

# Happy Nappy Day: How NIIT intertwines employee benefits with personal landmarks

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Babita Karki, HR Head, NIIT

Leaders at **NIIT** primarily draw their philosophy for the experience and management journey of their employees from the vision statement, which is a “living document, gospel, lighthouse and guiding principle”.

Having a positive regard for each other, a tenet of the vision document forms the

cornerstone of all the interactions, dealings and communication, and is visible in all the spheres of the professional lives, formal or informal.

But why are we discussing this? It's because the company has three innovative HR policies that are directly pivoted with the employees at its centre stage.

## **Special Dating Allowance**

Over 2,800 employees-strong talent development company participates in celebrating the special days with its employees. Every married employee gets reward points on each birthday which can then be redeemed for an array of products.

The idea was an outcome of a chain of benefits that aimed at participating in the precious moments of each employee's life. In the mid-90s – initial days of the policy – while the single workers received the cheque which reached them a couple of days before their birthday, for the married ones, the cheque was being issued in the name of the spouse of the employees.

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“It was a matter of great pride for the spouse who felt truly honoured,” Babita Karki, HR Head, NIIT, says.

The allowance is a specific sum for all, irrespective of the grade or any other consideration. However, the practice of cheques in the name of the spouse was subsequently discontinued as for some it meant an added income for the already tax-paying spouse.

“But this warm gesture generated a lot of happiness amongst NIITians (NIIT employees) and adoration for the benefit,” Karki reveals, adding, “NIITians were truly excited and looked forward to it, each year.”

In the following decade, as NIIT transitioned to salaries getting directly credited to the bank accounts, the allowance was also auto-credited with all due diligence along with the salary of the preceding month so that the same is available well before the actual event.

In recent times, the amount is being credited as “Hats-off” points to the employees which can be redeemed for an assortment of products. Lately, to respect the privacy of the marital status of the individual, NIIT, now shares the allowance with all the employees on their birthdays, irrespective of their marital status.

“The idea was to add to the NIITians’ joy and enable them to make the occasion more memorable by funding a part of their celebrations on their special days,” Karki asserts.

### **Happy Nappy Day**

At 40 years old NIIT, birthdays are a compulsory day-off from work globally, so that it can be an extra memorable one.

This was also envisaged way back in the early 90s. Christened as the ‘Happy Nappy Day’, the HR Head says it is meant to be a compulsory time out for the employees to celebrate with friends and family in their unique ways or nap away if that is more preferred by the concerned employee.

The respective day for each NIITian is marked as a day off in the attendance system so no leave needs to be applied. Further, a birthday greeting is triggered off in advance to the employees which is also copied to the immediate reporting manager and co-workers.

“This email serves as a reminder to all concerned to wish the NIITian on this special day, and to expect the absence from work and not reach out to the NIITian on that day with work-related transactions,” Karki says.

### **Wedding allowance and interest-free Loan**

The Wedding Allowance or gift also finds its way into the list of benefits that

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are available to the employees – they are eligible for a “sizable” wedding allowance on their wedding, which is a gift from NIIT on their special day. And this is not the whole story! Soon to be married employees can avail of an interest-free wedding loan repayable – adjusted from the salary – in easy instalments across a period of 24 months, Karki explains.

The detailed policy is available on the staff self-help portal. Each time an employee applies for a wedding leave, the respective HR reminds him/her of the wedding benefits that the person is entitled to.

“Whereas the wedding allowance or gift – used interchangeably to refer to the sum been credited to the NIITian by NIIT on account of the wedding – is a default entitlement, [whereas] the wedding loan is optional and the NIITian indicates his/her desire to avail it,” Karki says.

### **The impact**

Rolling out the initiatives is just one part, gauging its impacts is another. For the latter, NIIT has been capturing the voice of its employees through multifarious forums, including both formal and informal ones.

Karki believes that while the customised merchandise that the company shares with the employees has a shelf life and can be forgotten over time, however, the benefits which are intertwined with “key personal landmarks have an indelible” impact.

For instance, the annual Employee Satisfaction Survey gauges the sentiments, both qualitative and quantitative, across the organisation, on various parameters, each year. The company found that employees have been appreciative of the benefits, and they are being availed by all.

“The Global eNPS (employer **Net Promoter Score**) of the company on overall ‘Happiness’ and ‘Pride’ has been increasing year on year, and it is something we are extremely proud of, as this is our compass on being in the right direction with respect to the success of our **employee experience** initiatives,” Karki says.

She further highlights that the analysis of the surveys shows that the employees who are in the age group of less than 35 years are the happiest. Talking numbers, Karki reveals that the stay index (employees who want to stay) of NIIT has been high with 4 per cent of the total strength consisting of people who have been with the company for more than 20 years at a stretch. Besides, “we also have in our fold several NIITians who join us for their second stint in the company, and we fondly call them home-coming NIITians,” Karki says, concluding, “One can thus say with great conviction that the string of benefits builds an emotional bond binding the NIITians. It speaks of a culture that values the NIITian.”