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Flexible Work Arrangements and Employee Retention in IT Sector

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Abstract: *Traditional ways of working is evaporating due to advanced technologies, new societal values, changing demographics, and rapid globalization. This new phenomenon has put forth new challenges as well as opportunities before the organizations. In order to survive and accomplish goals, organizations required to induce new policies of work system that is flexible work arrangements. A survey by Aon Hewitt, 'Employee Preference Study 2013', suggested that employees listed flexible work arrangements along with additional fixed pay and higher incentives as the top three preferred benefits. One out of three employees' ranked flexi work arrangements as a top pull in a new job. Flexible work arrangements are preferred by employees across generations, levels, gender, and is one of the most sought after benefits. The study aims to understand Flexible Work Arrangements and its impact on staff retention with reference to employees in IT sector of Delhi region.*

Keywords: *Flexible work Arrangement, Retention*

I. WHAT IS FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS(FWAS)

Flexible Work Arrangements are defined as employer provided benefits that permit employees some level of control over when and where they work outside of the standard workday (Hill et al., 2001). Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) alter the time and/or place that work is conducted on a regular basis - in a manner that is as manageable and predictable as possible for both employees and employers (Sloan, 2010).

flexibility in terms of hours worked includes alternative work schedules (e.g., flex time and compressed workweeks), and arrangements regarding shift and break schedules. flexibility in terms of amount of hours worked includes part time work and job shares. Whereas flexibility in terms of work place includes work from home or from a satellite location.

II. TYPES OF FLEXI WORK ARRANGEMENTS

A. *Alternative work schedules:*

Any schedule other than that which is standard to the work setting. It's of two type:-

- a) Flexitime: Start and/or end the work day earlier (or later) than the usual, where workers can set their own starting and stopping times (Kelly & Kalev, 2006).
- b) Compressed Workweeks: Work fewer (or no) hours some days, and longer hours on other days e.g., work 37.5 hours in 4 days, with one day off (Sundo & Fujii, 2005).

2. Arrangements Regarding Shifts and Breaks

- a) Shift Arrangements: employees who are assigned shifts by their employers enter into arrangements with their employers giving them more flexibility regarding the shifts they are assigned.

- b) Break Arrangements: employees who generally can only take assigned breaks enter into an arrangement with their employers giving them more flexibility over when they take breaks.

B. Flexibility in the amount of Hours Worked

1. Part Time Work/Reduced Hours Schedule: Work less than 30 hours a week.
2. Transition Period Part Time: employees gradually return to work after a major life event (e.g., birth or adoption of a child) by working part time for a set period and eventually returning to full time work
3. Job Shares: Share the responsibility and benefits of one full-time position with another employee (Gottlieb et al., 1998).
4. Part-year Work: employees work only a certain number of months per year.

C. Flexibility in the place of work

1. Telework/Home Work: employees work remotely from their own homes, using a telecommunications connection to the workplace if necessary.
2. Telework/Satellite Location: employees work remotely from a designated satellite work center.
3. Alternating Location: employees work part-year in one location and part-year in a second location.

III. ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS

Flexible work arrangements are beneficial for employers in the form of increase productivity, job satisfaction, employee morale, reduce absenteeism etc.

- » Increase job satisfaction of the employees (Baltes et al., 1999)
- » Increased employee morale, engagement to the organization.
- » Increase organizational commitment (Glass & Finley, 2002)
- » Increased productivity of the organization (Pierce & Newstrom, 1980)
- » Decreased absenteeism and turnover (Hyland, 2000)
- » And increase applicant attraction to an organizations offering flexitime (Rau & Hyland, 2002).

IV. ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Flexible work schedule have been recommended to help employee reduce work–family conflict by allowing them more control over their work schedule. The following points summarize the benefit of FWAs to employees.

