
**LATEST EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES:
EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS**

Dr. Rajasshrie Pillai

Asst. Professor, Human Resource Mgmt.,
Indira Global Business School, Parandwadi, Pune MS, India, Pin- 411 033.

Dr. Brijesh Sivathanu

Asst. Professor, Mktg. Management,
Indira Institute of Management, Wakad, Pune, MS, India, Pin- 411 033.

ABSTRACT

The concept Employee Wellness (EW) is the broader concept of Employee Welfare and most of the contemporary organizations have started providing Employee Wellness programs (EWPs). The term Employee Wellness is mostly popular in MNCs in India, and this concept has a great potential towards the organization's growth.

The face of the workplace has drastically changed over the past decade. An increasingly empowered and diverse workforce, technological advancements, increased competition and globalization have created a new workplace reality that is totally different from the past workplace. Helping employees to take care of their health has become the moral and business need for the organization.

Employee health and wellness programs attempt to improve the overall health status of employees and sometimes even employees' family members through prevention, education, and health interventions. "Employee First Customer Second" the book by Mr. Vineet Nayar conveys the need and importance of employee care. Taking care of employees is the utmost important issue in front of companies.

This paper focuses primarily on the meaning and concept of employee wellness program. This paper explains the dimensions of wellness. The author explains the difference between employee wellness and labour welfare. This paper highlights current practices of employee wellness programs in organizations. The author surveys the HR managers to understand the implementation of employee wellness programs at the workplace and its contribution towards employee retention.

Keywords: Employee Wellness Programs, Employee Retention, Current Practices, Wellness Dimensions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, employee health has fallen under the health and safety banner and has been restricted to occupational health related interventions for injuries or illnesses acquired at work.

Employee Wellness (EW) is a boon in disguise for employee illness. Wellness programs are defined as the programs designed to maintain or improve employee health before health problem arises. EWP is a simple and effective way for most of the companies to increase fitness of their workforce and reduce cost, helping to reduce stress and increase the quality of life for valued employees along with being a recruiting and retention tool. Employee wellness helps employees to manage and maintain good health. Mental and physical health problems create an impact on the productivity and work-life balance.

“Wellness is a lifelong, interactive process of becoming aware of choices and making decisions, creating balanced fulfilling and successful life.” Brahma Kumaris, Raj yoga Centre

Contemporary organizations are taking care of employees not just because of legal implications but also to make their employees loyal towards the organization. Taking care of the employee’s health has now become the HR manager’s responsibility.

2. OBJECTIVE

This research attempts:

1. To study the concept and meaning of Employee Wellness Program.
2. To study the dimensions of Employee Wellness.
3. To study difference between employee Wellness and Employee Welfare.
4. To study the current employee wellness practices.
5. To survey the HR Managers to benefit of employee wellness programs and employee retention at workplace.

3. MEANING AND CONCEPT OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Employee Wellness Programs have been defined as below:

“A wellness program can include wellness benefits such as fitness training, company sponsored athletics and sports teams, health education, and life improvement classes. It also includes prevention of mental health problems by stress management”^[2]

“Employee Wellness Programs are essential to the long-term viability of all businesses. Employee Wellness Programs have been proven to reduce health care costs, absenteeism and presenteeism thus resulting in improved productivity. Research has also shown that Employee Wellness Programs offer a positive Return-on-Investment making them a benefit that costs more to avoid than to provide.”

4. DIMENSION OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

The below Figure 1 shows 6 Dimensions of Wellness - developed by Dr. Bill Hettler, Cofounder and President of the Board of Directors of the National Wellness Institute, this interdependent model, commonly referred to as the 6 Dimensions of Wellness.

