Incidence of Work-life Imbalance among Faculty Members of Higher Education Institutions of Delhi:

61% of the faculty members of higher education Institutions of Delhi reported work-life imbalance. Work-life imbalance affects not only the personal life of faculty members but also their professional life get affected.

Figure: 5.1 Results of Work-life Imbalance among Faculty Members of Higher Education Institution in Delhi.
Work-life imbalance is a serious issue and needs to be dealt as it has serious effects of the productivity, hampers employee loyalty to the organization, hampers employee job satisfaction, reduced the commitment to the organization, increases employee absenteeism, increases employee turnover intention, hampers organizational citizenship behaviour and also affects employee life satisfaction, hampers employee relations with other staff and also his/her family members, hampers employee happiness, increases his/her tension/stress, affects marital satisfaction and also the health of the employees. Both faculty and the management need to work together to solve the issue of work-life imbalance, else it will have its negative on the faculty career life and also their personal life. Faculty members have to do a great task of preparing the future citizens of our country and if faculty themselves are struggling in managing their work-life balance then how can they give their best to the students and ultimately not only the faculty career life and personal life will suffer but the students will also suffer.

**Determinants of Work-life Imbalance among Faculty Members of Higher Education Institutions of Delhi:**

**Demographic variables:** There is significant difference in Work-life imbalance in terms of gender. Females have more work-life imbalance as compared to males. Persistence second shift can be one of the reasons of work-life imbalance being more among females. Females indulge more in household chores as compared to males, though males do help in buying grocery and teaching kids but other household activities mostly females have to do. There exists significant difference between married and unmarried faculty in terms of work-life imbalance. Married faculty reported more work-life imbalance as compared to unmarried faculty members. After marriage the family responsibility increases to a greater extent and thus effects the work-life balance of faculty member of higher education Institutions of Delhi. Unmarried faculty members have very low work-life imbalance as compared to married faculty members. Career stage has a significant impact on work-life imbalance level among faculty members. Work-life imbalance is highest among Assistant Professors and lowest among Professors. So as a faculty moves in their career ladder the level of work-life imbalance decreases and faculty starts having more of work-life balance. Family type has a significant effect on the work-life
imbalance among faculty members. Those living in nuclear family set up have more work-life imbalance as compared to those living in joint family set up. Of course, as the number of family member increases so the family responsibility gets distributed or divided among the family members and the members of the family more relieved of the family responsibilities and can concentrate on their professional life more. Significant difference exist as the number of children increases. Faculty having one child have less work-life imbalance as compared to faculty having two or more children. With increase in the number of children the responsibility also increases. Work-life imbalance is more among dual working couples as compared to single earners. In single earning family the spouse is always available to take up the family responsibilities and the working spouse can concentrate on his/her work. In dual working couples not only the physical pressure of work increases but also the mental pressure. Both the spouses know that there is nobody at home and they only have to manage all. There exists significant difference between married males whose spouse is working and married males whose spouse is not working in terms of work-life imbalance. There is no significant difference in same same career couple in terms of work-life imbalance. There is no significant difference in terms of work-life imbalance among the faculty taking up consultancy work and among those who do not take up consultancy work. There exist no significant difference in terms of work-life imbalance among those faculty having get together functions in their Institutions and among those not having get together functions in their Institutions. There exists no difference in terms of work-life imbalance among faculty whose family members are invited in get together functions and those whose family members are not invited in get together functions of the Institution.

There exists relation between age and work-life imbalance among faculty members. As the age increases the work-life imbalance issue decreases. Also there exists relation between total years of work experience and work-life imbalance, as the years of work experience increases the work-life imbalance among faculty members decreases. There exists significant difference in faculty members working in government/private Institutions of Delhi in terms of work-life imbalance. Faculty working in private Institutions report more work-life imbalance as compared to
faculty working in government set up. Management/Engineering Institutions didn’t show any significant difference in terms of work-life imbalance. Long working hours and time spent in travelling has a significant relation with work-life imbalance.

