

Confronts Faced By Indian IT Professionals around the Globe

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Abstract

India becoming as global hub for IT and ITES companies because of its adaptation to the globalisation process and intellectual skill availability. For the continuous 20 years, the IT/ITES industry abundant growth contributing Indian economy in making revenue and huge employment. Even though the sector contributes heavily in employment generation over the period but people who are employed in this sectors faces so many hurdles due to the employment type, working hours, working environment, speaking languages, working style offered by these companies, and usage of global technologies the companies develop and creates, pushes the professional to work hard to satisfy the client's need. The knowledge industry offer better in terms of compensation and working environment ,still the existence of issues faced by employees in terms of turnover, stress level etc., are higher.

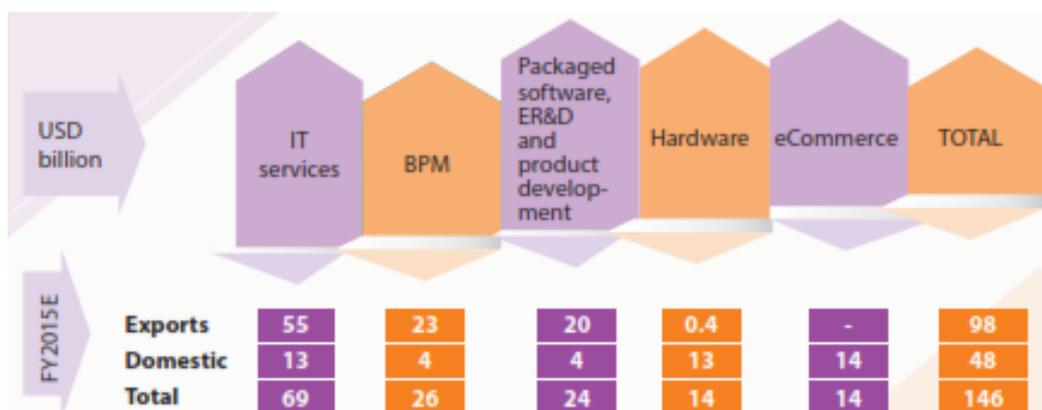
In this context of use, we as researchers, undergone an interview schedule with the professionals working in IT & ITES industry and able to gain cognition over the expectation of those employees against their challenges, facing as PCN, TCN, HCN, Expatriates & Repatriates.

Keywords: Challenges in work environment, issues of IT employees, HCN, PCN,SWOT of IT employees, TCN.

Introduction

Services sector, being the tertiary sector of an economy, contributes 52 percent of the India's total GDP in 2015 by employing more than 20 million people in it and shares US \$783 billion to the 2014-15 GDP. The sub sector of the Services sector, Information Technology turns India into a land of innovative entrepreneurs with aggregated revenue of ~US \$ 146 (Export \$98 and Domestic \$48) billion in 2015, an addition of US \$ 17 billion to the previous year, ~13 percent more than the last year. To the India's GDP the IT sector alone contributes 9.8 percent and shares >38 percent in the total services export.