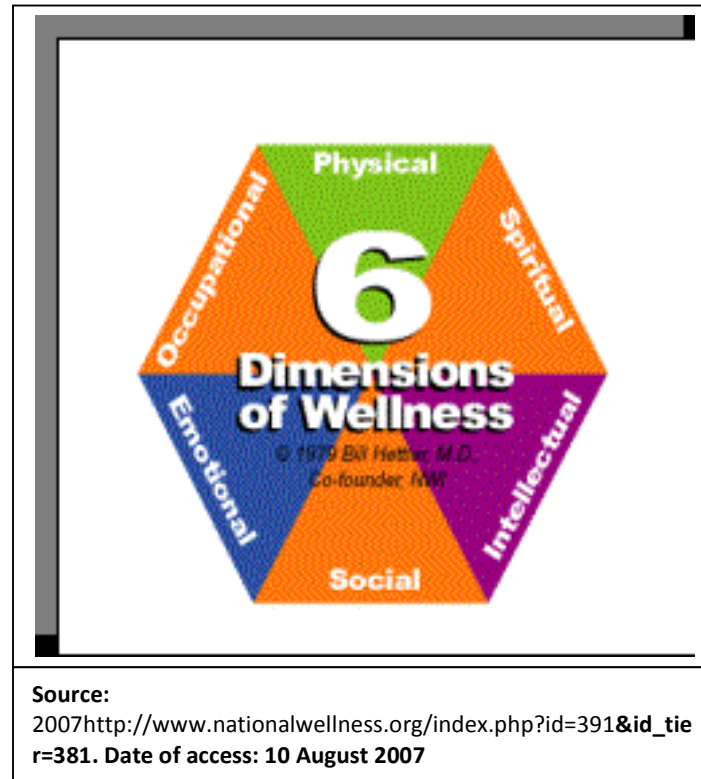


Fig 1: Dimensions of Wellness

4.1 PHYSICAL WELLNESS

Wellness is a wellness of body of the human being with no disease. The body of a person is mostly the outcome of the hereditary characteristics. The healthy body without disease provides positive energy to mind and which also helps for psychological wellness. Physical Wellness is characterized by the fact -Good physical health – free from disease and energetic and dynamic.

Physical Wellness can be achieved by following measures

- Physical exercise.
- Yoga.
- Walking / hiking.
- Aerobics.
- Dance.
- Eating nutritious food.

4.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Individual's status of mind is an important aspect of this wellness process. This wellness is also called as "**Emotional Wellness**". Following aspects are involved:

- Expression of Emotions.
- Coping up with stress, failures and success.
- Adapting to a new environment, culture and people.

Psychological Wellness Measures

It can be achieved by following measures

- Yoga.
- Meditation.
- Mentoring.
- Counseling.
- Advice from parents and Gurus.

4.3 SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Spiritual wellness is understanding the real "self" and meaning of life. Spirituality is to find out the meaning of following questions like.

- Who I am?
- What is the purpose of life?
- How I can be in shape with the world?

It is also linked with the having understanding about others and also appreciating beauty outside own self. Spirituality is result of ethics, values, culture, relation and beliefs etc.

Spiritual Wellness Measures

Following measures can help spiritual wellness:

- Meditation.
- Self – talk.
- Reading religious / self-help books.
- Advice from Gurus / Saints.

4.4 SOCIAL WELLNESS

Relationship personal or social matters a lot. Social health is very crucial part of life of human being. Human being is a Social Animal. Social wellness means enriching life through education and work for the benefit and satisfaction of self and others in your community. Social wellness creates a positive impact on others and relationships with others around you are healthy.

Measures for Social Wellness

- Communication skills Training.
- Networking skills.
- Understanding others.
- Reading Books.
- Fun at work activities
- Interacting with people

4.5 INTELLECTUAL WELLNESS

Intellectual wellness is learning new things and thinking in a different perspective. It is being active with maximum intellectual activities in life. Understanding importance of different things in life and giving priorities intellectually.

Measures for Intellectual

- Reading: Pick up a newspaper or educational pamphlet. By choosing to read, you not only increase your intellect, you remain knowledgeable about current issues and past events.
- Try to learn something new every day: Keep your eyes and mind open to new ideas and focus on learning something new each day.
- Attend an educational workshop or seminar, not because you are earning credit, but because you want to increase your knowledge.

