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Chapter – 1

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Over the past few decades, a dramatic change has occurred in the labour market and demographic profiles of employees. Families have shifted from the traditional male breadwinner role to dual-earner couples and single parent families. Relative to the working environment, organisations are demanding an increase in employee flexibility and productivity. The traditional job for life has changed into an economic environment of instability and job uncertainty. Workers perspectives and expectations towards work have also changed. New orientations towards life-long learning, personal and career development, and an increased awareness and need for a balance between work and life, have affected organisations through incentivizing the introduction of policies such as flexi time. As a result of these demographic, employment and organisational trends, both men and women have experienced an increase in demands from the familial, household and work domains.

Work life balance is a broad and complex phenomenon, lacking a universal definition. Greenhaus and colleagues define 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. When individuals struggle to maintain and satisfy the demands placed on them by both the work and family domains, an imbalance may occur.
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Clark defines ‘balance’ as “satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict”, stating that “though many aspects of work and home are difficult to alter, individuals can shape to some degree the nature of work and home domains and the borders and bridges between them, in order to create a desired balance”. She notes that it is this proactive shaping of domains (work and family) by individuals which differentiates work/family border theory from much of the literature on work and family conflict that assumes individuals to be purely reactive to their situations.

Work life balance is a serious issue today as long hours at work are stealing quality hours from the time that we dedicate to our families and our personal pursuits. Globally, the corporate world is waking up to this reality and a myriad of interventions are being proposed and implemented. Work/life balance has important consequences for employee attitudes towards their organizations as well as for the lives of employees. The work/life boundary may be especially significant in the management of highly skilled knowledge workers, such as technical professionals whose commitment and loyalty present a challenge to employers (Scholarios et al., 2006). Software engineers have enjoyed considerable labor market power in recent years, a situation that has encouraged mobility across organizations rather than promoting loyalty to a single organization. Changing societal trends, such as an increase in the number of women entering the workforce combined with an economy that requires dual incomes to support an average standard of living, contribute to work life conflicts. As a result, today’s human resource managers evaluate personnel practices to meet those needs with the hope of increasing employee loyalty toward the organization. In addition to
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	his, many organizations have begun to take a role in developing quality of work life programs.

IT Companies are now having the policy of “Employees first and customer second” by believing that happy employees can keep customers happy. There is increasing awareness of the benefits of providing more flexible HR strategies, reflecting increasing recognition of the fact that work and other life commitment cannot be separated. As the IT organizations move towards more participative and flat structures in which employees are expected to manage increased workloads, the demands of the environment increase and maintaining the balance between the demands of the environment and maintaining the balance between the demands of a career and life responsibilities, becomes more difficult. Hence the studies to find out the effects of psychological factors over work life balance.

Adams et al., 1996, in the study of work/life balance, examine the people’s ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life. Generally, the work life balance assumes that individuals have too much rather than too little work - a debilitating long working hour’s culture is said to be pervasive. The organization benefits have been identified in terms of improved retention and recruitment positioning from work/life balance, easier service delivery (Hogarth et a., 2000), enhanced quality service (Lasch,1999), employee flexibility and skills to succeed in rapidly changing markets (Vincola,1999).
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The fact that work/life balance is a key mediating mechanism through which all the exogenous variables have a positive relationship with employee satisfaction. Such an approach may be practical from several perspectives. Tombari and Spinks (1999) identified that management support is critical to work/life balance initiatives.

Work life balance is now a heavily researched area of interest. Work life balance has always been a concern for those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to broader quality of life (Guest, 2002). The articulation of work and life, cast as work life balance, has become a key feature of much current government, practitioner and academic debate (Eikhof, Warhurst & Haumschild, 2007). It is believed that balancing a successful career with a personal or family life can be challenging and affects a person’s satisfaction in work and domestic settings. (Broers, 2005). Dundas (2008) argues that work life balance is about effectively managing the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development and leisure and recreation. The ability to balance between workplace’s needs and personal life’s needs is perceived as an important issue among workers globally. Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) define work life balance as the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role. Thus, employees, who experience high work life balance, are those who exhibit similar investment of time and commitment, to work and non-work domains (Virick, Lily & Casper, 2007). According to the United States Department of Labor, women constitute a full 46% of the American workforce today and by 2016, women are projected to
account for 47% of the workforce (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007). Of the types of occupations held by women in 2007, 39% worked in management, 34% worked in sales, 20% worked in service industries, 6% in transportation and material moving industries, and 1% in the natural resources, construction, and maintenance industry (U.S. Department of Labor). By these measures, it is clear that women are and will continue to be a dominant presence in organizational life. Additionally, the child per household ratio, while declining somewhat since the 1970’s, has remained relatively stable. According to U.S. Statistics, the average American household has 1.81 children (United States Census Bureau, 2007). Understandably, the migration has left women with salient issues of performance and balance concerns. And the ability to do both well is perhaps debatable. As a result, some households have (likely for a variety of reasons) opted to have the mother stay-at home full time, or only work on a part-time basis. Regardless of the choice, it is likely that mothers experience emotional distresses associated with issues of work/life balance. Farley-Lucas (2000) suggests that women must negotiate the visibility of their mother status within the workplace depending on the perceived attitude of their supervisors toward family responsibilities. Working mothers, who perceive their supervisors enacting unsupportive behavior towards families, will consciously reduce their mother status in the work place. Furthermore, Farley-Lucas (2000) reports that for women to be viewed as competent professionals, they were best professionally served if they hid or masked their mother identities. Work/life balance studies reveal that working mothers use micro-practice strategies on a daily basis to juggle the plural roles they assume (Medved, 2004). Strategies like connecting, which involve a coordination of work/life goals such as planning childcare pickup via the work
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telephone, are high-maintenance and sensitive to even the minutest slip of alignment.

