CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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1.1. Managing Human Element in the Organizations

The good performers in any organization are the drivers of growth for the management and are assets to the organization. Such people always seek challenges, crave for the opportunities, set high benchmarks and also motivate their team members to accomplish their goals in a structured manner. Although, it sometimes becomes difficult to sustain one's performance levels throughout when one is operating in such an environment on a continuous basis. According to a survey, nearly 66 per cent of employees experience stress or extreme fatigue, which they correlate to tight deadlines, hectic schedules at work, etc. This can lead to the devastation in an organization. It is difficult enough to find good employees without losing one who was contributing to your success. But the organization cannot afford to let this occur. This situation of stress leads to the burnout amongst the employees which again might have many causes. In many cases, burnout stems from the job. Although, it is not caused solely by stressful work or multivariate responsibilities or expectations but the other contributors could be our changing lifestyle and certain personality traits that gets easily influenced. To retain this effective and needed human capital the organizations need to motivate them constantly by appreciation, growth opportunities in their career and success. And this must be both at individual as well as group levels. In organizations the high-performing teams only work passionately to achieve the high targets. While the bonus of keeping the employees' morale high is not solely the HR
department's prerogative, but it is really a matter of concern how the managers would identify such low performers and weak assets. Generally, a decline in productivity of the individual, his irregular attendance and a low involvement in team activities are few of the important indicators that an employee needs some intervention. Such ways even if companies haven't literally lost their employees, they at least have lost them psychologically. This is an alarming sign for the organizations that run at risk of losing their reputation when employees are swiping in/out but neither are mentally present during work hours and nor they are productive. Results of various researches indicate that employees are no longer interested in devoting extra time to their work or profession. They are becoming increasingly conscious of the outcomes of a healthy life as well. Good employers are fast realizing that it would be very difficult for them to attract, retain, and develop manpower unless they try to integrate work and life of the employees effectively. In fact, many studies have shown that the employees nowadays seem to value the quality of life more than the amount of salary they get.

Employers suggest that people want to have more control over their work and accord more meaning to it. Employees want a better work-life balance. The organizations or the employers are considered not great because of the perks and benefits offered alone, but because of its work culture and policies that promote meaningful work, and a nurturing as well as supportive workplace. These developments strengthen the search of companies for better ways of accommodating some of the expectations of the employees with regard to both family and professional lives hence enhancing the performance, in turn productivity.

Employees that face severe saturation levels cannot be productive. Therefore the challenge faced by the organisations today is to identify and then effectively manage their organisational assets
i.e. the employees so as to ensure sustainability in their performances. It is really challenging to not only re-energise a highly motivated burnt out employee, but firstly to find out the one. So, the modern Corporate are into framing some proactive programmes to identify highly demotivated employees who show the signs of burning out, then working with them and helping them to overcome the situation. The emphasis is to be put on establishing a strong culture where people get a feeling of being valued. The employees are always to be treated with value and respect, thereby creating a understanding and productive employee base. Once the internal stakeholders are contented, external customers can be assured of getting the best service. They become ambassadors and counsellors for fellow employees who might fall into a similar situation. Since it is important to keep employees happy and motivated, timely identification and healing of burnout (state of emotional, mental, and physical exertion caused by excessive and prolonged work-life stress) of employees by keeping an eye on its symptoms in early stages might help the damage to be less annihilating. However the modern corporate today are trying in their own ways in making their work atmosphere a little less cluttered and a more engaging work culture.

Although the employees are given remuneration for their work, today's typical, tedious and tight corporate culture of nine-to-five working schedule in offices is quiet unnerving and exhausting. This hectic work schedule undoubtedly affects employees' mental and physical health adversely obstructing them in giving their hundred per cent at work. As a result, many companies are striving today to provide a more relaxing atmosphere at the workplace to help employees retain their energy and thus can maximise their productivity. But we need to know about the factors that are making the jobs so tiring and what can employees and employers both do to fight these factors. It is therefore essential to maintain a positive environment at the workplace. The
traditional work setting lacked motivating recharge activities. A few have tried to make the work environment more accommodating and friendly by offering meals, fitness clubs, and special areas for relaxation. Although these amenities are expensive for employers, certainly they are the improvement, but they're not able to completely satisfy employees because they become the hygiene factors of motivation. When an employee becomes mentally fatigued, they can go off the clock and engage in recharge activities that are personally productive like exercise or relaxation. When they are reenergised, they can start working afresh at a high level, effectively cutting out the low productivity period of the cycle. Employers don't pay for unproductive time and employees get to work in a more natural pattern that adjusts to their personal lives. The dynamic market factors and the constant stress of performing better than previous, leads to low morale among employees and their performance graphs starts diminishing. The human capital in any organisation is one of the most important elements for that organisation to succeed and it is inevitable that they feel motivated to perform at all times. Deadlines of the targets to be attained lead to constant stress and at such times they need to regain their self confidence but also trust their employers as it could even force them to turnover. Organisations have understood that providing its employees time off while still being paid could act as an excellent retention tool. It's imperative enough to connect them with their employee needs. Many of these initiatives come from the employees themselves than the HR manager. The manager has become a facilitator. This trend does indicate that employers are going all out to keep its workforce motivated. According to a recent survey, roughly 18 per cent of large organisations offer its employees paid sabbaticals while few other do provide an option of taking an unpaid sabbatical. It has improved key employee retention, employer brand of the organisation which helps in top talent attraction which in turn is linked to increased productivity **Sabbaticals can't be only**
termed as any retention tool but also it helps the employee in various ways; in the rigmarole of
day to day life often lacklustre creeps in and adversely impacts an individual's performance. The
shooting raise in the health care costs and a growing concern about the health of the employees, a
majority of multinational organisations have targeted to place a priority on workforce health
initiatives and the overall well-being of their workers over the next few years.

1.2. Changing Position of Women in Organizations

One of the most significant and positive changes taking place universally is the rapidly
increasing number of women in all types of professions. The recent trend suggests an assuring
rise of women in managerial positions too all over the world. However, it is a cause for concern
that women are mostly concentrated in the lower and middle levels of management and their
representation at the senior and top management levels remains extremely low. There is a sudden
surge in the number of talented women entering the corporate sector has resulted in new
challenges for the work culture in the organisations. The workforce today is no longer a male
dominated one. The fading gap between male and female employees essentially requires firstly
the workplaces to be revamped, redesigned and restructured. The culture at work place and work
environment should be accommodating for women. Though multinational organizations like
IBM, Google, Sapient India, and Infosys have already started introducing changes in the policies
but still there is lot to be done before women feel safe to work in corporate sector. A few recent
studies have revealed that in forthcoming five years, the women workforce will increase to
double fold. The economic turmoil has enforced the increasing number of women in corporate
sector. It has been projected through various studies that after three years, more than 70 percent
of women graduates will kick start their career in the corporate sector. [2] These facts clearly
reveal that women are becoming more conscious towards their career. To utilize the increasing talent pool of women employees in a right manner, employers are also taking befitting measures.

Women who till now were mostly involved with crop production, livestock care, small scale works, handicrafts etc. have started to challenge the status quotient. The increase in the education level through improved social care initiatives and better medical facilities women have become conscious about their career. However stereotyping does exist and they do face rejection on account of many factors such as their accent and to a very small extent, their upbringing and social background. The social pressures on women in India from the beginning have been comparatively higher than the men.