4.6 OCCUPATIONAL WELLNESS

- This wellness is job-related or work-related. It depends on the satisfaction of the individual person on the job in relation with the work, pay, and other factors related to work.

Occupational Wellness can be achieved by

- Choosing correct career which is liked by the individual or may be the individual is passionate about the same.
- Continuous improvement and value addition in the job related competencies which are helpful to the organization and individual both.

5. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LABOUR WELFARE AND EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

After thorough literature survey on employee wellness and labour welfare this paper explains the below conveys the difference between Labour Welfare to Employee Wellness Program:

Table 1: Difference Between Labour Welfare and Employee Wellness Program

	Labour Welfare	Employee Wellness Programs
Definition	Labor Welfare - ILO Asian Regional conference - "such services, facilities and amenities, which may be established outside or in the vicinity of undertakings, to enable the persons employed therein to perform their work in healthy and congenial surroundings and to provide them with the amenities conducive to good health and high morale."	Employee Wellness Program is a program offered by some employers as a combination of educational, organizational, and environmental activities designed to support behavior conducive to the health of employees in a business and their families.
It Includes	Welfare includes anything that is done for the comfort and improvement of employees and is provided over and above the wages. Social and Charitable Agencies are also involved.	It consists of health fairs, health education, medical screenings, health coaching, weight management programs, staff member wellness newsletters, on-site fitness programs and/or facilities and educational programs designed to change employees' behavior in order to achieve better health and reduce the associated health risks
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide good environment • To avoid industrial unrest • To improve worker health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce health care cost • Reduce absenteeism • Employee Motivation • Employee Work-life balance • Employee Satisfaction • Better employer brand • Good organization work-culture • Less turnover
For whom	for Blue Collar workforce	For White Collar workforce
Reasons to start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly Legal implication • Industrial Unrest • Pressure from Trade Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its Business Need Implication • Higher level of stress • Less physical Activity more stress on mental work • Increasing Health Care cost • Employee Demands • Generation X & Y Lifestyle • 24/7 work culture • Work-life balance • For employee engagement • For employee Satisfaction
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provide better physical and mental health to workers and thus promote a healthy work environment • Help workers in raising their standards of living. This makes workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increases their productivity. • Employers get stable labor force by providing welfare facilities. • Workers work with a feeling of involvement and participation. • Healthy industrial relations thereby maintaining industrial peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased health care & insurance cost • Reduced Absenteeism • Increase in employee loyalty • Employee Engagement • Good Employer brand • Better employee work-life balance • Employee Job Satisfaction • Better Quality of Work-life • Employee Retention • Employee Involvement

	Labour Welfare	Employee Wellness Programs
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Health • Mental Health • Social Health • Occupational Hygiene and Health • Workers Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Wellness • Psychological Wellness • Environmental Wellness • Occupational Wellness • Intellectual Wellness • Social Wellness • Spiritual Wellness • Financial Wellness
Facilities provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Water • Toilets • Crèche • Washing Facilities • Occupational safety • Uniforms and protective clothing • Canteen • Shifts allowance • Social Insurance (Gratuity, pension, PF etc.) • Benevolent fund • Maternity benefits • Health and Medical Facilities • Education Facilities • Housing Facilities • Recreational Facilities • Leave travel facilities • Worker's cooperatives • Vocational training • Transport to and from place of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It includes basic welfare facilities along with the following facilities as per recent need of the industry • Health clubs / health weeks / medical insurance / health education at work / on-site doctor etc. • Stress Management Training / behavioral training / conflict resolution / flexi work time /Counseling etc • Art of Living sessions / Tie up with organization like Oneness University etc • Higher Education Assistance / seminar n workshop / training programs • Ergonomics, Walking tracks, cycling tracks etc. • Safety at work / Employee Feedback • ESOP / Financial Advisory help Desk • Family get together / sports league / fun at work Events/ Employee bands/ employee league • For Women Employees – Crèche at workplace, Women Counseling cell, Flexi-time, Work From home, Sexual Harassment Policy, safe transport facility
Who looks after	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welfare Officer / Personnel Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Manger & Wellness Managers
Frequency to provide facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes and slow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost always and fast (Every Friday IT companies have different fun at work programs)