Work/life balance, in its broadest sense, is defined as a satisfactory level of involvement or ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in a person’s life. Although definitions and explanations vary, work/life balance is generally associated with equilibrium, or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life. The study of work/life balance involves the examination of people’s ability to manage simultaneously the multi-faceted demands of life. Although work/life balance has traditionally been assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles, more recently the concept has been recognised as more complex and has been developed to incorporate additional components. A recent study explored and measured three aspects of work/life balance:

1. Time balance, which concerns the amount of time given to work and non-work roles.
2. Involvement balance, meaning the level of psychological involvement in, or commitment to, work and non-work roles.
3. Satisfaction balance, or the level of satisfaction with work and non work roles.

This model of work/life balance, with time, involvement and satisfaction components, enables a broader and more inclusive picture to emerge. For example, someone who works two days a week and spends the rest of the week with his or her family may be unbalanced in terms of time (i.e. equal measures of work and life), but may be equally committed to the work
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and non-work roles (balanced involvement) and may also be highly satisfied with
the level of involvement in both work and family (balanced satisfaction).
Someone who works 60 hours a week might be perceived as not having work / life
balance in terms of time. However, like the person who works only a few hours a
week, this individual would also be unbalanced in terms of time, but may be quite
content with this greater involvement in paid work (balanced satisfaction).
Alternatively, someone who works 36 hours a week, doesn’t enjoy his or her job
and spends the rest of the time pursuing preferred outside activities may be
time-balanced but unbalanced in terms of involvement and satisfaction.
Thus, achieving balance needs to be considered from multiple perspectives.

In the traditional perspective of work life balance, Zedeck and Mosier
(1990) identified five models of representation. *Spillover model* assumes that there
are no boundaries in one’s behaviour between work and non-work situations and
asserts that there is similarity between the occurrences in work and family
environments. *Compensation model* proposes an inverse relationship between
work and family such that work and non-work experiences tend to be antithetical
(Staines, 1980). *Segmentation model* hypothesizes that work and non-work are
distinct domains of life and individuals can function in each domain without
influencing the other. The separation in time, space and function allowed
individuals to neatly compartmentalize their lives. *Instrumental model* suggests
that activities in one environment will facilitate success in the other. Work
outcomes would lead to good family life and life’s pleasures. *Conflict model*
proposes that the two environments are incompatible with distinct norms, and
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requirements of one environment entail sacrifices in the other (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990).

Clark (2000) argued that people are daily border-crossers between work and family domains. Although many aspects of work and family are difficult to alter, individuals can shape to some degree the nature of work and home domains and create bridges to attain the desired balance.

The work life balance requirements of employees are considered to fall into three categories: working time arrangements, in particular total hours worked and flexibility; parental leave, such as maternity and paternity leave; and childcare provision and support (Gregory & Milner, 2009). To some extent, this is reflected in the varied uptake of flexible working policies, both by hours of work and by sex (Summerfield & Babb, 2004).

The concept ‘work life balance’ allows for a wider understanding of ‘non-work’ areas of life, incorporating workers with diverse family situations, giving increased scope to include men and allowing for spillover and fluidity between work and other areas of life (Gregory & Milner, 2009). Whilst there is no one comprehensive definition of work life balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008), it can be conceptualised as “the relationship between institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in societies where income is predominantly generated and distributed through labour markets” (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2002); i.e. the relationship between paid employment and other areas of life. A more specific definition has been adopted by Clark: “satisfaction and
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good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum of role conflict” (2000). However, the concept of work life balance has also been critiqued. Firstly, the concept of ‘balance’ is thought to reinforce the separateness between paid employment and other areas of life, focusing on the movement between roles as opposed to “multiple role interactions” (Speakman & Marchington, 2004). This approach fails to encompass the interactive nature of life, where there is “no clear-cut distinction between the world of work and the work of family, friends, and social networks and community” (Taylor, 2001). This is reflected in a qualitative study of fathers who worked from home several days a week for an insurance firm (Halford, 2006). For these men, the public and private boundaries continued to exist but in a different form to the work-home binary model: “there is nothing fixed, permanent or objective about these public / private boundaries. Rather, in contextually specific, situated circumstances, people make (or feel the need to be seen to make) distinctions” (Halford, 2006).

Secondly, there is a danger that by applying boundaries to spheres of activity, the assumption that activities not considered to be paid employment are classed as ‘non-work’ is reinforced (Speakman & Marchington, 2004), thereby ‘othering’ areas of life outside of paid employment. This approach may not allow for individual values placed upon roles, for example the notion of housework as ‘work’ (Oakley, 1974), or paid employment being a site for “subcultural expression” (Fincham, 2008). There is often a narrow understanding of the ‘life’ component of the concept, ignoring issues of ethnicity, culture and religion (Kamenou, 2008). Furthermore, it has been argued that this dichotomy is unhelpful due to living within “an institutional system that subordinates home to
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the economy” (Connell, 2002). This raises the question of whether balance can be achieved within a system, already skewed in favour of paid employment.

Thirdly, whilst the concept of work life balance purports to be gender neutral (Gerson, 2004; Hogarth, Hasluck, Pierre, Winterbotham, & Vivian, 2001; Lewis, Gamble, & Rapoport, 2007; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005), by being situated within “wider discursive spaces constructing particular gender assumptions and dynamics” (Lewis et al., 2007), the claim to neutrality instead both hides and reinforces gender inequalities. This is evidenced by a number of studies which have found work life balance policies to have gendered assumptions attached to them regarding for whom they are applicable, to whom they are made available (in both instances predominantly working mothers) and the implications for individuals of making use of relevant policies (Kilkey, 2006; Lewis & Campbell, 2007; Smithson & Stokoe, 2005; Wise & Bond, 2003). Furthermore, much work life balance discourse has been narrowly applied, focusing predominantly on heterosexual, two-parent families with children (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gamble, 2003).