**Individual Trait Variables:**

There exists significant correlation between all the individual trait variable viz. emotional stability, spiritual inclination, locus of control, workaholism and work-life imbalance. Faculty who reported to be emotional stable reported less work-life imbalance as compared to others; spiritual inclined faculty reported less work-life imbalance as compared to others; faculty with external locus of control report more work-life imbalance as compared to faculty with internal locus of control; faculty those are workaholic report more work-life imbalance problem.

**Work and Family related variables:**

Supervisory support, job demand, satisfaction with teaching career, social life within the Institution, social life outside the Institution, spousal support have high correlation with work-life imbalance among faculty members while job time control has significant relation with work-life imbalance and family support is also related to work-life imbalance. As the supervisory support increases the work-life imbalance among faculty members decreases, as the job demand of the faculty increases so does the work-life imbalance among faculty increases, work-life imbalance also increases with increase in satisfaction with teaching career, social life within the Institutions, social life outside the Institution, spousal support; work-life imbalance decreases with the increase in job time control and also increase in family support.

**Impact of work-life imbalance:**

The study reveals that work-life imbalance affects enormously the personal and professional life of faculty members of higher education Institutions of Delhi. Work-life imbalance affects the job satisfaction, life satisfaction, health of the faculty members, relation with spouse, performance, quality time with family, free time for self and time for hobbies and friends. So work-life imbalance is a major concern for not only the faculty members but also the management also as it affects the personal and professional life both.
Recommendations for Enhancing work-life balance:

“In order to consistently attain Work-life balance, we must change our work ethic and corporate culture through education, acceptance, communication and accountability”- 

Hank Rennar.

Work-life balance has been talked about from the last two decades. Due to globalization, deterioration of the boundaries between work and family, increase in the dual working couples in the workforce, shift from joint family system to nuclear family system, increased work pressure, and so on. Work-life imbalance usually arises out of a lack of adequate time or support to manage work and family responsibilities. It is very important that both the employees and the employer realize the benefits of enhancing work life balance of the employees. Work life balance policies don’t only work for the good of the organization but also for the good of the employees and also has a larger impact of the society as a whole. As the benefits of the work life balance are enjoyed by the employer and the employees so does the responsibility for better work life balance lies with the employer and the employee. The employer needs to do his part and the employee needs to do his part for a better work-life balance. The employer cannot throw the responsibility of maintaining good balance on the shoulder of his employees and in the same way the employees cannot entirely throw the responsibility of work life balance to their employers; relatively both have to work hard for the benefit of each other and for the betterment of the society as a whole. 

Rome wasn’t built in a day, and so your WLB won’t be either. Here are the suggestions on what the employer can do and what employees can do to enhance the work-life balance among employees.

Educating top management on the importance of work-life balance:
Management need to be educated on the various benefits of providing WLB practices like improved organizational commitment, reduced turnover and high employee retention, reduced absenteeism, greater productivity and greater performance of faculty. Unless and until the top management understands the importance of work-life balance in an individual’s personal and professional life then they will never like to put any effort towards the achievement of work-life balance among the faculty
members of their Institution. Top management should also reward managers who are supportive of and responsive to the particular needs of their employees. For example, performance evaluation could include a measure of how employees working under that manager are doing in their balancing work and family domain. Supervisors should also encourage their staff to leave on time in the evening.

**Management support:** Employees often take cues from the senior faculty of the Institution. If the top management are workaholics, the other faculty also tend to be workaholic and if the top management work hard to achieve balance in their work and life domain, the rest of the organization will follow the same. Top management should come to office on time and should leave the office on time in the evening. If the boss is sitting in the office then the employees wonder whether they should leave the office or not, they hesitate to ask their senior if they can leave when their senior is still working. So top management should understand this and should themselves become an examplar for their faculty. Management should appreciate faculty who opts for WLB initiatives so that they can be happy at work and also at life outside work as happy and satisfied staff be a good father or mother and also vice versa.

