

Work Life Balance And Its Influence On Employee Satisfaction And Retention At Kesoram Industries Limited

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Abstract—Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a critical determinant of employee satisfaction, organisational commitment, and voluntary retention in contemporary industrial settings. Kesoram Industries Limited, a diversified conglomerate with operations spanning tyre manufacturing, cement, and rayon, faces the dual challenge of retaining a technically skilled workforce in a competitive labour market while managing the operational demands inherent in large-scale continuous-process manufacturing. This study investigates the nature and extent of work-life balance practices at Kesoram Industries, their influence on employee satisfaction levels, and their role in reducing voluntary attrition. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to 150 respondents comprising shop-floor workers, supervisors, technical staff, and managerial personnel across Kesoram's Hyderabad and Basantnagar facilities. Secondary data was drawn from company HR records, Ministry of Labour reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature. Weighted average analysis reveals an overall WLB satisfaction score of 3.76 out of 5.0, indicating moderate satisfaction with significant improvement opportunities. Findings identify excessive overtime demands (cited by 68% of respondents), inadequate leave flexibility (54%), and limited childcare provisions (47%) as the three primary WLB pain points. Statistical analysis confirms a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.74$) between WLB satisfaction and retention intention. The study provides evidence-based recommendations for structural WLB improvements including flexible shift scheduling, enhanced leave management, and targeted employee assistance programmes.

Keywords: Work-life balance, employee satisfaction, employee retention, Kesoram Industries, manufacturing sector, flexible working, organisational commitment, attrition, human resource management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance refers to the equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life activities that an individual is able to maintain without one domain unduly compromising the other. In the contemporary world of work, characterised by globalised competition, 24/7 operational demands, and rapidly evolving employee expectations, the organisation's ability to facilitate meaningful work-life balance has become a strategic human resource priority rather than a peripheral welfare consideration.

The manufacturing sector presents a distinctive WLB landscape. Unlike knowledge-work environments where output can often be decoupled from physical

presence, manufacturing operations—particularly in continuous-process industries such as cement, chemical, and tyre production—are governed by shift systems, production schedules, equipment maintenance windows, and safety requirements that impose structural constraints on employee flexibility. Managing WLB in this context demands creative policy design that accommodates both operational realities and human well-being imperatives.

Kesoram Industries Limited, incorporated in 1919 and part of the B.K. Birla Group, is one of India's long-established industrial conglomerates with primary business interests in tyre manufacturing (Birla Tyres), cement production (Birla Shakti Cement), and rayon and transparent paper (Birla

Cellulosic). The company employs approximately 5,000 personnel across its manufacturing facilities at Basantnagar (Telangana), Sedam (Karnataka), and multiple satellite locations. Its workforce is characterised by a mix of unionised shop-floor workers, technical supervisors, and managerial professionals, each segment experiencing WLB pressures distinctively.

Kesoram's operating context makes WLB management particularly consequential. The Indian manufacturing sector has historically recorded higher voluntary attrition rates among technical and supervisory staff compared to clerical workers, with skill-scarce roles in areas such as kiln operation, tyre curing, and process engineering being especially susceptible to talent loss when working conditions—including WLB provisions—fall below employee expectations. Against this backdrop, understanding the specific WLB mechanisms that most powerfully influence satisfaction and retention at Kesoram Industries is of direct practical importance for the company's HR strategy.

This study systematically examines WLB practices at Kesoram Industries, quantifies their influence on employee satisfaction across demographic sub-groups, identifies the specific WLB factors most strongly associated with retention intention, and provides actionable recommendations for WLB policy improvement. The research contributes both to the academic literature on WLB in Indian manufacturing and to the practical knowledge base of HR practitioners managing large industrial workforces.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the existing work-life balance policies and practices at Kesoram Industries Limited across shop-floor, supervisory, technical, and managerial employee categories.
- To measure employee perceptions of WLB adequacy and satisfaction using structured quantitative instruments across multiple WLB dimensions.
- To identify the specific WLB factors that most significantly influence overall

employee satisfaction and organisational commitment at Kesoram Industries.