Increasing workloads have pressurised employees to demonstrate their commitment to work in more obvious ways (Ishaya and Ayman 2008). Consequently, a larger part of them have tended to be present at their work place for longer periods of time, thereby reducing the time for which they are available at home. The internet and mobile phones have made it possible for the organizations to keep in constant touch with the employees both during the day and at night (Morgan 2003). This has further intensified the work demands on
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employees. Consequently, there are growing reports of stress and work imbalance (Bhagwagar 2009).

To a large extent, in the IT sector, the employee is expected to be engaged on the job almost at all times. So the traditional distinctions between work life and family-life have disappeared. Even during selection of employees for an organization, emphasis is placed on the attitudes the person exhibits, more particularly, whether the employee is flexible enough to be available for work at any time (Yasbek 2004).

Simultaneously, family life is also becoming more complex. The extended family, even in India, is slowly disappearing (Patel 2005). Small nuclear families have come to stay, where both the spouses go to work. In addition, there are an increasing number of single parent households due to increase in divorces (Amato et al., 2003). Although this problem is not as serious in India as in the West, yet it could become a serious issue sometime in the future. Participation by women in employment continues to grow since the past decade. In spite of more women going out to work, there has been little change in patterns of household responsibilities (Singh 2004). Women continue to undertake the majority share of domestic chores and child rearing. These synchronous changes in working and family life result in a need for employees to continuously attempt a balancing act. Quite often the work intrudes into the family and social life while at other times, family pressures affect the work performance (Fu and Shaffer 2001; Hyman et al., 2003) observed that organizational pressures, combined with lack of work centrality, result in work intruding into non-work areas of employees’ lives. Such
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intrusions often manifest themselves differently depending on the type of work, extent of autonomy and organizational support (Hyman et al., 2003; Atkinson and Meager 1986). Fisher and Layte (2003) consider three distinct sets of measures of work life balance, viz. proportion of free time, the overlap of work and other dimensions of life and the time spent with other people. Several reviews have highlighted other issues such as age, gender, life-cycle stage, ethnicity, citizenship, and childcare arrangements which also merit attention (Wallace and Cousins 2004).

Jenkins (2000) observes that issues like child rearing, the need to balance multiple roles etc. have consequences on health and family relationships. Securely attached individuals experienced positive spillover in both work and family (Summer and Knight 2001). These are pointers that there are gender differences in coping with work family issues. Women still primarily take care of domestic tasks, irrespective of their employment status. So, many women employees continue to face difficulties in balancing these two forces (Hyman and Summers 2004). Work based support to women is positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment and career accomplishment (Marcinkus et al., 2007). The home working can lead to greater flexibility and independence, but it can make people work for longer periods of time, including weekends and evenings. Home environment also plays a very important role in the quality of life. Home working could be stressful, if young children have to be managed (Valcour and Hunter 2005). Gender has an important effect on home working (Gunkel 2007). Both women and men prefer working in organisations that support work life balance. Men appeared to benefit
more than women (Burke 2002). Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more on the job even at the cost of ignoring the family. On the other hand, women stress that work and family are both equally important and both are the sources of their satisfaction. For them, the former is more important. When work does not permit women to take care of their family, they feel unhappy, disappointed and frustrated. They draw tight boundaries between work and family and they do not like one crossing the other (Burke 2002).

Valcour and Hunter (2005) premise that new trends like teleworking attempt to address work-family issues. In India too, there is a rising trend towards teleworking (Morgan 2003). These reviews highlight that there are work-life balance issues that need to be addressed. The work-life balance problem is fairly similar across countries (Humphreys 2000). Most countries have put in place some measures to address the work-life balance (Todd, 2004). However, there are differences in practices to address it (Lewis, Gambels, and Rhona 2007). Reviews also indicate that the perception of work-life balance is observed to be different across genders (Connell 2005; Smithson and Stokoe 2005; Duxbury and Higgins 1991).

1.2 Work life Balance: Definitions

There is plethora of definitions to work life balance. It means different things to different people at different times. As Lewis and Cooper (2005, p.10) observe, work life balance policies are associated with offering employees the chance to work flexibly and notions of flexible working were “originally considered within equal opportunities programmes”, with a particular focus on
working mothers. The phrase work life balance was called an ‘almost taken for
granted metaphor’ by Pitt-Catsouphes, *et al.*, (2006). Work Life Balance is a
person’s control over the responsibilities between her/his workplace, family,
friends and self. It is recognized that technology has an impact on the control an
employee may or may not have with such responsibilities.

Generally, work life balance is defined as a state of equilibrium in which
the demands of both a person’s job and personal life are equal. It is nothing but
investing equal amounts of time and energy between work and personal life.
Parkes and Langford (2008) defined work life balance as ‘an individual’s ability
to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work
responsibilities and activities. Kirchmeyer (2000) simply defined work life
balance as ‘achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains’. Clark (2000), while defining work life balance introduced satisfaction and role
conflict. He defined it as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home,
with minimum of role conflict. Greenblatt (2002) viewed work life balance as
“the absence of unacceptable levels of conflict between work and non-work
demands. Whereas the traditional definitions focussed on the absence of conflict
between the paid work and personal life sphere, the new school of thought
proposed different characteristics to work life balance. Greenhaus *et al.*, (2003)
defined work life balance as the extent to which individuals are equally engaged
in and equally satisfied with work and family roles. They projected equality and
engagement to define balance. Another new school of thought by Grzywacz and
Carlson (2007) viewed work life balance as “accomplishments of role related
1.2 Work life Balance: Definitions

expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his / her role related partners in the work and family domains”.

