textsuperscript{376}Ibid
BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)\textsuperscript{377} reports that today BPO employees were buying flats in beautiful colonies, buying latest cars and taking an annual vacation to a European location. In a few years time, Call centre was ‘THE’ place to work in.

BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)\textsuperscript{378} describes that the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Industry is one of the largest providers of employment in India. They employ an estimated half-a-million Indians, mostly in the 20-35 age groups, and these numbers are only increasing. Thus, the number of people who are directly affected by the Indian call centre industry is nearly 1.5 million Indians including dependents.

Pavan Vaish (May 11, 2007)\textsuperscript{379} has pointed out that according to a NASSCOM-McKinsey study, the Indian BPO industry is growing at seven times the domestic GDP. The industry will contribute about 2.5 per cent to India's GDP in 2009. This contribution is expected to double to 5 per cent by 2010. The sector will directly employ about 2.3 million by 2010. To be a part of the BPO industry is to be part of the India growth story that has captivated the world.

Business Line (Jun 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{380} presents that the higher disposable incomes with youngsters in the IT/ITES industry results in excessive consumerism and splurging, with little thought for the future. It contributes to an economy’s growth, greater employment and affluence.

\textsuperscript{377}Ibid
\textsuperscript{378}Ibid
\textsuperscript{379}BPO sector — busting the myths, Pavan Vaish, BUSINESS LINE, Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Friday, May 11, 2007
\textsuperscript{380}IT — the flip side, Rasheeda Bhagat, BUSINESS LINE, Financial Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Friday, Jan 27, 2006
Somashekar.R.N (Jun 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{381} examines that the Indian IT-BPO revenue is set to grow by 33 per cent in the fiscal year 2008. Exports are expected to cross $40 billion, while the domestic market will clock over $23 billion.

Somashekar.G.R.N (Jun 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{382} reveals that the BPO industry alone is estimated to touch $12.5 billion in 2008 and has the potential to grow five-fold by 2012. The industry today employs two million people directly and indirect job creation is seven-eight million.

**Holistic approaches proposed by the Organisation to reduce Stress:**

Chrmglobal.com\textsuperscript{383} has identified that every company should also have a guidance counsellor who is to identify the stressed out people and help them out. He should be able to help them out in making the long and short term career plans, place the milestones in between and keep track of the actual progress. The employees should also be helped in having a work-life balance. They should be asked to do the household chores in advance so that meaningful time can be spent with the family.

Chrmglobal.com\textsuperscript{384} recommended the importance of doing activities of interest to the kids like playing together and family outings that can help in bringing the family together. Team outings and better working

\textsuperscript{381} ‘BPO space has huge scope, needs new biz paradigm’, G.R.N Somashekar, BUSINESS LINE, Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications Tuesday, Jun 10, 2008 and this is also found in http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2008/06/10/stories/2008061051520400.htm

\textsuperscript{382} Ibid

\textsuperscript{383} Coping with BPO Related Stress, http://www.chrmglobal.com/articles.php

\textsuperscript{384} Ibid
environment where one is applauded for his achievements help in removing the stress to a large extent.

**Chrmglobal.com**\(^{385}\) firmly believes that moving in accordance with a good career plan with the support of the family can always improve self confidence, thus making one employable. And if possible, the employees should be permitted to work from home. The stress on commuting and the interruptions in the office are thus reduced.

**Business.inquirer.net**\(^{386}\) considering the results of XMG BPO opines that BPOs firms should consider providing more non-cash rewards that focused on improving the quality of life of their personnel. This would not only help companies retain their talents, but would also ease the pressure on BPO firms to give out cash or cash-oriented incentives.

**Business.inquirer.net**\(^{387}\) points out that every organisation should address real and important employee needs and concerns.

**Business.inquirer.net**\(^{388}\) considers that by respecting individual needs for leading a better quality of life from work more flexible approaches to the work environment will be a leading retention practice”

**Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003)**\(^{389}\) describes the report according to an official with `The Art of Living Foundation', a non-profit organisation that offers courses to eliminate stress. As much as 30 per cent of the people who join the Foundation's programmes are from the ITES sector.

\(^{385}\) Ibid
\(^{386}\) http://business.inquirer.net/money/topstories
\(^{387}\) Ibid
\(^{388}\) Ibid
\(^{389}\) Ibid
Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003) examined that today many BPOs company have seen a noticeable growth in the number of people from this sector who take up art of living courses. Today, these young people account for about 30 per cent in a group and they say this helps them feel reduced stressed.

Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003) registered that today Companies too, are encouraging their employees to take up stress reduction programmes as work-related stress is seen as a major reason for the large-scale attrition in the ITES industry.

Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003) evaluates that the Art of Living Foundation has special schemes for corporate. Apart from HSS, companies such as HCL Perot, Hero Honda, Telco, Sasken and many others send their employees to stress reduction programmes.

Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003) investigated that today most of the employees work during the night, servicing companies in the US and other parts of the world. The call centres and BPOs companies handle work such as customer queries, processing application for various financial and banking products and offering remote technical assistance. The night shift and the monotonous nature of work lead to high level of stress. Today almost all the companies address the issue and have established a special breathing technique to reduce stress, which is a popular method practised by youngsters.

390 Ibid
391 Ibid
393 Ibid
Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003)\(^{394}\) points out the report presented by Mr. Aadesh Goyal, Heads of the unit, Delhi-based Hughes Software Systems (HSS) that organisation will shortly make it mandatory for employees of its business process outsourcing (BPO) division to undertake a basic course from the Art of Living Foundation,

**Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\(^{395}\)** critically evaluated that job in a BPO is taxing to say the least; however, employers like HSBC, GE do their best to help employees beat the stress through innovative and creative activities, besides rewarding good performers richly.

**Mallika Jayasheelam (Mar 03, 2004)\(^{396}\)** significantly pointed out that large BPO firms are taking to beat the high attrition rates is to hire retired people, which include housewives and those in the 40 to 55-age bracket. It is a new avenue for those desirous of rejoining active service after a long break or even retirement.

**Syeda Farida (Jun 28, 2004)\(^{397}\)** "Long hours and night shifts can take a toll on the health. We have a lot of youth who come once a fortnight for a rejuvenation therapy. It tones up the body, improves circulation and detoxifies the body. Also another problem is the cervical spondylosis that is seen in bikers. We treat them with herb packs and oil therapy," says Ranveer Puri, executive director Dhanwanthari Vaidyasala.

