Chapter One: Introduction
Chapter I: Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the topic of the thesis; it is about the theoretical background of the topic and shows the meaning of various constructs used in the research. It also shows the problem statement of the study, the scope and importance of the research. Following are the sections included in the chapter.

1.1 Work – Life Balance

1.2 Theories of Work – Life Balance

1.3 Introduction to the Topic of Research

1.4 Constructs Used in Research

1.5 Problem Statement of Thesis

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1.1 Work – Life Balance:

In recent years the concept of work – life balance has gained immense popularity in India as employers have realized that employees’ work life and personal and family life make conflicting demands on each other. There are various factors which have enhanced the importance of work – life balance. Enhanced competition due to globalization have forced companies to adopt long working hour’s culture leading to work pressure and intensification of work for employees. On the other hand breakdown of the old joint family structure and increase in number of women in the labor market have majorly impacted the need for work – life balance policies in the Indian context. The social fabric of the nation has changed as well over the years and now we can witness a rise in the number of divorces and single parents even in tier II cities like Pune. In addition there has been a rise in the number of working mothers and dual working couples in the economy.

Primarily work – life balance is concerned with the working time of employees and how long working hours impact the personal and family lives of employees. According to Green (2006) the total hours worked by households in comparison to increase in number of hours worked by an individual has given rise to work – life imbalance and people are feeling time constrained as they cannot balance their work and non work activities. Work pressure often made employees anxious and they found themselves to worry and think about work situations even beyond working hours. This creates stressful situations for the employees where they are not able to devote adequate time and energy to either work or their home and family life. In some cases the work as well as the home / family / personal lives of the employees take a beating as a result of their inability to manage work pressure with family or personal responsibilities.

The result of dissatisfaction emerging from the work – life conflicts can affect both the personal and professional lives of individuals. Professionally the end product of
work – life conflicts can be very harmful to both the organizations as well as the individuals and can be manifested as reduction in productivity, reduced motivation and organizational commitment, increased level of absenteeism, job dissatisfaction or separation from the immediate employer. Personally the work – life conflict could be emotionally devastating as it often results in inferior relationships with spouse and other family members; it can also bring about serious health conditions and lifestyle related health problems.

Organizations have therefore developed several work – life balance initiatives which can help employees to balance their work life and home life. Work – life balance initiatives have often been used to retain valuable employees in the company which reduces its cost of recruitment to a large extent. Initiatives such as working from home arrangements have been used by companies to cut down on increasing administration costs. Therefore work – life balance has become a significant topic of study for human resource managers in recent times. Work – life policies are mutually beneficial tools for both the employees as well as the employers as both the parties derive valuable benefits from them. An employee using child care facilities may be in a better position to manage multiple work – family roles. On the other hand the employer by providing child care facilities is able to retain a valuable employee in the company, projects itself as an employee centric organization and reduces recruitment cost and costs of absenteeism; in return they get a loyal, productive and committed employee.

Some of the commonly used initiatives are flexible working opportunities like telecommuting, flexible working hours, job sharing, compressed work week, shift work, split shifts and work from home opportunities. In addition to this many organizations provide financial benefits like health insurance, subsidized meals, pick up and drop facilities to and from office, medical facilities and gym for exercise, overtime payment and night shift allowance. Recently few banks in India have started providing extended maternity leaves without pay or the maternity leave can be availed off in trenches. Women employees are able to take sabbaticals from their career post childbirth and return to their job thereafter. Women employees in education sector are
also provided with extended maternity breaks and flexible working options when they
rejoin the organization after childbirth. The motive of these companies is to retain the
women employees and make them feel welcomed in the company post taking breaks
due to childbirth or other family events. On the other hand many companies in
automobiles sector, FMCG sector, IT sector are providing employees with flexible
working hours option and compressed work weeks option to enable employees spend
time with their family and take care of home responsibilities.

**Statutory Provisions in India:**

As per Baral and Bhargava (2011) apart from the initiatives and benefits adopted by
the organizations there are certain statutory benefits allowed under the various acts of
India which enables the employees to manage successfully their work – life balance.
They are as follows:

a) As per The Factories Act, 1948 the working hours of adult workers should not exceed 48 hours a week or 9 hours per day.

b) As per The Factories Act, 1948 no women and adolescent workers are allowed to work in the evening and night from 7 pm to 6 am.

c) Workers as per The Factories Act, 1948 should be given one day in a week as weekly holiday so that they do not work for ten consecutive days. In situations where the worker has to work on a holiday, he or she will be entitled to a compensatory leave on some other day.

d) The Factories Act, 1948 also makes provisions for crèches in factories where more than thirty women employees are employed so that the mothers can take care of their young children and maintain a good work – life balance.

f) The ESI Act, 1948 provides health coverage for employees who are earning below a specific income level. Cash benefits are paid for the period of sickness, cash benefits are also paid to women employees who have suffered miscarriage, have been sick due to pregnancy or miscarriage or have medically terminated their pregnancy.

In general work – life balance of individuals can be understood from the number of hours of work put in by them. However always it is not so as many individuals consider autonomy in deciding their working hours, control and choice of work schedules and their being able to match their work patterns with their own life stage and specific life style as a major deciding factor for creating balance in their life. Therefore even though a number of work – life initiatives are available for employees, their choice of the best initiative suitable for them varies over time, age, stages of career and other factors which may turn out to become significant at different phases of an individual’s life. For example the work – life balance of a working mother with an infant baby will be different from a working mother with a grown up adult child. Therefore we can see that there are some individuals who are comfortable with working for long hours as long as they do not have to work on weekends. Or on the other hand there are individuals who are used to long work schedules for days as long as they are able to take significant periods of day off for a vacation for relaxation with family.
1.2 **Theories of Work – Life Balance:**

Since 1980s a large number of researchers have studied the various aspects of work – life balance in detail. Several models have been formulated by researchers to study the relationship between work and family roles of individuals. Following are some of the popular models and theories of work – life balance.

