CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

As such standard and tailor made approaches are not available to handle issues related to work/life balance and stress. But, based on the findings, informal discussions with respondents and general observations made by the researcher the following suggestions are drawn. The suggestions include a) Suggestions for employers/organizations; b) Suggestions for individual employees; and c) Suggestions for employers and employees from social work point of view.

The review of related literature has revealed that the lack of proper balance between profession and personal life, has led to the stress which have negative impact on the person’s health, organizational health and societal health as well. The related Indian literature has also revealed a similar status. It has paved way to the researcher to find the existing research gaps to carry out this study.

With this back ground, to describe and diagnose the issues of Work/Life Balance, aspects of Occupational Stress and Personal Life Stress of employees of manufacturing and IT sector, the researcher has undertaken to unravel the factors affecting the ‘Stress and Work/Life Balance among Employees of Manufacturing and IT Sector’ with the following specific objectives:
1. To find the level of Work/life Balance of employees.

2. To assess the extent of stress derived from work-related issues among manufacturing and IT sector employees.

3. To compare Personal Life Stress of manufacturing and IT sector employees.

4. To find the inter-relationship among Work/Life Balance, Occupational Stress and Personal Life Stress.

5. To derive and render suggestions to improve the quality of work/life of employees.

The study area chosen to fulfill the above said objectives is Bangalore, a metropolitan and capital city of Karnataka, India. The descriptive and diagnostic research design has been adopted accordingly for Work/Life Balance (Pareek and Purohit, 2010) Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava and Singh, 1981), and for Personal Life Stress (Holmes and Rahe, 1967).

Based on the findings of other scientific studies, 15 (fifteen) hypothesis have been framed. They are:

1. Employees of manufacturing sector, compared to employees of IT sector, experience greater level of Work/Life Balance.

2. Women employees, compared to their counterpart, experience greater level of Work/Life balance.

3. Higher the age of employees, lesser the level of their Work/Life Balance.

4. Longer the years of work experience, greater the level of their Work/Life Balance.
5. Employees of IT sector, compared to employees of manufacturing sector, experience greater extent of Occupational Stress.

6. Women employees, compared to their counterparts, experience great level of Occupational Stress.

7. Higher the age of employees, lesser level of their Occupational Stress.

8. Lesser the years of work experience of employees, lower the level of their Occupational Stress.

9. Employees of IT sector, compared to employees of manufacturing sector, experience greater degree of Personal Life Stress.

10. Employees, irrespective of gender, experience greater level of Personal Life Stress.

11. Young employees experience lower level of Personal Life Stress.

12. Higher the years of work experience, lower the Personal Life Stress.

13. There exists an inverse relationship between the extent of Occupational Stress experienced by employees and their degree of Work/Life Balance.

14. There is a negative correlation between Work/Life balance and Personal Life Stress.

15. Higher the level of Occupational Stress of employees, lower the level of their Personal Life Stress.

As many as 15 IT and 15 manufacturing companies which have workforce of 500 and above on the roll have been identified for the study. Permission has been accorded
by three IT and three manufacturing companies to carry out the study. While identifying
the respondents, the below mentioned criteria have been adopted: They are:

**Inclusion Criteria**

1. Employees those who have put in minimum two years experience in the same
   organization (manufacturing and IT) in the cadre of minimum supervisory cadre.
2. Employees those who are on permanent rolls.

**Exclusion Criteria**

1. Organizations wherein manufacturing and IT together form a unit.
2. Employees those who are facing disciplinary action for professional misconducts.
   Those employees who are badli, on contract.

Subjects of the study have been chosen based on these inclusion and exclusion
criteria from three manufacturing and three IT organizations situated in and around
Bangalore city by adopting simple random sample method. A brief introduction has been
given about the selected organizations and the programmes, HR policies, practices,
facilities, innovative systems adopted have also been discussed. For the purpose this
study, three scales have been adopted to measure Work/Life Balance, Occupational
Stress and Personal Life Stress.
**Work/Life Balance Scale (WLBS)**

To assess and diagnose the work-life balance of employees, the researcher adopted Work-Life Balance Scale, developed by Pareek and Purohit (2010). This scale consists of 36 items and each with five alternate responses. While some items are negative, others are positive in conveying the response. This is to avoid mechanical way of filling up the inventory.