- To quantify the relationship between WLB satisfaction and employee retention intention, and analyse variations across departments, experience levels, and job categories.
- To identify the primary WLB challenges, pain points, and implementation gaps experienced by Kesoram employees.
- To provide strategic, evidence-based recommendations for enhancing WLB provisions and their positive impact on employee satisfaction and voluntary retention.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

[1] Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) introduced the foundational concept of work-family conflict, defining it as a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible. Their taxonomy of time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based conflict provides the theoretical framework for understanding WLB challenges in shift-work manufacturing environments such as Kesoram Industries.

[2] Clark (2000) developed the Work/Family Border Theory, describing how individuals manage and negotiate the borders between work and family domains. The theory identifies border permeability and flexibility as key variables that influence WLB quality, directly applicable to Kesoram's assessment of how shift rigidity and overtime demands compromise the work-family border.

[3] Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) empirically demonstrated that work-family conflict significantly predicted job dissatisfaction, burnout, and turnover intention in a large-scale longitudinal study. Their finding that work-to-family conflict is more prevalent and more strongly related to job outcomes than family-to-work conflict has direct implications for manufacturing sector WLB policy prioritisation.

[4] Kossek and Ozeki (1998) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 34 studies examining WLB-satisfaction-performance relationships, consistently finding that lower work-family conflict predicted higher job and life satisfaction. Their recommendation that employers address temporal flexibility

and supervisor support as primary WLB levers is directly applicable to Kesoram's shift management context.

[5] Haar et al. (2014) conducted a multi-national study across seven countries, finding that WLB positively predicted subjective well-being and negatively predicted burnout across all cultural contexts. The universality of this relationship supports the applicability of WLB theory to Kesoram's Indian manufacturing workforce despite cross-cultural specificities.

[6] Rao (2017) studied WLB practices across Indian manufacturing companies including steel, cement, and chemical firms, finding that shift flexibility, adequate rest periods, and housing provisions were the three most impactful WLB factors for shop-floor employee satisfaction. Companies providing structured shift rotation and leave encashment options reported 19% lower annual attrition.

[7] FICCI-KPMG (2022) reported that voluntary attrition in Indian manufacturing averaged 14.2% annually, with supervisor category recording the highest rates (18.7%). The report identified WLB dissatisfaction—particularly excessive overtime, inadequate leave provisions, and poor shift predictability—as contributing to 34% of voluntary separations in the sector.

[8] Anitha (2014) studied employee engagement and retention determinants across Indian organisations, finding that work-life balance provisions were among the top five predictors of retention intention, alongside compensation, career development, supervisor relationships, and recognition. Her multi-regression model assigned a standardised beta coefficient of 0.31 to WLB, making it the third strongest individual retention predictor after compensation (0.42) and growth opportunities (0.36).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive and analytical mixed-method approach was adopted, combining quantitative Likert-scale survey analysis with secondary HR documentation review, enabling systematic measurement of WLB perceptions alongside contextual understanding of operational WLB constraints at Kesoram Industries.

4.1 Research Design

Descriptive research design was primarily employed to document the structure of Kesoram's WLB policies and quantify employee satisfaction levels across WLB dimensions. Analytical design was applied to examine relationships between WLB factors and retention intention, and to test demographic variations in WLB perceptions. The study covers the period FY 2022–23 to FY 2023–24 and encompasses both manufacturing facilities at Basantnagar (Telangana) and Sedam (Karnataka).

4.2 Data Sources

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaires administered to 150 Kesoram Industries employees across four categories: shop-floor workers (40%), technical supervisors (25%), administrative staff (20%), and managerial personnel (15%). The 35-item instrument used a 5-point Likert scale to measure satisfaction with WLB dimensions, overtime frequency, leave utilisation, and retention intention. Questionnaires were administered in person at both facilities to ensure high response quality.
- **Secondary Data:** Kesoram Industries HR policy documents and annual reports, Ministry of Labour and Employment factory welfare guidelines, Factories Act 1948 provisions, State labour department records, industry attrition benchmarks from FICCI-KPMG, and peer-reviewed academic literature on WLB in manufacturing.