1. Segmentation Theory  
2. Compensation Theory  
3. Spillover Theory  
4. Instrumental Theory  
5. Conflict Theory  
6. Enrichment Theory  
7. Resource Drain Theory  
8. Congruence Theory  
9. Work / Family Border Theory  
10. Boundary Theory

**Segmentation Theory:** This theory states that work life and home and family life are two completely separate, compartmentalized and different domains of individuals. As per the theory work and family domains function independently and do not influence and affect each other in any way. This is a process where individuals actively hold back work related thoughts and behaviors while they are in the family domain and also suppress family related emotions, feelings and behaviors while they are active and involved in the work domain. This theory does not have any practical support and is the weakest theory on the relationship between an individual’s work and personal life. Recent studies have however shown that complete segmentation of the home and work domains are not possible for individuals. Therefore segmentation has been in modern times viewed as an active psychological process where people create and maintain a boundary between their work and personal life so that work and non – work domains can be maintained separately and an impermeable boundary can be created between them.
**Compensation Theory:** This theory promulgates that work and family are the two domains of life for individuals and if something is lacking in the form of satisfaction or demand from one domain of life then they will try to derive that satisfaction from the other domain of life. This simply means they will try to compensate for the dissatisfaction in one particular domain (home or work) by trying to get more satisfaction in the other domain. Therefore the relationship between the two domains of work and home are inverse and bi-directional; negative experiences in one domain is offset when individuals focus on the other domain for seeking positive experiences. For example if an employee finds his work to be monotonous and unchallenging, he will try to compensate this dissatisfaction by taking on key roles in a local area activity or by doing social work outside his work domain. On the other hand dissatisfied employees have also been seen to find more satisfaction from home and family activities and relationships. Compensation can take place in two forms. Firstly an individual may decrease his involvement from a dissatisfying domain and increase his activities and involvement in the other domain of life where there is potential for success to make up for the deficiencies of the other domain. A woman who is dissatisfied with her personal life may spend less time with close family members and relatives and spend more hours working to compensate for the loss of satisfaction in personal life. The second way to compensate will take place when individuals focus on pursuing rewards in one domain in response to experiencing dissatisfaction, restrictions and limited returns in the other domain. For example an employee who is dissatisfied at work may choose to concentrate on leisure activities after a long and tiring day at work.

**Spillover Theory:** According to this theory the two domains of work and family can influence each other either in a positive or in a negative way. Values, emotions and behavior of individuals at work can be carried back to their personal and family life thereby showing a direct relationship between work and family. Therefore the experiences of individuals in one domain affect their experiences in another domain. Example of negative spillover is when an individual is very tired after a long and difficult day at work, his fatigue is carried over to his family life and he may not be in
the best of moods to spend time with his wife and children. Spillover means that the experiences of an individual at work and family are identical, either both are negative or both are positive.

Spillover effect can occur with transfer of affect, values, skills and behavior from one domain to the other. Spillover of affect such as mood and feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction can take place when positive and satisfactory experiences at work leads to an uplifted and positive interactions and experiences with family members and vice versa. Value spillover takes place when values from one domain create an impact on the values to be followed in the other domain. For example if an individual experiences control as a value in organizational life, he may want to use the same value in his home environment. If the value at work is compatible with the accepted values at home then this spillover will be considered a positive spillover. On the other hand if the value adopted from work / home is not compatible with the values in the other domain then the spillover will be considered as a negative spillover. Skills and behavior spillover can occur when the skills and behavior learnt in one domain can be put to use and implemented in the other domain. It will be considered a positive spillover when the skills and behaviors individuals have learnt in one domain increases his ability and helps him to meet the demands of the other domain with ease. However when the skills and behavior learnt in one particular domain interferes with the functioning of the other domain, the spillover will be considered to be a negative skill and behavior spillover.

The spillover theory has a number of limitations. Few researchers have said that the theory lacks psychological links between the work and family domains of the individuals. The theory fails to shed any light on the day to day interactions between the work and family roles. Further the theory does not explain how the individuals will regain their work – life balance in situations of negative spillover from one domain to the other.
**Instrumental Theory:** The theory posits that activities undertaken by individuals in one domain of life facilitates and accentuate success in another domain of life. This theory considers achievements in a job as a tool which is used to provide resources for living a peaceful, pleasurable and comfortable personal life. For example an employee undertakes overtime work and works beyond normal working hours to maximize his earnings so as to purchase a car or an apartment for the comfort of his family. There are two perspectives of this theory. First is the expansionist perspective which states that participation and involvement with multiple roles enhances an individual’s energy level and reduces stress which may be associated with their activity in multiple roles. A survey conducted by Barnett and Baruch (1986) reported that married mothers who worked in high level position in organizations often showed very good level of well being out of all the women that were studied in the survey. The second perspective is the enrichment perspective wherein it is believed that roles assigned for one domain could provide enrichment to the other domain in the life of the individual. Therefore the more importance the individuals gave to both home and work domain, the more they will experience enrichment in their lives.

**Conflict Theory:** This theory suggests that work life and personal and family life of individuals are mutually incompatible and when there is a high level of demand in both the work and home domains of one’s life then an individual experiences psychological conflicts as he has to make difficult choices because of the significant overload in both the domains. Work overload in office is always accompanied by making sacrifices in the home domain and when there is overload of duties at home, the pressure is also felt in the work domain. Therefore success in one domain of individuals’ life is always accompanied by sacrifices made in the other domain. This theory is on the basis of the concept of role conflict which arises because of the existence of incompatibility in values, expectations and pressures specific to both the domains. In general individuals have limited time in a day and as a result they are not always able to give adequate time and energy to both work and home demands which leads to the individuals experiencing psychological conflict. Also individuals who have a conscientious personality are seen to experience less conflict and stress and are able to perform competently in both the work and home domains.
**Enrichment Theory:** This theory states that experiences of individuals in one role leads to their experiencing an improved quality of life in another domain. For example, if an individual experiences a successful day at work then it leads to his experiencing a good day with family as well. On the other hand, good family outcomes also lead to good work outcomes in the lives of the individuals. These experiences are related to the mood, satisfaction level experienced, value system adopted and the skills and abilities of the individuals and they enhance the positive experiences of the other domain. Therefore, as per this theory, work and family life of individuals are considered as allies and not as enemies and employees feel that their work roles enrich their family roles and vice versa.

**Resource Drain Theory:** This theory states an individual has a limited supply of resources such as time, energy, attention and money. Therefore, the amount of resources used in one domain reduces the quantity of resources available to the other domain. For example, when an individual spends a large part of his time and energy at work then the time available in a day or week for his family, for his personal life, social activities and hobbies reduces to a great extent. This theory speaks of transfer of limited resources from one domain to the other which leads to depleting and reducing the available resource for the domain which originally owned the resource. Overspending of resources such as time and energy in one domain makes the individual experience stress and burnout in the other domain. An individual who spends long hours at work and does not have adequate time for family members, for taking care of children, for spending time with spouse, old parents and friends will feel stressed out and will experience inter-role conflict.

