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IT SECTOR CONCERNS ABOUT MOONLIGHTING

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ABSTRACT

The Covid -19 pandemic has caused many unprecedented changes in every industrial sector. One of the prominent sectors, IT sector has also been impacted positively and negatively. One such change is work from home given to employees by almost all the companies. During the lockdown period all the companies asked its employees to work from home. This continued for about two years. But now some of the companies are asking its employees to come to work place at least for few days in a week. While others like Swiggy, Twitter, SAP, TATA Steel and others are allowing its employees 100 per cent work from home. This work from home or hybrid working has raised a concern on some IT companies like WIPRO, Infosys and others where employees are moonlighting without bringing it to the knowledge of their employer. The remote access has posed a risk of danger of data breaches to competitive firms. This paper aims at exploring the concerns of IT sector on moonlighting employees.

KEYWORDS

IT sector, employees, employer, moonlighting.

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INTRODUCTION

Moonlighting is the practice of working a second job outside normal business hours. An employee may work a normal eight to nine hours job as a primary source of income under primary employer and may work at different job during night to earn additional money from the secondary job. The Covid-19 pandemic which hit the country in 2020 making the nation to go for a complete lockdown has impacted on the working practices of IT sector. During the period the IT sector embraced for work from home to its employees. The work from home made many tech professionals with full time jobs to work on side projects. Today it has become a great challenge for IT sector to deal with moonlighting employees. Some IT companies like Wipro, Infosys, IBM, etc. consider moonlighting as unethical, cheating While Swiggy, a food delivery firm has allowed its employees to moonlighting for pro bono. Employees are moonlighting due to the disruptive ideas, low job satisfaction levels, low salary, transition between jobs and inflation. Is moonlighting ethical or unethical is a matter of concern. Even if the companies consider it as ethical, it may have a great impact on the physical and mental health of an employee leading to burnout.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steven D Culler and Gloria Bazzoli (1985) have identified the moonlighting determinants of doctors in their training period. The study reveals that demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status and time spent with the family acts as the determinants in decision making whether to take a secondary job or not.

Jamall (1986) has analysed the organisational commitment of moonlighting. The study inferred that non moonlighters showed much higher organisational commitment than moonlighters.

James Green (2013) stated that an employer's weapon of choice in case an employee is using company equipment or resources or sharing company details with the competitor is to have expressed terms in the contract. A well drafted contract will contain an express term requiring the employee to devote their whole time and attention to the primary employee during normal working hours.

Patricia Lotich (2014) has identified employer concerns about moonlighting. The concerns are trade secrets, exhausted employees, use of company resources and impact on health. He has suggested that employers should focus on managing employee performance and ensure that moonlighting employees are meeting job requirements and business goals. The organisations should adopt win to win approach wherein the moonlighting employees meet job requirements of their primary employer as well as earn extra money from moonlighting with secondary job.

Akbar et al., (2016) have examined the impact on moonlighting practices on job satisfaction of the university teachers. The study finds that lack of pay and blocked promotion have led to the reduced level of job satisfaction.

Hardeep Kaur and Kavita Saini (2020) opined that the organisations should have a clear moonlighting policy. The policy must specify the organisations rules and regulations regarding moonlighting to overcome the effects of moonlighting and maintaining harmonious relationship between employer and employees in an organisation. It is also stated that HR managers should make more efforts towards improving the performance of the employee engaged in moonlighting.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the issues in moonlighting.
2. To find out the drivers of moonlighting.
3. To suggest do's and don'ts for moonlighting employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive research paper based on secondary data. The secondary data is collected from research articles, newspapers and related web sources.

IS MOONLIGHTING ETHICAL OR UNETHICAL?

Is moonlighting ethical or unethical in India has become hot topic since Swiggy, the food delivery firm allowed moonlighting for its employees. Some consider moonlighting an open secret in IT sector. While many companies call it unethical. Employee's moonlighting has triggered a fresh debate, conflicting opinions and has raised legal questions. Doing two remote jobs at once was already happening in teaching and medical field. But the IT sector is divided when it comes to moonlighting. Some call it ethical while others believe it is the need of the hour. It is ethical when the company's employee hand book and policies does not restrict employees to do secondary jobs, employees do not use company resources and equipment and does not disclose the company secrets with others. It is unethical when the employee does not disclose his second job to his primary employer and the primary employer can level action against such employees.

WHAT INDUSTRY SAYS ON MOONLIGHTING?

Wipro Chairman Rishad Premji says 'there is a lot of chatter about people moonlighting in the tech industry. This is cheating – plain and simple.

Mohandas Pai, Former Director of Infosys, does not consider moonlighting cheating. According to him, employment is a contract between an employer who pays me for working for them for n number of hours a day. Now what I do after that time this is my freedom, I can do what I want.

C.P. Gurnani, MD of Tech Mahindra stated that his organisation would make a policy to allow workers to openly pursue multiple jobs at once. If you want to do it, sure. But be open about it and share with us.

Ganapathy Subramaniam, CEO, TCS described it as an ethical issue. You lose out in the long run when decisions like this are made for short term gains. Swiggy announced an industry first policy that allowed moonlighting for its employees. Any project or activity that is taken up outside office hours or on the weekend, without affecting productivity and does not have a conflict of interest can be picked up by its employees.

ISSUES IN MOONLIGHTING

1. Employees are reluctant to come back to office.
2. A majority of employees are considering to either change or quit the job if they are not allowed to work from home.
3. Possibility of revealing their secrets or confidential matter to rival firms.
4. Possibility of working for a competitor.
5. Employee may become fatigue.
6. Possibility of having their own start up.
7. Reduced productivity.
8. Risk of using company's resources and equipment.
9. Risk of breach of data.

DRIVERS OF MOONLIGHTING

1. Due to disruptive ideas.
2. Gap between supply and demand.
3. Due to transition between jobs.
4. Due to poor job satisfaction levels.
5. Remote work.
6. Inflation.
7. Blocking of promotion.
8. Low pay and compensation policy.

DO'S AND DON'TS OF MOONLIGHTING

DO'S

1. Read all agreements such as offer letter, employment agreement, confidentiality agreement, intellectual property agreement and prohibition on working on any venture related to the employment.
2. Read an employee handbook which contains additional policies that may impose more requirements and restrictions.
3. Read every document of the company before you start moonlighting.
4. Ensure your obligations to your employer because violating the terms of employment agreement can lead to the termination.
5. Get the approval from your employer to work on any outside venture.
6. Be loyal to your employer.
7. Prioritise your obligations to your employer.

DON'TS

1. Don't use the employers time, resources and equipment.
2. Create a separation between your primary job and secondary job by focusing on your secondary job on nights and weekends only.
3. Don't use employer's confidential information to benefit your secondary job.
4. Don't do anything that would harm your employer.

CONCLUSION

No doubt, today HR function is challenging. Retention of work force is a great challenge. Firing moonlighting workers may have a great impact on the company. IT sector should clearly come out with a detail policy document whether to allow or disallow its employees from moonlighting. Companies should spell clearly in its employee hand book the requirements and restrictions on moonlighting employees and ensure that they read every document before they report for job. The employees who are moonlighting secretly without telling their primary employers should reconsider to talk about moonlighting without using the company resources and equipment. Appropriate policies must be framed to overcome the effects of moonlighting and maintaining harmonious relationship between employer and employees. Employer may provide job security, job rotation and monetary and non monetary benefits to employees to avoid moonlighting.

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