1.3. Need for Work/Life Balance

Work has evolved throughout the years, and the role and the composition of the workforce has changed with passage of time. In today's time, work is widely perceived as a source of the personal satisfaction. The term "work/life balance" was coined in 1986, although its usage in everyday language was sporadic for a number of years. Interestingly, work/life programs existed as early as the 1930s. Before World War II, the W.K. Kellogg Company created four (six-hours each) shifts to replace the traditional three daily eight-hour shifts, and the new shifts resulted in increased employee morale and efficiency.[3] In the 1980s and 1990s, companies began to offer work/life programs. In their first swings of these programs were mainly women oriented. Employees in global communities too want flexibility and control over their work and personal lives.
1.3.1. Defining Work Life Balance

Life is a balancing act in its own, and it is quite clear that almost everyone seeks work/life balance. But what exactly is understood by work/life balance? The term is not new to majority of us yet many of us complain that we don't have enough of it in our lives. Among men and women both, the frustrating search for work/life balance is a very common topic of conversation, usually translated into not enough time and/or support to do, to handle, to manage ... our work commitments or personal responsibilities. "Juggling competing demands is tiring if not stressful and brings lower productivity, sickness, and absenteeism, so work/life balance is an issue for all employees and all organizations"[4]. The meaning of work/life balance has the characteristics as that of a chameleon i.e., it has different outlooks by different people and includes different things. The meaning often is derived in the context of the conversation and the speaker's viewpoint. There are few working definitions of terms used in context to work/life balance out of which some definitions overlap whereas few are still evolving. Work–life balance is the proper balance between "work" i.e. career and ambition on one hand and "life" i.e. pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development on the other. Work life balance is very vital and influences employee attitudes towards their organizations. A balance between work and life is supposed to exist when there is a satisfied attitude towards the proper functioning at work and also at home. A good balance in work and life can play a phenomenal role in the attainment of personal and professional goals both. The concept of work-life balance is becoming more relevant in today’s fast changing work environment. Thus we can say that the work life balance is the state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. There has been always a push and pull between the work and family responsibilities that result in the work-life conflict. The employers view the concept of work life balance as the challenge of creating a supportive
company culture where employees can focus on their jobs during at work. It includes the structured programs offering the benefits to the employees to address their family commitments, while at the same time accomplishing their work responsibilities. These policies and procedures are established by an organization with the goal to enable employees to get their jobs done and at the same time provide flexibility to handle personal/family concerns. Thus if an organization's culture acknowledges and respects the family responsibilities and obligations of its employees, it is presumed to adapt the work life balance.

The topic of work/life balance is getting a great deal of attention in the academic and corporate worlds, and new research is continually being conducted. A 2003 study reveals that employees are often preoccupied with work when not working, and when in the company of family and loved ones, experience an inability to be meaningfully engaged in no work spheres.[5] As researcher Ezzedeen explains, "modern work has become knowledge based, fluid, and intellectual; overworked people think about work all of the time. For many people, work has become cognitively intrusive." To understand work/life balance, Professor Swiercz and Doctoral Candidate Ezzedeen of The George Washington University developed and tested a cognitive approach, the "Cognitive Intrusion of Work." This simply meant that work/life balance is not just to find time to do all that needs to be done but more importantly, it is about the "cognitive space" necessary to process, organize, and respond to the thinking demands of life with in a complex society. Ezzedeen and Swiercz found that the cognitive intrusion of work results in lower job satisfaction, less happiness, a greater incidence of work/life conflict. Their findings challenge long-held assumptions about the role of personality, gender, family status and age with regard to work/life balance. Professor Swiercz states, "this research not only gives employers a new benchmarking tool, it also provides a new theoretical basis for understanding this important
Despite the worldwide quest for the concept of Work-Life Balance, only a handful have found an acceptable definition. Let us first discuss what is not included in work-life balance. Work-Life Balance does not mean an equal balance with respect to the devotion of the equal time for both the work as well as family responsibilities. Scheduling an equal number of hours for each of your various work and personal activities is usually unrewarding and unrealistic. Each one’s best individual work-life balance will vary over time. The right balance for an employee today will probably be different for him tomorrow. The work life balance for employees will be different when he is single, when married, or when he has children; when you start a new career versus when you are nearing retirement. Thus there is no perfect, one-size fits all, balance for employees. The best work-life balance is different for different people because we all have different priorities, different circumstances and different lives.

However, at the core of an effective work-life balance definition, achievement and enjoyment are the two key concepts that are relevant to every one of us. Most of us crave to attain all the comforts and a feeling of satisfaction both at domestic as well as the professional front and thus gets the sense of achievement. As part of a relevant Work-Life Balance definition, enjoyment does not just mean simply what leads to superficial happiness. Enjoyment here means Pride, Satisfaction, Happiness, Celebration, Love, A Sense of Well Being and Joys alike. Achievement and Enjoyment are the two sides of the same coin of one’s values in the life. One can’t get one without the other. One can’t lead his life happily without the support of the other. Trying to live a one sided life is why so many "Successful" people are not happy, or not nearly as happy as they should be in their lives. Therefore one cannot get the full value from life without both the Achievement and Enjoyment. At work you can create your own best Work-Life Balance by
making sure that not only achievement of their targets at job are important, but also it should reflect the joy of the job, and the joy of life, both.

The issue of how work life balance can be achieved and enhanced has received significant attention of both the employers, and the employees. The prospect of having a skilled and an ageing workforce is now imperative for the organizations to embrace work/life balance practices to attract and retain talent, not only from the traditional sources but also uses untapped and diverse social groups. The women employees, the working mothers, mature workers and some minority groups are social groups whose lifestyles can often demand greater attention towards work/life balance. For a stable commercial sustainability in future the organizations need to not only encourage but also mandate a practical and workable work/life balance policy, befitting the needs of both the organization and its employees. The organizations that fail in providing so are inviting in their organizations, an increasing numbers of dissatisfied and unproductive employees and hence increased attrition rates. Merely creating a work/life policy framework would also not be enough; fostering an organizational culture that supports the use of available policies is also of great importance. Every employee, be it a male or a female, deserves to have the sufficient time to spend with his/her family and participate in extra-curricular activities that help him/her de-stress. It is high time now that we give up the orthodox notions of considering work as the only priority of employees. There are many companies today which encourage working from home by evaluating the performance of an employee by the results rather than the time spent inside the office. "We believe that it is not about the 'x' number of hours you spend inside the office but the work you deliver at the end of the day. We give our employees the freedom to work out of any premises and deliver the performance that is expected out of them. We believe in giving them the option of choosing how and where they want to work rather than creating a
structure about it. We have the performance evaluation program that is such that their working from home doesn't hinder their performance criteria." [6] If such opportunities are provided by a greater number of companies in market, it would be better for the employees to handle both their works as well as their families. It is time for 'work-life balance' to rise out of its conceptual stage and become a reality in all industries, both for male as well as female employees on a uniform level. But such a phenomenon is only possible when every company rises to the occasion of understanding the needs of all its workers and coining effective and efficient policies for their immediate benefit. This will lead to more satisfied employees and in turn a better productivity. It been proved that the benefit programs have the potential to significantly improve the employee morale, reduce absenteeism, and retain organizational knowledge and talent, particularly during the difficult economic times. In today's globalised market, as companies aim to reduce costs, it falls to the human resource professional to understand the critical issues of work/life balance programs. Be it employees whose family members and/or friends are called to serve their country, single mothers who are trying to raise their children and make a living, Generation X and Y employees who value their personal time, couples struggling to manage dual-career marriages, or companies losing critical knowledge when employees leave for other opportunities, work/life programs offer a win-win situation for both employers and employees. There are unique work/life programs structured according to the needs of the employees, they are necessarily to be customized. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) is one such beneficial program that can play a vital role in an organization's eldercare program. Some of the lesser-known benefits of an EAP are referrals to community programs and contacts regarding eldercare issues. Human resource professionals could significantly increase EAP usage by learning more about EAP eldercare support and communicating this to the employees. Through these actions,
HR professionals can emphasize the importance of EAPs to management and at the same time leverage EAP benefits to employees. Similarly Total Life Planning is a new and innovative approach to work/life benefits that helps employees to examine the important aspects of their professional and personal lives and understand how they relate. Their goal is "to encourage employees to look at their lives as a whole and assess relationships, emotional and physical wellbeing, careers, spirituality, and their personal financial situation. From these programs, employees can assess their available choices to improve balance in their lives and develop an individualized life plan the most successful programs set a goal-oriented environment with a meaningful and transformational component for each individual." The concept of the total life planning represents a paradigm shift in our society. One of the major benefits is renewed employee energy, enthusiasm for work, and increased productivity. Total life planning programs may be offered in conjunction with benefits such as health, life, and disability insurance, or on a standalone basis. However, not all organizations might wish to implement the same trendy work/life balance programs in its work place.