**Occupational Stress Index (OSI)**

The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) is adopted to measure the occupational stress of employees. This scale purports to measure the extent of stress which employees perceive arising from various constituent and conditions of their job. The scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five point scale. Out of 46 items, 28 are ‘true-keyed’ and rest 18 are ‘false-keyed’ items. The items are related to almost all relevant components of job life which cause stress in some way or the other.

**Personal Life Stress (PLS)**

To explore the link between occupational stress and personal life stress, researcher adopted Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS), developed by Holmes and Rahe (1967). This scale consists of a list of 43 life events. Each life event has been given specific values which indicate the extent of stress as a result of event, and the total score ranges from 0 to 1,466. Higher score indicates higher level of personal stress. This scale administered as check-list.
Proper and suitable statistical techniques have been adopted to test the hypothesis. Pre-testing was done before administering it to the respondents. Feedback ensured the effectiveness of the tools and found to be easy to understand and relevant to the present working scenario. These tools were administered as questionnaire and each respondent took approximately 25-30 minutes to fill-in.

Before approaching the respondents, permission was obtained from concerned authority. Respondents were approached personally during their leisure time and explained the objectives of the study. Confidentiality has been ensured by the researcher.

**Findings of the study**

**Socio-demographic details**

1. Of 200 employees, 109 (54.5%) were male and 91 (45.5%) were female employees.
2. 36 (18%) were aged less than 25 years, 76 (38%) were aged between 25-30 years, 73 (36.5%) were aged between 30 to 40 years, and 15 (7.5%) were aged above 40 years.
3. 103 (51.5%) were graduates, 68 (34%) had completed Post Graduation and only 29 (14.5%) were having diploma certificate.
4. 36 (18%) were having minimum work experience i.e. two years of work experience, 90 (45%) were having experience between 3 to 5 years, and 75 (37.5%) were having more than five years of work experience.
5. 83 (41.5%) were unmarried and 117 (58%) were married employees.
6. Among married employees, 44 (37.60%) were having one child, 27 (23.07) were having two children, and only 4 (3.41%) were having more than two children and rest of married employees i.e. 8 (6.83%) were not having any children to take care.

7. Out of 117 married employees, 66 (56.41%) of their spouse were employed and 51 (43.58%) were not employed.

8. Of 200 respondents, 80 (40%) owned their own houses, and 120 (60%) were residing in rented or leased houses.

9. 82 (41%) have their own vehicle for conveyance, 46 (23%) were using public transport and 72 (36%) were using company’s transport facility.

10. 40 (20%) were residing within 5 kms diameter from their workplace, 57 (28.5%) with 5 to 15 kms 57 (28.5%) within 15 to 25 kms and 46 (23%) residing at more than 25 kms from their workplace.

**Work/Life Balance**

1. There was no significant mean difference in Work/Life Balance score between employees of manufacturing and IT sector.

2. There was no significant mean difference in Work/Life Balance score between *male and female* employees.

3. There exists significant positive correlation between age and Work/Life Balance.

4. There exists significant positive correlation between experience and Work/Life Balance.
**Occupational Stress**

1. There exists significant mean difference in Occupational Stress score between employees of manufacturing and IT sector with employees of IT sector having high Occupational Stress.
2. There was no significant mean difference in Occupational Stress score between male and female employees of manufacturing and IT sector.
3. There exists significant negative correlation between age and occupational stress.
4. There exists significant negative correlation between experience and occupational stress.