In such situations, the individuals require the help of their spouse’s at home and the help of their supervisors at work. When the supervisor or employer is not supportive and does not acknowledge the life of an individual outside work then the support of the spouse or partner reduces the role conflict experienced. On the other hand, if the spouse or partner is unsupportive then the family-friendly attitude of the employer compensates for the lack of the support from the home domain.
**Congruence Theory:** This theory states that additional variables such as personality traits, socio cultural factors, behavioral styles and genetic structure of individuals help to create a balance between work and family domains. For example education and intelligence of individuals may help in maintaining a balance between the work and home domains. A highly qualified and intelligent individual may be aware of how he can save time and can resort to online payment of utility bills, online purchase of certain essential items for the comfort of his family and thus maintain a balance between his work and home life. On the other hand an individual who does not know how to use the computer or does not believe in making online payments and purchases may not be able to do so and save time and thus create work – life balance.

**Work / Family Border Theory:** This theory by Clark (2000) was formulated as an improvement over the earlier theories of work – life balance. The theory recognizes the association between work and family systems as a human connection and not an emotional connection. People on a daily basis move between their two worlds of work and family and are termed as border – crossers. The people while making the daily transitions between the work world and home and family world mold the borders separating these two worlds and in this way determine and create distinctive relationships with that world and its members. The individuals achieve work – life balance by negotiating and managing the work and family domains and the borders that separate them. Work and family spheres can be considered as two different countries with different cultures, purposes, languages, standards of acceptable behavior and accomplishment of tasks. Therefore the individuals make daily transitions between these two domains to maintain a balance by focusing on the goals of each domain and customizing their interpersonal style to match the unique requirements and demands of each domain.

There are four important concepts of the work / family border theory. They are as follows:

a) The Domains – Work and Home  
b) The Borders between Work and Home  
c) The Border – crossers  
d) The Border – keepers
a) **Domains:** The work and the family form the two domains of the theory. They domains differ in their culture, have different rules, different ways of working and different standards of thought patterns and acceptable behavior. The two domains also differentiate in valued means and valued ends. Work satisfied the end of providing financial income and a sense of achievement in career where as home and family satisfied the end of experiencing personal happiness through close and committed relationships. The means for achieving the goals of the two domains were distinctively different. The means for achieving goals at home were often associated with showing emotional honesty, being loving, caring and giving with other members of the domain. Whereas the means for achieving goals at work were associated with individuals being responsible, being capable, being customer friendly and cheerful; in fact organizations often train their employees to suppress their real emotions and to wear the façade of another emotion to create a customer friendly environment.

Therefore by integrating and segmenting the differences in cultures, means and ends of both the domains, the individuals are able to create a desirable level of balance in their lives.

b) **Borders:** The borders between work and family are of three forms. They are physical borders, psychological borders and temporal borders. Physical borders exist when domain activities take place in different locations or are within the confines of walls separating the domains in case of home offices. The psychological borders are created by individuals and consist of rules that govern their behavior, thinking patterns and emotions that are suitable for each domain. The temporal borders brings out the different time and working hours in which the home and work duties will be managed.

There are three characteristic of borders. They are permeability, flexibility and blending.
**Permeability:** It signifies the extent to which elements of the other domain may be entering the domain in which the individual is active. For example in a home office a physical door or wall may separate the borders of the two domains, however the family members may enter the work domain at any time and interact with the individual. Therefore permeations can be physical, temporal and psychological in nature. Increased rate of physical and temporal permeations can distract and interrupt the individual at work or when he is at home with family. On the other hand psychological permeations can be both positive and negative depending on what emotions and inspirations individuals carry from one domain to the other. Psychological permeations can be negative when one carries negative emotions from work to home life so a negative spillover from work damages the harmony at home. Psychological permeations can be positive when an individual gets inspirations and innovative ideas from one domain which might help him to resolve problems that have cropped up in the other domain.

**Flexibility:** It signifies the degree to which the border of a domain may be flexible and expand or contract to accommodate the demands of the other domain. Temporal flexibility can be found in situations where individuals are free and available for work at any time he chooses. Similarly when individuals are ready to work from any location, be it home or office or from client’s premises then the physical borders are flexible. Psychological flexibility is found in situations where the individuals are able to think about work when they are at home and can think about home when they are at work.

**Blending:** It is possible for domains to get blended when there is a huge amount of permeability and flexibility between the borders of work and home. In situations where the work and home domains are similar, blending of domains gives a sense of wholeness to the individuals and integrates their work and family life. When the domains are very different then blending gives rise to conflict between their identity and purpose.
Border Strength: The level of permeability, flexibility and blending between domains determine the strength of the border dividing them. Strong borders are impermeable, inflexible and do not facilitate blending of the domains. When the two domains of work and home and family are dissimilar and different from each other then a strong border helps to maintain work – life balance of the individuals.

On the other hand weak borders are flexible and allow permeations and blending between the domains. When the two domains are similar then a weak border helps in maintaining work – life balance of the individuals.

The border is usually strong for a powerful domain and in such situations individuals will achieve work – life balance if they identify with the strongly bordered domain. However the work – life balance will not be achieved if the individuals identify with the weakly bordered domain.

c) Border – Crossers: Individuals make frequent transitions between the two domains of work and family and are termed as border crossers. Border – crossers can be either central participants or peripheral participants of the domains. Central participants have wholeheartedly accepted and internalized the domain’s culture and values, they identify with and are competent to manage the responsibilities of the domains and have connected well with others in the domain who have central membership. Peripheral participants on the other hand do not identify with the goals, cultures and values of the domain and have not connected well with other central members of the domain.