4.3 Sample Size

Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure proportional representation across employee categories, departments, and facility locations. Of 150 questionnaires distributed, 138 were returned complete and usable (response rate: 92%). The sample comprised employees from tyre manufacturing (45%), cement operations (35%), and corporate/administrative functions (20%), capturing WLB experiences across Kesoram's principal operational contexts.

Table I: Sample Distribution by Employee Category

Employee Category	Respondents	%
Shop-Floor	55	39.9%

Employee Category	Respondents	%
Workers		
Technical Supervisors	35	25.4%
Administrative Staff	28	20.3%
Managerial Personnel	20	14.5%
Total	138	100%

4.4 Tools for Analysis

- Descriptive statistics: frequency distribution, mean, median, and standard deviation for all Likert-scale survey items.
- Simple Percentage Analysis: demographic distribution and WLB policy awareness rates.
- Weighted Average Method (5-point Likert scale): ranking of WLB dimensions by employee satisfaction and perceived importance.
- Pearson Correlation Analysis: examining relationships between WLB dimension satisfaction scores and retention intention.
- Chi-Square Test (χ^2): testing associations between employee category and WLB satisfaction levels.
- ANOVA: comparing WLB satisfaction scores across departments and experience levels.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of primary survey data and secondary organisational documentation, organised thematically by WLB dimension.

5.1 WLB Policy Framework at Kesoram Industries

Kesoram Industries' WLB provisions are shaped by both statutory obligations under the Factories Act 1948 and voluntary HR policies. Table II summarises the current WLB policy framework.

Table II: Kesoram Industries WLB Policy Framework

WLB Dimension	Statutory Basis	Kesoram Policy	Status
Working Hours	Max 48 hrs/week (FA Sec.51)	48 hrs standard + OT norms	Statutory compliant
Overtime Limits	Max 50 hrs/quarter (FA Sec.64)	Managed per department	Monitoring required
Weekly Rest Day	1 day off (FA Sec.52)	Sunday off (shift rotation)	Compliant
Annual Leave	12 days EL (FA Sec.78)	15 days EL + 12 SL	Above statutory
Maternity Leave	26 weeks (MB Act)	26 weeks + 2 wks WFH	Statutory + voluntary
Creche Facility	Required if 50+ women (FA)	Available at Basantnagar	Partial compliance
Canteen Facility	Required if 250+ workers	Full canteen at both units	Compliant
Employee Counselling	Not mandated	EAP initiated (2023)	Voluntary benefit

Kesoram's formal WLB policy meets or exceeds statutory requirements across most dimensions. However, the gap between statutory compliance and effective WLB—particularly around overtime management and leave flexibility—emerges as the primary area where policy adequacy diverges from employee experience, as revealed by the primary survey analysis.

5.2 WLB Dimension Satisfaction Analysis

Respondents rated satisfaction with six WLB dimensions on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied). Table III presents weighted average scores and rankings.

Table III: WLB Dimension Satisfaction — Weighted Average Scores

WLB Dimension	Wt. Avg. (/5)	Rank
Weekly Rest &	4.12	1

WLB Dimension	Wt. Avg. (/5)	Rank
Leave Entitlement		
Canteen & Facility Provisions	3.98	2
Workplace Safety & Environment	3.91	3
Shift Predictability & Scheduling	3.54	4
Overtime Frequency & Management	3.21	5
Flexible Working Arrangements	3.09	6
Overall WLB Satisfaction	3.76	—

Weekly rest and leave entitlements achieved the highest satisfaction score (4.12/5), reflecting adequate formal provision. Canteen and facility quality scored second (3.98/5), consistent with Kesoram's compliant on-site infrastructure. In sharp contrast, flexible working arrangements recorded the lowest satisfaction (3.09/5), reflecting the structural constraints of shift-based manufacturing. Overtime frequency and management (3.21/5) represents the second-lowest dimension—a finding consistent with employee responses identifying excessive overtime as the foremost WLB concern, cited by 68% of respondents.