\(^{394}\)Ibid
\(^{395}\)Taking your business elsewhere, Mallika Jayasheelam, THE HINDU, India's National Newspaper, Mar 03, 2004
\(^{396}\)Ibid
\(^{397}\)A holistic affair, SYEDA FARIDA, THE HINDU, India's National Newspaper, Monday, Jun 28, 2004
Syeda Farida (Jun 28, 2004) discussed in her report that BPOs Companies identify the right kind of people - cool, calm and unflappable, with an ability to make a decision even under crisis-induced stress. Special training seminars are conducted so that such people take over whenever there is even a whiff of a crisis.

Raghavan .B.S (Sep 13, 2004) pointed out the universal findings that stress management is now the staple of every training course on management and physical fitness. Americans are far ahead of others in quantifying the effect of stress on quotidian life. There is even an American Institute of Stress in New York, and a stress-reduction industry has grown up round the phenomenon. Japan too has been catching up with the US in terms of ravages of stress and techniques of fighting them. The Japanese have even a special word "karoshi" to denote "death from overwork" in recognition of its becoming a contagion.

Priyanka Jayashankar (Nov 27, 2004) describes from her study that some BPO employees even have the emotional maturity to straddle a US-centric culture at work and a traditional set-up at home. The youth in the BPO segment are very enthusiastic and they have a need to achieve.

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398 Ibid
399 Distress from stress, B. S. Raghavan, BUSINESS LINE, Financial Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Monday, Sep 13, 2004
Priyanka Jayashankar (Nov 27, 2004)\textsuperscript{401} pointed out the report explained by Dr. Sangeetha Madhu, a Clinical psychologist that youngsters in BPOs are perked up by the rewards, appraisals and fun-at-work activities. The key result-area targets and incentives really motivate employees and this leads to eustress (a positive form of stress).

Priyanka Jayashankar (Nov 27, 2004)\textsuperscript{402} studied the measures taken by the BPOs to reduces stress. Some BPOs companies offer loans to HBTs (home-based transcriptionists) to buy PCs. Home offices and flexi-timing are giving MTs an edge over other BPO segments.

THE HINDU, Special Correspondent Report (Jan 28, 2005)\textsuperscript{403} research report shows that stress can actually increase one's performance. It could stimulate one's faculties to discover one's true potential. Psychologists also second the opinion that some stress situations could boost one's inner potential and could be helpful in a creative manner. Changing one's lifestyle, listening to soothing music, deep breathing and physical exercises are among the most-effective stress-busters.

THE HINDU, Special Correspondent Report (Mar 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{404} points out that many get into depression on not being able to communicate with their family. Seeking career counselling is common among people working in call centres and BPO firms.

\textsuperscript{401} Ibid
\textsuperscript{402} Ibid
\textsuperscript{403} Stress `can enhance performance', Special Correspondent Report, Tamil Nadu – Chennai, THE HINDU, India's National Newspaper. Friday, Jan 28, 2005
Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{405} evidenced in his report the measures taken by Mr. Rohit Arora, Chairman of eMR Technology Ventures BPOs that "We have realigned our timings to allow employees to go back early. Also, advance planning for critical functions such as online interactions has been done. We will be finishing the shifts by late afternoon to allow employees to be with their families in the evening".

Rituparna Chatterjee (June 22, 2006)\textsuperscript{406} lists out the confidential report shared by the BPOs that Rs 3,000 crore (Rs 30 billion) ICICI Prudential Life Insurance is another example of an organisation that makes it mandatory for its 10,000 employees across 225 offices, to finish their earned leave quota for the year. No employee can carry over more than 15 days of earned leave to the next year. The leave taken considers only working days and excludes holidays and Sundays. Plus, all employees get unlimited sick leave.

Rituparna Chatterjee (June 22, 2006)\textsuperscript{407} quotes the case study of Cola major PepsiCo's Speak Up hotline where employees are encouraged to report unprofessional and stress-causing behaviour like harassment. Then, in its South India branches, PepsiCo has tied up with Apollo Hospitals to hold stress awareness programmes for its employees, wherein employees are informed about the impact of stress on health. Apart from that, PepsiCo makes it mandatory for all employees to wear out their quota of annual leave.

\textsuperscript{405}A Study on the Work life of BPO Employees and the various Human Resource Practices in a BPO - A Case Study of Convergys. By Dr. Kumuda Tripathy, Faculty Member, ICFAI Business School, Pune, Aundh-411 007, June 21, 2006


\textsuperscript{407}Ibid
Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{408} points out the report presented by Mr. Yashwant Saran, Vice President, Sales and Marketing, According to FitnessOne which has centres in Chennai, Bangalore and Coimbatore a perceptible change has taken place in the way employee fitness is perceived in the past couple of years. FitnessOne, that has specific programmes for corporate fitness and wellness, has a centre at the IT park in Chennai that caters to the needs of around 35 companies.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{409} pointed out in his study that there is a growing number of fitness freaks in the IT, management, BPO sector and other MNCs, who are using options at work to stay fit. In fact, at Infosys, the surge in the number of people working out necessitated a second gym being opened in the campus.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{410} signifies the importance of professionals beginning to take fitness seriously. Employers are striking deals with fitness clubs for the sake of the employees across metros in the country.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{411} attributes the philosophy behind the BPOs company's interest in employee fitness to various factors. "Companies are willing to go that extra mile and spend on the employee's health. They believe it will reduce attrition and absenteeism, enhance productivity and build team spirit." In an arena where the buzzword is competition, the fitness package is also an attractive incentive to lure and retain employees.