- » Employees feel less stressed when they have more control over their schedule (Almer & Kaplan, 2002);
- » Increased energy and creativity (Schaefer, 2005);
- » Employees perceive that flexible working makes them “happy” and that there are attitudinal/behavioral links between this happiness, discretionary behavior and a number of performance outcomes (Atkinson & Hall, 2011);
- » Achieving work/life balance for many office-based employees and less workfamily conflict (Hayman, 2009).

V. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- » To thoroughly study the concept of Flexible works Arrangements.
- » To study employees prospective towards Flexi work arrangements.

- » To study the various flexible work strategies implemented by the organizations. .
- » To suggest suitable measures to improve work life balance of female employees.

VI. METHODOLOGY

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Employees from IT sector organizations (delhi) constitute the universe.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample design of this study will be non-probability convenience sampling method (University). The number of respondents is 100.

METHOD OF STUDY

The research study will be of exploratory type.

DATA COLLECTION

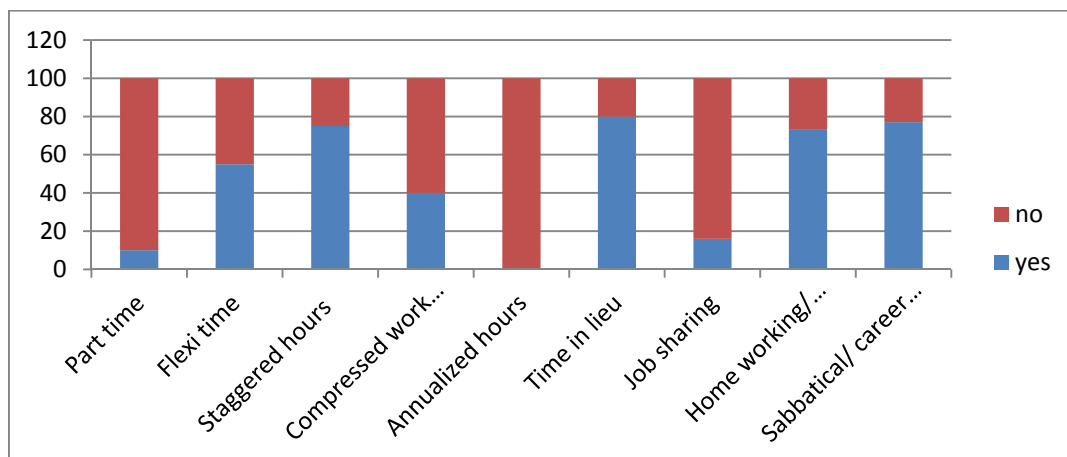
Primary data- In order to collect the primary data in this study, questionnaire and interview method is used.

Secondary data- Research studies conducted in this area and related areas in different universities, books, magazines and journals, websites dealing with this subject and various reports published by institutions working in this field is the source of secondary data collection.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

I Types of flexi work arrangements available to the employees

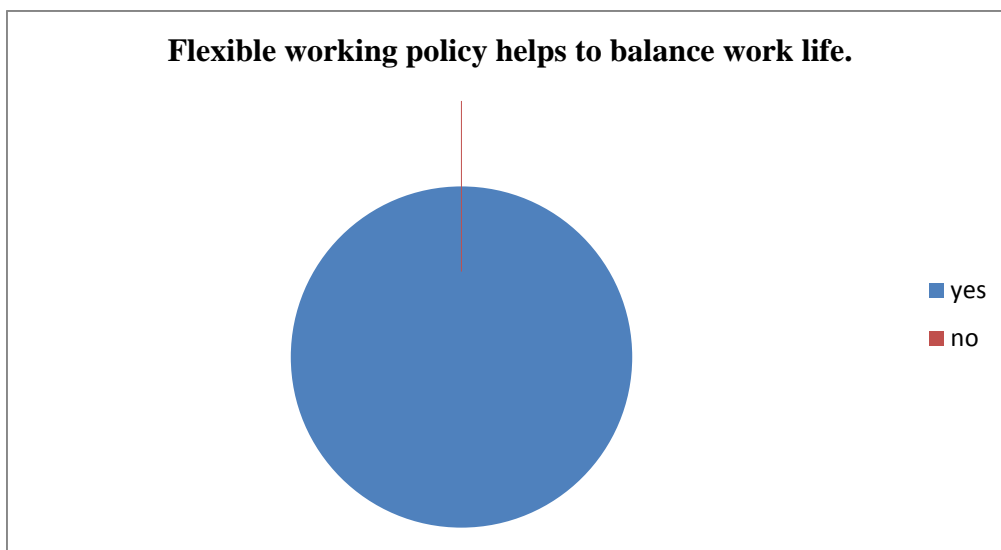
Types of flexi work arrangements	Response (yes)	No
Part time	10	90
Flexi time	55	45
Staggered hours	75	25
Compressed work week	40	60
Annualized hours	0	100
Time in lieu	80	20
Job sharing	16	84
Home working/ Teleworking	73	37
Sabbatical/ career leaves	77	33