6. CURRENT PRACTICES OF EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

A. ZENSAR TECHNOLOGIES

- **The Excellence Awards:** Excellence Awards are held to honour the year's winners and acknowledge the accomplishments that have taken place in the organization due to the passion, dedication and leadership of the associate.
- **Women for Excellence (WE)** is an interactive forum that facilitates discussion, dialogue and encourages women to discover their inherent potential and helps fuel their desire for excellence.

- **Daycare Centre:** This Center has not only been designed in-keeping with children's requirements but also meets with the necessary health, security and safety standards obligatory to such ventures.
- **ZenShare:** Is an initiative to drive fun @ Zensar. ZenShare several interest groups which are completely managed by the employees to encourage and facilitate employee participation in activities beyond work. These include:
 - ZenVentures - adventure club.
 - Dramatics club.
 - Music and Dance club.
 - Literary club.
 - ZenSports - Sports team.
- **Madat-Online:** One of the most unique and popular practices with associates, is the Madat Online service. It is a dedicated service to take care of all sundry chores of the associates; like bill payments, bank transactions and submission of applications/forms.
- **On the Campus Medical Center:** Medical center staffed by visiting qualified doctors to attend to the medical needs and exigencies of the associates, the center is functional 24 * 7 for associates working in shifts. Medical Center also has a visiting corporate counselor to counsel the associates on issues related to work-life balance.
- **Round-the-Year Inclusive Events:** Zensarians and their families a forum to meet, interact, collaborate and participate through various cultural events. Also have competitions like indoor games, cricket, Quizzes, Antakshari, and Rangoli. Zensar extends the participation for these competitions to the families of the associates as well. At Zensar celebrate all major festivals like Diwali, Dussera and Christmas are celebrated.
- ZenShare is a way of life, the underlying principal being to create a sharing synergy and mature relationships between each ZenSarian and within the company at large.
- **ZenSports:** Again, as a part of team integration and fostering bonding with the organization, Zensar provides facilities for sports in the campus. Indoor games include: Chess, Table Tennis, Carrom, etc. Outdoor sports include: Cricket, Volleyball, Basketball.
- **Zenventure:** The Adventure Club takes one to the world of Trekking, Rappelling, Paragliding and other adventure sports.

B. HCL TECHNOLOGIES

HCL provides the following:

- **Smart Service Desk:** An automated query resolution mechanism for employees, SSD enables employees raise their concerns for adequate redressal in just three clicks. On an average 31,000 tickets are raised every month.
- **EFC:** Employee First councils work on goals that are of common interest to all employees and also help to maintain a balance between work and life. The councils allow employees to unleash their creative talent. Last year over 1,500 events were conducted by EFC councils.
- **Women First Council:** The purpose of this council is to focus on women development and to create an inclusive, supporting and caring environment. A woman exclusive website

was launched which information of all women has related policies, safety and security measures, work-life balance techniques.

- O2 league of Extraordinary: O2 is a system created in HCL to recognize high performers. The league constituted those employees who have been outstanding performers since last 2 years.
- Xtramiles: HCL’s created a unique reward and recognition portal where all employees can see extraordinary efforts & performances and appreciate them at a click of a button. The purpose of Xtramiles is to ensure timely and public instantaneous recognition of employees who have displayed exemplary performance.
- MITR: MITR lends helping hands to all HCLites and their family members by providing them expert counseling 24X7 on any issue concerning them.
- Genie: The personal assistant, the all purpose coordinator, the private shopper, the entertainment guide, the travel planner, located within the office premises & programmed to take any request. Genie can manage all trivial and not so trivial chores.
- F.U.N.D.O.O. F.R.I.D.A.Y: Is synonymous with fun @ work at HCL Technologies.
- Catalyst : A employee driven team building program, catalyst enables much of the desired work-life balance for his/her team by rolling out various activities in a year.
- Training: HCL has adopted a number of innovative methods of training and developing talent within the organization