**Personal Life Stress**

1. There was no significant mean difference in Personal Life Stress score between employees of manufacturing and IT sector.
2. There was no significant mean difference in Personal Life Stress score between male and female employees of manufacturing and IT sector.
3. There exists significant negative low correlation between age and Personal Life Stress.
4. There exists significant negative low correlation between experience and Personal Life Stress.
Correlation between study variables

1. Since $P = 0.00 < 0.05$, the test was significant at 5% levels, i.e. there exist significant negative correlation between Work/Life balance and Occupational stress, $r = -0.556$, at 5% levels.

2. Since $P = 0.054 > 0.05$, the test was not significant at 5% levels, i.e. there was no significant negative correlation between Work/Life balance and Personal life stress, $r = -0.136$, at 5% levels.

3. Since $P = 0.02 < 0.05$, the test was significant at 5% levels, i.e. there exist significant negative correlation between Personal life stress and Occupational stress, $r = -0.556$, at 5% levels.

This present study has certain limitations. The main study variables of the study are Work/Life Balance (WLB), Occupational Stress (OS) and Personal Life Stress (PLS). Each variable could be affected by other issues such as job satisfaction, work environment; organizational climate and culture, perceived personal life satisfaction and family members’ and personal health of respondents have not been considered for the study. Hence, the scope of the study is limited to only three issues of personal and professional life of respondents.

Other limitation of the study is related to geographical area. The researcher has selected Bangalore, a metropolitan city, as study area. In a metropolitan life style, culture and other factors of people may affect largely the present study.
The study is confined only to manufacturing and IT sector. Other sector like hospitality and service sector have not been taken for the study. Hence, the result of the study applies only to respondents/employees of manufacturing and IT organizations of Bangalore.

**Suggestions for Employers/Organizations**

Organizations need to adopt suitable problem identification system to check genuine cases of work/life balance and stress related issues and try to resolve the issues. Instead of appointing extra personnel for this, it is better to identify supervisors/managers, especially senior most persons, who are sensitized about psychological aspects of employees. It is better to identify a volunteer for this purpose in every department/unit because it is cost effective and consume less time.

Organizations should make sure that positive/conducive work environment is established. Negative interpersonal conflicts/issues have to be addressed immediately. If unaddressed, these issues may create severe problems and can damage the image of an organization. Hence, workshops/seminars are to be organized to widen the thinking horizon of employees so that a cordial and professional relationship is maintained.

Certain extra care and facilities are to be provided for women workforce. Any misbehavior, unacceptable behaviour/gesture within or outside of the organization towards women employees, need to be resolved strictly. Organizations should provide
protective measures to women workforce. Male workforce is to be sensitized about the issues related to women and treat them with respect and dignity.

It is suggested to develop work timings and workloads logically and scientifically so that employees do not feel overloaded with projects. Organizations are under immense pressure to deliver the goods and time is money for them. While assigning work/project/s organizations must think about the existing work/project/s assigned to them already. IT organizations have a tendency to keep extra manpower on bench which can be supplied immediately as and when situation arises. But, the same cannot be suggested to manufacturing organizations.

While recruiting fresher, organizations should have clear recruiting policy which allow the recruiting authority to select and recruit candidates who have skills and potentials to perform and handle work-related stress. Along with personal interviews, group discussions, personality assessment tests, ability to work with teams and attitude can be used as criteria for selection.

It is observed by the researcher that most of the organizations selected for this study do not have clear policy framework with regard to work/life balance and occupational stress. Hence, it is suggested that organizations need to frame policy to organize stress management techniques programmes, training programmes, workshops, and seminars to empower the employees to tackle the issues related to work/life balance and stress.
It is suggested that organizations need to identify the senior/experienced managers and train them as mentors and counsellors so that personal and informal guidance can be provided to employees who need the services.

It is observed by the researcher that IT organizations have provided certain facilities such as telecommuting, work from home, meetings through tele-conference, . The nature of the work itself is flexible and these facilities are inevitable to meet the clients’ demands. Manufacturing organizations can not have the above mentioned facilities due to the work nature. But, manufacturing organizations need to find out some other alternative ways to satisfy the needs of employees (Channuwong and Kantatian, 2012).