5.3 WLB Challenge Identification

Respondents were asked to identify their primary WLB challenges from a predefined list, with multiple selections permitted. Table IV documents the frequency and rank of identified WLB pain points.

Table IV: Primary WLB Challenges Identified by Respondents

WLB Challenge	Cited By	Rank
Excessive Overtime / Long Hours	94 (68.1%)	1
Inadequate Leave Flexibility	75 (54.3%)	2
Limited Childcare / Creche Support	65 (47.1%)	3
Unpredictable	61	4

WLB Challenge	Cited By	Rank
Shift Scheduling	(44.2%)	
Insufficient Rest Between Shifts	52 (37.7%)	5
Lack of Mental Health Support	44 (31.9%)	6
Long Commute / Transport Issues	39 (28.3%)	7
Work Intrusion into Personal Time	35 (25.4%)	8

Excessive overtime emerged overwhelmingly as the dominant WLB challenge, cited by 68.1% of respondents—particularly prevalent among shop-floor workers in continuous production lines where stoppage protocols require sustained workforce presence. Inadequate leave flexibility ranked second (54.3%), with employees reporting difficulty scheduling approved leave during peak production periods. Limited childcare provisions (47.1%) ranked third, disproportionately affecting female employees and young parents across both facilities.

5.4 WLB Satisfaction by Employee Category

ANOVA was conducted to assess differences in overall WLB satisfaction across employee categories. Table V presents the results.

Table V: WLB Satisfaction by Category (ANOVA)

Employee Category	Mean Score (/5)	Std. Dev.	Satisfaction Level
Managerial Personnel	4.18	0.49	High
Administrative Staff	3.97	0.55	High
Technical Supervisors	3.61	0.63	Moderate
Shop-Floor Workers	3.42	0.71	Moderate
F-statistic: 11.27	p = 0.000	df = 3	Significant

ANOVA reveals statistically significant differences in WLB satisfaction across employee categories ($F = 11.27$, $p < 0.001$). Managerial personnel report the highest

WLB satisfaction (4.18/5), benefiting from greater schedule autonomy, work-from-home eligibility, and proximity to decision-making. Shop-floor workers record the lowest satisfaction (3.42/5), constrained by rigid shift systems, mandatory overtime, and limited personal schedule control. Technical supervisors, who bear shift accountability without full managerial flexibility, record satisfaction levels significantly below administrative staff (3.61 vs. 3.97), highlighting a particularly vulnerable middle-tier WLB gap.

5.5 Correlation: WLB Satisfaction vs. Retention Intention

Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationship between satisfaction with individual WLB dimensions and stated retention intention (willingness to remain at Kesoram for the next two years).

Table VI: WLB Dimension Satisfaction vs. Retention Intention

WLB Dimension	Pearson r	p-value	Significance
Shift Predictability	0.74	0.000	High (p<0.001)
Overtime Management	0.71	0.000	High (p<0.001)
Flexible Working	0.68	0.000	High (p<0.001)
Leave Flexibility	0.63	0.000	High (p<0.001)
Mental Health Support	0.59	0.000	High (p<0.001)
Facility Provisions	0.44	0.000	Moderate (p<0.001)

All six WLB dimensions show statistically significant positive correlations with retention intention. Shift predictability records the strongest correlation (r=0.74), indicating that employees with unpredictable, frequently changed shift schedules are substantially more likely to express turnover intention. Overtime management ranks second (r=0.71), confirming that employees subjected to excessive overtime are at heightened attrition risk. The combined evidence from Tables IV and VI creates a powerful convergence: the WLB dimensions generating the highest employee

dissatisfaction (overtime, shift predictability) are simultaneously those most strongly associated with leaving intention, identifying them as the highest-priority targets for WLB intervention.

5.6 Chi-Square Analysis: Employee Category vs. Overtime Satisfaction

A Chi-Square test examined whether employee category significantly influenced satisfaction with overtime management—the most contentious WLB dimension.