\textsuperscript{408} Ibid
\textsuperscript{409} Ibid
\textsuperscript{410} Ibid
\textsuperscript{411} Ibid
Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{412} narrates an incident of Mrinalini Sekar, Director, Blue Fitness Centre, Chennai that at times, the fitness package is given to employees as (part of the) perks for having achieved a target. She observes increased awareness about fitness among employees too, prompting corporate to pay attention to the fitness factor. The company introduces fitness programme to 30 to 40 customers with gym's services at a reduced rate.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{413} points out the report of M.Ramakrishnan, Senior Manager, HR, Pricol in Coimbatore that has a state-of-the-art gym on campus. A nominal sum of Rs. 50 is kept aside for fitness from employees' salary. What has been worked out here is a flexible collaboration where the members of the neighbouring sports college help out the employees with training. Now their lifestyle has made them realise the necessity for it and people have begun to take it seriously.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{414} reports that as pointed out by Mr.M.Ramakrishnan on the impact of workouts on employees, it is observed that there is less absenteeism and consistent output among people who are fitness conscious.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{415} evaluates the interview report told by the Oracle India spokesperson that "Gyms and fitness centres have now become a part of the campus infrastructure" in many of the BPOs.

\textsuperscript{412} Ibid \hfill \textsuperscript{413} Ibid \hfill \textsuperscript{414} Ibid \hfill \textsuperscript{415} Ibid
Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{416} assures in his report that the BPOs company has in-house fitness centres in Bangalore and Hyderabad. Though the trend of corporate joining hands with fitness centres is common in the metros, it is yet to take off in smaller cities like Coimbatore.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{417} reports the press report shared by Ganesh Prabhu, President, Flex Fitness Club that "The concept of companies tying up with fitness centres and covering employees under a corporate fitness plan is yet to catch up".

Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)\textsuperscript{418} pointed out in his study the opinion shared by S.Seelan, Vice President - HR, Allsec Technologies that "Night shift is not mandatory in a BPO job as it is made out to be. Today many companies make extra efforts to deal with the issues arising from night shift".

Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)\textsuperscript{419} discussed the report pointed out by iGate, Bangalore that women are taught basic self-defence techniques to tolerate work stress. Employees were constantly told about safety actions and precautions they need to adopt or, if required so that they can solve their problems.

Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)\textsuperscript{420} describes the measures taken by HP, Bangalore that the night shift environment mirrors the day shift in terms

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  \item Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{416}
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  \item Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)\textsuperscript{419}
  \item Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)\textsuperscript{420}
  \item Paromita Pain, BUSINESS LINE, BUSINESS LINE, Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Friday, Oct 06, 2006
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of the facilities and support provided the floors are brightly lit to ensure that the night-shift energy levels are as high as those of the day shift.

**Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)**\(^{421}\) discusses the measures to reduce stress at SlashSupport BPOs company that the appointment order itself provides new recruits with ample information on ways to cope with night shifts and in the appointment letter a diet and exercise chart.

**Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)**\(^{422}\) clarifies the opinion of Manuel D'Souza, Vice-President - HR, Intelenet Global Services regarding ways to solve work stress that "Working in shifts is commonplace in the media and publishing industry, hospitality, airline and similar service industries, so it would be appropriate to inculcate some protective measure to tackle stress provided include stress handling mechanism".

**Paromita Pain (Oct 06, 2006)**\(^{423}\) discussed efforts taken by some BPOs to protect workers from negative stress. Realising that the cafeteria is a lively place to take a break by keeping in mind the fact that diet plays a very important role in a person's health, we offer healthy snack alternatives such as fresh juice stands".

**BPO E-Sat Survey Report (2007)**\(^{424}\) testimonies that a few companies seem to have woken to the issues. Take the case of e4e for instance; it keenly promotes flexi timing as a means of lessening stress. It even has made it mandatory for the managers to ensure that their juniors are

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\(^{421}\) Ibid
\(^{422}\) Ibid
\(^{423}\) Ibid
taking at least a week off annually. While a lot many have tied up with local gymnasiums and health centres, offering heavy discounts to employees.

Pavan Vaish (May 11, 2007)\textsuperscript{425} identified that the plan followed by the BPOs to handle work stress with good mechanism with a growth plan, involving further education, training and development, is charted out for each employee in consultation with the management. Rewards and recognition plans also serve to motivate employees to do better.

Pavan Vaish (May 11, 2007)\textsuperscript{426} discussed the mechanism to tolerate work stress by ways of meditation, yoga, counselling and "walk-in" policies that allow employees easy access to their seniors at any given time to discuss their problems.

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)\textsuperscript{427} reports the policy framed by the HCL Technologies which introduced a day care centre for the children of its employees at some of their centres and Infosys boasts of a 24-hour help line with psychologists fielding queries from employees. Others have games and activities to enliven work atmosphere. Maytas Properties has contests for the best dressed employee, tambola, quiz, work cubicle decoration and so on. As you walk away with gifts like candle stands and glass showpieces, you also unwind.

\textsuperscript{425} BPO sector — busting the myths, Pavan Vaish, BUSINESS LINE, Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Friday, May 11, 2007

\textsuperscript{426} Ibid

\textsuperscript{427} Fight the demon, head on, Sangeetha Devi Dundoo, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Wednesday, Jan 02, 2008
Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)\textsuperscript{428} described that the employees of BPOs companies who have registered with this service can log on and take quizzes on self-assessment, parenting and relationships. Online, telephonic and face-to-face counselling is offered when necessary.

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)\textsuperscript{429} explicates that the employees of HCL are given counselling through a programme called Mitr. “There are regular yoga and meditation sessions too”

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)\textsuperscript{430} considers that the BPO divisions conform to GS13 and GS18 standards, the UN environmental standards for health and safety of the workforce.” The height of the chair, work-table, height at which the computer screen has to be located, number of rest rooms, number of times the air has to be circulated, etc are taken into account. Round-the-clock medical facilities exist in all centres in addition to employees being given eye-checkups and dental checkups. The cafeterias serve low calorie meals and fresh fruit/vegetable juices.

Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)\textsuperscript{431} observes that according to Debashish Chatterjee, Director Operations, NetXcell the monotony of a desk job has a telling effect on young professionals. He observes that “he could see professionals in their 20s complain about indigestion and backache. After some thought, we decided to have yoga workshops

\textsuperscript{428} Ibid
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid
\textsuperscript{430} Ibid
\textsuperscript{431} Fight the demon, head on, Sangeetha Devi Dundoo, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Wednesday, Jan 02, 2008
every Thursday,” he explains. This is an addition to offsite get-togethers and other feel-good activities like celebrating every employee’s birthday.

**Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)** discussed in her article that today BPOs companies offer a lot of facilities for tennis, badminton and other sports. As of now, there are periodic aerobic workshops and gym sessions. “A multiple level leadership programme offered to employees touches upon issues unrelated to work. Yoga workshops are part of this programme”.

**Sangeetha Devi Dundoo (Jan 02, 2008)** examined the report shared by Sanjay Kendri, VP, Sierra Atlantic that the eagerness for medical checkups has grown. He said that “They have a practitioner come to the office once a week; at first the employees were hesitant. Nowadays one has to wait to get an appointment”.

**Jeshi.K (Jul 24, 2008)** reports as pointed out by Udai Singh Solanki, COO, eRev Max, an IT company in Kolkata, that “The idea is to promote work as a stress-reliever. ‘Do justice to time’ is what we insist. We look for reasons to celebrate together and build a better understanding with the families”.

**Jeshi.K (Jul 24, 2008)** explored the points told by Bhaskar Das, Vice President of Human Resources, Cognizant that work-life balance is all about harmonious and holistic integration of work and family.

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432 Ibid
433 Ibid
435 Ibid
Jeshi.K (Jul 24, 2008)\textsuperscript{436} discusses the personal interview told by Pradeep Yuvraj, Director of Finerva Financial Education and Wellness Consulting Solutions that “Work smart is the buzzword. Some companies even compel their employees to leave office at a particular time and weekends are made a compulsory holiday. Outings and adventure treks that encourage team-building efforts are encouraged”

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{437} investigates that the organisations now use a host of initiatives like gyms in working areas, picnics, events, yoga, ayurveda to de-stress employees.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{438} analysed that it is important to incorporate a system that provides employees with an opportunity to discuss issues. Trained counsellors are of immense value in this regard and can help provide solutions to a majority of stress-related issues and pre-empt dangerous situations.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{439} points out that the many organisations have measures to help their employees cope with stress. There is inadequate focus on nipping it in the bud while inducting an employee. By focusing on environmental adaptation during induction, organisations can prevent stress-related issues, improve productivity and reduce attrition rates.

\textsuperscript{436}Balancing equations, K. JESHI, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Thursday, Jul 24, 2008
\textsuperscript{437}Cope with stress, DR. K. HARI PRASAD, The writer is Chief Executive, Apollo Health City, Hyderabad, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Sunday, Aug 10, 2008
\textsuperscript{438}Ibid
\textsuperscript{439}Ibid
Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{440} examined that major organisations give adequate attention to their employees’ health, and the smaller organisations (which employ a significant proportion of IT and BPO personnel) are yet to focus on health.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{441} presents the interview talk shared by Ma Foi Academy’s Ashokan that every organisation has a more pragmatic take on work-related stress in BPOs. “Youngsters should not walk into BPOs with stars in their eyes. Freshers have to orient themselves to the organisation’s needs and adjust their schedules. The academy also administers a 16PF psychometric test for its candidates to find out whether a BPO/ITES job will suit their temperament.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{442} points out in his article that BPOs companies that think ahead and plan for the future, know how to manage crises. Special training seminars are conducted so that such people take over whenever there is even a whiff of a crisis.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{443} discusses the efforts taken by Bangalore-based 1to1help.net liaises with companies like Texas Instruments, IBM India, HP-GDIC, i-flex solutions, Metlife Insurance, GE-ITC, Dell and L&T Infotech. The group, formed by like-minded psychologists, offers online and offline help to all BPOs employees.

\textsuperscript{440}\textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{441}\textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{442}\textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{443}\textit{Ibid}
THE HINDU, Special Report (Nov 14, 2008) speaks about the measures followed at 24/7, expressed by Mr. Swaminathan, Employee of 24/7 that employees are encouraged to socialise especially during weekends. At work, employees have impromptu events such as a birthday party during recess/breaks, music etc. The company also encourages regular team outings, which are budgeted and mandatory at least once a year.

DQ-IDC BPO Employee Satisfaction Survey (2009) epitomises that the most companies are offering benefits like free health checkups, regular tests, etc. Also, a lot of them have switched on to the concept of non-smoking premises to keep their employees off cigarettes. And yes, even the health minister is at it. Who knows, there might be a separate health policy for the night walkers soon.

Responsibilities of BPO Companies in reducing Stress:
Facebook.com shows that today every company has taken up responsibilities to reduce stress in its organisation and has interest in “quality of life”. Incentives such as flexible hours, additional paid time off, telecommuting, stress management, and family counselling have grown.

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444 Cases of anxiety, depression on the rise Health & Lifestyle, Andhra Pradesh - Hyderabad, Special Report. The Hindu, India's National Newspaper, Friday, Nov 14, 2008
Vipin V. Nair (Nov 24, 2003)\textsuperscript{447} pointed out the feelings shared by Mr. Goyal that stress in the BPOs is not at tolerable level. HSS has already made it compulsory for all its employees to do such a programme at its expense when they join the company.

Pankak Vaish (Aug 11, 2004)\textsuperscript{448} demonstrates that to retain the young, skilled and ambitious BPO employees, every company has a need to look beyond compensation. Companies need to overhaul HR practices to contain attrition and optimise hiring and training costs.

Pankak Vaish (Aug 11, 2004)\textsuperscript{449} quotes that today the CEO instructs the inductees on company offerings, including finance transaction processing, customer relationship management, IT help desk support, applications development, maintenance and management or support for various software applications. Icebreakers, quizzes and photo sessions help inductees warm up before the formal induction process shifts on-site. At the induction programme, the inductees get a sense of the information, quality parameters and tools and technologies available to them.

Pankak Vaish (Aug 11, 2004)\textsuperscript{450} discusses the issue that some companies have learnt that people have different career aspirations. They believe that by instilling a sense of pride in the employees, they can foster long-term ties with them.

\textsuperscript{447}Breath of fresh air to distress ITES staff, Vipin V. Nair, THE BUSINESSLINE, Financial Daily from THE HINDU group of publications, Monday, Nov 24, 2003
\textsuperscript{448}BPO industry - Winning from within, Pankaj Vaish, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Wed, Aug 11, 2004
\textsuperscript{449}Ibid
\textsuperscript{450}Ibid
Pankak Vaish (Aug 11, 2004)\textsuperscript{451} points out the responsibility task taken by BPOs company by way of `community' concept and the induction programme may be small steps to achieve high value goals like employee retention but such innovative people practices encourage creativity in work that could become `routine' and `boring '. Given the high attrition rates in the industry, no BPO can afford to ignore such innovations.