Heavy lay-offs in the early 1990s, mostly the result of enthusiasm for the ephemeral fad of re-engineering, changed attitudes to work. For many, downsizing sounded the death-knell for having a job for life. Young skilled workers increasingly write their own terms of the employment. In such a labor market, where short-term contracts are the norm, corporate schemes to improve the balance of employees' lives can become a side-show. It was forecasted that for time to come, the talented people will be more in demand by employers. Those employers should note that for a growing number of these types of employees the most appealing way would be to provide them with the freedom to work as and when they please.

Some companies explored the importance of the work/life balance some time ago. IBM has more
than 50 different programs promoting work-life balance and Bank of America over 30 in it. But many others remain resistant and also few lack the capacity to cater to such ideas even if they wanted to. The pioneer component of almost all schemes to promote work-life balance is the flexible working that relives the employees from the rigid nine-to-five schedules and benefitted them to work even away from their formal office. IBM says that 40% of its employees today work off the company premises. For many businesses, flexible working as become a necessity. Globalization has spread the hours in which workers need to communicate with each other and increased the call for flexible shifts. For most of them, they still mean little more than child care, health care and flexible working. Businesses are befitted to a great extent by improving employees' work-life balance such in lowering the rates of employment turnover in them and also sometimes these programs can be surprisingly cost-effective too. IBM, for instance, is spending $50m over five years on “dependant-care” facilities for its employees. Although that sounds generous, it is the equivalent of little more than $30 for each IBM employee every year. That is far cheaper than a pay rise and probably a better way to retain talented mothers and fathers. And IBM says that 40% of its employees today work off the company premises. The proliferation of work-life-balance schemes and activities are to a greater extent is a need of today's human capital market. Companies majorly are now worrying about the shortage of skilled employees and if they get them it's a challenge to persuade such talented people to retain with them. The employee-market conditions were very different in beginning of 2000. Attrition rates went down then because staff was afraid to leave. Many of the employees were offered unpaid sabbaticals for the sake of the organization’s health and not just as an added benefit to the individual. The introduction of the flexible working, of itself, might not give any guarantee that employees' work-life balance will improve. The same technology that enables them to work
flexibly from home or on the road also prevents them from ever leaving their office. With the sophistication in technological upgradation, employees are expected to be at work or at least in proximity of the employers for 24X7, and boundaries between office and personal lives have become bleak. A 24x7 commitment to work could help to achieve business goals and ensure life’s little luxuries but makes the personal lives and relationships often suffer. The organizations have realised that the cost of setting up communication infrastructure is nothing as compared to the benefits they provide. It is taken as a normal thing now for people to take calls around midnight or even at dawn and wonderfully it is accepted by the family members but they know it makes them suffer a lot.

1.3.2. Need for Balancing Work and Personal Life

Increasingly, work-life balance is being viewed as an important issue by many employees and organizations today. In today’s world, where every individual has to balance conflicting responsibilities and commitments, work-life balance has emerged as a predominant issue in the workplace [10]. The choice between two apparently opposite wants, i.e. an active and satisfying career, or marriage, children, and a happy family life puts them in a dilemma. Many studies have made it evident that many domestic factors bring hindrances in their carrier advancements and also that working mothers face a great difficulty (real or perceived) in combining the two roles of working and mothering (Knight, 1994) [11]. In fact, the frustrating search for work life balance is a frequent topic of conversation among men and women alike which has an adverse effect on their performances. Work-life imbalance usually arises out of a lack of adequate time and/or support to manage work commitments as well as personal and family responsibilities. The race of competing demands of work and family is tiring and can be stressful that might
lead to sickness and in turn might increase absenteeism. And these ailments inevitably would affect performance. Work-life balance, generally considered as a state of wellbeing to handle multiple responsibilities, has become a critical factor for bringing individual and organizational success. Work-life balance is best achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life, both inside and outside paid work, is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business, and society.  

A balanced life conceives of work and family as mutually reinforcing. Organizations, aware of the positive implications of balanced life, have begun considering family experiences as part of what workers bring to their workplace to enrich their contributions to work and organizations (Gallos, 1989) and vice versa. In fact, work life balance brings greater effectiveness to all aspects of life. Employees work better when they find adequate time out of their work schedule, for family and personal interests. From the employees' perspective, work-life balance is an effective resolution of the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal or family responsibilities. From the employers' viewpoint, work-life balance poses the challenge of creating an organizational culture supportive of the family needs of employees so that the employees while at work can focus better on their jobs.  

Also the Changing Face of Family and with the growing diversity of family structures represented in the workforce in the new millennium, it is important that human resource professionals should bring changes in reformulating the interface of work and family relationships and the resulting impact of the same at the workplace. Research by Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002) documented that segments of the workforce may be subject to unique
work family pressures, yet often have few sources of support. The variations of these groups of individuals with potentially difficult and different types of work family pressures makes the work family research little complicated, uncertain and fails to employers' understanding of their needs at times. Mostly studies have focused on employed men and women who are married or living with a partner or those with children. But the new workforce market that comprises of some other types of employees such as single-earner mothers and fathers, single and childless employees with extensive responsibility for eldercare and many other categories that keep emerging as per the socio-cultural changes in the society are overlooked. From both the employer and employee viewpoint, in today's society the changing nature, values and composition of family is one of the prime factors responsible for these complicated work groups. As human resource professionals the framing up of policies and programs to address the skilled workforce retention which is the resultant of their job satisfaction, morale development, and enhanced productivity etc. commands a serious consideration of their changed social and demographical variables.

Companies have begun to realize how important the work-life balance is to the productivity and creativity of their employees. Research by Kenexa Research Institute in 2007 shows that those employees who were more favorable toward their organization's efforts to support work-life balance also indicated a much lower intent to leave the organization, greater pride in their organization, a willingness to recommend it as a place to work and higher overall job satisfaction. Therefore it's the employers that can frame a range of distinct benefit programs for their employees such as flexible working arrangements, flexible working schedules, working from home and telecommuting work etc. Further the proactive employers might provide the
employees with compulsory leave, strict maximum hours etc that might motivate the employees by inculcating the thought of being cared by their employers. And this would benefit at both individual as well as the organizational level. But these practices are enjoyed generally by only highly skilled workers, although many professional fields would not go so far as to discourage workaholic behavior whereas the unskilled ones would almost always would enjoy the bare minimum benefits. In fact, work life balance brings greater effectiveness to all aspects of life. Employees work better when they find adequate time out of their work schedule, for family and personal interests. From the employees’ viewpoint, work-life balance is an effective resolution of the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal or family responsibilities. From the employers’ viewpoint, work-life balance poses the challenge of creating an organizational culture supportive of the family needs of the employees so that the employees can focus better on their jobs while at work. When an employer adopts policies favorable to work life balance, it is likely to be perceived by the employees as a huge incentive, which can motivate them as much as other considerations like additional remuneration or provision of training opportunities. Results of various researches indicate that employees are no longer interested in devoting their entire time to their work or profession. They are becoming increasingly conscious of the outcomes of a healthy life as well. Good employers are fast realizing that it would be very difficult for them to attract, retain, and develop manpower unless they try to integrate work and life of the employees effectively. In fact, many studies have shown that the employees nowadays seem to value the quality of life more than the amount of salary they get (Vloeberghs, 2002) They also suggest that people want to have more control over their work and accord more meaning to it. They want a better work-life balance. The best employers are not great because of their perks and benefits, but because of their organizational culture and policies that promote meaningful work,
and a nurturing as well as supportive workplace. These developments strengthen the search of companies for better ways of accommodating some of the expectations of the employees with regard to both family and professional lives hence enhancing the performance, in turn productivity.

1.3.3. Work Life Policies Expected

While at work in their highly acclaimed book, Work and Family--Allies or Enemies, Friedman and Greenhaus (2000), two leaders in work/life balance, bring forth new evidence to help us understand choices we make as employers and individuals regarding work and family. This pioneering study of more than 800 business professionals considered values, work, and family lives and found that "work and family, the dominant life roles for most employed women and men in contemporary society, can either help or hurt each other." Conflict between work and family has real consequences and significantly affects quality of the family life and career attainment of the employees. The conflict might affect the women employees such as serious constraints on their career and promotional choices, limited opportunity for career advancement and success in their work role, and of course might result in the dilemma of choosing between two apparent opposites yet both important--an active and satisfying career or family. Considering at behavioral interference of the work on family and family on work, the human resource managers are supposed to frame something that would have a positive impact on both.

