

Working Fathers

Companies have to acknowledge the changing roles of fathers, and create family- friendly work places so as to have great dads and great employees.

Several changes are taking place in our society, transforming our hierarchical society into an egalitarian society. There are sufficient laws to have gender equality in workplaces but in the domestic front we find few. One of the important tasks in the domestic front is child care which traditionally was left to women. With societal changes, men have also started contributing to the family in terms of quality time, on finding the necessity as well as happiness derived in bringing up children, thereby calling for changes of certain accepted traditions and beliefs. The Central Government of India way back in 1999 made provisions for paternity leave for a male Central Government employee (including an apprentice and probationer) with less than two surviving children for a period of 15 days to take care of his wife and new born child. Leading companies like Yahoo (8weeks), Bank of America (12 weeks), PwC (12-14 weeks), Cisco Systems India (12 weeks), Google India (10 days) and Infosys (5 days) grant paternal leave to their male employees. In this regard, India appears to be more forward than U.S.

It is now recognized that workplace flexibility or work-life balance are as important to men as it is to women. Men's demands to have paternal leave, though not on par with women have been justified with media's active role. Men, along with great careers wanted to become great dads and there are many sportsmen who missed golden opportunities in their careers to be near their wives at the time of their child birth. The importance of both work and family to both men and women being clear, fathers or the new dads are now increasingly engaged in childcare and household responsibilities.

Research shows that working fathers are being stressed and they are not being able to take time for their self and this is a matter of concern. Companies have to reduce this type of stress to ensure excellent performance from the new dads. It is important to have their well-being too. The HBR study shows significant improvement in the performance of employees as also satisfaction levels of work and family when their personal well-being is improved.

Taking time for Self	Satisfaction level with personal well-being	Satisfaction level with work	Satisfaction level with family
Before taking time for self	4.3	7.4	6.5
After taking time for self	6.5	8.4	8.5

The changing role of fathers warrants certain privileges and support from companies to have great dads and great employees. Family-friendly workplaces can enhance productivity and morale of the employees.

The aim of **creating a family-friendly workplace** is to improve employee morale, enhance productivity and reduce absenteeism. By creating family-friendly workplaces, companies want to help employees in balancing their family life with careers. Programs like flexible work hours, paid holidays, care centers for the aged and children, relocation assistance have been taken up by organizations with the intention of enhancing employee morale and ensuring that they retain the talented employees working for the organization.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the aims of creating family-friendly work places?
(**Hints:** improve employee morale- enhance productivity-reduce absenteeism-work-life balancing)
2. Discuss the changing roles of fathers in the context of making our society egalitarian?
(**Hints:** need for fathers' contribution in child care-changing attitudes-desire to become great dads- paternal leave- neglect of self- stress-need for personal well-being-satisfaction in work)

Sources: (i) Scott Behson, *The Rise of the Hands-On Dad*, HBR Blog Network, June 13, 2014
(ii) Alyssa Westring and Stew Friedman, *Working Dads Need "Me Time" Too*, HBR Blog Network, June 13, 2014.