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology

1. The research was conducted in Pune city.
2. 30 HR managers have been surveyed using simple random sampling technique.

Data Collection

Besides secondary data, the primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and the questions were close ended which were coded and cross-tabulated, keeping in view the context and objectives of the study.

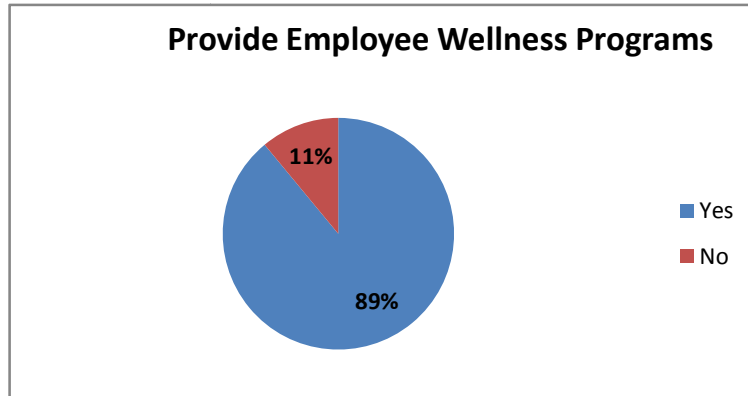
Contribution

It will add value to the Employee Wellness practices at workplace.

Data Analysis and Findings

Table 2: Wellness Program

	Yes	No.
Does Your organization Provide Employee Wellness Programs	89	11

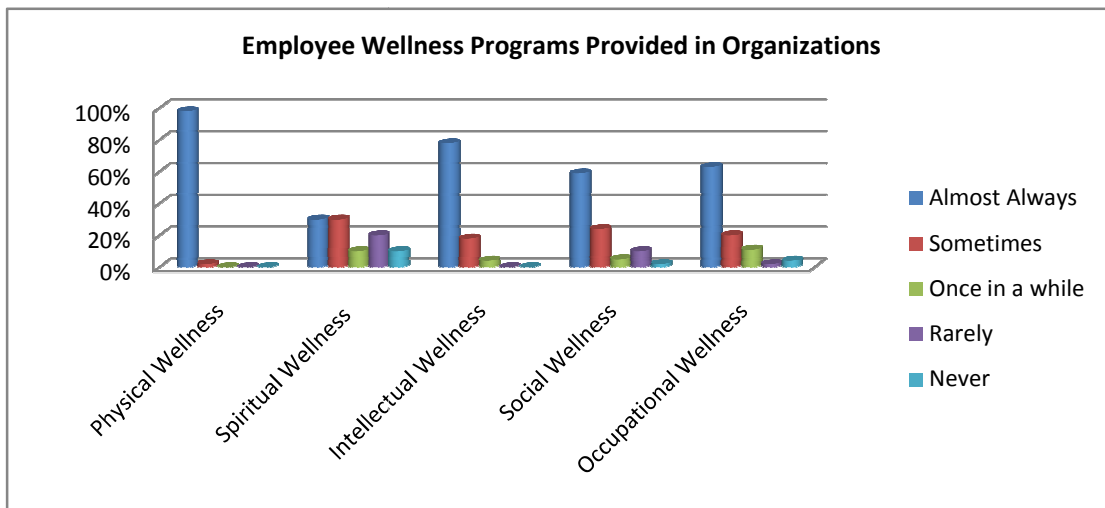


Graph 1: Provide Employee Wellness Program

As per above table and graph, most of the organizations provide employee wellness programs.