We live in stressful times, and each of us deals with stress every day. In the past three years, an increasing number of employees surveyed indicate that the stress is the outcome of their struggle with their work/life balance. This in turn increasing can rapidly lead to low employee morale, poor productivity, and decreasing the job satisfaction. Some of the specific symptoms that relate
directly to productivity in the work environment are abuse of sick time, cheating, chronic
absenteeism, distrust, embezzlement, organizational sabotage, tardiness, task avoidance, and
violence in the workplace. To name a few more are depression, alcohol and drug abuse, marital
as well as financial problems, compulsive eating disorders, and employee burnout. There are a
number of measures being adopted by the companies worldwide in order to reduce or overcome
the stress level amongst the employees in the organizations.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), offered by many employers, are such measures and are
an excellent resource for those employees who are under stress. EAPs are the diversified myriad
of services that are customized as per the needs of employees, from drug and alcohol abuse
counseling to addressing family and marriage problems, financial and legal difficulties, and other
stress-related problems. In addition, in line with the times and the increasing stress levels in our
society, a new profession has emerged: work life professionals. The Work life initiatives taken
could act as a greatly untapped workplace solution that has the potential to significantly address
the stressful work environments. Although an employer's commitment towards adopting
work/life initiatives is directly influenced by the perception of whether or not such initiatives
have a positive return on investment. In past recent years, employers have increasingly realized
that the quality of an employee's personal and family life does affect the work quality and so
there are concrete business reasons to promote work and family integration.

1.4. Status of IT Companies in India.

The IT & ITES sector includes IT services, engineering design and R&D services, ITES i.e., IT-
enabled services or Business process outsourcing (BPOs) and hardware. Today IT and ITES
sectors lead the economic growth in terms of employment, export promotion, revenue generation
and standards of living. As per NASSCOM estimates, IT/ITES sector (excluding hardware) revenues are estimated at USD 87.6 billion in FY 2011-12; and the industry was expected to grow by 19 per cent during FY 2012-13. The IT and ITES sector has led to employment opportunities, both direct and indirect, of nearly 2.8 million and around 8.9 million respectively. This growth is expected to increase to more than 14 million (direct and indirect) by 2015 and to around 30 million by 2030. The market size of the industry is expected to rise to USD 225 billion by 2020 considering India's competitive position, growing demand for exports, Government policy support, and increasing global footprint. IT & ITES industry has led India's economic growth and this sector's contribution to the national GDP has risen from 1.2 per cent in 1997-98 and reached to 7.5 per cent in 2011-12. IT & ITES industries are highly localized and clustered in seven cities as of today. These are: Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Gurgaon/Noida/New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Pune. Infrastructure limits and scarcity of land has recently led to expansion to newer places like Ahmedabad, Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Jaipur, Kochi, Madurai, Mangalore, Mysore and Trivandrum.

1.4.1. Factors leading to growth in the IT and ITES sectors:

- Low operating costs and tax advantage.
- Favorable government policies.
- Technically qualified personnel easily available in the country.
- Rapid adoption of IT technologies in major sectors as Telecom, Manufacturing etc.
- Strong growth in export demand from new verticals and non-traditional sectors as public sector, media and utilities.
- Use of new and emerging technologies such as cloud computing.
- SEZ as growth drivers; as more of SEZs are now being set up in Tier II cities and about 43 new tier II/III cities are emerging as IT delivery locations.

All these factors have given IT/ITES industry in India a strong competitive position with high market share.

1.4.2. Introduction to the terms

Information Technology (IT) is defined as the design, development, implementation and management of computer-based information systems, particularly software applications and computer hardware. Today, it has grown to cover most aspects of computing and technology. The largest firms globally include IBM, HP, Dell and Microsoft. The Information Technology-Enabled Services (ITES) industry provides services that are delivered over telecom or data network to a range of external business areas. Examples of such business process outsourcing (BPO) include customer service, web-content development, back office management and network consultancy etc.

1.4.3. Indian IT-BPO Industry

FY2012 was a landmark year – while the Indian IT-BPO industry weathered uncertainties in the global business environment, that was also the year when the industry is set to reach a significant milestone – aggregate revenue for FY2012 was expected to cross USD 100 billion. Aggregate IT software and services revenue (excluding hardware) is estimated at USD 88 billion.
Key Highlights during FY2012

- India – A trillion dollar economy; GDP growth rate projected at 9 per cent for 2011
- Fast emerging as a growth story driven by a growing middle class, consumer spending, and technology innovation
- Increasing adoption of technology and Telecom by consumers and focused Government initiatives – leading to increased ICT adoption
- Milestone year for Indian IT-BPO industry-aggregate revenues cross the USD 100 billion mark, exports at USD 69 billion
- Within the global sourcing industry, India was able to increase its market share from 51 per cent in 2009, to 58 per cent in 2011, highlighting India’s continued competitiveness and the effectiveness of India-based providers delivering transformational benefits
• Export revenues (including Hardware) estimated to reach USD 69.1 billion in FY2012 growing by over 16 per cent; Domestic revenues (including Hardware) at about USD 31.7 billion, growing by over 9 per cent

• Software and services revenues (excluding Hardware), comprising nearly 87 per cent of the total industry revenues, expected to post USD 87.6 billion in FY2012; estimated growth of about 14.9 per cent over FY2011

• Within Software and services exports, IT services accounts for 58 per cent, BPO is nearly 23 per cent and ER&D and Software Products account for 19 per cent

• The industry continues to be a net employment generator - expected to add 230,000 jobs in FY2012, thus providing direct employment to about 2.8 million, and indirectly employing 8.9 million people

• As a proportion of national GDP, the sector revenues have grown from 1.2 per cent in FY1998 to an estimated 7.5 per cent in FY2012

• The industry’s share of total Indian exports (merchandise plus services) increased from less than 4 per cent in FY1998 to about 25 per cent in FY2012

• While the global macroeconomic scenario remained uncertain, the industry exhibited resilience and adaptability in continually reinventing itself to retain its appeal to clients

• Embracing emerging technologies, increased customer-centricity, deepening focus on new markets, adopting new business models are some successful growth strategies followed by the industry
1.4.4. Impact of IT Industry on India's Growth

IT-BPO sector has become one of the most significant growth catalysts for the Indian economy. In addition to fuelling India’s economy, this industry is also positively influencing the lives of its people through an active direct and indirect contribution to the various socio-economic parameters such as employment, standard of living and diversity among others. The industry has played a significant role in transforming India’s image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. The industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy. When it rains, it pours as they say, and so it did in 2010. The global economic downturn of the past year had a lingering effect on the GDP growth and employment in developed markets. However, based on pent-up demand from the corporate sector and return of discretionary spending, there was a surge in IT spending across markets, both traditional and emerging. And not all of it was customer-led – service providers did their part too, by providing new business models that encouraged first time buyers, and re-invented value propositions for existing ones. Further, with sector focus shifting from basic outsourcing advantages of cost and talent, to higher value added services, innovation and transformation, global sourcing is now evolving from being tactical to being of strategic benefit to clients. Indian IT-BPO sector has become one of the most significant growth catalysts for the Indian economy. In addition to fuelling India’s economy, this industry is also positively influencing the lives of its people through an active direct and indirect contribution to the various socio-economic parameters such as employment, standard of living and diversity among others. The industry has played a significant role in transforming India’s image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing
world class technology solutions and business services. The industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy. Domestic IT-BPO revenue (excluding hardware) was expected to grow at almost 17 per cent to reach Rs 918 billion in FY2012. Strong economic growth, rapid advancement in technology infrastructure, increasingly competitive Indian organizations, enhanced focus by the government and emergence of business models that help provide IT to new customer segments are key drivers for increased technology adoption in India.

