Preface

“Our core values are those that are relevant to every part of our life. When we break our core values, we experience stress and tension. A key reason for much job dissatisfaction is because people are not honouring their values.”

– Stewart McIntosh

Work-life imbalance implies inter-role conflict wherein the role pressure from work and family are mutually incompatible and demand of participation in one role makes participation in the other role almost difficult. Work-life imbalance not only affects the psychological well-being of the employees but also their work related attitudes such as organizational commitment and their work related behaviour such as absenteeism, tardiness and turnover.

Until not very long ago, organization looked at ‘work’ and ‘life’ as independent domains. The conflicting demands of work and personal life have always existed in the lives of employees. However, there was an unwritten rule that employees were not to let their personal life interfere with their work-life as these were two compartmentalized spheres. Employees were expected to place the organization’s interests ahead of their own. Work versus personal life was seen as a zero sum game.

While organizations accepted responsibility for providing employees with a conducive and pleasant atmosphere at work in the past, personal needs were usually met with indifference and disdain. But, with the changing times, employers’ attitudes have changed. Globalization, technological advancements, changing family structures and competition for quality talents have forced organizations to view employees as their ‘whole persons’. A growing number of organizations are now adopting programmes that help employees balance the conflicting demands arising out of their multiple roles.

Work-life issues comprise of those aspects of an employee’s work or family life that may have an influence on one another. Initial interest in work-family issues was the result of two developments that occurred during the 1970s. These developments included an increase in the number of women entering the workforce and the growth
of dual-career families where both the spouses were working. This trend resulted in a better understanding of employees’ family and other personal commitments on the part of the employers.

Research on work-family conflict has found that such conflict is higher among those who work longer hours or have greater work demands, and report higher job involvement and greater autonomy (Eby et al., 2005), thus rendering the academic context particularly sensitive to work-family issues. Fisher (2001) developed a broader term called work-life balance, in which “imbalance” refers to an occupational stressor based on lost resources of time (e.g. amount of time spent at work relative to time spent in non-work activities), energy (e.g. not having energy available to pursue non-work activities after a full-day’s work), and feelings toward work and personal life. Greenhaus et al., (2003) recently defined work-family balance as, “the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in and equally satisfied with- his or her work role and family role (p.513)”.

The role of work has changed throughout the world due to economic conditions and social demands. Originally, work was a matter of necessity and survival. Throughout the years, the role of “work” has evolved and the composition of the workforce has changed. Today, work still is a necessity but it should be a source of personal satisfaction as well

**Statement of the Problem**

Not long ago, teaching was perceived as the most cool and relaxed profession preferred mostly by women. However, the scenario has changed drastically in recent years. The academic jobs, especially in higher educational institutions, are becoming more demanding in terms of efforts and time. A 50-60 hours week workload has become the norm in many universities thanks to growing institutional demands, accountability and work intensification (Jacobs and Winslow, 2004). Various regulatory authorities in India such as University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) have also set forth stringent quality norms for selection and promotion of faculty members in different institutions of higher learning.
Moreover, most of the higher educational institutions indulge in the rat race of ratings and rankings by a number of independent agencies, thereby putting tremendous pressure on their faculty members to contribute towards intellectual capital by way of publications, research and development, consultancy and revenue generating training programmes. Besides, the faculty members have to carry out administrative responsibilities assigned to them from time to time. Thus the faculty members invariably end up having no time for themselves or their families. The critical state of faculty members certainly indicates a rising work-life imbalance in the academia. Universities have traditionally organized academic careers based on the male life patterns making it more difficult for women to advance their careers while building a family (Armenti, 2004; Moen and Sweet, 2004). As large number of women is working in higher educational institutions as faculty, it becomes all the more imperative to study the determinants of work-life balance issue in such organizations.

It is assumed that work-life imbalance among faculty members of higher education institutes are caused due to job family role strain; excessive work pressure, unsupportive organization culture, unsupportive superiors, unsupportive spouse, large size of the family, income, positions, life cycle stage, level of socialization, etc.

**Research Gaps**

While the researchers across the world have studied various aspects of work-life balance in the corporate settings, no significant work has been done to measure incidence and find out the definitive causes of work-life imbalance among faculty members in higher educational institutions especially in India. This statement is based on a thorough search of electronic databases of academic journals. As the corporate and academic settings are entirely different, it is imperative that a concerted effort is made to understand the work-life balance issues in academia. The proposed study is likely to bridge the research gaps in this area.