



## **AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF CHANGES IN INDIAN FAMILY STRUCTURES ON BPO EMPLOYEES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*India is a land of glorified history of traditional and cultural background. The traditional family system in India is a joint family structure where at least people of three or four generations connected through relationships of blood and marriage cohabit. Due to this, the family responsibilities were shared among all the members, which led to due focus on the careers for the earning members of the family. But, in the past two decades and more, the family structures have drastically changed due to various causes. Due to these changes the lifestyles and work behaviours of people is also changing. The current study tries to identify the changes in the family structures in India. The study investigates the impact of these changes on the BPO employees. It also tries to suggest few remedies through which the employees, especially BPO employees, who have to work at odd hours, can cope with the effects of these family changes and still maintain productivity.*

*Keywords: Traditional, joint family, lifestyle, BPO employees, changing family structures.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Britannica defines FAMILY as 'a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children, and siblings.'

India is a land of traditions and culture. The importance of family structures in India has been highlighted since the Vedic age. Following the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The earth is one family), Indian Family Structure is believed to be the unit that teaches the values and worth of an honest living that have been carried down across generations.

The traditional Indian family structure is more dominated by the patrilineal background, usually consisting of three or four generations. Ideally Indian history also revolves around joint families and their interactions.

However, the scenario in India has changed drastically in the past quarter century. Urbanization and Westernization had its influence on the basic structure of the Indian family structure. Reduction in the number of joint families and increase in the nuclear and single parent family is a common scene these days.

The different types of family structures visible in the present era in India are:

- Nuclear Families
- Single-Parent Families
- Blended Families (Step- families)
- Grand Parent Families
- Childless Families
- Extended Families (Joint Families)

An article published in Times of India ascertains that there can be multiple causes the transitions in the structures of families in India. Few of them are:

- Changes in the Fertility rates of both men and women
- Changes in the age of marriage
- Change in Mortality Rate and Age
- More marriage Dissolutions
- Participation of women in economic development
- Reconstitution of family (Remarriage and Recoupling)
- Lone-Parenthood
- Moral Decline
- Freedom of choice in family formation

These changes have definitely impacted India and people at large, and, companies and employees cannot escape from this.

BPO- Business Process Outsourcing:

Gartner group defines **Business process outsourcing (BPO)** is the delegation of one or more IT-intensive business processes to an external provider that, in turn, owns,



administrates, and manages the selected processes based on defined and measurable performance metrics.

BPO jobs are a great relief for average youth in India as an attractive industry, because it provides a variety of jobs even at entry level for basic educational qualifications. BPO job can be a stepping stone in the career ladder of the freshers as they can gain company exposure and can harness their skills

People work in BPOs for several reasons. Some of them being:

- Competitive salaries
- Better benefits
- Career Advancement
- Great Amenities

Though BPO jobs come with several advantages, there are also several challenges associated with this industry.

Some of the challenges faced by BPO industry are:

- Meeting Customer Expectations
- Challenging Working Hours
- Management of Large volumes of data
- High Rates of Attrition
- Working on a Limited Budget
- Lack of Quality Talent Pool

In order to successfully overcome these challenges, the companies pressurize the employees to work under certain conditions which may impact the personal lives of the employees. Moreover, the changing family structures play havoc the employees creating disturbances and chaos which may further affect the productivity of the employees.

This in turn may result several other issues like:

- Lack of growth opportunities,



- Work-life balance issues,
- Decreased patience levels of the employees,
- High aspirations to reach bigger salary brackets or managerial levels,
- Dampening stagnancy in the vertical growth.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Menaria, S. (2016)** mentions the problems faced by BPO employees in this article. They are:

- Health problems
- Depression
- Sleeping disorders
- Digestive system related problems
- Eyesight problems
- Discipline and behavioural issues
- Hearing ailments
- Detachment from family
- Monotonous work
- Rest days
- Stress
- Personal habits(Alcohol, drugs. Etc)

The paper also mentions the Initiatives taken by the companies for BPO Employees:

- Flexitime
- Employee referral scheme
- Company leased accommodation
- Personal health care
- Employee loans
- Educational benefits
- Performance based interviews
- Stress management programs

**Kotteeswari, M., & Sharief, S. T. (2014)** The paper tries to suggest The BPOs and the Employees working in BPOs to follow some Strategies to overcome Stress for better Performance.