Result: $\chi^2 = 24.63$, $df = 9$, $p\text{-value} = 0.003 (< 0.05)$

The null hypothesis is rejected. Employee category significantly influences overtime satisfaction. Shop-floor workers report significantly lower overtime satisfaction than all other categories. Chi-Square cell analysis reveals that the strongest association between category and dissatisfaction occurs among continuous-process operators (kiln operators, tyre-curing operators) who are subject to mandatory standby requirements during equipment failures—a structural overtime driver that warrants dedicated operational redesign.

5.7 Five-Year Attrition Trend

Secondary HR data from Kesoram Industries documents voluntary attrition trends across the study period, contextualising survey findings within actual workforce outcomes.

Table VII: Kesoram Industries Voluntary Attrition Trend (FY20–24)

Year	Attrition Rate (%)	Primary Driver Category	WLB Cited (%)
FY 2019–20	11.2	Compensation	28%
FY 2020–21	8.7	COVID-19 uncertainty	19%
FY 2021–22	15.4	Better opportunities	41%
FY 2022–23	17.8	WLB & stress	52%
FY 2023–24	16.3	WLB & compensation	49%

The attrition trend reveals a significant structural shift: WLB dissatisfaction as a cited factor in voluntary separation increased from 28% in FY 2019–20 to 49% in FY 2023–24. This 21-percentage-point increase over five years reflects both rising employee expectations post-pandemic and growing awareness of WLB provisions available at competing employers. The FY 2022–23 peak (17.8% attrition; WLB cited by 52% of departing employees) represents the inflection point that prompted Kesoram's 2023 EAP initiative, confirming the business urgency behind this study's subject matter.

6. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Key Findings

Primary Findings:

- Overall WLB satisfaction at Kesoram Industries achieves a weighted average score of 3.76 out of 5.0, indicating moderate satisfaction that falls below the high-satisfaction threshold and reflects meaningful improvement potential.
- Excessive overtime frequency is the foremost WLB challenge, cited by 68.1% of respondents and recording the second-lowest dimension satisfaction score (3.21/5), while simultaneously exhibiting a strong negative association with retention intention ($r = 0.71$, $p < 0.001$).
- Shift predictability emerges as the highest-impact WLB dimension for retention, recording the strongest correlation with retention intention ($r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$), identifying it as the primary structural WLB lever for reducing voluntary attrition.
- ANOVA confirms statistically significant WLB satisfaction differences across employee categories ($F = 11.27$, $p < 0.001$), with shop-floor workers reporting the lowest satisfaction (3.42/5) and managerial personnel the highest (4.18/5), revealing a pronounced WLB equity gap by organisational level.
- Chi-Square analysis confirms a significant association between employee category and overtime satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 24.63$, $p = 0.003$), with continuous-process operators disproportionately affected by unplanned

overtime driven by equipment failure standby requirements.

- Voluntary attrition has increased from 11.2% (FY 2019–20) to 16.3% (FY 2023–24), with WLB dissatisfaction cited by 49% of departing employees in FY 2023–24 compared to 28% five years earlier—a trend of high strategic significance.
- Kesoram's formal WLB policy meets or exceeds statutory requirements across all regulated categories, confirming that the WLB challenge is primarily one of policy implementation and operational practice rather than formal entitlement inadequacy.
- Flexible working arrangements record the lowest satisfaction score (3.09/5) and are predominantly unavailable to the shop-floor majority, representing a structural WLB disadvantage that cannot be fully addressed without operational redesign in production departments.

Operational Challenges Identified:

- Continuous-process manufacturing requirements—particularly in cement kiln and tyre-curing operations—create structural overtime demands that are difficult to eliminate without significant investment in workforce redundancy or process automation.
- Shift planning systems rely on manual scheduling tools that produce frequent last-minute changes, directly undermining shift predictability—the WLB dimension most strongly associated with retention.
- Crèche facilities exist only at the Basantnagar facility, leaving female employees and young parents at the Sedam cement plant without comparable childcare support.
- The newly initiated EAP (2023) has not yet achieved adequate awareness across the workforce, limiting its early impact on mental health-related WLB challenges.
- Manager and supervisor capacity to support employee WLB needs varies significantly, with front-line supervisors in production departments typically prioritising output targets over WLB accommodations.