Therefore border – crossers who are central participants have more control and can influence and make changes to the domain and its borders in comparison to peripheral participants. Such central participants have more autonomy and can have more choices as to how to manage the domain. However when the individual is a central participant in both the domains then
he can achieve work–life balance with ease in comparison to individuals who are not central participants in both the domains.

d) **Border – Keepers and Other Domain Members:** Border – keepers are influential domain members like the spouse at home and the supervisor or manager at work who controls and defines the border and the domain. The border – keepers and other members of the domain have an important role in helping the border – crosser to manage the domain and the border with ease. When the domain members have low level of knowledge and awareness regarding the other domain then it will become difficult for the border – crosser to achieve a high work–family balance. For example unmarried employees are often considered to have no responsibilities at home by supervisors. Often it may be the opposite in certain situations where the unmarried employee has as much responsibilities as a married counterpart. However since the supervisor fails to understand this it does not help to reduce the work–life imbalance of the unmarried employee. On the other hand when domain members have high level of awareness regarding the other domain then the border – crossers have high level of work–family balance.

When the domain members have a high level of commitment to the border – crosser and care and support him then the border – crosser experiences high level of work–family balance in comparison to border – crossers who were not supported by the domain members.

When the domains are very different then the border – crosser does not communicate a lot about his home life with his supervisor. However frequent and regular communication between border – crossers and border – keepers and other domain members can minimize the negative impact of situations which can cause a work–life imbalance.
**Boundary Theory:** The theory was formulated by Ashforth et al in 2000 and focused on the psychological and physical micro transitions between the professional and personal roles that an individual engages in every day. It particularly speaks about how an individual disengages from one role and enters another role, thus the individual engages in role transitions which is a boundary-crossing activity according to the boundary theory.

The theory takes into consideration three types of role transitions. They are:

a) Transition between work and home roles.

b) Transitions at work between two roles e.g. role of a superior and subordinate.

c) Transitions between work and a third place like health clubs, church or a neighborhood bar.

Four assumptions have been made to formulate this theory. They are as follows:

1. The many roles that individuals engage in are stable and have established boundaries and content and are not under threat from each other.

2. Individuals vary and have their own personal choices regarding the number of roles they wish to engage in and have some liberty in enacting the roles of their choice.

3. The individuals have the freedom to choose the degree of segmentation or integration of roles they engage in. Given the costs and benefits associated with segmenting or integrating roles in one’s life, individuals have their own personal choice and vary in their
preference for the amount of segmentation or integration of roles in their day to day life.

4. Regardless of whether individuals segment or integrate their roles, they always seek to minimize the psychological and physical difficulties associated with role transitions. They also seek to minimize the level of undesired interruptions while engaging in their roles.

**Creation, Maintenance and Crossing of Boundary:** Boundary is a mental fence created by individuals around physical, geographical, temporal, people, emotional, cognitive, events and ideas so as to separate one entity from the other and create boundaries which are slices of domains which are meaningful for the individuals. Social domains like home, work and church are separated by boundaries and the individuals treat these boundaries as real and genuine, thereby enabling them to focus and concentrate on domains in which they are active and not get distracted by the other domains. Crossing of boundaries between domains therefore becomes very complicated because of the creation and maintenance of boundaries. It has been discussed by various authors metaphorically as crossing a bridge or taking a cognitive leap between two domains.

**Role Boundaries:** It describes and defines the scope of role of individuals within a domain and includes all the activities within the perimeter of the domain. Social domains like home, work and church are somewhat institutionalized and the roles of such domains are applicable and appropriate in a specific physical location and at a specific period of time which may be a day, a week or a month.
**Flexibility and Permeability of Role Boundaries:** A role with flexible boundary signifies that the role can be carried out in different locations and at different period of time and there are no fixed spatial or temporal boundaries related to the role. For example a man working in a family business will play the role of a son at any location or at point of time as and when required. Flexibility of role boundaries however will not be possible in the job of a security guard as the individual will have no flexibility regarding the location of his job or the timing of his job.

Permeability of role boundaries refers to the extent to which individuals can psychologically and behaviorally get involved with other roles even when they are physically present in another role domain. An individual at work will have a permeable work role boundary when he is able to accept personal phone calls or personal visits while being at work. On the other hand an individual who has no free time or access to accept personal phone calls or visits has an impermeable work role boundary.

Flexibility and permeability of role boundary plays an important role in micro role transitions as and when required. For example an employee who has permeability of role boundary may leave work when he has to face some problems at home or church. However too much looseness of the boundary might puzzle the individual as he will not understand which domain’s role is the most important role for him.

**Role Identities:** It comprises of socially constructed description and characteristics of the individual who is enacting a particular role in a specific domain. It usually consists of core and important characteristics and peripheral characteristics of the individual enacting the role. For example role identities of a manager may include aggressiveness, self reliance, objectivity and stability of emotions as core characteristics and charisma and intelligence as peripheral characteristics. When role identities of two roles that an individual plays are very different and contrasting then it becomes difficult
for the individual to make a transition between roles. For example the work roles of a manager requires him to be self resilient and aggressive at work, however the same manager may require to be warm and nurturing while interacting with family members at home. Therefore he finds it difficult to switch off and disengage from work role behavior and engage in a dissimilar behavioral pattern at home.

On the basis of flexibility and permeability of role boundaries and contrast of role identities any given role can be placed on a continuum which ranges from high segmentation to high integration where in the segmentation and integration decisions involve costs and benefits for creating, maintaining and crossing over between role boundaries.

**Role Segmentation:** Highly segmented role are characterized by high role contrast, where roles are highly differentiated and is negatively associated with role flexibility which speaks of roles being tied to and performed in specific settings and at specific times. Role contrast in highly segmented roles is also negatively associated with role permeability which refers to very few cross – role interruptions in the lives of the individual. Highly segmented roles have different values, goals, norms, beliefs, communication patterns, time settings and have dissimilar contexts with regard to the different roles. Segmented roles usually are carried out in different physical locations so there is no overlapping of physical location and no overlapping of the members who constitute the different domains.

**Benefits of Segmented Roles:** The primary benefit of segmented roles is that it reduces blurring between the different roles. Since segmented roles are carried out in different physical settings and at different time period therefore the differences in physical settings and time periods are symbolic markers that a different identity is to be undertaken by the member of the role set. For example, an employee entering the office building in the morning gets the cue
that he has to adopt the identity of an office staff. Where as an employee who picks up her children from a day care center in the evening after work gets the cue that now she has to adopt the identity of a parent and a family member. In addition since highly segmented roles are highly contrasted therefore it becomes easy for the individuals to psychologically compartmentalize the identities associated with the different role sets. For example a police officer does not behave aggressively at home unlike at work but is sensitive to his children. Highly segmented roles do not allow the role occupants to get distracted by interruptions from other roles as segmented roles tend to be impermeable. As a result the individuals can focus and concentrate on their work during work hours, concentrate on the family during family time and achieves peace of mind.