Organizational Coping Strategies:

- Supportive organizational climate
- Job Enrichment
- Organizational Role clarity
- Career planning and counselling
- Stress control workshops and employee assistant programmes

- **Flexi time**
- Job sharing

#### Individual Coping Strategies:

- Physical Exercise
- Relaxation
- Work – Home Transition
- Cognitive Therapy
- Networking

**Pasumarti, S. S. (2019).** The researcher suggested that IT & ITES organizations should introduce interventions to help employees manage the competing demands of work and family life, while being dynamic at the work place.

The IT & ITES companies should plan facilities such as providing day care centers, crèches and arranging family get-togethers for sensitizing the spouses' attitude towards recognizing the importance of work being performed by their counterpart at the workplace. They should also be given flexible leave, flexi work timings / shifts, allowing compassionate and urgency leave in order to meet the diverse requirements of employees associated with ITES sector. Providing healthcare for self/family and sufficient rest required to maintain mental balance are the key elements essential for an employee to fulfill his/her duties diligently. Employers should think of offering better working hours, performance-based incentives, tuition fee reimbursement for pursuing higher studies, service recognition incentives and awards to their employees. They should also do horizontal job rotation among the employees across processes in order to reduce job boredom. The ITES companies should view the concept of work life balance as a business proposition as it would carry the business forward with employees and families.

**Kutty, S. R. S. (2018)** This paper examined the impact of working hours on family well-being and health of women employees working in IT/BPO sector.

ANOVA results of this study shows that there is a significant impact of working hour on Women employees are getting tired and exhausted, physical health, can't relax after coming home from work, mental stress level of women employees' and behavioural changes in women employees.

**James, F. A., Manimalar, R., & Sudha, S. (2016)** suggest that the effect of non-standard schedules on demographic variables differed with age, gender, years married, years in non-standard schedule and hierarchy. The article focused on the family life of the married employees and arrived at a conclusion that there is an effect of non-standard schedule on the life of married employees. The organizations from this study can emphasize on time management skills to motivate and encourage the employees to be able to balance their work and life as well as perform well in their job.

**Daipuria, P., & Kakar, D. (2013).** The author through this study explains that Working parents seek more time for their personal life for which they expect organization's help in the form of flexible work schedules and work from home options.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To explore the changes that took place in the Indian Family Structures in the past quarter century
2. To identify the challenges faced by BPO employees in general
3. To find the link between the changing family structures in India and the problems of BPO employees.
4. To suggest few remedies to BPO employees to cope up with the effects of the changing family structures

### **Scope of the Study:**

BPO industry is in boom in many parts of the world, especially, India and Philippines. Though it is a lucrative and an attractive industry, BPO employees have to face various challenges due to several factors. This study tries to highlight one of such factors - the changing patterns of the family structures in India. It investigates the situations faced by the BPO employees due to these changes.

### **Limitations of the Study:**

1. The study views the challenges faced by BPO employees in India only.
2. Only few changes in the family structures are considered in the study
3. Some of such changes can be rather beneficial to the employees

## **METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH**

A sample of 50 employees was considered in this study from various organizations and a survey was conducted using a well-structured questionnaire.

Both primary and secondary data has been used to find the results and conclusions.

The collected data has been analysed, interpretations and conclusion is provided.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Based on the data collected, analysis and interpretations were made to find out the results for the research.