Abhishek (Jan 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{452} quotes the NASSCOM study report that the BPO industries employing upwards of 2,50,000 people and expecting to reach up to the 1.1 million mark soon and companies have to prepare themselves to face issues of job security, employee benefits and protection and essential facilities at the workplace.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{453} pointed out that with professionals beginning to take fitness seriously, corporates are striking deals with fitness clubs for the sake of the employees.

Jeshi.K (Jul 19, 2008)\textsuperscript{454} discusses the report shared by Mr.Sagar Naik, Vice-President of Social Club that “We create an environment that one gets while staying with family” which plans fun activities beginning with games involving families and friends of employees to acting and dancing competitions and laughter challenge contests. “We affiliate with Spas, shopping malls and restaurants and give family discounts where the families can shop, eat and relax”.

\textsuperscript{451}Ibid
\textsuperscript{452}Hello! India calling V. Abhishek, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Monday, Jan 16, 2006
\textsuperscript{453}A toast to corporate health, Anima Balakrishnan, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Sat, Sep 16, 2006
\textsuperscript{454}Balancing equations, K.Jeshi The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Saturday, Jul 19, 2008
Jeshi.K (Jul 19, 2008)\textsuperscript{455} pointed out in his report as reported by Bhaskar Das, Vice President of Human Resources, Cognizant, Bangalore that work-life balance is needed to balance harmonious and holistic integration of work and family. He supports that Cognizant’s family day celebrations bring parents, spouses and children to the workplace where employees spend quality time with their families within the office environs.

Jeshi.K (Jul 19, 2008)\textsuperscript{456} pointed out the case of Mr.Pradeep Yuvraj, Director of Finerva Financial Education and Wellness Consulting Solutions that “Work smart is the buzzword. Some companies even compel the employees to leave office at a particular time and weekends are made a compulsory holiday. Outings and adventure treks that encourage team-building efforts are encouraged”. And also involving them by engaging in one creative hobby is vital to achieve the balance. “Make it a compulsive habit. Collect stamps; learn music; go on long drives or play the violin. Take time off to nurture relationships, family, friends and hobbies works wonders”.

Health Care in BPOs enhances Productivity

Facebook.com\textsuperscript{457} points out the significant notes told by CEO, XMG BPOs that high performance and successful retention are found in work environments that emphasize quality of life, compared to simply using cash rewards for doing good work.

\textsuperscript{455} Ibid
\textsuperscript{456} Balancing equations, K.Jeshi The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Saturday, Jul 19, 2008
Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{458} describes the fact told by Ramakrishnan, senior executive of a reputed BPOs that even though no study has been done on the impact of workouts on employees, it is observed that there is lesser absenteeism and consistent output among people who are fitness conscious.

Anima Balakrishnan (Sep 16, 2006)\textsuperscript{459} discusses the issue shared by Mr.Ganesh Prabhu, President, Flex Fitness Club that the concept of companies tying up with fitness centres and covering employees under a corporate fitness plan is yet to catch up and now "The stress here is on the individual's interest, which is not very high".

Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)\textsuperscript{460} significantly pointed out that tackling stress needs attention in today's workplace to ensure best performance by employees.

Business Line (Jun 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{461} quotes, Mr Akhil Gupta, Senior Managing Director and Chairman, Blackstone India, who said that the present stress relief mechanism would enhance productivity among employees.

Bindu Sridhar (Nov 26, 2008)\textsuperscript{462} observed that when there is are opportunities available to exhaust work stress or stress reduction

\textsuperscript{458} A toast to corporate health , ANIMA BALAKRISHNAN , The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Saturday, Sep 16, 2006
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid
\textsuperscript{460} Healthy staff, healthy organization, Hema Gopalakrishnan, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Wed, Oct 17, 2007
\textsuperscript{462} Happy workplaces foster higher productivity, Bindu Sridhar, The Hindu, India's National Newspaper Wed, Nov 26, 2008
opportunities, the worker will be happier and more productive working from home, or working flexi time. It is also better for the business; after all, a happy employee is a productive employee.

Bindu Sridhar (Nov 26, 2008)\textsuperscript{463} found that fun at work alleviates stress, boredom and fatigue arising out of dull, routine tasks; it mends conflict and tension in the workplace, improves communication and creates an environment that promotes enthusiasm and creativity.

Bindu Sridhar (Nov 26, 2008)\textsuperscript{464} in his study quoted that the pleasant and happy workplace will lead to decreased absenteeism, improved productivity and better employee health in the physiological and psychological sense. In short, a generous dose of light-hearted fun and humour can go a long way in improving employee health, motivation and cultivating a positive corporate culture.

Policies and Act to be established in BPO

Dqindia.ciol.com\textsuperscript{465} quotes that the gender issue is the rampant problem in the BPOs companies. As measures promoted by IBM Daksh, it once again emerges at the zenith of gender inclusivity policies. IBM increased its focus on gender issues and modified its policies a bit, to create women leaders of the future. From sensitization to female mentorship, IBM has always been a pioneer in gender issues, and its dominance continues.

\textsuperscript{463}Ibid
\textsuperscript{464}Ibid
\textsuperscript{465}Ibid
\textsuperscript{466}Ibid
Dqindia.com\(^{466}\) pointed out that one of the biggest detractors in the otherwise shining Indian BPO story has been the health issue, the result of the need for night shifts, an inherent requirement of the industry. Considering that most clients these companies are catering to are in the US and Europe there is nothing much that can be done about this problem. As a result, health has become a prime area of concern. The Union Health Minister Anbumani Ramadoss got very much involved and proposed a special health policy to be included in the BPOs companies because there is no denying that health remains an important issue and the industry has to find ways to tackle it.

Ohstrategy.net & Hse.gov.uk\(^{467}\) observes that the UK Government's plans to reduce workplace stress were outlined by Elizabeth Gyngell OBE, Head of Health Strategy, Management & Research at the Health & Safety Executive. Ms Gyngell described how the Government aims to achieve a 20% reduction in work-related ill health; and 30% reduction in sickness absence by 2010. This will involve a holistic approach combining five key programmes - regulatory compliance, continuous improvement, knowledge/data collection, skills and support - an announcement that was warmly welcomed by the conference delegates.