The above chart shows that flexi time, staggered hours, compressed work week and time in lieu, home working or work from home, sabbatical leaves are facilitated to employees more in comparison to other strategies like part time, annualized hours, job sharing. The percentage of implementing these strategies should be increase kept in mind the benefits of flexi work arrangements.

II Flexible working policy helps to balance work life.

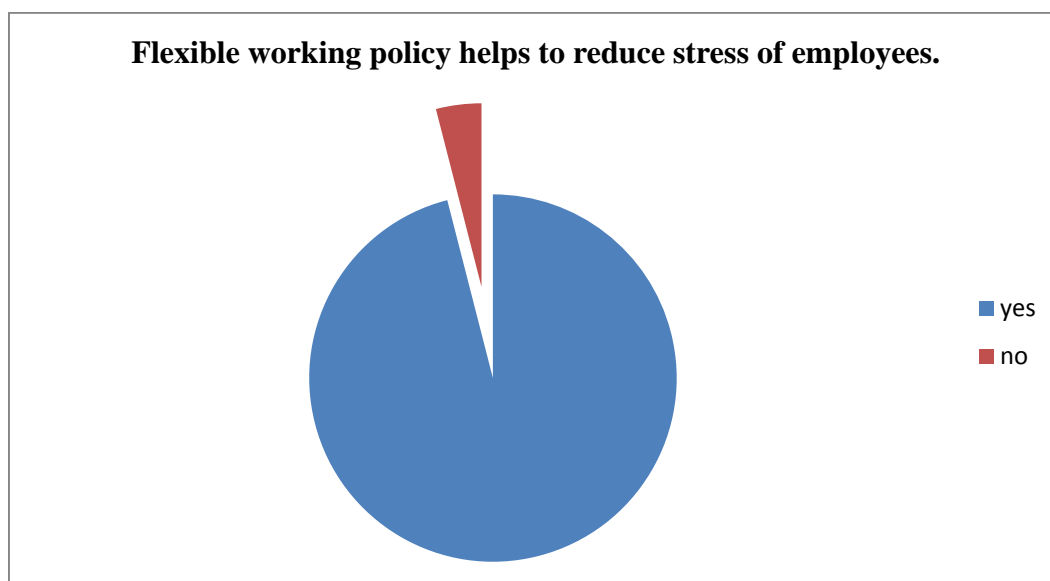
	yes	no
Flexible working policy helps to balance work life.	100	0



The above chart divulge that flexible working policy do help in creating work life balance.

III Flexible working policy helps to reduce stress of employees.