FIG 1: INDIAN IT-BPM (DOMESTIC + EXPORT) REVENUES

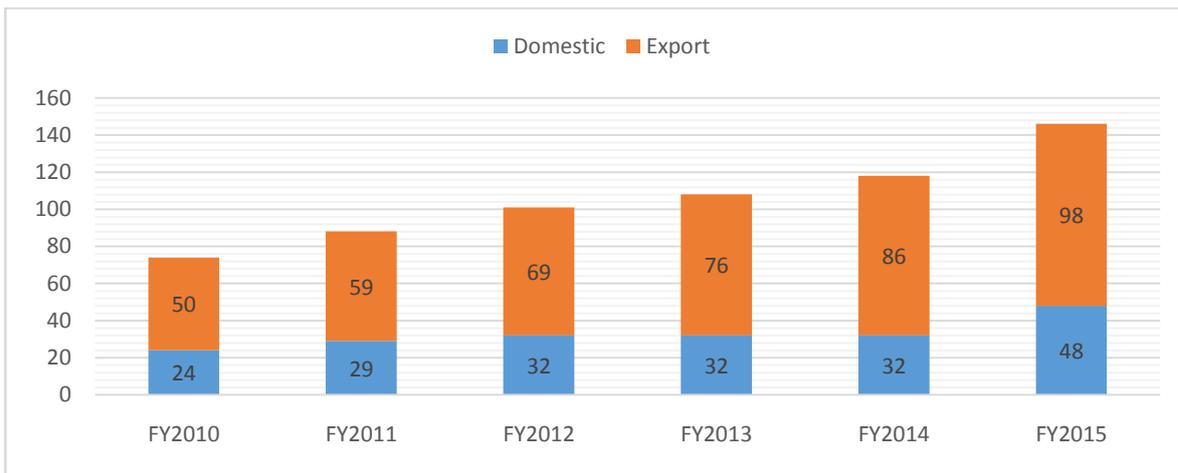


Source: The IT-BPM Sector in India: Strategic Review 2015, NASSCOM

IT Industry Present Development Scenario

Among the service sector, IT industry caters more both domestically and foreign, through the pathway of all services like financial, banking, medical, pharmaceutical, tourism, restaurant, etc. Indian IT industry playing a life-sustaining role, showing growth both in domestic and export of the software, hardware services. This successful development of the Indian IT industry is due to the contribution of the technologically skilled employees, whom available for cheap labour at any time zone. The industry attracts and employs directly and indirectly, a huge group of people by offering them a sophisticated life in terms of societal image, salary, life style, etc.

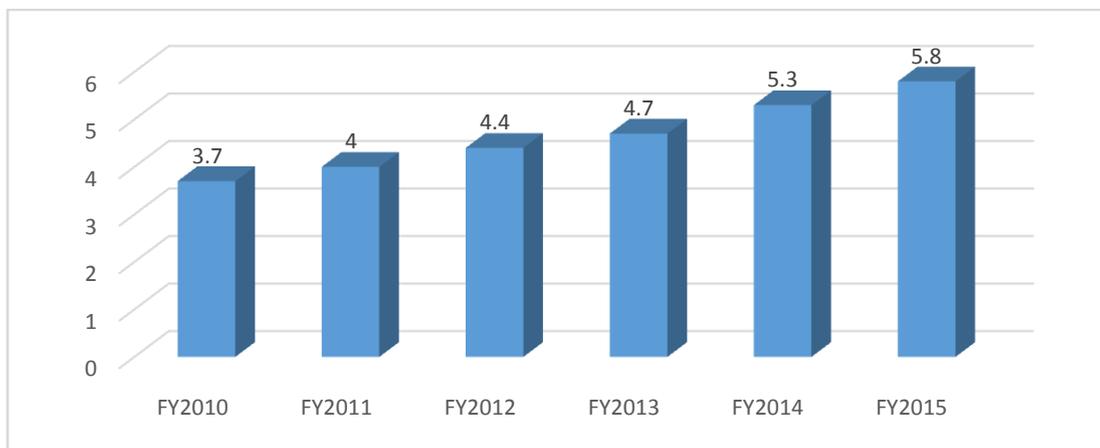
Fig 2: Growth of Market Size of IT Industry in India



Note: Values in US \$ billion

Source: NASSCOM, TechSci Research; and IBEF report

Fig 3: Growth of Employment in the IT Industry



Note 1: Values in million

Note 2: Graduates includes both graduates and post graduates

Source: NASSCOM, TechSci Research; and IBEF report

IT Industry – A Flip Side

The industrial development with respect to the globalisation attract and pull mankind towards this sector with few factors like High salary, Career advancement, New challenge and interesting work, Job security with targets, Good location of company, Better culture, Life work balance, More freedom/autonomy, Well reputation of organisation,

External Demand, Decent job stress, Vales, More benefits, Societal Image and Good boss(Ms. S. Janani, March 2014).As the company atmosphere continues to develop, they search more fresh & new ideas, generate and implement it and expect the employees to develop accordingly. Relatively the working conditions altered and pressurization to employees starts over.

Research Questions for the Study

The research has carried out to find the **“Challenges confronted by the employees and their outlooks against it”**. To address this subject, we framed two supportive questions.

1. What are the issues faced by IT & ITES employees?
2. What will be the possible remedies for the issues faced by them in their incumbency?

Research Methodology Adopted In This Study

PRIMARY DATA: The data was collected by conducting interviews with 25 Indian employees of IT & ITES companies who been to abroad and returned home country. The semi structured interview method is adopted with the executives to collect more data.

SECONDARY DATA: The other reports are collected from the websites and annual reports, television programs subjected to this area were taken for the study to show the reality and real picture of the industry. Some case studies are chosen in supportive to the research, which answers for the questions framed.

Reviews on Employee Issues and Challenges

Bangalore NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health And Neuro Science) survey results also highlighted the same issues and its impacts on employees as 36% with serious psychotic disorders, 27.6% are addicted to narcotic drugs, high divorce rate, marital discords, and neglected childhood among children. Most shocking is, 1 in every 20 IT professionals contemplates suicide. Suicides, health problems, discord in family due to work pressure and long and uneven work schedules has severely strained the delicate family and social fabric of the society (Dr.Veena & Chaturvedi, Oct 2013).