Ohstrategy.net & Hse.gov.uk\(^{468}\) points out that in UK, fairly rapid strides have been made in introducing Work-Life Balance policies. Industry initiatives have been supported by Government legislation,
trade union debate and industry association advocacy to ensure that Work-Life Balance policies are more pervasive and effective.

Ohstrategy.net & Hse.gov.uk\textsuperscript{469} discussed that there are still some fundamental issues that need to be addressed or myths that need to be shattered by both employee and employer. Some of the more important ones are: The myth that Work-Life Balance policies are relevant only for women or working parents; the myth that Work-Life Balance policies cannot work for senior managers; the myth that employees are empowered and work in environments where there is a culture of trust and openness.

Ohstrategy.net & Hse.gov.uk\textsuperscript{470} Organizations must address these issues while developing their Work-Life Balance policies. Further, these policies must be enshrined in an organisation's vision or values and supported by a culture that encourages flexibility.

Work related stress, Short guide; HSE Books\textsuperscript{471} Every Company is committed to providing a working environment and management practices which promote the best health of all employees. Part of that commitment is to minimise the risk of the harmful effects of stress by:

- Introducing workable policies and procedures
- Increasing awareness and understanding of stress related issues through training and health promotion
- Investigating all incidents of potential or actual work related stress

\textsuperscript{469}Ibid

\textsuperscript{470}Government's Securing Health Together strategy and Tackling Work-related Stress initiative, visit www.ohstrategy.net and www.hse.gov.uk respectively.

• Providing access to confidential welfare support services for any staff whose physical and/or mental health may have been injured by stress. Staff is encouraged to assist the company by reporting areas where stress management could be improved, reporting incidents of bullying/harassment etc and ensuring appropriate individual behaviour.

Work related stress, Short guide; HSE Books\textsuperscript{472} Health and Safety Legislation - Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 obliges employers to safeguard, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the people who work for them. This does not only mean physical health, but mental health as well. Ill health resulting from stress at work should be treated in the same way as ill health resulting from physical hazards in the workplace.

Work related stress, Short guide; HSE Books\textsuperscript{473} The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess risks to health and safety and implement avoidance and control measures. Hazards that could lead to stress must, if significant, be included in the risk assessments.

Work related stress, Short guide; HSE Books\textsuperscript{474} The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 incorporate the requirement for employers to minimise the risk of ill health, including stress, which may be caused by working with display screen equipment (computers).

\textsuperscript{472}\textsuperscript{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{474}\textsuperscript{Ibid}
The Working Time Regulations 1998 place limitations on the number of hours worked during an average working week; make provision for rest breaks and so relate to stress caused by excessive working hours.

Employment Protection Legislation - The Employment Rights Act 1996 gives employees the right not to be unfairly dismissed. One of the possible reasons for dismissal relates to “the capability or qualifications of the employee for performing work of the kind which (s) he was employed to do. Capability should be assessed in relation to “health or any other physical or mental quality”. When dismissing someone on the grounds of incapability, the employer must clearly establish the medical circumstances and ensure that fair procedures are followed.

Discrimination Legislation - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) states that discrimination occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably “for a reason which relates to the person’s disability”. The act may relate to stress-related illnesses if the disability is such that the person “has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities.” A mental illness can only be a mental impairment if the person is suffering from a clinically recognised illness such as depression. The impairment must have lasted for at least 12 months or be reasonably expected to last that long.
The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and the Race Relations Act 1976 give the right of access to employment tribunals to victims of discrimination. People, who are discriminated against, may find the experience distressing, humiliating and consequently may suffer from a stress related illness. In successful cases, both the employer and the discriminator may be ordered to compensate the victim.

Common Law - There is a long established “common law” duty of care owed by employers to employees not to subject them to unnecessary risk. An employer will be liable in negligence for an employee’s stress related illness provided it was reasonably foreseeable that the employee would suffer mental or physical illness, and it failed to take reasonable steps to prevent the illness, and the failure caused the ill health.

It is recognised that work related stress is a health and safety issue and that risks to health can be minimised by the implementation of good management procedures. The company believes it to be unethical that employees should be injured by their work and that reasonable arrangements must be in place to prevent accidents and ill health occurring. The policy informs everyone in the college of the commitment to minimising the harmful effects of stress, the procedures that should be followed and who is responsible for each step.
Work related stress, Short guide; HSE Books\(^{482}\) A good and workable stress management policy will:

- Have been created following consultations among managers, trade unions and employees
- Emphasise that stress is a health and safety issue and that it is the employer’s responsibility to minimise risk
- Be based on current best knowledge and practice
- Apply to all staff
- Be acknowledged by the college Governors and Senior Managers as a demonstration of their responsibility and commitment to minimising risk
- Clearly state the organisation’s preferred definition of stress, demand, hazard and risk
- Create a climate of openness to encourage the reporting of potential stressful incidents
- Refer to other related policies and procedures

Ohstrategy.net & Hse.gov.uk\(^{483}\) This is further outlined in the following framework for making Work-Life Balance work in organizations: Identify the key need or reason for introducing Work-Life Balance policies. Build the commitment to Work-Life Balance Policies into the organisation's vision or value statement. Set up a Work-Life Balance Task Force. Examine current practices in the organisation. Hold joint discussions with employees to evolve policies, while also identifying possible barriers. Communicate policies through handbooks, newsletters, Intranet and other forms of

communication. Hold workshops to help Managers implement and manage policies. Begin with a few "quick win" policies. Monitor implementation and put feedback systems into place.

**NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000**\(^{484}\) OHS Act is the key legislative instrument that provides for the health, safety and welfare of all people at a workplace including employees, agency nurses, patients, contractors and visitors.

a. Section 8 of the OHS Act places the prime responsibility for occupational health and safety on the employer.

b. Employers are required to:
   a. ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, and
   b. ensure that people (other than employees) are not exposed to risks to their health and safety arising from the employer’s activities.

c. This means that employers must: ensure that the work environment is safe.