**Providing work-life balance initiatives:** Employees needs not only a good salary package but also good organizational culture with better work-life balance practices. Top management should ensure the employees that they can always contact them whenever they require any help. Work-life balance programs are initiatives adopted by Institutions to help employees manage their paid work and other important life activities, including family. Various work-life balance programs include: flexible starting time, flexible finishing time, take time off during middle of the day, work from home (if faculty is not having classes on those days), on-site day care centre, sick child-care, sick days for children, job sharing, compressed working hours or part time employment, sabbaticals, etc. When companies include work-life balance practices as part of career development initiatives, then employees are more productive, creative, healthy and happier workforce with less turnover and lower absenteeism. There seems to be a direct correlation between positive activity outside the workplace and maintaining high energy levels at work. A balanced approach to work and life outside keeps people energized about their careers, organizations and their quality of life.
Responsibility centre for work-life balance: There should be a person responsible for looking after the work-life balance initiatives in the Institution, he/she should ensure that the work-life balance practices are not only there on papers but are also given to the employees. Employees should be made aware about the availability of the various work-life balance initiatives and should be encouraged to use the initiatives without the fear of missing promotion or salary hike. The responsible person should understand the individual needs of the employees as every individual has different needs so the work-life balance initiative need of every employee will be different.

Training and workshops on work-life balance: Institutions should arrange trainings and workshops on achieving work-life balance. Experts on work-life balance issues can be invited who impart training to the faculty members to enhance their work-life balance and also counsel the employees who have issues with his/her work-life balance.

Maintain some white space on your calendar: Keep few days or your weekends where you have no other work but to just spend it for yourself or your loved ones. Spending quality time with loved ones removes all the stress and refreshes an individual. Do the activities with your loved ones which you cherish doing together like sports, shopping, cooking, watching movie, visiting family members and friends, vacation, spiritual places, going to your home town, etc. Leonardo da Vinci said Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment. Go some distance away because a lack of harmony or proportion is more readily seen”. The genius of da Vinci’s counsel is not simply that work should be paralleled by life, but rather that without a life, work itself is compromised. Sometimes we become so busy with our day today life that we don’t even realize how trapped we become by the life created for yourself. Life has a richness far beyond what any of us can produce. It is more a gift to be enjoyed than a task to be managed.

Respect your personal life: You yourself need to decide at set your mind that your work is a part of your life and is not only your life. So let others also know your priorities and your values for your personal life and personal time. Let your
colleagues and others know that you value your personal life and don’t want any disturbance in your personal life and don’t like personal time for life to be disturbed.

**Get plenty of exercise:** Exercise really energises not only our body but also our mind. Do the physical exercise which you like the most like swimming, basketball, jogging, cycling, walking with friends, etc. If you don’t have time and energy to do exercise daily then three or four times a week is also good enough.

**Evaluate your work-life balance on regular basis:** Evaluate your work-life balance from time to time and see the areas which need more attention. Make a list of priorities in your life like family, career, exercise, spirituality, friends, finances, etc, then give scoring (from 1 to 5) to each of your priority on how you are doing in that particular area. Then finally you will come to know which area needs more attention and accordingly you can put your energy and effort accordingly.

**Eat well:** All meals should be based on foods rich in complex carbohydrates for sustained energy and to minimise swings in blood-sugar levels. Complex carbohydrates are also a good source of fibre, B vitamins, some iron and calcium. Some fat in the diet is essential but most people need to eat less. Eat at least five portion of fruit and vegetables each day. Fruits and vegetables taken regularly helps in prevention against cancers and heart disease. Take enough fluid, some fluid comes from the foods we eat and these count too. Fluid is vital to keep all the cells in the body well hydrated and functioning in optimally. Feeling tired, having persistent headaches and even feelings of hunger between meals can all be caused by a lack of fluid.

**Workaholism:** Researchers agree on qualifying workaholism as work addiction. Workaholism can lead to serious health concerns, destroy relationships with family and friends, derail careers and ultimately lead to death. Management should look for faculty who are workaholic and should counsel them to overcome the workaholism and should promote well-being among such faculty. With people now waking up to the fact that widespread sleep deprivation is a major threat to our public health and productivity, the ability to get adequate rest has become a new denominator of luxury, status and privilege. If you are going through a really busy time at work figure out a brief way to reduce stress. That could mean simply walking around the block on your
lunch hour or taking a few deep cleansing breaths at your desk before hitting your next project. It doesn’t have to require a major investment in time.