1.4.5. Employment Trends in IT Companies

The Indian IT-BPO industry has proved to be a premier source of mass employment across the country. However, to attain ‘industry-ready’ status, organizations were required to equip their employees with a new set of skills – foreign language capabilities, global business process knowledge, sales and marketing skills, research (business, market, financial) and business analytics. Service providers are effectively utilising India’s talent pool by designing large scale talent re-engineering initiatives and employee engagement activities. This is enabling the industry to provide both end-to-end and high-end value-added services across sectors. India’s talent base is expanding rapidly with an annual addition of nearly 4.4 million graduates and postgraduates in FY2012. India retains its dominant position as the leading country to churn out ‘Ready-to-hire’ pool of graduates, 400,000-500,000, in 2011. Industry-NASSCOM-Government initiatives to enhance long-term employability through finishing schools, mentorship programs, setting up industry benchmark (NASSCOM Assessment of Competence) and IT-BPO initiative. Internally, supply side is taking several employee engagement initiatives to retain human
capital– retention/performance-based bonuses, rewards & recognitions, career development plans, up/cross-skilling, CSR initiatives etc.

As per the Economic Survey 2011-12, the IT and ITES industries has added 7.96 lakh jobs in one year, in the period ending September 2011. According to NASSCOM, employee base in the rural areas is expected to increase by over 10 times by 2013-14, compared to 5000 in 2009-10. According to a customer poll conducted by Booz and Co, India is the most preferred destination for engineering off shoring, which are encouraging foreign companies to offshore complete product responsibility to Indian ITES companies. Hyderabad is fast becoming the IT and ITES hub of India with new players hankering to get a foothold here, and existing players continuing to hire aggressively. Large companies such as Infosys, TCS, Genpact, Deloitte, Facebook, Bank of America, Thomson Reuters, Amazon, Google, Cognizant, and Franklin Templeton among others, are growing their presence in the state. According to Andhra Pradesh Government's estimates, the total IT and ITES sector hiring for 2012-13 could be at about 50,000 professionals.

In the twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17), the Department of Information Technology proposes to strengthen and extend the existing core infrastructure projects to provide more horizontal connectivity, build redundancy connectivity, undertake energy audits of State Data Centers (SDCs) etc.

1.4.6. List released by NASSCOM for top-10 IT companies in India.

1. Tata Consultancy Services

The Indian software industry is set to keep up its growth rate despite the slowdown in the economy. According to the latest National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) rankings, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd., Infosys Technologies Ltd. and Wipro
Technologies Ltd are the top 3 revenue generators in India. TCS is one of India's largest corporate houses. It is also India's largest IT employer with the staff strength of 111,000 employees. The company began as a division of the Tata Group, called the Tata Computer Centre. Its main business was to offer computer services to other group companies. Soon the company was spun off as Tata Consultancy Services after it realised the huge potential of the booming IT services. S. Ramadorai, is the chief executive officer and managing director of TCS. TCS is IDC-Dataquest IT best employer in IT services in 2007. TCS also topped DataQuest DQTop 20 list of IT service providers in 2007.
Top Information Technology Companies in India

**TATA Consultancy Services (TCS)**
Asia's largest global software and services company. Providing software consulting through its 68 offices spanning 19 countries with over 13,000 consultants. Has major offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Madras, Secunderabad, Bangalore and Pune in India.

*Category*: Computers

*Website URL*: [http://www.tcs.com](http://www.tcs.com)

**Infosys Technologies Limited**
Infosys offers offshore-based software services such as application development, software maintenance, Internet consulting, and establishing software centers for their customers. Has offices in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, India, Japan, Scandinavia, UK and USA.

*Category*: Computers

*Website URL*: [http://www.infosys.com](http://www.infosys.com)

**Wipro Technologies**
Wipro is a global provider of software services to Fortune 500 companies. Wipro is a diversified, integrated Corporation in Services, Technology Products and Consumer Products.

*Category*: Computers >> Consulting Services

*Website URL*: [http://www.wipro.com](http://www.wipro.com)

**HCL Technologies**
HCL Technologies provides technology development services, Software engineering services, Application engineering services and Networking services.

*Category*: Computers >> Software Development

*Website URL*: [http://www.hcltechnologies.com](http://www.hcltechnologies.com)

**Fig.1.2: Top-10 IT companies in India (source: www.nasscom)**
2. Infosys

Infosys Technologies Ltd was started in 1981 by seven people with $250. Today, the company boasts of revenues of over $4 billion and 94,379 employees. Under the leadership of N R Narayana Murthy, the company has become a global brand. The company is now headed by Mr. Narayan Murthy. Forbes magazine named Infosys in its list of Global High Performers. Waters magazine rated Infosys as the Best Outsourcing Partner. The Banker magazine conferred two Banker Technology Awards on Infosys to acclaim its work in wholesale and capital markets in two categories - Payments and Treasury Services, and Offshoring and Outsourcing. The International Association of Outsourcing Professionals (IAOP) ranked Infosys at No. 3 in its '2008GlobalOutsourcing100'.

3. Wipro

What started off as a hydrogenated cooking fat company, Wipro is today is a $5 billion revenue generating IT, BPO and R&D services organisation with presence in over 50 countries. Premji started Wipro with the 'idea of building an organisation which was deeply committed to values, in the firm belief that success in business would be its inevitable, eventual outcome'. The company has over 72,000 employees. Wipro was the only Indian company to be ranked among the top 10 global outsourcing providers in IAOP's 2006 Global Outsourcing 100 listing. Wipro has also won the International Institute for Software Testing's Software Testing Best Practice Award.
4. HCL Technologies

HCL is a leading global technology player comprises two companies listed in India, HCL Technologies and HCL Infosystems. Founded in 1976, HCL is one of 'India's original IT garage start ups'. The HCL team comprises 53,000 professionals of diverse nationalities, operating across 18 countries. At a time when India had a total of 250 computers, Shiv Nadar led a young team which passionately believed in the growth of the IT industry. Three decades later, he succeeded in creating a $4.9 billion global enterprise.

5. Satyam Computer Services

Established in 1987 by Ramalinga Raju, Satyam has a staff strength of 51,000 employees. In 2008, the company's revenues crossed the $2-billion mark. 'A simple, yet extensive management model to create value, which promotes entrepreneurship, a focus on the customer, and the constant pursuit of excellence,' is the company's mantra for success. Satyam is among the youngest IT service companies to reach $1 billion in annual revenues. It is ranked No. 1 in the ASTD (American Society for Training and Development) BEST Award, 2007.

6. Tech Mahindra

Tech Mahindra was incorporated as a joint venture between Mahindra & Mahindra and BT plc in 1986 under the name of 'Mahindra-British Telecom'. Later, the name was changed to 'Tech Mahindra', in order to reflect the diversification and growth of the client base and
service offerings. The company was incorporated in 1986. Tech Mahindra is a global systems integrator and business transformation consulting firm focused on the communications industry. At the helm of the fast expanding organisation is Vineet Nayyar. In a career spanning over 40 years, he has worked with the government, international multilateral agencies and the corporate sector.

7. Patni Computer Systems

Patni Computer Systems Ltd is one of the leading global providers of information technology services and business solutions. The company has clients across the Americas, Europe and Asia-Pacific locations. The company has serviced more than 400 Fortune 1000 companies, for over two decades. Patni Computer Systems Limited was incorporated on 10 February 1978 under the Companies Act, 1956. On 18 September 2003, the Company converted itself from a private limited company into a public limited company. The company headed founded by Narendra K Patni by has a staff strength of over 14,000 professionals. Frost & Sullivan ranked Patni 1st among 'Top 5 Engineering Service Providers'.

8. i-flex Solutions

i-flex started as a division of Citicorp (now Citigroup), wholly owned subsidiary called Citicorp Overseas Software Ltd. (COSL) in 1991. Later, a separate company Citicorp Information Technologies Industries Ltd. (CITIL) was formed and Rajesh Hukku was appointed as its head. CITIL started off with the universal banking product, MicroBanker which became very successful. In the mid-90s, CITIL developed Flexcube at its Bangalore development centre. After the launch of Flexcube, all of CITIL's transactional banking
products were brought under a common brand umbrella. CITIL changed its name to i-flex solutions to reflect its growing independence from Citicorp and to strengthen its Flexcube brand. In 2006, i-flex became a majority-owned subsidiary of Oracle Corporation

9. Mphasis

Mphasis Limited was formed in June 2000 after the merger of the US-based IT consulting company Mphasis Corporation (founded in 1999 and the Indian IT services company BFL Software Limited (founded in 1993). Jeya Kumar is CEO of Mphasis, which has a staff strength of 27,000 people. Mphasis was named among amongst the Top 100 Companies in Global Outsourcing.