While the term ‘work life balance’ has in recent years become the most widely used in policy debates, a range of terms are currently in use. The first distinction is whether the emphasis is on the interface between work – primarily referring to employment – and either a focus on ‘family’, ‘nonwork’ or ‘life’ more broadly, with a less common variant referring to ‘personal life’. The second distinction is whether the focus is on ‘balance’ or another conceptualization of the interface. The metaphor of balance invokes the image of a set of scales – the idea that the two domains can be brought into a harmonious existence, that each has equal value (weight). Many writers have rejected or avoided the connotations invoked by the metaphor of ‘balance’ by using other terminology; a neutral description of the relationship between the two domains; one that emphasizes tensions; or one that focuses on identifying the potential positive synergies. In the view of the authors, the most appropriate terminology is to refer ‘work and personal life’ since: (i) Work is part of life, and therefore to see it in terms of a work / life interface is misleading and (ii) ‘Personal life’ captures the range of commitments and duties which an individual may have, and which can vary across the life course, while still allowing family to be a large part of personal life for most people. For most purposes, the authors also favour more neutral descriptions, such as integration or coordination, rather than ‘balance’.
1.3 Need for Work life Balance in India

Being a developing economy, Indian workforce is facing fierce competition. Due to the liberalization, privatisation and globalization, the workforce of India are always under pressure. Apart from this, the advent of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the increased level of female participation in the workforce add complexity while balancing paid work and personal life. Hence it is crucial that the workforce of India have to be given work life balancing programs to balance their paid work and their personal life.

By the mid 1990s, health research had demonstrated a well-substantiated link between poor work life balance and stress. In 1997, a clear relationship was identified between parenting, employment, and sharply rising stress levels (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997). Among working parents, especially those employed in managerial and professional roles, long hours and work intensification have been shown to be putting pressure on relationships with partners and children, thus triggering stress-related illness and stress-inducing behaviours. Stress appeared to intensify in relation to the number of hours worked by parents who were physically and emotionally torn between the demands of family and paid work. Research has observed work life conflict to be associated with a myriad of indicators of poor health and impaired wellbeing including:

- Poorer mental and physical health.
- Less life satisfaction.
- Higher levels of stress.
- Higher levels of emotional exhaustion.
- Less physical exercise.
1.3 Need for Work life Balance in India

- Higher likelihood to engage in problem drinking.
- Increased anxiety and depression levels.
- Poor appetite and
- Fatigue.

Both the recognition of possible interactions between working life and private life and the resulting conclusion that HRM should consider these interactions, are not new in general. On the one hand, plenty of research has been conducted into the interface between working life and private life (for an overview see Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Guest, 2002). On the other hand, the implementation and prevalence of work life balance policies in companies have considerably increased (Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). However, both developments have not yet been connected to Green HRM. A short overview of mechanisms explaining the possible linkages between working life and private life, is given and the basic principles of work-life-balance-policies are presented. This provides the necessary foundations for the development of a conceptual model of green work life balance. While early conceptualizations described working life and private life as “naturally” independent and segmented domains, nowadays it is assumed that people make efforts to actively separate their life domains (Piotrkowski, 1979; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). Apart from these segmentation models, there are other theories in which life domains are usually conceptualized as reciprocally influenced by each other (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).
1.3 Need for Work life Balance in India

Established approaches that draw on these reciprocal influences include the conflict model, the enrichment model, the spillover model and the compensation model (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Rothbard, 2001; Guest, 2002). Meanwhile, it is common practice in HRM to consider employees’ work life interface and to support them in managing both demands of working life and private life (e.g. Ryan & Kossek, 2008). Work life balance policies are supposed to create win-win situations for employees and employers, thereby improving the mental and physical well beings of employees. Companies, themselves expect to increase attraction, productivity and the retention of employees (Ehnert, 2009; Konrad & Mangel, 2000).

Nevertheless, there are both positive and negative findings concerning the effectiveness of work life balance policies for both the company and employees (Brough et al., 2006; Brough, O’Driscoll, & Kalliath, 2005; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). Work life balance policies are meanwhile perceived as gender-neutral assistance for all private demands with regard to leisure, education and family activities (Ryan & Kossek, 2008). However, employees’ demands as mothers and fathers are offered special attention and work life balance policies often focus on work family balance (e.g. Kossek, 2003; Fleetwood, 2007). Work life balance policies are dominated by time-based instruments (like flexible work schedules and part time arrangements) (Thompson & Bunderson, 2001), since the finiteness of time and its unequal distribution is seen to be the starting point of many inter-role conflicts. Apart from time-based policies, other services are discussed which can be information-based (like parental counselling),
1.4 Model of Work Life Balance:

service-based (like corporate nurseries) or finance-based (like family allowances) (Thompson, Beauvais, & Allen, 2006; Kaiser et al., 2010).

Work life balance policies are not supposed to equalize peoples’ use of resources in both life domains since employees might have individual perceptions of “balances” and personal wellbeing. Likewise, work life balance policies are not designed to cut off or change specific demands and requirements of life domains. These policies are supposed to facilitate the reconciliation of working life and private life (e.g. Ryan & Kossek, 2008). However, up to now these policies mostly neglect large parts of private life, including consumption activities and connected environmental issues.