Table 4: Employee Wellness Programs Provided

Sl. No.	Employee Wellness Programs Provided	Almost Always	Sometimes	Once in a while	Rarely	Never
1	Physical Wellness	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%
2	Spiritual Wellness	30%	30%	10%	20%	10%
3	Intellectual Wellness	78%	18%	4%	0%	0%
4	Social Wellness	59%	24%	5%	10%	2%
5	Occupational Wellness	63%	20%	11%	2%	4%

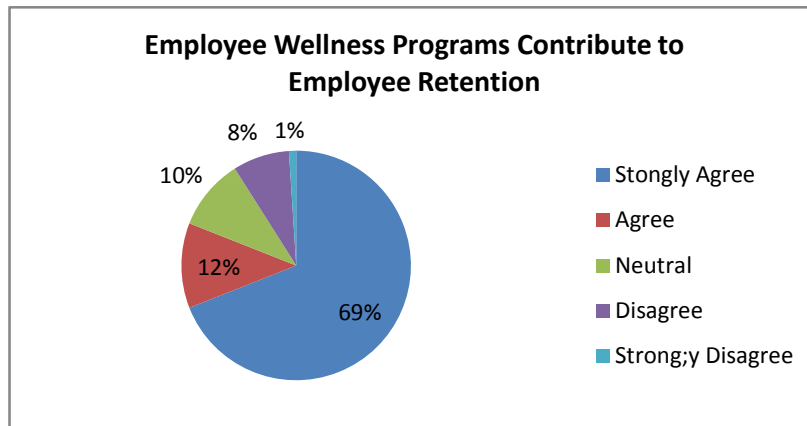


Graph 2: Employee Wellness Provided in Organizations

The above graph conveys that most of the organizations provide physical wellness, intellectual wellness, social wellness, and occupational wellness programs. Frequency of spiritual wellness programs is quiet less in organizations.

Table 5: Contribution of Employee Wellness Program

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Employee Wellness Programs Contribute to Employee Retention	69	12	10	8	1



Graph 3: Contribution of Employee Wellness Program

As per the above graphs the HR managers mentions that employee wellness programs do contribute to employee retention and 69% of them are strongly agree with the fact.

8. CONCLUSION

The globalization, competition and 24 X7 work culture has lead to emergence of employee wellness programs. There is drastic shift from statutory labour welfare practices in to employee wellness programs. Organizations are providing wellness programs for the various wellness dimensions like physical wellness, psychological wellness, intellectual wellness and occupational wellness. There is less emphasis on spiritual wellness. Employee wellness programs benefitted organizations in various ways and it helps in employee retention and employee satisfaction.

REFERENCES

- 1) <http://dictionary.bnet.com/definition/Wellness+Program.html>.
- 2) <http://www.infinetwellnessolutions.com/>.
- 3) Wayne F. Cascio (2008), Managing Human Resources Safety, Health and Employee Assistance Program,Pg. No. 610.
- 4) 21st Century Management – A reference Handbook – Employee Wellness programs, sage E- Reference pg. No. 1.

- 5) <http://www.zensar.com/careers>.
- 6) <http://www.hcltech.com/EmployeesFirst>.
- 7) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Workplace_wellness<http://www.employee-wellness-programs.com/employee-wellness-programs.html>.
- 8) <http://www.infinitehealthcoach.com/advantages-of-corporate-wellness-programs.html>
- 9) www.nationalwellness.org.
- 10) <http://www.infinitewellnesssolutions.com/wellness-program.html>.
- 11) <http://workplacewellnessprograms.net/workplace-wellness-programs-employee-engagement/>.
- 12) <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/index.htm>.
- 13) <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/>.
- 14) <http://www.wellnessproposals.com/>.
- 15) K. Aswathappa (2008) Nature and Scope of Human Resource Management, Human Resource and Personnel Management, Pg. 6.
- 16) Sumati Reddy (2008), Employee Health and Wellness Programs – Perspectives and Cases – Pg. no. 106.