**Career stage**: Faculty in the early years of career life face more work-life imbalance as they have little choice over how much time and effort they devote to work in order to establish their career. They should do proper career planning for themselves and should take care that in the race of proving themselves they should not miss out the life outside work. They should do time management for work and for activities outside work like spending time with spouse, children; going for a holiday, movie, etc. It is important that the faculty should also learn to say ‘no’ to the work if it is getting overburdened for them. Sometimes we want to do all by ourselves and don’t feel good to say no to those especially we care for. But later we find hard to manage the work as we have got so much to do. So it is better to say no politely and also telling the reason for saying no. And then remember to carry the guilt of saying no, remember you can’t do everything at the same time and you can’t make everyone happy. Many a time’s management inefficiency causes faculty to work long hours. Management should make effort to reduce its inefficiencies and have adequate workforce to carry the work and to ensure that no faculty is over burdened. As an overburdened won’t be able to perform in the class well and also will not be able to do what he or she actually wants to do in their lives. Be under the mentorship of a person who is always there to help and guide you in your personal and professional matters. A mentor who is always there, whom you can go in times of trouble. A mentor is an experienced person willing to share knowledge in a mutually trusting relationship.

Their role is one of coaching, counselling, facilitating and networking. A mentor should be someone you respect and value for their experience, style and knowledge, someone you can talk to easily. He/she will act as a sounding board, give advice, be honest and frank, and be prepared to give you constructive feedback. Going to professional association events and conferences not only keeps you up to date but also allows your name to be known in the business. Invest in being recognized and respected as an active member of a professional organization: this will indicate that you are interested in continuous professional development. When you need help, it will be easier to access. Pick up information at meetings, workshops, committees.
Identify any newspapers and journals that you need to read regularly. Make presentations, write reports, publish articles, and carry out research.

**Spiritual Inclination:** Spirituality has more to do with our affective experiences than it does with reasoning or logic and relates to the values that we hold most dear, our sense of who we are and where we come from, our beliefs about why we are here-the meaning and purpose that we see in our work and our life and our sense of connectedness to each other and to the world around us. Spirituality involves the internal process of seeking personal authenticity, genuineness, and wholeness; transcending one’s locus of centricity; developing a greater sense of connectedness of self and others through relationships and community; deriving meaning, purpose and direction in life; being open to exploring a relationship that is beyond human knowing and valuing the sacred. Spirituality gives wholeness to an individual in his personal and professional life. Individuals feel inner satisfaction and peace and can have a better life. Spirituality creates a balance between work and personal life with a splendid charm. Majority of experts claim that individual’s personal life and life at work is strongly influenced by the spiritual dogmas. Employees who are happy at work transfer such happiness into their lives outside work and vice versa. We all have to earn our living, but why can’t we enrich the life of those who work with us. We should have a deep sense of gladness toward life be contagious. As individuals and as a society, we need to recover such a sense of work as part of our powers to make life better. We should contribute whatever we can for the good of the society at large and should not only think about just our own self, our family, etc. But we should contribute for the good of the society in whatever way we can.

**Hire people with internal locus of control:** People with internal locus of control believes that they are responsible for whatever outcomes happen in their life. These people take the responsibility of the outcomes in their life and they do not blame God or other people for the outcomes that happen in their life. During the screening process of potential recruits management should take into consideration locus of control as one of the important dispositional characteristics of candidates. Also management should look into the possibility of designing training programmes to assist employees in taking more control of events in their work situations and personal life.
Hire people who are emotionally stable: Check for the emotional stability before you hire your employees. Emotionally stable people will find it easy to adjust to the work pressure and will be able to manage their work and family pressure in a better way. Emotionally stable people are optimistic and positive about life. Even at hard times they have hope of coming out. They think about what they have achieved so far, and remember the skills and the resources they have accumulated during life. By appreciating our strengths, remembering what you had overcame in the past, the positive outcomes from the past, you can bring optimism about yourself and your capabilities into the present and the future. People who have well-developed emotional intelligence understands themselves well and are comfortable naming their strengths and weaknesses. They are consciously able to choose their behaviour and also are good at reading and influencing the moods of others. Emotional and social skills are critically important in finding fulfilment, and an essential resource in negotiating work-life balance.