It has been found by Karve and Mulay (2012) that forming fun clubs can be a great occupational stress minimizer and further suggested that job rotations can be used as a tool for reducing monotony and boredom.

Organizations need to establish a proper communication channels to reduce ambiguity in decision making systems. A proper reporting system is helpful in order to reduce the stress.
While explaining the importance of Work/Life Balance, Lute (2007) has offered certain suggestions to organizations. They are:

- Abolish internal Saturday afternoon meetings with full support from management. This policy alone can bring very quick and positive results.
- Give a half day off on Saturday if the individual has put in the incremental hours earlier in the week and assuming that no outside customer meetings have been schedule.
- Provide one or two days off with pay for approved community involvement.
- Create and encourage an annual or quarterly ‘bring your family to work’ day and picnic or trips.
- Establish a ‘disconnect from work’ vacation policy – no cell phones/laptops.
- Create more accommodating ‘on and off – ramp’ policy for those who leave the firm, especially if it is to spend time with family. Similar suggestions have also been given by Madhavi and Vimala (2011).

Beaurgard and Henry (2009) has suggested that managerial support and the work life climate of an organization may moderate the link between work life balance practice provision and employee use of practices and perceptions of organizational support.

Maintaining a balance between work and life and developing strategies to minimize the stress are not primarily the responsibilities of an organization. Individuals need to realize certain factors/their strengths and weakness/potentialities in order to have
peaceful professional and personal life and ultimately enjoy the life. Hence, the below mentioned suggestions are offered to individual employees.

**Suggestions for Individual Employees**

‘Time and Tide wait for none’, is a popular saying, hence, time once lost never come back. So, one should manage the time properly. Failing to utilize the time optimally can cause stress. In this sense, it is suggested to have a time table for every activity, whether professional or personal, and stick to that plan. Time management is a skill and not very difficult to acquire but requires lot of trial and error approach. Once adopted, then taste of utilizing time can be enjoyed. The similar suggestion has been given by Kofoworda and Alayode (2012).

In day-to-day professional and personal life, individuals have a number of activities to perform. Before taking up any activity one should clarify certain doubts such as – a) is it very important; b) is it necessary/urgent; c) is it worth. If the answer is yes than such activities are to be carried out immediately. Hence, it is suggested to prioritize the works/activities/tasks/assignments according to the nature of activities.

Individuals require some time to address the physical and emotional needs. If left unaddressed, severe consequences can occur to body and mind. People say if the physiology of the body is healthy than mind is also healthy. It has been experienced by the researcher that most of the respondents do not find it important to engage in some kind of physical activities. Majority of the respondents spend more time on computers.
This results in certain ailments such as fatigue, blood pressure, diabetes. These ailments can be prevented by doing physical exercise. To retain mental balance, individuals need to adopt certain steps such as listening to music, reading so that mental fitness can be maintained.

Unhealthy competition disturbs interpersonal relationship with others. It is true that everyone tries to reach the top rung of their professional ladder. While trying this, one should pull up others instead of pushing them down. Unhealthy trend towards colleagues leaves bitterness in their mind which is not advisable. Hence, one should try to compete in a healthy manner.

Any activity, whether professional or personal, requires team effort. Cordial interpersonal relationship is required to be in the team. Hence, individuals and organizations make sure that team members support, help and assist each other, so that their professional and personal goals can be achieved.

Employees need to take-out some quality time to spend with family members, friends. This would help the individuals to relax their mind. It is suggested to have a vacation once in six months. While applying for vacations, one should make sure that the vacation is properly planned. Before going for vacation, one should have their substitute in their place.
Relaxing techniques such as yoga, meditation, breathing exercises, painting, reading and cooking can be used as stress busters in order to relax the body and mind. Body massage, aroma therapy, and other facilities have been provided by certain IT organizations on payment basis.

