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**A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ATTRITION AND RETENTION IN BPO SECTOR****DR. SHAMSHER SINGH****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****BANARSIDAS CHANDIWALA INSTITUTE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES****DWARKA****RAVEENA RANA****STUDENT****LADY SHRI RAM COLLEGE FOR WOMEN****DELHI UNIVERSITY****NEW DELHI****ABSTRACT**

*The objective of this research is to identify the causes of attrition in BPOs. Employee retention is more than just keeping employees on the job. It is also about sustaining employees, primarily by enhancing their job satisfaction. Failings to retain a key employee is a costly proposition for any organization. Employee retention is commonly considered to mean the ability to maintain a stable workforce. Business process outsourcing (BPO) offered opportunities for employment to a large number of persons with diverse skill sets in India. The industry is plagued by high employee attrition which gives sleepless nights to Human Resources managers (HR). This study is conducted to find out the predominate factors that causes high employee attrition in BPO sector and to find out the ways to control attrition. This study was carried out in BPO companies in Delhi NCR by obtaining response of 100 employees. ANOVA and frequency analysis were employed to analyze the responses. Study found that employees are not satisfied with reward & recognition of achievement system and welfare measure followed by these organisations. Bonus and games & cultural events have positive impact and leads to higher level of motivation and increased performance. Implementation of three R's (respect, recognition and reward) will increase employee retention.*

**KEYWORDS**

attrition, bpo, employee problems, outsourcing, retention.

**INTRODUCTION**

The term "employee retention" was first used in the business scene in the early '80s. It was usual for people who entered the job market as late as the 1950s and '60s to remain with one employer for a very long time—sometimes for the duration of their working life. If they changed jobs, it was usually a major career and life decision, and someone who made many and frequent job changes was seen as somewhat out of the ordinary. As a natural result, an employee leaving his or her job voluntarily was seen as an aberration, something that shouldn't really have happened.

In today's context the perception of having a job for life in a public or private sector no longer exists. The trend for the younger generation of workers is to shift from one job to another job and this is becoming a norm of society. Companies that can recruit the best talent and retain them will have an edge in the long run. There are number of changes taking place in the work force and the workplace which is radically altering the way companies relate to their employees. Retaining good employees is an important concern of every company in industries. Companies which make a proactive and strategic decision are able to retain their employees.

Employee retention is more than just keeping employees on the job. It is also about sustaining employees, primarily by enhancing their job satisfaction. Job satisfaction, in turn, can increase productivity and keep employees energized and motivated to give their best. Job satisfaction can equate to employees who stick with their current employer and strive to perform at or above expectations and standards. Employee retention is commonly considered to mean the ability to maintain a stable workforce. It is often linked to morale and to organizational productivity.

Outsourcing the non-core processes in order to concentrate on the core process is how the companies prefer to work now, thus BPO has become the obvious strategic choice of the organizations to outsource their noncore process. With the rising number of opportunities, the Indian Business Process Outsourcing sector seems to be on growth trajectory and its exports have grown from \$565 million in 2000 to about \$7.3 billion in 2005. India has become the most sought after destination for outsourcing globally.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

BPO or Business Process Outsourcing refers to the outsourcing of some non core business functions to some other service providers, primarily in low cost locations. The service provider may be either self owned or a third party. Generally following services are provided by the BPOs: accounting services such as receivables & payables, cash flow analysis, financial statement preparation & reconciliation, inventory management services such as order processing, data entry etc. There are number of facilitators which have helped in the growth of BPOs. These are reduced international trade barriers and improved telecommunication and IT capability. This has led to a situation where business organizations across the world are increasingly interlinked with each other.

The recent trend of high employee turnover in BPO is due to the various reasons such as employees not being happy with the kind of work they do, lack of investments in training and development, lack of career growth and development opportunities, unfair and misleading performance appraisals, etc. Kumar (2013) found that night shifts, money, inability to handle various types of stress, monotonous work; company policies, lack of career growth, problems with those in senior positions etc are the major reason of employee attrition of employee in BPOs in India.

Various reasons cited for employee attrition are dissatisfaction with internal job postings, work profile, personal causes and finally dissatisfaction with compensation/ salary (Bhatnagar 2007). So for better retention of talent organizations must improve pay/compensation and benefits and also factors like good working conditions, flexible work timings, cooperative teams, good bosses, culture and values of the organisation (Devi 2009). Other ways to improve employee retention and commitment include- providing flexible work hours, on the job training opportunities, providing adequate resources for the staff, health and insurance benefits, perks like gyms, health centers, rewarding best employees for not only getting the task done on time but also doing it efficiently (Deery 2008).