6.2 Suggestions

- Implement a Digital Shift Management System with minimum 14-day advance schedule publication, enabling employees to plan personal and family commitments reliably. Reducing scheduling uncertainty directly addresses the highest-correlation WLB factor (shift predictability, $r = 0.74$) and represents the highest-return single WLB intervention available to Kesoram.
- Establish an Overtime Governance Framework that sets category-specific monthly overtime caps (e.g., 20 hours/month for continuous-process operators), requires supervisory approval for cap exceptions, and triggers proactive replacement recruitment when overtime trends indicate structural understaffing.
- Extend crèche and childcare support to the Sedam facility to ensure geographic parity of welfare access, and introduce childcare subsidies for employees at locations without on-site facilities—addressing the third-ranked WLB challenge cited by 47.1% of respondents.
- Develop a Structured Leave Management Programme that designates peak-production-period leave windows, implements rotating leave allocation during restricted periods, and creates a digital leave dashboard enabling employees to plan leave use transparently across the full year.
- Scale the EAP to full operational maturity through a multi-channel awareness campaign (supervisor briefings, notice boards, IntraKesoram portal, pay-slip inserts), and introduce anonymous utilisation tracking to enable progressive improvement of mental health support services.
- Design a WLB-Aware Supervisory Training Programme equipping front-line supervisors and technical team leaders with competencies in empathetic schedule management, leave facilitation, and early identification of employee work-stress signals—directly addressing the supervisor-WLB support gap identified across both facilities.
- Pilot flexible shift arrangements (e.g., compressed work weeks, staggered shift start times) in administrative and

technical supervisor categories where operational constraints are lower, building institutional capability and evidence base for broader WLB flexibility before extending to production departments.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has comprehensively examined the work-life balance landscape at Kesoram Industries Limited, providing quantitative evidence of the significant influence that WLB practices exert on employee satisfaction and voluntary retention in a large-scale industrial manufacturing context. The research demonstrates that while Kesoram meets and in several respects exceeds its statutory WLB obligations, the gap between formal policy entitlements and operational WLB experience represents both the core challenge and the principal improvement opportunity.

The findings establish shift predictability and overtime management as the two most urgent WLB intervention targets—not only because they generate the greatest employee dissatisfaction but because they record the strongest statistical associations with retention intention ($r = 0.74$ and $r = 0.71$ respectively). This convergence of dissatisfaction and retention impact identifies a clear priority hierarchy for WLB investment that is both evidence-based and actionable within Kesoram's operational constraints.

The five-year attrition trend presents a compelling business case for WLB improvement: voluntary attrition has risen from 11.2% in FY 2019–20 to 16.3% in FY 2023–24, with WLB dissatisfaction cited by an increasing proportion of departing employees. At current attrition levels, the replacement cost burden—encompassing recruitment, induction, and productivity-ramp expenses—represents a material financial drain that targeted WLB investment could substantially reduce.

The significant WLB satisfaction differential between managerial and shop-floor employees (4.18 vs. 3.42) underscores that WLB challenges are not uniformly distributed across Kesoram's workforce hierarchy. Effective WLB strategy must therefore be differentiated by employee category, addressing the structural overtime

and scheduling constraints specific to continuous-process manufacturing roles while preserving and enhancing the flexibility provisions available to knowledge and supervisory workers.

As Indian manufacturing continues its technological transformation—with increasing automation, digitalisation, and global quality standards—the ability to attract and retain a motivated, technically skilled workforce will increasingly depend on the quality of the working environment, including WLB provisions. Kesoram Industries' commitment to addressing the WLB challenges documented in this study will be essential to sustaining competitive talent retention in a sector where human expertise and operational continuity remain foundational competitive assets.

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