While trying to balance between work and personal life and reduce stress, certain foods such as fatty and junk food, food with high calories, meat, deep fried snacks, alcohol, and excess tea/coffee need to be avoided. Healthy life style has to be adopted. One should consult a doctor once in six months. So that a proper health can be maintained. Proper support from family members, colleagues, friends, supervisors/manages, sub-ordinates can be sought in identifying the cause of stress/work life imbalance and resolve the problems.

The scientific studies by Sagare et al (2011); Rai and Kaur (2013); and Bhargava (2014) have shown that a proper sleep of 7-8 hours could relax the stressed mind.

Suggestions for employees and employers from social work point of view

The social functioning of an individual may get affected by several factors such as personal, social, physical, financial, occupational and other factors. The consequence of this would hinder an individual to perform his/her role and responsibilities at workplace and home, which in turn affect the organizational overall performance.
Social work interventions can be effectively utilized which enhances the ability and social functioning of individuals. Hence, the below mentioned suggestions have been offered to employees and employers/organizations to maintain a better balance between work and life and reduce the stress from social work point of view.

Counselling service can be provided to create awareness about industrial accidents and injuries, absenteeism, low performance, lack of interest, low self esteem and motivation, effects of alcohol.

Research can be taken up to understand certain issues such as employee grievance and its redressal cause of stress. It would help the organizations to frame a policy and implement it.

The above suggestions are not exhaustive. Employees and organizations can develop their own strategies in order to overcome the problems of work/life imbalance and stress. Based on the findings, informal discussions with respondents with regard to the aspects of work/life balance and stress, of manufacturing and IT organizations, the following implications are made.

Issues pertaining to work/life balance and stress and their redressal are not only responsibility of an employer. These issues can only be resolved by adopting collective approach. In order to attain greater professional and personal positions and enjoy the life, individual employee, organizations, family, professional social workers and society all
should join their hands. Then only the full potential of individuals and organizations can be realized.

Proper involvement and participation from employees and organizations are required to address the issues of work/life balance and stress, so that a healthy work environment is established and the image and goodwill of the particular organization can spread. On the other side, familial, and social support are expected to strengthen the personal and positiveness of life of an employee.

Employees need to achieve their desired professional goals at the cost of their personal, social and familial responsibilities. Widening the gap between familial demands and responsibilities, cause severe damage on person, family, organizations and society at large. It is always suggested to prevent the larger damage rather than controlling the damage.

Whatever the sector may be, the changes in job and global market, and change in economy of the nation are altering the fabric of individual life style. The important noticeable job changes are forcing individuals, directly or indirectly, to alter their life which is often beyond their control. Individuals find it very hard to bring adjustments in their personal and professional life. While trying to balance, generally, people tend to mess-up issues. Hence, it is the responsibility of the individuals, organizations and the society to take the issues of work/life balance and stress collectively to realize the full potential and enjoy life. The current study is an attempt to bring the issues of Work/Life
Balance, Occupational Stress and Personal Life Stress among employees of manufacturing and IT sector.

India is witnessing an increase in capital investment resulting in huge demand for manpower. Talented and skilled people are optimistic with regard to job opportunities. This positive aspect of economic growth enables the workforce to actively engage in production activities in an organization.

Organizations in order to compete with other organizations, promote their employees to extend their capacity beyond the limit, which affects the mental, social and familial equilibrium of a person. This situation has become common phenomenon in an era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). Due to this, number of people who seek professional help is increasing.

The issues related to stress, with respect to personal and professional, and maintaining balance between work and other aspects of life need to be addressed immediately. Employees and organizations are willing to spend lakhs of rupees to tackle the work related issues. Empowering the workforce through training and development, mentoring and coaching, counselling and other suitable model have gained its momentum in these days. Organizations have realized the monitory value of talented and skilled manpower. Hence, organizations do not hesitate to adopt any method to retain the workforce.