1.4 Model of Work Life Balance:

![Diagram of Work Life Balance]

Figure 1.4.1. A pictorial representation of work/family border theory (Clark, 2000: p.754)

Clark uses the diagram above (figure 1) to graphically demonstrate the central concepts of work/family border theory. ‘Work’ and ‘family’ are seen as separate domains or worlds which are associated with different rules, thought
1.5 Barriers to Work Life Balance Strategies:

Patterns and behaviours. Borders are the delineation between domains, indicating the point at which domain-specific behaviour can begin and end. There are three main forms of border: physical (borders defining where domain-relevant behaviour can take place, such as the location of paid employment), temporal (borders which divide when tasks can be done, for example, set working hours), and psychological (borders defining which thinking patterns, behaviour and emotion are suitable to which domain). It is this recognition of tangible (physical and temporal) as well as psychological borders which make work/family border theory distinct from that of boundary theory (Desrochers & Sargent, 2003). Understanding the differing natures of boundaries as permeable, malleable, dynamic, and changing (McKie, Cunningham-Burley, & McKenrick, 2005; Speakman & Marchington, 2004) provides greater insight into behaviours in different domains. The strength of borders may differ in either direction, depending on the permeability and level of blending in either direction, with the border being stronger in the direction of the stronger domain and weaker in the direction of the weaker domain.

1.5 Barriers to Work Life Balance Strategies:

Work life balance has emerged as a strategic issue for HRM and a key element of an organization’s employee retention strategies. It has been argued that organizations need to be aware of the changing needs of employees and provide flexible work life balance strategies in order to retain employees. Organizations that seek to increase employee morale, commitment and satisfaction and reduce source of stress and problems at work, will improve their ability to retain talented and valued employees and attract good talents into the organisation.
1.5 Barriers to Work Life Balance Strategies:

There is increasing awareness of the benefits of providing more flexible HR strategies, reflecting increasing recognition of the fact that work and other life commitments cannot easily be separated. As organizations move towards more participative and flat structures where fewer employees are expected to manage increased workloads, the demands of the environment increase and maintaining the balance between the demands of a career and life responsibilities becomes more difficult. The importance of work life balance has increased as a corollary of increasing work force diversity. Also, the increasing participation of women in the work force creates increasing pressure for diversity management and work life balance strategies.

There is a need for organizations in the current business environment to adopt HR strategies and policies that accommodate the work life needs of a diverse work force and work life balance strategies are a key element of this. Management strategies, which endeavour to address the apparent lack of fit between work demands and the new diversity of work force characteristics, are emerging, although progress has been somewhat piecemeal.

Several barriers have been identified as creating major difficulties for the development and implementation of work life balance strategies. The barriers generally identified are:

1. An organizational culture which emphasizes and rewards long hours and high organizational commitment.
2. An isolated, hostile and unsupportive working environment for employees with life commitments external to the organization.
3. Attitudes and resistance of supervisors and middle management.
4. Preference of senior management involved in recruiting, to deal with people perceived as similar to themselves.
5. Lack of communication and education about work life balance strategies

1.6 Emotional maturity

Maturity is the ability to respond to the environment in an appropriate manner. Emotional Maturity is one of the vital components of personality which characterizes Multi-trait non-cognitive psychological concept. Maturity as defined by Finley (1996) is “the capacity of mind to endure an ability of an individual to respond to uncertainty, circumstances or environment in an appropriate manner”. Havighurst (1950) has emphasized the importance of attainment of social and emotional maturity by adolescence through his proposed major developmental tasks for adolescence viz., achieving new and more mature relationships with cohorts of both sexes, achieving a masculine or feminine social role, achieving emotional independence from parents and adults, preparing for an economic career, and desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.

Emotions are great motivating forces which influence aspirations, thoughts and doing of individuals. An emotion refers to feelings, instinct, impulses, and physiological reactions. Emotional maturity involves emotional health and ability of self-control. Chamberlain (1960) said that an emotionally mature person is one whose life is well under control. In the present world of competition and innovation, emotional maturity provides the individual to develop and maintain
1.6 Emotional maturity

healthy relationship with others for better adjustment. Emotional maturity is linked with physical, intellectual, social and moral development.

Emotional maturity is an important aspect for the success of personality. Bernard (1954) suggests the following criteria for evaluating emotional maturity.

1. Developing tolerance
2. Ability to make a choice
3. Freedom from fear
4. Enjoyment of daily living
5. Ability to err without feeling disgraced
6. Satisfaction from society
7. Expressing negative emotions
8. Cultivating positive emotions
9. Increasing dependence of actions

According to Menninger (1999), emotional maturity includes the ability to deal constructively with reality. Emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally. Raj (1996) defines social maturity as a level of social skills and awareness that an individual has achieved relative to particular norms related to an age group. Social maturity is a term commonly used in two ways like with reference to the behavior that conforms to the standards and expectation of the adults and secondly, with reference to the behavior that is appropriate to the age of the individual under observation. Thus, social maturation permits more detailed perception of the social environment which helps
1.6 Emotional maturity

adolescents to influence the social circumstance and develop stable patterns of social behavior.

Both emotional maturity and social maturity, are vital for attaining success and happiness in one’s life. Emotional maturity enables individuals to make better decisions; better choices; have more fun and less stress, which enable them to have better balance in life. In addition, Singh et al., (2007) found that social support and maturity plays an important role in maintaining the health and well being as it gives the individuals a feeling of being loved, cared for, esteem, valued and belonging.

Emotional maturity is an adult level of emotional development as opposed to childhood maturity. Emotional immaturity is the failure to develop normal adult degree of independence and self-reliance, with consequent use of immature adjustive pattern and inability to maintain equilibrium under stretches which most people can meet satisfactorily. Emotional maturity is the state wherein one’s emotional reaction is considered appropriate and normal for an adult in a given society. Emotional maturity is a process through which the personality is continuously striving for a greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra-personally maturity.

According to Walter,D & Smithson (1974), emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both Intra-psychically and Intra-personal. Emotional Maturity or stability might be considered as a potential factor in any field of life. Actually,
1.6 Emotional maturity

emotional maturity is not only the effective determinant of personality pattern but also helps to control the growth of adolescent’s development. The concept ‘mature’ emotional behavior of any level is that which reflects the fruits of normal emotional development.