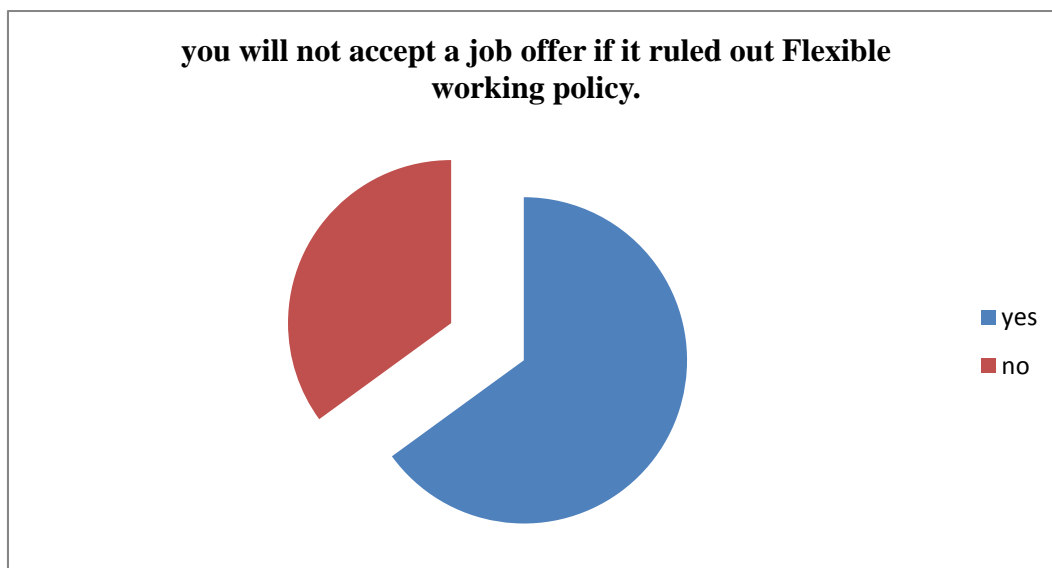
Statement	Response (yes)	No
Flexible working policy helps to reduce stress of employees.	96	4



Flexible work police plays an important role in reducing stress of employees as shown in the chart above.

IV you will not accept a job offer if it ruled out Flexible working policy.

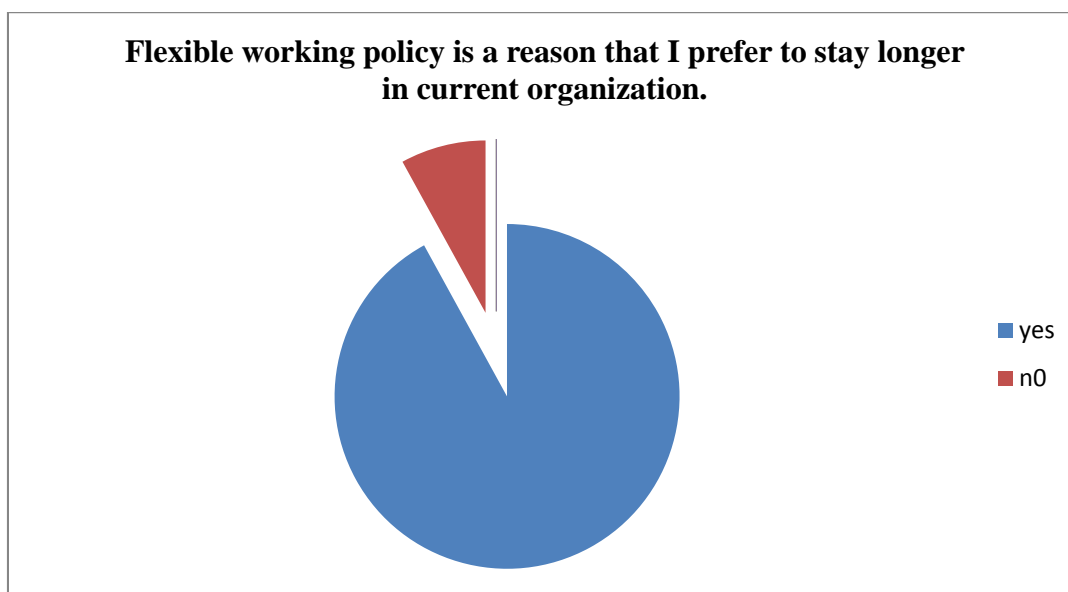
Statement	Response(yes)	No
You will not accept a job offer if it ruled out Flexible working policy.	65	35



The above chart clearly indicates that employees are very much interested in working with an organization facilitating flexible work arrangements.