VV Giri National labour institute stated the working environment in the ITES (BPO) as comparable to 19th century Roman Slave ships. It is not magnified, merely the situation of the larger segment of IT & ITES employees are working longer hours without any compensation for their extra duties performed, unrest work with no proper leaves and holidays, completely under surveillance, totally a high pressurized environment whereby the young people with a little or no experience are not prepared or trained to endure. The graveyard shifts leaves employees with irregular sleep, unhealthy food habits, and other personal disorders (Pashankar, August 2012). Eventhough the earnings of these employees were high which results a socio-economic image with new lifestyle, there is no security for their job except few firms (Rajan, 2006).

42.5 percent Indian corporate employees shared in a survey (released on eve of World Health Day) about the depression & disorders faced. Delhi ranks first in the survey and followed by Bangalore, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, and Pune are in the list. Among the taken 17 broad sectors for the survey, IT/ITES sector (including BPO) shares 17 percent, the high responses suffering from depression & anxiety disorders.

Assocham, an industry body in India, surveilled about the emotional problems and found the rate of emotional problems in the last eight years has been increased by 45-50 percent. The views of the 1250 corporate employees in 150 companies throughout 18 broad sectors, in the major cities such as Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Pune, Chandigarh and Dehradunfeed this study(42% Indian private sector employees face depression: Assocham, 2015).

Obesity, wrist problems, eye fatigue, High blood pressure, Diabetes, Spondylosis, Heart disease, Cervical, Asthma, Slipped disc, Arthritis, Repetitive strain injury, Headache, Voice loss, hearing problem, Digestive problems are the most common illness found among the corporate employees and the reason causing those are sleepless nights or sleep less than 6 hours a day due to stress. This leads changes in Personal habits (addict to alcohol, smoke, drug), discipline & behavioural changes, detachment from the family etc (Saran, 2015).

IT companies admit the prevalence of stress in their campus by providing “Stress Breaks” to employees for balancing work and fun. Major IT players take part in such phenomena in different manners. Infosys with “Green food stalls” in its food courts to promote the healthy eating habits, Cognizant arranges adventurous trip in the name of “The Everest” and Tata Consultancy Services & Wipro do ‘family day functions’ and ‘workout programmes’ for their employees (Venugopal, 2013).

(Porter, 1986) Says the industry in which the multinational firm is involved is of considerable importance because patterns of international competition vary widely from one industry to another. Multi-domestic industry, one in which competition in each country is essentially independent of competition in other countries. Global industry, one in which a firm’s competitive position in one country is significantly influenced by its position in other countries

Whatever maybe the company, either MNC/MNE or TNC and wherever its location be, the employer expects few qualities or characters with its employees are

- i) He/she should satisfy the MNE requirements
- ii) Language Proficiency
- iii) Technical ability
- iv) Cross cultural suitability

Which becomes the vault for employees later based on their status

Host Country Nation Perspective

- Employee belongs to the same nation where the local subsidiary locates

Normally employees must satisfy the clients for whom they work since they were provided with multi technologized environment. For the same, employees are sacrificing their freedom in name of time, they work for longer hours unknowingly to achieve the targets pushed over them gently. Though they are provided with good environment to work, cafeteria etc, deliberately they were monitored and taped continuously, for how they work, what they do, etc in the IT & ITES companies which disturb their mentality and affect personally and mentally.

Working Hours: The change in technological environment absorbs the times of employees, they work for 12 to 14 hours a day, do multi tasking, continuous shifts, etc. Proper transportation is also not with few companies for the night shift employees. The women employees are made to work in night shifts and other shifts start by 4 am which is termed as graveyard shift, leaves few threats happening today like rape, night accidents with them. Such a change in working hours affects the metabolism in mankind eventually.

Personal & Health Problems: The night shifts employees provided with many facilities to refresh, eventhough the metabolic changes occur in the organ leads tremor health disorders. Irregular sleeps, night snacks, unhealthy food habits results with chronic fatigue, body ache, headache, nausea etc. when these coupled with stress, nervousness, insomnia, anxiety, hypertension, restlessness, even depression can left within us. Continuous work before the light devices may give irritation to eyes, back pains and mental disturbances leads to violence. Most shocking outcome of working in such a high pressured environment is, chances of infertility.

The extensive working hours disturbs the personal life by endowing perturbations mentally which extends to work and life balancing inability. Divorces, marital disorders are increasing and by other side where both father and mother working are unable to spend ample time and attention towards child care and leads to neglected childhood.

Among the above some issues are seen very common with all types of employees irrespective to their location and their company.

Repatriates

Professional those been in the foreign countries for many years, even got citizenship, happened to return to their home country under organization pressure, they have to face many challenges in their life starting from basic needs. Nikolaeva(2010) discussed many challenges faced by those people, which adds more with the research. Below are the few challenges faced by the repatriates in their return to home country.