**Costs of Segmented Roles:** The limitation of segmentation is that it creates difficulties in the transition process between role boundaries or between the different domains. High contrast in roles often requires greater psychological and physical difficulties in bridging the gulf between two role sets. A policeman who has to behave aggressively at work may find it difficult to release that personality completely at home and it takes him quiet an effort and time to be again the loving and sensitive parent and member of the family. This is because of the spillover of moods, emotions and stress and thought patterns generated in one domain generally get carried over to the other domains and it becomes difficult for the individual to make a role transit and adopt the behavioral patterns of the other role. Therefore highly segmented roles makes it less difficult to create and maintain a role boundary, however highly segmented roles makes it difficult for the individuals to cross the role boundaries.

**Role Transition for Segmented Roles:** Transition in highly segmented roles is difficult and of a high magnitude, therefore it requires certain rights of passage or rituals and ceremonies to facilitate movement of individuals from one role to the other.
There are three stages of a role transition process. They are:

a) Rights of separation which leads to exit from one role. It involves the individual getting psychologically and physically disengaged from one role. An employee may disengage from work at the end of the working hours by seeing the clock as an external cue and planning for the next working day’s agenda with his coworkers, turning off the computer and clearing away the files he was working on.

b) Movement involves the psychological and physical movement from one role to the other by the individual. Rites of transit facilitate psychological and physical movement between roles and helps in psychologically preparing for entering a role by regulating individual’s attention and arousal. Commuting to and from work is a rite of passage where in the individual is able to relax, reduce his stress and unwind from work day’s thoughts and is a valuable buffer between two role identities.

c) Rights of Incorporation which facilitates role entry and is characterized by psychologically and physically being engaged with a role. An individual may meet up with friends for a drink after work is over signaling that leisure time has begun and may discuss high points of the work day with them and thus gain closure of the work role.

**Role Integration:** Integration in roles is characterized by low contrast and role sets are seen to have a flexible and permeable boundary. Therefore there is no such rule that the role sets for example home and work have to be carried out in a specific location or at a specific time and allow cross – role interruptions. Highly integrated roles are weakly differentiated and have similar identities and often are carried out in the same physical location and overlap in timing and membership of the role sets. Since there is a high degree of flexibility and permeability of boundary, therefore there arise frequent and unpredictable transitions between the two roles. For example an
employee working from home can take care of the needs of her small children as and when required while working.

**Benefits of Integrated Roles:** Highly integrated roles have a high degree of role boundary flexibility and permeability and therefore transition between roles is less difficult and do not require any elaborate rites of passage like highly segmented roles. For example an employee working from home may begin work after having a cup of coffee and reading the newspaper; therefore the entire role exit, movement and role entry process is done almost unconsciously and rapidly by the individual without much psychological and physical effort.

**Costs of Integrated Roles:** The primary cost of highly integrated roles is that there is a greater amount of role blurring as a result of which individuals become confused and anxious and cannot understand which role identity they should give more importance. Highly integrated roles make it difficult for individuals to completely disengage from a role psychologically and individuals are seen to juggle between two roles which might cause stress and can have a negative impact on enjoying the tasks. Due to high degree of flexibility and permeability individuals engaging in integrated roles are often seen to experience unforeseen interruptions; however role integration reduces the affective impact of such interruptions. Therefore the main challenge of highly integrated roles is to create and maintain role boundaries.

**Other Factors Impacting Role Transitions:** When individuals have a greater identification of their role identities then they are more likely to integrate the various roles they engage in. Individuals try to reduce the contrast of different roles which makes role entry an easy task; however role exit often becomes difficult as individuals get engrossed with the tasks.
On the other hand strong situational factors such as acceptance of what is the right or the wrong behavior at work by all the employees will reduce the individuals’ ability to change the boundary which has already been created. Often at work maintenance of such boundaries is reinforced by punishments or rewards which further reduce the chances of individual differences on creating, maintaining and crossing of role boundaries. On the other hand role transitions become automatic when it is repeated over a period of time and the more the role is performed by the individual the lesser he will give importance to interruptions while performing the role. For example if a teacher gets a call in between her class, she will take the call and then continue with her teaching without any loss of continuity.
1.3 Introduction to the Topic of Research:

The topic of the research is ‘A Critical Analysis of Gender Perception of Work – Life Balance in the Service Sector in Pune’. The research is aimed at finding the differences if any as per the Indian context in the perceptions of men and women employees working in various service sector organizations. Keeping the study of differences in gender perceptions for various aspects of work – life balance as the study’s primary aim; the research has further investigated the work – family conflicts experienced by the respondents and delves into their job satisfaction to finally come to a conclusion as to whether work – life balance is considered a good measure or a key factor for successful career of the employees.

1.4 Constructs Used in Research:

The following constructs have been used in the research to explain the differences in gender perceptions:

a) Work – Life Balance
b) Work – Family Conflict
c) Job Satisfaction
d) WLB as a key factor for achieving a Successful Career
e) WLB programs in organizations

1.4.1 Work – Life Balance:

Work – life balance is about managing and balancing paid work and career related activities with unpaid work and the unpaid activities of home and family, social life, community services and leisure activities. As per Guest (2002) achieving a good balance in life can lead to personal satisfaction for individuals in the form of work satisfaction or life satisfaction. Unbalanced life can lead to mental stress and anxiety, dysfunctional family relationships, illness and negatively impacts the overall wellbeing of the individuals. Professionally an unbalanced individual may not be able to give his best performance and reportedly experience reduced commitment and
lower job satisfaction in comparison to individuals who have successfully balanced their lives.

However what is meant by work – life balance differs from one individual to another as the perception of balance changes with age, gender, marital status and social norms. The work – life balance of a working mother of a young child will be very different from the work – life balance of a working mother of a teenaged youngster. On the other hand work – life balance of men and women in gender egalitarian society will be very different than the work – life balance of men and women in traditional gender bound roles society.

Definitions:

_The Word Spy (2002) _defines work – life balance as a state of equilibrium in which there are equal demands arising from an individual’s job and career sphere and the personal life sphere.

_Lockwood (2003) _considers work – life balance to have chameleon characteristics. She defines work – life balance from the employees’ point of view as well as from the employers’ point of view.