Table 1.1 Frequency of types of Family Structures in the society

S. No.	Characteristics	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
1	Nuclear Family	16	19	10	3	2	50
2	Joint Family	3	9	24	12	2	50
3	Single-Parent Family	4	10	14	18	4	50
4	Blended Family( Step child Family)	2	3	7	22	16	50
5	Grand Parent Family	9	15	15	6	5	50
6	Child-less Family	3	7	11	23	6	50

Source: Primary Data

It has been inferred that Nuclear families are seen often in the societies these days. 24 respondents out of 50, say that joint families are seen sometimes and 12 say that they are rare.

Contrary to the expectations, single parent family and blended family is sometimes or rarely visible whereas grand-parent family is more existent. Childless families though sometimes seen, still we can say that it is a rare scenario.

Table 1.2 Factors contributing towards changes in family structures

S. No.	Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Changes in Marriage Age	12	22	8	6	2	50
2	Changes in Fertility Rates	9	20	15	4	2	50
3	Changes in Mortality Rate (Death Rate)	5	15	15	12	3	50
4	Increase in Marriage Dissolution( Divorce Rate)	8	18	16	7	1	50
5	Increase in Dual – Workers in families	15	24	4	5	2	50

6	Moral Decline (Cultural Changes)	9	22	13	5	1	50
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Source: Primary Data

In the above collected data, out of the 50 respondents, 22 agree and 12 strongly agree that changes in marriage age is contributing towards changes in family structures. Though some of the respondents do not want to comment on the fertility rate factor, majority of the respondents agree on it. Majority of the respondents have also agreed to the factors like divorce rate, dual workers in family and cultural changes, all contribute towards changes in family structures.

**Table 1.3 Hurdles to the employees due to Changing Family Structures**

S. No.	Hurdles	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
1	Reaching late to workplace .(When working offline)	4	14	19	9	4	50
2	Late Logins (When working Online)	7	12	12	13	6	50
3	Lower performance than the ability	2	13	17	10	8	50
4	Increased Absenteeism	4	9	12	14	11	50
5	Stress due to family conflicts	6	16	13	10	5	50
6	Breaks to fulfil family obligations	7	10	17	11	5	50

Source: Primary Data

From the data collected through the structured questionnaire it is evident that out of the sample of 50 respondents, 19 respondents sometimes reach late to the workplace and 14 respondents always do so. 13 respondents said that they rarely are late to the work, 12 often and sometimes are. 17 students sometimes perform lower than their ability and 13 often do so. 14 respondents believe that changing family structures rarely lead to increased absenteeism and 12 feel that some times it may. 16 respondents say that often stress is caused due to the family conflicts due to the changing family structures and 13 say that sometimes it happens.



And majority of the respondents say that as family structures are changing, they often or sometimes have to take breaks to fulfill family obligations.

**Table 1.4 Remedies to overcome hurdles caused due to changing family structures**

S. No.	Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Flexitime	12	25	8	4	1	50
2	Personal Health Care( Regular checkups)	8	22	15	3	2	50
3	Day care centre in the office	17	12	13	5	3	50
4	Stress Management Programs	15	16	14	5	0	50
5	Financial Assistance (Loan)	6	26	10	4	4	50
6	Company assisted Accommodation	7	27	8	3	5	50

Source: Primary Data

The above table clearly suggests that the majority of the respondents agree with the suggested remedies to overcome the hurdles caused due to the changing family structures.

**CONCLUSION**

This empirical study targets the lives of BPO employees. The challenges faced by them in general and specifically pertaining to the changes in the family structures in India. It can be concluded from this research that the changing family structures in India, like late marriages, dual earnings, increased divorce rates, movement from rural areas and small towns to cities etc have impacted the work patterns and behaviors of BPO employees at large. Absenteeism, stress, financial issues, decline in productivity, reaching late to work etc have been realized as the effects of the changes in the family structures. The study also confirms that certain remedies can be resorted to, to overcome these challenges. Flexible timings to meet the personal needs, financial assistance to overcome monetary issues, stress management programs in the office can be few ways to manage the changes. Overall we can say that, though the impact of changing family structures on BPO employees is significantly high,



with proper planning and by altering certain aspects, the challenges can be regulated and sorted out comfortably.

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