Help for working mom: It’s better to hire a maid/paid help who can help you in buying grocery; picking and dropping kids to schools, swimming classes, music classes; teaching kids; cooking, washing, etc. It will be a more profitable and sensible decision to hire a help and pay her for her services. It’s not easy to run here and there as it not only gives physical exertion but mental exertion too. And you can protect yourself from such exertion and can concentrate more in your work and be more productive. Spend quite time with yourself may be in a local park, back porch, beach, conference room at work, office (before everyone arrives at work). To re-explore yourself, looking back and thinking what happened in the past, what you did or how you reacted in a particular situation, what else you could have done and learning through your experiences. After all experience is the best teacher. Emergencies happen, but if you know far in advance that you will need to take off for a family function, then give a lot of notice and plenty of reminders before you take your time off. That will help you and your boss make sure that any time off will go smoothly. And also ensure that you finish your work well in advance so that no one has any problem for you going for vacation.

Take some time out for yourself: You need to take care of yourself before you take care of others. That is what is announced for oxygen masks every time before the
flight takes off, “You need to put the oxygen mask for yourself first then for your kid”. You can take good care of others only if you take good care of your own self. If you are healthy then only you can look after others who may require your help. If you are not able to spend enough time with your children for few days, tell your children that you are too busy finishing an important assignment and do promise them that you will spend enough time with them once you have done the assignment. Children are very smart and they do understand your problems. May be you are not able to teach them as you are too busy with your own work so tell them that they need to do their homework on their own and they may contact you if in case they find something difficult. These way children also learn to be independent. We Indians get too obsessive about our children. We don’t want to leave them and we want to help them with each and every thing, but the problem in this is that the children get pampered too much and expect their parents to do all for them.

**Family support:** Support from extended families could mitigate or reduce work-life imbalance as others family member are available for help in the transition. When female faculty begins to work other family members could take care of her part of the work, thereby providing the support that she requires at home and this would reduce her worries and guilt about not being able to perform her duties as a wife, mother and homemaker and also she can concentrate on her work well. The husband will also be happy as he would be unaffected by his wife’s role change. Control all interruption and distractions which come on your way. Prepare a ‘to do list’ and check it with the works you actually did in that day and try to find out the sources of distractions so that you can work on them. Cut off the activities which are not important in your personal or professional life else they will just consume your important resources like time and energy. Don’t work harder but work smarter. Don’t try to do all things by yourself so that everybody calls you a hard-working employee but learn to be a smart-working employee. A well known proverb “A person is known by the company he keeps”. The person who surrounds you also has an impact on the way you see the things or the world around. Be in the company of optimistic people who can encourage you at time of difficulty and can encourage you to handle situations. Of course balance in work and family life is not easy but it is not impossible. If you strive for balance you can definitely strike a balance in your work and family domain. Stop blaming yourself of not spending enough time with your kids, not helping them with
their home work; not taking care of old parents. Quality counts more than quantity, spend quality time with your loved ones. Spending 1 hour in the evening with kids is still better than not working at all (housewives) and blaming the spouse or kids for not letting you work outside.

**Spousal support:** If wife tries to satisfy the demands of both work and family roles and experience more work-life imbalance as husband is unwilling to share the household responsibilities as it increases the husband's total workload and involves him in an arena that traditionally has not been a part of his social responsibility. Husband support to wife in terms of help in household chores can help both the couple to maintain a better work life balance. Also spousal support improves marital relations and leads to a happy family. Reliance on each other at times of increased role demands can reduce the problem and work-life imbalance and can enhance overall life satisfaction. To have an intimate and satisfied life it is important that both husband and wife are intimate and supportive of each other. Humour can be a potent and creative stress reducer. Reframing is a useful technique to access our humour, and laughter is known to relieve tension. Laughter stimulates the immune system, offsetting the immune-suppressive effects of stress. The emotions and moods we experience directly affect our immune system, so gaining emotional intelligence and control over our moods is essential for our health. Having a good sense of humour allows us to perceive and appreciate the incongruities of life and provides moments of joy and delight. Going on a holiday does not mean staying in a five-star hotel, eating at the most expensive restaurants. Sometimes staying in a simple cabin, riding bicycles on the river side, exploring the town looking at the architecture, reading at a beach side also work wonders. This will give your pleasure and the outcome will be refreshment and renewal. It may be nothing special but still it will be priceless.