According to Lockwood work – life balance can be defined from the employees’ perspective as the dilemma as to how to manage the two domains of their lives and balance with ease their work obligations with the family and personal responsibilities.

According to Lockwood work – life balance can be defined from the employers’ perspective as a challenge as to ways of creating and supporting a culture in their company in which employees can focus on their work without being distracted for concerns and issues related to their personal and family life.

_Visser and Williams (2006) _defined work – life balance as a situation where individuals have adequate control and autonomy as to when, where and how they can work to accomplish their responsibilities both in paid work and nonpaid home work.
Kirchmeyer (2000) defined a balanced life as one in which individuals achieve satisfying experiences in both the work and home and personal life domains by utilizing and distributing well the personal resources such as time, energy and sense of commitment across all the domains of their lives.

According to Clark (2000) work – family balance is defined as a situation where in the individual derives satisfaction and good functioning at work and also in home and family activities with a minimum of role conflict between the two domains.

According to Kofodimos (1993) balance for individuals refers to their leading satisfactory, healthy and productive lives combining work, play and love.

Greenhaus et al (2003) defined work – family balance as the extent to which individuals are equally satisfied and engaged with their work and family roles. Work – family balance can also be divided into three components; time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance.

Time Balance: It refers to the individuals devoting equal amount of time to both work and family roles.
Involvement Balance: It refers to the individuals equally devoting and involving themselves psychologically in both the roles of work and family.
Satisfaction Balance: It refers to the individuals deriving equal level of satisfaction from work roles and family roles.

Hudson (2005) has defined work – life balance of individuals as a satisfactory level of involvement, association and fit between the various multiple roles of their life. Work – life balance examines the individuals’ ability to simultaneously manage the multiple demands from different domains of life and is generally associated with preserving an overall sense of harmony in their lives.

Greenblatt (2002) has defined work – life balance as the absence of undesirable levels of conflict between work and professional demands and non work demands arising from family and personal domains of an individual.
Buddhapriya (2009) has defined work – life balance as a state of well being which enables employees to manage multiple responsibilities and is a critical factor for achieving organizational and individual success.

Manfredi and Holliday (2004) conceptualizes work – life balance on the basis of the fact that paid work and home and personal life should not be seen as competing priorities but should be viewed as complementary elements of a full life and this can be achieved by adopting an approach where the needs of both the employees and the employers are considered.

Taylor (2002a) has defined work – life balance as a broader issue which shows us how to deal with the conflicting demands of profitability of companies on one hand and the concerns and problems of the employees who are constantly under strain and considerable work pressure on the other hand.

Noon and Blyton (2007) defines work – life balance of individuals as one in which they are able to lead their work lives and non work lives without experiencing any pressure from one domain which might detract from performing the activities of the other domain.

Clarke et al (2004) has given a holistic definition of work – life balance and is defined as a level of equilibrium or stability achieved by individuals which further creates harmony and synchronization in their overall lives.

1.4.2 Work – Family Conflict:

According to Priyadharshini and Wesley (2014) work – family conflict has increased in the last few decades in India as more and more women have entered the labor market and there has been a rise in the number of double income families. With the increase in rate of divorces the number of single – parent families have also increased. With the men also getting involved with house work to a certain extent, the women are no longer only serving the role of home makers.
**Haskins (2011)** has stated that even though the traditional roles of bread earners and home makers are gradually changing but still women spend more time than men taking care of children and household activities. Therefore work – family conflict has increased in families and families have to take the help of employers for flexible working arrangements to ease the pressure of such conflicts.

**Vallone and Donaldson (2001)** stated that work family conflict is also closely related to employees’ health and their overall well being.

**Bell et al (2012)** states that high work life conflict and lower work life balance are related to reduction in job satisfaction amongst employees.

**Definitions:**

**Greenhaus and Beutell (1985)** have defined work – family conflict as one which is experienced when participation in one role (work / family) interferes with participation and performance of the other role (family / work).

The demands of one role make participation in the other role difficult. Work – family conflict is an inter – role conflict where the demands of work and family are incompatible with each other. For example, when employees’ work long hours at work even on weekends, they will not be able to spend time with their families and it will create negative family relationships for them.

As per Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) there are three types of work – family conflict. They are as follows:

a) Time based conflict – It is believed that personal resources such as time, energy and attention are finite. Time based conflict takes two forms. Firstly when an individual spends more time in performance of one role and because of this he cannot give adequate time to the other role. And secondly when one is physically present in one domain and tries to perform the duties of that domain but is unable to do so as he is mentally preoccupied with the thoughts and worries about the other domain.
b) Strain based conflict – This type of conflict results when an individual’s participation in one domain makes him physically and psychologically stressed out that hinders in the performance of his role in the other domain. Often when one faces excessive demands from one domain then the performance of the other domain is hindered as it causes anxiety, fatigue and dissatisfaction.

c) Behavior based conflict – This type of conflict occurs when behavior patterns of one role is incompatible with the expectations of behavior in another role. For example an assertive and aggressive behavior at work is required for problem solving, however such behavior is not suitable in the family domain where one has to be warm and nurturing.

Netemeyer et al (1996) have improved the definition given by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and have given two separate definitions of the two components of work – life conflict; work – family conflict and family – work conflict.

Netemeyer et al (1996) have defined **work – family conflict** as an inter role conflict where the time and energy devoted to work and career domains create interference with performing family responsibilities. Whereas **family – work conflict** is an inter role conflict where time and energy devoted to performing family responsibilities interferes with performance of work responsibilities.

1.4.3 Job Satisfaction:

Performance and success of the organization as a whole depends a lot on the job satisfaction of employees. It is said a satisfied employee is more productive and will try his / her level best to satisfy the customers and clients of the organization. Job satisfaction results in employees being more motivated and are strongly committed to their organization.
Locke (1976) has defined job satisfaction as an emotional state where individuals’ find pleasure as a result of appraisal of their work.

Job satisfaction has been defined by Spector (1997) as an attitudinal variable that tells how individuals feel about their job in general and also measures how individuals feel about specific aspects and facets of their job.

Job satisfaction has been defined by a number of researchers as a positive feelings and attitudes that individuals have for their job experiences. On the other hand job dissatisfaction measures the negative feelings which individuals have for different aspects of their job or job experiences.

Pietersen (2005) has viewed the concept of job satisfaction as sum total of each of the aspect or facet of job multiplied by the important of each facet of the job as per the perception of the individuals.