As emotions do play the central role in the life of an individual, one is expected to have higher emotional maturity in order to lead a effective life. It is also true that our behavior is constantly influenced by the emotional maturity level that we possess. Emotional Maturity is a measure of one’s capacity to create a positive mental attitude. Emotional maturity can be understood in terms of ability of self control which in turn is a result of thinking and learning. According to Chamberlain (1960), an emotionally mature person is one whose emotional life is well under control.

Emotions are aroused by circumstances. A mature person views life experience as learning tools and, when they are positive, he enjoys them thoroughly. When they are negative, he accepts personal responsibility and learns from them to improve in his life. But the immature person feels dejected when things do not go as expected. Alka Mankad (1999) observed that personality of emotionally mature and immature adolescents differs significantly. When frustrated, an immature person looks for someone to blame and attack people while mature people attack problems. The mature person uses his anger as an energy source and, when frustrated, doubles his efforts to find solutions to his problems.
1.6 Emotional maturity

Emotional pressure is increasing day by day as work pressure is increasing. Emotions are basic primeval forces by nature to enable the organism to cope up with circumstances which demand the utmost effort for survival. The emotions are a way of acting, as a way of getting along in the world and they may be constructive or destructive. Emotions have strong link with urges, needs and interests. A healthy emotional development cultivates emotional maturity. Emotional maturity is the product of interaction between many factors like home environment, school environment, society, culture and to a great extent, the programmes watched on television. Emotionally mature person can make better adjustment with himself as well as with others. He accepts the reality and does not grumble for petty things. Emotional maturity can be called the process of impulse control through the agency of self or ego.

According to Dosanjh (1960), Emotional maturity means balanced personality. It means ability to govern disturbing emotion, show steadiness and endurance under pressure and be tolerant and free from neurotic tendency. Singh (1990) defines emotional maturity as not only the effective determinant of personality pattern but also helps to control the growth of an adolescent’s development. A person who is able to keep his emotions under control, to brook delay and to suffer without self-pity might still be emotionally stunned”.

A man who is emotionally stable, will have better adjustment with himself as well as with others. Emotionally mature person will have more satisfaction in life and he will be satisfied with what he is and have a balanced attitude. During the period of adolescence, physical, emotional, psychological, cultural, intellectual
and socio behavioural changes occur in life. Suddenness of these changes results in anxieties and causes confusion and unrest among them. Anju (2000) found that there exists a positive and significant relation between emotional maturity and intelligence of students, which implies that intelligent persons exhibits more emotionally maturity than others.

Peter Lichtenberg (2005), in his research on, "Emotional Maturity Across Life Span "found that only that man has ability to work with others who has emotional maturity and stability. He focussed on ageing as well as personality and emotional maturity across life span in his study. Darwin Nelson (2005), in his research related to, "Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Maturity" says that if we want our children to be emotionally mature, we must focus on their early childhood education which affects certain level of social and emotional maturity.

Just as there are invariant stages of physical development, cognitive development, moral development and social development, there is some evidence for stages of emotional development. Emotional development is totally concerned with the development of the ways and manners of expressing various positive and negative emotions. These ways and means of emotional expressions are learned through environmental experiences, formal as well as informal education and specialized training given to an individual right from his childhood. The role of emotions in each and every individual’s life is as important as life itself. The term, emotion, refers to a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act (Goleman, 1995). Emotional maturity is not only the effective determinant of
personality pattern but also helps to control the growth of individual’s overall development. Emotionally mature person is not one who necessarily has resolved all conditions that aroused anxiety and hostility but it is continuously in process seeing himself in clear perspective, continually involved in a struggle to gain healthy interactions of feeling, thinking and action.

1.7 Dimensions of Emotional Maturity

1. Emotional Stability: the emotionally stable person is able to do what is required of him in any given situation. It helps him not to react excessively or display marked changes in emotions.

2. Social Adjustment: maintaining desired relationship with the environment is a symptom of emotionally matured person.

3. Emotional Progression: growing vitality of emotions for friendliness, social mindedness and mental peace.

4. Independence: without depending on others, taking self decisions, doing difficult task own and being self-reliant is a strong dimension of emotional maturity.

5. Compassion: it means fellow feeling.


7. Personality integration: unifying different elements of an individual’s motives and tendencies resulting harmonious balance in expression of emotions.
1.8. Roles of Emotional maturity in one’s life.

Emotional Maturity plays the following roles in anybody’s life:

1. Emotional maturity is essential for emotional labour.
2. Emotional maturity is essential for emotional intelligence.
3. Emotional maturity is essential for professional identity.
4. Emotional maturity helps in adjustment.
5. Emotional maturity helps in tolerating stressful situations of life.

1.9 Self Concept

The concept of how a person views himself or herself is part of a whole where one’s self-esteem is a fundamental contributor to well being and mental health (Fox, 2000). In this way, the feelings that one has toward oneself are at the core of one’s thoughts and determine the development of self concept. The examination and understanding of self concept requires appropriate methods of measurement of this construct. Originally, the examination of self concept was oriented towards a unidimensional perspective that reflected a global view of the self (Coopersmith, 1967; Marsh and Winnie, 1978). This approach to measurement was imprecise because it assessed a general sense of self-worth without considering the role of other contributors to self concept (Fox, 1990). The works of Marsh (1990) and Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) provide a new viewpoint on the manner of understanding the self concept, a contribution that was directed towards a multidimensional perspective, introducing the physical dimension as a fundamentally important component of general self concept.
1.9 Self Concept

Self concept, though not easy to define, has been defined in various aspects. One line definition deals with self concept “with reference to the individual’s assessment of himself”. According to Williams, how a person perceives himself will be termed as his self concept and in the words of kehas, “it is the cluster of the most personal meanings a person attributes to the self”. Jersild conceives self concept as “perceptions, meanings and attitudes that the individual has about himself”. Combs and Snygg consider, it is individual’s view of himself.