**Dual working couple:** Dual working couples should do career planning for each partner, family planning. Each partner should encourage other to engage in personal career assessment including clarification of values, identification of interests and skills and setting of career goals. Each partner should be willing to choose to alternate heavy role demand periods under the assurance of long term fairness of mutual goals. Goals for the family should be based on what is important to each person these decisions are to be made on the basis of information and values. Knowledge of the
consequences of decisions can obtain by learning about the experiences of other dual-
earning couples. A well known proverb goes as “Jack of all trade and master on
none”. Remember you have 24 hours in a day and you have to manage with that only.
So line your work accordingly. Don’t try to do all things in a day. Set feasible goals
for yourself; don’t think of doing all in one day. Sometimes being in the same room
for a longer time also gives irritation and one feel being trapped in the indoors. So just
go out for a walk in the corridor or just go to a colleague’s desk and talk to her/him
for 10 minutes. Or just go out your office and take a quick walk and then be back to
work. It gives you time to think of another way to make suggestions and address your
work-life balance changes. Build a strong network of friends/colleagues with whom
you can share your issues and concerns. To whom you can approach when you face
any problem. Sometimes when we feel low then talking to someone with similar
interest or thoughts do motivates/encourages us. Especially when we live in
Metropolitan cities where we do not have our family members around as we all come
from different areas to earn our livelihood so building strong supportive network can
help in reducing the work-life imbalance. Let your boss also know that you priorities.
If your boss is making unreasonable demands, then let him or her know what impact
this is having on your personal life. The sooner you take action, the more likely you
can get the situation back under control. Your abnormal work life will seem normal to
your boss and everyone else if you don’t bring things in their notice.

**Enjoy the old ways of doing things**: With the increase in income couples they
tend to buy more gadgets in the hope of saving more time. But yet they have less
time. Building a fire in the fireplace brings real satisfaction and causes one to pause to
enjoy the fire. Watering the flowers pots in the back yard allows one to again enjoy
one’s garden. Leisure comes in many guises, but it happens only as we slow down to
enjoy again the life that is ours.

**Know your values and priorities**: Knowing your values and living your life
according to them is the path to your authenticity, your power and your honesty.
Values are what we believe in- they are part of our character. If you are living to
someone else’s values or the conventional values of the society you live in, and don’t
feel that you go along with them- don’t be surprised if you feel stressed. Studies prove
that people who are satisfied in their lives are happier at their work. The secret to
satisfaction at work lies in people’s happiness with their own lives. Music gives relaxation; listen to the type of music you like the most. Plan your time off as you plan your work week. Schedule activities with family and friends, a weekend trip, or just dining out with family. Enjoy your time with friends and family, don’t be just physically present but be mentally also available. I have seen so many professionals even when they come for family get-together they will be busy with their blackberry, replying the mails. So when you are with your family just leave your work assignments. I know men especially when they are at home with their wives; wives will be talking and husbands will be just sitting and listening and if the wife expects an answer back from the husband he will say “please carry on I’m listening to what you are saying” and actually they are busy planning their next day’s work- whom to meet, what to discuss with boss, etc.

**Discipline yourself:** Work-life balance is not a one day or one month or one year effort. It is a lifelong effort and needs initiatives by the individuals themselves. No one can do anything for your balance unless an individual himself/herself strives for it. So discipline is very important whether its personal life or professional life.

So, both the faculty and the management have to work together for a better work-life balance of the faculty members. Attaining work-life balance is a lifelong that needs to be made by the employees and the management together.