Job satisfaction can also be viewed as intrinsic or extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors are those which promote and improve job satisfaction. Examples of intrinsic factors are growth opportunities, autonomy, variety of tasks, recognition and responsibility, utilization of skills and feeling of fulfillment. Extrinsic factors are those factors which prevent job dissatisfaction. Examples of extrinsic factors are pay, working conditions, interpersonal relationships with co – workers and supervisors and policies of the company.

Work – Life Balance and Job Satisfaction:

As per Saltzstein et al (2001) a satisfactory work – life balance positively impacts the job satisfaction of individuals. It has been seen that when organizations implement work – life balance programs which helps employees to manage the demands of work and home with ease then it enhances the job satisfaction experienced by the employees. Ezra and Deckman (1996) have reported that job satisfaction of individuals can be forecasted from work – life balance experienced by them. For example working mothers experience satisfactory work – life balance when they are provided with child care facilities or alternative working arrangements.
Shujat et al (2011) have also reported that work – life balance positively impacts the job satisfaction experienced by individuals. Therefore job satisfaction of employees working in banks can be enhanced by providing work – life balance policies to them so that they are able to manage their work life and home life with minimum of conflicts.

**Work – Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction:**

*Chahal et al (2013)* reported that very long working hours causes job dissatisfaction amongst the employees. Many researchers have shown that there is a negative relationship between work – family conflict and job satisfaction. *Netemeyer et al (1996)* showed that a negative relationship exists between work – family conflict and job satisfaction. However it has been seen factors like work time flexibility and autonomy impacts the relationship between work – family conflict and job satisfaction as such factors enable decrease of the conflict and enhancement of satisfaction at work.

**Gender and Job Satisfaction:**

*Haar et al (2014)* have also stated that in high gender egalitarian cultures individuals who experienced high work – life balance were also more satisfied with their jobs. Gender egalitarian cultures are those cultures where both men and women are not bound by traditional gender roles and have equal opportunities to pursue their professional goals as well as have opportunities to take care of home and family related activities. In such cultures society is more tolerant towards both men and women’s taking care of work and home responsibilities and it is not expected that individuals will leave one domain to take care of another; therefore individuals experience greater job satisfaction when they have high work – life balance as their personal values and beliefs are consistent with the society’s values and beliefs.

As per *Gamage (2013)* in non gender egalitarian cultures where men and women are bound by traditional gender roles, the women employees and professionals are found to experience more of job dissatisfaction in comparison to the male professionals. The women in such cultures have to take care of dual roles of home maker and a
professional at work which leads to their taking on excessive work load and experience job dissatisfaction as a result of it.

1.4.4 WLB as a key factor for achieving a Successful Career:

In the research we want to investigate if employees consider work – life balance as a key factor for a successful career. For that firstly we will try to understand what is meant by career success and how it is related to work – life balance as a concept.

**Career Success:** It can be defined as achieving goals and desirable work related outcomes that are personally meaningful and important for the individual at any point in their work experiences over a span of time.

*Seibert and Kraimer (2001)* have defined career success as positive psychological outcomes which are work related and which have been achieved due to one’s work experiences over a period of time.

Career success is important not only for the individuals but also for the employers as overall organizational success is the outcome of the personal growth and success of every employee.

*Judge et al (1995)* have defined career success as extrinsic and intrinsic work related achievements which the individuals have gathered due to their work experiences.

Objective and Subjective Career Success: Career success can be of two forms; the extrinsic objective career success and the intrinsic subjective career success.

**Objective Career Success:**

*Dries et al (2008)* have defined objective career success as those achievements which are visible, measurable and which can be verified. Examples of objective career success are salary, promotion, hierarchical status. Objective career success is neutral and not based on empirical evaluation.
Subjective Career Success:

Seibert and Kraimer (2001) have defined subjective career success as subjective evaluation of present work related achievements in comparison to the individuals’ predefined personal goals and expectations. Subjective career success can be self referent or other referent. Self referent means that the individual compares his current subjective achievements with their own predefined expectations, standards and aspirations. Other referent denotes that the individual compares his subjective success with expectations of other people. Therefore subjective success shows an individual’s judgment of achievements in his career. Examples of subjective career success are job satisfaction, career satisfaction and life satisfaction.

Gender and Career Success:

Inceoglu et al (2008) reported that women employees prefer the subjective career success measures and were not driven in their career path by only objective success measure such as salary, promotion or status. Instead women employees preferred job security and preferred to be engaged in a job which enabled them to find and maintain their balance and be successful in their own terms. According to Melamed (1996) women employees have to prove their credentials at work and be successful in their career by doing more than what the men employees do in their job. Therefore women employees who work for longer hours are recognized easily by superiors and bosses and often rewarded for their commitment.

Male employees are drawn more on objective measures of success like pay, status and promotion. In situations where their expectations are not met by the company then they leave their present jobs and joins some other organization where their expectations of pay, promotion and position are met. Therefore men employees’ dependence and attraction for objective measures of success portrays their need to get ahead in the organization. When male employees accumulate greater objective success then they are able to do justice to their role of bread earners in the family. Women employees are more driven by subjective measures of success as they have a nurturing role at home and need stability at work and perform their duties within certain specific hours so that they are able to take care of the needs of their family.
Work – Life Balance and Career Success:

_Boudreau et al (2001)_ have added life satisfaction to the definition of intrinsic career success earlier given by Judge et al (1995). Life satisfaction as a subjective or intrinsic career success measure acknowledges the significance of work – life balance or work – family balance as a measure for career success.

_Lee et al (2006)_ have stated that a study conducted by them showed that people considered themselves to be successful in their career if they were able to achieve balance in their life that involved their having a life outside work. Success in career meant that they were able to spend time and energy on personal and family related matters other than work. Flexibility, autonomy in the work place, personal space and well being were all very important for those people who were studied to think of themselves to have a successful career.

_Glynn (2000)_ have stated that work – life balance was a critical element of a successful career. Her study showed that individuals thought of a successful career as one in which they do not have to spend all their time on work or think about work most of the time after they have left the work place and are with their family and friends or doing personal activities.

_Baruch (2006)_ has stated that career related stress is an outcome of gaining career success for employees which in the long run hinders an individual’s performance and the overall organization’s performance. Therefore for managing the career of their employees, organizations should emphasize ways to enhance the balance between work and life domains so that a healthy organization is maintained and individuals can achieve success in their career and the organization can benefit from it.