V Flexible working policy is a reason that I prefer to stay longer in current organization.

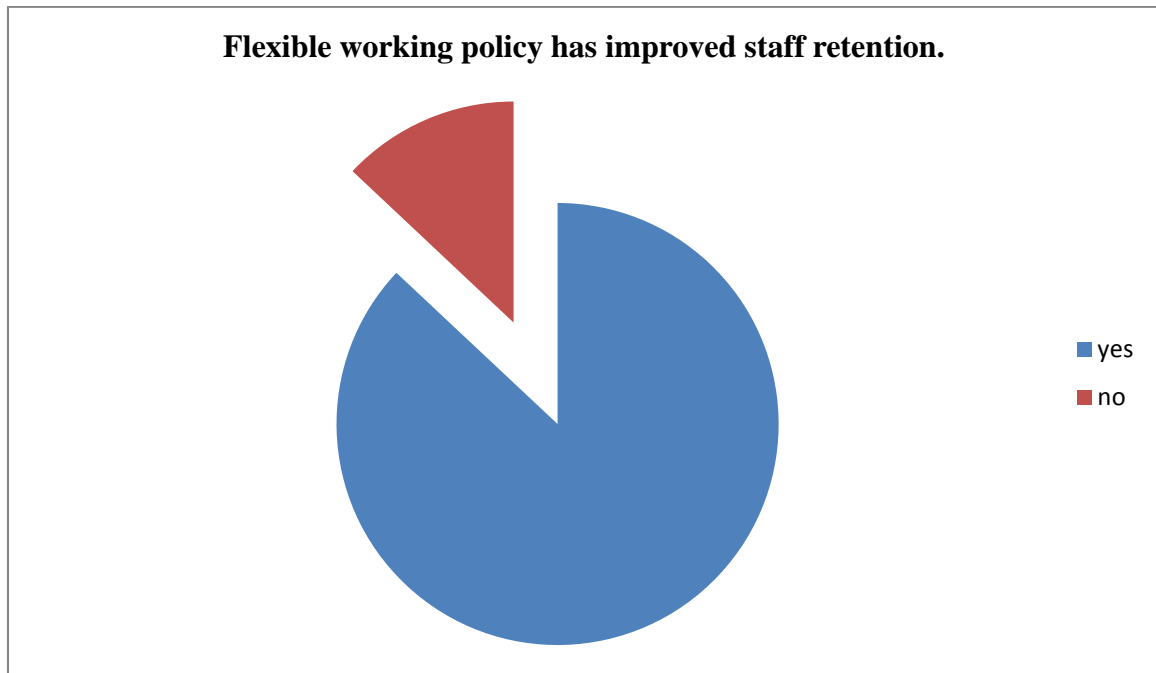
Statement	Response (yes)	no
Flexible working policy is a reason that I prefer to stay longer in current organization.	92	8



The chart above reveals that employees would prefer to stay for a longer period of time if flexible work arrangements are practiced by the institution. This also equally draws our attention to the point that how much importance employees give to flexible work arrangements.

VI Flexible working policy has improved staff retention.