Provide and maintain safe systems of work, e.g. work conditions
   a. ensure that everything used at the workplace is safe when used. Proper equipment, and chemicals provide information, instruction and training
   b. establish and maintain effective consultation. Provide supervision sufficient to ensure safety
   c. provide adequate facilities for the welfare of employees, toilets, facilities for hand washing and meal rooms

\(^{484}\) NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, Study Report
Geeta Seshu (Jun 09, 2003) As per the directive issued last year by the Tamil Nadu High Court, night shifts must not come in the way of a woman's right to work. Amenities have to be made available for them. Based on the same legislative instructions, transport, rest rooms and canteens are made available across all call centres.

Moumita Bakshi Chatterjee (Nov 07, 2005) THE BPO industry might be the eye of a storm on labour issues, with some Left parties resolving to educate workers about the benefits of organising themselves into unions, but a section of employees across established companies say that they have enough negotiating power. They feel they can take up issues with the management without the intervention of an organised union. The majority opinion was that unions could be counter-productive to the growth of the sector. Though employees admitted to issues such as high stress levels at workplace, long work hours, and night shifts, many attributed it to the nature of BPO operations where deadlines and data security became crucial.

Anasuya Menon (Sep 04, 2006) The growth prospects for young people with no graduation are also bleak within the industry and it offers no creative challenges for the person to develop his or her knowledge base. While many blame it on the lifestyle and Americanisation of Indian youth, educational institutions should consciously discourage students

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487 BPO jobs - big bucks and no skills?, Anasuya Menon, The Hindu, India's National Newspaper, Sep 04, 2006
from accepting low-end call centre jobs and provide them counselling even after completion of the course, Mr.Bijoor says.

Ramy Kannan, The Hindu, India's National Newspaper, Tuesday, Sep 26, 2006 $^{488}$ BPOs and software giants seemed to have realised the urgency: stress management workshops and medical camps are conducted for employees. However, clearly more action is required, both in terms of estimation of the situation and concrete policies to handle the crisis.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006) $^{489}$ The above characterisation of work in BPO outfits does not paint a rosy picture of the working conditions, which leads one to the second question, namely, whether employee-unionisation has not taken place as yet because of the absence of effective leadership. This may, in fact, be the case but it is also true that, if reports are to be believed, an attempt to unionise the 350,000 employees in the sector (80,000 more jobs are to be added this year) by the Union Network International (a global alliance of 900 unions) has till now not met with any success.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006) $^{490}$ The obvious question to ask is: Why has this happened if working conditions in the Indian BPO sector have a lot of scope for improvement? Does the prevailing demand-supply situation

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$^{488}$Health policy for IT, BPO employees under consideration, Ramya Kannan, The Hindu, India's National Newspaper, Tuesday, Sep 26, 2006 also available in http://www.hinduonnet.com/2006/09/26/stories/2006092609510400.htm

$^{489}$A Study on the Work life of BPO Employees and the various Human Resource Practices in a BPO - A Case Study of Convergys, By Dr. Kumuda Tripathy, Faculty Member, ICFAI Business School, Pune, Aundh-411 007, June 21, 2006

$^{490}$A Study on the Work life of BPO Employees and the various Human Resource Practices in a BPO - A Case Study of Convergys, By Dr. Kumuda Tripathy, Faculty Member, ICFAI Business School, Pune, Aundh-411 007, June 21, 2006
have any role to play in the answer? As one outsourcing employee is reported to have said: "A union would make sense if there was no job security. Here jobs are more, people are less — companies are trying all means possible to keep employees happy so that they won't leave". The entire controversy over BPO working conditions, at this particular point of time when the country is taking rapid strides towards expansion of the sector, could not have come at a more inopportune moment for the BPO establishment, as represented by NASSCOM.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\(^{491}\) In countries like the UK and Australia, where the call centre industry is a lot older, there is a great deal of understanding on what this unique workplace entails and what needs to be done about it.. In Australia, some call centre companies have signed onto a call centre charter that includes, among other things, a minimum standard code of the workplace.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\(^{492}\) The Government and the corporate sector should look at employment laws as different from the labour laws for the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry. There is a need for a forum to redress the grievances of employees in the BPO sector.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\(^{493}\) Tactically, it has done the right thing by rejecting outright the allegation. On a strategic plane, the emphasis on minimum standards has been most sensible as also the gradual framing and adoption of a self-regulatory agency "for laying guidelines on a range of issues, including data protection and work conditions of employees". It

\(^{491}\)Ibid
\(^{492}\)Ibid
\(^{493}\)Ibid
can be no one's case that the BPO sector is uniformly employee-friendly in the country. On the contrary, it should be the universal appeal that the sector should be strengthened further if the nation is to make the most of its IT potential.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{494} Legal support -The picture that emerges is the absence of any notion of work protections and guidelines. In an industry being touted as the magic wand that will ward off unemployment, no one wants to discuss establishing an equitable and gender-safe work culture.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{495} At a public meeting organized by the Union of Information Technology and Enabled Services, participants regretted that the BPO industry lacks a regulatory framework from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) regulations to issues of security, technology transfer and employee welfare.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{496} Various call centre employees and non-governmental organization activists expressed concern about the non-implementation of the universal charters prepared pertaining to the security of women working in night shifts.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006)\textsuperscript{497} The absence of such a regulation leaves employees open to machinations of unscrupulous
employers, cases of fraudulent salary cuts, collection of deposits in the name of training, arbitrary fixing of salaries and fear of reprisal.

Kumuda Tripathy (June 21, 2006) as of now, no understanding of the problem exists in India, leave alone a minimum standard code. Some call centre and BPO companies in the country have got together under the aegis of NASSCOM to address common areas of concern - but so far these have largely centered on deciding how not to poach on each other's employees and what to do with the Shops and Establishments Act. Employee stress - and its impact on the bottom-line through high attrition rates - is not even on the horizon of concerns. Although the fundamental elements of a call handler's job are the same as a typical computer-based office job, the close combination of these elements results in a unique job often of an intensive nature; hence the need for appraisal of dangers that are lurking in the corners of well furnished BPO offices.