_Shah (2013)_ has stated that work – life balance was considered to be one of the most important career advancement and career success factors for employees of both genders in the Indian context.
1.4.5 WLB Programs in Organizations:
It has been often found that when work – life balance programs are implemented in organizations then the rate of turnover and absenteeism of employees are reduced on one hand and employees’ level of commitment to the organization are increased on the other hand. In addition WLB programs implemented in organizations also increase the productivity and motivation of employees, reduces work stress of employees and reduces the employee retention costs of the organizations.

Lowe (2003) has stated that large organizations often have some form of flexible working arrangement in operation in the organization to help the employees to attain greater flexibility in scheduling their activities. However such work – family programs will be effectively implemented in the organization only when supervisors encouraged the employees to use them. Employees will not avail of such policies if they feel that supervisors disliked it and it will be detrimental to their career.

Meenakshi and Bhuvaneshwari (2013) have stated that since WLB programs are known to enhance employees’ productivity, morale and job satisfaction therefore organizations in India are taking steps to introduce family – friendly policies which help to reduce work place stress and work – family conflict of the employees.

Beauregard et al (2009) have stated that for women employees in particular who have family responsibilities to manage, the availability of flexible working hours from the organization increases their organizational commitment and level of job satisfaction. In addition for male employees’ availability of flexible working arrangements increase their organizational commitment when they perceive that flexible working is supported by their organization and use of this facility was high amongst other male employees.

Purohit (2013) has stated that in the Indian context the availability of WLB policies in organizations are dependent on the nature of their business, the philosophy of the organization as well as the profile of the organization and the employees working for them. The researcher has further given an example that in IT industries in India flexible working arrangements are available for the employees where as it is absent in manufacturing companies.
1.5 **Problem Statement of Thesis:**

Work – life balance was mostly a women centric topic of research for many years both at the national and international level. However with changing times men have started getting involved with domestic responsibilities; gradually a small percentage of men have also started taking the first few steps to be involved with caring for young children. Therefore in recent times the concept of work – life balance is equally important for both the genders.

Lack of work – life balance often results in employees leaving their jobs. Men switch jobs from companies which makes them work for very long hours and which affects their well being and family life negatively. Such switching of jobs is not always carried out in the short run; it has been seen that in such companies male employees leave their job for better options in the long run after working for a couple of years and after gaining valuable experience and knowledge on the job.

On the other hand due to lack of balance many female employees leave their jobs or take extended maternity breaks, work part time, accept salary cuts for reduced working hours or take sabbaticals from work after childbirth. This results in loss of valuable talent and human resource for the company; in addition the company has to incur repeated costs for recruitment and training of new employees. Therefore work – life balance is required to survive and create a long term successful career in the Indian context.

The outcome of the research will reveal the differences in perception of men and women regarding work – life balance, work – family conflict, job satisfaction and importance of work – life balance as a measurement of career success.
1.6 **Scope of Research:**

The research has been conducted to find out the differences in gender perceptions with respect to work – life balance. Therefore the scope of the research is limited to the following parameters:

1. Work – life balance has been studied on the basis of three demographic factors only. They are as follows:
   a) Gender
   b) Age
   c) Marital Status

2. Differences in gender perceptions has been studies with respect to the following constructs:
   a) Work – Family Conflicts
   b) Job Satisfaction
   c) Work – life balance for Career Satisfaction

3. The area of study is confined to the city of Pune. Pune district has 15 talukas and Pune city is one of the talukas and it has been chosen as the area of research.

4. The sector chosen for study is the service sector. Industries chosen in the service sector are ITES, IT, education, banking, financial services, health and retail. Each of these industries in the service sector is mostly operated by private companies and long working hours is an accepted norm in such organizations. Therefore the study can easily bring out the problems related to work – life balance that the employees are facing in this organization.

5. The research is based on the point of view of the employees working in the service sector and employers can benefit from this insight.
There are certain factors which are not included in the research. They are as follows:

1. The research does not include the point of view of the employers and organizations.

2. Work – life balance is not studied using demographic parameters such as income level of individuals and designation of employees in organizations.

3. Family – work conflict is not used as a construct in the research as Work – family conflict was considered more important in finding out how work was interfering with family and home responsibilities which in turn impacted the overall job satisfaction and career success of individuals.

4. The research did not include the extrinsic measures of career success such as salary, promotion and position in organizations.

5. The research does not make comparisons between the various industries included in the study but takes an overall view of the total service sector regarding the various facets of work – life balance.

1.7 Importance of Research:

The research focuses on gender perceptions of work – life balance in the service sector where it can also be understood if work – life balance is considered an important factor for achieving a successful career.

In India majority of the studies have been concentrated on work – life balance of women employees only and work – life balance of male employees were not given any importance. However till date only Doble and Supriya (2010) have studied the gender differences in work – life balance in the IT sector in the Indian context. Therefore other industries in the service sector were not given any importance in the context of gender difference with respect to work – life balance.
On the other hand very few researchers have studied the relationship between work – life balance and career success both globally as well as in India. On a professional level relationship between work – life balance and career success was firstly studied in a survey worldwide by Accenture for International Women’s Day 2013. Thereafter Shah (2014) has conducted a research on Indo – German study of role of work – family enrichment on work – life balance and career success.

However till date no researcher has focused on study of the gender differences on the perception of work – life balance as a key factor for achieving a successful career or work – life balance as a measure of career success. Gender differences with respect to relating work – life balance with career success will find out the perception of the men and women employees about the importance of balance in their lives to get career success in the long run.

The importance of the research can be summarized as follows:

1. Male employees and professionals have not been given much importance with respect to research on work – life balance in India. The transition from traditional gendered roles, emergence of nuclear families and rise in rate of divorce in India has resulted in work –life imbalances in male professional’s life as well. Therefore the research includes both the male and the female perspectives on work –life balance.

2. The industries in the service sector other than IT, BPO and education were not given much importance so a fresh approach of the service sector has been taken with inclusion of industries such as health, banking, financial services and retail.

3. The outcome of this research will enable employees as well as employers and organizations to understand the importance of work – life balance as a strategic tool to achieve a successful career.

4. The importance of a successful career is of supreme importance in the life of working professionals in urban India. So the study will be beneficial and relevant to the present economic environment in India.