Reverse Cultural Shock: Feeling like foreigners in their physical, psychological, activities and emotionally acting like the citizen of other country in their home country itself are struggling in coping and adjusting with the cultural aspects.

Societal Changes: Cost of living, financial changes, Political, economic and social changes, weather and climatic changes, law and order adoption, public utilities.

Household Adoption: Housing, change in time zones, Spouse job, children schooling and admission, examination patterns, curriculum activities, family security and settlement, friends' touch, health issues.

Job Environment: Policies and procedures of new company, infra structure and environment of the company, job nature and working hours, trends and development, support of subordinates, colleagues and other staffs, employee welfare and benefits plans, career success.

Expatriates

Dowling, Festing, & Engle Sr (2012) adds many challenges that are faced by the expatriates, which been made as questions to the professionals outside the country and found to be matched. Starting from the immigration, upto the accomodation and cultural adoption, the employees without foreign experience are struggling, even the continous traveller also.

International Relocation & Orientation involves arranging for pre-departure training, providing immigration & travel details, providing housing, shopping, medical care, recreation & schooling information and finalising compensation details such as delivery of salary overseas, determination of various overseas allowances & taxation treatment.

Cultural Environment: Language, food, dress, hygiene & attitude to time. People experience a shock reaction to new cultural experiences that cause psychological disorientation because they misunderstand or do not recognize important cues. Cultural shock can lead to negative feelings about the host country and its people and a longing to return home.

International Taxation, including both home & host country tax liabilities they have to pay and the Political climate, which relates with the cultural environment plays major role.

Attitudes of Senior Management: Knowledge transfer is the key point in any job, done by manager to his subordinate or employee to employee. Managers with less international experience but successful career built on domestic experience happened to transfer the knowledge in an International assignment, there the conflicts starts.

Terrorism is another major component, which made the employees life, threatens to stay in other countries they move.

Parent Country Nation and Third Country Nation Perspective

- **Employee belongs to the same nation where the headquarters of the firm locates**
- **Employee belongs to the other nation where the local subsidiary or the headquarters of the firm locates**

PCN and TCN both nationalities face the similar challenges mostly since the employees are away from their home country, but few differences based on the organization they employed and placed are present as below.

Job Expectation Mismatch & Unfair Pay: Employees may get transferred to the other countries where their subsidiaries located in need of abroad experience, helps in promotion, increments etc. If the mismatch with the expected job and salary, the challenges started for them to work in the country they employed at present

Choosing Right Career: Following the expectation mismatch, the plan of career success goes in failure and again they started choosing the new or correct career path which results in greater disappointment. Choosing a new career path after a period slow down them in their plan.

Lack of Communication: The communication break down or gap between employees and employers creates problems & rumours which decreases the focus on work life and ultimately affects the productivity. Tonya Slawinski, president of Supportive Solutions, Inc., quotes “the problem of work place is poor or lack of communication”. This happens due to the language, neither misunderstanding nor not understanding.

In addition, other few are

- No job security
- No opportunity for advancement
- Incompetent manager
- Under appreciation
- Favouritism
- Overworked
- Hostile work environment
- Discrimination

Swot Analysis of IT Employees

To overcome the challenges as an employee of IT & ITES companies, each individual must know about their Strength and weakness, threats and opportunities to sustain as inpatriates, expatriates and repatriates. This SWOT analysis of individual helps them lot to find out better profile under any situation and helps in maintaining relationship with their senior management.

Suggestions

Beyond the SWOT analysis, there are other few suggestions, from the expectations of the employees' results from the research.

- Enforcement of Law, which are applicable to the employees' welfare, especially job security, wages to break the income barriers.
- Organization must provide Pre departure Training which includes cultural awareness programme, language training etc., in order to make convenience to the employees
- International Taxation: tax equalization policies must be designed to ensure that there is no tax incentive or disincentive associated with particular international assignment.

- Global standardization of HRM practices is to reach the consistency, transparency and an alignment of a geographically fragmented workforce around common principles and objectives.
- Physical exercise for stress relief because 57% of private company employees are not at all exercising
- “Hot Help lines” present in the IT companies provides counselling to the employees facing depression, stress or any psychological fatigues.

Conclusion

There are many evidences and cases about the grieves and concerns of the employees of IT &ITES companies, to overcome this no proper support from the employer and the government. However, both of them are moving towards profit making as their priority instead of redressing employees issues. This paper throws more light on the existing reviews about the challenges faced by the employees from all sides and how the employees feel as PCN, TCN and HCN. The above said suggestion should be considered for the welfare of the employees and to encourage them to work well with satisfactory.

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