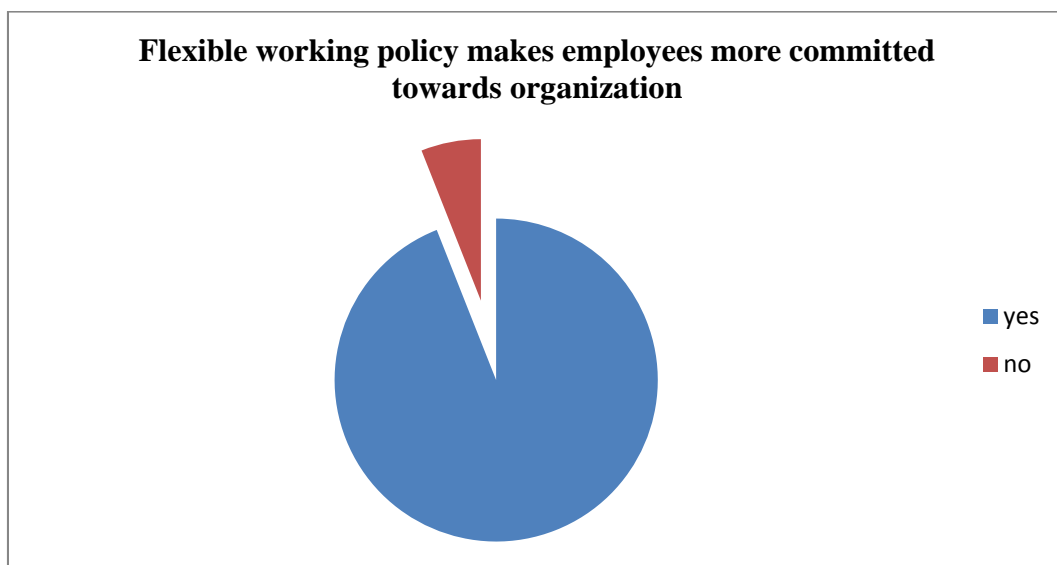
Statement	Response (yes)	no
Flexible working policy has improved staff retention.	87	13



The chart above shows that flexible work policy has improved staff retention in the organizations. It's because of the FWP that employees would not leave their respective institutions.

VII Flexible working policy makes employees more committed towards organization.

Statement	Response (yes)	no
Flexible working policy makes employees more committed towards organization	94	6



The benefits of flexible work police have made employees more loyal and committed towards the organization are confirmed by the chart drawn above.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The above data analysis divulged that the employees give due weight age to flexi work arrangements. As indicated in study that employees feel that FWL helps them to balance work and life, reduce stress, longer tenure in the organization, more committed towards the organization. The previous studies as mentioned in this paper show that organizations are also benefited in the form of increase job satisfaction, productivity, employee morale & employee engagement, reduce absenteeism & turnover, attract and retain talent employees. The study also reveals an interesting fact that employees prefer to stay longer in the institution if facilitated with flexi work arrangements.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this growing economies and competitive market, Flexible work arrangements emerge as an important HR strategy to attract and retain talented employees in the institution. As the new work force that is knowledge workers put great value to Flexi work arrangements and see them as an important perk. Businesses of all sizes report that flexible working improves staff retention, with larger businesses marginally more likely to appreciate the value of flexible working for both hiring top talent and staff retention (both 77%)(Regus 2014). There are some suggestions to improve employee retention while keeping flexi work arrangements in perspective.

1. All organizations are not implementing FWA, its time demand to consider it as important and powerful tool to attract and retain employees.
2. All the options in respect of FWA are required to be implemented.
3. If not all options of FWA are likely to be implemented than institute make a survey as to find out which are most beneficial and hence implement them.
4. Employees should be properly educated regarding FWA as to who can avail, under what circumstances, the authority who can give permission etc., to make most of this policy.

The organizations should provide its employees certain amount of flexibility so that they are able to balance their work life thus reducing absenteeism, attrition rate and increasing productivity. It is always a known fact that if a company takes care of the needs of the employees, the employee will serve the company better.

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Dr. Bindu Jain has been working as Associate Professor in Maharani College, Department of Business Administration, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur since 1992. She has done M.com., M.Phil, Ph.D from University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. She is a research supervisor to students pursuing their doctoral degree. Her area of interest is General Management, HRM & Marketing. She has to her credit a large number of Research papers in national and International journals. She has authored books on computer science.



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