Self concept is an individual’s attitude towards his/her physical self and own behavior. Self concept is a dominant feature of one’s personality. It develops an individual’s behavior and attitudes. It is the key to self confidence which is the secret of success in life. The self constitutes a person’s world as distinguished from the outer world consisting of all people and things. The self is the term used to refer to one of the highest levels of personality organization. The self has a series of conceptual levels that consist of the social self, the conscious private self and the insightful or depth self. Narrative or story structure, which has been the focus of increasing interest (Polkinghorne, 1988; Sarbin, 1986), offers an alternate way to conceptualize the self. Viewing the self as a narrative or story, rather than as a substance, brings to light the temporal and developmental dimension of human existence.

The Encyclopedia of Psychology (1972) defines self concept as that totality of attitudes, judgements and values of an individual relating to his behaviours, abilities and qualities and self concept embraces the awareness of these variable and their evaluations.
1.9 Self Concept

We humans find the contents of our experience significant and understandable. We do not encounter a buzzing confusion of indistinct and unstructured perceptual elements but a world that appears to be meaningful. Our experience is a construction that results from the interaction of cognitive organizing processes, with cues emanating from our external perceptual senses, internal bodily sensations, and cognitive memories. The processes of consciousness interpret and give meaning to cues by identifying them as elements or parts of a structure. For example, an object in a room is experienced as a chair, not as discrete pieces of wood and metal. Similarly, a child can be experienced as a student, a ball player, or someone with a scratched knee, depending on the interpretative frame used to give meaning to the experience. Self concept is, at the most simplistic level, an idea or set of ideas one has about oneself. Current theorists (e.g., Byrne & Shavelson, 1996; Harter, 1982; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985) suggest that an individual has distinct views of self within various areas, including general self concept (e.g., self-worth, self-esteem, global self concept) and more specific social/relational and scholastic/academic self concepts. Models of self concept are generally considered to be either unidimensional or multidimensional in nature, with additional classifications within each major category (Byrne, 1996).

Self concept is one of the most popular components in psychology and it is developed by individuals through interaction with their environment. Studies show that the importance placed on other people’s evaluations of oneself, may affect one’s self concept such that one’s behavior is externally guided instead
of internally guided (Kalliopuska, 1990). Therefore, it is not surprising that self concept during adolescence remains an element of interest to be explored and understood about adolescents and their world. Rogers (1951) viewed the self as “organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the ‘I’ or the ‘me’ together with the values attached to these concepts”. He stated that the self concept includes only those characteristics of the individual that he is aware of and over which he believes he exercises control. There is a basic need to maintain and enhance the self. Threat to the organization of the self concept produces anxiety. If the threat cannot be defended against, catastrophic disorganization follows. Since there are several aspects of the self, there can also be as many corresponding aspects of self concept (Lihanna, 1998; Lihanna and Ishak, 2007).

In addition to general self concept, three subscales have been investigated in this study: physical self concept, social self concept and academic self concept. Physical self concept is defined as the student’s view of his or her body image. A student, with positive physical self concept, feels comfortable with his or her body image and accepting it as it is whereas a student, with negative physical self concept, is not happy or is uncomfortable with his or her body appearance. Academic self concept is related to the performance and achievement during the secondary phase of education (Marsh, Byrne, & Yeung, 1999). Students, with positive academic self concept, feel that with proper effort, they can do well in their studies whereas the students, with negative academic self concept, doubt that they can do well in their studies and will not be able to fare adequately in their academic performance. Social self concept is how the students believe of their
1.9 Self Concept

standing among peers. It reflects the students’ ability to socialize among themselves and how they relate to other people.

One’s self concept (also called self-construction, self-identity or self-perspective) is a collection of beliefs about oneself that includes elements such as academic performance, gender roles and sexuality, racial identity, and many others. Generally, self concept embodies the answer to "Who am I?". Carl Rogers (1959) believes that the self concept has three different components:

- The view you have of yourself (Self image)
- How much value you place on yourself (Self esteem or self-worth)
- How you wish you could be (Ideal self)

Psychologist, Carl Rogers, also paved the way for this concept. According to Rogers, everyone strives to become more like an "ideal self". The closer one is to their ideal self, the happier one will be. Rogers also claimed that one factor in a person’s happiness is Unconditional Positive Regard, or UPR, from others. Evidence of UPR in self concept research is apparent in studies by Benner and Mistry (2007) and Tiedemann (2000). Research has indicated that adolescents, whose mothers and teachers had high expectations for their future educational attainment, experienced more academic success than those mothers and teachers who had lower expectations.

Despite a lack of clear distinction among self-related perceptions, current researchers agree that self concept has a multidimensional nature (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh, Byrne & Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976).
1.9 Self Concept

Researchers also agree that self concept is not innate, but rather it is formed through an individual’s experiences and interaction with the environment (Bong & Clark, 1999; Bong & Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985), where “significant others” play an important role (Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976; Sanchez & Roda, 2003). Sanchez and Roda (2003) defined self concept as a component of human personality development. An important theory related to self concept is the Self Categorization Theory (SCT), which states that the self concept consists of at least two "levels," a personal identity and a social identity. In other words, one’s self-evaluation relies on both one’s self-perceptions and how one fits in socially. The self concept can alternate rapidly between the personal and social identity. Research by Trautwein et al., (2009) indicates that children and adolescents begin integrating social comparison information into their own self concept in elementary school by assessing their position among their peers. Gest et al., (2008) maintained that peer acceptance has a significant impact on one’s self concept by age 5, affecting children’s behavior and academic success. Both these research examples demonstrate the social influences on a person’s self concept.