Gupta (2013) in her study found that better remuneration & career prospects, perceptions of training & resources, shift timings & week-offs and organizational culture are the factor which lead to employee retention in BPO in India. If the employee are not heard and valued, they are likely to leave because of stress and frustration where as the sense of achievement and belongingness helps in retaining the employee. In a transparent environment they can best utilize their potential and realize their skills and organisation is benefited with a stronger, reliable work-force bring new ideas for its growth. (Singh & Dixit 2011).

Hagargi (2011), found that retention is a key challenge for the BPO industry. With the help of retention, the company can save investment on recruitment and can turn it as cost effectiveness but retention has become a tough job for the sector as attrition is on the rise due to various reasons. Flexible shift and weekend off can make employees comfortable is one of the important strategy for retention. Also the BPO sector should plan the career path of people and provide them rewards and promotions on time and keep them satisfied so that employees should not think about alternative employer. Gayathri (2012) found that most of the

employees leave an organization because of frustration and constant disputes with their superiors or with other team members. Also low salary, lack of growth prospects and motivation compel are some of the reasons behind quitting their jobs. The study of Gayathri (2012) also found that encouragement & recognition, competitive compensation, safe environment and prospective roles are the factors which help in the employee retention.

Kaur & Gupta (2012) undertook the study of women employees of BPO in Chandigarh. Women constitute about one-third of the total workforce in Call Centre and BPOs in India. They found that women employee is satisfied with the safety & security measures, infrastructure, supervision, employee-employer relationships but they are not satisfied with the salary, perks, promotion prospects and grievance redressal system. The opportunities of promotion to higher level are few which leads to frustration and dissatisfaction which reinforce the propensity of leaving BPO industry and becoming the major cause of employee attrition (Singh & Jayashankar, 2002). Ranganathan & Kuruvilla (2008) found that in BPO employees are overqualified for the kind of jobs that they do which leads high turnover. They suggested that BPO may recruit employees with lower qualifications and provide them long-term careers prospects. This is likely to reduce turnover and retain employee for longer period of time.

### NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Attrition in BPOs has terrible effects on the organization. The high attrition costs increase the costs to the organization considerably. The more the people leave an organization, the more it is a drain on the company's resources like recruitment expenses, training and orientation resources and the time. The high attrition rate also affects the productivity of the organization. Therefore, it is extremely important to curb attrition not only for an individual firm but also for the industry as a whole. The present study is an attempt to understand the issue related to employee retention in BPO industry.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study has been undertaken to analyze employee attrition & retention of BPO sector and influence of demographic factors on perception of BPO employee.

### HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- **H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of age of the employee.
- **H<sub>02</sub>**: There is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of gender of the employee.
- **H<sub>03</sub>**: There is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of education of the employee.
- **H<sub>04</sub>**: There is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of income of the employee.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research involved the in-depth study of previous literature to understand the concept. A number of research article were studied in depth to understand different issue related to attrition and retention in BPO industry and to formulate the questionnaire. The study is a descriptive study involving the collection of primary data from 100 respondents using structured questionnaire as research instrument. Simple random sampling was adopted to select respondents. Survey method was used for collecting the primary data by face to face interview of BPO employee. Data has been analyzed using SPSS software. ANOVA, and frequency analysis has been carried out on the primary data. Reliability of the data has been tested using Cronbach alpha method.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Variable	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	36 yrs & above	19	19
	26-35 yrs	57	57
	18-25 yrs	24	24
Gender	Female	54	54
	Male	46	46
Education Level	10+2	23	23
	Graduation	58	58
	Post Graduation	19	19
Income per month	Less than Rs 20000	17	17
	Rs 20000 to Rs 50000	52	52
	Rs 50000 to 100000	23	23
	Above Rs 100000	08	08

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows the respondent profile. Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 26-35 years (57%), 54% are female, 58% are graduate and they are having monthly income in the range of Rs 20000 to Rs 50000 (52%). This demographic profile can be assumed to be representative of BPO employee. This profile is ideally suited for carrying out research.

#### RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability is the indicator of internal consistency. It can be measured by different scale however most of the researcher uses Cronbach's alpha scale. If the score is 1 it indicates 100 percent reliability which is generally not found hence a score of 0.7 or above is considered as reliable score (Nunnally's (1978)). The Cronbach Alpha score is given in table 2. The test score of 0.709 indicates good internal consistency.

TABLE 2: VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY STATISTICS

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.709	15

Source: Primary Data

#### HYPOTHESIS TESTING: ANOVA COMPUTATION

In order to test the hypothesis ANOVA has been employed. The results are given below. Table 3 gives the result of ANOVA computation on the basis of age, gender education and income of the respondents.

TABLE 3: COMPUTATION OF ANOVA

Statements	Age		Gender		Education		Income	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Preference of employees to move for a new job	.459	.633	1.207	.275	3.210	.026	.398	.755
Satisfaction of employees towards current job	1.000	.372	.249	.619	.794	.500	.861	.464
Satisfaction obtained in quitting the existing job	.832	.438	1.486	.226	.754	.523	.557	.645
Rewards and recognition for your achievements	.389	.679	2.281	.134	.299	.826	.606	.612
Appreciation for work from co-workers & supervisors	.870	.422	.275	.602	1.567	.203	2.029	.115
Satisfaction gained from facilities provided by organization	1.215	.301	.028	.866	2.229	.090	2.683	.051
Infrastructure and equipment provided in the organization	5.054	.008	6.821	.010	2.243	.088	.425	.735
Bonus has an impact on the motivation levels and performance of an employee	.493	.613	.030	.864	.102	.959	.830	.480
Games and Cultural Events at work have an impact on motivation levels of employees	.810	.448	.445	.506	2.123	.102	.402	.752
Company provides opportunities for growth and development for employees	.580	.562	.190	.663	.212	.888	.952	.419
Company policies and procedures restricting your ability to work	.096	.909	.502	.480	.455	.714	.145	.933
Importance given towards implementation of three R's (respect, recognition, reward) will increase employee retention	1.424	.246	.428	.514	.784	.506	.210	.889
Opinion towards working environment	.961	.386	.084	.773	.452	.716	.917	.436
Satisfaction regarding the welfare measures	.288	.750	2.899	.092	.275	.843	1.575	.201
To plan your further career in BPO sector	4.394	.015	2.736	.101	.478	.698	1.909	.133

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 gives the result of ANOVA computation on the basis of age, gender, education and income of the respondents. The result shows that no significant differences is perceived by respondents on the basis of age except for "infrastructure & equipment provided in the organization" and "plan your further career in BPO sector". Hence we accept the  $H_{01}$ . This indicates that there is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of age of the employee.

The result shows that no significant differences is perceived by male and female respondents for any characteristics. Hence we accept the  $H_{02}$ . This indicates that both male and female customer perceive that BPO services in similar way. The result also shows that no significant differences is perceived by respondents for any characteristics on the basis of education level. Hence we accept the  $H_{03}$ . This indicates that there is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of education of the employee.

The result indicates that no significant differences is perceived by respondents for any characteristics on the basis of income level except for "satisfaction gained from facilities provided by organization". Hence we accept the  $H_{04}$ . This indicates that there is no significant differences in perception of BPO employee regarding employee retention on the basis of income of the employee.

TABLE 4: FREQUENCY ANALYSIS

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Satisfaction of employees towards current job	11	27	12	44	06
Satisfaction obtained in quitting the existing job	17	35	03	22	13
Rewards and recognition for your achievements	16	17	11	31	25
Appreciation for work from co-workers & supervisors	23	43	09	18	7
Satisfaction from facilities provided by organization	21	44	16	11	8
Infrastructure and equipment provided in the organization	36	42	12	08	2
Bonus has an impact on the motivation levels and performance of an employee	21	46	11	10	2
Games and Cultural Events at work have an impact on motivation levels of employees	29	41	5	13	12
Company provides opportunities for growth and development for employees	19	46	12	19	04
Company policies and procedures restricting your ability to work	16	42	27	11	04
Importance given towards implementation of three R's (respect, recognition, reward) will increase employee retention	26	49	19	04	02
Working environment is conducive and cordial	15	28	09	32	13
Satisfaction regarding the welfare measures	13	18	18	33	18
Preference of employees to move for a new job	36	28	20	12	04
Further planning for your career growth in BPO sector	17	25	03	31	24

Source: Primary Data

## FINDINGS

Frequency analysis has been carried out to find the level of satisfaction of BOP employee on various parameter / characteristics of BPOs. The responses have been collected on Likert scale having strongly agree as highest level to strongly disagree as no lowest level. In order to understand the positive response- strongly agree & agree responses have been clubbed together similarly to find negative responses strongly disagree & disagree responses have been clubbed together.

