



## 'HOURS THAT HELP' LEAVE POOLING-A NEW CONCEPT FOR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

**Ms. Rashi<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Ajay Kumar Garg Engineering College, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India

### ABSTRACT

**C**ar pooling is passe. The latest on the sharing front is leave-pooling that one can quite factually bank on. The scheme allows employees to donate their excess leave to their colleagues who may need it in times of crunch.

Accenture India lately announced a policy, '**Hours That Help**'. The Company believes that it encourages the spirit of sharing among the employees. It appeared as a result of many of the company employees wanting to assist colleagues who desired extra leave on account of a medical emergency or personal problem. Many people do not avail of their leave fully by the end of the year. This offered an opportunity to address the other's problems or help them out. This is a facility that permits employees to donate their leave in a common pool that everyone can dip into on the basis of individual requirements. It is called as a '**Leave Bank**'.

**KEY WORDS:** Employee Engagement programme, Accenture's initiative, HR Policy

### INTRODUCTION

Leave pooling is a new trend in India. First time offered by Accenture India. It is a management consulting group, technology services and outsourcing company. Company started leave-pooling policy with the name of '**Hours that Help**.' In this programme employees are able to donate paid-time off hours to help a colleague in times of need like family medical emergencies or related crisis situations. The goodwill and bonding factor in schemes like '**Hours That Help**' make it stand ahead of other provisions like advance leaves. Web search reveals that similar formats of pooling of leaves are already in use in some places like Alexander County, USA or University of Texas, USA in which employees can voluntarily register and donate their leaves in a common pool.

Additional leaves are required in various circumstances like chronic illness, career responsibilities, geriatric problems, pregnancy complications, care of child in early period and illnesses. In many of these situations

employees are unwilling to disclose their illnesses or career responsibilities in work place for fear of losing job or negative inferences by colleagues. Availability of these extra leaves not only provides job security but it also increases bonding between employees. This social support provides a sense of great relief to the employee in need and thus helps in prevention and healing of physical or psychiatric illness.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a news paper of Mumbai 'While most companies have a system of advance leave which employees can take recourse to in an emergency, goodwill and bonding factor in schemes like Accenture India's leave pooling initiative called 'Hours That Help' are unbeatable'.

"Donating leave or working on behalf of someone increases the bonding among employees which helps an organization create a progressive atmosphere," points out Sunil Goel, director of executive search firm **Global Hunt**.



Other companies may not be following such a policy at present-day, but a more flexible approach to leave is clearly in evidence."We don't have a leave sharing programme currently, though we may discover it in future," says **S Ramesh Shankar, executive vice-president, HR, Siemens.**

"But we are making a leave calendar top-down and encouraging everyone to take at least 15 to 20 days leave in a year." Indeed, though most companies allow employees to either accumulate or encash leave, some have discontinued encashment altogether, forcing employees to take a break and come back "refreshed".

At Ambuja Cements, where leave programmes were highly regimented till a few years ago, changes have been brought about to usher in flexibility. "Now we have only one type of leave and we have made it mandatory for employees to take a minimum of 20 days a year, which will otherwise lapse. Every employee is entitled to 40 days leave in a year," says **Meenakshi Narain, joint president (HR), Ambuja Cements.**

## OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the benefits & drawbacks of leave Pooling.
2. To identify how it is beneficial in employee engagement.
3. To understand the right implementation of the policy.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- ★ **Research type:-** Descriptive Research
- ★ **Data Source Used:-**The present study is based on secondary data only. Basically the required information has been derived from Articles from newspapers & from the various web-sites which deals with topic.

## BENEFITS OF LEAVE POOLING

- The leave pooling system also addresses the problem of some employees failing to avail their leave.
- Employees can get paid benefits at the time they need.
- It will create greater flexibility in the organization.
- It is an employee engagement programme.
- It helps in to create employee bonding, motivation & a positive feeling towards their job & team.

## DRAWBACKS OF LEAVE POOLING

- ☞ Misuse of facility or use of unethical means to avail this facility.
- ☞ Create conflicts.
- ☞ Biasness
- ☞ Poor Implementation

## POOLING PRACTICE AS AN EMPLOYEE BONDING

**"Be the type of co-workers who delivers more positive contributions than negative chaos ...."by Ty.Howard**

- ✘ Social support has been associated with decrease in tension & faster recovery .
- ✘ In many situations employees are unwilling to disclose their illnesses or career responsibilities in work place for fear of losing job or negative connotations by colleagues.
- ✘ Availability of these extra leaves not only provides job security but it also increases bonding between employees. This social support provides a sense of great relief to the employee in need and thus helps in prevention and healing of physical or psychiatric illness.

## RIGHT IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

In this arrangement every year employee would donate one day leave to the leave bank. The policy can be implemented in that way:-

### Eligibility-

All employees who have contributed their 1 day leave in the Leave Bank at the time of commencement are eligible for making an application.

### Entitlement-

Any employee who has consumed all his paid leave due to prolonged illness and who is required to take leave without pay will be entitled to get maximum 30 days' paid leave from the bank.

### Application:-

An eligible employee if entitled for the leave as stated above should make an application to the HR. It should be accompanied by a relevant medical certificate. This should be done immediately after the resumption of duty.

### HR Process:-

1. HR should verify the application, medical certificate details and the history of the leave record of the employee.
2. An application can be rejected for poor history of the employee about attendance and behavior.
3. If the application fulfills the basic requirement of eligibility, then the same should be forwarded to the HOD for his recommendations.
4. The application with the recommendations should be forwarded to the committee for the final decision.

- The committee will decide the exact quantum to be sanctioned.

### Payment:-

- Employee will receive payment for the sanctioned period from the leave bank. This will be equivalent to per day amount of Basic including DA.
- This will be treated as special payment and will not be part of the salary. This will be subject to Tax deduction.

Prolonged absence due to following reasons will not qualify for leave from the Bank:

- Recurring Illness
- Born handicapped or disorder, if any
- Beauty treatment
- Treatment for sexual disorder
- Attempt to commit suicide
- Third time pregnancy or any surgery arising out of it

### Reasons for rejection-

- Not contributed leave in Leave Bank
- Habitual Absenteeism

### CONCLUSION

In Accenture India the system has been created to help employees facing emergencies that require them to be absent from work for long. There are some MNCs

which have similar special leave programs, including a month long paid leave to employees who have served for over six years, sabbatical for long-time, valuable employees and a provision for clubbing calendar holidays with weekend offs. The leave pooling system also addresses the problem of some employees failing to avail their leave. It ensures that leave is not wasted by transferring it to colleagues who may need it more. It also facilitates bonding among colleagues. For the organization, such initiatives help create a positive work atmosphere. Some companies may not have formal leave policies, but empower team leaders/ managers to design their own policies to ensure employees plan their leave better.

### REFERENCES

- Singh NT. *Times of India*. Delhi: Bennet, Coleman & Co. Ltd; 2012. *Running low on offs.? Leave-pooling is here*; p. 1.
- Namrata Singh, *Economic times*: May 4 2012. . *Running low on offs.? Leave-pooling is here*
- VinodBidwaik, *Cite HR*: Nov 26 2012. *Leave Pooling a new concept*.
- Russ, c., Soane, e. and Edwards, C. (2006) *Working life: employee attitudes and engagement*