Ramya Kannan (Sep 26, 2006) When they exchange notes, it is clear that while lifestyle diseases hardly spare any group of people, one sector — IT and BPO services — is suffering the most. So much so, the Union Ministries of Health and IT are contemplating evolving a health policy specially for employees of this booming segment. "It is terrible to see 20-year-olds fall to their deaths at work. Without being alarmist, we have to address the issue," Union Minister of Health Anbumani Ramadoss said in Chennai recently.

Ibid

Health policy for IT, BPO employees under consideration, Ramya Kannan, ,The Hindu, India's National Newspaper, Tuesday, Sep 26, 2006) also available in http://www.hinduonnet.com/2006/09/26/stories/2006092609510400.htm
Santhosh.K (Nov 19, 2006)\textsuperscript{500} Trade unions alleged that registers were not properly maintained in many IT companies. “There is a blatant violation of labour laws. We are against the powers of the Labour Commissioner being delegated to the Development Commissioner of Special Economic Zone. In Kerala, the Left is caught in a dilemma: being in power, it needs to project a pro-development image and woo investors even as it is under pressure to honour its trade union commitments," said Saji Narayanan, vice-president, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

Santhosh.K (Nov 19, 2006)\textsuperscript{501} Thrissur: Close on the heels of the announcement of the formation of a trade union in the Information Technology sector by the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-backed Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) in Kolkata, efforts are being made to bring IT employees in Kerala too under the umbrella of labour unions.

Santhosh.K (Nov 19, 2006)\textsuperscript{502} A State-level organisation, Association of IT Employees, which claims to enjoy the support of major trade unions, is being launched in Thrissur on November 19. It seeks to bring together employees in IT and ITES (IT-enabled services) /BPO domain and countless professionals in the unorganised sector.

Santhosh.K (Nov 19, 2006)\textsuperscript{503} in his study observed one of the factors leading to organisational stressors is widening disparity in wages is gaping. Some get jaw-dropping salaries; others abysmally low amounts. The norm is: perform or perish. To tackle these issues, the INTUC

\textsuperscript{500}Trade unions set to enter IT sector, K. Santhosh,Kerala – Thrissur, The Hindu, India’s National News paper, Sunday, Nov 19, 2006
\textsuperscript{501}Ibid
\textsuperscript{502}Ibid
\textsuperscript{503}Ibid
\textsuperscript{504}Ibid
[Indian National Trade Union Congress] is planning to enter the State's IT sector in a major way," said Suresh Babu, INTUC State president.

**Santhosh.K (Nov 19, 2006)** A large section of the IT sector is worried about having labour unions. "Trade unionism will destroy the sector, especially at a time when Kerala is finding a toehold in the global IT order. Kerala accounts for IT export revenues of Rs.500 crore. Compare this with the achievements of Karnataka, which accounts for one-third of the country's IT exports. In the current fiscal, Karnataka is expected to take in 37 per cent of all IT revenues amounting to Rs.37,000 crore ($8.2 billion)," said V. K. Mathews, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, IBS Group of Companies, Technopark. He countered the allegation that many IT companies in the Technopark violated labour laws.

**Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)** Organisations have to address these issues when it comes to dealing with work related stress. Companies should adopt policies like flexi time options, telecommuting and improve work-life balance in employees.

**Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)** The Business Work-Life Study conducted by the Families and Work Institute, suggests "organisations adopt work-family programmes; inform employees that help is available and hold managers accountable for sensitivity to their employees' work-family needs."

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504Ibid
505Ibid
506**Healthy staff, healthy organization,** Hema Gopalakrishnan, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Wednesday, Oct 17, 2007
507Ibid
Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)\textsuperscript{507} Lack of Labour Guidelines: There is very little over-time pay and it, thus, leads to systematic overworking or understaffing of resources in both small and big BPOs. The understaffing is also responsible for the erratic quality or projects due to rush jobs. Labour regulation has been avoided because historically Indian regulations have been misused to offer hassles to industry rather than relief or solutions. Recently, a committee headed by Arjun Sengupta had submitted a draft of the Unorganized Sector Workers’ Bill to cover the workers in this sector.

Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)\textsuperscript{508} Lack of Health Guidelines: There must be a policy which can offer medical counselling (without too much expenses) to cope with effects of prolonged night-shifts, or sitting in chairs, especially chronic back-aches, and personality counselling.

Hema Gopalakrishnan (Oct 17, 2007)\textsuperscript{509} with regard to the issue of employee retainability, there can be career counselling to help young employees plan a career in a still turbulent sector (Not everyone will be a team leader). There is no legal provision for re-training for workers being laid off and there is little chance of unemployment benefits in India. BPOs companies should offer skill enhancement and re-training which are likely to have a sustainable edge in human resource management.

\textsuperscript{507}\textsuperscript{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{508}\textsuperscript{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{509}\textsuperscript{Ibid}
Bindu Sridhar (Jan 09, 2008)\textsuperscript{510} In India there is a starting point in that organizations have recognized the need for value of Work-Life Balance policies. The Government could play a critical role in being a catalyst of change. It has to influence the Indian BPOs to adapt policies to fit in with not just the nature of industry, profile of workforce and other such factors but also with the local culture and environment.

Bindu Sridhar (Jan 09, 2008)\textsuperscript{511} Today the corporate should encourage a policy which includes Flexi time, telecommuting or a compressed workweek that could save employees from the everyday stress of extreme commute and help him or her achieve better work-life balance.

Hari Prasad.K (Aug 10, 2008)\textsuperscript{512} There should be a policy that has its value. It is important to incorporate a system that provides employees with an opportunity to discuss issues. Trained counsellors are of immense value in this regard and can help provide solutions to a majority of stress-related issues and pre-empt dangerous situations.

The next chapter explains the analysis and interpretation of the parameters framed and the dimensions of each parameters (Personal Information, Company culture, Job content/growth, Career advancement, Training, Salary and compensation, Performance Appraisal system, various stressors, reasons for joining / leaving at work and Quality Work Life experienced by the employees of Business Process Outsourcing Services in Tamil Nadu.

\textsuperscript{510}Encourage employees to relocate, BINDU SRIDHAR, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Jan 09, 2008

\textsuperscript{511}Ibid

\textsuperscript{512}Cope with stress, Dr. K. Hari Prasad, The Hindu, India’s National Newspaper, Sunday, Aug 10, 2008