It was found that only 38% employee are satisfied and 50% are not satisfied from their current job which is really alarming situation and need attention from organisation to change this situation. This is further supported by when we found that 52% will find satisfaction in quitting their existing job and 55% employee are not satisfied with reward and recognition of achievement system followed by the organisation. The study found that employee is satisfied with the appreciation from co-worker and supervisors (66%), facilities provided by the organisation (65%) and infrastructure and equipment provided by the organisation (78%). Also the bonus (67%) and games & cultural events (70%) have positive impact and leads to higher level of motivation and increased performance (67%).

Although BPO organisation provides opportunities for growth and development for employees (65%) but policies and procedures of organisation restricts the ability to work of employees (58%). 75% employee feel that importance given towards implementation of three R's (respect, recognition and reward) will increase employee retention. Almost half the employee feels that working environment is conducive and cordial where as other half think otherwise. Only 31% employee are satisfied with welfare measure and 51% are not satisfied with welfare measure. Therefore, it is natural that majority of employee (64%) will prefer to move/look for a new job and will not plan their career growth in BPO sector (55%).

## RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Indian BPO industry is expanding at very rapid pace and with the growth, there are number of issue associated with it. There are odd hours of working to suit the foreign clients. There is shift in the biological rhythm of body, loss of personal life which leads to stressful life. Due to all such issues these organisations face one of the prominent problem of the employee attrition and retention. The present paper attempted to find the satisfaction of BPO employee and what leads attrition of employee and how the employees can be retained.

ANOVA was used to find if there is any significant difference in BPO employee responses. ANOVA computation on the basis of age, gender, education and income of the respondents shows no significant differences was perceived by respondents for most of the characteristics. However, there was significant difference was perceived by them for "infrastructure & equipment provided in the organization" and "plan your further career in BPO sector".

The studies found that majority of employee are not satisfied from their current job and will find satisfaction in quitting their existing job, which is really alarming situation and need attention from organisation to change this situation. Also employees are not satisfied with reward and recognition of achievement system followed by these organisations. However, they are satisfied with the appreciation from co-worker and supervisors, facilities provided by the organisation and infrastructure and equipment provided by the organisation. Also the bonus and games & cultural events have positive impact and leads to higher level of motivation and increased performance. Our finding is similar to the previous researches of Bhatnagar (2007) Devi (2009), Kaur & Gupta (2012) and Kumar (2013).

Although BPO organisation provides opportunities for growth and development for employees but policies and procedures of organisation restricts the ability to work of employees. Employee felt that importance given to implementation of three R's (respect, recognition and reward) will increase employee retention. Almost half the employee feels that working environment is conducive and cordial where as other half think otherwise. Employee are not satisfied with welfare measure. Therefore, it is natural that majority of employee will prefer to move/look for a new job and will not plan their career growth in BPO sector. The previous study of Singh & Dixit (2011). Hagargi (2011), Gayathri (2012) and Gupta (2013) also found similar results.

It is essential that the BPO organisations must retain the employees who are really important for them. The supervisors and employers should ensure that the employees are satisfied with their roles and responsibilities and they are offered rewarding remuneration along with the recognition of their contribution. The other factor which will contribute in retention are well equipped, safe & secure work environment to women employees, prospective roles and protection and equality at work. These organisation are taking proactive steps accordance with various laws and legislations enacted in Indian for security, protection and equality at work of women employee in particular. These steps are proving quite useful in helping the organisation in retaining the employees.

### LIMITATIONS

The study has been carried out in metropolitan city covering the geographical area of National Capital Region (NCR) Delhi where the demographical factors are different from other urban area of county especially Tier II & III cities where new BOPs are established. Due to this limitation the finding of the study cannot be generalised for whole country.

### SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Similar study can be carried out in Tier II & III cities where new BOPs are established and their finding can be compared to find out whether similar issues are there which affects the operation of BOPs.

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