10. L&T Infotech

L&T Infotech is a global IT services and solutions provider. It is a subsidiary company of Larsen & Toubro Ltd. (L&T), an engineering, manufacturing and construction conglomerate, with global operations. A M Naik is the chairman of the company. Originally founded as L&T Information Technology Ltd (LTITL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Larsen & Toubro Ltd (L&T), the company changed its name to L&T Infotech on 1st April, 1997. In 2004, it tied up with Fidelity Information Services, a division of Fidelity National Financial to provide banking solutions for the Indian banking industry.

The efforts of the industry towards the holistic development of the Indian economy and society will continue making a positive impact and changing lives as it has done so far. Further, the industry has acted as socially responsible corporations playing an active role in regional development across India, empowerment of diverse human assets, driving technology and
innovation to transform client businesses, and enhancing the overall brand image of India. On its part, since 2009, as a result of an altered demand landscape, the sector had begun to transform itself by actively diversifying beyond core offerings and markets through new business and pricing models, specialise to provide end-to-end service offerings with deeper penetration across verticals, transform process delivery through re-engineering and enabling technology, innovate through research and development and drive inclusive growth in India by developing targeted solutions for the domestic Indian market. When demand returned in 2010, the combined effect of all these factors helped India grow faster than its competitors, accounting for almost 90 per cent of incremental growth in the global sourcing market. IT services spend increasing by 1.4 per cent in 2010, within which IT outsourcing grew by 2.4 per cent. Continuous ROI focus led to BPO growing by 4 per cent, while software products rose by 3.7 per cent led by increased focus on security, storage, and application development. Within IT outsourcing, global sourcing grew by 10.4 per cent in 2010, validating the industry’s integral position in service delivery chain. What is surprising though is that none of the top 5 Indian software companies make the cut in the top 50 companies. No mention of Infosys, TCS, Wipro or Tech-Mahindra. When the same survey was covered, Google was placed in 3rd position, while Indian bread RMSI Pvt. Ltd. was top company to work for in India. In 2010 list of Great places to work, 3 out of top 5 companies are Multinationals while 4 of them are technology companies. Generally, the list suggests that Technology / IT companies offer better working environment and work life balance to its employees, as majority of them are tech oriented companies.
1.5. Why Work Life balance in IT Companies?

The work culture in IT sector is very different, working in shifts, working hours are long, targets are challenging, thus making it a tedious job. It becomes tough when it comes to women in IT who are expected to justify both at home as well as at a tedious work place. It is even more challenging in context of Indian women where it is moral duty of working women to fulfill the role of homemaker and also obliged to follow social and customary obligations. This inevitably has a negative influence on the mental as well as physical health of the women working in this sector. It becomes a real challenge to maintain a balance between physical and mental rhythm of women executives to synchronize with that of the demands of work. Striking a balance is the real fulfillment to life. In the rat race of our present day existence, especially in the long working hour’s ethos of our industry, we forget to maintain a balance between work and family. The result is devastating: high levels of stress, trauma, and even nervous breakdowns. All this translates in to HR departments paying more and more attention to the aspirations of every employee and creating parameters of social interactivity to enable them to constantly discover their true potential. The IT industry and other ITES companies are constantly reframing their work-life policies because of high attrition rates. More than half of corporate India’s work force suffers from various chronic & lifestyle diseases with those in the information technology (IT) & IT enabled services (ITES), media, knowledge process outsourcing (KPO) & financial services topping the list, says an industry group report.

A study by the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry (Assocham) said 54% Of the workforce in the IT and ITES sectors were afflicted with depression severe headaches, obesity, chronic backaches spondylosis, diabetes & hypertension. It said of them, 23% suffered from
spondylosis, 20% from sleeping disorder and 18% from obesity. Other ailments were depression (16%), fatigue (13%) & high BP (9%). In the media sector, 51% of respondents suffered from similar ailments, with about 36% suffering from High Blood Pressure, 29% from depression and 15% afflicted with diabetes. Of the near 50% of KPO employees who reported ailments, 24% suffered from sleeping disorder, 17% reported regular headaches and fatigue, 12% suffered from depression and 9% with diabetes and obesity. Financial services emerged as the fourth hardest-hit sector, with 47% of its workforce reporting various ailments. Of them, 24% suffered from a high level of fatigue, 18% from diabetes, 14% had cardiovascular disorders and 12% sleeping disorder. As per the National Sleep Foundation—a US-based non-profit organization, sleeping disorder increases chances of diabetes by 81%, hypertension by 79%, heart diseases by 78% & depression by 83%. This makes these firms alert towards its employees and their physical and psychological well being.

1.5.1. Working in IT Industry

Information Technology Industry is the sun rising sector where the long working hours and work overload are typical, according to many human resources managers. Though most of the IT firms have a five-day week, the workload is going up. After the 2001-02 slumps, companies that downsized did not always hire more people after business picked up. This means that being called to work on weekends and 14-hour working days have become synonymous with the sector. There are also long intervals between projects when many software professionals are sent to training sessions to keep them occupied. They react to such breaks negatively; many feel that they are not competent enough or that their potential is not adequately used. There is also disappointment among newcomers, especially in the Information Technology sector. Other
studies have revealed that I.T. executives suffer from deep feelings of inferiority owing to factors such as working during nights and not really using their soft skills. The skewed work-life balance affects their health and family life. The world has recognized India's competitive advantage in software services and today India is a magnet for software clients owing to the quality of its skilled software manpower (NASSCOM, 2010). India has gained a lot of interest as a source of software and has emerged as a leader in the software industry. Indian firms develop software for more than three fourth of the Fortune 500 companies and at least half of the Global 2000 corporations (NASSCOM, 2009).

The role of women has been changing substantially over the last decade and half, both inside and outside homes. In addition to their role within households, they are now having a larger role in the outside world also, especially in the labor market. Though women are found in all fields, their participation in the I.T. industry is more. Unlike other sectors, this fast growing business sector is looking for knowledge only. Hence, they do not discriminate the gender. As a result, there is significant number of women employees in this sector. NASSCOM Survey reveals that 38 per cent of the employees are women. When compared to the manufacturing sector, I.T. Industry includes all knowledge based activities. Both men and women are attracted by this rising sector for the lucrative pay. But this job requires profound contribution at job environment, psychological involvement of mind and good physical fitness. There is also a pressure to complete the task in time due to cut throat competitions. Also they have to work for both Indian and foreign companies/clients/projects which need different work climate, timings etc., which leads to work life imbalance in this sector. An attempt is made in this analysis to examine the work life imbalance of the women employees across the various categories of employment.
1.5.2. Work-life Balance Initiatives in IT Companies

The IT companies have lined-up measures ranging from realignment of shift timings to people-oriented initiatives such as Diwali fests complete with firework displays, to ensure that business continues during the festivities. "We have realigned our timings to allow employees to go back early. Also, advance planning for critical functions such as online interactions has been done. We will be finishing the shifts by late afternoon to allow employees to be with their families in the evening," said Mr Rohit Arora, Chairman of eMR Technology Ventures. Exëvo, a Knowledge Process Outsourcing firm, has offered a deal to its employees — in case they come in on Tuesday, they would get two compensatory offs. On a strategic plane, the emphasis on minimum standards has been most sensible as also the gradual framing and adoption of a self-regulatory agency "for laying guidelines on a range of issues, including data protection and work conditions of employees". It can be no one's case that the ITES sector is uniformly employee-friendly in the country. On the contrary, it should be the universal appeal that the sector should be strengthened further if the nation is to make the most of its IT potential.