Self concept is thought to be a relatively stable variable, formed within an individual’s social environment and based on feedback from significant others and by self-evaluation (Byrne, 1996; Hay, Ashman, & Van Kraayenoord, 1998). Self concept stability also refers to the ease or difficulty of changing an individual’s self concept belief. Pajares and Schunk (2002) claimed that the stability of a self-belief is dependent on its level of structure or ‘crystallization’.
1.10. Hardiness

Beliefs become crystallized with development and the repeat of similar experiences producing similar outcomes.

Adolescents have relatively well structured perceptions of themselves in domains such as intelligence, sociability and sports. New information, not consistent with an individual’s usual self concept beliefs, is more likely to be disregarded and challenged (Hay, 2002; Hay, Ashman, van Kraayenoord, & Stewart, 1999). Children’s self concept s are thought to be modified more easily, as are the self concept s of individuals with poorly formed notions about themselves (Pajares & Schunk, 2001).

1.10. Hardiness

Hardiness, in simple terms, can be stated as the personality style capable of stress resistance known as Hardy Personality that is effective in coping with stress. We come across so many situations in our daily life, that is sometimes calm and at other times stressful. Working men and women, school children, college students, house wives, business executives and professionals face turbulent situations at various points of time.

Kobasa (1979) observed a personality known as hardy personality that was effective in coping with stress. According to Kobasa there are three characteristics of the hardy personality they are

- Control: hardy individuals see themselves as being in charge of their environment
- Commitment: hardy individuals get involved and tackle problems head on.
1.11 Need for the Study

- Challenge: hardy individuals see change as a challenge rather than as a threat

Hardy persons are those who are deeply committed to themselves and the activity within their daily lives, they also believe that they can control the events they experience and view life change as an exciting challenge for further developments.

But how exactly does one react to such a condition? Some lose their cool and take their anger on others, some analyze the problem and try to get a solution, still others go for professional guidance while majority are balanced and level headed in stressful conditions. This resistance to stress is of prime importance to people in all walks of life but this study concentrates on the effects of hardiness among the IT professionals with respect to important variables such as sex, education, type of settings, marital status and type of family. The comparisons are made with respect to the above mentioned variables in this study. Broadly speaking, the reaction to stress is determined by one’s personality traits.

1.11 Need for the Study

An organization’s need to attract and retain valued employees in a highly competitive labour market is a strong motivating factor for increased organizational awareness and action with regard to human resource policies and practices that address work life balance. Work life balance is an important area of human resource management that is receiving increasing attention from government, researchers, management and employee representatives. Work life balance from the employee perspective is the maintenance of a balance
1.11 Need for the Study

between responsibilities at work and at home. Employees view the benefits or working conditions that are provided to help them to balance the family and work domains as work life benefits. Work life balance strategies in an organizational setting include policies covering flexible work arrangements, child and dependent care and family and parental leave.

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. In fact, the frustrating search for work life balance is a frequent topic of conversation among men and women alike. 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. Meeting competing demands of work and family is not only tiring but can be stressful and can lead to sickness and absenteeism. It inevitably affects productivity.

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 contribution 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.

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 employees 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 (Vloebelgs, 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. 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.
1.11 Need for the Study

These developments strengthen the search by companies for better ways of accommodating some of the expectations of employees with regard to both family and professional lives.

Chennai, the most traditional metropolis in India, is witnessing a sea change in its values and beliefs. This City is currently booming with employment opportunities mostly in the service sectors, more particularly in the IT and BPO, offering jobs equally to men and women (Pradhan and Abraham 2005; Varma and Sasikumar 2004). The working groups are predominantly youngsters but due to the increased job opportunities, people in middle age are also shifting into these jobs (Sachitanand et al., 2007). These jobs often come with a fair share of problems such as work pressure, extended working times, over arching goals, non supportive work environments etc. (Upadhya and Vasavi 2006). Consequently, employees report work life conflicts. The current study attempts to ascertain psychological variables which influence the work life balance and it is directed at narrowing the existing research gap in this context. Surprisingly, the literature review did not reveal any study of this nature in India. Results of the study may be useful to organisations designing measures to address work life imbalance, as expectations and coping styles appear to be different across genders (Baick and Drew 2006; Parker 2007).

The recent past is a witness to changes in work schedules. A larger part of the IT sector is moving from a standard eight-hour a day to operating twenty four hours a day for seven days of the week (Bharat 2008). Many employees need to work on Saturdays and Sundays too. Moreover, there is a changing pattern in the
working hours which is quite different from the standard one, which normally operates from 9 am to 5 pm. While some employees work in the standard time, some others need to be available for work that normally starts early in the evening and continues well through the night. Sometimes they need to even work beyond the normal eight hours (Rai 2009).

1.12 Statement of the Problem

In today’s world, work and family domains influence each other greatly. It is a truism that work interferes with family as much as family interferes with work. There is indeed a critical linkage between career and family, especially in IT industries. It is found that individuals’ involvements, demands, and accomplishments in the employment and family domains are interdependent, The internalization of the belief that roles are gender-specific, prescribes different life-options for men and women. For men, this life option implies prioritization of work over family, whereas for women, it implies prioritization of family over work. 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). As compared to the other parts of the world, Indian employees face a lot of difficulties in managing their work and life. 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 families
1.12 Statement of the Problem

come in the form of hired domestic help or female members of extended families. Although hired domestic help 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 leads to higher levels of personal role overload for women and men are expected to care more about their work life. This has definitely affected the career prospects, especially in India. 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, employees face a lot of problems in terms of their career advancement and familial role-fulfillment.