1.5.3. Work-Life Balance and its Impact on the Performance

Work-life balance, which is considered as a state of wellbeing to handle multiple responsibilities, has become a critical factor for bringing individual and organizational success. Work-life balance is best achieved when an individual’s right to a fulfilled life, both inside and outside paid work, is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business, and society. A balanced life conceives of work and family as mutually reinforcing. Organizations, aware of the positive implications of balanced life, have begun considering family experiences as part of what workers bring to their workplace to enrich their contributions to work
and organizations (Gallos, 1989) and vice versa. In fact, work-life balance brings greater effectiveness to all aspects of life. Employees work better when they find adequate time out of their work schedule, for family and personal interests. From the employees' viewpoint, work-life balance is an effective resolution of the dilemma of managing work obligations and personal or family responsibilities. From the employers' viewpoint, work-life balance poses the challenge of creating an organizational culture supportive of the family needs of the employees so that the employees can focus better on their jobs while at work. When an employer adopts policies favourable to work-life balance, it is likely to be perceived by the employees as a huge incentive, which can motivate them as much as other considerations like additional remuneration or provision of training opportunities. Good employers are fast realizing that it would be very difficult for them to attract, retain, and develop manpower unless they try to integrate work and life of the employees effectively. In fact, many studies have shown that the employees nowadays seem to value the quality of life more than the amount of salary they get (Vloeberghs, 2002). They want a better work-life balance. As a result, says Chalofsky (2003), the best employers are not great because of their perks and benefits, but because of their organizational culture and policies that promote meaningful work, and a nurturing as well as supportive workplace.

1.6. Work- Family Challenges of Women Professionals

The battle often in organizations is not on what are the differences or similarities between men and women but on how to retain women employees despite differences/no differences. Retention measures centre primarily on providing a more conducive work environment for women. In these attempts, noteworthy are the changing mindsets in proposing and handling issues of diversity and inclusivity. In most of the societies, work-life conflict seems to be quite high in case of working
women. Although men also face this challenge of balancing work and other priorities, it affects women more since they do most of the work associated with the household activities, apart from taking care of children, older family members, and other dependents. Though multiple roles in work and family can be the source of multiple satisfaction for employed women (Crosby 1987) a combination of career and family roles is often associated with conflict, overload, and stress (Frone, Russel and Cooper, 1991). Research suggests that family-to-work spill-over is stronger for women and the work-to-family spill-over is stronger for men. Gender differences exist in terms of work and family boundaries in almost every society and this has resulted in gender differences in the experiences of work-family interface (Rothbard, 2001). Even in developed countries in the West, especially in North America, sources of stress for women include role overload from paid work and family work, role conflict, pressures associated with child care and other family care, and aspects of spouse relationships, including dissatisfaction with spouses' contribution to family work (Lewis and Cooper, 1987; 1988). Women give birth to children, and still do most of the work of bringing them up. To do a demanding job and managing family and social life simultaneously is notoriously difficult. It is generally women who take the primary responsibility for childcare and who, in situations of conflict, adjust their working lives to accommodate family pressures (Wajcman, 1981; Falkenberg and Monachello, 1990). Data in various researches show that women professionals till to date assume their primary responsibility as of homemaker and child-care. Balancing both career and family is an arduous task for working women especially when they have small children and there is no well-equipped day-care/créche facility where they can leave their kids without any tension while they are at work. Women often suffer from the guilt-complex of not spending enough time during the tender age of their children and being forced to leave their children in the hands of the
maids on whom they have little faith. Women employees thus face a dual burden—work and family—which creates a lot of stress and strain and role conflict. Evidence indicates that workers who take advantage of family-friendly benefits, such as career breaks or flexible-hour contracts, are still perceived as adversely affecting their future careers by doing so (CIPD, 2003).

1.6.1. The Indian Context

The growing number of educated women in India—who are now participating in the urban, organized, industrial sector in technical, professional, and managerial positions—has been accompanied by a steady growth in dual career families (Komaraju, 1997). Research on career women in India shows that work and family dilemmas are often different from those reported by women in the West (Sekaran, 1992). As compared to their counterparts in other parts of the world, Indian employees face a lot of difficulties in managing their work and life. The inflexible working hours and the absence of childcare facilities constitute impediments rather than sources of support for employed mothers (Bharat, 2001). Though in urban India, things have started improving, yet they are not adequate. For maintaining work-life balance, social support plays a very significant role for women managers. In societies, where there is low gender egalitarianism, such as in India, spousal support is extremely important for women (Rosenbaum and Cohen, 1999). But unfortunately, even though Indian husbands are supportive of their wives' participation in the workforce, they are yet to assume responsibility for sharing domestic chores (Ramu, 1989). In India, instrumental support for most working women come in the form of hired domestic helps or female members of extended families. Although hired domestic helps in urban areas of India have been noted to be expensive and
unreliable, they still continue to be a major source of support for the growing number of nuclear families who live far from their relatives (Sekaran, 1992). Although conflict between career and family roles can be a potential source of stress for both women and men managers, it affects women in India more than men because of many reasons. While social, legal, and economic reforms have helped women to join the workforce in India, the continuing influence of normative attitudes and values have prevented them from altering the perceptions of the society as well as their own regarding their sex-roles. Equal distribution of domestic responsibilities is thus a distant possibility now (Bharat, 2003).

The expectation that women should give priority to their family-needs has definitely affected the career prospects of women in particular. In many cases, the supervisors/managers are sensitive to this issue and try to handle employees' difficulties at an individual level. However, in the absence of any systematic policy to address this important issue, the women suffer more than men in terms of their career advancement and familial role-fulfillment. One of the most important challenges they face is talent management and development. Professionals bring with them a lot of aspirations, and to be on the competitive edge they look out for three important dimensions—learning, technology and early opportunities. A recent study conducted by Wipro showed that people join the company because of the benefits and these act as a differentiating model for the organisation. In the IT industry, the best practices of today may not be the best practices after some time, so it is imperative that the company constantly improve its own business-aligned HR processes to be at the leading edge. Another dimension to the challenges faced by the industry is the growing pace of talent acquisition, which creates with it the
challenge of smoother assimilation of new employees into the organisation fold. Another important issue, which continues is retention of existing employees.

1.6.2. Workplace Issues

Work context, which includes dissatisfaction with superiors, dissatisfaction with the work environment, and organizational support has emerged as a critical dimension influencing one’s decision to move or stay in the organization. Sometimes strained relationship with superiors and peers forced the employees to look for other options. However, organizational support, especially when a couple had young children, emerged as a decisive factor for women’s stay or quit decisions. Gender emerged as an important individual differentiator among employees for their career transitions. A few women respondents with young children, who fortunately worked in supportive organizations could continue with their careers. But many young mothers had to take a career break during the child-bearing and child-rearing stages as they found it difficult to manage the work and family fronts simultaneously without organizational support. Such career interruptions were a setback to the careers of professional women. Loss of talented women employees with proven track record due to their child-rearing requirements was a setback for organizations too. In most organizations, the employee-related workplace policies and practices rest on the age-old assumption of male employees having a dependable support system back home, run presumably by their wives to take care of their familial responsibilities and also personal needs, allowing them time and energy to focus exclusively on their professional contribution and growth. The expectation that women should give priority to their family-needs has definitely affected the career prospects of women in particular. In many cases, the supervisors/managers are sensitive to this issue and try to handle employees’ difficulties at an
individual level. However, in the absence of any systematic policy to address this important issue, the women suffer more than men in terms of their career advancement and family role-fulfillment. Many organizational assumptions and practices need to be revisited to keep pace with the changing times.

1.6.3. Interrupted Career and Changed Meaning of Career for Women

The past findings suggest that for women, the concept of ‘career’ is part of the gestalt of their life, which includes, besides their work, their family, friends, community, responsibilities of care-giving and nurturing others. For men, career is viewed as life’s dominant priority with vertical professional growth in almost all the cases, whereas for women, the gestalt of life includes dual commitment to professional career as well as to their familial responsibility as care provider, especially in the maternal role. As a result of their childhood socialization, women reported to have compromised again and again on their professional front in the form of either intermittent break in their careers or making suboptimal choices of work roles, so that they could take care of their various familial responsibilities also. A significant finding of one study was that except for the first life cycle stage, when they launched their careers, women participants in all other life cycle stages had at least one interruption in their career. After the first career break due to child-birth, it seems the purpose and meaning of career changes for women as their priorities in life change. After career interruption, most women reported to have re-entered the professional domain gradually, not disturbing their familial role. After this break, work for most women was not a continuous linear progression, but a series of sporadic professional engagements which helped them make constructive use of their available time, thereby providing
them with an occasional feeling of satisfaction and self-fulfillment rather than being just a means of earning money.

Manjula Rajoli, Manager, Talent Engagement & Development, Wipro Technologies, elaborates on how Wipro manages the challenges. "Wipro's talent management and engagement has a two-fold approach. They contain the challenges by following best practices in two areas—compensation and non-compensation. Challenges arising due to compensation reasons are contained at Wipro by continuously benchmarking our salaries with our competitors and providing merit-based salary increases. In addition, for middle and senior management, we have equity-based compensation through Restricted Stock Units. They also have various employee benefit programs. These ensure that we stay competitive on the compensation front."

Employee care is a top priority. Elizabeth Mathew, Head, HR, TCS (Deccan Park-Hyderabad), states: "At TCS, we value every associate and invest in their personal and professional development. We have a number of associate engagement initiatives that bring associates and their families together in learning, fun and social activities. This enhances the bonding and commitment to the organisation. We also continuously revise our HR policies, listen to our associates' opinions, make our policies more people-friendly, and cater to varied needs of a diverse workforce." The following, according to Mathew, are some of the key issues faced by the industry in general: attracting and retaining talent, meeting volume and quality needs, providing multiple career opportunities, aligning and integrating policies with market needs, and coping with the constant pressure on compensation.
1.6.4. Barriers to the advancement to senior managerial positions

While the organizations stand to gain with the presence of a higher number of women in senior leadership positions, studies reveal that there are only a handful of women who have broken the glass ceiling – few women featuring in the list of Directors or in the role of CEOs. The main impetus for women leaders' dissatisfaction is that they do not feel fully integrated as leaders and their dissatisfaction is derived from not fitting in as equal in their leadership ranks, a lack of networks, and low social capital experienced by these women leaders. There is a strong requirement to develop a new corporate culture based on integration rather than inclusion. (Denise Cormier, 2007)\(^{38}\) Interesting is the finding published in *Harvard Business Review* (2005) that dissatisfied with the workplace experience, many women decide to quit their organization after reaching the zenith of their career. Inability to continue at the workplace resulted from dissatisfaction faced by women at the workplace. Most of them were of the view that their inability to fit in with the “masculine” work culture and bond through social networking had pushed them to a lone position in which pressures mounted without providing opportunities for a release mechanism. Transitioning of women from one role to a dual role is a recent phenomenon (almost a decade old). As is the case with any new initiative, it is time taking and heralds a change in the cultural milieu and mindsets of the people in and around home and work front. They often face the “double bind” (Hinze, 1999\(^{39}\); Adams, 2000\(^{40}\)) To perform well they must behave like “men in skirts”, ”conceptual men” (Snitow, 1990)\(^{45}\), but cannot lose their feminine qualities for fear of being ridiculed by peers, superiors, and subordinates alike. If they de-emphasize and downplay gender or feminine qualities, they may succeed in breaking the glass ceiling. The workplace culture has been created by men and is naturally “masculine” with a language competency and ethos typically favoring men. For instance,
insensitivity to language usage or partying into the wee hours of morning are some of the typical methods of bonding and reducing workplace stress and pressures. Most women, because of familial or societal pressures, may find it difficult to continue in the same strain. If the concept of gender is to be embedded in the workplace environment, gender equity as distinct from gender equality should prevail. The good news is that the initiation process has commenced. Many organizations are attempting to embed the concept of gender in their workplace experience.

1.6.5. Impact of Family Responsibilities on Career Decisions

The growing presence of professional women at workplace in India, as in other countries, is leading to a noticeable increase in dual career couples who try to manage work and non-work domains simultaneously. The challenge in the work domain for dual career couples is pursuit and enhancement of two careers, each with its demands on the commitment, time, and energy of individual members. The non-work domain includes multiple-role commitments from the family making demands on the emotional, cognitive, and financial resources of members as well as time and energy for personally meaningful pursuits such as leisure, self care, community work, social, aesthetic, spiritual interests, etc. The increasing number of professionally-trained dual career couples at the workplace is stepping up pressure on employing organizations to recognize the needs of such couples to balance their work and non-work lives. Since attraction and retention of talent is a key human resource management challenge for organizations today, understanding and addressing the special needs of dual career couples can provide a competitive edge to retaining talent. In a recently concluded study of dual career couples, the underlying dynamics for career mobility decisions of twenty-nine couples in different phases of their life cycle were explored.
1.7. Role of Organization in Providing Work-Life Balance

One of the key challenges before modern organizations is to understand what they need to do in order to reduce the avoidable loss of their talented women employees. Organizations can consider options like creating unconventional career paths with flexible work schedules, job-sharing, imaginative use of IT to allow telecommuting, facilitating re-entry of women through crash training program, providing dependable child care facilities, etc. However, the foremost requirement is to acknowledge the changing gender profile of the employees, and modify their basic assumptions about work and non work aspirations and commitments, and their needs, not only to balance, but also to enjoy multiple life roles. Such an understanding and consequent action steps can enhance an organization’s ability to retain its talented employees, especially women.

Setting a New Index for Supporting Women in IT

Some very interesting perspectives on gender matters and status of women are found in the reports such as “The Global Gender Gap Index 2009” by the World Economic Forum (WEF), and “Embedding Gender in Sustainability Reporting- A Practitioners Guide” by GRIIFC. On one hand, while global companies are trying to create an inclusive workplace, the gender gap in many countries like ours seems to still continue with no improvement at all. India seems to have done relatively better in political empowerment (ranked 24th) but has lost out on creating enough economic opportunities for women to participate in (rank 127th). The female to male ratio of legislators, senior officials, and managers in India as per the study stands at 0.03.
The GRI report titled “Embedding Gender in Sustainability Reporting - A Practitioner’s Guide” studies gender equality in the business context and its impact on the organization values, supply chain, community, investors, and consumers in detail. Organizations continue to see gender inclusion both from the business imperative and corporate social responsibility angles. They try to communicate their commitment and be inclusive in recruitment and retention practices, but accountability at the senior management levels and the diversity metrics still seem to be at a nascent stage. Organizations are struggling to create gender inclusion as a culture and not just as an HR practice. These recommendations are only meaningful only when companies start discussing their gender issues openly. While there are companies like Infosys committed to promoting an equitable and inclusive work culture, the World Economic Forum Report indicates that most companies in India do not monitor even wage gaps. There is one observation which is common in both the reports – While there are more women joining the professional workforce; the number of women in senior management in Indian Companies is very less compared to many other countries. “Family commitments as priority” is the reason most commonly quoted by researchers, companies, and women themselves for not pursuing a career as well as for not reaching the senior management levels in India. But it has to be seen whether this reason should any longer be seen as a barrier against women pursuing their careers effectively. Progressive companies are sensitive to women’s issues and have started establishing policies and support systems to help women balance life and work priorities. Indian women are also probably becoming better planners, more career- oriented, and proactive in creating a support system before starting a family. Studies reveal that Indian companies still have a long way to go in terms of child care support such as certified day care centers or nannies or even domestic help. We do not have world class infrastructure to support e-mobility which enables
women to work from home. There are still cities that are unsafe for women to travel late in the evenings. We still live in neighborhoods that gossip about women returning late after night shifts. So, while we have multiple indexes such as gender gap index, gender equity indices, gender equality index, gender empowerment index, etc. We do have a common thread that connects the needs of the women with those of the corporate and the government for supporting women throughout their career life cycle. Therefore it is important for us to create a new index to support working women which will track the level of support systems that the government, corporate and communities should provide women enabling them to balance their career and family. This should begin at a very early stage when women start their education. The index could include parameters such as society being educated on the need for women to pursue a career, the government introducing gender sensitivity courses at the senior school level itself and also policies for child care and day care centers, institutions providing career and life-related counseling services, corporate initiating work life balance programs, besides the safety and health initiatives both by corporate and government, governance bodies for monitoring workplace harassment, and taking actions against it. It is time that corporate and the government should work together on this for improving gender mix and reap the benefits of gender diversity. It is time we moved beyond women empowerment and equality issues.
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